

THE MESSENGER February 2025

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



On behalf of the community center committee, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in our recent asset mapping event. Your time, insights, and enthusiasm made the exercise a remarkable success. Seeing our cafeteria walls covered with more than 250 ideas in just over an hour was a powerful reminder of the gifts and resources God has placed among us.

This process with Indiana Sacred Places is more than just an exercise, it's a crucial step in shaping the future of Bethlehem. By identifying our strengths and opportunities, we are laying the foundation for new ministry possibilities, deeper community engagement, and a renewed sense of purpose as we approach our 100th anniversary. Your contributions are already making an impact, and we are excited to see where God leads us next. If you ever have questions about this or want to talk about it with me do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you again for your participation, and we look forward to continuing this journey together!

A follow-up on the Asset Mapping exercise:

Following church on Jan. 12, Bethlehem's Community Learning Center Committee hosted approximately 40 congregation members for an Asset Based Community Development exercise. The goal was producing a list of assets in six categories: associations, institutions, economy, stories, physical and individuals, and then seeing if any areas could match up into specific possibilities we might explore.

Though committee members had already compiled a list of about 100 assets during training with Sacred Places Indiana, the ideas suggested during the local exercise were expansive and very helpful. No one expected to see the cafeteria walls covered in just over an hour with more than 250 pieces of paper listing additional ideas!

With participants divided into seven working groups the most common theme mentioned was the continual caring generosity of the congregation in general. "Good people" was written down several times and posted on different walls.

Let's start with the most obvious category, the physical aspects of the church. Even taking for granted the beautiful and well-maintained sanctuary, ideas included the overall facility, the land, the huge field between Euclid and Central, parking lots, food bank, lighted sign on Anthony, cafeteria, kitchen, gymnasium, stage, music-specific rooms, office space, various pianos, pipe organ, classrooms, storage, locker rooms, showers, sound system and streaming capability. We have plenty of room to expand or try new things.

Under associations, the topics included connections with numerous community leaders and organizations including city and county government, Lutheran South United School, Irwin Elementary, Lutheran Foundation, Lutheran Life Villages, McMillan Park, Bridge of Grace Church, recent southeast Fort Wayne developments, Community Harvest, the Rescue Mission, Fort Wayne Lutheran, Brightpoint, the Southeast Area Partnership, the city's new Neighborhood Department, Concordia Seminary, ARCH, Lutheran Social Services, the Red Cross, Euell Wilson Community Center, Thrivent, Shadarobah Horse Rescue, connections to PFW and other local colleges and the other LSUS churches.

As for institutions, the listing may seem a little lean, but only because many of the ideas cross over with other areas. Maybe our biggest asset is that everyone in the city knows where Bethlehem is and what the church stands for, a strong reputation we have earned over almost 100 years. We could also include some of the events and groups we participate in with this category such as the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, the Grief Share program, an extensive choral and band music library, Darkest Night Service, Advent Tea, Epiphany Lunch, the food bank, the Book Nook, the choir, handbell choir, alter guild, the annual rummage sale and all the so-called "little" things we have done for generations which might get overlooked, but are huge in making up a parts of who we are as a church. We could also include Christmas and Easter services in this category which are truly community institutions. We truly do a lot of things!

In the economy category, the biggest topic that everyone mentioned, one that truly deserves more positive attention, is we have no debt. We also have a healthy endowment, financial acumen, grant opportunities, access to non-profit entities and foundations, and possibly the second-biggest is our location. We are the heart of one of the state's most economically challenged areas which might be seen as a negative, but that also means government and social agencies are looking for opportunities to help. They LOVE our location.

Under the topic of individuals, this area definitely deserves more exploration as we move forward. The committee previously came up with the topics listening ability, willingness to pitch in, research ability, connections, movers and shakers, communication, social media, creating ideas, empathy, compassion, understanding of financial and governmental structure, an expansive alumni base, loyalty and diversity. After the asset exercise, we can add steady participation, hosting social events, public speaking, teaching ability, cooking, retirees with time flexibility, mission support, adoption knowledge, generosity, volunteers, fundraising, providing rides, hosting community concerts or other presentations including possibly after- and before-school activities and tutoring. Again, "Good people! Good people!"

