

BETHLEHEM STAR

DECEMBER 2023

VOLUME 42 NUMBER 12

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For the Lord is good; God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations. Psalm 100:5

What an exciting time to be at Bethlehem Lutheran Church!

God is definitely up to something at Bethlehem, and the Spirit seems to be buzzing around to our different ministries. The Spirit also led our congregation to approve funding and hiring a full-time Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries position. I can't think of a better time than Advent to start waiting for God to call and bring our new Director to Bethlehem.

Thank you all for your prayers, your support, your giving of time and money, and your faith to take this next step for our church.

Here are some other things that I think are worth celebrating that our church has done:

- ◆ We've celebrated a couple of great Birthdays at Coffee An' (Pastor Bob and Ed Bolstad)
- ◆ A few times we've had upwards of 13 kids at Sunday School!
- ◆ 12 middle and high school students came on our Youth Retreat to Cragun's
- ◆ The BLCW led our Thankoffering Sunday, including two guest pastors: Pastor Barbara Johnson and Pastor Marion Rova
- ◆ The Church in Society Committee has led meaningful ministry, including a TON of food collected for folks in need, God's Work Our Hands Sunday, and currently a mission of the month for ELCA Good Gifts.
- ◆ The Esther Circle is meeting regularly and has grown!
- ◆ The Men's Bible Study is still meeting consistently, and has added new members. Several of our Canadian members that join via Zoom even made a surprise, in person visit in November.
- ◆ Our Wednesday Contemporary Services are back and thriving under the servant-hearted leadership of the Average Worship Band.

Thanks be to God for all that we have experienced together!

Peace in Christ, *Pastor Calvin Konop*

SPECIAL EVENTS:

DECEMBER IN BETHLEHEM:



DEC. 2: 1-5PM

HANGING OF THE GREENS



DEC. 8 & 9, 7PM

BOREALIS CHORALE & ORCHESTRA CONCERT



DEC. 9, 11 AM-1 PM

CHRISTMAS BRUNCH & BAKE SALE



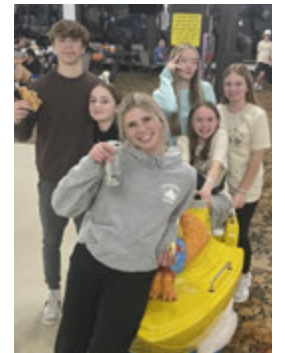
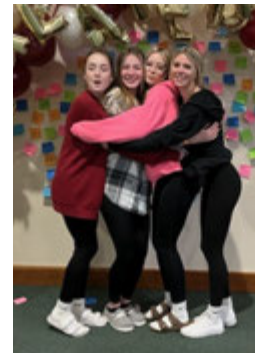
DEC. 24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

10 AM, 3 PM, & 5 PM

All Youth Gathering at Cragun's, November 17-18, 2023



Attending Bethlehem members - front row-sitting: Emma Boen, Keynote speaker David Agape, Gus Gulstrand; Middle row: Katie Shannon (standing), Aubrey Williams, Ty Mielke, Pastor Calvin Konop. Back row: Lute Jansen, Jack Radloff, Birk Jansen, Ruby Gulstrand, Talon DeBoer, Carrie Jansen, Grete Youngdahl, Carin Gulstrand, Torjah Backstrom. Missing from picture: driver Brad Shannon.





December Devotions

By Pastor Calvin Konop

A voice cries out, "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 40:3, 5

Did you know that the Israelites were taken away from the Promised Land into exile in Babylon? It's true, the land that was promised to God's people was conquered, and the unrepented Israelites were carried out of the land and into slavery (again) in Babylon. It was in Babylon when the 3 men were thrown in the fiery furnace, and Daniel thrown in the Lion's Den. The book of Isaiah recounts much of this dark time in Israel's history. The first 39 chapters of Isaiah are warnings from the harbinger prophet, telling the people to turn back to God or they will lose the land. But, as we know, they don't listen and the Babylonians punish them severely.

