

The Bethlehem Star

A PUBLICATION OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH AND CHILDREN'S CENTER



Volume 71, Issue 11

November 2021

Introducing Pastor Jensen

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” *1 Peter 1:3*

My friends in Christ,

It is a joy to officially be your Pastor! I count myself blessed that the Spirit has called us together in ministry. Thank you for your prayers and your warm words of welcome for both Abigail and I – we are excited for all God has in store for us at Bethlehem Lutheran Church!

As your Pastor, I feel called to equip God's people for God's mission in the world through vibrant worship, Word and Sacrament, faith formation, and leadership development to empower our community of faith by living out our baptismal callings through the proclamation of the Gospel in both word and deed. Outside of church, you can find me hiking, singing, camping, reading, and spending time with my new wife, Abigail Jensen.

On Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, you will often find me in the office or around the church campus, but if you can't find me, I'm just a phone call away. On Thursdays, I am available by phone and regularly check my email, but I take the day to prayerfully compose both my sermon and the prayers of intercession from home. Fridays are my dedicated “Sabbath” and the day of the week Abigail and I have set aside for the two of us. Saturdays, in general, will also be a day off. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me by phone or email, I am always “on-call” for pastoral emergencies when out of the office.

Speaking of schedules, both Abigail and I are excited to get to know you all! If you are so inclined and willing, we would love your invitation to dinner on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evening – these evenings tend to be free for us. I am also available to meet for coffee, chat in the office, talk by phone, or I can happily set up a zoom for us on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays.

I give thanks for this opportunity to be your Pastor, it is both a privilege and a blessing! My prayer will continue to be that our partnership in ministry will be a blessing to you, our church, and our community.

With praise and thanksgiving,

-Pastor Tyler W. Jensen

PastorTylerJensen@gmail.com

510-470-4305

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



All Saints Sunday

Five Bethlehem members will be added to the Memorial Garden on November 7, All Saints Sunday.

Dorothy Gullixson

Judy Sengstock

Paul Sengstock

Dr. Stephen Gospe

and

Stefanie Hux

The memorial tiles have been added to the outdoor wall and our Saints will be communally honored at the beginning of our 10:30 a.m. worship service.

On All Saints Sunday we have a memorial canvas where you can add names of those departed and bring pictures to share of your Saints. The display will be available in the Narthex.

We look forward to celebrating All Saints Sunday with you.

Everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. *John 11:26*



Greeters. Welcome one and all to Worship on Sunday mornings. No need to handshake in this current climate, but a word of welcome and a smile are needed. This position requires you to attend 1 or 2 Sundays every other month.

Zoom Worship Hosts. We will train you, and you can do this from home or from church. It involves welcoming people, starting the recording, muting as needed, and a few other details. Interested? Let the church office know. Learn a new skill and be apart of an important ministry - online worship!

Ushers. Be apart of a team and an important volunteer in our Sunday Worship. Help with communion and offering as well as take attendance. Training is definitely provided and we are in desperate need of usher teams.

Readers & Assistants. Volunteer to read the lessons or assist Pastor in Sunday Worship or help with Communion. Readers and assistants volunteer once a month. Training is provided.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Children's Center 1300 St. Francis Road, Santa Rosa, California 95409 Sunday Worship : 10:30 a.m.	
Church Office: 707/539-5252, Hours: 9-3, W & F Church Email: blc@sonic.net Facebook: www.facebook.com/BLCSantaRosa YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/	Church Website: www.blc-bcc.com Zoom Meeting ID: 889 9423 0337 Password: church
Pastor: Tyler W. Jensen 510-470-4305 (Pastor's cell) Email: PastorTylerJensen@gmail.com	Linda Knapp, Witness & Service Carolyn Cole-Schweizer, Worship Interim Michelle Thomson, Youth Susan Jenkins, BCC Executive Board Siri Fenson, Bethlehem WELCA President
Congregational Officers: Jason Kracht, President Janet Bertoli, Vice President Carolyn Cole-Schweizer, Secretary Beverly Schaap, Treasurer Susan Jenkins, Financial Secretary	Staff: Deborah McNally, BCC Director Michelle Frabotta, Parish Administrator Janet Bertoli, Adult & Youth Choirs Barbara Laferriere, Organist, Adult Choir, Laura Lightfoot, Youth Choirs
Council Commissioners: Laura Lightfoot, Education Cal Eriksen, Property George Schweizer, Stewardship	