All of this leads to the final category, stories. Though the next chapter of Bethlehem is the committee's focus on this congregational effort, topics on our list include leadership, history, reputation, presence, prayer, teaching, fellowship, mentoring, encouragement, counseling, faith, mental health awareness, the ability to explain complex issues, partnership possibilities, and relationships with other churches. We also have extensive institutional knowledge. We know who we are and what God has called us to do over the decades, and we know He has new purposes coming.

At the end of the exercise, participants were asked to study where the connections from all the categories might come together into opportunities. Some ideas for that – probably more than a dozen – included possibly building affordable housing in the athletic field, setting up classes to teach things like cooking, writing, personal finances, crafts, resume writing, cake decorating, gardening, car or building maintenance, sewing and lawn care. Someone suggested a weekend soup kitchen or possibly restarting Living Luke's Legacy, while another repeated idea was hosting after-school athletic programs.

One unintended positive was all the ideas that might be used for the 100th anniversary celebration in 2026.

Thanks to everyone who stayed after service to add their ideas, and especially to the ladies who provided the refreshments which were a true highlight! Another thrill was singing the doxology at the conclusion. We should do more of that!

Eventually, we will be hosting a similar exercise with our neighbors, and we'd like as much participation from the congregation again.

The committee will continue to update the congregation through the Messenger.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,
Ephesians 4:11-12



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)

February 2, 2025

The Purification of Mary and Presentation of Our Lord

Live in the Light - Luke 2:32

Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

The forces of light and darkness have clashed since the creation of the world. Jesus brings light into every corner of creation. Do we suppress His light through ignorance and neglect? Or do we *live in the light*?

February 9, 2025 – Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Holy, Holy, Holy - Isaiah 6:1-8

Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

We know all too well that God is holy, and we human beings are not. Isaiah also knew this, and each one of us joins with him in crying out, “Woe is me!” But Christ became sin for us, and that means for us a blessed reality here on earth and in the life to come when we will be holy!

February 16, 2025 – Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

Blessed Are You - Luke 6:22

Rev. Thomas Eggold

The term “blessed” is one of the most misunderstood and misused words in our cultural vocabulary. Today we find this word “blessed” coming straight from the mouth of Jesus, but the way He uses the word stands in blatant contrast to the way it’s used in the world. Everything about today’s Gospel lesson challenges our natural and cultural understanding of what it means to be “blessed.”

February 23, 2025 – Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

The Baptized Life - Luke 6:27-28

Rev. Shayne Jonker

Our Lord Jesus Christ had mercy on us though we did not deserve it. Our ingratitude should be punished, but instead He forgave it and gave us even more. Our wickedness should be judged as worthy of hell, but He gave His own Son hell, and gave us heaven instead. Living in and under the love, grace, and mercy of God in His Son, Jesus Christ, life looks different, sinners look different, enemies look different, and love and mercy is not only possible, but natural.



February 22

Men's Prayer Breakfast
THE LORD'S MESSAGE ON EDMOM
IN OBADIAH

The book of Obadiah begins, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says about Edom. . . ." A nearby neighbor of Israel, the nation of Edom had likewise descended from Abraham but had a very hostile relationship with Israel. To understand why this was so, we shall look at Edom's origins and history. Please plan to join the Men's Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, February 22, at 8:30am in the Bethlehem cafeteria as we get together for breakfast, prayer, a devotion by Bill Ihssen, and God's Word in Obadiah. *"We have heard a message from the LORD: An envoy was sent to the nations to say, 'Rise, and let us go against [Edom] for battle. . . .'"* Obadiah 1b NIV.



