



# 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 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

**“Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need” (Malachi 3:10).**

As many of you know by now from the letter mailed to all members last month, the Bethlehem Lutheran Endowment fund has been a blessing for many years, providing the funding to pay the pastor's salary and benefits, the building insurance, and other necessary expenses when the regular giving did not cover them. The Church Council appealed to everyone to consider a gift to boost the Endowment so it can continue to provide long-term stability for this congregation, and many have already responded. Thank you!

Spiritually, we already have long-term stability. We are built on the Rock – our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is a foundation that does not shift or settle. It will stand firm forever. The Triune God is the source of all our spiritual and material blessings.

So when we get hung up on material wants and needs, it shows we have a spiritual problem. God uses these situations to test us, and He will make us stronger if we pass His test. I believe that God is testing us in regards to the use of our material blessings these past several months. And I believe that we are rising to God's challenge.

Here are some facts from the financial reports from last year and this year to prove it. (1) Per quarter giving in 2014 has increased in both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters and is significantly more than what we received in 2013 (over \$11,500 more!). (2) Third quarter giving to the Home fund (with non-envelope donations) actually *exceeded* our home fund expenses! (the first time this has happened in the five years I have served this congregation; to God be the glory!) (3) While we have withdrawn \$15,000 from the Endowment in 2014, we needed \$30,000 in 2013. (4) The Endowment had grown by \$8,000 from Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, so the net decline to the Endowment is only \$7,000 this year.

So while the overall giving to the Home fund is still behind as of the end of September, the facts are that God's love and blessing for you has caused you to rise to His challenge. This worth a moment to pause, pray, and give thanks to God that this body can still respond to Christ, who is our head.

We have everything we need in Christ. So as we close out the year, may God continue to test us and make us stronger in our faith and more committed to serving Him faithfully and providing for this congregation out of all His blessings! **“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up” (Gal 6:9).**

A blessed Advent and Christmas to all of you!

- Pastor Augustine

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### **BOCL Minutes**

Meeting was held on Tue. Nov. 4th at 8:00 p.m. Members present were Barb Meitler, Warren Meitler, Marilyn Wenthe, Dale Krueger, Mary Powell, Brock Mueller, Pastor Augustine. Pastor opened with prayer. Minutes from previous meeting were read and corrected. The total amount for the spirit basketballs came to \$419 and came out of the endowment fund. Warren M will take care of the advertisement of the blood drive coming up on Nov. 14. Marilyn W volunteered for the snacks at the blood drive which will be from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Discussion was held on the holiday food baskets, Pastor will contact the food bank and other organizations so the BOCL can create a list of potential recipients. If any members know of a deserving recipient of these baskets, they will be discussed by the board. It was discussed that caution must be taken not to offend the community on who receives and not receives the holiday gift baskets. On that note it was decided that a special meeting be held on Sunday Nov 16 after church to finalize the plan.

Date for the congregational decorating of the church for Christmas is set for Dec. 6 at 9:00 a.m. If someone wants to bring a breakfast item or snack to share, please feel free to do so.

Barb M will contact Gary & Ruth Sorensen about the children's fruit & candy sacks passed out after the children's Christmas Eve program.

Advent services are Dec. 3, 10, & 17 at 7:00 p.m. We usually have a meal before service, so we will ask for volunteers & organizations to prepare the meal. Approximate time: 6:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

Guest greeters for December will be Warren Meitler, Barb Meitler & Marilyn Wenthe. Next meeting is set for Dec. 7 after church. Meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brock L Mueller sec.

### **BOCL Special Meeting Minutes**

A special meeting was held after church on Nov. 16. Members present were Chairman Gary Frederking, Barb Meitler, Brock Mueller, Ruth Mueller, and Pastor Augustine. In the matter of the Holiday gift baskets to the needy, after Pastor researched the situation, the forum of BOCL present decided that what was most needed was volunteering to deliver the baskets to the recipients from the Lincoln County organization in charge. Gary motioned that this is appropriate, Barb seconded, motion

passed. Gary volunteered to help deliver the baskets along with Kylie E (volunteered by Pastor).

Barb reported that Gary & Ruth Sorensen are providing the candy sacks passed out on Christmas Eve.

