

December 2022

Volume 41 Number 12

Bethlehem Star

A publication of Bethlehem Lutheran Church-Grand Marais, MN

Advent at Bethlehem:

Sundays

8:40 am - Choir Practice

10:00 am - Worship Service & Sunday School

11:15 am - Classes for youth grades 3 - 8

Wednesdays

6:30 pm - Advent Worship - Holden Evening
Prayer Service with our Contemporary Musical
Team

Hanging of the Greens and Advent Festival

December 3: 1 to 4 pm (see page 7)

Bake and Craft Sale

December 10: 12:noon to 2pm
(see page 6)

Borealis Concerts

December 11 & 12 at 7pm

Christmas Eve Services

December 24th:

3:00 pm Service of Lessons and Carols with
Reverend Tom Murray

5:00 pm Service of Lessons and Carols with
Bethlehem Choir

9:00 pm Holy Communion Service with
Chaplain William Strand

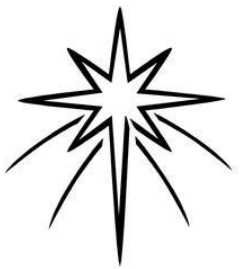


ELCA NE MN Synod All Youth Gathering Cragun's Resort Nov. 19-20, 2022



Now with the Synod Youth Gathering under their belts, they are SO EXCITED about going to the National Youth Gathering next. Attendees from Bethlehem were: Lute Jansen, Grant Oberg, Birk Jansen, Mindy Jacobson (Youth Director), Chance Jacobsen, Jorjah Backstrom, Katie, Shannon, Kyle & Theresa Oberg (Chaperones).





December Devotions

By Intern Deacon Ben Nikodym

Philippians 4:2-9

² I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my coworkers, whose names are in the book of life. ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you.

Especially this time of year, it's common for me to catch myself humming Amy Grant's song, "I need a silent night, a holy night." In the rat race of life and the holidays, it's easy to get overwhelmed and burned out. For many, this season is the loneliest time of the year, and being told we're supposed to be "holly jolly" all the time doesn't help with seasonal depression. As we approach the shortest day of the year, the weather gets increasingly inhospitable, the community shrinks, and you need headlights both to and from work. The idea of a peace "which surpasses all understanding" sounds incredible.

I want that peace. I want rest, an end to my to-do list, and a break from all my challenges. If we only look at verses 4-7 from this passage, it almost looks like God is offering that - to solve all our problems. But that's not the whole story. Verse 2 mentions Euodia and Syntyche, two female leaders in the church who had worked super hard and were feeling burned out. In verse 3, Paul validates how hard their work is and tells others to support them.

Paul encourages them in verses 2-3 and 8-9 to press on - to continue their ministry united with him as he continues his ministry. He's begging them to not give up. And then, in the midst of that, we get verses 6-7, everyone's favorite verses.

Here, Paul does not say that God will solve their problems, but he assures Euodia and Syntyche that God will go with them and offer them a peace that surpasses all understanding as they do their work. I believe that God still offers that to us today. It is in the midst of our work, that mess that we call life, God meets us and offers us a peace that surpasses all understanding. God will be with us for every step of every journey, but we are still, nonetheless, called to take that journey.

Right now, I am all-too-rapidly approaching the end of my internship at Bethlehem/Trinity. I am unsure what comes next for me, and I don't know what will come next for Bethlehem. There are many unknowns in my life right now, and it would be so easy to become a ball of anxiety worrying about everything. However, I take comfort in the words of this passage. No matter what happens, God will be with me and God will be with Bethlehem. I, we, are called to keep taking the next step. We are also, though, invited into God's peace which is greater than our fears. We are invited to let go of what is outside our control so that we can focus on what matters, even in the midst of innumerable stressors.

