



# The Bethlehem Record

*The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church*

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**A family of God sharing Jesus  
and serving Him faithfully**

August 2014

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### Our Mission Statement

As members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church who have been granted eternal life through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, we worship Him as our Lord and seek to further His work of salvation through word and sacrament ministry in our community and world toward the goal of creating and strengthening personal faith in Him.

### The Pastor's Page

Wow. So much has taken place in the past month that I thought it worthy of just recounting the highlights in my article this month. Not to be boastful of what we do, but to give thanks to God for allowing these things to happen in our midst.

On June 29, Pastor Philip Hoppe was our guest during bible study and worship. Pastor Hoppe is the Circuit Visitor (formally known as the Circuit Counselor until the 2013 Synod convention), and was here on official synod business of visiting the circuit congregations. We enjoyed a wonderful potluck dinner followed by a meeting that Pastor Hoppe led using Ephesians chapter 1 as his guide. In doing so, we were able to talk about the ministry of the Gospel here. This included things that we believe we do well, and therefore could be of some help to other congregations looking for assistance or perhaps partner with us.

The meeting also allowed those gathered to express their concerns for the future given our aging community and financial needs of a full-time pastor. Personally, I was very happy that many spoke freely and honestly. This helps Pastor Hoppe know us better. It helps me understand where the concerns are and what things you all are thinking could or should be done here.

Overall, I believe this was time well spent together with our Circuit Visitor and will help us with our long-term planning.

Then it was time to pack up seven teenagers in a Yukon and head to Mequon, Wisconsin for the Higher Things youth gathering. It was a long trip, but well worth it. Check out some of the photos from the gathering later in the Record. I shared some pictures on Facebook that probably make you think it's nothing but fun. But it's so much more than that. It's incredible worship, teaching, and fellowship, too.

Then it was time for VBS the next week. We went on a wilderness adventure with Moses and the whiny Israelites who had to learn time and time again to trust God.

Much like Pancake Day in February where the whole congregation seems to get involved in some way, so also again in July with VBS. It's one of the things we do well because we have people willing to commit their time and talents to it. From the bottom of my heart, thank you! It's an honor and a joy to serve with you.

Speaking of serving you, July 26 was the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my ordination here at Bethlehem. Thank you for allowing me to be the voice of the Good Shepherd and caring for His sheep.

And then July finishes off with Council and Voters meetings. Now August is upon us and it reminds me to start planning for fall – Midweek, Confirmation, bible classes, and a wedding on August 9.

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Regardless if your summer had been packed with activities or a peaceful break (maybe even a bit boring?), we thank God for His continued blessings upon us. May His Word and Sacrament be the source of our joy and hope that we have in our life together now and forever in heaven. St. Peter's encouragement is as relevant today as it was nearly 2,000 years ago: **“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen”** (2 Peter 3:18).

- Pastor Augustine

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### **BOCL Minutes**

BOCL meeting was held on Tuesday, July 1. Pastor opened with a prayer. Members present were Warren Meitler, Barb Meitler, Marilyn Wenthe, Brock Mueller, Ruth Mueller, Gary Frederking, and Pastor Augustine. Minutes from previous meeting were read and approved.

Warren will put out the flyer for the blood drive for July 11. The date for the next blood drive was tabled until the August meeting.

VBS is being sorted out and coming together. The date is July 14-18.

Space has been reserved at the fairgrounds for the peach cobbler stand at the fair July 24 & 25. We will need volunteers to bake the cobbler and work the stand. A sign-up sheet will be put on the bulletin board in the church hallway. Bottled water will also be given away at the stand.

The church brochures are being discussed. Several volunteers have agreed to help with the layout.

Warren motioned that we pay for a space in the Wilson Lake Advertiser with an advertisement of our church, Ruth seconded, motion passed.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 5 at 8:00 p.m. Greeters for August will be Kylie Ehrich and Gary Frederking. The meeting was ended with the Lord's Prayer. Respectfully submitted Brock L Mueller

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### **August Stewardship Newsletter Article**

The parable of the unjust steward vexes us. Why would our Lord commend the unjust steward and the sons of this world as He does? It's because the sons of this world know how to treat something that they think is valuable. They love money and the earthly comforts that come with it. They jump to get the job with higher pay, better benefits, or greater prestige.

Yet all of this, as we know, will fade and wear out. And so, Jesus does not commend the sons of this world for *what* they love. He commends them for *how* zealously they love and the lengths they will go to attain it.

Mimic their zeal, but do not become a son of this world. Do not be drawn away by the love of money. The sons of this world are set for destruction, but at least they pursue it with vigor. They know what they want, and they go after it.