Respectfully submitted, Brock L Mueller

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### **December Stewardship Newsletter Article**

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). God became man; he took on human flesh, so that men would once again dwell with God. In the fullness of time, the Son of God from eternity became a part of history to be born under the law in order to redeem those under the law. Christ came from heaven above to earth below for us men and for our salvation. He who knew no sin became sin so that we would be declared righteous in God’s sight. He was defiled so that we would be cleansed. He was born so that we would not die, and He died for us so that we would live in Him. He took upon Himself everything that rightfully belongs to us—sin and death—and in exchange gave to us everything that rightfully belongs to Him—righteousness, life, and the status as the sons of God.

This is what we celebrate in Advent and at Christmas. We celebrate the coming of our Lord to save us from sin, death, and hell. We celebrate that God in Christ cared for us in body and soul, for He came not only to reconcile us to the Father by taking away our sin, but also to redeem us from death and hell so that we would live with Him in His kingdom, which has no end.

In a sermon on Acts 6 for St. Stephen’s Day, preached on December 26, 1522, Martin Luther said this: “From this story we learn in the first place how a Christian community should be constituted. In addition, we have a true pattern of spiritual government that the apostles here provide. They care for souls, occupy themselves with preaching and prayer, and yet also see to it that the body is cared for; for they suggest several men who are to distribute the goods, as you have heard. Thus the Christian rule is concerned for the people in body and soul, so that no one suffers want . . . that all were richly fed and well cared for in both body and soul.”

And this is one reason we give to the church. We give so that people will see the church not just as a place that cares for souls, that forgives sins, but also a place that cares for the body. For the church is a place of mercy. It is a place where we inhale God’s mercy and loving kindness through the Word and the Sacraments for the forgiveness of our sin. And it’s a place where we exhale the mercy we received there in love and service to our neighbor. The church cares for both the body and the soul.

The church is not so heavenly minded that it forgets those in need on earth. In fact, it cares for the needs of this body and life precisely because it is heavenly minded. We seek to do what God has done for us. The church is so ordered that it does both.

Giving to the church is a responsibility given to those who are the church. This can sometimes be difficult. But it is also a great joy. For in giving to the church we are giving back to God for His use for others what He has first given to us. In giving to the church, we participate in God's work here in time for all eternity. In giving to the church, we who are heavenly minded do what God has done for us: dwell with those who live in a fallen world and care for them in both body and soul. Let us, then, in this most joyous season of the church year, dwell not on the struggles in giving, but rather on the joy set before us in caring for body and soul as God in Christ has done for us.

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### **BETHLEHEM LWML MEETING**

#### **LWML MEETING - - NOVEMBER 5, 2014**

The Bethlehem LWML met on Wednesday evening, November 5th for their bi-monthly meeting. This meeting is being held to take the place of the December meeting, which will only be a Christmas party. Emilie gave the opening devotions, which was a Lutheran Hour devotion. The Bible Study, "The Spirit Liberates", based on Romans 8:1-27, was presented by Sophia Schofield.

The meeting was called to order by President Coleen. Roll call was answered by 12 members and 1 guest, Holly Ehrlich of Glenpool, Okla., answering the question "Where were you born?" Secretary Lois read the October minutes and they were approved as read. Correspondence followed. The Treasurer's report was given by Ramie and was also approved as read. The treasury reports a balance of \$4085.38, with \$1243.74 designated for the cookbook fund, \$1160.50 designated for the funeral luncheon fund, and \$1681.14 in the home fund (including proceeds from the Bazaar).

The following committee reports were given:

- 1) Greeting cards - Euni has added to the amount of boxes of cards on the table, including Christmas cards. She is missing envelopes out of some of the boxes so please take only the amount of envelopes for the cards you're purchasing
- 2) Mission of love/quilts - we have given some of the quilting supplies away but still have some to sort through. We will not put any more kits together for Lutheran World Relief until after our next meeting in February.

3) Campus ministry - Ramie reported we have 9 college kids to prepare Valentine boxes for in February.

4) Flowers - The November committee is Euni & Lois. The December committee will be Annie & Marmie.

5) Networker - Euni reported that we pay for 23 quarterlies for our members.

