

PARISH VISITOR

December 2023



Pilgrim Lutheran Church Frederic, Wisconsin

*Pilgrim Lutheran Church is a family of God,
centered in Christ, inviting all people to journey
with us in faith, hope, and love.”*

*We worship Sunday mornings at 10:30
Find our services online at bplutheran.com*

Church office Wednesdays & Thursdays, 9am-3pm
Pastor's Office Hours Thursday, 3-6pm

PILGRIM LUTHERAN VOLUNTEERS December 2023

USHERS Chris Byerly

LECTORS

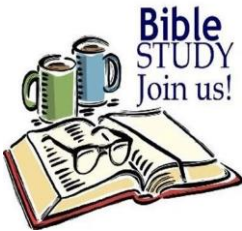
- 03 Mary Nelson
- 10 Phil Zuniga
- 17 Bruce Bengtson
- 24 Lisa Jensen
- 31

COFFEE SERVERS

- 03 Todd & Lisa Jensen
- 10 John & Jackie Kurkowski
- 17 Steve & Rhoda Jensen
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 31 Wayne & Kathie Koball

ALTAR COMMITTEE

Chris Byerly
Karen Swanberg



Tuesday Morning Adult Bible Study meets **10am at Bethany in December.** All are welcome to join us for discussion of the Scripture readings for the coming Sunday.

Did you know we have a new prayer chain online!? Visit at www.bplutheran.com

Prayer Chain



COME JOIN US

FREE SOUP

TUESDAY – DECEMBER 5th - from 4-6



Frederic Community Center

109 Elm Street W

(Small yellow building behind Frederic Grocery; used to be Senior Center)

ALL ARE WELCOME

**Sponsored by Pilgrim Lutheran Church of
Frederic**

Carol Thompson 715-371-0580 or

Karen Swanberg 715-491-2700



**Confirmation Class
will be held at
Bethany for the
month of December-
Hope to see you all
there! 6:30-8pm**



**Recap of Food Distribution for
November: We had a total of 667
families. Children- 579 Adults- 702
Seniors- 554 Grand total of 1835 persons
25,049 Pounds**

**We have the new Acolyte Sign-ups
all ready for those willing to help out through Dec. Please
feel free to use the sign up yourself or contact Faith in the
Pilgrim office & she can add your child to the list.**

**[https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E45A8A62DAAFDC52-
bethanypilgrim#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E45A8A62DAAFDC52-bethanypilgrim#/)**



**PILGRIM LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - November 20, 2023
(Unapproved 11-28-23)**

Present: Bruce Bengtson, Chris Byerly, Brandon Dahl, Marty Davis, Kerrie Erickson, Rhoda Jensen, Carol Thompson and Pastor Emily.

Call Meeting to Order: President Rhoda at 6:40 pm a quorum declared

Opening Devotions: Pastor Emily led us in prayer

Approval of Agenda: Consensus to approve the agenda as presented

Public Comment: Carol presented two public comments on behalf of Marlyce McKinney wanting to borrow kitchen property items and from the Free Soup Committee asking for feed back on this event and ideas for future direction. Rhoda will call Marlyce to tell her it is okay. Carol will give feedback/recommendations to the Free Soup committee.

Secretary's Report: **M/C (Chris/Marty)** to approve 10-16-23 meeting minutes.

Treasurer's Report: Checking

Savings

General \$25,602.18

Memorial \$ 3,992.53

Memorial \$ 4,823.96

Money Market \$10,946.04 (CD)

Youth Gathering \$ 873.14

TOTAL \$14,938.57

TOTAL \$31,299.28

FUND TOTALS \$46,237.85

Endowment Fund Balance - \$12,706.60 (10-9-23) M/C (Bruce/Brandon) to accept report as presented with correction/addition of offering taken on 10-29-23 will be added to the report as it had not been deposited.

PASTOR'S REPORT - Pastor talked about trick and treating with confirmation students as well as their visit to the cemetery on All Saints Day. Pastor Emily has volunteered to be the Chaplin for Burnett County. Sunday, December 31, is Pastor Emily's Golden Birthday so she will be taking that day off and will get a replacement for worship services. The Parish Directory is still in the process of being completed. Pastor gave us copies of her Parish Master Calendar from November 1, 2023 to May 29, 2024. Report accepted as presented.

WANTED - Someone to run the Sunday morning iPad that does the live stream of worship.

Discussion of replacing the current laptop that is stored in the sound system box. Rhoda will do some research and more discussion at the next meeting.

CHURCH HOLIDAY DECORATING - Rhoda said this will be done on Sat, December 2, at 9 am and students have been contacted to help and anyone can volunteer to help the committee.

