

The Bethlehem Record

The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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A family of God sharing Jesus and serving Him faithfully

December 2016

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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

"Many of you probably know that the hymn, "Thy Strong Word" (LSB 578) by Martin Franzmann is my favorite hymn. What you might not be aware of yet, is that for our Advent midweek services we are going to be closing each night with it. This is of course partially because I love the hymn and you all sing it so well that I put it in whenever I think I can get away with it. But there's more to it than me just showing some liturgical favoritism.

The reason that this is my favorite hymn, aside from the rousing music that it's set to, is that it combines two of my favorite Scriptural themes. That is the Word of God and Light. The entire hymn is in fact speaking of how the Word of God acts as our light, and ultimately how both the Word of God and God's light, is in fact Jesus.

Our Advent series this year is going to be on light. The themes are going to be, "Light of Hope," "Light of Faith," "Light of Joy," and "Light of Peace." This combines the light theme with what each of the candles on the advent wreath symbolize.

I'm not sure why I've always been so fascinated with the theme of light in the Bible. I don't know that I would say I was any more scared of the dark than any other kid growing up, or anything like that. Maybe it's for a similar reason that I've always been fascinated with fantasy and science fiction. If you're not familiar with those two genres, it's difficult to find a book or movie in that category that doesn't deal with light vs dark in some way, shape, or form.

Of course, there's a problem with all those stories. Whether its Harry Potter or Star Wars, they almost always portray light and darkness as being on equal levels. As if they had the same amount of power. Sometimes they even portray darkness as being the stronger of the two.

And yet, we know that this isn't true. Darkness simply can't stand up to the light. This is because when it comes down to it, darkness is nothing other than the absence of light. This is like how cold is only the absence of heat. All that one needs to do to defeat darkness is to light a candle.

This is why I think we focus so much on light during this time

of the year. Why we string up lights on our houses, and in our trees. Sometimes we do this simply because they are pretty, and we like to look at them. But deep down, I wonder if we aren't making our stand against the darkness that is encroaching on our door steps. If we aren't subconsciously recognizing that darkness makes us nervous, and taking action to fight against that darkness.

This Advent, you will hear of the actions that our Lord and Savior took to fight against the darkness. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world, and the light of life, is on His way. While we wait, let us not forget that he has given us light even now, in these dark times. I look forward to worshipping with you this month, as we praise God for the light that He has given us, and wait patiently for the eternal light to dawn on us.

May God bless you all,

Pastor Christopher Craig

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LCMS Stewardship: December 2016

Every Christmas present that sits wrapped under your Christmas tree will wear out. It will break or go out of style. This fact was there, somewhere, in the back of your mind even as you bought them, but you bought them anyway. For you love the person you bought them for, you wanted to see that look of joy it brings to their face.

So also God gives to you. But greater. What He gives will never wear out, break down, or go out of style. For what He gives is His eternal and only-begotten Son, wrapped in your flesh, and placed upon the tree of the Cross. He gives His Son for you. He gives that you may have everlasting joy. He gives because He loves you. This is why the Word became flesh to dwell among you.

And that is who is given to you. The Word who is God yet was with God from all eternity. The Word through whom all things were made.

The Word who is the only-begotten Son of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, being of one substance with His Father. The One who called all things into existence, the One who spoke to Moses from the bush that burned yet was not consumed, the One whose glory filled the tabernacle to dwell among His people, God Himself, has taken on your flesh.

Even though the Word is made flesh, even though God became Man, His Divinity is not lessened. His Divinity is not changed. His Divinity remains, pure and unchanging, but your flesh, your human nature, is exalted. Your flesh and humanity is assumed into God. God became man so that you would become like unto God—holy and righteous, without sin, without death.

And so it is that the Son given to you wrapped in your flesh is placed upon the tree of the Cross. And no tree was ever adorned more beautifully. Its ornaments were nothing less than the Blood of God, poured out as an atoning sacrifice for your sins. Its garland the Body of God, hanged in death that you may have life. Its light the incarnate Light of the world, strung up to call you and all men unto Himself, to enlighten you, to make you His own. He gives you His life, He gives you joy and peace—peace with God in heaven and peace with one another on earth.