6) Prayer Chain (email) - Let Lois know if you have an address change OR you get rid of your email address. No reports were given by the committees of cheer, banners, church guests, library, or historian.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

A Bazaar report was given from October 4th. Another good attendance was reported. We had good participation again, also with the 'flea market' items on the cement slab north of the Parish Hall. We had soup, sandwiches, and pies left-over so we served the noon meal after church services on LWML Sunday, October 5th. A complete report on proceeds will be given at our next meeting. We did vote on the projects we intend to support from our Bazaar funds. They are: The Lutheran Hour (5 broadcasts from Hays Radio) \$200, Seminary Food Bank (2 Sems) \$200, Orphan Grain Train for 'Project Feed 500) \$150, LWML National Mites \$100, 2015 Bethlehem Vacation Bible School \$100, Pastor Augustine & Family Christmas Gift \$100, and \$100 for Valentine Box Postage - making a total of \$950.00. We also voted to give \$75.00 per quarter, to our church specifically for Church Office Supplies (computer ink, paper, etc.).

We celebrated LWML Sunday by sitting together and singing in church again, and a bookmark was placed in each Sunday bulletin. We served the luncheon in the Parish Hall following services. Mite boxes were given to the children that were up in front listening to the Children's' message. We will try to collect the monies from these 'mite boxes' the 1st Sunday of each month, with December 7th being the 1st time. The Sunday School kids will be hearing about this in Sunday School soon. The big 'mite box' will be put out the 1st Sunday of each month and it will be located as you enter church.

Shelly & Coleen reported on the Lincoln Zone LWML Workshop held at St. Johns', Lincoln, on Sunday afternoon, Oct. 26th. Coleen, Emilie, Shelly, and Lois attended from Bethlehem. Emilie and Shirley donated 2 salads for the salad luncheon.

We had election of officers: Coleen was re-elected as President, & Lois was re-elected as Secretary.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

We are to start thinking about attending the National LWML Convention is Des Moines, Iowa, June 25 - 28. It would be fun if more from here attended!

We will be decorating the Church and Parish Hall for Christmas on Saturday, December 6th, at 9:00 a.m. Barb Meitler, for the BOCL, reported that we are all invited to bring a breakfast item to share that morning before we start decorating. We also will be setting up the Parish Hall for the congregational Christmas party the next day, Sunday, December 7th.

The congregational Christmas party will include a POTLUCK lunch at noon after church services, so you are invited to bring along a casserole, salad, or dessert. Drinks & table service will be furnished. After the luncheon, we will give everyone a last chance to bid on the items for the Silent Auction - Shelly is in charge of this, if you have questions. We will also sing Christmas carols, play a Christmas game, have a Silent Auction with proceeds going to KS. LWML Mites, and then the LWML members will be exchanging prayer partner gifts, drawing new prayer partners for 2015, collecting our Love Socks monies for CCCS - 'Lead a Child', and Mite Box monies, & Closing Devotions. Should be a great and fun day! Advent Wednesday on December 17th our LWML will be serving supper. All members will be fixing casseroles, salads, or desserts for this occasion. See Coleen about this meal.

Our next LWML meeting won't be until February 4th. There will be no meeting in December or no Bible Study in January. We will let you know if you're in charge of flowers for the month of January. For the February meeting we will contact you if you are in charge of the Bible Study, Devotions, or furnishing refreshments. For closing devotions, Emilie led us in prayer. Marmie was hostess for the evening, serving left-over soup and sandwich meat on her delicious home-made bread. Jacob, Eli, and Isaac helped her serve. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and evening.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Walter, Secretary

**LWML Flower Committee**

**December**

Anne Dohl, Marmie Schultz

**January 2015**

Lu Willingham & Lorelei Dohl

*Tentative schedule*

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**Annual Meeting and Elections**

It's closer than we might think! The annual meeting and elections are coming up in January. The Church Council invites every voting member (any confirmed member age 18 or older) to consider serving in the following positions:

- Board of Church Life: 5 members to serve a 2-year term. All current board members can serve again (no term limits), but Shirley and Dale Krueger have indicated they are declining to run again.
- Elder (Phil Chegwiddden is eligible for a second term)
- Trustee (John Sorensen has served two terms and cannot serve again)
- Financial Secretary (Wayne Trapp has served two terms and cannot serve again)
- Treasurer (Art Dohl has served two terms and cannot serve again)

Contact John Thaemert or any Council member in regards to serving.

