

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 2017 BEACON

Overboard

Halloween ads dominated the papers and TV until October 31st. Then, as if November and Thanksgiving did not exist, Christmas ads were everywhere. Before Halloween, Christmas decorations were already on display in major retailers. Millions will forsake a happy Thanksgiving with family to prepare for Black Friday shopping. Something is amiss.

Jesus did not receive grand Christmas presents, nor did he give any. The early church celebrated His death and resurrection, but not His birth. The magi, when they arrived over a year after Jesus' birth, did not bring him toys, toys, and more toys. They brought him things to prepare for His death.

Skip ahead eighteen hundred years and we come to "Little House on the Prairie." Read about the happy Christmas they had. Pa brought home a tin cup for one child's present. That along with a candy cane filled her with joy. The highlight of the day was to read the Christmas story and offer thanks for Christ's birth.

Skip ahead a century and a half. As a pastor I have been asked, on more than one occasion, to not have services on Christmas when that day was on Sunday. Oh no, that morning was for the Christmas tree and opening presents. (We had church anyway.) Where is our focus?

Yes, how did we go so far overboard? I am not suggesting tin cups. Although I did broach the idea with our kids when they were little. They said, "Nobody drinks out of tin cups anymore." They missed the point, but they were young. But the big bucks buying public is not young, but they have also missed the point. God gave His Son. His Son gave His life. The most important gifts have already been given. Everything else will never compare.

But there are great gifts that support the gifts God has already given. Our grandchildren will all receive Concordia Press children's books. They can learn to know their Savior better. Better than playing X-box, and that's a certainty. We needn't go overboard on things that don't last. As Christians we need to refocus on the things that do. Things that undergird our understanding and appreciation for what God has already given. It is, after all, Christ's birthday that we are celebrating.

David Craig

davidccraig.net

[Abundant Grace Daily Devotion](#)

Hat and Mitten Tree

The Social Concerns committee will be doing the Hat and Mitten Tree again this year for Christmas. Please donate any hats and mittens for children by placing them on the tree just outside the sanctuary. Thanks in advance for your support.

The Social Concerns committee would also like to thank everyone for the Thanksgiving family meal items and Christmas shoebox donations. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Poinsettia Garden

If you would like to donate a poinsettia to decorate the sanctuary in memory or in honor of a loved one, the order forms are available at the back of the sanctuary. Orders need to be in the office with money by **Tuesday, December 5th**. You may take your poinsettia home following the Christmas services.

AP Food Pantry

December is Bethel's month to set up at the AP Food Pantry. On **Friday, December 15, 4-5 p.m.** to set up. If you are able to help, please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Quilting Update

Since we started quilting in September, 55 quilts have been completed and 69 quilts were given away, as follows:

Adult Stabilization
Dumont Nursing Home
Friends of the Library
Grundy Center Nursing Home
Lions Club
Parker Place
Ronald McDonald House
Women's Adult Hope Cancer Center
Bethel Church Family

Fire Extinguishers, Location Of

The location of each fire extinguisher is listed below; this list is also posted in several locations at the church.

Sanctuary Level:

- In the narthex, to the right of the mailboxes
- In the office, near the office assistant's desk
- Top of the southwest basement steps

Basement:

- Inside custodian closet, by water heater
- In the kitchen, by basement steps that lead to parsonage
- In the fellowship hall, southwest corner

Balcony:

- Near the balcony door

Thank you –

THANKS! Bethel for the prayers, get well wishes, and also to the prayer chain on my behalf. And thanks for all the "fuzzies." Love you all –

Sincerely,
_ _

Thank you –

Many thanks for your prayers and kindnesses the last couple of months. It's a real blessing to be part of such a caring congregation.