Advent, our current season of the church year, is not about joy and celebration. In Advent we remember the generations who waited for the coming messiah. These short, cold days of Advent in Minnesota remind us of the problems of the world. We know that Christmas is coming, but for now, we are sitting in the discomfort. This Advent, I invite you to recognize the problems in the world and in your life, to continue working to make the world a better place, and to also accept God's peace. Take a deep breath and know that you are not alone - you have a loving God and you have this community. As we do what we can in the world, God will always be with us - giving us a peace that surpasses all understanding.

Thanks be to God!





It's wild how time flies, but I'm already almost done with my internship! I will be staying through Christmas of this year, which means that I only have about a month left!

While we don't have concrete plans, exactly, we are planning to move to St. Louis, MO after this and get a small place where we can live for a while. Assuming that my candidacy committee (God willing) approves me, I will begin looking for a first call. Julianna is already hunting for a job, hoping to find a position related to her passion for prison/criminal justice reform.

Eventually, we hope to purchase a Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid and travel the country, seeing all the national parks while just living out of a van! I have so loved being here on the North Shore and am so grateful for all of you who have welcomed us with open arms and made this time so meaningful!

~Intern Ben



Global Health Ministries

With Intern Ben wrapping up his time here, the Church in Society committee chose to honor him and choose a Mission of the Month that was meaningful to him. Ben suggested Global Health Ministries, which supports places including Madagascar, where Ben lived as a child, not to mention that Ben's dad is the executive director! GHM is also

close to Bethlehem's heart – we've supported them before, and some of our members and confirmation students have rolled bandages for GHM.

For anyone unfamiliar with GHM, it "is an independent Lutheran nonprofit committed to improving health among some of the most vulnerable people in the world. We believe all people should have access to a healthy life. But they don't. GHM 'helps the hands that heal' in countries where Lutheran churches manage hospitals, clinics, and community-based outreach - all focused on improving health.

Together we can make a difference. Each year thousands of volunteers gather in our Minnesota-based warehouse and around the nation to help sort and pack medical supplies to share around the world. At the request of our international partners, we also offer grants and volunteer consultants to help our partners build their capacity to move the needle on health in their communities and effect sustainable and enduring change.



We currently partner in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, El Salvador, Ethiopia, India, Liberia, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Nigeria, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe." For more information, and to see how you can support GHM, please visit ghm.org

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



Youth and Family

Thank you to Mindy Jacobsen, our Youth Director, for planning and promoting our youth programs (including lots of emails, texts, phone calls and teaching).

Senior High lunch will continue on Tuesdays from 11:45 to 12:30 through December 13th. We will reconsider our connections with our post confirmation members in January.

Confirmation will continue Sunday mornings from 11:15 to Noon.

Holy Moly has had a small attendance of 2-3 children. We may combine them with Sunday School. We need a second team teacher when Ben Nicodym is no longer serving our congregation.

Sunday School, during worship, has been very popular. We have a potential of 15 young attendees, and usually have 7-8 on any given Sunday. They love to sing!

We especially thank our deacon, Ben Nikodym for leading our Senior High discussion group, teaching Holy Moly and his enthusiastic children's sermons. Ben and his wife Julianna have truly blessed our congregation these past 6 months.

Thanks be to God, Kris Hedstrom



Snow Birds

Why do birds fly south for the winter?
Because it's too far to walk

Please keep Denise informed of your winter address. (218-387-2227 or blc@boreal.org)



Stewardship report

You by now should have received our letter from the Stewardship Committee and we hoped that in prayer you have considered your plan to contribute to Bethlehem's ministries.

Please return your "Giving cards" or your intention before the middle of December.

Thank you, Gwen Lenz

BLCW Report

Thankoffering Sunday has passed and we had a delightful turnout for this special Sunday for the Women of the ELCA. We are looking forward to having a Holiday Bake & Craft Sale on December 10th

While the Quilters gather every Thursday, and the Altar Guild continues their service; and the Esther Circle and the Ruth/Rebecca Circles continue to meet each month from fall to spring. Since COVID, our board is no longer meeting, and we are wondering what to do next.