EDUCATION HOUR

10:30am-11:30am

Adults-cafeteria

Hiding God's Word

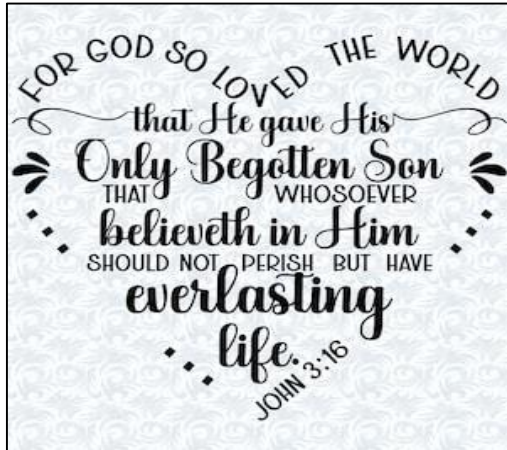
in our hearts

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!

small GROUPS



The 2025 Epiphany Brunch was such a great success. We collected \$111 for Our Savior Lutheran Church in St Petersburg, Florida.

We want to thank all the volunteers for their time, talents, egg cassorales and amazing baked goods. It was a good time for everyone.



We have open dates for 2025 to volunteer at the Rescue Mission. Look for the sign up sheet just outside the Book Nook Library.

2025 Rescue Mission

Serving & Dessert Sign-up: We serve every 4th Sunday of month
Need three or four volunteers and baked goods every 4th Sunday of the Month.

Food Bank Report

By Sharon Shediack

December

We provided food to 245 individuals. They included 97 children under the age of 18, and 37 individuals over the age of 60.

Our congregation provided 506# of food.

We went to Community Harvest twice this month to purchase 654# of food in the amount of \$116.

Our 18 volunteers gave 103 hours of their time.

We could use soup, pasta sauce, rice, 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: health for family members

Please pray that: my family finds Christ

Please pray for: my health to get better after stroke.

Please pray for: health, happiness, and prosperity for my children

Please pray for: protection of my family from harm.

HELP KEEP THE FOOD BANK SHELVES STOCKED

Scour your pantries, include them on your shopping list. Bring a grocery bag of a few non-perishable items to the Saturday and Sunday services to the front pews during the Offering.



Every
Donation
Makes A
Difference

Bethlehem Mission News

By Jane Miller

As I write this, we have had several new updates for groups and missions for whom we have been praying at Bethlehem. The first news comes from Southeast Asia, where the dad, Don Kovac and oldest daughter, Ellyn Miller of Tim and Michelle have just arrived today for a visit with them! They will also visit Thailand, where Ellyn grew up, and Don will go on to Cambodia to visit with Michelle's sister Becky and her Husband Todd Bequette, who work as Bible translators there. You may remember that we have often prayed for Don Kovac and his wife Dini, who had a very long illness down in Oviedo, FL. Dini went home to heaven in March, and now Don, a former missionary with Lutheran Bible Translators, is taking opportunities to visit family members in the same line of work. It's good grief work for him to do this! Please pray for good health and strength for Don; we are thankful he has Ellyn as a travel companion!

We have also gotten the good news from Jeanne Burger at New Life Lutheran that Joe Boway and the team from IL have arrived safely in Liberia for their work time together in rural Liberia! Also, Joe will participate in the National Lutheran Convention in Liberia, and then Jon Frank from the Tri-Cities of Saginaw, Bay City and Midland, MI will join Joe in late February to help with visiting schools and with a construction project! So Joe will be gone from home for quite a length of time this time, and so often when he is gone on these trips, Jeanne pointed out that many health or repair problems take place with Glendora and the 2 boys! So let's be sure to cover them with our prayers!

We also got an update from LAMB, about the outreach at both New Life and Southwest Lutheran churches as they attempt to partner with Shepherd's Hand, which provides multiple types of assistance to the poor. Lately they have found themselves overwhelmed with Burmese and Karen-speaking people, and have asked LAMB for some practical assistance. We will pray for some of those needs to be met. Whether it be in across the seas to Africa or Asia, or right here with immigrants/refugees from Burma/Myanmar, the Lord provides us with many opportunities to use our prayers and spiritual gifts to be an encouragement to those others God loves as much as He loves us! Jesus, our Good Shepherd, says in John 10:16: "I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to My voice, and there will be one flock with one Shepherd."

