

# THE MESSENGER December 2024

## *The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church*

*As forgiven children of God, Bethlehem Lutheran Church shows Christ's love through acts of service so that we can share the hope of the Gospel with others.*

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## From the Pastor's Desk



### A Season of Light

Winter nights have a way of settling deep into the soul. Darkness stretches long and wide, wrapping the world in a kind of stillness that can feel both heavy and expectant. Yet, even in this long shadowed season, light has a way of speaking. It flickers in a single candle, weaves across rooftops in strings of Christmas bulbs, and glints in frosted windows. Light insists on being seen, on breaking through. And for those who follow Christ, this is no accident. Light is at the heart of the story we live by because it is at the heart of who He is.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone” (Isaiah 9:2). These words of the prophet Isaiah ring out across centuries, as bold and urgent as the first rays of dawn. They remind us of something we can forget in our weariness: God’s light is not afraid of the dark. It enters shadowy places, speaks into chaos, and kindles hope where there was none.

This Advent and Christmas season, we’ll spend a lot of time talking about this light. We’ll focus in on how God’s light not only entered the world on that first Christmas night but continues to shine into the very fabric of our lives. Each week, we’ll pause to see how Christ’s light illumines different parts of our walk—our waiting, our weariness, our rejoicing, and even our grief. Advent begins with a spark of hope. As we wait for Christ’s coming, we’ll see how His light strengthens hearts that watch and yearn. From there, we’ll follow the light’s path, stretching far beyond Bethlehem. The prophets spoke of it reaching the nations—a beacon drawing all people to the God who created them. It shines in deserts, renewing what seems barren, and pierces shadows of fear and doubt with the promise of peace. On Christmas Eve, we’ll gather in awe before the Light of the World, born in a manger, fulfilling God’s promise to redeem what’s broken.

But the light doesn’t stop there. On the Sunday after Christmas, we’ll sit with one of the most sobering stories in Scripture—the slaughter of the Holy Innocents. Here, the light confronts us with a hard truth: the world into which Christ was born is dark indeed. And yet, it’s precisely into this brokenness that His light shines. The light of Christ is not fragile or fleeting; it meets sorrow head-on and overcomes.

As we move into Epiphany and beyond, the light continues to stretch. It touches all that it meets—transforming, healing, and calling us into a deeper trust in the God who walks with us. This is not just a poetic metaphor; it is the very reality of God’s presence with us. The same God who spoke light into existence at creation, who guided His people with fire in the wilderness, has entered our world as the Light that no darkness can overcome.

So, as the season unfolds, let’s pay attention. Let’s watch for the light. Look for it in the glow of the Advent wreath, in the faces of those gathered around you, in the quiet moments of reflection, and in the Scriptures we read together. Above all, let’s fix our eyes on Jesus, the true Light, who has come into the world for us all.

May His light fill you with hope, peace, and joy this Advent and Christmas.

Pastor Ben



**Ways to watch WORSHIP ANEW:**  
**Online - <https://worshipanew.org/>**  
**Sunday at 6:30am on (WISE-TV Channel 33)**  
**Sunday at 7:00am on (EPTA channel 21.2)**  
**Sunday at 11:30am on TCT (WINM channel 12)**

**December 1, 2024 – First Sunday in Advent**  
**Your Coming King - Zechariah 9:9**  
**Rev. Shayne Jonker**

Your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation. He came once in humility to die and rise. He comes now to bless, to forgive, to make you His own, and to give you a share in His life and royalty. He comes to establish His reign, not on earth, but in the hearts of men and women, turning hearts in faith toward Him and to the Father.

**December 8, 2024 – Second Sunday in Advent**  
**Prepare the Way - Luke 3:1-20**  
**Rev. Paul Shoemaker**

John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament (old covenant) prophets, even though he appears in the New Testament. He calls upon people to prepare the way of the Lord. We, too, need to prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts and lives as we repent of our sins, receive God's forgiveness, and walk in the newness of life. At the end of this earthly journey, we receive the crown of glory prepared for us.

**December 15, 2024 – Third Sunday in Advent**  
**Advent is for Rejoicing - Zephaniah 3:14-20**  
**Rev. William Mueller**

For some, the season of Advent is a far cry from a joyful season. For others, they might be caught in a feedback loop of rejoicing only for the repetition of loved traditions. Our Lord invites us through His message, by way of Zephaniah, both to rejoice and to know why it is we rejoice!

