



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

# The Bethlehem Record

*The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church*

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**January 2015**

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*Note: This edition is shorter (and later) than usual due to no meeting minutes for LWML and BOCL, the busyness of December, and Pastor being on vacation.*



### 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

**“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem”** (Luke 9:51).

What a resolution for Jesus to make, knowing that it would be His last. But He knew it had to be done for salvation to be won for us.

My New Year's resolutions have never had much depth. I've made the typical “lose weight / get in shape / eat better” resolutions, and many others that I can't even remember anymore.

Typically our resolutions have to do with our physical world – our health, possessions, jobs, and families. Have you ever set a spiritual goal for yourself? Like reading through the whole Bible? Or maybe the Psalms? Ever resolved to be in church more often? Or get involved at church or with some other charitable work? The possibilities are endless.

This is why we should always seek the Lord's blessing and direction on our resolutions. A hymn stanza says it so well:  
*With the Lord begin your task;*

*Jesus will direct it.*

*For His aid and counsel ask;*

*Jesus will perfect it.*

*Ev'ry morn with Jesus rise,*

*And when day is ended,*

*In His name then close your eyes;*

*Be to Him commended.*

(LSB #869:1)

How about our congregation? What goals should we be talking about, planning for, and praying to the Lord for guidance and blessing? What do we do well?

What could we do better? Again, the possibilities are endless.

But what we should not do is not do anything. Even as we resolve to get our own physical bodies into shape, so also we need to be in shape as a congregation. We are the body of Christ (1 Cor 12; Romans 12). We are His eyes, ears, hands, feet, arms, and legs that move where Christ, our head, directs us.

There are some exciting possibilities on the horizon for sharing the Gospel. If you are a Wilson Communications cable subscriber, you may be aware that channel 58 is for Sylvan Grove community broadcasts, which are school sporting events so far. We may be able to record and broadcast our worship service to the community through this medium. It may also provide our nursing home and homebound members a video/DVD option instead of the audio CD.

We also have some challenges ahead of us, too. There will be changes in the Church Council as some have reached their term limits. Will we be able to sustain our levels of giving so our reliance on the Endowment fund will be minimal? The devil will not go easy on us. Not when he sees the Good News reaching hearts and touching lives like it is here.

Therefore, let us “set our face” to follow Christ Jesus, and resolve to be a family of God sharing Jesus and serving Him faithfully!

*- Pastor Augustine*

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## January Stewardship Newsletter Article

Stewardship doesn't have to be difficult. We often make it more difficult than it need be. The fundamentals of stewardship come from answering these basic questions: Who are you? To whom do I give? And how much? It's that simple.

So who are you? Look at the Table of Duties in the Small Catechism. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties and questions, arise in giving to the church.

So what are our stewardship duties as members of the church? The Table of Duties gives us a guide. If you are a hearer, a member of the church who receives instruction, St. Paul taught: "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor" (Gal 6:6). This means that the local congregation is primary.

The primary recipient of stewardship resides here.. Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things are given out. Therefore, we give to the local congregation to ensure that this continues. We don't vote with our giving. We don't let the pastor or the congregation know we are unhappy by how we give: because we are supposed to see our giving as giving to our Lord!

Thus, when God calls us to give to the church, He has His work in mind – especially right where we live. For "the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Cor 9:14). "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Gal 6:7).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are these: to give regularly (1 Cor 6:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor 16:1–2; 2 Cor 8:12), and generously (2 Cor 8:20) of our first fruits (Gen 4:4; Prov 3:9; Lev 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor 9:7), and love (2 Cor 8:23).

In other words, giving to the church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We set it aside beforehand, before anything else is spent. From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for them. We're not bound to that command in the same way as they were. Just like we are not bound to all the

regulations of the Sabbath day (no physical labor, no hot meals, etc.). But the pattern remains: Christians still gather for worship once a week, for how could we do less than the Israelites did? Likewise, does it seem right that we would support the New Testament ministry at a rate less than the Israelites supported the Old Testament ministry?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy. For it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

It's that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that, makes all our work holy work, work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

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## Annual Meeting and Elections

The annual meeting and elections will be held on January 25 following the worship service. 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 Mary Powell and Shirley and Dale Krueger have indicated they are declining to run again.
- Elder (Phil Chegwiddden is eligible for a second term)
- President (John Thaemert is eligible for a second term)
- Vice President (Dell Gier 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.

A potluck meal will be served after the meeting. The Board of Church Life will provide beverages and table service. The congregation is invited to bring a dish to share (large enough to serve 8-10 people).

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**LWML Flower Committee**

**January 2015**

**Lu Willingham & Lorelei Dohl**

*Tentative schedule*

**February**

**Eunice Thaemert & Coleen Ancell**

*Tentative schedule*

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**Flowers for Christmas 2014**

<u>From</u>	<u>In Memory Of</u>
Larry & Billie Groth	Elmer & Margaret Groth
S. Krueger & Family	Ron Krueger
S. Krueger & Family	Fred & Blanche Zvolanek
	Walter & Leona Krueger
Marmie Wacker	Sidney Wacker
	Robert & Leonette Gier
	Bobby Gier
Ray & Lu Willingham	Kim Willingham, Son
Terry Lilak	Vera Meyer
Lois Gier	Harvey & Florence Gier
Pastor & Kim Augustine	Grandparents
John & Shelly Thaemert	Wilmer Thaemert
Thelma Blase & Fam.	Ray Blase
Ken & Shirley Small & Fam.	William Small & Parents, Grandparents & Picnic Aunts
Gary & Ruth Sorensen	Grandparents
Lois & Eunice	Marilyn Peter

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**Coming Events**

- February 1 – BLTeens making Super Bowl sub sandwich meals
  - February 8 – 52<sup>nd</sup> annual Pancake Day
- Look for more details in the Sunday bulletins soon.

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**Baptismal Birthdays in January**

*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!*



Kenneth Becker	Evan Lamb
Willis Becker	Jodi Nelson
Titus (Pete) Falcon Jr.	Douglas Princ
Gary Frederking	Kent Rahmeier
Tyler Gier	James Thaemert
Barbara Groth	Clarence Thrun
Teri Hiitter	Lyle Wohler
Jolene Janssen	

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**Acolyte Schedule  
January - February**

January 4	Marshall Hurlbut
11*	Hannah Wolting
18	Rachel Sebesta
25*	Kilby Meyer
February 1	Kayla Augustine
8*	Grace Chegwiddden
15	Marshall Hurlbut
Ash Wednesday 18*+	Hannah Wolting
22*	Rachel Sebesta
25+	Kilby Meyer

\* Communion service  
+ Lent service

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**Blood Drive is January 30**

On January 30, the American Red Cross will be at Bethlehem to host a blood drive. Why should you consider giving? Consider this: 1 donation may help save up to 3 lives.

Contact Dell Gier for your appointment or call the Red Cross at 800-733-2767. Smartphone users can download the Red Cross donor app and schedule your appointment, or you can log on to [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org).

# Coming Events at Bethlehem

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

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January 7 – BOCL meeting

January 8 – Elders meeting

January 11 – Church Council meeting

January 14 – LifeLight bible study begins (meets weekly)

January 25 – Annual Voters meeting and congregational potluck

February 1 – BLTeens Super Bowl Subs

February 8 – Pancake Day

## *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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