Thank you,
Terry Mennen

Family Devotions for December

A Light in the Darkness

Bible Verse: "The **true light** that enlightens every man was coming into the world." John 1:9

The world before Jesus was born was a dark place, a place with unfulfilled hope. It wasn't until God sent His Son, the **Light of the World**, to die for us and live again, that we had the hope of everlasting life fulfilled! So how fitting it is for us to celebrate the **True Light** coming into the world by lighting it up! This Advent and Christmas season, let's remind our families about the real reason for these beautiful lights:

- 1) Light the first Advent candle beginning December 3, adding one each week through Christmas.
- 2) Read Scripture passages about the **Light of the World**, such as John 1:1-5; John 8:12; Matthew 4:15,16 . . . and search for others!
- 3) Read the Christmas story in Matthew 1:18-24 and in Luke 2:1-19.
- 4) As a family, tour light displays and talk about the light of Jesus shining in our lives today.
- 5) Talk about your Christmas traditions and how Jesus' birth is the reason for them.

Pray: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for lighting up our world by sending us your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

December Bible Reading Schedule

Dec. 1, Fri: I Sam. 18:17-30, Isaiah 42:14-25, Rev. 14:1-11
Saturday: I Sam. 19:1-13, Isaiah 43:1-15, Rev. 14:12-20
Sunday: Genesis 48

Dec 4, Mon: I Sam. 19:14-24, Isaiah 43:16-28, Rev. 15
Tuesday: I Sam. 20:1-16, Isaiah 44:1-17, Rev. 16:1-11
Wednesday: I Sam. 20:17-34, Isaiah 44:18-28, Rev. 16:12-21
Thursday: I Sam. 20:35-42, Isaiah 45:1-13, Rev. 17
Friday: I Sam. 21, Isaiah 45:14-25, Rev. 18:1-8
Saturday: I Sam. 22:1-10, Isaiah 46, Rev. 18:9-24
Sunday: Genesis 49

Dec. 11, Mon: I Sam. 22:11-23, Isaiah 47, Rev. 19:1-10
Tuesday: I Sam. 23:1-18, Isaiah 48:1-11, Rev. 19:11-21
Wednesday: I Sam. 23:19-28, Isaiah 48:12-22, Rev. 20
Thursday: I Sam. 24:1-7, Isaiah 49:1-13, Rev. 21:1-8
Friday: I Sam. 24:8-22, Isaiah 49:14-26, Rev. 21:9-27
Saturday: I Sam. 25:1-13, Isaiah 50, Rev. 22
Sunday: Genesis 50

Dec. 18, Mon: I Sam. 25:14-31, Isaiah 51:1-11, Deut. 1:1-18
Tuesday: I Sam. 25:32-44, Isaiah 51:12-23, Deut. 1:19-33
Wednesday: I Sam. 26:1-16, Isaiah 52, Deut. 1:34-46
Thursday: I Sam. 26:17-25, Isaiah 53, Deut. 2:1-15
Friday: I Sam. 27, Isaiah 54, Deut. 2:16-37
Saturday: I Sam. 28:1-14, Isaiah 55, Deut. 3:1-17
Sunday: I Sam. 28:15-25, Isaiah 56, Deut. 3:18-29

Dec. 25, Mon: I Sam. 29, Isaiah 57, Deut. 4:1-14
Tuesday: I Sam. 30:1-15, Isaiah 58, Deut. 4:15-31
Wednesday: I Sam. 30:16-31, Isaiah 59, Deut. 4:32-49
Thursday: I Sam. 31, Isaiah 60, Deuteronomy 5:1-21
Friday: II Sam. 1:1-16, Isaiah 61, Deut. 5:22-33
Saturday: II Sam. 1:17-27, Isaiah 62, Deut. 6:1-9
Sunday: II Sam. 2:1-17, Isaiah 63, Deut. 6:10-25

December Birthdays

2 – Riley Ellermann
6 – Ranae Knock
7 – Dan Frey
15 – Jennifer Buss, Kay Frey
20 – Sarah Redman
22 – Colton Henrichs, Diane Johnson
24 – Nina Sweeney
26 – Savannah Buss
28 – Sara Mann
31 – Vada Luhring

December Anniversaries

12 – Sam & Ami Cordes (2)
14 – Ken & Beth Van Lengen (26)
22 – Bob & Connie Rule (59)
27 – Joel & Diane Buss (49)

Fellowship Following Worship

Please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board to volunteer to make coffee and bring treats for fellowship following worship for a Sunday in December. A separate sign-up sheet will be posted for January and future months. Thank you.