**December 22, 2024 – The Nativity of Our Lord**  
**One of Us - Matthew 1:21**  
**Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer**

Christmas Eve – the time for us to celebrate the underwhelming arrival of an overwhelming love. The Old Testament gives our newborn Savior the title, "Immanuel," which means "God with us." We have everyday and eternal peace and joy by having a God who is One of Us.

**December 25, 2024 – Christmas Day**  
**Mundane and Beautiful - John 1:14**  
**Rev. Jonathan Meyer (Guest Pastor)**

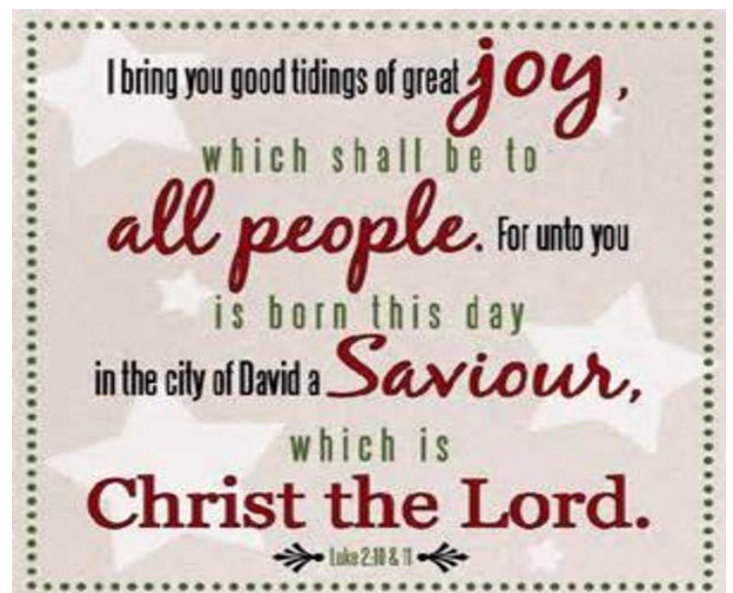
God works things out so beautifully. We see that particularly in the Christmas story, but not in the places where you would think. It's not the angels tearing open the sky or the picturesque idea of a stable, but in something utterly unremarkable.

*This program will be released on Christmas Day on our digital platforms:*

- *WorshipAnew.org*
- *Mobile App*
- *TV Apps*
- *YouTube*
- *Facebook*

**December 29, 2024 – First Sunday After Christmas**  
**Anna - Luke 2:36-38**  
**Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III**

Anna was an elderly woman who lived in Jerusalem. She had experienced great grief at a young age when her husband died, and she, thereafter, had remained a widow. But God sustained her in her time of sadness and preserved her in saving faith through his Word. In fact, she became a powerful witness for the Lord, used by him for the benefit of many people. Her story speaks to you today.



# small GROUPS

Mark your calendars:

**Epiphany Brunch: January 5, 2025**

Come down to the cafeteria after service, January 5<sup>th</sup> for Brunch, music and fellowship. We'll see you there!

The Freewill offering will be collected for Our Savior Lutheran Church and School, St Petersburg, Florida. Our Savior Lutheran Church and school families lost everything from the devastation of Hurricane Milton. The collection will help provide needed resources to rebuild and recover.

Kasey Hapner providing the music for the Epiphany Brunch



There are openings for Rescue Mission Volunteers in November for both bakers and servers. Look for the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside the Book Nook library. Contact either Randy Hapner @ 260-745-7477 or Ruth Bates @ 260-417-0600 if you have further questions.



DECEMBER 28

On the Church calendar December 28 is the Feast of The Holy Innocents. Matthew 2:13-23 tells us of the massacre of these infants and children in Bethlehem and environs at the order of King Herod, whose objective was to murder the Christ Child after the visit of the Magi. Dietrich Bonhoeffer prepared a sermon on this text for January 7, 1940, entitled "The Cross over the Manger," which will be the focus of our Men's Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, December 28, in the Bethlehem cafeteria starting at 8:30am. Please plan to join us for breakfast, prayer, a devotion by Bill Ihssen, and our meditation on The Holy Innocents and their meaning for us today.



