

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

The Bethlehem Record

The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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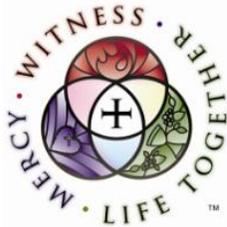
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May 2014

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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

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."

Luke 2:10

Are you afraid yet? Are you concerned about the things you've read or heard about our financial situation at Bethlehem? It's one thing for the pastor to talk about it once in a while. It's easy to glance over that little note on the back page of the bulletin that says "weekly need is \$2,000". But now more people are aware. More of you are talking and thinking about our future.

And that's a good thing. Thinking about the future of our congregation, that is. Fear – not such a good thing.

Fear comes from conflicts of the past and unknown futures. Nothing scares us more than money – or the lack thereof. We are confronting the possible shortage of funds within the next 4-5 years. Fear is a function of God's Law. It forces us to reckon with who we are, where we're at, and what might happen.

We have been blessed over many years – many decades, in fact – with people who have remembered Bethlehem in their estate planning. These gifts have sustained and grown the congregation in numerous ways. But as John Thaemert said at the voters meeting last Sunday, "Counting on people to die and leave us money is not a good financial plan" (may not be his

exact words, but you hopefully get the point).

Discussions have begun. Different groups within the congregation have met and expressed their questions and concerns; and also their ideas on what we can and should do for our future. A bulletin announcement has run for a few weeks now that encourages each person to consider their financial giving. I attended an endowment and fundraising seminar in Lincoln and have some ideas to share with the Church Council when we next meet.

I believe we have the people and resources to meet our budget. Many of you have been through "droughts" of giving before and are confident that God will provide for us. Indeed, He will! We just might have to live through the growing pains to get there.

There is no quick-fix to a \$30,000+ deficit. It's going to take time. It's going to take patient teaching and conversation with each other to build each other up in our life together in Christ (1 Thes 5:11).

Ultimately, it's going to take sacrifice as we put the support of the Church first instead of the things of the world (wants or needs). It's learning to live on less so that God's Word and Sacraments would continue to bring people into the Kingdom of God by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.

There will be great temptations along the way. Great and

(continues on page 2)

(Pastor's article continued)

powerful temptations to fear and fight one another in what to do or not to do. Terrible temptations to point fingers and pronounce judgment. That goes for all of you reading this as well as for me who is writing it.

Thank you to those who have increased your giving in response to our need and faith in the Gospel that enables us to do good in God's eyes. Continue to be faithful and you will see great blessings from the Lord (Mal. 3:10).

God has made us into a body to function and move and grow. Let us heed the Word of God delivered to humble shepherds to fear not because we have good news of great joy that is for all people. Jesus is with us. We are free of our sins. Christ is risen from the dead. Therefore, we will also rise from death – and the fears of today. A blessed Eastertide to you all!

- *Pastor Augustine*

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May Stewardship Newsletter Article

Jesus is risen from the dead, and He is not angry. He appears to the eleven, locked and hidden away for fear of the Jews. He gives them peace, when there seems to be no peace. He gives them hope, when all hope seems to be lost. He gives them forgiveness, life, and salvation, even though they all fled and watched Him die. But Christ is risen and He is not angry. No one took His life from Him, but He laid it down willingly. He offered it up of His own accord. Thus, He does not blame them. He is not angry. He gives them His Spirit that they may be one and not alone, that they may have peace, that they may live forgiven and free from fear, that they might go do the same into all the world. Christ is risen and He is not angry.

Our God is a God who gives gifts. He gives because that is who He is and what He does. He created us for this purpose. The God who is love created us to be loved. And to love is to give of oneself for the good of another. And so He gives daily bread. He gives food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, and faithful neighbors.