Mission Prayers

PLEASE PRAY for Michelle Miller's Dad, Don Kovac, as he travels in Southeast Asia to assist family in their work and have good family time. Pray also for Ellyn Miller as she is a traveling companion for Don and is inspired to find our Father's path for her life once she returns to Florida. Please also pray for Sarah and Zack Anderson, who have made an unexpected trip back to Laos to comfort the family of Zack's closest friend there, who died from lung complications after his recent kidney transplant.

THANK GOD for the safe arrival of Joe Boway and his team from IL in Liberia. PRAY for them as they travel to and in rural Liberia, distributing hygiene kits and visiting teachers and students. Pray for the IL team as they travel back to Chicago on February 8th. Then continue to be in prayer for Joe as he visits schools, attends the Liberian Lutheran Convention. Ask God to bless all the pastors, teachers, lay-leaders and all the church members as they plan and seek God's guidance for His church there. PLEASE PRAY also for Glendora and the boys as they manage at home without Joe. Then pray for Jon Frank as he arrives from Saginaw, Michigan to be Joe's helper in construction and visiting schools, from February 24- to March 8, when both will travel back to the US together! I will remind you again in the March Messenger to be praying for them! Pray for all the helping and outreach work being done by LAMB's and Shepherd's Hand's work in the Burmese and Karen-speaking communities in south Fort Wayne. Pray also that the contacts made through their helping and events will blossom into relationships where they can present the Good News of Jesus to these dear people! Thank you for all your faithful prayers!



LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

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

February is American Heart Month

We all know how important our Heart Health is!! We have Drs., meds, exercise, etc. to keep us healthy. Maybe we can add one more! February 17th is **NATIONAL RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS DAY!!!!** Acts of kindness can boost our well-being also!

What is Kindness? **kind·ness**

/'kīn(d)nəs/ noun the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.

What are some acts of kindness?

Giving compliments

Doing an act of service for someone else

Saying kind words

Noticing good things that others do

Showing gratitude

Giving your time to someone else

Being respectful

Smile and maybe say "HI"

Kindness is a fantastic tool to use to grow your well-being. It's not only great for you, but has a positive impact on others. The kindness in scripture is what Jesus said "love your neighbor as yourself".

Luke 6:31 "*and as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them*".

Ephesians 4:32 "*be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*"

Romans 12:15 "*rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep*".

Galatians 6:2 "*bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*".

There are many quotes in the bible to Kindness, God shared this many times to many people. We don't just have to be kind ONE day, but this can help us do God's kindness every day and boost our well-being to help with our lives and others.

God Bless your health and kindness always!!

No act of kindness,
no matter how small,
is ever wasted.

— Aesop

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), Thresa Lightning (260-417-1450) or Richard Pierce (260-450-2280), our Grief Coordinators.

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)

BETHLEHEM'S 100th 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

To honor Bethlehem's 100th anniversary in 2026, we offer an opportunity to participate in a second videotaping session on April 13 from 1-4 in the sanctuary.

These 5-minute videos consist of three questions:

1. When and why did you come to Bethlehem?
2. What are a couple of your favorite memories?
3. What has Bethlehem meant to you?

Understanding that everyone could talk for an hour, we are asking to keep the sessions to five minutes so we can include more people. These recordings will be played before services throughout the anniversary year. Those being interviewed also do not need to be current members.

If you are interested, please email Blake Sebring at blakeds@frontier.com so we can get a rough estimate of those wishing to participate. Seating will be available, and we will not schedule appointments, but we'll start a line and keep going until we are finished. Hopefully this will be a fun time of reminiscing.