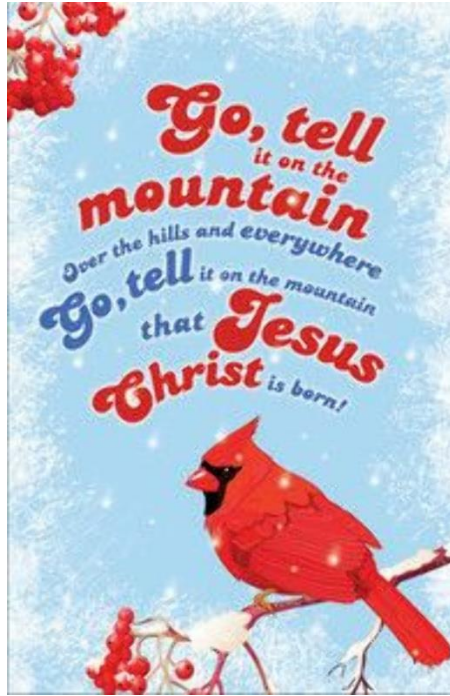
BUDGET REPORT - Rhoda stated this year's budget will be brought up to the recommendations of the synod to be used for 2024 budget to be presented at the annual meeting Jan 28, 2024. **CREDIT CARD USAGE** - Discussion held. **M/C (Chris/Bruce)** church expenses up to \$200, but if over this limit Rhoda and/or Council President needs to approve.

SIGNAGE PORTABLE - Marty continues working on this project, white board kind of sign.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. Next meeting - Monday, December 18, at 6 pm

Respectfully submitted --- Carol Thompson





Campfire Christmas

Dec. 9

A Time of
Celebration and
Fun at Luther Point
Bible Camp.



Enjoy Holiday
Crafts, Cookie
Decorating, Dinner,
Campfires. S'mores,
Caroling
and More!

4:00 - 7:22
2:00 P.M.





Bethany & Pilgrim
LUTHERAN PARISH

Siren & Frederic, WI
Office P: 715-349-5280
E. bethanypilgrimparish@gmail.com
The Rev'd Emily K. Stelling
P: 320-438-5807.

Dear Christian Friends,

“REJOICE! With heart, and soul, and voice!”

I write this official Christmas greeting three days before Thanksgiving. It is funny how impatient we can be, isn't it? We have not even started the *season of waiting* (Advent), let alone the 12 Days of Christmas and yet it seems like the world has transformed into Whoville! In daily prayer today it hit me: *I've* become more like the obsessed, fretting Who's with a pinch of the Grinch's judgmental sourness. Why do I lose sleep over things that are not important? What's it to me that the Dollar General blasts Christmas music while encouraging gross consumerism? Is it really too early to enjoy my favorite peppermint Hershey's Kisses? In judging others' piety surrounding the LC (liturgically correct) way of “doing Christmas” I, too, have cheated myself of really *being* in the season.

This is why I will be offering a mid-week Advent prayer series from Augsburg Fortress called “Pause, Prepare, Ponder.” **For three Wednesdays in December all are invited to gather at Bethany from 6-6:20pm in the comfort room and take twenty minutes out of our rushed and busy week to be in God's presence; to pause, prepare, and ponder.** We will be meeting at Bethany because that is where Confirmation Classes meet in December.

I choose to soak in all the holy-day delight and just rejoice! Rejoice that we are a church family that grows together in faith. Rejoice that we are loved and saved by our Great King, our God, a baby born in a barn.

Love,

Pastor Emily

P.S. Look at our new letterhead with our new logo! Thanks be to God!



**Pastor Emily & Frank Dao with AnneBelle Benson and Claire Meyer
@ Frederic Cemetery All Saints Day**



We are looking for visitation volunteers to bring Sunday's Communion (and fellowship) to those who cannot come to church.

Next Steps: prepare a visitation list and send them a letter letting them know about the new idea. Then, we divvy up visits and have an hour meeting to go over how to do a visitation.

If you are interested, please talk to Pastor Emily, Donna Tjader/Pres. Rick Kosloski (Bethany) or Carol Thompson (Pilgrim).




Do you know any adults who wish to be baptized?

Please reach out to Pastor Emily

A graphic with a central scallop shell. The text is arranged around the shell in a circular pattern. The text reads: "• MAKE ALL WHO ARE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST FAITHFUL IN OUR CALLING TO BE YOUR CHILDREN. •". The text is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The shell is a simple line drawing with radiating lines representing the ribs of the shell. There are small decorative dots around the text.

