



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

December 2017

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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 Bethlehem Record

The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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The Pastor's Page

The Lutheran Church has historically been called the "Singing Church." This was originally meant as a derogative term. The Roman Catholics were trying to mock us with this term. Of course, like the good Germans that the Reformers were, they embraced it and threw it right back into the Roman's faces.

The truth of the matter, is that songs appear everywhere in the Bible. Particularly in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament. This year for Advent we are going to embrace the truth that we are indeed the Singing Church. For our Advent Midweek Series this year we are going to be taking a close look at the three of the canticles that arise directly from the Nativity of our Lord. Those canticles are the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-56) the Benedictus (Luke 1:67-80) and the Nunc Dimittus (Luke 2:22-35.)

In addition to our Midweek services though, we are also going to do something a little special for our Sunday services as well. Usually we try to stick with the same services on Sundays for about a month or two. This month though, and for a couple of weeks afterward as well, we are going to use nearly every single order of service in the Lutheran Service

Book. By doing this, we hope to show you the rich tradition that has been handed down to us from our ancestors, as well as a few of the things that our contemporaries have added as well.

It is not just songs that are in the Bible of course. And make no mistake about it, the most important thing about a song in the Bible is not the fact that it has music. The truth is that these songs carry the Word of our Lord into our ears, our hearts, and our minds. They help us to remember the things that God is trying to teach us and strengthen the faith that the Word has created inside us, sometimes through those very songs.

Those songs tell us many things. They can speak to us our dire need for Christ because of our sinful nature. They can tell us of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross to take care of that need. Sometimes they even evoke images of the glory that awaits us through the doors of death. These songs are there for us to use, and throughout this Advent season, our voices will join with those who have sang them for generations before us. May God bless you as we sing to the Lord this month,

Pastor Christopher Craig

Stewardship Newsletter December 2017

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Christmas is coming. It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10–11).

We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased” (Luke 2:14)!

We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in manger, but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God.

God’s people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people. And He commanded them to feast upon it (Deut. 16). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (Deut. 16:10, 15, 17).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas, but throughout all the year.

We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal

blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us.

We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us.

Let us, like them, give generously of the first fruits of our income, which He gives, so that all may know and enjoy the salvation He gives and the joy we have in the Savior born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord.

Acolyte Schedule

Communion service

December

Dec 3 **Kaden Gier**
Dec 10 * **Valden Dohl**
Dec 17 **Vance Dohl**
Dec 24 * **Jacob Schultz**
Dec 31* **Rylan Gier**

January

Jan 7 **Aubrelle Hurlbut**
Jan 14* **Eli Schultz**
Jan 21 **Issac Schultz**
Jan 28* **Kale Sorensen**





T.W.M.L Flower Committee
December
Annie Dohl
Marmie Schultz



In the month of November you saw a Christmas tree covered in paper angels located in the back of the church. This tree is what we call and "Angel Tree." For those of you who aren't familiar, this is a means to receive donations for a cause.

: On the tree there were several paper angels. On the angels there was written the child's gender, age, and what they are hoping to get for Christmas and gifts that could also include items like a picture Bible, faith based children's book, biblical coloring book, or whatever you feel may "plant the seed of faith". On November 30 at the LWML Christmas Party the members wrapped 60 gifts for the angel tree. May God Bless everyone who participate in this project.



The BOCL

The BOCL met on Thursday, November 2 at 6:00 p.m. Members present were Tyler Gier, Brock Mueller, Ruth Mueller, Dena Sorensen, Lloyd Gier, and Pastor Craig. Pastor led with devotions and a prayer. Minutes from previous meeting were read and approved.

With Advent fast approaching, meals are being planned before services. LWML has volunteered for one. Contact needs to be made with LWML on which date they want. BOCL will take care of the other two dates if no other volunteers ask to provide the meal.

It was decided to have cookies and drinks after the Christmas Eve service, the BOCL will ask for donations from the congregation on this event. Ruth Sorensen has volunteered to provide candy sacks as in the past.

The "angel tree" has been put up in the back of the church, Corey Hircsh has provided information on this in the bulletin.

Dena moved to provide Christmas baskets to the needy, Lloyd seconded. Dena will talk to several ladies who are familiar with families in need. Motion passed. The amount to be spent will be determined after the number of needy families we are gifting is determined.

Lloyd Gier moved to look into the possibilities of live streaming our services, Tyler G. seconded, motion passed.

Pastor commented on starting an informal weekly Wednesday evening church service after the first of the year.

Christmas decorating of the church is set for Saturday, December 2 at 9:00 a.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 7, at 6:00 p.m. Pastor closed with a prayer

Respectfully submitted Ruth Mueller

.....

November 1, 2017 LWML Minutes

Coleen called the regular meeting of Bethlehem's LWML to order on November, 2017. Shelly Keller reviewed a book of stories written by past presidents of the national LWML.

