



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

The Bethlehem Record

The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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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

What's That You Say?

The Nunc Dimittis

Have you ever been following along with the order of service on Sunday morning only to find that you have been speaking the words without actually reflecting on what they mean? Are there parts of the Sunday morning liturgy that are a mystery to you, with words that you don't understand? Do you find yourself wondering why we do certain things or say certain things in the service? If that's the case, please join me in asking a very Lutheran question... "What does this mean?" As we ask this question and discover the answers, you will find that you will benefit more from what we do and say in the service. As your understanding of what is being said in the service is increased, you will walk away from Sunday services with a deeper sense of satisfaction and a greater sense of having been fed by the Word of the Lord.

Today, let's turn our attention to the **Nunc Dimittis**. You'll find the Nunc Dimittis as an option for the Post Communion Canticle in many services, but here, at Bethlehem, we sing it after the communion distribution in Divine Service Setting III (page 184). The Nunc Dimittis (literally translated as "Now to leave") is based on Simeon's song in Luke chapter 2, and it is a joyful response to the wonderful gift that we have just received from the

Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar. Let us turn our attention to the words that we sing.

"Lord now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation"

As we read in the second chapter of Luke: "it had been revealed to [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Here was an old man who knew that he would not die until he had seen the long-promised Messiah of God. What an incredible revelation!

We catch up with Simeon after he had come, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to the temple where he sees his Savior face to face. In joy he picks up and holds the long-awaited Savior and sings "Now Lord, I can die in peace, since I have seen my Savior." We echo Simeon's words when we sing the Nunc Dimittis after we, too, have come face to face with our Lord, holding Him in our Hands, receiving His true body and His true blood in, with and under the bread and wine that we consume at His holy meal. Knowing and trusting His words "given for you... shed for you for the forgiveness of sins" we also rejoice and we also know that we can die in peace, for we, like Simeon, have seen the Lord's Salvation. You and I can depart from the service in peace, knowing that no matter what happens in the course of the week the Lord is in control and we

will be taken care of. You depart from the service knowing that even

if you die in the parking lot as you leave, you can die in the peace and comfort of knowing that you have been nourished in both body and soul, that you have been forgiven and reconciled to your heavenly Father and by God's grace you will be received into the kingdom of heaven.

"which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel."

The nation of Israel was God's chosen people and thus the nation was the heir of the promises that God had made to Abraham. Israel received special care and attention from God as He prepared them to welcome the Christ into their midst. God sent the prophets to the Israelites, He met them with holiness, mercy and forgiveness in the divine service at His holy altar, first at the tabernacle and then later at the temple in Jerusalem. The Old Testament believers among the nation of Israel were saved because they were looking forward, in faith, to the Messiah who would come to save them. In light of this we can understand what is meant by "the glory of Thy people Israel," because the people of Israel were the ones who were chosen and prepared to receive the Savior.

However, this does not mean that God's salvation is exclusive to the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel truly was given a place of honor, for it is through Israel that Christ enters into the world, it is in Israel that Jesus goes about His earthly ministry and it is on Jewish soil that His saving blood is spilled, but that does not mean the Jesus was sent only to the Jews. Instead it is through the Israelites that the rest of the world is blessed as the believers from among the nation of Israel spread the teachings of the prophets and the Gospel of Christ throughout the Roman Empire and eventually throughout the world. People who had previously had no relationship with the true God were enlightened as the Gospel was proclaimed to them. People who had previously been in the darkness of unbelief were gathered into the family of God. People who had previously been on the path to damnation and eternal death were given life and salvation. In this we can understand the words "prepared before all people" and "a light to lighten the Gentiles."

In these words we are reminded of the pagan past of our ancestors in northern Europe. We are reminded that we are believers as a result of the selfless work of evangelism undertaken by dedicated Christian brothers and sisters well over a thousand

years ago, as they bravely faced persecution and death to proclaim Christ to our forefathers. Even as we are reminded of our own history and our own salvation, these words also confront us with our duty and our privilege to follow in the footsteps of those brave Christian brothers and sisters in proclaiming Christ's Gospel in every corner of the earth, every corner of our nation, every corner of our state and every corner of our community.