If there are specific budget items to address, please inform a Council member prior to the Council meeting in mid-January.

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**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!*



John Augustine  
Louis Blase  
Justine Dohl  
Tevis Dohl  
Kevin Feldkamp  
Kyle Frederking  
Lloyd Gier  
Reese Gier  
Remington Gier  
Larry Groth

Marlin Huehl Sr.  
Kenneth Meitler  
Barb Mettlen  
Heather Meyer  
Michael Meyer  
Tracy Meyer  
Robert Trost  
Wilda Wenthe  
Ray Willingham

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### Children's Christmas Program



The Children's Christmas program will be on Christmas Eve this year. Please note that the service time is **6:00 p.m.** Many have family gatherings after the Christmas Eve service so the time is moved up to allow for a time of worship, fellowship, and family. The Board of Church Life will sponsor some light refreshments following the service.

The Christmas story is presented by looking at the words of the beloved hymn "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," and shows how Charles Wesley crafted the hymn based on scripture verses found throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Directors of the program are Shelly Keller, Dena Sorensen, and Marmie Schultz. The children have started practicing the music in Sunday School and Midweek, so encourage them to share what they are learning with you. There will be practices during the Sunday School hour on December 14 and 21, beginning at 8:45 a.m. so they have a full hour of practice time. There will be a full dress rehearsal on Tuesday, December 23 at 4:30 p.m. followed by a light supper for the kids.

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### Got Long Term Plans?

One of the most common missteps that people make when planning their estate is this: leaving their IRA to loved ones and their life insurance to charity. In reality, tax implications make the exact opposite a better option.

If you have not made plans for your estate through a will and/or living trust, you may have significant tax implications to your family. Estate planning isn't easy,

nor is it all that comfortable to do. Many have partnered with local banks and attorneys to ensure an easy transition from one generation to the next with little or no tax consequences. If you would like to visit with someone regarding estate planning, contact the church office who can connect you with other members that have done estate planning or with firms that can help you with your plans.

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### Acolyte Schedule December - January

December 3+	Rachel Sebesta
7	Grace Chegwiddden
10+	Marshall Hurlbut
14*	Hannah Wolting
17+	Rachel Sebesta
21	Kilby Meyer
25*	Kayla Augustine
28*	Grace Chegwiddden
January 4	Marshall Hurlbut
11*	Hannah Wolting
18	Rachel Sebesta
25*	Kilby Meyer

\* *Communion service*  
+ *Advent service*

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### A Child is Born!

Advent worship services this year will feature a pulpit rotation of Pastors Kerns, Hoppe, and Augustine focusing on various Old Testament children and their connection to the birth of Jesus, the Messiah. Come and prepare your hearts and lives for the birth of Jesus as we take in the births of Cain, Isaac, and Solomon. Light suppers will be served at 6:00 with worship at 7:00.

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### German Service in Salina

Trinity Lutheran Church 9th and Crawford, Salina will host its annual German Christmas Worship (Weinachtsdienst) on Friday, December 26th at 7:00 p.m. Rev Vic Streufert will preach the sermon and officiate in German, and the Salina German-American club will host refreshments following the service. You are cordially invited to join us to hear the message of the angels, "Denn euch ist Heute der Heiland geboren, welcher ist Christus, der Herr" ("Today a Savior has been born to you; Who is Christ the Lord").

# Coming Events at Bethlehem

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

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- December 2 – Elders meeting
- December 3 – Advent supper and worship
- December 6 – Church decorating @ 9 a.m. | BOCL delivering food boxes
- December 7 – BOCL meeting after church
  - Congregational Potluck dinner
  - LWML Christmas party
- December 10 – Advent supper and worship
- December 17 – Advent supper and worship
- December 23 – Children’s Christmas program dress rehearsal
- December 24 – Children’s Christmas Eve program
- December 25 – Christmas Day worship with Holy Communion

## *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)*

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
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