

Thanks for Volunteering for December 2023

Lector

Kristin Kosloski

Ushers

Jim & Marge Olson

Altar Guild

Marge Olson & Laura Schmidt

Acolytes

- 12/3 Annabelle Benson
- 12/10 Vincent Wiltrot
- 12/17 Oliver Getts
- 12/24 Needed
- 12/31 Needed

Coffee Serving Schedule

- 12/3 **
- 12/10 Judy & Mark Foote
- 12/17 **
- 12/24 ** * *Volunteers*
- 12/31 ** * *Needed*

Tech Support

Jenelle Lindquist/Will White/Josh Formanek

Money Counters

Val Lindquist – Kristin Kosloski- Jenelle Lindquist

Kitchen Manager

Andy Peloquin



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX MINISTRY

thank you!



We made someone's Christmas brighter!

Thanks to Siren schools for donating 25 boxes our total boxes was 71!
Thanks for your donations!!

Sunday School Reminder

No Sunday School the following dates:

December 17th 24th or 31st



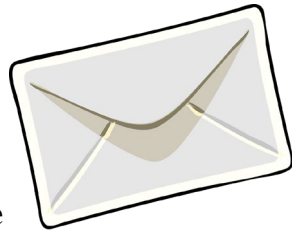
Please keep the following persons in your prayers:

Prayers for:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| Nona Severson | Marilyn Smith |
| Claire Lidel | Greg Close |
| Lewis Clifton | Lona Nordgren |
| Aiden, Bonnie & Chris Foehser | |
| Dean Birch (Doris Birch's husband - battling cancer) | |
| Collin Eid | Carol Buck |



2024 offering envelopes will be available soon!



Those who wish to continue to use envelopes for next year -- they will be available in the hallway at church. *If you have envelopes left from a previous year-- you are welcome to continue to use them -- just be certain your name is on the envelope.*

If you want a new box - pick up a box and sign the list with the number on the box you select. Thanks!

Thanks to everyone for your on-going donations & Support of Bethany.
As we near the end of the year, we appreciate your commitment to your Bethany family.



Bethany donated 51 blessing bags to Ruby's Pantry!! Included in the bags were placemats made by the quilting crew. Ruby's was grateful for our support!



The Giving Tree"

Bethany is supporting a family in need this Christmas with gifts.

****Pick an ornament on the bulletin board in the hallway.** Please be sure to wrap the gifts and attach the ornament to the gift.

Gifts are due by December 19th

Please help make the holidays brighter for a local family.

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**



Toys are needed by December 8th!

December Birthdays

Casey Goranson	12/3
Laura Schmidt	12/4
Andy Moritz	12/4
Cindy Johnson	12/5
Emily Muus	12/5
Austin Schmidt	12/5
Jeff Alden Jr	12/6
Don Taylor	12/6
Breck Mangen	12/6
McCoy Maslow	12/9
Walter Brewster	12/9
Jim Brewster	12/10
Marilyn Harle	12/11
Kari Fox	12/11
Shelia Bristol	12/15
Charlie Albrecht	12/16
Ben Johnson	12/16
Ralph Severson	12/18
Mark Foote	12/19
Phillip Stiemann	12/19
Nona Severson	12/19
Laura Formanek	12/21
Jesus B-day!	12/25
Margaret Taylor	12/26
Ron Friel	12/27
Renae Peterson	12/27
Robert Lee	12/27
Jon Ruud	12/28
Braedon Thiex	12/29
Pastor Emily	12/31



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A HOMEMADE GIFT FOR SOMEONE?



Our talented
quilting crew have
many
items for
sale!



They would be
the perfect gift
for someone
special. Help
support a group
of hard-working
ladies!



***Individually priced – stop in
and check them out!***

Plan ahead for our
Christmas Eve Service –
order your Christmas
poinsettia by
December 12th



Cost: \$13.50

I would like to honor

OR

I would like to have my plant in memory of

Your
Name: _____

Please make your check out to Bethany
Lutheran or cash – please bring to the
church office by **December 12th**



*Plan for the Christmas
holiday!*

Pause, Prepare, Ponder: An Advent Midweek Series

Wednesdays in Advent @
Bethany Lutheran
6:00-6:20pm

*Advent invites us to pause and be with
God, prepare for The Birth, and ponder
the mysteries of God.*



Bethany & Pilgrim
Lutheran Parish

Wednesdays Dec. 6, 13, 20

*Bethany's & Community Christmas Program –
December 16th at 4:30pm Don't miss it!*



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.

~Continued~

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.¹ 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

Luke 1: 26ff In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you..." "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, ... the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God... For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

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.²

"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

The Choctaw, deeply moved by this story of people they have never met, collected \$174, an incredibly amount of money considering the

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

~continued~

² Grant, R. (2023, Sept/Oct). On Common Ground, Smithsonian, pg. 56-65.

² Attributed to Pope John Paul II

¹ [Mary the Brave: Neither Meek nor Superhuman - CBE International](#)

~bishop message continued~

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 house 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 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.