WOMEN of BETHLEHEM



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

2025 Convention



Date: June 26–29, 2025

Location: Omaha, Nebraska

Convention Center: CHI Health Center,
455 N 10th St, Omaha, NE, 68102

Theme: Growing in God's Grace

Scripture Verse: *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen (2 Peter 3:18).*

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

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

WINTER SOWING WORKSHOP

The WOMEN of Bethlehem Winter Sowing Workshop was FUN. Ten Bethlehem and community members planted more than 40 milk jugs with cold tolerant seeds and will patiently wait for nature to germinate the seeds into seedlings. Then on April 12, willing WOB members will plant the seedlings into pots and then share the plants with Food Bank clients and the neighborhood. Seeds planted were lettuce, greens, carrots and coriander along with nasturtium and pansy flowers. Thank you volunteers!



The Joyful Corner

God's Conversation Hearts - A Valentine's Devotional

Julia Bettencourt

"...blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Luke 11:28

I've always loved those candy conversation hearts at Valentine's. The New England Confections Company, otherwise known as Necco, says that conversation hearts are the most popular of Valentine's candy. I read the history of the candy on the Necco website and it was quite interesting how the sayings being printed on the candy got started. Can you believe that the concept behind conversation hearts was started back when Abraham Lincoln was president?

I like the taste of those little hearts and it's one of those childhood candies that give sweet memories. I also like them to decorate cupcakes and cookies with. What I like best I guess is those little sayings. "Kiss me!" "Be Mine" "Be True". I know today they say a few different things than the ones I grew up with.

Did you know that God sends us conversation hearts too? The things He left in His Word were left for us because He loves us. Each conversation heart from God is sweet to the taste. We just don't sometimes read or pay attention to them. Here are some of my favorites...

BE MINE - God wants us to accept His love.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16



ALL MINE - God loves us and will keep us.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. John 10:27-30

TRUE LOVE - God loves us with true love as only He can.

I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Jeremiah 31:3

LOVE ME - God wants us to love Him.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. Luke 10:27

I'M SURE - God's sure of His love and wants us to know we have a future with Him.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. John 14:1-3

SWEET TALK - God's Word is His love letter to us.

How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Psalm 119:103

BE GOOD - God tells us how to love Him back.

If ye love me, keep my commandments. John 14:15



FAX ME - God loves us so much He wants to communicate with us.

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. Jeremiah 33:3

Conclusion:

There's more conversation hearts that the Lord left for us to see His love through. We just have to dig into His Word to find them. So, have you missed out on God's conversation hearts?

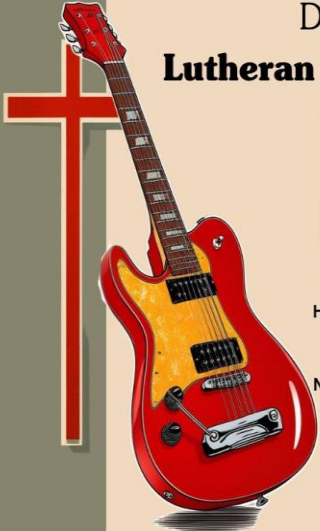
LSUS NEWS

Rockin' My Salvation



Dinner Benefits

Lutheran South Unity School



Hannah Koch is a 2014 graduate of LSUS. She attended Concordia High School and University of Notre Dame. Now she is attending IU School of Medicine.



SCAN ME

Tickets are \$50 per person
5:00- doors open
with social hour
6:00 - dinner
RSVP by Feb. 14

Feb. 22, 2025
Quimby Hall
1502 Bluffton Rd



PHOENIX SPORTS

Congrats to our Phoenix teams!

Our JV boys' basketball and girls cheerleading teams competed in the Hoenick Hoopfest Tournament at Concordia Lutheran School last weekend.



Kindergarten ROUND UP

Thursday, March 6th, 2025 @ 6 – 7 PM

Where: Lutheran South Unity School
5401 South Calhoun Street
260-744-0459



What to Expect: Children welcome to come!

