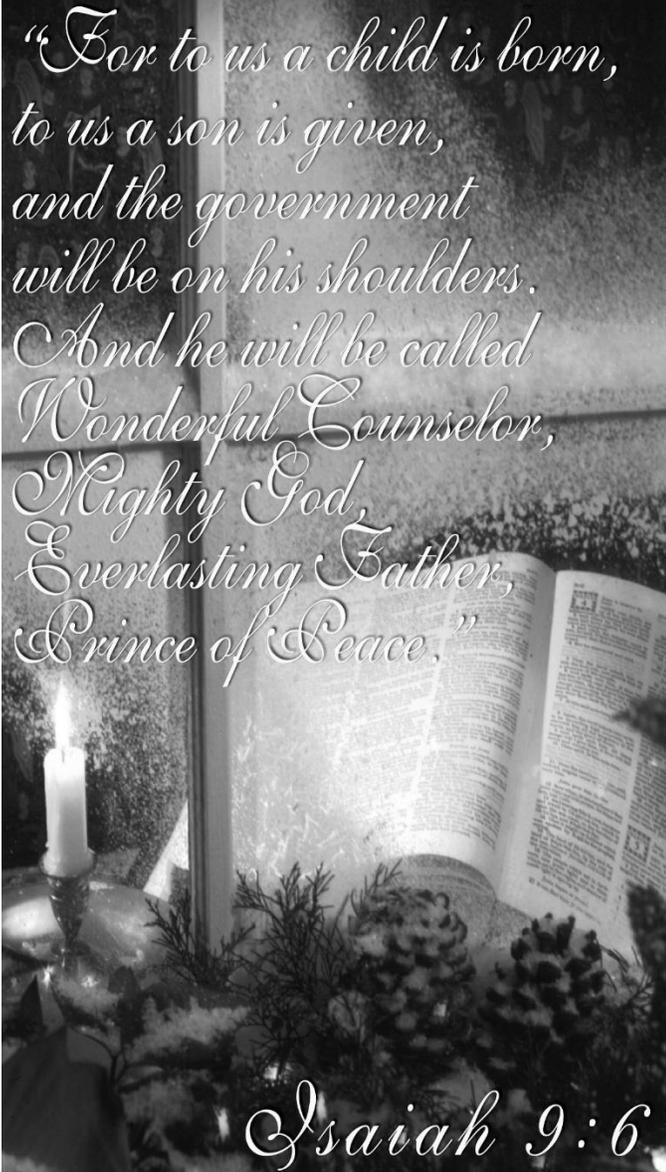




The Bethesda Beacon

Monthly Newsletter of Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church, Carlton MN
December 2020



In This Month's Beacon:

*Pastor Jim's Beacon Article

*Financial Update

*Member News

*Committee Updates

*Faith on the Go!

*And More



Christmas Eve Service will be led by Pastor Jim Raisanen at 5:30 p.m. on
December 24th.



Greetings in the Lord! During this pandemic I have had too much time to think. . .and dream . . .and wax poetic. This is my latest thought. . .

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; God's mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning.

The Lord God gave the peoples of the earth a garden,
And the people said: "That's very nice, God, but that's not enough. We'd like a little knowledge, please."

The Lord gave them knowledge,
And the people said: "Now that we have knowledge, we'd like things."

The Lord gave the people things,
But they always said: "That not quite enough."

So the Lord gave them gifts unequalled:

The Sun

Lightening and Thunder

Rain and Flowers

Animals and Birds and Fish

Trees and the Stars and the Moon

God gave them the Rainbow

God parted the Red Sea and gave them Manna

God gave them Prophets

And Children

And Each Other,

But still the people said, "That's not quite enough."

God loved the people,

And out of ultimate merciful goodness

God gave them the Gift of Gifts—

A Christmas present never to be forgotten—God gave them Love In the form of God's Son. . .Christ Jesus.