PLCW NEWS...(Pilgrim Lutheran Church Women) I bring you greetings from the women of the church; "Ordinary Women Serving an Extraordinary God."



OPENING PRAYER - "Emmanuel, God with us, your mother, Mary, waited for you to be born. We wait for you to be born into our midst again. In these days of turmoil, we work and wait for justice and peace. Amid uncertainty, we long for comfort. Shine your light of love into our hearts and throughout the world, that we may feel your presence guiding us always. May we, like Mary, learn to see the ways you are with us in our times of waiting. Amen"

Quilters meet every Wed. morning at 9:30 and during the month of December check with Karen Swanberg at 715-327-8150 to confirm the dates they will meet.

DEC 5 - Tues 4-6 - FREE SOUP at Frederic Senior Center/Community Center. This is a new "Mission Outreach Program" that PLCW and the church is sponsoring with your help. The public is invited, and we encourage Pilgrim people to come and provide fellowship for this event. Get to know your neighbor! **We are looking for volunteers to make soup (for 25), 5 dozen cookies or bars and bread for this event as we continue to offer it the first Tuesday of each month.**

DEC 6, Wed at 11 - All women are invited to **BRUNCH IN THE WOODS** at Marlene's cabin. Meet at the church at 10:45 and we will carpool. We have several people who will be providing the food just come and bring a friend or relative and gather as women of the church and community.

DECEMBER Faith Circle Bible Study will not meet as a group, but we encourage everyone to do the study on their own or with someone.

CHRISTMAS FAMILIES - We have two families that we will shower with abundant blessings at this blessed time of the year. A Giving Tree is in the back of the church as we have done in the past - take an ornament off the tree, buy the gift, wrap the gift, securely put the ornament back on the gift and bring it to church by Sun, Dec 15.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX MINISTRY - Sun, Nov 19 during worship 9 Shoeboxes were blessed and then delivered to the Baptist Church in Webster. **THANK YOU!**

BLESSINGS TO ALL - Carol Thompson...jcthompson1943@gmail.com or 715-371-0580(cell)



Thank you Praise Band for leading us during worship on Sunday October 22. Wonderful music. (L-R) Christina White on piano (not shown) Jackie Kurkowski, Bryn Anderson, Laura Formanak, Christine and Rick Kosloski.



CONFIRMANDS SHOWING PASTOR THE COOL NEW DANCE-
ROYCE, TAYLOR, GABBY, LYDIA



Grandpa Engen attended worship with his grandson Cade and his sweet girlfriend Carley. Cade will graduate from Michigan Technological University in December with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, minor in Electrical Engineering. Carley graduates in the spring of 2024 and she is studying biomedical lab work. Way to go students.



It's that time of year again! Time to register to ring the bell for The Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign!

Last year our bell ringers in Polk and Barron Counties helped us to raise \$147,000 for the Red Kettle Campaign. This year, we would like to increase that number to \$150,000 or more.

We will need many ringers to help us reach our goal, so be sure to invite your friends, family members and fellow congregants to join you!

WILL YOU HELP US BLESS THE Local Community by RINGING THE BELL THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON?

Proceeds from bell ringing allow The Salvation Army to feed and shelter residents at The Family House, prevent homelessness with emergency rent and utility assistance, and offer transportation support for Polk and Barron County residents who are starting a new job.

This year, bell ringing will take place November 16th- December 23rd. To reserve your preferred spot, **REGISTER NOW** at www.registertoring.com or call Patty Gallaty at 715-554-4928. Please note we have a special need for ringers the week of Thanksgiving.

Thank you for prayerfully considering this important call to service,

Your Friends at The Family House

Salvation Army of Polk and Barron Counties

AN UNPRECEDENTED GIFT

Advent and Christmas Greetings from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

Jesus is God's **unprecedented gift of love** for a world in great need. Friends, we live in unprecedented times. The word "unprecedented" means *never done or known before*.

In recent years we've heard of the unprecedented effects of climate change causing more powerful hurricanes and devastating wild fires. We lived through an unprecedented pandemic, and we lament the unprecedented death toll from mass shootings in our country. We worry about the stability of our democracy after an unprecedented political insurrection at our own capital. At times it feels as though we are reeling from one unprecedented disaster to the next. How do we live as people of faith in this time and place? How do we put our Christian faith into action? What if we countered with **unprecedented goodness**?

This is a true story of **unprecedented goodness**.

On March 23, 1847, at a meeting in Skullyville, Indian Territory (Oklahoma), a group of tribal members from the Choctaw Nation, missionaries, and traders heard the news about what was happening far away across the Atlantic in Ireland, the Great Famine. The result was an unlikely, **unprecedented friendship between the Choctaw and the Irish**.