- Kindergarten scavenger hunt
- New Families tour of the school
- Repeat families meet with kindergarten teachers and principal — learn about the program.

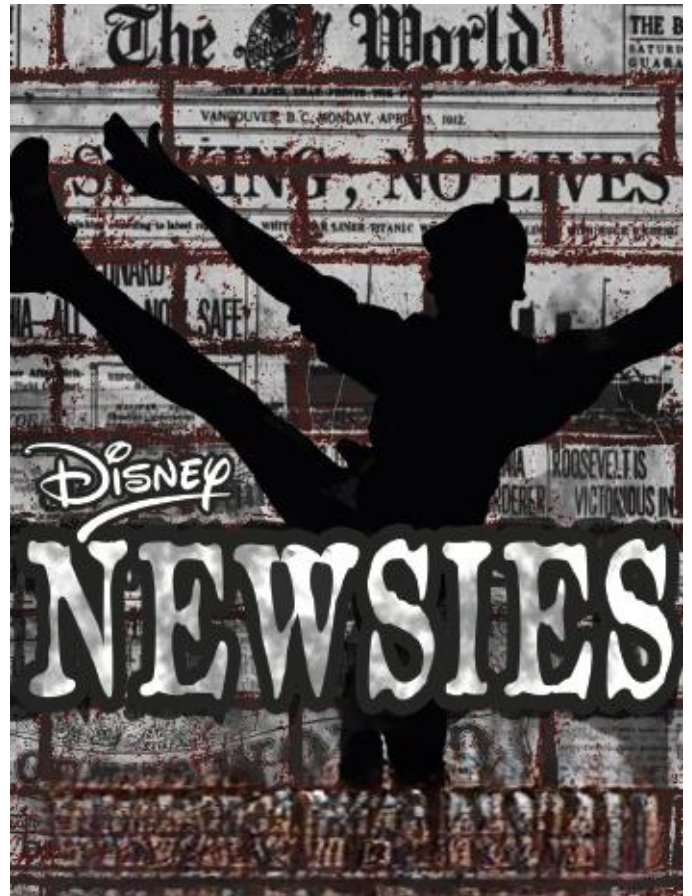
We look forward to hearing from your family!
RSVP by phone or use the QR code to LSUS today!

CLHS NEWS

Concordia Lutheran High School Theatre Department Presents Newsies, February 21-23

Set in turn-of-the-century New York City, *Newsies* is the rousing tale of Jack Kelly, a charismatic newsboy and leader of a band of teenaged "newsies." When titans of publishing raise distribution prices at the newsboys' expense, Jack rallies newsies from across the city to strike against the unfair conditions and fight for what's right! Based on the 1992 motion picture and inspired by a true story, *Newsies* features the classic songs "Carrying the Banner," "Seize the Day," and "Santa Fe." *Newsies* is packed with non-stop thrills and a timeless message, perfect for the whole family. This musical is directed by Mr. Chris Murphy, with musical direction by Mr. Isaac Weander.

Tickets are available online or at the CLHS Box Office starting 30 minutes prior to show times.



CHOIR AND HANDBELLS

We invite all current members as well as new voices and ringers to join us as we begin rehearsals and prepare to sing/ring once a month in services. Whether you're a seasoned musician or just looking to share your talents, we would love to have you be a part of our Music Ministries. Choir Rehearsals are Wednesdays from 6:00 – 7:00pm in the 1st floor choir room. Handbells are Wednesdays at 7:15- 8:15pm in the balcony.

No prior experience is necessary—just a love for music and a desire to serve through song and sound. For more information or to sign up, please contact Kasey Needham Hapner, kaseyneedham92@gmail.com

Bethlehem-



The love, grace, & generosity you all showed to total strangers was & is so beautiful & Christ-like. It has been a hard year & opening all the gifts brought us to tears. Your generosity allowed our family to spend intentional time together we would not have been able to do without you.
May God bless you hundred-fold.
- Your Christmas family.