Thanksgiving Day

The perfect way to start your Thanksgiving day is at the Bethlehem Thanksgiving Day service, November 25, 10:00 a.m.

The altar is decorated, the music is uplifting, making one grateful the moment one enters.

This year's Thanksgiving offering will be divided between our local Redwood Empire Food Bank and internationally to ELCA World Hunger.



Living Lutheran Subscriptions

It's time to renew your subscription to the Living Lutheran magazine for uninterrupted service beginning January 2022. The annual group rate is \$8.95 (which is less than half price) if we have 20 or more subscriptions. Please drop off a check or cash when you come to church or mail it to the office. Please make checks out to Bethlehem Lutheran Church with *Living Lutheran* on the memo line. If you are a new subscriber, we'd be happy to add you to the list. The Living Lutheran is the magazine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and has many timely articles.

Any questions, call Michelle in the office 539-5252.

Thankoffering Sunday - November 21st

We're looking forward to the upcoming Thankoffering Sunday service celebrating the work of the Women of the ELCA.

Your donation will help WELCA provide resources, its grant program, Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls, and support advocacy work in racial justice and human trafficking. Visit their website at <https://www.womenoftheelca.org> to learn more about this organization's mission.

There are several ways to make your gift on the 21st.

Thankoffering envelopes will be available in the narthex starting on Sunday, November 14th. Please stop by to pick one up and learn a little bit more about Thankoffering Sunday, BLC's Women's Circles and Quilt Circle.

If you're a Zoom or home congregant, you can give by mail by sending your checks directly to the BLC church office (1300 St. Francis Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95409). Please enter "Thankoffering" on your check's memo line.

You can also give online securely through the BLC website (<https://blc-bcc.com>). Click on the blue "Giving Options" button on the home page and follow the prompts.

The Thankoffering tradition encourages us to offer daily thanks for God's blessings. In that spirit the WELCA Board invites the membership to bring forward their donations during the Offertory on the 21st. I hope you'll join us.



Thank you.

Liz Ferrari, *WELCA Board, Secretary of Stewardship*



Thank you for your thoughtfulness in sending me Birthday cards and greetings.

Sincerely,

Adele Mortensen

"We have shared together the blessings of God." *Philippians 1:7*



Gale Bowers, our new Bell Choir Director invites you to come practice with us on Thursday's at 6:00pm. **No experience required!** We have a good time making good music. We will be practicing to play for Thanksgiving and Christmas Worship services. Call Beverly Schaap for more info 707-527-2872.

Book Club Pick for November

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81863339161?pwd=amE0L1A3K1ovVEpiQ0dxbGZsTzBaQT09>


Meeting ID: 818 6333 9161

Dial In: 1-669-900-6833

Passcode: 495762

Passcode: 495762#

All meetings at 7pm.

 Tuesday November 2- *When You Were Mine* by Kate Hewitt

Single mother Beth loves her seven-year-old son Dylan with all her heart. He's her world. But life with Dylan isn't easy - and his emotional issues push Beth to her very limit. When a misunderstanding leads Dylan to be taken into foster care, she is determined to do whatever she can to get him back.