We, on the other hand, as Christians, desire the joy of eternal dwellings, but sometimes you would hardly know it. And so, we are accused of lacking zeal for the kingdom of God. For we have not pursued what we supposedly value with the same zeal that the sons of this world pursue what they value. We don't seek fellowship with the Father like the sons of this world seek the comfort that money provides. We don't put on purity with the enthusiasm that the sons of this world put on the latest fashions. We don't invest in the work of the Church, our very salvation, with the same zeal that the sons of this world invest in the markets.

Don't get sucked into pursuing the love of money and what it provides, but what money you do have, use for good works. Use money and possessions, but don't allow them to use and possess you. God in His grace and mercy gives you many things. You are stewards over what He gives into your hands. You control them. Don't let them control you. Use what you have been given to serve your neighbor, those who are part of your family, your community, and your church.

Get what you need to eat and drink, a home to shelter your family and clothes that you need. But don't squander. Don't waste your excess on things that don't serve you and your neighbor. Make friends with it instead. Give it to those in need. In so doing, you show mercy. And in showing mercy, you give a picture of God's mercy to you in Jesus Christ. You imitate the loving-kindness and mercy that God has given you to others. By faith, trusting in the promise that God will never leave you or forsake you and will provide everything that you need, you demonstrate what is of the highest value to you: the eternal dwellings of heaven. Thus, on the last day, Christ will receive you into them.

For Christ is the one son of light who is the most zealous, the most single-minded. He squanders the possessions of His Father with wanton abandon, not in wastefulness, but for your benefit. For these can't be wasted. They never run out. And so He lavishes the grace and mercy of God upon you without price, without charging you a cent, without keeping any books, without

demanding any accounting of you. Christ takes all that belongs to the Father and gives it to you in abundance. And the treasures He gives never run out, never fade away, but are stored where moth and rust cannot destroy. They are eternal. They never end

Rather than mimicking the zeal of the sons of this world, trust in Christ, and imitate His zeal and His works, for He gives out not only earthly treasures, but also heavenly ones.

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**LWML News**

**LWML Flower Committee**

August

Coleen Ancell, Justine Dohl

September

Shelly Keller Coleen Ancell

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**Vacation Bible School**

VBS was a great success again this year thanks to everyone who helped, even in small ways. We averaged 55 children per night who came to sing, play, eat, and learn to trust God through the stories of Moses (Art Dohl) each night. Here is the group photo from Friday evening:



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**Church Cleaning**

Why does Pastor and family clean the church? There are some people who are probably offended by the fact that I signed up to clean the church during the month of

June. The offense is that the pastor should not have to clean up after his people. The people should want to take care of that for the care and upkeep of God's house that we have.

Now, if I were a single guy, I would whole-heartedly agree. However, before I was a pastor, I was a husband and a father.

So it is not as a pastor that I volunteered to clean, but as a father. It is my duty to train my children in the proper care and upkeep of God's house, so they understand all the effort that it takes to keep things looking nice week after week. I want my children to follow my example and be willing volunteers to clean, serve on boards and committees, or whatever the need is within their future congregations.

This is how we live out our callings to be disciples of our Lord. We use our time, talent, and treasure to the glory of God by volunteering, as well as being good citizens, good workers, good students, and so on.

Many of you have helped with the church cleaning and a host of other things over the years. But as our people get older and younger members are fewer, there aren't as many hands to help.

So if you are not on a monthly cleaning crew, would you consider donating your time to do so? If you can't commit to a month, could you commit to being "on call" so if something comes up for our regular crew that they could contact you for help for the week?

The schedule is set for the rest of the year, but may be revised for 2015. Therefore, the Trustees and Church Council would appreciate your willingness to serve. Contact a Trustee or the church office for a particular month or to be on the "on call" list.

*Pastor Augustine*

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**Baptismal Birthdays in August**

*God's blessings to you for all His gifts of grace that you have received, and we pray for many more blessings for Jesus' sake!*



- Anna Augustine
- Taunya Campos
- Arthur Dohl
- Kylie Ehrlich
- Christie Gier
- Vera Jorgensen

- Judy Meier
- Roger Meitler
- Brock Mueller
- Ryan Schulteis
- John Thaemert
- Rozella Trapp
- Emilie Wacker

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## Lake Service Planned

The Board of Elders and Pastor Augustine announce that on August 31, Bethlehem will host the Wilson Lake service at the Tatanka shelter at the Wilson Lake state park. The service is at 9:30 a.m. The park does not charge an entrance fee if you are coming just for the service.

Due to the 9:30 time at the lake, there will be no Bible study or Sunday school that day. Worship at Bethlehem will be at 8:00 a.m.

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## Circuit 13 News

Circuit Visitor and pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church of north Ellsworth, Rev. Philip Hoppe requests our prayers as he has recently received a call to serve as the pastor at a dual parish in northern Minnesota (First Lutheran in Ely, MN and Our Shepherd Lutheran, in Babbitt, MN).