Thank You so much for helping us and our family we all appreciate every thing you did for us: kids and us Love every thing you did for them & our family. Love you so much: Joe & our family. Happy new years!

Joe
& family.



Thank you to everyone at Bethlehem Church for helping my family with Christmas! We are so thankful and grateful for all your kindness. Thank you for paying my financial burden. Thanks to Bethlehem family I'm able to move into my own home with my children! We are forever grateful God bless you all!
- The Ingram family ♡



Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Board of Directors Regular Monthly Meeting
December 10, 2024

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

Members absent: none Guests: Dena Schult

The December 10th regular monthly meeting of the Board was opened at 6:31 PM by President Greg Shediack. Pastor Ben provided an opening devotion based on the Chapter on Motherhood from *Honest Devotion* by Scott Erickson. Pastor closed the devotion with prayer.

The minutes from the Board's November, 2024 regular monthly meeting were unanimously approved as submitted, on a motion from John Stafford and a second from Dan Bates.

The Soul Accounting report, as approved by the Board of Elders at its December meeting, was reviewed by the Board. It included the baptism of Apollo Marquette Billingsley on November 17th and the transfers of Doug, Natalie and Aaron Reynolds to Emanuel Lutheran Church, New Haven, on November 10th.

Brian Bates presented the November Financial Report. Monthly offerings for November were \$31,872 compared with a budgeted amount of \$26,833. Extraordinary income of \$1,148 was also recorded during the month for the receipt of a dividend from Church Mutual Insurance. Monthly expenses for November totaled \$29,275, compared with monthly budget amounts of \$40,010. The balance in the Endowment Fund at the end of November was \$1,328,121. The balance reflected the October ending balance in the funds held with the Lutheran Foundation as the more recent statement had not yet been received. The month-end balance in the SSMG Fund was \$24,840. Brian also presented a report illustrating actual expenses compared with budgeted amounts for the major categories of the Operating Budget. Through the first eleven months of the year, we have expended 90 percent of the budgeted expenses. The monthly Treasurer's Report was unanimously adopted on a motion by Brian Bates and a second by Rachele Dance.

Pastor's report included a summary of the Grief Share program which was completed with good participation. He also discussed the recent changes to the Saturday/Sunday bulletin as we are now using the Lutheran Service Builder software to produce the bulletins. Pastor provided an update on the search for a new music director. Lastly, Pastor noted that he has now completed the halfway point in his Doctor of Ministry studies.

John Stafford provided an update on the work of the Community Center Committee. He discussed the encouragement of the Sacred Places program for us to conduct an Asset-Based exercise with members of the congregation. That activity is schedule for immediately after the service on Sunday, January 12th. John also provided updates on our meeting with Brightpoint as a part of their search for a new Head Start program site. Unfortunately, it does not appear that our facility meets the physical requirements related to emergency exits as required by the federal Head Start program. Mark Blessing and John also recently met with the Board of Building and Grounds to provide them with an update on the Sacred Places program and associated grant opportunities. John has also met with staff members from the City's Department of Community Development, making them aware of our efforts to reach out to our neighborhood through enhanced use of our facilities. They expressed real interest in our outreach and suggested a follow-up meeting after the first of the year. Blake briefly described the draft of our congregational case statement being prepared as part of the Scared Places process. He will provide a more detailed update at the Board's January meeting. Lastly, members of the Committee will be traveling to Indianapolis on January 18th for the third of four work sessions was part of the Sacred Places program.

Under New Business, the Board determined that the Advent Service collections should be allocated to the Food Bank. The Board also approved a modification of the health insurance benefit to the Pastor on a motion by Brian Bates and a second by Evans Branigan.

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 7:43 PM.

