



Bethesda Outlook

Bethesda Lutheran church

May, 2016



Bethesda Plant Sale and Raffle

23406 54th AVE WEST

MOUNTLAKE TERRACE

Saturday, May 7th, 9:00am-2:00pm

Vegetable Starts **Flowers**

Houseplants Shrubs

Raffle

\$1 buys a hot dog and soda

The proceeds from the plant sale and raffle will go into the Bethesda Lutheran general fund.

Interim Pastor
Pr. Kathleen Anderson

Office Administrator
Jean Leavens
425-778-6390

Treasurer:
Sue Rasmussen
425-357-6272

Musician:
Vic Peters
206-789-1699

Altar Care:
Joy DeGraff
425-778-5040

Council ~ 2015-16

President:
Joy DeGraff
425-778-5040

Vice President:
Sharon Boyd
425-610-4588

Secretary
Katherine Dedrick
425-672-9080

Jeanette Anstice
425-742-4216

Bill Johnson
206-300-2440

Darlene Johnston
425-673-5168

Caryl Klingensmith
425-775-0478

Joan Minnis
425-778-0309

Cliff Pearson
425-275-3590

CHURCH BULLYING

This is an excellent, insightful—and unfortunately all too relevant—blog article from a millennial Lutheran pastor in Manitoba. For those of us who grew up in the church, especially, it's difficult to believe that people in a church actually can become bullies, but as you of Bethesda ought to recognize, church bullying is a very real thing. We often forget, also, that Jesus does not call us to “be nice”, Jesus calls us to follow him, and he even tells us that unless we put him first, we are not worthy to be his followers (Luke 14:26). This verse is under the heading “The Cost of Discipleship” in my Bible; that heading is also a book by Lutheran martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was hanged by the Nazis shortly before the camp he was held in was liberated. There is indeed a cost to discipleship, and not many of us are willing to pay the price. It's so easy for us to want to be comfortable and even to achieve comfort that we sometimes forget that comfort is our enemy. When we become too comfortable, it's easy for bullies and “church terrorists” (another blog article by the same pastor) to take over. After a while, even the discomfort of anxiety becomes its own kind of comfortable, and we are in danger of not being church any more.

The bullying behavior at Bethesda has included calling a fellow member in the body of Christ “the enemy,” verbal threats of physical violence, harassment of members of the Transition Team, and willing collusion with an unethical city official to sabotage Bethesda and your ministry. None of this behavior reflects God's intention for us as the body of Christ, and it is particularly odious when this behavior is exhibited by your elected leaders who have an obligation to lead by example.

As Dumbledore said in the first Harry Potter book: “It takes a great deal of courage to stand up to your enemies but a great deal more to stand up to your friends.” If you, the congregation of Bethesda, do not stand up to your own church bullies, there soon enough will be no more church for which to fight. I'm not sure it's not already too late, but I like to believe it's never too late to confront bullying behavior. You might help to redeem not only your congregation, but the bully, too.

12 REASONS WHY IT IS GOOD TO BE A CHURCH BULLY

If you have spent any amount of time attending church, it's likely that you have encountered a church bully. It is even more likely that you have come across church bullies if you have been involved with church leadership. Of course, bullies are everywhere in the world, and are not limited to churches. Bullying is hot button issue these days, and bullying is something many people are trying to draw attention to so that it can be eliminated. Yet still, bullying can be hard to identify. It isn't just the big kid on the playground stealing lunch money. Bullying can be psychological, emotional and physical.

Church bullies have a special advantage, though. Most church people have been taught to be nice and kind, to refrain from stirring the pot or rocking the boat. Church bullies know that often people will not stand up to them, and that they can get away with just about anything.

Church bullies are not good, but being a church bully is good business these days, and here's why:

1. **Being a bully is the easiest way to get what you want.** Churches are groups where people usually have to work together, and work out how to live as a community. That means give and take, compromise and collaboration. Bullying, however, means you can get anything and everything you want. You can bend

people to your wills and desires without giving anything up in return. And as a bully, you don't have to work with, consider or respect others. Bullying is the easiest way to get what you want.