## EDUCATION HOUR

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**10:30am-11:30am  
Adults-cafeteria**

## Hiding God's Word

*in our hearts*

**Sonshine Club 2024 - 2025**



Children ages 3yrs + are invited to join us in the Sonshine Club room after Sunday worship from 10:30-11:30. We'll be digging into God's promises for us all throughout the Bible beginning in Genesis!

# Food Bank Report

By Sharon Shediack  
October

We provided food to 395 individuals. They included 171 children under the age of 18, and 46 individuals over the age of 60. Our congregation provided 317# of food. We went to Community Harvest three times this month to purchase 1877# of food in the amount of \$772. Our 17 volunteers gave 140 hours of their time.

We could use soup, pasta sauce and tomato products. Thanks to ALL of you for all your many volunteer hours, dedication and the financial support you give to help provide this mission at Bethlehem.

## FOOD BANK PRAYER REQUESTS

Below are some prayer requests from some of our Food Bank clients. I have omitted the names for privacy.

**Please pray for:** My family, my friend will for addictions, for strength and guidance for my grandson and daughter. For direction and discipline for my son and myself. Strength and peace for my mom and dad. Everything for my sisters.

**Please pray for:** Me and my family

*The greatest gifts we can give  
to each other  
is to pray for one another.*

## Christmas Worship Schedule

12/04 Wednesday	6:30pm	Midweek Advent Service
12/11 Wednesday	6:30pm	Midweek Advent Service
12/17 Tuesday	6:30pm	LSUS Christmas Service (Beth)
12/18 Wednesday	6:30pm	Midweek Advent Service
12/21 Saturday	6:30pm	The Darkest Night Service
12/24 Tuesday	6:30pm	Christmas Eve Worship Service
12/25 Wednesday	10:00am	Christmas Day Worship Service



# BETHLEHEM FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commands that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)*



## GENERATIONS of Faith Bible Study



## Bethlehem Mission News

By Jane Miller

As is often the case, today I watched and heard the Scriptures designated for the day twice, both during the live Bethlehem service as we were getting ready to attend Chapel here at LLV, where Bob is often the volunteer organist. Today Chaplain Mike Wakeland was preaching the sermon based on Mark 13, where Jesus prophesied that the stones of the temple would be destroyed, not one stone left on another! Then he went on to talk about what would happen to them as His disciples, when persecution for their faith began to happen, and then turned in his Bible to 1st Peter 2. Here Peter is saying, "You are coming to Christ, the living cornerstone of God's temple....And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple...The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone!" That reminded me that one of my favorite parts of our Bethlehem Lutheran Indiana Limestone building has always been the cornerstone in what used to be the well-used front door area of the building, where the school children of the neighborhood used to enter as they walked into the school. Unless you are old enough to have entered the school that way yourself, you may have never noticed that cornerstone! What it says, in the old King James Version is, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven."

When I came back to Bethlehem for the second time to be the Kindergarten teacher, after having first taught second grade here right out of college, I would always sometime that first week of school bring the children out that front door to sit down and see that cornerstone. You see, that first week of Kindergarten I would teach them the Bible story of Jesus warning his disciples that he always had time for the children, and not to shoo them away! We would have pictures, finger plays, and songs about how much Jesus loved and valued the children! I was proud and thankful to be able to teach at a church and school where children were warmly welcomed and valued! So when Bethlehem and 3 other congregations had decided to unite our efforts in running one joint school, based at the former Unity Lutheran School, I felt very sad that for logistical reasons it would no longer be in our Bethlehem building. But I was consoled to think we were still operating a mission outreach to the south side of Fort Wayne! And for many years of that partnership, I was thankful that our Bethlehem congregation was the largest financial support of LSUS. So today, when Charlotte kindly brought us a copy of today's voter's meeting agenda and budget for 2025, I was very disappointed that, due to budget problems of a shrinking congregation, we will no longer be supporting LSUS as a true arm of our congregation! This comes after the weekly prayers for missionaries have been eliminated from the Sunday prayers the last few months, because "those who are interested in missions can read about it in the Messenger." I contrast this with New Life Lutheran Church, a little storefront building across from the old Harvester building on East Coliseum, for whom missions, citywide, refugees and foreign, is their main focus, along with giving loving care and teaching to their neighbors and members. I know many people at Bethlehem are very interested in all kinds of missions, and individually support them through the envelopes and a \$4000 line budget item divided among 4 different missions for special needs. But I am glad that our dear Pastor David Schlie is no longer here to see us turn our backs on the importance of local missions! That, along with coming where there was at the time a vital youth program, was the main reason we transferred to Bethlehem from a large downtown congregation sitting on a very big endowment fund!

