

The Bethlehem Star

A PUBLICATION OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH AND CHILDREN'S CENTER



Volume 70, Issue 1

January 2020

From Pastor Bill

"The March of Time" is a common New Year reflection. In late December I listened to a podcast*; in it the relentlessness of time is described as a prodding enemy over and against the "living in the moments given."



The rhythm of life does seem so brisk that if we slow down, we will miss our opportunities. Certainly, the velocity of our culture and technology lend itself to this perspective. We have to run just to keep current. This makes it easy to miss the life right in front of us if we always focus our eyes on the next horizon or obstacle.

When Jesus described himself as the good shepherd He spoke, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." *-John 10:10* So the life Jesus speaks of is true life, life that is LIFE, not merely existence. It is not about a life of eternal green pastures or of endless horizons of accomplishment. It is a life with a purpose: living within the life God gives us. A celebration of what is giving and who is served. It is in the living of our life for our neighbor that we find a true and abundant life. We practice in family, and Church, and move into the local community and finally globally.

This is a transition year for Bethlehem, a year when we recount our rich history and grow a vision of our prosperous future. We do this in a time when culture seems to be passing us by, we do this when new things change faster than we can seem to adjust. This is a time to see and name the beautiful depth of our resources. We are a tested and resilient people bringing the very best to what life might bring. We know how to offer our talents into the world. We bring sharp and curious minds, devoted hands, skillful servants, enthusiastic artists, and humble disciples; all in abundance. With this, Christ will do much. I could not be more pleased to vision with all of you as we grow.

What are we going to do with the time given?
Come and See.

Peace,
-Pastor Bill

*Steve McMoyler. "The March of Time". KQED Perspectives.



Budget Forum

In preparation for our annual meeting, we will hold a budget forum on January 5th at 9:30 a.m. This is the perfect opportunity to find out how your giving is spent. Come and review the proposed budget, ask questions, make comments. Your input is welcomed!

Sign up for Altar Flowers

It's a New Year, with new opportunities for you to honor a special person or remember a loved one, as well as beautify the altar with the gift of flowers. The cost for a bouquet is \$20 and you can sign up in the Narthex.



*Gathered to worship,
Equipped by the Holy Spirit,
Strengthened through
community,
Sent in peace to serve the Lord.*

Office Hours

The Church office will be closed on Wednesday, January 1st for New Year's Day, and Monday, January 20th for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.



Bethlehem's Congregational Meeting

The annual Congregational meeting is on January 19th, at 11:45 a.m. following 10:30 a.m. service. At this meeting we will review the accomplishments of 2019; the differences that we at Bethlehem Lutheran have made in our Church, our community and our world. You will meet the new and returning executive committee members and commissioners, and hear about plans for the upcoming year in 2020 and beyond. There will be items to be voted on and the 2020 budget to be reviewed and approved.

This is also a day to recognize our outgoing council members and commissioners, and to honor them for their dedication and hard work done here at Bethlehem Lutheran.

We begin our meeting at 11:45 a.m. with a potluck finger food luncheon; sandwiches, chips, cookies, and the like.



Council & Commission Meetings

In January, the Commissions will meet Wednesday the 8th at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Joining a commission is a great way to bring new ideas and activities to our Church. There are many things to be done here and many hands make light the work!

On January 15th, the Council meets at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The Council meetings are open to all, and you are welcome and invited to see your Church leadership in action.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Children's Center

1300 St. Francis Road, Santa Rosa, California 95409

Sunday worship services: 8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Church Office: 707/539-5252, Hours: 9-3, M-F

Church Website: www.blc-bcc.com

Church E-Mail: blc@sonic.net

Fax: 707/539-0229

Children's Center: 707/538-2266

Pastor:

Bill Wessner

707-782-8703 (Pastor's cell)

E-Mail: pastorbill.blc@gmail.com

Congregational Officers:

Cal Eriksen, President

Brad Powell, Vice President

Bev Powell, Secretary

Beverly Schaap, Treasurer

Lynn Carlson, Financial Secretary

Council Commissioners:

Nancy Trbovich, Education

Bob Adams, Property (Acting)

Rick Knapp, Stewardship

Linda Knapp, Witness & Service

Carolyn Cole-Schweizer, Worship

Michelle Thomson, Youth

Janet Krug, BCC Representative

Leslee Cramer, Bethlehem WELCA President

Staff:

