

# The Bethlehem Record

The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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A family of God sharing Jesus  
and serving Him faithfully

July 2014

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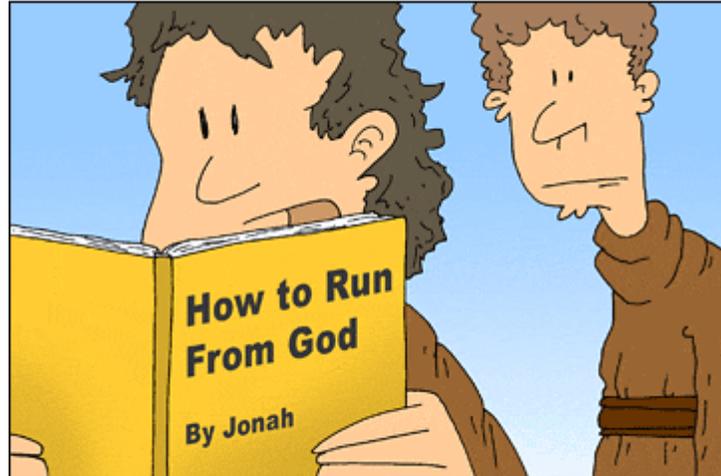
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### Our Mission Statement

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.

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Thanks to Richard Germain (See Jonah 1-4)

09-19-2008

IT JUST SAYS "DON'T"

### The Pastor's Page

Have you ever felt like Jonah? It's a syndrome the devil likes to inflict on Christians, especially pastors, in my opinion.

You may recall the story of Jonah as the prophet who was swallowed up by a great fish. But the story of Jonah goes much deeper than that.

God had directed Jonah to go preach to the people of Nineveh. Jonah didn't want to go and so he boarded a ship going the other way. So, as the cartoon above indicates, Jonah tried running away.

And it didn't work. God worked on Jonah so that he understood his duty as a prophet and proclaimer of God's justice and mercy; His Law and Gospel. Repent, people of Nineveh, or be destroyed. Repent, and live in the grace of Almighty God.

Jonah prophesied as commanded. And much to his dismay, the people of Nineveh

listened and repented and believed in the Lord. God had spared them.

When Jonah tried to flee, God basically told him, "Don't." When Jonah grumbled because God had seen the repentance and faith of the people, God basically told him, "Don't."

So what does this have to do with you and me? Plenty. How often are you confronted with a clear message from the Word of God and you decide to ignore it? Whether a message to stop a particular sin, or a message to share with someone who should hear it, our natural sinful tendency is to run, hide, go somewhere else so you've got the excuse not to do what God's Word has spoken. And God says, "Don't."

Don't listen to the devil and your old Adam who wants to relish in that special sin or avoid doing something that a follower of Jesus should do.

Sadly, pastors, including yours truly, also suffer from the "Jonah syndrome" from time to time.

(continues on page 2)

How? Pastors are ones who are called and sent by God to go where He leads. Sometimes, pastors go that place willingly. Other times, well, the “old Jonah” in them cries out, “No! Not there! Anywhere but there!” (as Jonah did when God said to go to Nineveh).

But pastors go not only to a place, but also to people. People that are different; that have challenges or a lack of understanding. Some pastors willingly and easily embrace those people where they are at, regardless of how different they are from him. That is the Christ-like image all pastors are to follow (and all believers for that matter). But some will shake their heads, look up to heaven and grumble at God and say, “Really?!? You want to save *this* person? You want me to preach to *these* people?”

Jonah pronounced his judgment upon the people. He didn’t think they were worthy of God’s mercy. Fortunately for them, Jonah’s judgment was not God’s judgment. When pastors fall into the “Jonah syndrome”, God’s message to them is simple: “Don’t”.

Don’t pronounce a judgment that isn’t yours to give. Don’t give up on preaching the message that all must hear. Don’t give up on speaking the Law to expose sin for what it is and then apply the sweet, saving Gospel of Christ crucified.

We never know how God will use us as His witnesses. So when the temptation to be like Jonah rises up – either to run away from the opportunity or to grumble at God for how He decided to give His grace – remember that God is God, and we are not. Submit to God’s “Don’t” so that He can do His will among us and those who do not yet know His love and mercy. Be forgiven and renewed in your Christian life and give thanks to God that He took the time and effort to save you through Jesus Christ our Lord. And pray for your pastor. ☺

*Pastor Augustine*

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### **BOCL Minutes**

June 3, 2014

The meeting was brought to order by Chairman Gary Frederking. Members present were Shirley Krueger, Dale Krueger, Brock Mueller, Ruth Mueller, Gary Frederking, and Pastor Augustine. Pastor opened with a prayer. Minutes from previous meeting were read and approved.