Organized Prayer for Bethel Families

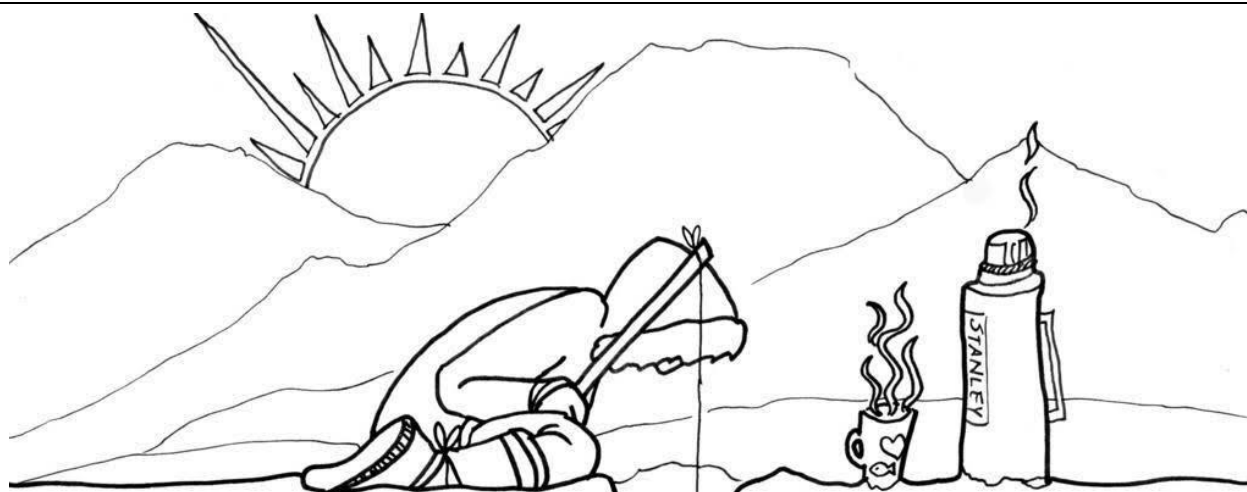
WEEK OF DECEMBER 3 – Ben Frieling, Tom & Sara Mann, Nora, Ava & Corryn, Leona Wallbaum, Butch Geertsma

WEEK OF DECEMBER 10 – Lance & Kim Marlette, Kaitlin & Erica, Kory & Deb Walters, Terry & Janet Mennen, Eric & Becky (Walters) Simmons

WEEK OF DECEMBER 17 – Dennis & Bonnie Gerloff, George Miller, Lee Walters, Guy Gerloff