November

- 3 Siri Fenson
- 6 Rod Hannon, Richard Ziegler
- 8 Dan Carlson, Heidi Wood, Mary Carson
- 10 Rylee Petterssen
- 13 Janet Bertoli
- 15 Duane Jensen
- 18 John Wells, Megan Younger
- 19 Laurie Claasen, Don Hux
- 20 Nathan Sanders
- 21 Gary Schouest, Jena Preston
- 22 Howard Camin, Mike Petterssen
- 23 Joann Schumann, David Peck
- 24 Richard Graalfs
- 25 Chris & Cheri Hershwitzky (26)
- 29 Candy Claasen, Siri & Max Fenson (30)
- 30 Sean Knudtzon

Advent begins Nov. 28

To receive your free Advent Calendar please contact the office and one will be mailed to you.

"Prepare the way of the Lord"
(Mark 1:3)



...But First Coffee...

and then a chance to chat with friends, getting to better know fellow members or even welcoming a visitor.

Thank you friends - Marie Eriksen, Kara and Alexis Kracht, Pat Zivot, Linda Widdifield, Elsie Gillette, Kathy Hannon, Shirley Stevenson and Jan Gubrud, for having signed up to bring the treats in November and December. A coffee host helps making the coffee, setting up, serving and cleaning up (demonstrations will be given, and many are also around to help).

As Pastor Diane already has said in the STAR: A coffee hour should be called "Coffee and...because there is coffee and snacks as well as coffee and friendship, laughter, community, mutual consolation, and even a few jokes".



Siri Fenson, *Witness & Service*

Come quilt with us!

You are all invited to join us in making quilts. There are jobs available for anyone - no experience required. Cutting out materials, sewing squares for the tops, tying and finish work. We give these quilts to wherever they are needed. We have given to kids who are graduating out of foster care, Lutheran World Relief and to fire victims in the past.

We will be meeting from 10:00am to 2:00 pm on the third Tuesday of each month and the fifth Tuesday when we have a potluck. Come check us out... again no experience is required!

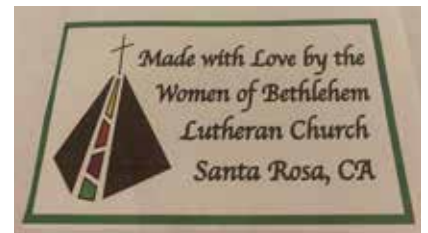


Photo: Each quilt has this special label sewn onto it.

Benefit BLC with Christmas Online Shopping

Christmas is right around the corner! Do your Christmas shopping online and don't forget, if you



are shopping at Amazon, you can shop instead at smile.amazon.com and increase donations for Bethlehem Lutheran Church. AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support BLC every time you shop, at no cost to you. Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price (.5%) To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device.

Youth Service - November 14

A reflection by: Janet Bertoli

I have been a member here at Bethlehem for over forty-one years and in that time have been involved with children's ministry in one way or another for most of those years. I don't consider myself to be extremely gifted at anything, but I do have a passion for the kids and I always love to be a part of their faith journey, which begins with welcoming them into God's house and introducing them to God's love. I just love them!

To be a part, even a very small part, of their journey in getting to know God is a great privilege and a joy. Over the years, I have seen so many times how they develop their faith and am always amazed at the process.

Children have an innocence and acceptance of God that is hard to beat. They allow themselves to ask questions without consideration of what others might think of them for asking. They open themselves to believe and trust that the answers they get are true. And as those instances compound with each other, the seeds of their own personal faith begin to grow.

Continued on page 7



Youth Gathering 2022

Calling all BLC Youth who are interested in attending the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering!

The event is open to 8th-12th graders and will take place July 24-28, 2022 in Minneapolis, MN. Please contact the church office or Michelle Thomson if you are interested in attending or if you have questions. BLC youth members have participated in years past and have found the experience to be quite rewarding.

missythomson@yahoo.com

707-477-3536

ELCA Good Gifts & God's Global Barnyard

As odd as it seems to give someone the gift of a cow, or a goat, or some chicks, or honey bees, it is this kind of a gift that can change a life, a family and possibly a whole community.