We are thinking a different set up would be important to consider moving forward. So much has changed in the last 3 years, than the time seems perfect for rethinking the BLCW board to just becoming a committee that reports to our Church Council; and our fundraising efforts continue and are kept by the Church's Financial Secretary. More discussion is needed on this proposal.

We would also like to be more inclusive; meaning we simply do not have the people needed to take on the traditional tasks that the BLCW has done for years. Other groups or committees could work together to handle weddings, funerals, memorials, meals, celebrations, cleaning, etc. To continue the service to our community is crucial and we want to be a part of it but can no longer do it alone.

To date, we have relied on Denise to fill so many gaps... this is not her job ~ and we need to make some clear choices in how we move forward.

God, give us Grace to accept with Serenity the things that cannot be changed; Courage to change the things that need be changed; and the Wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

~ Laurie Spry

BLCW Kudos

WOW! the women of Esther Circle really surpassed expectations for our wonderful Thankoffering Sunday on Nov 20th. My sincere "Thank you's" go to so many ladies like Cathi, Martha, Susan, Sue, Kathy, June, Laurie, Shirley, and to Denise-who rocks our world! And thanks to Mike Chmelik who welcomed our new members (who unfortunately were not able to attend), and read the gospel lesson.

It is a special season of the year in our Church. I really enjoy the look of the Church chancel area. The Altar Guild makes sure the linens, banners, and all things worship-related are ready for us each week. Thanks to Susan Bragstad and Sue Anderson for coordinating this. If you would like to be a part of the Altar Guild, please contact either of them.

We are blessed to have strong, bold women in our Congregation who take charge and are doers. *THANK YOU TO THOSE LADIES FOR BEING WHO YOU ARE!* ~ Gwen Lenz



New Holiday Tradition



Holiday Bizarre. Old-fashion holiday bake. Holiday craft sale. DIY Christmas Sale. It's hard to come up with a new name for a changing tradition. Rather than putting together a traditional Julefest with all of the traditions, programs, over-planning, and ALL THAT WORK... the ladies of the Esther Circle are starting a new tradition: a simple Holiday Bake and Craft Sale. A holiday bizarre, if you like.

Formerly part of Julefest, this bake sale has traditionally been a main BLCW fundraiser. But this time it's going to be different! No St. Lucia. No program. No Scandinavian-themed holiday traditions. Just an old-fashioned holiday bake and craft sale. A time to get together for fellowship and enjoy some holiday shopping with family and friends.

It's time to get recipe cards out, put on your favorite apron and start baking. We are open to all baking ideas~ whatever your favorite Christmas Cookie, Bar, Bread, etc., is a welcome contribution. People are also welcomed to sell their holiday crafts. They may donate individual items or set up a table and give a portion of sales to the BLCW.

All items should be dropped off on Friday Dec. 9th morning, or before 11:30 am on Dec. 10th. Sale will take place Dec. 10th from noon to 2:00 pm.

This year a light lunch will be served in conjunction with the bake and craft sale. Lunch will consist of chicken salad on buttery croissants, fruit, cookies and coffee. Cost will be \$10/plate and will be served in the Fellowship Hall.

Please contact Cathi Williams (218.370.8188), or any member of the Esther Circle, for information.





It's time to
decorate the church!
Hanging of the Greens
& Advent Festival
Saturday December 3rd
From 1pm to 4pm
Come One, Come All

Hanging of the Greens

Once again, the team of Janet Simonen and Hilja Iverson are planning the decorations for our sanctuary for the holiday season. It's always a secret and a joyful surprise once the theme and decorations are revealed.

Decorating will be on Saturday Dec. 3rd starting at 1:00 pm, with plans to be complete around 4 pm. They will need additional volunteers this year, with Hilja 9-months pregnant and the DeBevec's not available. Volunteers do not need to be here during the entire time, but it is much appreciated. Volunteers should wear work clothes, bring chore gloves and garden clippers. Any questions can be answered by Janet Simonen at 218-387-5189.