Michelle Frabotta, Parish Administrator

Deborah McNally, Tiffany Perry-Co-Directors
Bethlehem Children's Center 538-2266

Janet Bertoli, Adult & Youth Choirs

Barbara Laferriere, Organist, Adult Choir,

Melissa Kuhn, Bell Choir

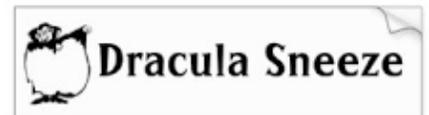
Laura Llerena, Youth Choirs

Debbie Knudtzon, Parish Nurse 537-7450

Keeping Healthy

Flu season is officially upon us again! But no need to worry this year as the BLC Health Committee continues to make available the respiratory hygiene stations (at selected entrances) created by Infection Control Specialist Jonathan Schouest. Please take the opportunity as you join us for worship, to cleanse your hands with an alcohol gel or blow your nose if stuffy. And even though Halloween was long ago, the CDC still recommends you always cough or sneeze into your sleeve like a vampire swinging his cape!

Remember, Influenza hits the youngest and oldest of us the hardest. So remember whether you play hard or pray hard to keep yourself...and those around you healthy!



Men of Bethlehem

The Men of Bethlehem (the MoB) will be meeting on Tuesday, January 21st at 7:00 p.m.

All men are welcome to come and join our community for food, fellowship, and discussion. Our lively talks are sometimes based on recent stories in the magazine Living Lutheran, on stories from the Bible, or on current events.



Your Acts of Kindness

Thank you to all of the people in our Congregation who have helped make this Christmas season a special time. Hands who decorated, harvested trees, strung lights, prepared programs, provided crafts, practiced music, sang, played instruments, led choirs, preached, led bible studies, gave gifts, prepared delicious casseroles, meals and treats, made coffee, worked on our facility and property, visited our homebound, brought Christmas to others, provided sanctuary, counted offerings, sewed, prepared reports, reached out to our community, purchased poinsettias, worked with our youth, brought and delivered food, prayed for us, supported others throughout the world with gifts of crops and animals, and many other acts of kindness. You are a very special and amazing group of people, and your time and talents make the world a better place. Thank you Bethlehem! Happy New Year!



Directory Update

Our 2020 Church Directory is being updated. Please send in your changes of address or phone number to the Church office (blc@sonic.net). Emails are an easy way to stay informed at BLC make sure your email address is on file and get connected!

Life Pax feed the Homeless

With homelessness and hunger on the rise in Sonoma County, there are plenty of Life Pax available to help. The Life Pax donation jar is in the Narthex with a requested donation of \$2 to cover the cost of materials.



Each pack contains a Chef Boyrdee easy open can of Ravioli, nutrition bar, juice drink, cracker pack, napkin & spoon, 211 emergency resource card, and a 'Caring is Sharing' message from Bethlehem.

Members are encouraged to store a few in their cars, backpacks or purses and share them when they see someone in need.

-Elaine Adams, Witness & Service

Stewardship

The Stewardship Commission thanks the members of Bethlehem for their response to this year's program. The up-to-date tally is 61 pledges, for a total of \$232,000. Compared to last year, this is a decrease of 7 pledges, and about \$30,000. The figures for the past five years have averaged 70 pledges, for \$256,000. Thank you again, for your efforts. We continue to be a very generous Congregation, engaged in many missions. -Rick Knapp



God's Global Barnyard

Thank you for your generosity in supporting God's Global Barnyard. This Advent BLC raised \$3609!! Many people in the world are benefitting from our contributions by being the proud owners of new farm animals.



These gifts will go a long way to bringing them out of hunger and poverty.



Thanks!
-Linda Knapp

WELCA Potluck

On Friday, January 3, 2020 at Noon, join the women of the Bethlehem WELCA for their annual Christmas Potluck. If you can please bring a main dish, salad or dessert to share. This year's theme will be, "It's Complicated: Reflections on a brief tour of Palestine/Israel." Herbert & Phyllis Anderson will share reflections of their trip to the Middle East. A freewill offering will be collected benefitting the YWCA: A Special Place Preschool.





January

- 3 *Stephanie Walls*
- 5 *Elizabeth Walls, Stacie Post-Sheffer
Adriane Clissold*
- 6 *Sophia Thompson, Mike & Kristina
Petterssen (14)*
- 7 *Jeff Thomson*
- 8 *Carrie & Ryan Winn (15)*
- 11 *Ramona Doran,
Gary & Pat Stone (51)*
- 12 *Cameron McConnell*
- 14 *Melissa Kuhn,
Wes Silverthorne,
Christen Thompson*
- 16 *Jaimee Comstock-Skipp*
- 17 *Patrick Riggs*
- 18 *Michael Jey*
- 19 *Emily Wong,
Anne-Elise Krug*
- 20 *Lucas Petterssen*
- 25 *Brian Schmidt,
Don McCullough,
Barry Wong*
- 26 *Greg Perrone, Nancy Doyle*
- 28 *Luke Jacobson, Tracy Huotari*
- 29 *Tom & Kathy Ziegler (55)*
- 30 *Rachel Anderson*
- 31 *Raymond Skipp*

Women of Bethlehem Lutheran

The Women's Circle bible study groups will be meeting this month on the following days. All women are welcome!