He also gave us His only-begotten Son. And everything He did, He did for us. He took up our flesh, was born of a woman, to fulfill the Law for us. He was circumcised, had sacrifices offered on His behalf, denied Himself certain foods, and ate the Passover to end them

all. The same is true of the Moral Law. He kept it for us. His fasting and temptation were done for us. He fulfilled what we were unable, and unwilling, to do. But that is not all. He not only kept the Law, He also allowed the Law to do to Him all that justice demanded it do to us. He who knew no sin, became sin. The guiltless guilty with His own Blood upon His hands.

And still he gives us more. He gave us His Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Through the means of grace—the Word, Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, the Holy Supper—the Spirit of Christ continues to deliver the fruits of His death and pour the benefits of His resurrection upon our heads, into our ears and mouths. We are not alone. We are not left as orphans. He is with us; He is for us, through these means. And by them we are knitted together into one body. This is the giving nature of our God. The depths of His love know no bounds.

Despite all this, we still hold back. We don't give cheerfully from our firstfruits. We don't with glad hearts, with planning and forethought, set our minds to give to the ministry of Word and Sacrament for the life of the world. We tend to give begrudgingly, apprehensively, and with what is left over. We don't give out of love for God and one another, as those united by His Spirit in the bond of peace, but out of a feeling of compulsion. How will they know us by our love, when we do not even love the means by which God gives us His love enough to support it with the other gifts He has given?

If you find it difficult to give freely, cheerfully, and proportionally, you are not alone. That sin, that selfishness is something inherent to our fallen nature. No, you are not alone. We have been knitted together into one body by the Holy Spirit. We are to bear one another's burdens. So let not your hearts be troubled. For the God of Love, the giver of every good and perfect gift, has given His own Son to bear yours. He carries your anxiety and worry. He dispels all your fears. Do not be afraid. Give from out of your poverty or your abundance. It matters not, because Jesus is risen from the dead and He is not angry. He ascended into heaven to fill all things. He fills you with His peace, His joy, His generosity, and His love. And nothing can separate you from that.

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Circuit 13 News

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 being done in Asia and how he now prepares students for mission work at Concordia University – Nebraska (Seward).

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Blood Drive is May 12



American Red Cross

The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
Give blood.™

redcrossblood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS

On May 12 the American Red Cross will be at Bethlehem to host a blood drive. A goal of 20 donors was set with a maximum of 26 slots available. Donations will be accepted by appointment.

Why should you consider giving? According to the American Red Cross, blood products can help save the lives of accident victims, surgical patients and those receiving cancer treatments. Each day in the U.S. 38,000 units of blood are needed. That means that every 2 seconds, someone needs blood. 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.

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BOCL Minutes April 7, 2014

The meeting was brought to order by Chairman Gary Frederking. Members present were: Gary Frederking, Shirley Krueger, Dale Krueger, Kylie Ehrich, Mary Powell, Brock Mueller, Ruth Mueller, Warren Meitler, and Pastor Augustine.

Previous minutes were read and approved. Easter breakfast was discussed, the board will provide the coffee, Gary Frederking volunteered to bring the orange juice, the congregation is asked to bring breakfast dishes to share. The contact person about Easter breakfast is Shirley Krueger.

Although there were no motions made at this meeting, an item discussed was about the guest greeter. It was brought up that perhaps we could ask the ushers or elder for assistance to let the guest greeter of the

month know of visitors attending church before the end of the service.

The next blood drive is set for May 12. Warren Meitler volunteered Barb Meitler to make sandwiches again. Dell Gier is still in charge of appointments for the blood drive.

Ruth Mueller will contact Shelly Thaemert about heading VBS, and asking which dates would work.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 4 after church. Warren Meitler will be the May guest greeter.

Meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Brock L Mueller secretary

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Acolyte Schedule May - June

May 4	Hannah Wolting
May 11*	Marshall Hurlbut
May 18	Rachel Sebesta
May 25*	Grace Chegwiddden
June 1	Kilby Meyer
June 8*	Kayla Augustine
June 15	Marshall Hurlbut
June 22*	Rachel Sebesta
June 29	Grace Chegwiddden

* Communion service

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Baptismal Birthdays in May

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!



