



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

The Bethlehem Record

The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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The Pastor's Page

December 2015

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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.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The month of December brings the celebration of Advent and Christmas. With these seasons, the calendar can fill up with all kind of activities like school programs and parties. The church celebrates these seasons with extra services to be reminded of the significance and importance of the Christ Child.

This year, the theme for the Advent services will be Angelic Messages, based on the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Matthew. We will hear the story of the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ, paying special attention to the messages from the angels who announced the birth. The Advent services will be on Tuesday evenings at 6:00pm, with a light supper to follow. As always, everyone is invited to join us for the Advent services as we prepare for Christmas

As we celebrate Christmas, the children's program will be on Christmas

Eve at 6:00pm. Please plan to join us as we listen to the youth of the congregation tell us of the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ. On Christmas Day at 10:30am, we will have the Divine Service with the Lord's Supper as we celebrate Christmas. Just as we begin the New Year, there will be a service on January 1st at 10:30am.

The calendar doesn't take long to fill up. But please plan to join us as we prepare and celebrate Christmas. The message of the angels, the message of your savior, Jesus Christ, is for you. "He will save his people!" "On earth, peace among those with whom he is pleased!" Listen to that message from the angels, "For unto you is born this day a Savior"

In Christ,

Pastor Jon Bonine

December Stewardship Newsletter Article

Our Lord Jesus Christ healed the man with dropsy by His Word on the Sabbath (Luke 14:1–6). He is the great physician of both body and soul. The paradoxical symptom of dropsy was an unquenchable craving for drink even though the body was over inflated with fluid, a craving that when indulged served not to ease but to feed the disease. And so if a man drinks a great deal, but is never filled, he sees a doctor to inquire about what ails him, what is wrong with his body and how to remedy it. For that is not thirst but a disease (Seneca, *Consolation to His Mother Helvia*, 11.3).

But if the owner of five couches goes looking for ten, or the owner of ten tables buys up as many again, and even though he has plenty of land and money, he remains unsatisfied and desires yet more, losing sleep and always in discontent, does he not also require a physician to diagnose the cause of this distress? For this is not want or lack, but a disease (Aristippus, quoted in Plutarch, *Love of Wealth*, 524b). As St. Augustine of Hippo wrote, “we may rightly compare the dropsical man to a covetous rich man: For the more the one is swollen with excess of water, the more he thirsts; so also the other: The more he abounds in riches . . . the more eagerly he desires them” (*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, Vol. 4, 135). Both require physicians. Both require diagnosis and medicine applied from the outside to the inward being. For these are not desires to be fulfilled but diseases to be cured.

This is why our Lord instructs us on taking care not to be overmuch consumed by money. “No one can serve two masters . . . You cannot serve God and money” (Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13). The point is that our desire for money, like the disease dropsy, is never satisfied. We always desire more. We always think, if I just had this much then I would be happy. But even when that much comes, which God gladly gives, that happiness evades us. For the desire for more of these things is never satisfied. It demands our constant energy—either in procuring more or protecting what we already have. When this happens, God, in His mercy, shows us that the money that He has given is no longer serving us, but we it. We have another master.

To overcome this, we need a physician’s diagnosis and a physician’s remedy. And our Lord, Jesus Christ, our great physician of both body and soul, like the man healed of dropsy, applies His Word to us. He shows us how we have put our fear, our love, and our trust in our money and not feared, loved, and trusted in Him above all things. In essence, He says, “Stop it! Stop chasing

after these fleeting things. They are vanity. They are the things that moth and rust destroy. For you cannot have two masters. Repent!” And in seeing our great error, we are sorry that we have not fully feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things. And, in the mercy and grace, that He earned for us on the cross, He takes away this sin, restores us to health, and bids us live.

But then what? What do we do with this healing balm and care that our great physician has done? Do we simply go back to our old ways? “By no means!” St. Paul says (Rom 3:31; 6:2). We do not just go back to the old ways. That way is dead to us and leads us to death. No, we live a new life, a life filled with the grace, mercy, and love of God toward us. And God’s great mercy, grace, and love toward is so abundant that it overflows and pours out onto those around us. So we no longer hoard money and possessions. We no longer scrape and crawl our way to amass more. We give to those around us, as God in Christ has given to us. We press our money and possessions into service for those who need it: our family, our society, and our church. For money is God’s gift to us to serve us and others. Not the other way round. It serves us because it is a gift from our Father in heaven.