ELCA Good Gifts are a creative, meaningful way to support the ministries of the ELCA that mean the most to you and your loved ones. The items in the Good Gifts catalog lift up examples of work being done in different projects and programs supported by funds from the ELCA: the ELCA Fund for Leaders, ELCA Global Church Sponsorship, the ELCA Malaria Campaign, ELCA New Congregations, ELCA Vision for Mission, ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response. Each of these programs is a long-term, partnership-based ministry that focus on the needs identified by local congregations and global companion churches and their communities.

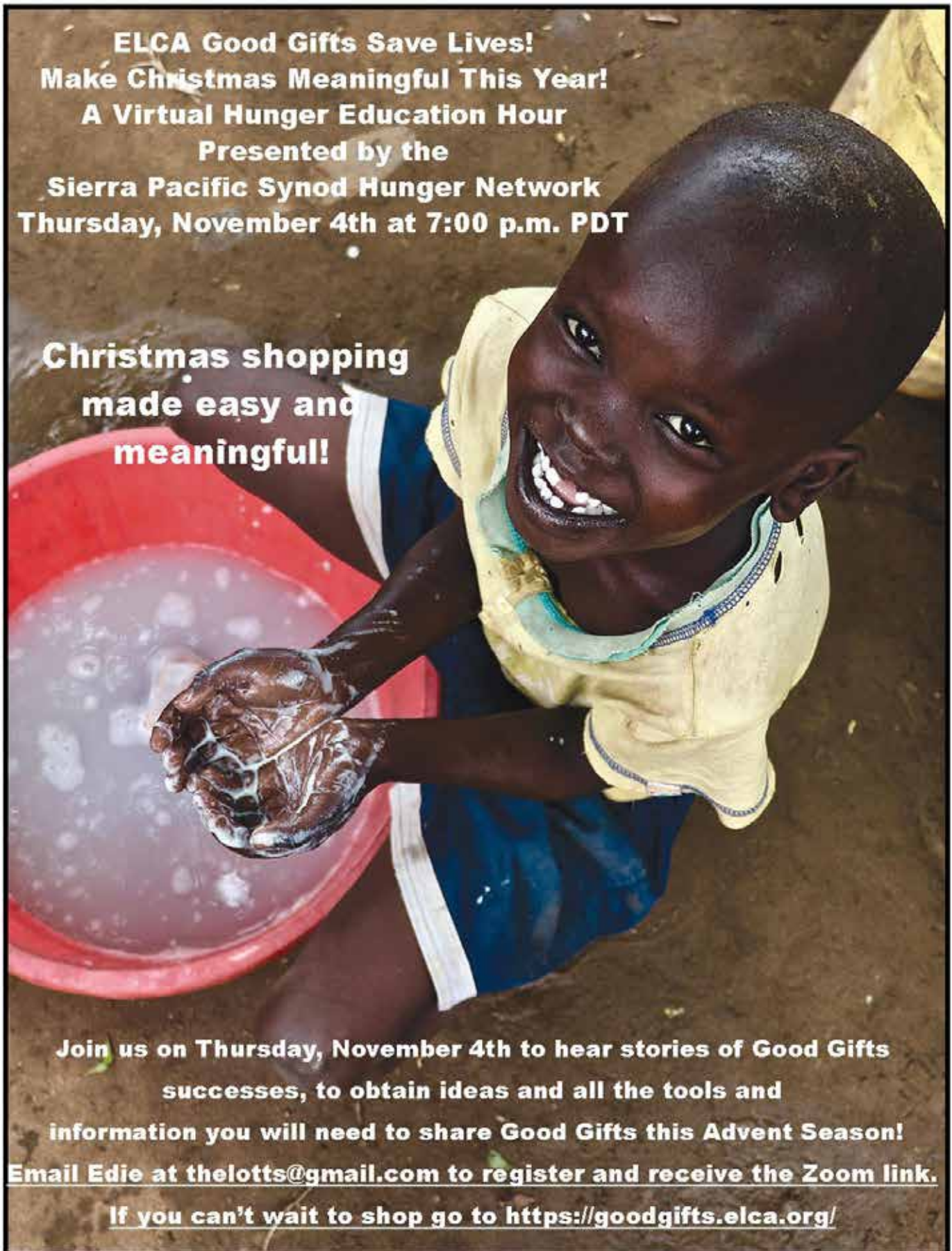
The animals of God's Global Barnyard are among some of the most popular gifts in the catalog. Your gifts to God's Global Barnyard in advent will support the sustainable development ministries of ELCA World Hunger, which include training, education, resources (and much more) to help the community care for animals and create new market opportunities like starting a small business selling eggs, meat or dairy products. Your gifts support this comprehensive approach to animal husbandry.