The Ruth Circle will meet on Tuesday, January 14th at 10 a.m.

Miriam Circle will be meeting Tuesday, January 21st at 7 p.m.

The WELCA Board meeting will be held on January 22nd at 11 a.m. in the Parish Hall.



Coffee Hour Treats

It's great to gather after Church and catch up with each other, and share a cup of coffee and some treats. It's interesting to taste different selections. Thanks to everyone who shared their treats over the year, they were greatly appreciated! A special thanks to Bob & Lin Beck who work most Sunday's to make sure BLC has coffee and treats to share. It's time to volunteer for 2020-check out the signup sheet on the Narthex kiosk Thanks!



2020 Offering Envelopes

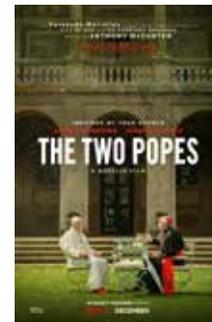
If you have not yet picked up your offering envelopes, they are in the Narthex hoping to be picked up and taken to their home.

Please note: names and numbers may have changed for the 2020 year. If you have any questions please contact Lynn Carlson at 707-523-2578. Thank You.

<p>Where your treasury is, there will you store your heart. Matt 6:21</p>	<p>My Offering</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Phone #: _____</p>
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Saturday Matinee

Bethlehem's Book Club invites you to join us for the movie *The Two Popes* on Saturday, January 25th at 2 p.m. at the Knapp's home (1401 Nighthawk Drive.)



At a key turning point for the Catholic Church, Pope Benedict XVI forms a surprising friendship with the future Pope Francis. A Golden Globe

winner and inspired by true events. Popcorn and drinks will be provided. Join us!

Young at Heart

Young at Heart is open to all people who enjoy going out for lunch. If you are available on the third Monday of the month, join the group for some friendly fellowship. This month, January 20th is the date, 11:45 a.m. is the time, and International House of Pancakes (near the Flamingo Hotel) is the place.



BLC Monthly Book/Video/Magazine Exchange

Have you finished any adult-level book, video or magazine recently that you thought mmm, someone else might enjoy this? But who?? How to find them?? The BLC Book Exchange has the answer!

For four years now, the first Sunday of each month has found a table set up by 9:30 just outside the Narthex for you to donate any book, video or magazine you are done with, AND as importantly, for you to take away any items you see of interest. In January, the exchange will take place on January 5th.

Some helpful clarifications:

- Any adult-level fiction or non-fiction item is welcomed.
- You don't need to "put in" to "take out".
- Your items are donated not loaned so they won't come back to you.
- The items you take are yours to keep.
- All items will be tagged with the date donated and the selection will be purged and donated to a non-profit thrift shop. Magazines will be recycled.
- PLEASE, no reference sets such as encyclopedias, but you can put a note on the table with contact information.
- Magazines must be within the last year.
- Remember we have a fine church library if you have a religious book (or video?) that merits being loaned and returned. Teen/children's books can be donated to our local family shelters or donation centers.

Questions? Call Rod Hannon at 707-490-6487.

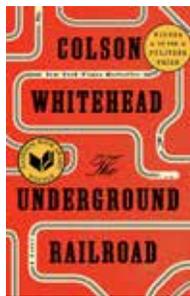
BLC Book Club pick for February

The Book Club meets every month to talk about books they have read. Everyone is invited to join in these interesting discussions. You can find copies of several of the books on the table in the Narthex. Check out February's read below:

Saturday, January 25th at 2 p.m. - Saturday Matinee: The Two Popes shown at the Knapp's Home (1401 Nighthawk Drive).

February 4th- Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead

Cora is a young slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. When Caesar, a slave who has recently arrived from Virginia, urges her to join him on the Underground Railroad, she seizes the opportunity and escapes with him. In Colson Whitehead's ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor: engineers and conductors operate a secret network of actual tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil.



We normally meet in BLC's Fireside Room at 7 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday of every month. Everyone is welcome.