June 29th is the day Pastor Hoppe will be here for circuit counseling. Ruth volunteered to be the contact person for the potluck dinner being held on that day. We are responsible for table service and drinks.

VBS was discussed, Brock called Justine Dohl to see if she would be willing to organize it. She will let us know.

Lincoln County Fair-Peach Cobbler will be served the first and second night of the fair. Shirley will see about reserving a spot in the building (same place we had last year) again for serving.

Next Blood Drive is scheduled for July 11. Dell is still willing to do the sign-up. Ruth will provide snacks.

Next meeting is scheduled for July 1st at 8:00 p.m. Brock & Ruth will be guest greeters for July. We closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Brock L Mueller

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### **July Stewardship Newsletter Article**

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?” asked the rich young ruler. Jesus said, “You know the commandments.” And he replied, “All these I have kept from my youth.” And Jesus said to him, “One thing you lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Lk 18:18-22).

As we listen to this, one question is raised in our minds: Is Jesus speaking to us also or only to the rich young ruler? In other words, is Jesus telling us to sell all that we have and give it to the poor?”

As good Lutherans, we answer, No! But why? Why should we not sell all that we have and distribute it to the poor? The simplest explanation is this: If we sold everything we have, our wife and our children would be neglected. In other words, to sell everything we have and give it to the poor would ignore, even abandon, those whom God has placed in our care. Our money, everything we have, is not to be used solely for the church. But that doesn’t mean it isn’t to be used for the purpose God intends.

Everyone has three stations in life, three spheres in which we live and are to be of service to our neighbors. These stations are the church, the family, and society. We are members of all three of these by birth. We are born into the church by water and the Word of God, and our duties to others in the church arise from either our birth into the church or the birth of others by baptism into it. We are born into a family and our duties to others stem from either our birth into that family or the birth of others into our family. Finally, we are born into society, which is simply a further extension of our birth into our family. The duties we have toward other members of society come from either our birth or the birth of others into the same society.

All that we have are to be pressed into service for the church, the family, and society. If we were to sell all we have and give only to one, the other two would be neglected, and our duties toward them would falter.

So consider your life and all that you have in light of these three stations. You pay taxes to support and help those in society. You save for college for your children, provide food, clothing, and shelter for the members of your family.

But the one that is usually thought of last is the church. Since the needs of the family and society are more immediate, the church is often given what is left over. This is not how it should be. Rather, we are to give of our first fruits, from off the top, the best, even as Abel gave the best of his flock.

This requires forethought and intent. It means that you sit down and make a plan of what you will give from the beginning. It means sticking to it even when it seems that there are other more immediate and pressing things.

Why? Because all that we have and all that we are is given to us by our gracious and giving God. He spared no expense for us and our salvation. He gave up His Son into death so that our sins are forgiven, and we will live. What is more, He provides for all that we need for this body and life. And our lives in this world, among these three spheres of the church, the family, and society, are to mirror the generosity of the one who gave us life in all three by birth.

Don't let the church, your divine family, be ignored or even be an afterthought. It is nurturing you, bringing you up in salvation by Word and Sacrament for eternal life.

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### LWML News

The Bethlehem LWML group met for their bi-monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 4th, at 7:00 p.m. at the Parish Hall. Shelly opened the meeting with devotions and singing. Justine led the Bible Study entitled "Hope and a Future" based on Jeremiah 29:11. Living in God's grace and the constant anticipation and hope of His future plans for us with Him is the mark of spiritual maturity. So, fix your hope on God and His grace in your life, and God will be glorified.

President Coleen then brought the meeting to order. Roll call was answered by 11 members. Secretary Lois read the minutes of the April 1st meeting and they were approved as read. Ramie gave the Treasurer's report and they were approved. She reported \$1243.74 in the Cookbook acct., \$1564.34 in the funeral luncheon acct., and \$687.27 in the Home Fund acct., bringing the

total balance to \$3495.35.