Please check out the display in the Narthex beginning November 28th.

-Linda Knapp



A young child with a joyful expression is washing their hands in a red plastic basin. The child is wearing a yellow shirt and a blue skirt. The background is a simple, earthy floor.

**ELCA Good Gifts Save Lives!
Make Christmas Meaningful This Year!
A Virtual Hunger Education Hour
Presented by the
Sierra Pacific Synod Hunger Network
Thursday, November 4th at 7:00 p.m. PDT**

**Christmas shopping
made easy and
meaningful!**

**Join us on Thursday, November 4th to hear stories of Good Gifts
successes, to obtain ideas and all the tools and
information you will need to share Good Gifts this Advent Season!
Email Edie at thelotts@gmail.com to register and receive the Zoom link.
If you can't wait to shop go to <https://goodgifts.elca.org/>**

Youth Service

Continued from page 5

Don't get me wrong, they can be exhausting! They are full of energy and have at least a million questions! And when you answer them, they will think of a million more. Since much of my time is spent with the kids through music, I have watched their faces as they sing and see such joy that I cannot ignore what is happening in their hearts as they share their voices with us. It doesn't matter if they are the most musically talented or completely tone deaf, they offer their best, with more energy expended in a two minute song than most of us use in an entire day.

Sifting through a multitude of memories of 'special moments' with the kids, I picked a few I'd like to share with you.

A few years ago at a crowded 5 o'clock Christmas Eve service, I saw one of our youth who had been away at college and greeted her after the service. She told me that she remembered all the songs she sang in choir and that the words were still in her head and she would sing them when she was struggling with something. Not always the complete song or the correct order of verses, but the words offered comfort or encouragement when she needed them. The seeds that were planted in her heart when she was a child helped to shape her thoughts as a young adult. Faith in action - nothing dramatic, just her faith that the words provided peace and comfort.

Another young singer at Bethlehem was so faithful in attending all of the events here at church and I mentioned how wonderful it was that she never missed anything. Her answer was straight-forward and simple. I like to be here. It feels safe and I don't get in trouble here. Everyone is nice to me and I feel like they want me to be here. At school and at home it's harder. Faith in action - a feeling of safety and welcome in God's house.

Years ago, a young boy who sang in the "Carol Choir" as it was called then, was so shy that everytime we would start to walk up the center aisle to go to the front of the church to sing, he would turn the other way and run back to his Mom in tears and couldn't quite make it to face the congregation and offer his singing. I told his Mom that I felt bad it was so traumatic for him and she asked that I keep letting him try. Someday he'll make it all the way up there she said. Sure enough he made it and as an adult he is a leader, a performing musician and a man of God. Faith in action - baby steps to allow faith to build and mature.