BOCL

The BOCL met on Tuesday Nov 10, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. Members present were Gary Frederking, Brock Mueller, Ruth Mueller, Marcy Hurlbut, Kylie Erhlich, Tyler Gier, Warren Meitler, Barb Meitler, Pastor Bonine and Elder Lloyd Gier.

The meeting opened with a prayer. Minutes were read and approved. Barb M moved to accept minutes, Ruth M seconded, motion passed.

Tara K sent an e-mail stating that BOCL should put a thank you and recognition in the local papers to the Post Rock Community Foundation for our clean up grant. Funds for the ad will come out of the grant money. She also reported that she finalized and submitted the final report to the Post Rock Community Foundation that was due on 11-15.

It was reported that there were approximately 73 children that attended the Bible Walk. Any candy that was left over from the Bible Walk will be distributed in the Christmas Eve sacks.

The topic of mid-week meals was discussed. Gary Frederking moved that we donate \$20 per midweek session for the meals as a form of outreach, Ruth M seconded, motion passed. The

money will come out of the BOCL budget as stated above.

The next Blood Drive will be Tuesday, Nov 24, 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. Barb M will work at passing out snacks, etc.

It was decided to do church Christmas decorating on Sat morning Nov 28 at 9:00 a.m.

Kylie E and Marcy H will be in charge of the Christmas Eve reception of cookies and drinks. We will need to ask for donations of cookies for that evening.

The topic of financial propriety came up, it's unclear of the exact amount that BOCL is budgeted for, the board feels that a person is needed to keep account of exactly how much we are allowed. Ruth M will contact Rozella T for a statement showing exactly where we are at and what we are budgeted for. Ruth will be the budget accountant for BOCL.

Kylie E volunteered to be the December Greeter. Next meeting is scheduled for Dec 1 after Advent Service. We closed with the Lord's Prayer
Respectfully submitted Brock L Mueller

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Post Rock Community Foundation

(Found On Face book November 11,2015)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church received a \$1,000 grant from the Post Rock Community Foundation for their project "Sylvan Grove Community Improvement." Rev. John Philipp Augustine reported that the Bethlehem Lutheran Church board of Church life was blessed with an abundance of volunteers from the community and that is what allowed us to accomplish so much. The grant funding allowed us to access large equipment used in taking down trees, hauling it all to the city dump, and assist providing food and drink for volunteers thought the day of service. Lu Willingham, resident of Sylvan Grove, stated "they helped two 87 year old's by trimming a tree down in our driveway so we can drive under our car port and cut other shrubbery that was hard for us to do. The volunteers also took care of items from the garage that needed disposed of. They helped us greatly with things that we couldn't

physical do ourselves. This was a very worthwhile grant as the community has a lot of seniors and the assistance is great to help allow us to stay in our homes."



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BETHLEHEM LWML

On Wednesday evening, November 4, 2015, Bethlehem LWML members met at 7:00 p.m. for their bi-monthly meeting (instead of December). Sophia Schofield led the devotions and the topic on "Multiply – Making Disciples". Many Scriptures from the Bible were read emphasizing this.

The meeting was called to order by President Coleen. Roll call was answered by 11 members. The minutes of the October meeting were read by Secretary Lois. They were approved as read. She also read several correspondence letters. Ramie then gave the Treasurer's report, reporting a balance of \$4530.78 in the treasury. Included in the total, \$1303.74 is designated for the Cookbook Fund, \$1518.58 is designated for the Funeral Luncheon Fund, and \$1708.46 for the Home Fund (in which Bazaar proceeds are included). The Treasurer's report was accepted as read. A few committee reports were given. There are greeting cards always available in the Parish Hall. Come in and look them over, as well as Christmas cards. Coleen reported on saving stamps – they will be taken along to the Manhattan LWML Convention in April. Eunice reported that we had served the funeral luncheon for the family of Janice Hurlbut and she thanked everyone in the congregation for helping the LWML work & fix food for the luncheon. Ramie reported for Campus Ministry that there will be 9 college students to fix Valentine 'goody' boxes for in February.

OLD BUSINESS:

Those attending the Zone LWML Workshop on Oct. 11th reported on the meeting & salad supper. Emilie, our Zone delegate to the National Convention in Des Moines, gave a very informative report for those attending the Workshop. LWML members are supposed to start thinking about attending the Spring Kansas District Convention to be held in Manhattan in April. We held elections for the office of Vice-President and Treasurer. We thanked Emilie for serving as our Vice-President for 4 years. Cheryl Gier was elected Vice-President and Ramie was re-elected as Treasurer for the next 2 years.