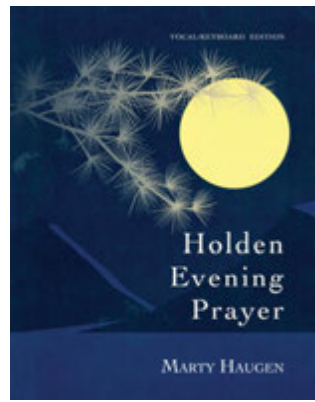
Finally, in chapter 40, we have a glimmer of hope. A voice cries out, the glory of the Lord is revealed, and all people shall see it together! The chapter goes on to promise God's faithfulness to the Israelites has not been abandoned, and that they will return to the land God promised them.

We read this story in Advent, because Advent is a time of waiting. It's a time of clinging onto an almost long, lost hope that God is up to something in our world. Advent is a time to be reminded that God is in the darkness, too. Just as the Spirit hovered over the dark waters in creation, God is hovering over us.



HANGING OF THE GREENS

The annual "Hanging Of The Greens" will be held on Saturday, December 2nd beginning at 1:00 p.m. Let's "spruce things up!" Come for an hour or for the entire afternoon and help decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas. *Many hands make light work.* All materials are provided (including coffee, cider, goodies, and general merriment), but feel free to bring your own gardening gloves, clippers, and/or heavy-duty scissors if you have them.



Invitation to Wednesday Worship

Join us on Wednesday evenings this December for a dinner at 5:30, and a **Holden Evening Prayer Service** at 6pm. The service will be approximately 30 minutes long, will have the beautiful music of Holden Evening prayer, a scripture reading, and a short message by Pastor Calvin or Pastor Tom Murray from Lutsen. Please join us this Advent as we sing and prepare for Christmas!

OPERATION FAMILY



CHRISTMAS



Operation Family Christmas is taking place once again this year. Be on the lookout for Christmas 'wish tags' at the local banks. Tags will be placed on Christmas trees and each tag will include basic info for a local child (age, gender, gift preferences). Simply pick up a tag, begin shopping and return unwrapped gifts, with the corresponding tag. It is important that gifts are returned unwrapped so parents know what their child is receiving in advance. Gift wrap or gift bags are welcome donation add-ons. Grocery gift cards can also be donated to help support these families.

By participating in Operation Family Christmas, you are anonymously showing love and support for a family in Cook County. Our collective gifts will help alleviate financial stress for area families this holiday season. Please reach out to Jes Rodne with questions at 218-370-2019 or jmrodne@gmail.com Many thanks to those who have already dropped off gifts at the Johnson's Foods drop off site!

Special meeting of the BLCW & All Interested Persons to plan the Brunch & Bake Sale join us: November 30th at 9:30 am



Mission of the Month

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Bethlehem's December Mission of the Month is **Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR)**.

LDR shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, LDR stays to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

When selecting our December Mission of the Month, the Church in Society Committee felt it was important to consider an organization who is directly working to support the humanitarian crisis in the Holy Land. We knew LDR would be a trusted organization for our funds. On November 17th, LDR posted the following on their Facebook page:

Situation: *The humanitarian crisis continues to worsen - almost 70% of Gazan residents are displaced, and resources such as food, water and medical supplies are in short supply.*

Response: *Lutheran Disaster Response is supporting Augusta Victoria Hospital, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and ACT Alliance to provide relief for people impacted by the crisis in the Holy Land. In the United States, Lutheran Disaster Response is supporting Salam Arabic Church and Mother of the Savior Church to provide emotional and spiritual care to Palestinian communities.*

While the crisis in the Middle East was our initial reason for selecting Lutheran Disaster Response, LDR will direct Bethlehem's Mission of the Month offerings to where it is needed most at the time, they receive our financial gift. LDR is currently providing support in the following areas:

Internationally:

- Easter Europe Crisis Response
- Horn of Africa Drought
- Middle East Crisis
- Middle East & Europe Refugee Crisis
- South Sudan Relief
- AMMPARO: Protecting Migrants

Domestically:

- Flooding
- Hurricanes
- Severe Storms
- Tornadoes
- Wildfires



Want to follow along? Like Lutheran Disaster Response on Facebook, follow @ELCALDR on Twitter and follow @ELCA_LDR on Instagram.