Pastor Craig continued his discourse on the word "League" He referred to Acts 10:23 where Peter is invited to the home of the Roman soldier, Cornelius. Peter realizes that his vision about the Christ centered church is for all people who accept Christ as their savior.

Roll Call - 8 members answered roll call. Coleen recognized that Annie Dohl provided the evening meal. Minutes were read and accepted. Ramie gave the treasurer's report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mission of Love: - Best Choice products allow the saving of the UPC symbol

Flower Committee: for November are Lois Walter and Justine Dohl

Nominating Committee: - Justine Dohl moved and Barb Meitler seconded that the members cast a unanimous ballot for the slate of Shelly Keller as VP and Ramie Schulteis as treasurer. Motion passed.

Cards: - Euni has ordered Christmas cards for the season.

Old Business:

Justine Dohl moved to spend \$60 for 100 candle holders. Barb Meitler seconded the motion. Motion passed.

New Business:

The Executive Board moved to have Christmas Party on Thursday Nov. 29th centered around the Foster Children's gift tree. The party will comprise of wrapping presents for the children, decorate the parish hall for Christmas season, and have a soup supper. The party will be open to all women and children. The motion passed.

Coleen appointed Ramie and herself as chairwomen for the event. Shelly Keller moved to start the showing of "The Full Armor of God" at January's meeting. wrapping presents for the children, decorate the parish hall for Christmas season, and have a soup supper. The party will be open to all women and children. The motion passed. Coleen appointed Ramie and herself as chairwomen for the event. Shelly Keller moved to start the showing of "The Full Armor of God" at January's meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Shelly Keller handed out the Sonshine Newsletter. Shelly Keller reminded LWML members to sign up for one of the membership committees. Ramie and _____ will go to Eden Keefe's comedy show.

Meeting adjourned,

Justine Dohl, sec. Coleen Ancell, pres.
+++++

Baptismal Birthdays in November

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 Matke |



How Can I Help?

By James Lohman on September 14, 2017 in
Disaster Response, Human Care, Leader Blog 2

The influx of hurricanes and flooding in recent weeks has raised the level of interest in people wanting to donate their time, treasures and/or talents. Churches, agencies, members and others in the LCMS Texas and Florida/Georgia Districts are leading the way as Christ's hands of service to their neighborhoods, communities and beyond. Several months following my personal experience during Hurricane Katrina, I found myself back in the Southern District serving at a donation distribution warehouse. Numerous pallets of items generously donated by people from around the country filled a significant portion of the warehouse. These many items still needed to be sorted, organized and placed in the appropriate area of the warehouse for distribution. It was a tremendous task and at the end of my time there, pallets still needing attention remained untouched. As those of us who are outside these regions determine how to best respond it can be helpful to become familiar with these guidelines from the National Donations Steering Committee*. This group is composed of voluntary organizations active in disasters, federal, state and local government emergency management personnel has developed the following information for people interested in supporting disaster relief efforts.

1) FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE OFTEN THE BEST KIND OF DONATION TO MAKE.

Providing a financial contribution to a voluntary agency involved in disaster relief is often the most sensible and the most efficient way of helping the people in need after a disaster. These agencies have disaster skills in many areas such as disaster needs assessment, disaster clean-up, mass feeding, mass shelter, first aid, crisis counseling, pastoral care, child-care, home repair, family casework, meeting "unmet needs" and many other areas. Consider purchasing prepaid gift cards or debit cards to be used at local stores for the purchase of necessary items. These donations make a difference in the lives of people and provide an economic benefit to the community.

2) USED CLOTHING IS RARELY A USEFUL ITEM TO COLLECT FOR DISASTER RELIEF.

Used clothing is rarely a useful item to collect and send into the disaster area because it is hard to clean, sort, pack, transport, store, and distribute. Mounds of clothing take up valuable warehouse space and frequently end up being discarded.

3) CONFIRM THE NEED BEFORE BEGINNING A COLLECTION OF DONATED GOODS.

The most effective way the public can assist is to support the experienced disaster relief organizations with either financial contributions or *in-kind goods and services* that the organizations report are needed.

4) DONATE THROUGH AN ORGANIZATION.

It is never a good idea to collect goods for disaster relief without a firm plan in place that confirms the goods are needed and that addresses who will receive the goods, how they will be transported and how the goods will be distributed. ***Donors will find that it is often most practical to focus on one or two items that an organization says is needed rather than collect a variety of items and have boxes filled with mixed goods.***

5) TRANSPORTATION MUST BE PLANNED IN ADVANCE.

Transportation is frequently a major challenge for donors. It must be planned for in advance otherwise a donor can easily be stuck with large amounts of donated goods and no means to bring it to the recipient agency in the disaster area. Don't assume unsolicited relief supplies will be transported at no charge. ***The donor has the primary responsibility to find transportation for the donated goods.***

6) DONATED GOODS MUST BE WELL PACKED AND LABELED.