Advent Festival



In coordination with decorating the sanctuary, the Youth will be hosting an Advent crafting festival. **Youth of all ages** are invited to attend on Dec. 3 from 1:00-3:00 pm to do some Christmas crafts while the church is being decorated. Snacks and hot chocolate will be provided.

Borealis Returns

The North Shore Music Association (NSMA) is delighted to announce that, three years after their last concert, the Borealis Chorale & Orchestra (BCO) has reconvened and is excited to perform for the community. In 2020 this cherished Cook County tradition, which began in the 1950s, was upended when the pandemic made it unsafe for vocalists, instrumentalists, and the public to gather. It is now time for the concert and the tradition to resume! **The concert will be held at Bethlehem on December 11 & 12 at 7:00 pm.**

Some big news this year is new leadership for the BCO. Former director William Beckstrand writes, "I had the great privilege of directing these concerts for a decade, after B.J. Muus asked me to take the helm. Now, it is time for another passing of the baton, into the able hands of Karina Roth. Karina's musical gifts and leadership are a natural fit for the group." NSMA and the BCO express our sincere thanks to Bill for his gift of musical leadership, as we warmly and enthusiastically welcome Karina.

This year's concerts, featuring over 75 talented Cook County singers and musicians, are a tribute to the considerable talents of Beckstrand and Muus. The program will include William Beckstrand's original compositions and pieces by B.J. Muus in addition to other seasonal selections will round out the program.

The BCO is also sustained by donations from Cook County residents and visitors. These contributions allow the director to purchase music for the chorus and orchestra and, at times, to pay visiting musicians who fill in gaps. BCO concerts are free, but giving to the BCO ensures that this beloved tradition can continue each year. Please give if you can!

You don't want to miss this wonderful Christmas tradition!



Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday January 29, 2023



Bethlehem Lutheran Church's Annual Meeting will be held on January 29, 2023 following the worship service. (Maybe there will be a potluck lunch if someone chooses to organize it. *Hint, hint!*) The standard order of business and voting will be run as usual.

Let this notice serve you:

1. To reserve this time on your calendar of events, and be sure to attend either in-person or via Zoom;
2. To remind team leaders that year-end written reports are due by December 15, so the final reports to the congregation will be out by January 15;
3. To begin to consider taking a place on the council or other committees, which will be voted on at this meeting; and
4. To review the proposed changes to the constitution (below) which will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

Constitutional Change Proposal for 2022-23

At the August 11, 2022 Church Council meeting, the Council authorized to have the congregation vote on the following changes at the January 29, 2023 Annual Meeting. These changes are meant to clarify our constitution and they align our constitution better with the current practices at Bethlehem.

The proposed changes affect the following sections. If you would like to see the entire constitution or any section thereof, please contact Denise in the office for a copy. (218-387-2227 or blc@boreal.org) The new language is underlined. Any language to be removed has a ~~strikethrough~~.

Chapter 11: OFFICERS

C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and financial secretary.

- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
- b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
- c. Officers of this congregation shall be elected from the membership ~~serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members~~ of the Congregation Council.

d. The officer shall continue to serve the remainder of their Congregation Council term after their term as an officer expires.

C11.02. The ~~congregation or~~ Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The President and Vice President ~~shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected.~~ President and Vice President shall be eligible to serve a second term of one year. Their terms as officers shall begin at the close of the first Congregation Council meeting, following the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer, other than the treasurer and financial secretary, shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Chapter 12: CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and not more than twelve (12) members of the congregation ~~and the officers of the congregation.~~ Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected by written ballot to serve for three (3) years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively, except for the treasurer and the financial secretary. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

ALL YOUTH GATHERING RECAP

By Mindy Jacobsen, Youth Director

On November 19-20, 6 youth and 3 adults attended the NE MN Synod Youth Gathering at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd. It was so much fun to see the kids grow as a group and experience an event such as this with close to 300 other youth! They learned about the 2 sacraments, Baptism and Communion and what they represent. The whole event was planned and put on by high school youth who led worship, small and whole group activities as well as sharing their faith stories. It was an incredible experience for our youth and hope they will continue to grow in their faith. (Pictures and names on page 2.)