There are some that don't open their eyes or their ears or their hearts
And they still say, that's not quite enough.

They wander through the stores or their computers looking for Christmas;
But others open their whole being to the Lord,

Bending their knees to praise God,
Carrying Christmas with them every day.

For these the whole world is a gift!

I pray your Christmas will fill you with Love and Thanksgiving!

Pastor Jim

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2020 Members of Bethesda Church Council

*President – Lynn Beatty

*Vice President – Frank Curtiss

*Secretary - Linda Newlon

*Stacy Colich, Treasurer

Dave Beatty

Deb Davis

Jane Joki

Bethany Leseman

**If you have items that you wish to be addressed by council, contact a member of the Executive Committee, who sets the council agenda. You can keep up to date with church business by viewing the Council Meeting Minutes on the rotating bulletin board or view them on our website.*



***“LIVE SIMPLY....SO
OTHERS MAY SIMPLY
LIVE.”***

For the month of December we will be focused on collecting rice and noodles for the food shelf, but all donations are welcome and needed. If you are unable to make it to the church and still want to donate you can send a check to the church designated for the food shelf. 50 pounds of food was donated to the food shelf in November. A big THANK YOU to everyone who gave and to Gladys Sievert who has been delivering our donations to the Salvation Army

From now until December 20th WELCA will be collecting donations for ***Christmas Gift Cards***. There is an envelope included in your Beacon if you would like to donate. Please let the office, Lynn Beatty or Pastor Jim know if there is anybody that you know of that may be in need of some extra help this holiday season.

Donations can be mailed or may be dropped off at the church. Thank you for helping those in need this holiday season! **Please make checks payable to WELCA.**

It's that time of year again...Committee reports for the Annual Report are due in the office by January 7th, 2021. Thank you. **The Annual Meeting is January 17th, 2021 immediately following worship.**

Mat Maker News...

Covid has not stopped the mat makers! Through October a total of 40 mats were made by many helping hands doing their part at home. Debby Johnson let her house be a drop off and pickup site. Bags got dropped off, picked up, sorted, flattened, cut, plarned, and then crocheted! What a wonderful group! We made it work! Some of us finally started meeting in the church basement, usually 5 of us where we sort, cut and then others pick up cuts at church to plarn. I just want to thank all of you who helped make it possible to bring 40 mats into CHUM!

They are always very appreciative to have them. We can always use more help with mat making. If interested or if you would like more info contact Mary Saarela 218-393-2693. Thank you!



Our deepest sympathy & prayers to the family of Dorothy Gault, Jill Johnson, Donna Koski and Richard Amren. God's promises of resurrection bring comfort and hope in Christ the risen savior.

We will continue to have in house worship services in December on Sunday's at 9 a.m. Pastor Jim will be leading worship on December 6th & 20th along with the Christmas Eve Service. On the Sundays that he is not leading it will be led by the worship team with a recorded sermon from Pastor Jim and Joel will live stream on Facebook



It is So Simple

1. Pick a Convenient [Location](#)
2. Sign up For a Ruby's Guest [Account](#)
3. [Schedule](#) Your Express Track Registration and Handle Your Donation Online to Save Time
4. OR Just Come to the Pop-Up Pantry Location on the Upcoming Monthly Date

Member News



Celebrating December Baptismal Birthdays

Audrina Schwartz, Giselle Martini, Westen Radtke, Nancy Crider, Kaitlyn Kelley, Emma DeVriendt, Crosby Moench, Alanna Soukkala, Emily Marciniak, Amelia McCarthy, Alan Moench, Kristen Wakefield, Stephanie Erickson, Jolene Johnson, Haven Rockenstein, Renee Kesty, Bobbie McCorison, Peyton Schmitz, Aliza Vernon, Brody Vernon, Jack Vernon, Chris Rousseau, Patricia Schmitz, Sofie Herman, Kristianna Konietzko, Jazmyn Martini & Bethany Leseman.