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.³ ~Continued~

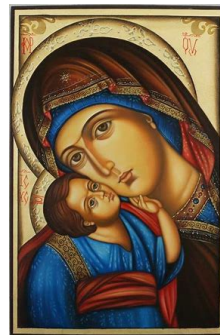
³ For more information about the Choctaw gift see: [The Choctaw Nation's Gift to the Irish | Smithsonian Voices | National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian Magazine](#)
[The Irish are sending relief to Native Americans, inspired by a donation from a tribe during the Great Famine | CNN](#)

~Bishop's message continued~

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.⁴

In Jesus' name, AMEN Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson



Advent, Christmas and Epiphany blessings to you from: Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, Synod Ministers, Elizabeth Bartsch, Sara Villarreal Bishop, Diane House, Lidix 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.⁵ I still carry 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 Theotokos⁶.) 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. ~continued~

⁴ Looking for ways respond in faith with unprecedented goodness? Consider giving a Christmas gift to our companion synod in Malawi for a well that will provide clean water for an entire village and enables girls to attend school rather than carry waters from rivers and streams miles away from their homes. [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin | Giving \(nwswi.org\)](#) Scroll to Bishop's "Water is Life" Malawi Well Fund.

⁵ Robert Munsch, *I'll Love You Forever*, Firefly Books (September 1, 1995)

⁶ Since the 3rd century, Christians had referred to Mary as theotokos, "God-bearer." The first documented usage of the term is in the writings of Origen of Alexandria in AD 230. [Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God | uCatholic](#)

Sundays in December ~ Lectionary

December 3rd

Prayer of the Day: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Isaiah 64: 1-9

Psalms 80: 1-7, 17-19

1 Corinthians 1: 3-9

Matthew 13: 24-37

December 10th

Prayer of the Day: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Isaiah 40: 1-11

Psalms: 85: 1-2, 8-13

2 Peter 3: 8-15a

Mark 1: 1-8

December 17th

Prayer of the Day: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

Psalms: 126

1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24

John 1: 6-8, 19-28

December 24th

Prayer of the Day: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

2 Samuel 7: 1-11, 16

Luke 1: 46b-55

Romans 16: 25-27

Luke 1: 26-38

December 31st

Isaiah 61: 10 – 62: 3

Psalms 148

Galatians 4: 4-7

Luke 2: 22-40

As church attendance numbers fade across the nation and online services become very convenient, it's important to remember why church attendance for you and your family matters so much.

You can't serve from your sofa. You can't have community of faith on your sofa. You can't experience the power of a room full of believers worshipping together on your sofa.

Christians aren't consumers. We are contributors. We don't watch. We engage. We give. We sacrifice. We encourage. We pray by laying of hands on the hurting. We do life together.

The church needs you.

And you need the church.

Author - - Rick Watt

Submitted by Donna Tjader



COMMUNITY CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT



*Sounds
of the
Season*

Saturday, Dec. 2- 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 3 - 3:00 p.m.

**COOKIES & COFFEE
TO FOLLOW**

**BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
24096 1ST AVE. – SIREN**



Kathy & Louie Barber – attending the
Veteran's Day celebration

**SAINT
NICHOLAS**
Is coming to Worship!

Sunday, December 10!
Bethany (Siren) 8:30am
Pilgrim (Frederic) 10:30am

Church Photo **Directory**



What happened
to our new
Church
Directory??

The final edits have been sent to the
directory crew and we hope to see our
finished product very soon!

Christmas Festival:
National Lutheran Choir
New Hope
 Friday, December 8th
 2:45pm Arrive @ Central Lutheran, 3:30 Arrive @ Basilica, 4:30pm Concert

Join Pr. Emily on a Minneapolis tour of Central Lutheran Church (Lutheran cathedral) and The Basilica and experience joy at the NLC Christmas Festival Concert, followed with dinner nearby.
 10 people or more=reduced tickets. Will arrange car pool options once interest is shown.
 Please let Pr. Emily know ASAP if you wish to go.

 Bethany & Pilgrim Lutheran Parish Ticket: \$35/adult 18 & younger FREE

Join Pastor Emily and celebrate the holiday season!



Calling All Musicians
 to Share Their Talent in
 Worship!
 Please contact
 Christina White,
 Pr. Emily or the Offices

Add your talents
 to the
 Christmas
 Worship Services!

If you know someone who
 would benefit from a visit
 from Christmas Carolers, or
 if you would like to take part -
 let Pastor Emily know soon!



Everyone is welcome!

Join Pastor Emily the 4h Sunday every month to
 worship at our local nursing homes.
 Check with her to see what the schedule will be
 - she visits Frederic & Luck homes.

**The residents would love to have
 visitors join them in worship!**

****Pastor Emily will be gone on vacation
 December 29 - January 1
Deacon Frank Dao will lead worship
 on December 31st - No communion.**



**All Saints Day
 Pastor Emily
 Annabelle
 Benson &
 Claire Meyer -
 At the
 cemetery!**



Grandma Diane holds Bennett Lund!
Oh so cute!!



Embrace the Scandinavian Tradition of Light

Santa Lucia

Will visit worshippers on Sunday, December 10
Bethany 8:30am + Pilgrim 10:30am

What a joyous holiday season!

A graphic for a Christmas Eve Candle Light Service. It features a lit candle, pinecones, and a star. A red ribbon banner contains the following text:

December 24
10:30 am Advent Worship
@ Bethany (*one service only*)

December 25
10:30am @ Pilgrim
with Holy Communion

**Christmas Eve
Candle Light Service**
4pm @ Pilgrim
8pm @ Bethany

The logo for Bethany & Pilgrim Lutheran Parish, featuring a stylized tree with a cross inside a circle.

Bethany & Pilgrim
Lutheran Parish

Merry Christmas

*Why do the bells of Christmas ring?
Why do little children sing?*

*Once a lovely shining star,
Seen by shepherds from afar,
Gently moved until its light,
Made a manger's cradle bright.*

*There a darling baby lay,
Pillowed soft upon the hay;
And its mother sung and smiled:
"This is Christ, the holy Child!"*

*Therefore bells for Christmas ring,
Therefore little children sing.*