Historians estimate that more than a million Irish people died between 1845-1851 from hunger and hunger related diseases.¹ The Choctaw, deeply moved by this story of people they have never met, collected \$174, an incredibly amount of money considering the Choctaw's own poverty due to the fact that they had been forcibly removed from their land by the U.S. government by an unprecedented act of cruelty just a little over ten years earlier. At the time of the donation many Choctaw were living in poverty with inadequate housing and food. One historian writes, "It is difficult to imagine a people less well-positioned to act philanthropically." Records show that the donation was sent to New

Jesus also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins.³ He said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them."⁴ For they all offered their gifts out of their wealth. But she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on. Luke 21:2-4

York City to buy grain and food that was shipped across the Atlantic.

Seven Irish

newspapers published an account of the generous Choctaw. Why were the Choctaw so compassionate and generous? Why are we so surprised by their generous gift? Perhaps the Choctaw and the Irish were connected by their common experience of colonization, mistreatment and suffering.

"We are never too poor to give or too rich to receive."² a favorite proverb of Bishop Joseph Bvumbwe, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malawi

Ireland had been colonized by England and forced into a land tenure system that enabled English landlords to gain profit from the Irish tenants farmers while leaving the farmers destitute. Tenant farmers raised crops to pay the landlord's rent and to feed their own families they grew potatoes. A disease, blight, to the potato plant caused the famine. The English refused to help and often blocked aid to the Irish.

The Choctaw were forced from their tribal territory by the U.S. government when President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830. The Choctaw were tricked and threatened into ceding 25,000 square miles of their land in Mississippi and were forced to walk 500 miles to Indian Territory now Oklahoma. Thousands of Choctaw died during that winter's blizzards from disease, and starvation walking what is now called the Trail of Tears and Death. With that memory still in their lived experience, the Choctaw had compassion and collected money (\$174) to be sent to those who were also suffering a great injustice 4,000 miles away in Ireland. It was truly a gift of unprecedented goodness, unprecedented generosity.

This story was largely forgotten until 1990 when an Irish writer uncovered it and began to connect with the Choctaw in Oklahoma. It began by Irish citizens joining members of the Choctaw to walk the Trail of Tears and members of Choctaw traveling to Ireland to join in a commemorative Famine Walk. Later there was a visit by the Irish prime minister to Oklahoma and in gratitude for the earlier gift offers of scholarships to pay for Choctaw students to study in Ireland.²

God sent Jesus into our broken, fallen world. Jesus is God's gift of unprecedented love. Jesus is a gift we desperately needed and did nothing to deserve, a gift we could never repay, a gift that transforms our despair and gives us hope.

Advent/Christmas 2023: May this season inspire us to give generously to those who have experienced injustice and live with great need in response to God's unprecedented gift of generosity to us.³

In Jesus' name, AMEN

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson





On December 8th the Mission Action Committee, along with help from the Confirmation Youth, gathered to put together the following items:

Sewing Kits: 1 box of 3 kits

Layette Kits: 2 boxes of 8 kits

Quilt Kits: 3 boxes of 18 kits

School Kits: 3 boxes of 27 kits

These items will go to over 96 countries, with the help from Lutheran World Relief. Mark Jensen will pick up the 9 boxes and take them to the cities to the LWR

Headquarters and from there they will go to the places where they are needed. A big THANK YOU to all of you who helped us with your prayers, donations ,shopping and the youth from Bethany and Pilgrim churches. For helping us to go shopping with funds by applying to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. God Bless each one of you!





The Christmas Story

Yesterday, Today, Forever

Community Christmas Program

Calling All Children, 4K-8th Grade
Saturday, Dec. 16
Bethany Lutheran
Church, Siren



- 1:00 pm** Activities, costumes, practice and treats
Bring your friends!
- 4:30 pm** Christmas program, everyone welcome!
Punch and cookies to follow.
- Registration appreciated, but not required, 715-349-5280.