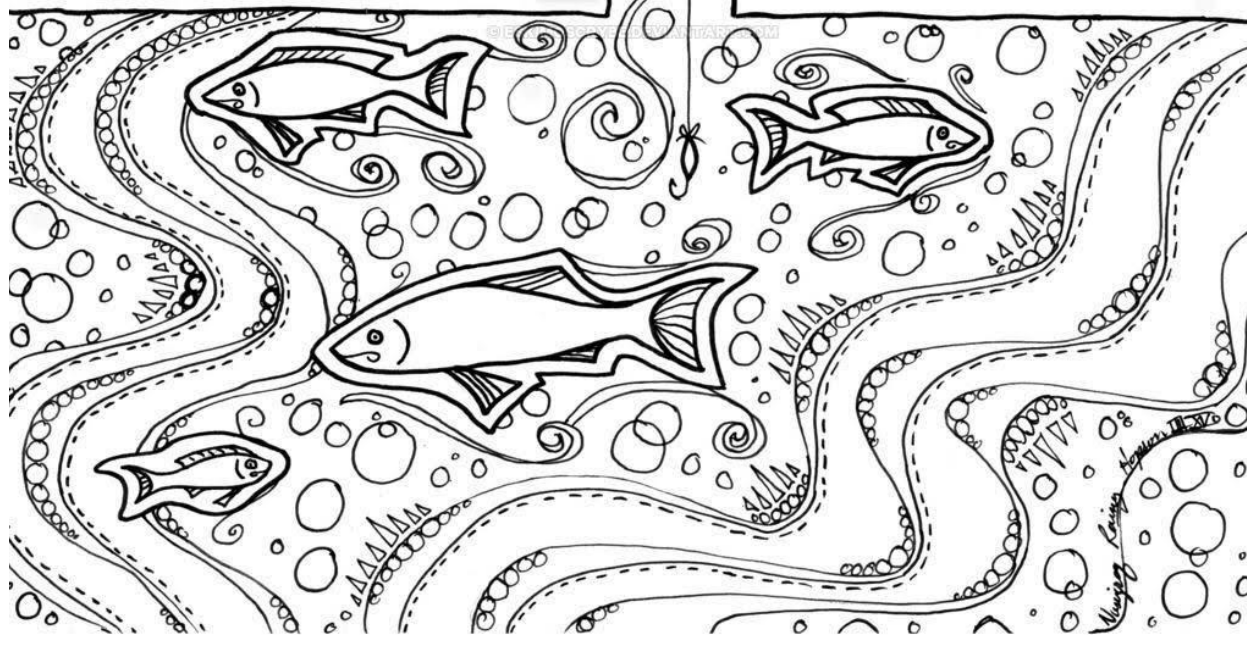
WEEK OF DECEMBER 24 – Justin & Tessa (Gerloff) Matherly & Noah, Carol Warneka, Henry & Janice Gerloff, Darwin & Peggy Miller

WEEK OF DECEMBER 31 – Jann Wiegmann, Meri Jo Wiese, Nichole & Tyler, Arlo Williams & Sandra Briggs, Bryce & Ruth Zacharias, Joe & Christina (Tjebkes) Edwards & Sloan



Going fishing for men, but can't get 'em HOOKED???

Now, at Bethel Lutheran, we have Referral Cards!!!!
Keep them in your wallet, purse, car, truck, snowblower, tackle box, tractor.... etc....
If you need help "breaking the ice," these handy little referral cards have all of our church info on them. Let's go FISHING!!!
(cards located in the narthex!!!)



BLCW News

December 3rd is the annual **Cookie and Candy by the Pound Sale**. Donations may be brought to the church on Saturday, the 2nd, or Sunday before church. Sales will start following worship service; no early sales. Anyone may donate.

Ushers Needed

Ushers are needed **beginning in January**. A sign-up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board in the narthex. Please sign-up to volunteer to usher for one Sunday or more. Thank you.

Financial Update as of November 9, 2017

Bank Account Balance		\$30,438.38
Commitments yet to be paid:		
- Benevolence	\$6,500.19	
- Sanctuary/Interior Bell Tower Repairs/Painting-estimate (congregational vote May 28, 2017)	500.00	
- Exterior Gutter finish work-estimate	<u>500.00</u>	
Subtotal - Commitments above		<u>7,500.19</u>
Balance		\$22,938.19

November 9, 2017 Church Council Minutes

Present: President Day Frey, Darla Drewelow, Carol Chapman, Jenny Hansmann, Michelle Krohn, Bruce Simon, Stacy Palmer

Call to Order: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." – Amen.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Michelle, 2nd by Darla.

Approval of the Minutes: Motion by Michelle, 2nd by Jenny.

Approval of the Treasurer's Report: Motion by Bruce, 2nd by Michelle.