[Cloquet, MN](#)

NEXT POP-UP PANTRY

12/16/2020 10:00 AM

Cloquet National Guard Armory

Sponsored By: Cloquet Area Churches

DAYS AND HOURS

Registration begins at 9:45 AM

Food bundles available 10:00-11:30 AM

For more information on dates and

locations go to Rubyspantry.org

Ruby's Pantry Phone

651.674.0009

E-mail goodnews@rubyspantry.org



The Cloquet Salvation Army is greatly in need of bell ringers! Grab your friends, family and masks! To register call 218-879-1693 or register at www.registertoring.com. Flexible shifts available for Super One, L & M, and Walmart.

Northeastern MN Synod News

A Message from Bishop Amy Odgren

Service, Partnership & Leadership in the Midst of Covid-19

¹⁵I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. Ephesians 1:15-19

Dear friends,

Since March we have been faced with the deadly threat of the coronavirus that thrives when we behave like everything is normal. We have all heard of the pressing concerns of communities who have been most impacted by this virus. In recent weeks we have heard our health leaders speaking with greater urgency about our deepening crisis. Many of us are now being impacted with the reality of our own family members, friends, and neighbors who have contracted this unrelenting virus, or worse yet, have died from its lingering effects. Our communities are feeling the pressure as schools dial back to distance learning, hospitals near capacity, and businesses are required to reimplement limiting standards. There seems to have never been anything like this before. My 94-year-old father, a retired physician, notes that even the polio epidemic was not as virulent as what we face today.

This virus and the safety standards to which we need to adhere to taxes our every routine and especially our relationships. Knowing that families want to gather for Thanksgiving and throughout December into the new year only heightens anxiety levels. All of us have heard and read many “sides” to this health threat. However, at the core of the concern is love – love for the health and safety of our own families and for our communities. We

know what it's like to assist others when a crisis hits. Think of how people come to the aid of their neighbors after a tornado or flood – when a home burns or when there has been wide-spread disaster. Oftentimes, this is when a community shines with love and care for others - when community members, no matter what their ideology or opinions are, come together under the same purpose of compassion and with servant's hearts. We are now faced with one of those crisis times. We are being called, by our actions and the way we respond to this virus, to put the health and safety of our families and communities as top priority.

Synod partners are here to guide our congregations in adopting new practices which minimize the risk of COVID-19 infection. We can do this while still performing the essential roles of faith communities in connecting people with God and with each other. I urge you to also adjust your behaviors to match the reality of a worsening pandemic.

Here are facts about the virus:

- The threat of COVID-19 is real, in Minnesota as in the rest of the nation it is worsening.
- Among our own state's faith communities there has been an increase in cases connected to worship, weddings and funerals.

- While following the guidance made freely available by the Minnesota Department of Health in serving our communities does mitigate risk, but it does not eliminate risk of transmission.
- Behavioral changes including increased handwashing, physical distancing, and mask-wearing help to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

In addition to these truths, we also know that the moral voice of faith communities makes a real difference in shaping how we face this disease. Though we may all have our feet in different places on policy solutions, our hearts are in the same place in our desire to save lives. I urge you to embrace three values when choosing how to oppose this disease.

Service: Try to be of service not only to your faith but to your community. The decisions made in each household have impacts that reach far beyond its walls. Make decisions not simply for your own sake but for the sakes of others, especially those who are in higher risk categories. Consider how you can be of service to your neighbors during this pandemic.

Partnership: Partner with your neighbors and public health workers. There is expertise in the world that can help us all to better survive through the

pandemic. Our congregations who share facts about COVID-19, who host testing sites, and who are changing the ways they conduct ministry are active partners with experts in their communities forming a united front in the fight against this disease's spread. We have our own synod COVID-19 team made up of healthcare and science professionals who will be hosting an informational zoom conference on December 17th at 7:00 pm. Watch for further details for participating in this event as the team shares truths about COVID-19 and addresses your questions.