I pray I haven't offended anyone by these fairly strong words; but as your missions' secretary, I don't think I can keep silent on this issue. I sense the Holy Spirit wants me to speak them.

## Mission Prayers for December Updates:

I have not heard yet for sure that Joe Boway has been able to return home to Fort Wayne as yet. I do know the roads were in such bad condition in rural Liberia, due to heavy rains, that they had to delay the reformation conference and the many baptisms being held. Todd Roeske posted many pictures on Facebook of his visits to churches and conferences in the Philippines and now has returned home, I believe. An excerpt from Tim and Michelle Miller's just received newsletter: Tim: "A series of podcasts on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount produced by The Bible Project has been a rich blessing to us this year. In one episode they summarize Jesus' 'Beatitudes' with these words: "Surprise! The Kingdom of Heaven has arrived! And the people taking hold of it are the outsiders - the unimportant- and the way they participate in it is through peacemaking and suffering." Tim continues "I heard these words while driving recently and felt so much emotion well up in my throat that I almost had to pull our car over. Only 6 weeks earlier while we were in the U.S. getting ready for our daughter Sarah's wedding, we heard the news that the life of an influential Khon pastor and friend ours had been cut short in a targeted attack that appears to have been an attempt to intimidate believers in the face of the church's growth. The event has shocked the Christian community among the Khon. But reading what Peter shares in 1st Peter 5 has comforted the Khon believers that God does care for them and will continue to take care of them! Please pray for our team and other Khon believers that these lessons can help confirm the same calling God has placed on their live so that Christ may be glorified in this nation

We have been delayed in receiving this newsletter because of the flooding of Florida by Helene, Tim shared when we called them about this! They have also just recovered from cases of Dengue Fever! Thankful!

## LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR



ie Mental Health Initiative at Bethlehem is under the direction of Joyce Knipstein. **Bethlehem seeks to be a caring community and to provide hope.**



*The Christmas  
star shines  
brightly upon  
all those  
missing loved  
ones  
in heaven."*

Christmas can be a painful time for some. It may be the first Christmas after a big life change: a lost job, a broken relationship, a wearying illness, a recent death—or perhaps it is simply a time that has always been difficult. For these reasons, our church will offer a special "Darkest Night" service on **Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:30pm**. You are invited to come join with us in sharing and hearing scripture, prayers, and music acknowledging that God's presence is for those who mourn, and that God's Word comes to shine light into our darkness.

## BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY

If you feel you would also benefit from the care of our Stephen Ministry Bereavement program, please call Pastor Ben (989-907-9481), Threasa Lightning (260-417-1450) or Richard Pierce (260-450-2280), our Grief Coordinators.

# WOMEN of BETHLEHEM



National: lwml.org  
State/Local: lwmlindiana.org

## Christmas Traditions



12<sup>th</sup> Annual Advent Tea  
December 8<sup>th</sup> 1:30pm

If you are interested in attending, please call the Church Office 744-3228.  
Love Offering will be going to Our Savior Lutheran Church and School in St. Petersburg, FL

### COOKIES FOR SHUT-IN CHEER BAGS

We would like to include homemade cookies for our Shut-In Cheer Bags. If you would like to donate cookies please bring to Bethlehem on Friday, December 13 or by 9:00am on Saturday, December 14 when the bags will be assembled in Room 4. Help is needed and appreciated to assemble the bags.

**Let's Go!**  
to Omaha, NE!

We're off to the LWML Convention!  
June 25-29, 2025

If you'd like to take the bus with us, email Emily at [emily12rogers6@gmail.com](mailto:emily12rogers6@gmail.com)

Approximately \$200 a person  
Intent to join deadline: August 25



SAVE THE DATE FOR

THE 2026 LWML INDIANA DISTRICT CONVENTION

June 26, 27, and 28, 2026

All women are invited to the

Vanderburgh 4-H Center

201 East Boonville - New Harmony Road,  
Evansville, IN 47725

## RUMMAGE SALE ITEM DONATIONS:

Thank you for your donations for our recent September Sale. LSUS received a check for \$5800.00! A future Bethlehem Rummage Sale is not in the works at this time, but a Joint Four Church Rummage Sale may happen next summer at LSUS.

### PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF DONATIONS AT BETHLEHEM!

Below are some nearby worthy recipients for your donations:

**Clothes for Joe's** (Men's clothing): 2202 Calhoun Street - 442-8600

**Lydia's Closet** (Women's Clothing): Faith Lutheran Church, 1700 E. Pettit - 435-0671

**St. Henry's Thrift Shop**: 3029 E. Paulding - 417-5569

**St. Vincent Thrift Shop**: 1600 S. Calhoun - 456-3561

**Cross Borders**: 929 N. Coliseum - 484-8580

**Blue Jacket** (Business & Professional Clothing): 4633 Lima Rd.

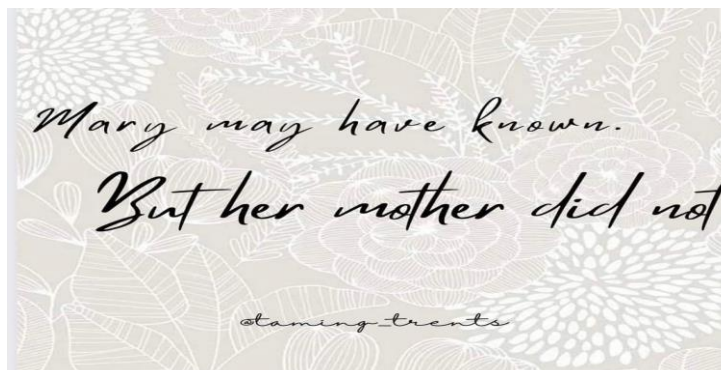
**Treasure House Thrift Shop** (Rescue Ministries): 10202 Coldwater Rd. - 456-8200



# The Joyful Corner

This time of year, we talk about Mary a lot.  
But what about Mary's mother?  
Someone had to raise Mary to find favor with God.  
Someone had to raise Mary to treasure purity.  
Someone had to raise Mary to honor Joseph.  
Someone had to raise Mary to know the voice of the Lord, even though they were living in the silent years.  
Mary's mother, we don't know her name.  
We don't know what her life looked like.  
We don't know who she was married to, or what he was like.  
All we know is, she raised the mother of Christ.  
She raised a daughter, highly favored of the Lord.  
She raised a daughter to fear the Lord, when the Lord was silent.  
This is what we know.  
Mary's mother didn't have an encounter with Angel, telling her to raise Mary carefully because of how the Lord was going to use her.  
Mary's mother chose to raise Mary wisely so that the Lord could use her.  
Mary's mother didn't have an encounter with Angel, telling her to honor her husband, because Mary would need to honor Joseph when he told her to travel to Bethlehem while she was great with child, when he told her to flee Herod's wrath (before it came to pass) in the middle of the night, Mary's mother just honored her husband, obeyed, and submitted to him because she knew that's what she was called to do.  
Mary's mother didn't have an encounter with an angel, giving her a word to cling to in those dark, silent years.  
But she clung to the word of God that she had. She trusted his word, even during his silence.  
And her home shone with divine favor, because she made choices in the dark that affected the whole world.  
Mary did you know?  
She knew some, she knew what the Angel told her.  
But Mary's mother?  
She had no idea.  
But she chose to raise a daughter that the Lord could use.  
And that choice still affects us all today.  
Who you raise can affect eternity.  
The example you set in marriage, can affect eternity.  
Your home can make the gates of Hell tremble.  
But it starts with you.

by Sarah Trent





# Christmas at the Embassy

The Christ Child:

Our Confidence and Joy Shall Be

*At the Historic Embassy Theatre*

December 15, 2024 | 4:00 p.m.

\$15 - Students and Seniors | \$20 - Adults



Concordia Lutheran  
High School

Tickets available at the Star Bank Box Office or Ticketmaster Beginning October 25

LUTHERAN SOUTH UNITY SCHOOL  
K-8 Christmas Service

# JOURNEY TO THE MANGER



Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024

6:30 PM

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
3705 S. Anthony Blvd.

**Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Board of Directors Regular Monthly Meeting**  
**October 8, 2024**

Members present: Pastor Ben Ahlersmeyer, Evans Branigan, Brian Bates, Dan Bates, Rachele Dance, Bake Sebring, Greg Shediack and John Stafford

Members absent: none

Guests: none

The October 8th regular monthly meeting of the Board was opened at 6:33 PM by President Greg Shediack. Pastor Ben provided an opening devotion based on Ephesians 2:20, we are “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.” Pastor closed the devotion with prayer.

The Soul Accounting report, as approved by the Board of Elders at its October meeting, was reviewed by the Board. It included the baptisms of Finn Wild Geisler on August 31<sup>st</sup> and Lejla Christionna Mi Amor Bontempo on September 7<sup>th</sup> and the death of John Nahrwold on September 19th.

The minutes from the Board’s September, 2024 regular monthly meeting were unanimously approved as submitted on a motion from John Stafford and a second from Blake Sebring.

Brian Bates presented the September Financial Report. Monthly offerings for September were \$28,748 compared with a budgeted amount of \$26,833. \$30,000 was also transferred from the Endowment Fund to the Operating Fund. Monthly expenses for August totaled \$63,543, compared with monthly budget amounts of \$40,010. Monthly expenses in September were unusually high as the boiler repairs of approximately \$29,000 were paid in September. The balance in the Endowment Fund at the end of August was \$1,330,359. The balance reflected the June ending balance in the funds held with the Lutheran Foundation as the more recent statements have not yet been received. The Endowment Fund has also received a bequeath of \$208,000, which is reflected in the balance noted above. The month-end balance in the SSMG Fund was \$24,905. Brian also presented a report illustrating actual expenses compared with budgeted amounts for the major categories of the Operating Budget. Through the first nine months of the year, we have expended 77 percent of the budgeted expenses. The monthly Treasurer’s Report was unanimously adopted on a motion by Brian Bates and a second by Dan Bates.

John Stafford provided an update on the work of the Community Center Committee. Four members of the Committee – Barb Netterville, Mark Blessing, Blake Sebring and John Stafford – will be attending the second day-long Sacred Places workshop on October 26<sup>th</sup>. Blake has taken the lead in preparing a draft case statement as required as a part of the Sacred Places program. The statement will need further input from the congregation as the process moves forward. Mark Blessing has taken the lead in working on the community fiscal impact of our congregation, another component of the information Sacred Places encourages us to prepare.

Under new business, the Board set Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup> as the date for the next Voters Assembly and discussed items to be placed on the agenda for that Assembly.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Evans Branigan moved and Dan Bates seconded a motion for adjournment. After closing with prayer, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 PM.

Submitted in His service,

John Stafford, Secretary

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Fort Wayne, Indiana  
Voters Assembly  
Sunday, May 19, 2024

The Voters Assembly was called to order by President Greg Shediack at 10:23 AM in the sanctuary. Forty-five members were present establishing a quorum.

The meeting was opened with a devotion provided by Pastor Ben Ahlersmeyer.

Secretary John Stafford offered a motion to approve the minutes as presented from the November 19, 2023 Voters Assembly meeting. Steve Bercot provided a second and the motion unanimously passed.

Treasurer Brian Bates presented a financial update with information current through the month of April. A handout was also provided tracking year-to-date expenditures. Through one-third of the year, expenditures were at \$152,664 or 31.8 percent of the budgeted amount. The update was accepted on a voice vote upon a motion by Brian Bates and a second by David Schult.

The sole item of new business was a presentation and consideration of proposal regarding exploration of the potential future use of portions of the Bethlehem facility which currently are not being utilized to full potential. The presentation was made by Mark Blessing. Mark reviewed information that had previously been presented at the April 14<sup>th</sup> congregational information session.