If you would like to give a financial gift to LDR this December, please note "Mission of the Month" or "LDR" on your special offering.

Thank you to all who have supported our Mission of the Month program in 2023!

In peace,

Jessica Markusen, on behalf of the Church in Society Committee



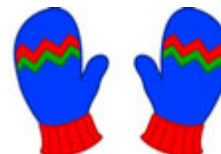
Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 God's work. Our hands.



DECEMBER

MEMBER CHALLENGE:

While it was certainly an unusually mild November, the season of snow and cold will soon be upon us! Please help our neighbors stay warm this winter by filling up the tree in the narthex with hats and mittens. In partnership with the First Congregational Church in Grand Marais, collected donations will be shared with the Damiano Center in Duluth. The tree will be up until Epiphany, January 6, 2024.



Thanks!

Libby Larson
 on behalf of the
 Church in Society Committee

BLCW Christmas Brunch and Bake Sale

December 9, 2023

11:00 am to 1:00 pm

\$10 Brunch includes: Chicken

Salad on Croissant, fruit, cookies, coffee



Attn: Women of BLC:

Start your holiday baking and bring
your donations on Fri. Dec. 8th or

by 10:30 am on Dec. 9th



Also seeking donations for the

Raffle from members.

Questions answered by

Cathi Williams: 218-370-8188

Feeling Thankful

~ by Laurie Spry

This season is one of my favorites, and at my age, reflecting on the past comes easy, except the recent past becomes less clear... memory is a funny thing. My mom, at 93, has an incredible memory and finally admits she isn't as sharp on things happening this morning or this afternoon, or sometimes a full blank. But what is so amazing is she is always in the moment and when asked for advice is engaged and incredibly wise. The memories of her sustain me to be a better person and to truly listen. I am thankful to still have my mom.

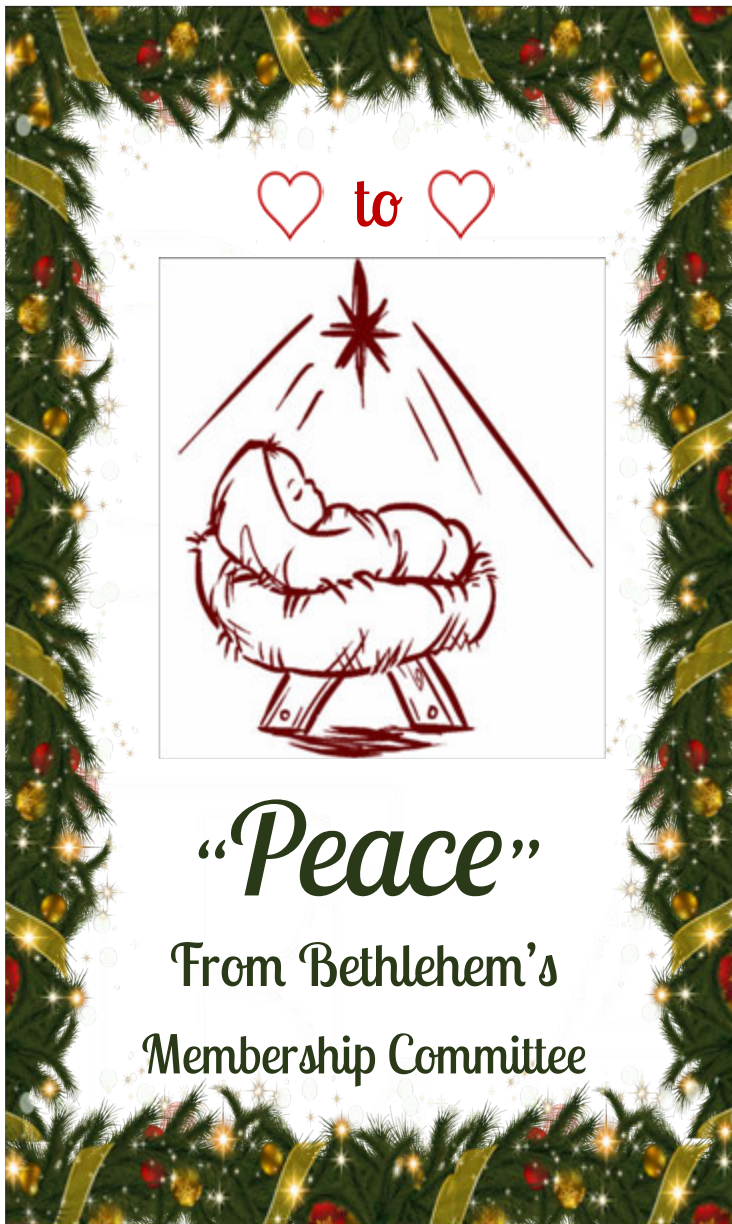
The summer of change at Bethlehem has been inspiring, and I am grateful for the people in our church family for the many gifts of time and effort that are what makes us such a wonderful place to gather and pray. I am going to name some names, and will likely leave some folks out, and I apologize for that. Denise is a hero of mine, as she has navigated so much this past several years with grace and a "can-do" attitude. We are so blessed by her. When Kris Hedstrom and I decided we would take on the Harvest Dinner; with some major changes, we were aware that there may be some folks who may have felt it should remain the same. We decided at an impromptu gather during the July VBS that we would set up teams with Men's Bible Study; Youth and Family and BLCW to accomplish this, and share the proceeds.