Leadership: Leaders of all stripes know that pushback is an ever-present element of change, especially in times of heightened anxiety. As a congregational leader, please make difficult changes in order to change lives. While we would all prefer to wish COVID-19 out of our lives, those leaders strong enough to look at our rising numbers in the eye and help congregations, communities, and families to behave differently in order to save lives deserve our thanks. We also know that your decisions have ripple effects. We pray our own changed behaviors give others the courage to also make life-saving choices.

Every community is different and there is no end to the variety of congregations and ministries engaged

across our synod. We find ourselves polarized in many ways and of one mind in so few. Yet we are united in our faith and trust in Emmanuel, God *with us*, in this trying time. We are also united in being under threat from COVID-19 no matter where we live or worship. Therefore, I urge all you to unite under the values of service, partnership and leadership.

Consider sharing this prayer at your holiday table: "Good and gracious God, we grieve those who are not at our table today, even as we hope that the end of this struggle is in sight. Give us servant hearts to love our neighbors enough to not spread this disease to them. Help us to partner with medical professionals and front-line workers as we wash our hands, physically distance, and wear our masks. With these practices, may our actions lead to a better and more hopeful future." Amen

Bishop Amy Odgren
+ Northeastern Minnesota Synod



Faith on the Go



In Mark we hear about total darkness and sometimes this can sound unsettling or even scary. But

take the time to examine the darkness around you. Go outside and look at the stars or close your eyes and try to walk through your house. What does that feel like? Are you able to start to experience light in a different more subtle way? Read the words from Mark again with just one little candle light or small flashlight to guide you. How is it different to hear them in the dark? What do you imagine?

Lighting the First candle: Together light your first candle in your home advent wreath or just get one candle out and light it. You can also turn on your Christmas tree lights if you don't have a candle. Say this prayer together or have one person read out loud.

In the darkness we have hope. We light this first candle reminded that the promise of God pierces through the shadows of our lives and reflects light. Let us pray, God of promise ignite our hearts anew with your word. Fix our eyes into the dark world around us that we might be prepared to walk into new opportunities to bring your light. Amen.

Pray

Come Messiah Come, as we watch and wait for your birth we give thanks for the gifts we have today and those that will come tomorrow. May your love shine as we talk, eat, pray, and be as one in you this day.

As we look at the one lit candle, help us to see that spark of light as a promise we live and a promise we give to others in your name. Amen.

Connect

Name one thing you are anticipating with excitement and one thing that you are waiting for that is difficult. Where is God in both our joys and our worries?

Bible

Mark 13:24-37—The Coming of the Son of Man

Day 1

Mark 13:24-27

What shakes you? What frightens you? What makes you question what you believe? How does the presence of Christ change that?

Day 2

Mark 13:28-29

Jesus talks about the coming of the Kingdom like it is a new season coming. What is your favorite season? How do you know it's coming?

Day 3

Mark 13:30-31

What is the oldest human-made thing you have seen in person? What are the oldest words you have read?

Day 4

Mark 13:32-33

Do you like the feeling of anticipation? Or does waiting drive

you crazy? When is waiting hard?
When is waiting fun?

Day 5

Mark 13:34-37

How do you stay alert when you need to? Why do you think that Jesus wants us to be alert? What are we watching for?

Bless

You are a spark and a gift to your place in this world.



Faith on the Go



When we think of the voice in the wilderness asking us to prepare the way of the Lord we may think of a time and place far away—and yet we celebrate and enter into advent each year to remind ourselves of God who is with us and God who sends us to be in the world, preparing ourselves to show others the grace of Jesus Christ. Light two candles together. As you do sing or listen to a Christmas song or hymn that helps you think about how you experience “God with Us,” and how you are sent to be God’s voice, hands, and feet for others.

Say this prayer together or have one person read it out loud:

Come Messiah Come, In the darkness we are awakened. We light this candle to expose our broken world to your love that we might redirect our lives to you.