Submitted in His service,
John Stafford, Secretary

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 – Ina Gaunt | 15 – Nichols Owen
Morgan Stewart |
| 3 – Karl Bernabe
Amber Finner | 17 – Donald Essex
Cecelia Snow |
| 4 – Ashley Stewart
Kayla Wright | 19 – Lois Branigan
Kole Mault
Kyle Mault
Michelle Stewart |
| 5 – Paula Polston | 20 – Evans Branigan
Marie Smiegal |
| 6 – Joyce Goodwin
Denali Mitchell
Nancy Pierce | 21 – Elaena Harris |
| 8 – Ruby Bonner | 24 – Stanley Franke |
| 9 – Justin Geans | 25 – Adrian Dance
Jane Moore |
| 10 – Silas Hill-Roddy
Terri Stewart | 26 – Demarlo Hill-Robinson |
| 11 – Stephen Melcher | 27 – Armani Brown
Trey Cook
Steven Davies |
| 12 – Elsi Bernabe
Reese Nelson
Susan Ramos | 28 – Rita Rincon
Dorothea Thompson |
| 13 – Stephanie Davies
Shirley Davis
Delores Tharp | |
| 14 – David Epperson
Jon Kenworthy
Joyce Simmons
Clarence Williams | |



www.myfwl.org



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.

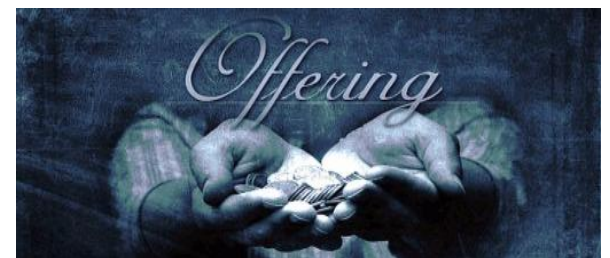
We want to stay in touch, so having accurate contact information is important to us.

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



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 14 – Clarence and Ocleva Williams



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



ONLINE WORSHIP

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

FEBRUARY 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>
1	Sharon Dietrich Suzie Emley	Peter Schlie			Charlotte Ratliff	
2	Amber Herndon	Peter Schlie	Ron Gallmeyer	Suzie Emley	Aaron Brown	Dave Volmerding
8	Kim Ellison	Michael Johnson			Carla Johnson	
9	Sharon Shediack	John Bates	Evans Branigan	Donna Melcher Threasa Lightning	Josiah Hapner	Randy Hapner
15	Linda Stafford	Brian Bates			Charlotte Ratliff	
16		Greg Shediack	Dan Bates	Donna Volmerding Dave Volmerding	Allison Cheng	Josiah Hapner
22	Mary Snow	Ed Ramos			Blake Sebring	
23	Allison Cheng	Peter Schlie	Ron Gallmeyer	Peter Schlie	Aaron Brown	Joshua Hapner

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

February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 1 John 3:1</i></p>						<p>1 8:30am Men's Bible Study 9:30am Women's Bible Study 4:00pm Worship w/Comm</p>
<p>2 9:00am Worship w/Comm 10:30am Education Hour</p>	3	<p>4 6:30pm - Bd. of Elders</p>	<p>5 6:00pm - Choir 7:15pm - Handbells</p>	6	7	<p>8 8:30am Men's Bible Study 4:00pm Worship w/Comm</p>
<p>9 9:00am Worship w/Comm 10:30am Education Hour</p>	10	<p>11 6:30pm - Bd. of Directors</p>	<p>12 6:00pm - Choir 7:15pm - Handbells</p>	13	14	<p>15 8:30am Men's Bible Study 9:30am Women's Bible Study 4:00pm Worship w/Comm</p>
<p>16 9:00am Worship w/Comm 10:30am Education Hour</p>	17	18	<p>19 6:00pm - Choir 7:15pm - Handbells</p>	20	21	<p>22 8:30am Men's Prayer Breakfast 4:00pm Worship w/Comm</p>
<p>23 9:00am Worship w/Comm 10:30am Education Hour</p>	<p>24 Messenger articles due</p>	25	<p>26 6:00pm - Choir 7:15pm - Handbells</p>	27	28	