DECEMBER



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 Advent CCW music Rev. Doug Cox & Ben Nikodym, presiding Worship in-person at 10:00 AM with Live stream 8:40am Choir Rehearsal 10:00am Sunday School 5:30pm Borealis Orchestra Practice 7:00pm Borealis Chorale Practice 	28 	29 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:30am Care Center Visitation 11:45am Sr High Pizza Lunch 	30 6:30pm Advent - Holden Evening Prayer Worship Service w/CCW musicians 	1 7:45am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 7:00pm Executive Committee 	2 Clarity Hearing Appts. 	3 1:00pm Advent Festival 1:00pm Hanging of the Greens 
4 Jonathan Rova, guest in pulpit Worship in-person at 10:00 AM with Live stream / Choir sings 8:40am Choir Rehearsal 10:00am Sunday School 11:15am Confirmation 11:15am Holy Moly 5:30pm Borealis Orchestra Practice 7:00pm Borealis Chorale Practice 	5 3:30pm Girl Scouts - 1st grade 	6 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:30am Care Center Visitation 11:45am Sr High Pizza Lunch Nursing Home Visits 	7 8:00am Church In Society meeting 6:30pm Advent - Holden Evening Prayer Worship Service w/CCW musicians 	8 7:45am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 9:30am Esther Circle 7:00pm Council meeting Church Council 	9 10:00am Rebecca & Ruth Circles 	10 12:00pm Holiday Bake & Craft Sale with Fellowship Luncheon 
11 Ben's Last Day to Preach at Bethlehem Worship in-person at 10:00 AM with Live stream 8:40am Choir Rehearsal 10:00am Sunday School 11:15am Confirmation Class 11:15am Holy Moly class 7:00pm Borealis Concert 	12 3:30pm Girl Scouts - 1st grade 7:00pm Borealis Concert 	13 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:30am Care Center Visitation 11:45am Sr High Pizza Lunch 	14 6:30pm Advent - Holden Evening Prayer Worship Service w/CCW musicians 	15 Denise's Vacation Day, beginning at 12 noon 7:45am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 	16 Clarity Hearing Appts. 	17 Tree gets delivered and decorated 
18 Chaplain William Strand in pulpit Worship in-person at 10:00 AM with Live stream / Choir sings 8:40am Choir Rehearsal 10:00am Sunday School 11:15am Confirmation Class 11:15am Holy Moly class 	19 	20 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:30am Care Center Visitation 5:30pm Worship Planning Committee 	21 First Day of Winter 10:00am Internship Meeting - Final/potluck 6:30pm Advent - Holden Evening Prayer Worship Service 	22 Newsletter articles due for next edition 7:45am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 	23 	24 3:00pm Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols 5:00pm Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols 9:00pm Christmas Eve Holy Communion 
25 Chaplain William Strand in pulpit Christian Contemporary Worship music Christmas Day Worship in-person at 10:00 AM with Live stream 	26 	27 	28 	29 7:45am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 	30 	31 

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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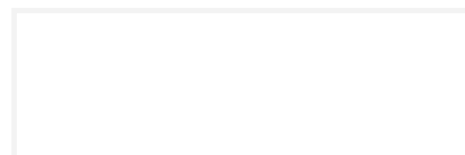
Belonging to Christ,

Sharing Christ on the

North Shore and beyond.



Evangelical
Lutheran
Church in America



Poinsettias for Christmas

If you would like to sponsor a poinsettia for our Christmas celebrations please fill out an order form (Narthex) or call Denise in the office at 218.387.2227 Cost is \$12.00

"The Lord is coming, always coming."

When you have ears to hear and eyes to see,
you will recognize him at
any moment of your life.

Life is Advent;
Life is recognizing the coming of the Lord."

- Henri Nouwen