I challenge you to reflect on these things the next time we sing the Nunc Dimittis in the service. I am sure that you will benefit from reflecting on the deep and comforting meaning of these words every time we sing them. I know I do.

Pastor Judson

Pastor James Judson is pastor at St Paul Ellsworth. He is our vacancy Pastor.

Rev Judson will be in Sylvan Grove on Thursdays in the Parish Hall. If you do not find him there, he likes to get out into the community and greet the people or check at the local Café. You can reach him at 307-438-1895. He also likes to text.

Please note the time changes in our worship service schedule found on back of the record.

Baptismal Birthdays in February

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!



Mark Butenhoff
Lyle Dohl
Marcus Fruits
Keith Meitler
Tyra Meyer
Allie Gier

Toni Nelson
Mary Powell
Allen Serrien
Randall Serrien
Clara Sorensen
Rachel Thaemert

February Stewardship Newsletter Article

We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves us is never alone. That is because faith is a living, busy, and active thing. It inhales all of God’s riches in Christ and exhales this in love and service to the neighbor.

But who is my neighbor? God in His mercy has placed us into three distinct communities: society, family, and the church. That means we have a duty to those around us in each of these communities. We pray for the people in these three communities daily. We rejoice with them in times of joy and suffer with them in times of sadness. And we give to them from the income that God provides as we are able and as they have need.

So we pay taxes to our governments so that they may do the work that is needed for our neighbors in society. We give to our families so that they have food and clothing, house and home, even educations. And we give to our church—our local congregations—so that the gospel may be preached and the sacraments administered for us and others.

The beauty of this is that God smiles upon all that giving. When you pay your taxes, God is pleased that you have served your neighbor who needs what the government provides. When you provide for your family, God is pleased. That you have helped your neighbor with the necessities of life by sharing with them what He has given to you, God is pleased. And when you give to your local congregation to support the ongoing preaching of the gospel, God is pleased. To all this giving, He says to you, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

Looking at giving in this light makes it a joy to give. The joy is multiplied. There is joy in you because you have served your neighbor in his need. There is joy in your neighbor for God has answered their prayers through you. And God rejoices and is pleased with it all. It might just make the humdrum of grocery shopping and

mortgage payments a bit more joyous. It might even make April 15 tolerable (St. Paul had to have this pep talk with the Romans, also, “This is why you pay taxes....” Rom. 13:6). And it surely will make the envelope placed into the offering plate a joyful thing.

Indeed God is pleased with you. You are saved by faith alone because of Jesus Christ. And that saving faith is never alone. It is busy and active. It serves the neighbor in society, family, and church with free and cheerful giving.

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Acolyte Schedule February - March

February

- 7 Mekelle Hurlbut
- 14* Grace Chegwidden
- 21 Rachel Sebesta
- 28* Marshall Hurlbut

March

- 6 Grace Chegwidden
- 13* Mekelle Hurlbut
- 20 Rachel Sebesta
- 27* Marshall Hurlbut

* Communion service

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LWML Flower Committee

February

Eunice Thaemert & Coleen Ancell

March

Shirley Krueger

**AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST
MIDWEEK CHILDREN
HELP FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN**

Several children of the Ambassadors for Christ Midweek program participated in a Feed My Starving Children event at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina, KS on January 17. Feed My Starving Children is a faith-based organization that provides food for the hungry in over 60 impoverished countries.

Mike Kratky organized a group of local children and adults numbering over 100 to participate in the packing event. AFC Midweek participants included: Valden, Vance and Tevis Dohl, Sydney and Molly Heller, Jaden Huehl, Lyra Pflugh, Hunter Reagen and Kale Sorensen. Midweek staff Annie Dohl, Lorelei Dohl, Alexis Pflugh, Sophia Schofield and Dena Sorensen also participated, as well as many others from Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Each package included a ladle of dried chicken stock laced with vitamins and nutrients, a ladle of dehydrated vegetables, a cup of soy and a cup of rice. This concoction has been specially formulated to meet the nutritional needs of starving people.