PLCW Giving Presentation to the Confirmands

JOIN US FOR

2023 ADVENT
CHRISTMAS
AND 2024 EPIPHANY

**BETHANY
LUTHERAN CHURCH
SIREN**

**PILGRIM
LUTHERAN CHURCH
FREDERIC**

PAUSE, PREPARE, PONDER
Advent Midweek Series, Bethany 6pm
Wednesdays, Dec. 6, 13 & 20



Bethany & Pilgrim
Lutheran Parish

- SAT. DEC. 2 "The Star" Christmas Movie
Timbers Theatres, 12:30pm, \$5.50
- SAT. DEC. 2 SPARK Kids, Pilgrim 9am-Noon
Decorate cookies and learn about
the Nativity
- SAT. DEC. 2 Community Choir Christmas
Concert, Bethany 7pm
- SUN. DEC. 3 Community Choir Christmas
Concert, Bethany 3pm
- FRI. DEC. 8 National Lutheran Choir
Christmas Concert, 4:30pm
Basilica, Mpls, RSVP to Pastor
Emily by Dec. 1 for tickets
- SAT. DEC. 9 Siren Christmas Parade, 5-6:30pm
Caroling around town, dress warm
Hot cocoa afterwards at Bethany

- SUN. DEC. 10 St. Nicholas visit during worship, 8:30am at Bethany, 10:30am at Pilgrim
- WED. DEC. 13 WELCA Luncheon, Marlene Dahlberg's Cabin, noon. Call office for address
- SAT. DEC. 16 The Christmas Story, Community Christmas Program, Bethany
Kids activities 1pm. Christmas program 4:30pm. All welcome, refreshments to follow
- SUN. DEC. 17 St. Lucia visits during worship, 8:30am at Bethany, 10:30am at Pilgrim
- SUN. DEC. 24 Regular Sunday Worship Service, Bethany 10:30am (one service only)
- SUN. DEC. 24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, Pilgrim 4pm, Bethany 8pm
- MON. DEC. 25 CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP, Pilgrim 10:30am (one service only)
- SAT. JAN. 6 Epiphany Worship, Traditions in Frederic 6pm
- SUN. JAN. 7 Lila Spelmanslag, Little Swedish Fiddlers, Pilgrim 10:30am

Everyone welcome!

For more information, call Bethany Lutheran Church, Siren, 715-349-5280
Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Frederic, 715-327-8012.



Advent, Christmas and Epiphany blessings to you from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, Synod Ministers, Elizabeth Bartsch, Sara Villarreal Bishop, Diane House, Lidixe Montoya, Randy Olson, Laura Ramlow

Mary the Brave: Mary the God Bearer

As a young pastor and working mom, I struggled with the challenges of balancing work and home life, often while carrying a child in my womb, arms, on my hip, in a front or back baby pack, or car seat. Now my children are adults, and I have the joy of watching them carry my grandchildren. They do it differently than I did, their car seats are much nicer than the ones we had, but like us, they carry their children with much love.¹ I am still carrying my adult children and grandchildren and will always carry them, in my heart with much love. This Advent and Christmas season I'm reflecting on Mary, the God bearer. (In Greek it's Theotokos².) Mary carried Jesus. Like all parents she carried her child with love, but she is also the God bearer. It was a brave thing Mary did to bear God into the world. To love is a brave thing. It is a brave thing to become a parent. Mothers put their own lives at risk bearing a child in their womb and giving birth. It requires a measure of bravery for parents to bring a child into this world filled with the bad news of climate disasters, gun violence, war, political upheaval, racism, food/water insecurity, and escalating health and higher education costs. History has painted Mary to be quiet, meek and mild, submissive to God's will, but a closer read shows us that Mary was brave. Mary was neither meek nor superhuman.³ She had grit. She was faithful, courageous, strong and brave. Most of all, she was human. Her encounter with the angel Gabriel, the messenger of God made her brave. She knew that her pregnancy was dangerous and she could die giving birth. She also knew that as an unmarried teenaged mother it would cause upheaval in her family and community. She would give birth to Jesus during Roman occupation, a time of political unrest. Mary was *brave*. Her encounter with the living God made her brave. Her encounter with God gave her bravery and the faith to see that if God was calling her God would also protect her. It revealed to her that God chooses the people on the margins, those overlooked and underestimated. Bearing God in the world was to bring good news and hope to those oppressed. May Mary, the God Bearer, inspire us all to be brave! This Advent and Christmas season, I invite you to be Theotokos, God Bearers. I invite you to carry the good news of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection to all those we meet on this journey of life and the love of Jesus in your hearts always. Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson



**Christmas for Kids
Interfaith Caregivers of Burnett County**

Christmas for Kids was created for the purpose of helping make a Christmas for each of Burnett County's children who would not otherwise have gifts to open on Christmas day.

**Collection Box @ Bethany Lutheran
M-F 8:30-3:45pm**



Pilgrim Lutheran Church

507 Wisconsin Avenue

PO Box 127

Frederic, WI 54837

Phone: 715-327-8012

Email: pilgrimlutheranfrederic@gmail.com

bplutheran.com

On Facebook at Pilgrim Church

Check us out and "Like" us!

The Parish Visitor

DECEMBER 2023