**Committee reports** were given as follows:

- 1) Greeting Cards - - We thanked Euni for doing an excellent job of keeping a great selection of cards available for sale.
- 2) Mission of Love - - Sophia & Lorelei reported on the 'Baby Kits' that we are Collecting on the bassinet in the back of the church proper. They will take donations until the end of June. In July until September we will start collecting items for the 'School Kits'. The congregation is invited to help collect these items for the LWML - these are Mission projects. Lu is still in charge of trimming 'Stamps for Missions'. Coleen is doing the Campbell's soup labels.
- 3) Funeral lunches - - No report because of no funerals.
- 4) Cheer - - Lois H. has been sending cards & especially birthday cards for member birthdays.
- 5) Banners - - Shelly fixed the names on the Confirmation banner & also continues to hang the banners.
- 6) Church guests- - Shirley Small sends cards to our church guests.
- 7) Campus ministry - - Ramie reported this is all done until fall school resumes.
- 8) Flowers - - Monthly committees were reminded to water the Parish Hall plants inside when it is your month. The June committee is Lorelei & Sophia, and the July committee is Barbara Meitler and Cheryl Gier.
- 9) Networker, Library, Historian, and Prayer Chain committees - - No Report.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

We discussed fixing up the 'flower box' outside the south church door. More information following later.

The Bobby Gier Farm Sale food stand went very well giving us a profit of \$548.54. Thanks to all who helped work the sale and furnished pies.

Shelly shopped for gifts for the confirmation and graduation students and also wrapped them.

The new refrigerator is in the Parish Hall and ready for use. It has been decided that no flowers will be stored in the new refrigerator.

The new 'Drink Center' is installed and ready for use. We will use it for the first time at our potluck Sunday dinner at noon on June 29th.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Coleen and Shelly bought new items and new bags for the 'Kids Church Bags' and discarded the old bags.

Shelly reported on the Spring Rally at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, North Ellsworth. It was a terribly windy day but the women of their new LWML did a super job on the rally and the supper.

Wednesday, June 25th, our LWML will be hosting the Park Manor June Birthday Party at Lincoln at 2:00 p.m. Shelly & Lorelei are in charge of the entertainment with possibly some of the Mid-Week kids singing.

In September we will be having a Fall LWML event. The committee planning this will be Emilie and Ramie. Shirley K. and Euni will be our LWML Sunday committee for Oct. 5th.

The Bazaar committee for Saturday, Oct. 6th is Coleen & Shelly. Lois Gier again donated a quilt to sell tickets on. Discussion was held on maybe adding a 'Large Garage Sale' outside on the cement slab for all congregation members to donate to - with proceeds going to our church expenses. More discussion will follow at our next meeting. And, we will need extra help with this 'garage sale' as the women will be busy serving food in the Parish Hall.

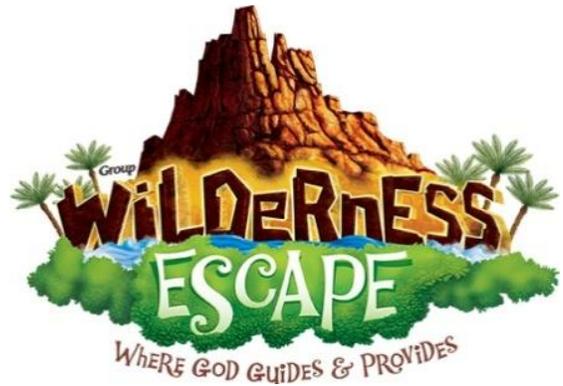
We are trying to find a date to visit June Butenhoff at the Wilson Nursing Home for her birthday in June. The watering schedule for the outside plants is as follows: Until June 7th - - Coleen, June 8 - 21 is Justine, June 22 - July 5th is Ramie, July 6 - 19 is Annie, July 20 - August 2nd is Emilie, August 3 - 16<sup>th</sup> is Lorelei, August 17th - 30th is Shirley K., August 31 - Sept. 13th is Shelly, Sept. 14th - 27th is Cheryl. Don't forget to water all plants outside and many thanks!

The meeting was adjourned followed by closing prayer by Shelly. The next LWML will be Bible Study on July 2nd with Pastor Augustine doing the Bible Study.

Lois W. will be hostess.

Thanks to Euni for being our hostess and serving delicious refreshments.

Respectfully Submitted, Lois Walter, LWML Secretary



The kids will learn about Moses and the Israelites wandering in the wilderness.

Contact Justine if you can help teach, cook, clean, do activities, or sponsor food and supplies. Over 60 children have been invited to attend, so we need lots of helpers!

As in past years, we will collect a cash offering each night to support a mission. This year's mission we will support is the LCMS Disaster Relief efforts directed at those affected by the tornados in Pilger, Nebraska.

We will also collect pop can tabs for the Ronald McDonald house in Kansas City, and we will collect food for the Lincoln County Food Pantry. Help our kids learn how to be good stewards and good neighbors with all these giving opportunities!

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### Gospel living and giving

Bethlehem has been blessed by God for over 130 years with the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation that flow from the font, the altar, and the spoken Word of God. Throughout our past, many have faithfully contributed financial gifts, volunteered their time and talents, and prayed for God to sustain and grow His kingdom. As children of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, we have a holy obligation to support the work of the kingdom on earth.