The packagers were divided into different tasks. Participants worked as scoopers, funnel baggers, weighers, sealers, sorters and boxers. Many of the little children worked as sorters helping count packages and fill boxes. Some also worked as scoopers. All worked together (folks ranging in age from 5 – 70+) to prepare the bags of specialty meals. When 36 packages were boxed, each table was encouraged to yell out their cheer. Ours was, “We got a box!” It was fun to yell and listen to the cheers of others as our boxes multiplied.

In less than two hours the group of 202 volunteers packed 37,000 meals. After the packaging was finished, participants got a chance to taste the meals they had prepared. Most agreed it could do with some salt &

pepper, but the food was certainly edible. Participants also watched brief videos about the meals and the difference they make in the lives of the recipients, providing physical, emotional and spiritual nutrition, strength and hope.

Area churches and businesses volunteered the money necessary to pay for the event, so our group volunteered only their time and did not have to raise funds.

If you would like to learn more about the event, ask a participant. If you would be interested in participating, organizers are already planning next year's packaging event. It's a great calling and a great feeling to be part of Feed My Starving Children



Hunter and Hadley Reagan were in charge of sorting packages and helping fill boxes for Table 9. Hunter also created the greatly original cheer, "We got a box!" Afterwards Hunter, who worked like a trooper for the entire two hours, commented, "My arms hurt."

Vance Dohl concentrates on getting a perfect dehydrated veggies.



Boxers Tevis Dohl and Sophia Schofield pose for picture while sealers Alexis Pflugh and Annie Dohl await the next package.



Flowers for Christmas 2015

<u>From</u>	<u>In Memory Of</u>
Ken, Shirley & Family	William Small Aunts & Uncles
Thelma Blasé & Family	Ray Blasé, Richard Fathers & Mothers
Marmie Schultz	Grandpa & Grandma Gier Bobby Gier
Shelly & Ray Keller	Harold & Mary Keller & Grandparents
Shirley Krueger & fam.	Ron Krueger
Emilie Wacker	Sid Wacker
John & Shelley Thaemert	Wilmer Thaemert
Gary & Ruth Sorensen	Grandfathers, & Grandmothers
Erwin Heine	Wife Marly Heine

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**News from Rev. Eric & Johanna Stinnett
serving in Ethiopia**

Taken from their January Newsletter

We are now in Africa! We arrived in Nairobi, Kenya on January 19th for our East Africa orientation. Our journey to Kenya was very smooth. We left for the airport on Mon-day, Jan. 18th at 6:30 am and landed in Kenya on Tuesday at 8:30 pm and arrived at the hostel where we are staying at 11:30 pm. Adjusting to the time zone difference in East Africa has been challenging with 9 hours dif-ference. One night, Luke was up from 2:00 am until 4:45 am and Rachael and Naomi woke up at 4:00 am and were up for the day too. Things are getting better though each day as our body clocks adjust. Our orientation will be going through January 29th. We then await our visas/ work permits from Ethiopia to find out when we will be moving there. We may begin language training in Kenya if our permits are take a while.

We are on Facebook! Note: you do not have to be-long to facebook to see this page. Just follow the link: [Facebook.com/stinnettsinethiopia](https://www.facebook.com/stinnettsinethiopia)

LWML Christmas Party

The Bethlehem LWML members and guests gathered at the old church in Vesper KS on December 12th for their annual Christmas party where the prayer partners are revealed for the past year and new ones are drawn for the coming year. Love Sock and Mite donations were also collected. This year the event began with a Saturday morning brunch at 9 AM. The brunch was followed by a game, gifts and a skit.



Coming Events at Bethlehem

Also available online at www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org

February 14 – Pancake Day

February 11 – Ash Wednesday Worship Service @ 5 pm

– Midweek Lenten suppers following worship service

Elder 40 Days of Study of the book of Concord

February 22 –Midweek Lenten, worship @ 5 pm, dinners begin following worship service

Our Weekly Worship schedule:

10:00 a.m. – Sunday School and BLTeens Bible study (school)

11 a.m. – Worship Service (Holy Communion on 2nd and 4th Sundays and some festivals)

12:00-12:15 p.m. a.m. – Adult Bible study (Parish hall)

5:00-Lenten Services Thursdays Feb 11-March 17

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