The Executive Board handed out a list of projects to receive our October Bazaar Funds. A motion was made and all were approved as read: 5 Lutheran Hour broadcasts for Hays Radio, Seminary Food Banks for 2 Sems, Orphan Grain Train Matching Funds, 'Project Feed 500' for Orphan Grain Train, LWML Mites, Christmas Gift for Pastor Bonine & family, and Valentine Box Postage for college students, for a total of \$900.00.

NEW BUSINESS:

On Saturday, November 14th at 9:00 a.m., the LWML will be cleaning and going through all the 'stuff' left over from the Bazaar in the school basement. Please plan to attend and help. The LWML Christmas Party will be held on Saturday morning, December 12th, at the old Vesper Presbyterian Church, with the Executive Board as hostesses. Linda Wrench was called and she was delighted we chose her place to have our party. It will start at 9:00 a.m. with devotions & a Christmas Brunch, a skit, exchange Prayer Partner gifts, collect our Mites and 'Dime Love Socks' for CCCS (Concerned Christian Children's Society), followed by games. Each LWML member is to invite another lady from our congregation to be her guest. Instead of a Silent Auction for Mites this year, we are going to try something different. We are going to have a CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE for the congregation,

after church services on SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20th. Prices will be put on the baked goods, and all monies collected will go to the Kansas LWML Mites. Each member is to bring several baked items for the Christmas Bake Sale.

We discussed options to replace our 'Adopt a Seminary Student' project, which we dropped for now. Ramie is going to check on another option the, Ex. Board has in mind. A motion was made and accepted to do this. There will be no LWML meeting or Bible Study in January. Flowers for December church services will be Annie and Marmie. For February it will be Lorelei and Lu. The meeting was adjourned and prayer was led by Coleen. Hostess for the evening was Lorelei who served delicious soup and sandwiches.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lois Walter, LWML Secretary

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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!



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

LWML Flower Committee
December
Anne Dohl & Marmie Schultz
January
Lu Willingham, Lorelei Dohl

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December Acolyte Schedule

- 6 Mekelle Hurlbut (Blue)
- 13* Grace Chegwidden (Blue)
- 20 Rachel Sebesta (Blue)
- 27* Marshall Hurlbut (white)

* Communion service

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THRIVENT NEWS

To update you on the success of the new Thrivent Action Team program they have going, the following is what took place in this congregation this past year. Colleen A. put in for one and used it for food items for VBS. Les W. put in one to furnish the snacks and drinks for the blood mobile. Les W. put in one to purchase all the needed material to refurbish the church sign. Shelly K. put one in to help purchase the food items for the bazaar. Rozella T. put in one to purchase drinks and snacks for the craft day at the Senior Center. Lu W. put in one to purchase quilt material to make quilts to go to Foster children. Lois W. put in one to purchase the food, and other items for the Soup supper fund raiser for Christmas lights. Emilie W. put in one to purchase the food items for the mission festival (Pastor Stinnett). Lois H. put in one to purchase all the candy for the Bible walk.

Don't look at this and glance over it lightly.

This effort by these individuals and Thrivent adds up to putting back into the church and community \$2250.00. Everyone who is a Thrivent member, either by having an insurance policy or by investing, qualify to become a part of this program. It's not hard to do and can become very rewarding, by helping a good cause. If you have an idea that's worth looking into, give it a try. Should you be wary on what to do, ask any one of the people mentioned for help. Another important thing to remember is that all Thrivent members qualify to do 2 of these per calendar year. If you're not a Thrivent member and have an idea, tell one that is and give it a try. The very worst that can happen is that you would be turned down. It's always within 5 days after an idea is turned in that you will know if it was accepted or not. So far, not one has been turned down. It's a great program, so let's use it.

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2015 Mission Festival

Picture submitted by Emilie Wacker
Bethlehem's 2016 T.I.M. Missions



Coming Events at Bethlehem

Also available online at www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org

Dec 8, 15, 22	6 pm Advent Worship Service Light Lunch to Follow
Dec 12	9 am LWML Christmas Party @ old Vesper Church
Dec 13, 22, 22	8::45 Children Christmas Eve program practice dates
Dec 20	LWML Christmas Treat Sale following Worship Service
Dec 24	6 pm Children's Christmas Eve Program
Dec 25	10:30 am Christmas Day Worship
Jan 1	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)

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here

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