Let us pray,
God of Wisdom bring clarity to our path Lord. Teach us to walk in your ways and help us give up the false lights that we so often center our lives upon. Amen.

Pray

Come, Messiah, Come into our time and our days and our nights. Be with each creature that has breath, and with us in the lives you have gifted us. Help us to see the preciousness of each moment and of each life that is a part of our day and our experiences. Bless this food as we eat it and bless those without. Open our hearts and our eyes to hear how you guide us this week. Amen

Connect

How have you pressed on toward a goal today?
How have you listened for God’s voice today?

Bible

Mark 1:1-8—The Proclamation of John the Baptist

Day 1

Mark 1:1-3

What do you do to prepare for Jesus?
Do you meditate or pray? Do you sing
or make art? Do you spend time in
service to others?

Day 2

Mark 1:4

Repentance can be defined as turning
away from sin and toward something
good. What do you need to turn toward
in your life?

Day 3

Mark 1:5

Where do you feel safe confessing
your sins?

Day 4

Mark 1:6-7

John's life pointed toward Jesus. Who
does your life point toward?

Day 5

Mark 1:8

What does the baptism by water mean
to you? What does it mean to be
baptized in the Spirit?

Bless

*You are blessed to bless others in this
time and place.*

Financial Update			
Year-to-date ending 10/31/2020			
	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under) Budget
Envelope giving	85057.82	85526.00	(468.18)
Non-pledged income	13919.18	9516.70	4402.48
TOTAL INCOME	98977.00	95042.70	3934.30
Salaries/Compensation	46152.01	78054.90	(31902.89)
General Office Expenses	8124.12	7410.10	714.02
Utilities	8329.51	8650.80	(321.29)
Other Expenses	717.37	1261.70	(544.33)
Benevolence Expenses	850.58	855.26	(4.68)
Evangelism Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Property Expenses	1233.26	1225.00	8.26
Social Ministry	270.00	291.70	(21.70)
Worship Expenses	5636.10	1840.00	3796.10
CYFM Expenses	538.40	3360.00	(2821.60)
TOTAL EXPENSES	71851.35	102949.46	(31098.11)
Net Income	27125.65	(7906.76)	35032.41
Non-pledged income includes Loose offering, Special Services, Meatball supper, Sunday School, Interest Income, etc. Memorial money is not included in any of the figures above.			



Upcoming VLM Events:

Cut Your Own Christmas Tree
December 5 & 19, 2020, 10am-3pm
at Camp Hiawatha and Camp
Vermilion
Pick a camp- Pick a tree

Celebration of Light and Music
Sunday, December 13, 2020 at Camp
Hiawatha
2:00 - 7:00 p.m.

*For more information on these events
go to vlmcamps.org*

December 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 9am Making Mats for the Homeless	2 5:45pm 7 th -10 th Grade Confirmation Class	3 2pm Children, Youth, Family & Ed. Meeting	4	5
6 9am Worship	7	8 9am Mats for the Homeless 5:30pm Council Meeting	9 5:45pm 7 th -10 th Grade Confirmation Class	10	11	12
13 9am Worship	14	15 Beacon Deadline 9am Mats for the Homeless	16 5:45pm 7 th -10 th Grade Confirmation Class	17 1pm Jam Group	18	19
20 9am Worship	21	22 9am Mats for the Homeless	23 5:45pm 7 th -10 th Grade Confirmation Class	24 5:30pm Christmas Eve Worship Service	25 Have a Blessed Christmas!	26
27 9am Worship	28	29 9am Mats for the Homeless	30	31 New Year's Eve		

Bethesda Lutheran Church
204 5th Street
P.O. Box 210
Carlton, MN 55718

Sunday Worship

9:00am

*In House
And Online*

*You can also view the Beacon
on our website at
bethesdacarlton.org or if you
would like to have a copy
mailed or emailed to you please
contact the office.*