Subsequent to the presentation, a motion was made Mark Blessing and seconded by David Schult to adopt the following resolution:

Bethlehem Congregation directs the Board of Directors to undertake the following actions associated with investigation of the feasibility of development of a Community Center program as generally described in the Neighborhood Mission Rejuvenation Plan document presented to the congregation on April 14, 2024:

- I. Performance of following feasibility analyses:
  - A. Identify interested potential Primary Service Providers and associated services, and obtain and assess proposals
  - B. For each identified Primary Service Provider determined to be potentially feasible by the Board, develop the following:
    1. Program Feasibility Assessment budget (these are costs such as architectural studies needed to complete following steps) along with immediate Fundraising Plan designed to limit Bethlehem contribution to no more than \$5,000 from the endowment fund for the feasibility assessments
    2. Proposed Community Center Primary Service operating budget
    3. Proposed Bethlehem Facility Plan, consisting of:
      - a. Architectural plans for necessary renovations for proposed program
      - b. Description of proposed use of designated Bethlehem-only or shared space for all key Church needs
      - c. Capital budget for required renovations
    4. Proposed Community Center entity operating budget
    5. Proposed Combined Bethlehem/Primary Service Provider Fundraising Campaign plan with following elements:
      1. Program descriptions of Community Center and associated Key Services to be provided
      2. Fundraising Campaign proposed budget to meet operating and capital budget needs outlined above
      3. Preliminarily research and set proposed fundraising goals by major donor types (Foundations; Corporations; Individuals, etc.) for:
        - a. Key Service Provider operations
        - b. Bethlehem Facility renovation

- II. If the Board determines, after performance of above analyses, that a proposed program appears feasible, the Board is directed to develop a summary presentation of the information analyzed above for Bethlehem Congregation membership, in partnership with the Primary Service Provider. Performance of actual program development steps to initiate proposed plans presented will require a separate authorization vote of Bethlehem Congregation membership at some time after this presentation.

Considerable discussion followed the motion being introduced. After due consideration, the above-stated passed on a show of hands.

There being no additional business, Pastor Ben closed the Assembly with prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 11:47 AM.

Respectfully submitted in His service,

John Stafford  
Secretary

## THE BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY CENTER COMMITTEE

During the Nov. 17 voters meeting, the Bethlehem Community Center Committee reported on training with Sacred Places of Indiana which could lead to substantial grants needed to assess and update our facility. As part of that process, we need to compile our church's Asset Based Community Development list, which includes positives as individuals and a congregation. The committee members compiled about 75 items during our training and asks for the congregation's help on more.

Following our Jan. 12 Sunday service, we ask members to meet in the cafeteria to discuss our list and add to it. From individuals, we are looking at the categories Heart (something cared deeply about), Hands (skills), and Head (something we know). As a congregation, the categories are Associations, Institutions, Economic, Stories, Physical, and Individuals.

As an example, under the Economic category, committee members have already listed financial acumen (lack of debt), the endowment fund, grant opportunities, city non-profit entities, foundations, location and service organizations.

Under the Physical category, we have included facility, land, parking lot, food bank, cafeteria, gymnasium, stage, music rooms, classrooms, office space, storage, locker rooms, and the pipe organ.

We are asking your help so nothing is missed, including skills and talents of individuals. The main emphasis of this meeting will be to compile the positives our congregation possesses. Among the questions: What are some physical assets of our congregation?

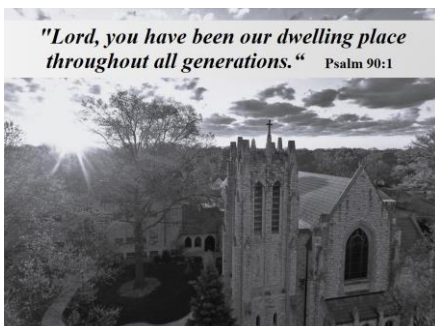
What are some assets unique to us?

What are some talents, experiences, perspectives, and skills of our individuals?

What are things you know a lot about such as professional skills or hobbies?

We want this to be a fun exploration.

## BETHLEHEM'S 100<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY "Throughout All Generations"



*"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations."* Psalm 90:1

Psalm 90:1 *"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations."*

\*Kick-off: Sunday, January 11, 2026 (same month as the first meeting of the church)

\*Education Celebration: Sunday, May 31, 2026 (History of education and recognition of Confirmation classes)