- Youth Checking Account: Two individuals (Jenny Hansmann and Julia Dudley) will be authorized to utilize the checking account; the Sweeney's name will be removed. Motion by Michelle, 2nd by Bruce.

Pastor's Report: Discussed Pastor's upcoming vacation and approved training events. Dan will find out the upcoming vacation dates and details for each.

Ministry Team Reports:

- Children and Youth Ministry Team – no meeting
Follow-up on Youth Leader position – Carol reported Wartburg College is willing to work with us to find students who may be interested. A draft of a job description was reviewed and tabled for our next meeting.
- Outreach Ministry Team – no meeting
- Fellowship Ministry Team – no meeting
- Property Ministry Team –
 - a. Dan will check if it's possible to get the parking lot lines painted yet this year.
 - b. Dan reported the sanctuary lights will all be replaced with new LED lights.
 - c. Bruce reported the safety latch on the SW exit door will be repaired.
 - d. Pastor has asked us to look at an old gas pipe in the parsonage basement that may need to be capped.
- Worship and Music Ministry Team – no meeting

November 9, 2017 Church Council Minutes (cont.)

- Social Concerns Ministry Team –
 - a. Thanksgiving Adopt a Family - our family consists of a single mother with six children; a sign-up sheet has been posted for the items needed.
 - b. Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box Project has been a success. So far 36 boxes have been filled; an additional 10 may be filled with funds received from Thrivent Financial.
 - c. For Christmas, we continue to work with our sources to find families to sponsor.
- Missions/Benevolence Ministry Team – no meeting

Correspondence: Recent mailings were discussed and distributed and/or posted when applicable.

Old Business:

1. Summit Companies – fire extinguishers – anticipate completion by month end.
2. McGee Construction – Bruce is confident the minor items remaining will be completed timely.
3. Nominating Committee – no meeting, however, Jim Schwarz will be the Chairperson.
4. Confirmation – Devin Bernard will be attending Adult Sunday School and on occasion, reciting his confirmation requirements during those sessions. Council is advised to attend when possible.
5. Call Committee – We will advise the Call Committee that a full-time pastor is what we desire and they should aggressively move ahead to seek one.
6. Sound System – Dan was authorized to review and purchase best affordable options to enhance our sound system issues inclusive of microphones, video and CD burning devices.

New Business:

1. Snow Removal – Koop Snow Removal will be hired.
2. Carpet – entryway – We'll be looking into cleaning and deodorizing options.
3. Thanksgiving Services/offering envelopes
 - a. Pastor will be on vacation the week of Thanksgiving - November 20–26. Alex McNally will be our supply Pastor for Thanksgiving Eve Service and the November 26 Sunday service at a salary of \$125 + mileage for each service. Motion by Stacy, 2nd by Darla.
 - b. Thanksgiving Offering Envelopes – all undesignated funds will be given to the AP Food Pantry. Motion by Stacy, 2nd by Michelle.
4. Christmas Services –
 - a. On Sunday, December 24, at 9:00 am - regular Sunday morning service.
 - b. On Sunday, December 24 at 7:00 pm - Candlelight Christmas Eve Communion service.
 - c. On Monday, December 25 at 9:00 am - Christmas morning service.
 - d. Christmas sacks – will be given this year. Carol and Stacy will review options and make recommendations.
5. 2018 Budget Draft was distributed and reviewed; will be reviewed again and approved at the December Council Meeting.
6. Annual Meeting will be immediately after worship service on January 28, 2018 with a snow date of February 4, 2018.
7. Follow-up on feedback from Fall Kickoff Brunch held on September 10, 2017:
 - a. Fishers of Men discussion with initiatives to be rolled out by year-end.
 - b. Coffee and Refreshments will be offered in the overflow area, following services starting November 12 and each Sunday thereafter. The Church Council will provide refreshments for the month of November. Ongoing, a Sunday sign-up sheet will be provided for the congregation to volunteer to participate.