2. **Bullies can offer anonymous feedback.** Churches are already pretty good at not requiring people to stand behind what they say. We send out surveys and feedback tools that remain anonymous. But bullies have it really great. They can send anonymous emails to leaders. They can give in-person feedback with the qualifier, "people are saying." Bullies never have to own the criticisms, and so are free to criticize anything they want to.

3. **Bullies often have gossip clubs.** Bullies are often supported in a small group that likes to keep up on the latest church gossip. This kind of group can meet for coffee during the week or lunch on Sundays or any number of places. As a bully, you can find allies who are ready to support you, who will offer behind-the-scenes support to your behind-the-scenes bullying. It is always easier to bully when you can be confident you are supported by, or acting on behalf of a club.

4. **People will worry that challenging bullies is unkind or unchristian.** The vast majority of church members worry that their behavior could be perceived as unkind or unchristian. You know, Jesus never stood up to anyone and never challenged bad behavior. So as a bully you know most of the time you can be confident that other church members won't stand up to you, lest they be thought of as creating conflict or being un-Christ like.

5. **You can use your anxiety against others.** Human beings don't like anxiety; we don't want to be worried or fearful if we can avoid it. Anxiety and fear are contagious. Use this your advantage. As a bully, if you can get others to take on your worries, your fears, your issues, your anxiety, most people (especially church people) will do almost anything to relieve you (and therefore themselves) of your fears. Use this to your advantage.

6. **You can use the other's anxiety against them.** As human beings we have often been taught that we have two responses to anxiety – Fight or Flight. Bullies know that this isn't true. There are 3 – Fight, Flight or Freeze. The best bullies know that freeze is the most common response. If you can make others anxious, you know that their first response will be to do nothing. It is pretty easy to bully people when they don't do anything or say anything to stop you. Make them anxious.

7. **You don't have to be open or transparent.** Bullies know this tactic well. It is much easier to bully from the shadows than in the open. Write anonymous letters and emails that you can deny came from you. Ambush your victims when others aren't around to catch you. Make life miserable for people in private, and be an angel in the open. Most people won't even know that you are a bully. Hide in plain sight.

8. **You can play the victim card when caught.** So what do you do when someone actually calls you on your bullying? Why accuse them of being the bully, of course! Most people will get so worried that they are bullying you that they will forget all about the fact that you were bullying them first. You never want to defend your own actions, so make other people defend theirs – play the victim card.

9. **The stakes are low for you but high for others.** One of the great things about being a church bully is that the stakes are pretty low. What could happen to you? Churches will rarely kick you off the membership list. Pastors have jobs to keep, leaders have to tend to running the place. As a bully the worst that could happen is people get annoyed with you, but really that's good for you (see point 6).

10. **You don't have to change.** Change is hard. Growing up and being mature is really hard. Bullying means you can stay the same. You don't have to accept new ideas or learn new things. You can just impose your will on others, make them do what you like, and complain if they don't. Don't change, be a bully instead.

11. **The congregational system (read: family system) will often work to keep you in power.** Great church bullies know that individuals might challenge them, but the system will work to maintain the status quo. Bullies don't change, and therefore don't challenge the system. Intelligent individuals will cease thinking straight in a group and will seek to silence those who oppose bullies (and therefore advocate change in the system) since it is easier to maintain the norm. Feel confident that almost all of the group behavior in a church is there to support your bullying.

12. **You don't have to care about anyone but yourself.** This is the best part of being a bully of course. You can claim you are speaking for the wronged, the victimized, the silent majority or minority, but really it is all about you. That's the whole reason you can bully in the first place, because your issues come first. Your needs, your wants, your feelings, your ideas. You are *numero uno*, and thinking about others only gets in the way of taking care of you. So put yourself first and you will be a great bully.

Bullying is a major issue in society, one that often seems to paralyze those in authority. Bullying happens because most bullies know to use our anxiety, our fears, and our emotions against us. Most of us would much rather just avoid conflict altogether, and it is much easier to give in to make the bullying stop than to challenge it. Church and family systems protect bullies, because upsetting bullies would cause so much stress on the church that their behavior is permitted, and even condoned. Anyone can be a church bully.