What happened is I did all the ordering from **Johnson's Grocery Store** ~ they gifted us with all groceries at cost! I contacted **North Shore Fisheries** ~ they gave us 42 pounds of herring! **Birch Terrace** donated the Tartar Sauce! All children were paid for to have a meal for free as a gift from a member of our church! The teams figured out what they would serve and I ordered for them. We always had plenty of help, because I was taught that if you ask, and let folks OWN their contribution, they not only show up, the love what they do and do it well.

So, all of you who stood with me, cooked with me, and planned with me, and all of you who came to eat and gather ~ we are thankful for you!

Thanks, Mom, for teaching me to open my heart and mind to the many gifts in this life. I love you, the community and church you raised me in, and all the many lessons you shared.





“All Earth is Hopeful” Borealis Chorale and Orchestra Annual Concert

Friday, December 8 &
Saturday, December 9

7:00 PM nightly

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

“This year, we are excited to debut a commission by William Beckstrand of “All Earth is Hopeful”. After the last few years, the text is especially pertinent as we look forward to the future. Please join us and sing along, and enjoy this community offering of music!”

~ Karina Roth, Director

Free will offering, \$10+ suggested

Church members and community volunteers are needed to help on either Dec. 8 and 9. Volunteers should be aware that the prep may not be complete by the start of the concert; if someone wants to experience the concert in the audience, they may want to attend on whatever night they don't volunteer.

Arrive at Bethlehem LC kitchen, upstairs next to the social hall, at 6pm. Assist the Church members there with getting the foods brought by BCO members out in the social hall to share with the audience after the performance. During the reception, help with replenishing of food and beverages may also be needed. Following the reception, help with clean-up and putting away the remaining food for the next night also is needed.

Volunteers can choose to do all of the above or either prep, or clean-up. Help before the reception is especially important as BCO members aren't available to help during that time. Whatever help folks can offer will be very much appreciated. Contact Chel Anderson: johnalt@boreal.org. phone: 218-475-0147



A VIRTUAL BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

DECEMBER 21 @ 7:00 - 8:00 PM

Holidays are not always a happy, joyful time for everyone. If you get the holiday blues, WELCA offers help. The Women of the ELCA will be hosting a “Blue Christmas Service” which offers a safe place to bring your grief, fear, and loss. Brief readings. Quiet and reflective music. Prayers. All are welcome. The service takes place at 7 p.m. CST on Thursday, December 21, 2023.