My last reflection involves my grandson, Sammy, at Vacation Bible School this summer. We lost my Mom last winter and she is greatly missed by all of us. During the storytelling part of VBS, Sammy shared that he was hoping to live in grandma the great's house. Yes, all the grand kids refer to my mom and dad as grandma and grandpa the great - which, of course, is true! Anyway, he hoped to move into that house because her spirit would live with him if he was there. At the age of five, no clear understanding of his faith yet, but absolute certainty that she would be with him still, even though she was in heaven. Faith in action - a certainty that the adults in his life that he trusts completely, assured him that she wasn't gone, she was in God's house in heaven. And in his own translation, that meant that he could still be close to her by living in her house here on earth.

Dramatic stories? Miracles? Shocking? No, not one of them. But they all remind me how powerful the ways of God are and how every moment cannot be overlooked as the potential to shape and mold our young people. God's work in the hearts of these children and children everywhere is a powerful, awe inspiring thing. If we wait for thunder bolts or grand epiphanies, we are missing endless opportunities to be a part of the faith journey God has in mind for these children. Being a small part of that process and experiencing the joy of sharing the beginnings and maturing of their faith, makes this Gospel one of my favorites. What a privilege to be allowed to interact with these children in God's house and watch His plan unfold. Welcome the children? Each and every day!

Lutheran Social Services

On November 14 our BLC Second Mile offerings will be donated to Lutheran Social Services of Northern California. Below is a message from LSS. They continue to be instrumental in assisting those who have experienced loss of their home through floods and fires. Their support has been appreciated.

October 31st marked the 504th anniversary of the reformation, out of which the Lutheran social ministry grew. Today, there are more than 300 Lutheran social service organizations across the country, touching the lives of one in 40 Americans each year. LSS of Northern California is your social ministry, serving more than 3,500 formerly homeless adults, former foster youth and families every day. We provide stable housing and compassionate guidance that assists in their journey to self-sufficiency and becoming engaged, productive members of their communities.

Luther set out to reform the Roman Catholic Church in 1517, but his focus wasn't just on the church. He also created a new approach to service. At the time, the Pope and certain bishops insisted that believers needed to make gifts or purchase special dispensations – indulgences – to secure their salvation. Luther argued that because we are saved by grace, in gratitude, we are free to serve others. Together with the Wittenberg Council he established the Common Chest, the first social services agency in Europe. The Chest provided funds to assist orphans, women and children, paid for education and vocational training and provided medical services.

The idea was that service was about giving a helping hand-up, not just about giving charity to the poor. Today we call this work Lutheran social ministry. LSS of Northern California's call is to end homelessness by addressing the underlying causes, which includes experience in foster care, poverty, chronic illness, mental health issues, unemployment, substance use disorder and disasters.

We extend our appreciation for your support! We appreciate your continued prayers and donations this holiday season.



Treasurer's Report

Beverly Schaap

September 2021

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$29,181	\$25,300	\$3,881
Expenses	\$22,632	\$28,625	-\$5,993
Net	\$6,549	-\$3,325	\$9,874

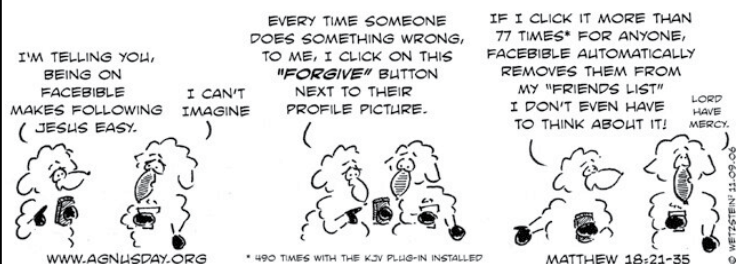
YTD 2021

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$196,079	\$190,100	\$5,979
Expenses	\$209,536	\$249,208	-\$39,672
Net	-\$13,457	-\$59,108	\$45,651

Amount needed to meet the budget \$6,216 per week
September \$7,295



Agnus Day



The deadline for the next issue of The Bethlehem Star is November 25, 2021.

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

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

Should you wish to discontinue your subscription to The Star please let us know via email.