~ Linda Knapp



A word from Martin

"All who call on God in true faith, earnestly from the heart, will certainly be heard, and will receive what they have asked and desired, although not in the hour or in the measure, or the very thing which they ask. Yet they will obtain something greater and more glorious than they had dared to ask." -Martin Luther



Friends

People who are more socially connected to family, friends, and community are happier, healthier, and live longer than people who are less well connected.

~Harvard Health Letter, June 2019.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, BLC YOUTH!

December found Pastor Bill, and a car full of Youth and adults heading to Graton on a new venture to find the perfect tree (yet again) to adorn our Sanctuary. The tree was found, cut down, brought home and set up in the Sanctuary where the Youth completed the task by climbing up really tall ladders and putting on hundreds of lights. Many, many thanks to our Youth and Parents!



Also in December was the annual St. Nicholas Festival. This year we had over 100 people attending, and very much appreciated the Youth who helped us out.

There are still some Life Pax the Youth assembled so be sure and replenish your supply. There is a jar on the glass top table for your \$2.00 donation to offset the cost of the Life Pax materials.



With February comes the Super Bowl, and the "Souper Bowl." On Sunday, February 2nd our Youth will provide the opportunity for you to support YOUR winning team by putting contributions in the soup pot that represents your team. All donations will go to the local food pantry.

Looking ahead, we have the Youth Service on March 1st, and the Easter breakfast on April 12th. Be sure and mark your calendars for these two annual events.



This summer we hope to return to a local camp for our Youth retreat. Stay tuned for more details.

If any parents of our Youth would like to attend the Youth Commission meetings, the next one will be Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. We'd love to have you there.

-Michelle Thomson, Youth Commissioner

Fish

Members of Bethlehem Lutheran will meet at F.I.S.H. on January 25th at 10:15 a.m. to volunteer in their food pantry. See Jeff Burton

for more information, call him at (707)538-4059 or just show up. Your help is appreciated!



Photos Needed

Our annual Congregational meeting is fast approaching and we are in need of photos from different BLC events of 2019.

These photos are a great addition to the annual meeting and a great way to see Bethlehem in service to each other and our community.

Send your photos to the Church office blc@sonic.net THANKS!

2nd Mile Sunday

At Bethlehem Lutheran, in concert with the Sierra Pacific Synod, every second Sunday of each month is designated Second Mile Sunday. A separate offering basket is placed in the Narthex for contributions.

Let's go the Second Mile with our Companion Synods.



During the month of January our Second Mile offerings will be divided among the Sierra Pacific Synod's Companion Synods:

The Lutheran Church of Rwanda

Lutheran Church of El Salvador

Taiwan Lutheran Church

Please keep these sister synods around the world in your prayers this month and consider an additional offering toward their ministries. The Sierra Pacific Synod is blessed to accompany these Churches in mutual ministry as we proclaim God's creative, redeeming and sanctifying love in all the world.

Take a Bag!

Please take a food bag from the Narthex and return it for the F.I.S.H. food pantry.

Baby food, canned meats, pasta, sauces, peanut butter and cereal are always in high demand.

As always, anything you can give would be much appreciated. Thanks for caring!



God Loves a Cheerful Giver

God calls us to give generously, so it should be no surprise that when we do so, we ourselves can benefit from our giving. Here are 5 ways giving benefits us:

1. Giving makes us feel happy. Studies have shown that spending money on others lifts our happiness more than spending it on ourselves.

2. Giving is good for our health. Those who volunteer more, and provide physical and/or emotional help to friends and family, tend to live longer than those who don't.

3. Giving promotes cooperation and social connection. When you give to others, your generosity is likely to be rewarded by others down the line. Your actions build trust and strengthen our ties to other people.

4. Giving evokes gratitude, either in expressing or instilling gratitude which is important to happiness. Cultivating gratitude leads to optimism which helps a person feel better about their lives overall. Expressing gratitude to a close friend strengthens our sense of connection to that person.



5. Giving is contagious. When we give, we not only help the immediate recipient of our gift, but we spur a ripple effect of generosity throughout our community. One act of generosity can influence dozens, and possibly even hundreds of people.

In the bible, Luke 6:38 says "Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands--all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you." *Good News Translation*

Remembering Dr. King

An American prophet of justice among races and nations, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an eloquent preacher, a leader of the nonviolent resistance to race-segregated society, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. At the age of thirty-five, Martin Luther King, Jr., was the youngest man to have received the Nobel Peace Prize. When notified of his selection, he announced that he would turn over the prize money to the furtherance of the civil rights movement. Born on January 15, 1929 Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 at the age of 39.

"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality...I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word. Use me, God. Show me how to take who I am, who I want to be, and what I can do, and use it for a purpose greater than myself."