And from the tree of the Cross the Lord Jesus places another gift for you upon the Altar. It is the Fruit of the Cross, His crucified and risen, living Body and Blood, the Fruit of the Tree of Life, wrapped in bread and wine and given to you. He fills you with His Glory. He makes your mouths and your hearts His manger. He abides in you and you in Him.

The Word became flesh to be placed under the Cross for you. You are forgiven. This is why we give. We give because He has first given to us. And just as it was a joy for Him to give all He had to us. It is a joy for us to give to one another and His church so that this message of forgiveness, life, and salvation may be proclaimed



LWML Guest Night 201

By Lorelei Dohl

LWML Guest Night was held Wednesday evening, October 26. Nearly 20 LWML members and guests were in attendance. Participants enjoyed a delicious meal of soup, crackers with sausage and cheese, relishes and dip, and desserts. Guest speaker for the evening was Colleen Bruning Sippel of Ellsworth, Kansas. She is a wife, mother and librarian at J. H. Robbins Memorial Library in Ellsworth. Colleen spoke about how she got interested in prayer and Scripture journaling. She showed items used in journal making and talked about different methods of journaling. She invited guests to ask questions and to look closely at the materials and journals she brought along. She also invited everyone to a journaling class that will be held at the library in Ellsworth in January. Door prizes of journaling supplies were won by guests Sharon Ringler and Melinda Howg.



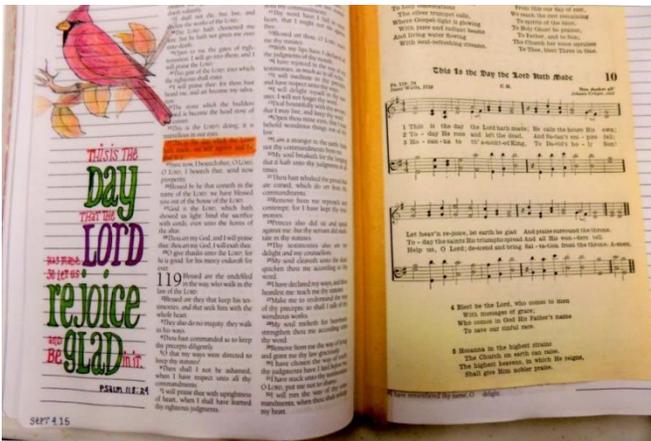
Colleen Bruning Sippel explains how she became interested in Scripture journaling.



*'O Christmas Tree—
Reveal to us the Savior'*
The Children Christmas Eve
Worship Service at Bethlehem

Lutheran Church is December 24, 2016 at 6 p.m.

Everyone is welcome to a reception in the parish hall following Worship Service with cookies, snacks drinks and fellowship



This page from Coleen's Bible shows a page she made in honor of her mother. She has highlighted her mother's favorite verse, illustrated it in the margin, and attached the hymn *This Is the Day the Lord Has Made* from the Lutheran hymnal.



LWML Flower Committee
December
Anne Dohl & Marmie Schultz
 Tentative schedule
January
Lorelei Dohl & ????

Cards for sale!

The LWML has Christmas cards for sale in the parish hall. There is also Religions Birthday, Anniversary, get well, and a variety of boxed all Occasion cards. You can buy just one card or a whole box. Just put your money in the box or give the money to Ramie. Thank you for supporting this cause!

The sign behind them is fitting, as Ray and Lu Willingham make time in their daily lives for both physical and spiritual exercise. May God bless them in their walk with the Lord



Ray & Lu Willingham *Submitted by Lorelei Dohl*
 For over 25 years Ray and Lu Willingham were part of the Sylvan Grove community and Bethlehem Lutheran Church. They were honored with a reception at the Sylvan Senior Center on Friday, October 21. Guests enjoyed eating ice cream and Lu's famous made-from-scratch German chocolate cake. Along with food and drinks, friends enjoyed sharing stories and memories of times spent with Ray and Lu. Many stories revolved around fishing, quilting, barbering, and their pets and walks. Ray and Lu have moved on to live with their son, Pate, and his wife, Judy, in Manhattan, KS. They will be greatly missed by many.