But now it's time for the bullying to end. It won't be easy. Standing up to bullies means recognizing our own anxieties and need to be liked. Standing up means risking being unpopular, it means risking the wrath of the system that protects the bullies. Standing up means knowing all the advantages that bullies have to lose (see the list above), and **not underestimating how far bullies will go to retain their power and privilege**. Standing up means that we all participate, even unknowingly support bullies, when our own anxieties about change prevent us from moving and growing into healthier ways of being.

Ending bullying means change. Change is hard. Sometimes it might land you on a cross.

But God knows something about that... in fact, change is one of God's favorite tools to work with – crosses are God's specialty.

<https://millennialpastor.net/2014/01/23/12-reasons-why-it-is-good-to-be-a-church-bully/>

May Christ's peace be with you,

Pastor Anderson

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 Worship 10:15am Comm. Table prep 4:00pm-7:00pm</p>	<p>2 Comm. Table Tutoring 10:00am-5:00pm Ruth/Miriam Circle 2:00pm-4:00pm Comm. Table 5:30pm-8:00pm WAM Committee 5:30pm-6:45pm GS Leaders 6:30pm-9:00pm Facilities Committee 6:45p (bldg. 3)</p>	<p>3 Comm. Table clean up 7:00am—12:00pm</p>	<p>4 Al-Anon Mtg. 7:00pm</p>	<p>5 Girl Scouts 6:00pm—8:00pm</p>	<p>6 Girl Scouts 5:00pm—8:00pm</p>	<p>7 PLANT SALE 8:30am—4:00pm</p>
<p>8 Worship 10:15am Comm. Table prep 4:00pm-7:00pm</p>	<p>9 Comm. Table Tutoring 10:00am-5:00pm Sue's Bible Study 2:00pm-4:00pm Comm. Table 5:30pm-8:00pm</p>	<p>10 Comm. Table clean up 7:00am—12:00pm</p>	<p>11 Al-Anon Mtg. 7:00pm</p>	<p>12 Girl Scouts 6:00pm—8:00pm</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 Worship 10:15am Comm. Table prep 4:00pm-7:00pm</p>	<p>16 Comm. Table Tutoring 10:00am-5:00pm Comm. Table 5:30pm-8:00pm Council meeting 7:00pm-9:00pm</p>	<p>17 Comm. Table clean up 7:00am—12:00pm Comm. Table Team meeting 11:00am-1:00pm</p>	<p>18 Al-Anon Mtg. 7:00pm</p>	<p>19 Girl Scouts 6:00pm—8:00pm</p>	<p>20 Girl Scouts 5:00pm—8:00pm</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 Worship 10:15am <i>Bi-Annual Congregational meeting</i> Comm. Table prep 4:00pm-7:00pm</p>	<p>23 Comm. Table Tutoring 10:00am-5:00pm Sue's Bible Study 2:00pm-4:00pm Comm. Table 5:30pm-8:00pm</p>	<p>24 Comm. Table clean up 7:00am—12:00pm</p>	<p>25 Al-Anon Mtg. 7:00pm</p>	<p>26 Girl Scouts 6:00pm—8:00pm</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 Men's Fellowship 8:00am—10:00am</p>
<p>29 Worship 10:15am Comm. Table prep 4:00pm-7:00pm</p>	<p>30 <i>MEMORIAL DAY (office closed)</i> Comm. Table Tutoring 10:00am-5:00pm Comm. Table 5:30pm-8:00pm</p>	<p>31 Comm. Table clean up 7:00am—12:00pm</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 20px; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">May 2016</div>			



Maxine

HAPPY BIRTH DAY MAXINE!

On April 17th we celebrated Maxine Helms' birthday.

has been a long-time active member of Bethesda.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 - Cory Henderson
- 6 - Ruby Engelstad
- 14 - Florence Carlson
- 18 - Amy Goldsmith
- 30 - Katherine Dedrick

FRED MEYER Community Rewards Program

Do you have a Fred Meyer Community Rewards Card? Bethesda is registered in their community rewards program and you can help us raise funds.

Go to <http://fredmeyer.com/topic/community-rewards-4>

Click on "Link your Rewards Card Now"

Log in to your account

search for 92255 (or type in Bethesda). Choose Bethesda Lutheran Church