-Martin Luther King



Looking to Lent

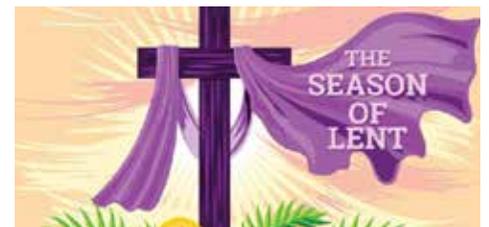
In 2020 Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, February 26th, with service and imposition of ashes at 7 p.m.

Soup Suppers will start on Ash Wednesday at 6 p.m. and continue each Wednesday, March 4, 11, 18, 25 and conclude on April 1st. Look for soup signups in the Narthex, January 26th.

Lenten evening prayer service will start after Soup Supper at 7 p.m. Wednesday night services will be a Lenten exploration entitled, "At the Name of Jesus". This 5-week series will explore Philippians 2:5-11.

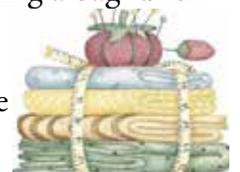
Lenten Devotionals will be available in the Narthex, February 16th.

Lent is a time for reflection on Christ's suffering and death on the cross for our sins, make Bethlehem a part of your Lenten journey.



Quilting Group

The BLC Sewing Ladies meet on Tuesday, January 21st from 10 to 2 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Join us if you like to sew and like making quilts. Bring a bag lunch and an appetite to do good! The quilts help provide comfort and warmth to the needy here in Sonoma County.



No experience needed-on the job training provided.

Thinking about College?



It's a complex topic for any student. You may be asking yourself, "What can I afford? What kind of college should I attend? What programs do I need?" Here is some information from the website: LutheranColleges.org, check it out for more information.

Choosing to attend a Lutheran college or university is a decision you can feel good about. At our institutions, you are more likely to finish in four years, inform and solidify your values, enjoy a sense of community and build the skills that employers value. And the price tag? Financial aid options are available to students at all income levels as well as many scholarships.

The Lutheran Educational Conference of North America represents 41 Lutheran colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. They

run the gamut of sizes, locations and specialties, so you're bound to find at least one that will fit your personality well. Although each of our colleges and universities is unique, they all focus on developing the whole self through active learning that engages the mind, body and spirit.

Here is a list of Lutheran Colleges:
 Augsburg College, Minnesota
 Augustana College, Rock Island
 Augustana University, Sioux Falls
 Bethany College, Kansas
 California Lutheran University, CA
 Capital University, Ohio
 Carthage College, Wisconsin
 Concordia College, Moorhead
 Concordia College, Alabama
 Concordia College, New York
 Concordia University of Edmonton
 Concordia University, Ann Arbor
 Concordia University, Chicago
 Concordia University, Irvine
 Concordia University, Nebraska

Concordia University, Portland
 Concordia University, St. Paul
 Concordia University, Texas
 Concordia University, Wisconsin
 Finlandia University, Michigan
 Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania
 Grand View University, Iowa
 Gustavus Adolphus College, MI
 Lenoir-Rhyne University, N. Carolina
 Luther College, Iowa
 Luther College, University of Regina
 Midland University, Nebraska
 Muhlenberg College, Pennsylvania
 Newberry College, S. Carolina
 Pacific Lutheran University, Wash.
 Roanoke College, Virginia
 St. Olaf College, Minnesota
 Susquehanna University, Pennsylvania
 Texas Lutheran University, Texas
 Thiel College, Pennsylvania
 Trinity Lutheran College, Washington
 Valparaiso University, IN
 Wagner College, New York
 Wartburg College, Iowa
 Wisconsin Lutheran College
 Wittenberg University, Ohio

Treasurer's Report

Beverly Schaap

December 2019

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$61,014	\$59,460	\$1,554
Expenses	\$40,331	\$39,612	\$719
Net	\$20,683	\$19,848	\$835

YTD 2019

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$328,089	\$332,600	-\$4,511
Expenses	\$328,345	\$378,134	-\$49,789
Net	-\$256	-\$45,534	\$45,278

**Amount needed to meet the budget \$7,271 per week
 December \$11,612**

Online Shopping can Benefit Non-Profits (Including Bethlehem Lutheran)

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price (.5%) to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support, including Bethlehem Lutheran Church. To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping.

The deadline for the next issue of The Bethlehem Star is January 24, 2020.

Please submit information and story ideas to the church office or e-mail blc@sonic.net

Should you have any comments or suggestions that will help improve The Star, we will be pleased to receive them.

Should you wish to discontinue your subscription to The Star please let us know via e-mail.