Meeting was adjourned – motion by Bruce, 2nd by Stacy. Closed with The Lord's Prayer.

December Communion Assistants: Diane Buss, Jay Herter

Next Council Meeting – Wednesday, December 13, 7:30 pm

Submitted by Carol Chapman

Worship Assistant Schedule for December--Worship Service 9:00 a.m.

	December 3	December 10	December 17	December 24	December 31
USHERS	Kyle & Mary Rice	Vern & Marilyn Ingalls Jason Uhlenhopp & Leah Ingalls	Dennis & Bonnie Gerloff	Dennis & Bonnie Gerloff	Dennis & Bonnie Gerloff
ORGANISTS/PIANISTS	Janet Mennen/Sharleen Hubbard/Jacque Craig				
ALTAR GUILD	JoAnne Schwarz				
GREETERS	Bill & Irene Senne	Larry & Carol Chapman	Dennis & Julia Dudley	Bruce & Cindy Simon	Terry & Janet Mennen
LECTORS	Darla Drewelow	Jim Schwarz	Steve Brouwer	Dave Hubbard	Diane Buss
LITURGISTS	Terry Mennen	JoAnne Schwarz	Choir	Sharleen Hubbard	Hymn Sing
ACOLYTES	Corryn Mann Evan Palmer	Ava Mann	Devin Bernard Gavin Bernard	a.m. Evan Palmer Candlelight Svc: Ava & Corryn Mann	Ava Mann
COMMUNION ASSISTANTS	Diane Buss Carol Chapman		Diane Buss Carol Chapman	Candlelight Svc: Diane Buss Carol Chapman	
COFFEE FELLOWSHIP	Cookie & Candy by the Pound Sale		Karol Ellermann		Bill & Irene Senne
SOUND SYSTEM	Jenny Hansmann/Stacy Palmer				

November Summary of Attendance and Financial Contributions

	Attendance	Bene./Mission	Current	Building Maintenance
Sunday, November 5	77	\$170.00	\$3,010.10	\$0.00
Sunday, November 12	66	\$118.00	\$1,572.02	\$0.00
Sunday, November 19	57	\$124.11	\$1,727.04	\$0.00
Sunday, November 22/26	21/58	\$347.50	\$2,181.77	\$0.00
Total Receipts January 1-November 26, 2017		\$7,184.63	\$95,613.77	\$100.00

Email: bethelparkersburg@gmail.com

Website: www.bethelparkersburg.org

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December 2017 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 9:00 Worship/Holy Communion/ World Hunger Sunday 10:00 Coffee Following Worship-BLCW Cookie/ Candy By The Pound Sale 10:15 SUNDAY SCHOOL-Adult & Children/Confirmation	4	5	6 6:30 pm Senior Choir	7 9:00 am-Noon Quilting 1:00 pm Ladies Bible Study at Darla Drewelow's home	8	9
10 9:00 Sunday Worship 10:00 Coffee 10:15 SUNDAY SCHOOL-Adult & Children/Confirmation	11	12	13 6:30 pm Senior Choir 7:30 pm Church Council	14 9:00 am-Noon Quilting	15	16
17 9:00 Worship with Choir/ Holy Communion/Noisy Nickels 10:00 Coffee 10:15 SUNDAY SCHOOL-Adult & Children/Confirmation	18	19	20	21 9:00 am-Noon Quilting	22	23
24 9:00 Sunday Worship 10:00 Coffee 10:15 SUNDAY SCHOOL-Adult & Children/Confirmation 7:00 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Communion Service	25 9:00 Christmas Day Worship	26	27	28 9:00 am-Noon Quilting	29	30
31 9:00 Sunday Worship/Hymn Sing 10:00 Coffee 10:15 SUNDAY SCHOOL-Adult & Children/Confirmation			MARK YOUR JANUARY 2018 CALENDAR The Church Council has set Bethel's annual meeting following worship on Sunday, January 28, 2018, with a snow date of February 4, 2018. Please plan to attend.			