Chesley Dohl	Tasha Meitler
Jason Dohl	Tyler Nelson
Valden Dohl	Joyce Naused
Deborah Falcon	Ramie Schulteis
Billie Groth	Marmie Schultz
Lydia Janssen	Lukas Sebesta
Shelly Keller	Wesley Thrun
Isabel Kirk	Janet Trost

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Congratulations Confirmands!



Confirmed in Christ on April 13, 2014 (Palm Sunday):
Lukas Sebesta, Cheyenne Meyer, Blake Chegwiddden,
Morgan Kubick, and Brody Schofield

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LWML News

LWML Flower Committee

May

Annie Dohl & Ramie Schulteis

June

Lorelei Dohl % Sophia Schofield

LWML MEETING - - APRIL 1, 2014

On Tuesday, April 1, 2014 the LWML of Bethlehem met for their bi-monthly meeting at 7:00 p.m. Ramie opened the evening with devotions. Lois W. led the group in singing "What a Friend we Have in Jesus" and then had a Bible Study using some Lenten & Easter Bible trivia questions quoting the answers from Scripture, after the members answered the question.

President Coleen then brought the meeting to order. Roll call was answered by 12 members. Secretary Lois read the minutes of the February 12th meeting and they were approved as read. Ramie gave the Treasurer's report and they were approved. She reported \$1243.74 in the Cookbook Fund, \$1564.34 in the Funeral Luncheon Fund, and \$1257.19 in the Home Fund, bringing the total balance to \$ 4065.27. Committee reports were given as follows:

- 1) Greeting Cards - - We have a great selection of cards available for you, the Members of the congregation.
- 2) Mission of Love - - We are going to be collecting items for "Baby Care Kits" For Lutheran World Relief, which are due by October. The committee will be putting write-ups in the bulletins and on our LWML bulletin board in the Parish Hall, so anyone in the congregation can refer to this and help with collecting these items for the kits. Watch for the 'collection rack'!
- 3) Funeral lunches - - We are going to be using up the frozen turkey & ham for casseroles for the Lenten meals we are going to furnish on April 2 & 9.
- 4) Cheer - - We all signed cards for Lois H. (sympathy), Elda Chegwiddden (birthday), and Elvera Fischer (get-well).
- 5) Banners - - There was no report.
- 6) No reports also from the committees on church guests, campus ministry, networker, historian, library, or prayer chain.
- 7) Flowers - - Responsible for alter flowers in April are Justine & Emilie, and for May, Annie and Ramie.

OLD BUSINESS:

Shelly K. and Emilie W. was the 2013 Financial Review committee and they found the Treasurer's books to be in order.

We will be serving the Lenten meals on Wednesday, April 2nd and 9th. Casseroles will be made, along with salads, bread, and desserts. The donations for the meal will go towards the refrigerator and the new project of the 'drink center' in the Parish Hall (if approved by voters').

The new refrigerator and the new file cabinet have been purchased. The file cabinet for LWML use is stored in the church balcony, so devotions, Bible studies, and skits, and other LWML information, will be accessible to LWML members. The refrigerator will be delivered on April 9th. It is only a refrigerator with no freezer.

NEW BUSINESS:

The new 'drink center' we've been discussing was voted on at our meeting and we will go ahead and ask the Board of Trustees and the Church Council for their approval. A sketch of the 'drink center' was passed around to look at.

The 2014 watering schedule for all outside plants and the flower box, was passed out to each member.

Lois W. will water March 30 – April 12, Lu W. will water April 13 – 26, Barb Mettlen will water April 27 – May 10, Eunice T. will water May 11 – 24, and Coleen A. will water May 25 – June 7. There is also a watering schedule on the Parish Hall bulletin board. Please call the next person to remind them, as you finish your watering.