The Church Council would like to encourage each person to consider how he/she has been blessed and respond by tithing a percentage of income to the church. Our financial reserves are dwindling by \$30,000+ per year and *may last only four more years*. As the Council prays and plans for what may come in the future, we can extend our reserves by contributing more in the short term. Please let the Gospel have its way with you that you may see what a blessing you have been given in Christ Jesus. Then joyfully respond with your giving that future generations may also know the gifts of the Gospel.

## LWML Flower Committee

July

Barb Meitler, Cheryl Gier

August

Coleen Ancell, Justine Dohl

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### Vacation Bible School

VBS will take place at Bethlehem from July 14 – 18. Justine Dohl has stepped in to be the director this year and we look forward to hosting another great year of VBS. This year's theme is:

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## Baptismal Birthdays in July

*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!*



Thelma Blase  
 Blake Chegwidden  
 Erwin Heine  
 Wyatt Heine  
 Dale Krueger  
 Susan Kurz-Sebesta

Connie Meitler  
 Peggy Meyer  
 Sophia Schofield  
 Eli Schultz  
 Isaac Schultz  
 Shirley Small

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## Circuit 13 News

On the horizon is the next round of Circuit, District, and Synod activities. Circuit Convocation will be September 14, 2014 at St. Paul's Lutheran of north Ellsworth. Rev. John Mehl will be our special guest presenter and will talk about the mission work he assisted with in Asia and how he now serves as the director of mission partnerships and church relations at Concordia University – Nebraska (Seward). We will also elect the Circuit Visitor for 2015-18. We may also discuss possible circuit realignments to eliminate the synodical exemptions for the circuits not having enough communicant members (per Synod bylaws). The realignments will be part of District Convention business when it meets in June, 2015. Art Dohl is our Circuit Forum representative from the congregation, but any member is able and encouraged to attend.

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## Acolyte Schedule July - August

July 6	Hannah Wolting
13*	Kilby Meyer
20	Kayla Augustine
27*	Marshall Hurlbut
August 3	Rachel Sebesta
10*	Grace Chegwidden
17	Hannah Wolting
24*	Kilby Meyer
31	Kayla Augustine

\* Communion service

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## Voters Meeting Notice

The next quarterly voters meeting will be held after service on Sunday, July 27. Agenda items are to be submitted to the Church Council by their meeting on July 20. No potluck is scheduled as the Gier reunion will take place that afternoon in the Parish Hall.

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## Lutheran Family Retreat

Lutheran Family Retreat is August 1-3, 2014, at Camp Webster, just off I-70 near Salina, Kansas. The facility provides air-conditioned housing and dining, plus lots of scenic outdoor areas and activities for all members of the family. Come and join other Christian families for a weekend of relaxation, worship and lots and lots of fun and good food! Retreat fees are \$80.00/person age 4 and older - with children 3 and under \$15.00. A deposit of \$15 is required for each person age 4 and older by July 18, 2014. You can register on-line @ [www.lutheranfamilyretreat.org](http://www.lutheranfamilyretreat.org) or pick-up a brochure from your LLL or LWML representative. A registration form is available in the brochure and online. For more information on the camp, go to [www.webstercc.org](http://www.webstercc.org). For more information on the family retreat, pick up a flyer in the narthex, visit the website @ [www.lutheranfamilyretreat.org](http://www.lutheranfamilyretreat.org); or contact Carroll or Barb Hackbart @ 785-494-2425, [cbhack@yahoo.com](mailto:cbhack@yahoo.com).

The Lutheran Family Retreat sponsors are your Kansas District Lutheran Laymen's League and the Lutheran Women's Missionary League.

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## Together In Mission Update

Dear mission partners,

Good morning from Guatemala!, we have arrived safely in La Antigua. To keep everyone up to date on our adventures and the work in Lima, I have created a blog that can be found at: <http://mercyfirsttolast.com>

There isn't a lot of content at this point, but the most recent newsletter is available, and some information tabs on the front page. I will regularly be adding content like pictures, stories and updates on the family. Check it out, share with your friends, and let me know if there's anything you would like to see on the blog.

Pastor Gale

*Received via email received on 5-31-2014*

# Coming Events at Bethlehem

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

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July 1 – Board of Church Life meeting

July 2 – LWML Bible Study

July 7-12 – Pastor and BLTeens attending Higher Things youth conference

July 13 – Elders Meeting

July 14-18 – Vacation Bible School

July 20 – Church Council meeting

July 24-26 – Lincoln County Fair / Peach Cobbler stand (Thursday & Friday)

July 27 – Quarterly Voters meeting

## *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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