Circuit Forum is scheduled for September 14 at St. Paul Lutheran of north Ellsworth. We will be electing the Circuit Visitor for the next district triennium. We also have the opportunity to draft and/or submit overtures to the District and Synod conventions (2015 and 2016 respectively) to determine mission and ministry areas in which the Synod should concentrate attention and efforts. If you have an idea or concern about the direction our church body is going (or not) on a particular mission or ministry, now is the time to voice that concern so it can be heard. Anyone is welcome to the Circuit Forum to present those questions, ideas, or concerns. Kindly contact your pastor or the Circuit Visitor to be on the agenda for the meeting.

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## Acolyte Schedule August-September

August 3	Rachel Sebesta
10*	Grace Chegwiddden
17	Hannah Wolting
24*	Kilby Meyer
31	Kayla Augustine
September 7	Marshall Hurlbut
14*	Rachel Sebesta
21	Grace Chegwiddden
28*	Hannah Wolting

\* Communion service

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## Voters Meeting Summary

On July 27, the quarterly voters meeting took place following worship. The usual reports were presented. President John Thaemert discussed the meetings of the Council in preparation for the Circuit Visitor as well as the meeting with Circuit Visitor, Pastor Philip Hoppe.

The congregation approved the purchase of a new office computer with the understanding that a donor has offered to pay for it and Pastor Augustine will be on the lookout for a better deal than the bids presented since the last meeting.

There was discussion and approval to look into getting the Lutheran School on the historical buildings register with the state and possibly nationally.

Much discussion also took place concerning bids the trustees presented on painting the north side of the parish hall and windows/trim on the old Lutheran school. The trustees were to get other bids before work would proceed.

The congregation nominated Pastor Philip Hoppe for another term as Circuit Visitor, following Pastor Augustine's suggestion.

Pastor Augustine discussed changes that were happening with his health benefits due to the Affordable Care Act. The congregation approved the Council to look into the details further and take care of any changes needed for the coming year in light of a deadline of September 8 with Concordia Plan Services.

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## RSTM Webinar on Bi-vocational Pastors

One of the long term options many congregations are considering (or forced to consider) is having a bi-vocational pastor. That means the pastor holds down another job for income and/or benefits while also serving as the pastor of a congregation.

LCMS Rural and Small Town Missions presents a webinar on August 14 at 1:00 p.m. on this topic to help congregations and pastors look at what transitioning to such a ministry would be like.

You can join Pastor Augustine at church office (or parish hall if several want to participate), or you can connect on your own (you'll need high-speed internet) at <https://www.anymeeting.com/741-392-359>

You can view past webinars by going to the RSTM home page at [www.lcms.org/rstm](http://www.lcms.org/rstm)

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### BLTeens News

The BLTeens and Pastor Augustine enjoyed another fantastic youth gathering of nearly 1,300 Lutheran youth, their pastors, and other chaperones in Mequon, Wisconsin on the campus of Concordia University. Here's a photo tour to give you a glimpse of their week:



Opening worship filled to capacity (1,200 people!)



Synod President Matthew Harrison in plenary session



Pastor Mark Buetow teaches a breakout session - "Baptized, not Gay"



Gathering on the baseball field after the game for Evening Prayer



Our group picture in chapel

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### Bethlehem Choir Practice

Yep, it's that time to start Adult Choir Practice once again! If you like to sing, come to our first practice on Monday night, September 15th, at the church/parish hall. One of the greatest blessings in being part of the body of Christ is the music that it has produced over the centuries. We all have our favorites--songs of worship and praise to God, songs that have ministered to us in a special time of need, songs that have touched our hearts in a unique way, and that have challenged us to commit our lives more fully to the Lordship of Christ. Music is a beautiful way to glorify God and lift your own spirit in praise. Music prepares the heart for worship and helps teach and proclaim God's love and mercy. We NEED more voices to help us sing praises to God, whom we love, so we can keep our Choir going for the coming church seasons.

We hope to see you then on Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. We usually practice twice a month, and we have fun with singing hymns of faith, and many other songs of praise and worship. Think about it and invite others to come along and sing. Thanks – Lois Walter

# Coming Events at Bethlehem

*Also available online at [www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org](http://www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org)*

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August 5 – Elders meeting

August 5 – Board of Church Life meeting

August 6 – LWML meeting

August 8 – Wedding rehearsal

August 9 – Ancell-Lapaille wedding

August 20 – Church Council meeting (strategic planning)

August 31 – Wilson Lake service at 9:30 a.m. (8 a.m. worship at Bethlehem)

## *Our Weekly Worship schedule:*

*9 a.m. – Sunday School and BLTeens Bible study (school)*

*9 a.m. – Adult Bible study (Parish hall)*

*10 a.m. – Worship Service (Holy Communion on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays and some festivals)*

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