<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/event/a-virtual-blue-christmas-service>



DECEMBER 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>26</p> <p>Christ the King Sunday 8:40am Choir Practice 10:00am Christian Contemporary Worship Service with the "Average Worship Band" 10:00am Sunday School during Worship 2:30pm Borealis Orchestra Rehearsal 4:00pm Borealis Chorale Rehearsal</p>	<p>27</p> 	<p>28</p> 	<p>29</p> <p>Confirmation: Gameshow Night 12:30pm Mid-Day Mid-Week Bible Study 5:30pm Hotdish meal before worship 6:00pm Contemporary Worship Service</p>	<p>30</p> <p>8:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 9:30am BLCW meeting to plan Brunc</p> 	<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>1:00pm Hanging of the Greens</p> 
<p>3</p> <p>Advent 1st/Sunday 8:40am Choir Practice 10:00am Sunday School during Worship 10:00am Worship with Live stream & Choir sings 2:30pm Borealis Orchestra Rehearsal 4:00pm Borealis Chorale Rehearsal</p>	<p>4</p> <p>3:30pm Girl Scouts</p> 	<p>5</p> 	<p>6</p> <p>8:00am Church In Society meeting 12:30pm Mid-Day Mid-Week Bible Study 5:30pm Sub sandwich meal 6:00pm Advent Worship Service 6:00 pm Confirmation</p>	<p>7</p> <p>8:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting</p> 	<p>8</p> <p>Clarity Hearing Appts. 7:00pm Borealis Concert</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>11:00am to 100pm Christmas Brunch & Bake Sale 7:00pm Borealis Concert</p> 
<p>10</p> <p>Advent 2nd Sunday 8:40am Choir Practice 10:00am Sunday School during Worship 10:00am Worship Service - Live streamed</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6:30pm Executive Committee</p> 	<p>12</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>12:30pm Mid-Day Mid-Week Bible Study 5:30pm Pizza Supper 6:00pm Advent Worship Service 6:00 pm Confirmation Christmas Party & Food Drive</p>	<p>14</p> <p>8:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 2:00pm Esther Circle</p>	<p>15</p> 	<p>16</p> 
<p>17</p> <p>Advent 3rd Sunday Choir sings during worship 8:40am Choir Practice 10:00am Sunday School during Worship 10:00am Worship - Live streamed with Choir 2:00pm Care Center Worship Service</p>	<p>18</p> <p>3:30pm Girl Scouts 6:30pm Church Council Meeting</p> 	<p>19</p> <p>6:30pm Worship Planning Committee</p> 	<p>20</p> <p>NO Confirmation 12:30pm Mid-Day Mid-Week Bible Study 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Advent Worship Service</p>	<p>21</p>  <p>First Day of Winter 8:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Clarity Hearing Appts. Newsletter articles due for next edition</p> 	<p>23</p> 
<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve 10:00am Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols 3:00pm Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols 5:00pm Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>Christmas Day Office closed</p> 	<p>26</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>12:30pm Mid-Day Mid-Week Bible Study NO Meal NO Confirmation NO Worship</p> 	<p>28</p> <p>8:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting</p> 	<p>29</p> 	<p>30</p>
<p>31</p> <p>8:40am Choir Practice 10:00am Sunday School during Worship 10:00am Worship Service - Live streamed</p>	<p>1</p> <p>New Year's Day - Office closed</p> 	<p>2</p>  <p>Hope</p>	<p>3</p> <p>8:00am Church In Society meeting 12:30pm Mid-Day Mid-Week Bible Study NO Meal NO Confirmation NO Worship</p>	<p>4</p> <p>8:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>Clarity Hearing Appts.</p> 	<p>6</p>

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

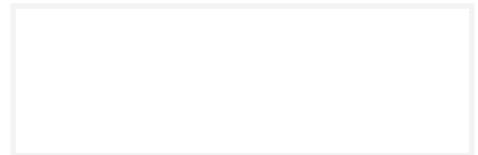
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Belonging to Christ,

Sharing Christ on the

North Shore and beyond.



Service of Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve: 10:00 am, 3:00 & 5:00 pm