\*Main Event - Sunday, September. 27, 2026 Tent service

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 3 - Johanna Hoffacker   | 21 – Percy Dance       |
| 4 – Annette Diemer      | Andrea Lightning       |
| 5 – Cathy Dykstra       | Terri Nelson           |
| Havilynd Martinsky      | Anousack Somsanith     |
| 6 – Zerek Graf          | 22 – Harrison Brooks   |
| 10 – Roger Stephans     | 23 – Cathy Finner      |
| 12 – John Davis         | 24 – Kaliq Jackson     |
| 13 – Catherine Stanley  | 25 – Kennedy Coopwood  |
| 14 – Pat Hawkins        | 26 – Carla Kay         |
| 16 – Joyce Knipstein    | 28 – Demetrius Jackson |
| Alexandra Leathers      | Ryan Jarrell           |
| Alexia Silva            | Rylee Jarrell          |
| 17 – Anoukone Somsanith | Alexis Parker          |
| 19 – Callen Bearman     | 29 – Trevor Essex      |
| Philip Urbahns          | James Lee              |
| 20 – Treshur Booker     | David Magadan          |
|                         | 31 – John Bates        |



[www.myfwl.org](http://www.myfwl.org)



**IS YOUR  
INFO UP  
TO DATE?**

If you have had a change in home address, home or cell phone number or email address, please be sure to let us know so that we can update our database.

If your children have moved out on their own please provide the office with their updated information.

**We want to stay in touch, so having accurate contact information is important to us.**

Please call, mail, or email the church office with any updates.



## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 18 – Ignacio and Esperanza Silva  
20 – Frank and Tamala Kahn  
25 - Bounma and Boualinh Vongphachanh  
28 – Bob and Jane Miller



Offerings may be mailed to the church at Bethlehem Lutheran Church

3705 South Anthony Boulevard,  
Fort Wayne, IN 46806

You can make gifts directly on our website. It's simple and secure. Visit our website to see how easy it is!

[www.bethlehemlcms.org](http://www.bethlehemlcms.org)



**ONLINE WORSHIP**

<https://www.facebook.com/bethlehemfortwayne>

# DECEMBER Servant Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Altar Guild</u>	<u>Elder</u>	<u>Head Usher</u>	<u>Lay Readers</u>	<u>Power point</u>	<u>Live Stream</u>
7	Kim Ellison Sharon Shediack	Peter Schlie			Blake Sebring	
8		Peter Schlie	Dan Bates		Josiah Hapner	Dave Volmerding
14	Linda Stafford	Michael Johnson			Carla Johnson	
15		Greg Shediack	Ron Gallmeyer	Peter Schlie	Allison Cheng	Randy Hapner
21	Mary Snow Allison Cheng	Ed Ramos				
21	Sharon Dietrich Suzie Emley Amber Herndon	Brian Bates			Charlotte Ratliff	
22		John Bates	Evans Branigan	John Stafford Linda Stafford	Aaron Brown	Josiah Hapner
24	Kim Ellison Sharon Shediack			Kimberly Brooks	Blake Sebring	Joshua Hapner
25	Linda Stafford					Randy Hapner
28	Mary Snow Allison Cheng	Ed Ramos			Blake Sebring	
29		Peter Schlie	Dan Bates	Dena Schult	Josiah Hapner	Joshua Hapner

*The greatest joy that I know in this life is **SERVING** the Lord.*

# December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> <b>9:00am Worship w/Comm</b> 10:30am Education Hour	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 6:30pm - Bd. of Elders	<b>4</b> 6:30pm Worship service	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 8:30am Men's Bible Study <b>4:00pm Worship w/Comm</b>
<b>8</b> <b>9:00am Worship w/Comm</b> 10:30am Education Hour 1:30pm Advent Tea	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 7:00pm – Bd. of Directors	<b>11</b> 6:30pm Worship service	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 8:30am Men's Bible Study <b>4:00pm Worship w/Comm</b>
<b>15</b> <b>9:00am Worship w/Comm</b> 10:30am Education Hour	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <b>LSUS Christmas Service</b> <b>@ Beth</b>	<b>18</b> 6:30pm Worship service	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 8:30am Men's Bible Study <b>4:00pm Worship w/Comm</b> <b>6:30pm Darkest Night Service</b>
<b>22</b> <b>9:00am Worship w/Comm</b> 10:30am Education Hour	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>6:30 Christmas Eve Service w/Comm</b>	<b>25</b> <b>10:00am Christmas Day Worship Service w/Comm</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 8:30am Men's Prayer Breakfast <b>4:00pm Worship w/Comm</b>
<b>29</b> <b>9:00am Worship w/Comm</b> 10:30am Education Hour	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<i>May you have a blessed Christmas season and may the gift of hope and the peace of His love be yours.</i>			