After confirming that the goods are needed and there is a plan to receive, store, and distribute them be sure that the goods are properly sorted, packaged and labeled. Specific content lists
(Continue to next page)

should be taped to the side of each box sent. This allows the receiving officials to determine what is in the box without opening it, and gets it to the proper distribution location in a timely manner. **Put yourself in the shoes of the person on the receiving end of the shipment and think about making the unloading, unpacking, warehousing, and distribution as simple as possible.** May these words of Paul to the Corinthian congregation be our guide: ¹² *For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.* ¹³ *By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,* ¹⁴ *while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.* ¹⁵ *Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!* 2 Corinthians 9:12-15 (ESV)

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Catching Up With the Mehl's



Greetings Dear Friends and Family!

CATCHING UP: Susan and I sent our last newsletter in September of 2013, two months before we left the mission field and came to serve at *Concordia University, Nebraska* (CUNE) in Seward. Susan works in the Student Financial Services department and enjoys her daily interaction with students. John worked as the Director of Church Relations and taught until January of 2017 when he took on a new role. **CHANGES:** While John continues to teach at CUNE as an adjunct instructor, he now serves as the executive director of **Mission of Christ Network** (MCN). MCN is a mission organization that trains, sends and supports lay workers to work in God's mission internationally. MCN is focused on **Intentional Gospel Proclamation**. It is a joy to be able to share with you some of the amazing work God is doing through MCN.

I WRITE TODAY because I know you care about missions and about spreading the Gospel message. MCN began with five missionaries in 2014. Today it has 31 individuals serving in 11 different countries around the world and a dozen **congregations** that are sending short-term teams. Our missionaries are incredible individuals doing incredible things in the name of Christ. Here is just one example



ZOE'S BAPTISM

HANNAH HESTER currently serves in Taiwan at Concordia Middle School. Hannah is a Concordia University, Nebraska graduate originally from Iowa. Our MCN missionaries are always building relationships and inviting people to meet Jesus. While in Taiwan, Hannah became friends with Zoe...inviting her to Bible study, which was a pivotal part of Zoe coming to faith. Zoe was recently baptized by Pastor Alex who serves the Lutheran church in Taiwan! This photo above shows Hannah, on the left, and Zoe, on the right, as they celebrate Zoe's "soul birthday." God is good. I invite you to pray for the work MCN is doing and for the missionaries as they boldly proclaim Christ's love.

<https://missionofchrist.org>

If you would like to financially support the work of MCN or support one of our missionaries, you can visit: <https://missionofchrist.org/ways-to-donate>

If you are interested in learning more about MCN, please go to our website here

<https://missionofchrist.org>: THANK YOU for your prayers and encouragement. I hope to continue sharing updates with you about MCN and the work God is doing through this ministry.

Yours in Christ, John



Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Blessed Thanksgiving to all of you! We are so thankful for the many blessings that the Lord has showered upon us here in Ethiopia. As you have seen from our newsletters, things are going well with the work the Lord has given to us. Thanks be to God!

As Thanksgiving is not a holiday here in Ethiopia, we don't have the day off this Thursday, but will instead gather together with friends on Friday evening. Turkeys are also extremely rare and the Ethiopians name for a turkey is "foreigner's chicken" in Amharic. Consequently, we will substitute Ethiopian chicken for our turkey. We will also have pumpkin hummus since Arabic food is readily available in this part of the world. Even though the food will be different, the time with friends and the chance to reflect on God's good gifts will still be the same.

May God grant you all a blessed Thanksgiving. We are so thankful for all of you. Many times over the past year, your love has been shown in your prayers, encouragement, snail mail, email and financial support. Thank you in Jesus' Name.

Thankfully Yours,
Eric, Johanna, Rachael, Naomi and Luke Stinnett
Missionaries to Ethiopia

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Planning is beginning for the 2018 Offering Envelopes. Please contact Emilie, or put a note in the Financial Secretary box, if there are any changes to be made for 2018 offering envelopes before mid-December so the offering envelopes can be in your box by the end of the year.

Charitable contributions for 2017 must be received before the first worship service in 2018 in order to claim the deduction for 2017. Checks that are mailed and postmarked in 2017 will still be deductible even if received at church in 2018.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS - Applications for the Bethlehem Lutheran Memorial Scholarship are posted on the north entrance bulletin board. Please take one if you are interested in applying.
- The BLC Scholarship Committee

Coming Events at Bethlehem

Also available online at www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org

- Dec 6, 13, 20** 6:00 pm Light Supper for Advent
7:00 p.m. Advent Worship Service
- Dec 3, 10, 17** 8:45-9:45 Children Christmas Eve program practice dates
- Dec 22** 9:00-11:00 a.m. Children Christmas Eve program dress rehearsal
- Dec 24** 10:00 a.m. Sunday Morning Worship
- Dec 24** 6:00 pm Children's Christmas Eve Program
- Dec 25** 10:00 am Christmas Day Worship
- Dec 31** 10:00 a.m. New Year's Eve Sunday Worship Service (Epiphany)

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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