Lu Willingham called recently, and we were able to get an update on life in Manhattan. She said that the transition is going somewhat smoothly. Ray has had some difficulty adjusting to all the change, but they are generally doing well. Lu has been going to the mall each day for a 30-minute walk. She has also been trying some new restaurants and enjoys getting out. She went to her first meeting with the Quilting Guild and is considering joining. She does plan to continue quilting. She and Ray have been attending St. Luke's Lutheran Church. The minister has already been to visit, and Lu is hoping to join the LWML. It is the church where Lu was baptized, confirmed and married; and they feel "at home" there. If you would like to contact Ray and Lu you may write them at:

**Ray & Lu Willingham,
 324 Fordham Road, Manhattan, KS 6650**



December

- Dec 4 Grace Chegwiddden
- Dec 11* Racheal Sebesta
- Dec 18* Marshall Hurlbut
- Dec 24 Mekelle Hurlbut
- Dec 25* Jacob Schultz
- January 1 Kaden Gier

January

- January 1 Kaden Gier
 - 8 * Valden Dohl
 - 15 Grace Chegwiddden
 - 22 * Rachel Sebesta
 - 29 Marshall Hurlbut
- * Communion service*

Baptismal Birthdays in December

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!



- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Louis Blase | Marlin Huehl Sr. |
| Justine Dohl | Kenneth Meitler |
| Tevis Dohl | Barb Mettlen |
| Kevin Feldkamp | Heather Meyer |
| Lloyd Gier | Michael Meyer |
| Reese Gier | Tracy Meyer |
| Remington Gier | Robert Trost |
| Larry Groth | Wilda Wenthe |
| | Ray Willingham |



Reminders from the Financial Secretary

Since it is the end of the calendar year, new church offering envelopes will soon be in your mailboxes for the members that have requested them in the past. If there are any changes, like you want a box of offering envelopes and haven't had one in the past or prefer not using them, please let the financial secretary (Emilie Wacker) know by December 18th. Thank you.

Also, I would like to remind the congregation about our Mission goals set in January of 2016, as we approach the end of the year. Offerings for Advent worship services will be collected for the 2016 Kansas District Missions pledge until our goal is met. If we exceed that goal, the donations will go to Lutheran Hour Ministries. Also, remember our Together In Mission (T.I.M.) missionary with donations to help complete that goal too

The congregation's collection towards our 2016 Synod Missions goal of \$2500.00 is right around 80% collected - so we have about \$500.00 to go yet before the end of the year. (Advent offerings go towards this.)

The congregation's collection towards our T.I.M. goal of \$1000.00 is a little over 80% collected - so we have a little less than \$200.00 to go yet before the end of the year.



Remember Our T.I.M. Missionary Offerings

The offerings can be placed in the box in the back of the church or in the offering envelope. Just make a note that it is for T.I.M. Rev. Eric and Johanna Stinnett serve the Lord as career missionaries through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in Ethiopia. Eric accepted the call from the LCMS' Office of International Mission (OIM) to teach at Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This seminary is dedicated to training faithful Lutheran pastors and other church workers to serve in Ethiopia. Find their newsletter on the front bulletin board near the men's bathroom



Coming Events at Bethlehem

Also available online at www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org

- Dec 7, 14, 21** 6 pm Light Supper for Advent
7 p.m. Advent Worship Service Light Lunch to Follow
- Dec 4, 11, 18** 8::45 Children Christmas Eve program practice dates
- Dec 23** Children Christmas Eve program dress rehearsal
- Dec 24** 6 pm Children's Christmas Eve Program
- Dec 25** 10:00 am Christmas Day Worship
- Dec31** 6 p.m.New Year's Eve Worship Service
- Jan 1** 10:00 a.m. New Year's Day Worship Service

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 2nd and 4th Sundays and some festivals)



Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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