Discussion was held about having the lunch stand at Bobby Gier’s farm sale on Saturday, April 26 at his farm. We voted OK to go ahead and do it. We will need everyone’s help, as it may last most of the day. We will most likely serve sloppy joes and pie, plus some other foods. Committee will let you know what we need.

The Spring Rally of the LWML-LLL will be held on Sunday, April 27th at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Ellsworth, beginning at 2:00. The in-gathering will be for the County Food Bank in Ellsworth, so start collecting some items to donate. The list is on the Parish Hall bulletin board. We will also need 2 delegates for the meeting. The supper will be by free-will donation.

Confirmation gifts were bought for the confirmation class of 5 eighth graders. Shelly will get them ready and wrap them. She will also find some cards & bookmarks for the 7 adults confirmation class. The LWML will host a reception following the adult confirmation on April 6th. Lois W. will get the serving table and punch ready and all LWML members are asked to bring cookies or bars.

On Wednesday, May 7th we will have our LWML Prayer Service, instead of Bible Study. Annie D. is in charge of the Prayer Service. Emilie W. is hostess for the evening. ANYONE in the congregation is welcome to attend the Prayer Service!

The meeting was adjourned followed by praying The Lords’ Prayer.

Shirley K. served delicious refreshments.
Respectfully Submitted, Lois Walter, LWML Secretary

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Voters Meeting Summary

On April 27, the regular Quarterly Voters Meeting was held after worship. The usual reports were presented and approved. Copies are available in the narthex.

The Voters approved the LWML’s request via the Board of Trustees to build and install a drink station in the northeast corner of the parish hall. This will provide a more permanent and sturdy area for storing and serving the drinks for our various events.

The Trustees also asked for contacts of anyone interested in renting the church pasture for the year or a

donation of cattle to graze for the summer and sell in the fall. Contact one of the trustees or the church office.

Although volunteer mowing of the cemetery was offered, the voters decided to retain Kissick’s to mow and trim the cemetery again this year.

The voters were informed by Pastor Augustine that the office PC is an old machine and runs on Windows XP which is no longer supported by Microsoft. A new PC will be needed, but is not required at the moment. A bid from Wilson Communications was presented but Pastor recommended we continue searching for a replacement. The voters decided to request a free-will offering to pay for the cost of the new PC so it would not affect the budget.

Much discussion was also heard regarding our reliance on the endowment fund to meet our expenses and our need to give more in the short term. Pastor Hoppe, Circuit Visitor, will be in attendance on June 29 for his synodical visitation duties and to hear our concerns regarding our long-term future.

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Easter Lily Donations

Many thanks to the following folks for donating Easter lilies this year. Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

<u>From</u>	<u>In Memory of</u>
Gary & Ruth Sorensen	Gary & Ruth’s Ancestors
Dale & Barb Mettlen	For our Parents
Ancell Family	Keith Ancell
Les & Lois Walter	Ted & Anita Walter
	Rev & Mrs. E. F. Peter
Thelma Blasé	Raymond Blasé & Richard
Kenneth Small Family	William Small
	Glenn & Eunice Small
Kenneth Small Family	Blasé Grandparents
	Strecker Grandparents
	Lenora Strecker
Emilie Wacker	Pete & Lorene Peterman
	Bill & Esther Stockamp
	Robert & Sophie Gier
	August & Amelia Heine
	Sidney Wacker
	Robert A Gier
Ray & Shelly Keller	Harold & Mirabelle Keller
John Thaemert family	Wilmer Thaemert

April 13 Palm Leaves & Daffodils

Emilie Wacker	Robert & Leonette Gier
Marmie Schultz (Daffodils)	Robert & Leonette Gier

Coming Events at Bethlehem

Also available online at www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org

May 4 – Board of Church Life meeting

May 6 – Board of Elders meeting

May 7 – LWML Prayer Service

May 12 – Blood Drive

June 1 – Community 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 2nd and 4th Sundays and some festivals)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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Sylvan Grove, KS 67481-8835

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