

THE BEACON

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

VOL. 67 NUMBER 8 AUGUST, 2011

**Unexpected beauty.
Radical love.
Breathtaking grace.
God blesses the world with heaven
on earth.**

Join us for the August sermon series.

Choose Love

This past June the Bethlehem community opened its doors to almost 300 children for Vacation Bible School. It was an incredible week. During one of the opening sessions the leader asked the kids “Where have you seen God this week?” and then she continued to share with them a personal story. A friend of hers was recently diagnosed with cancer and she had seen God in all the people who showed up to care for her friend— neighbors who brought meals, friends who prayed, doctors and nurses who worked to heal her and bring her comfort. After hearing her story many kids were quick to tell about their divine encounters. These kinds of conversations speak directly to our August sermon series, *Heaven on Earth*. So often we get into the habit of picturing heaven as some place other than where we are but the good news that comes to us in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that God is at work in the world *now, right where we’re at*, creating heaven on earth.

The world is hungry for this news and it’s news that needs to be shared. Here’s how:

- 1 Be part of a nationwide event on Saturday September 10 from 10-12.
- 2 Find some old cardboard.
- 3 Make a sign that states something you believe in.
- 4 Stand on a corner in your neighborhood, holding your sign.
- 5 Bring your sign to worship on September 11. We’ll include a blessing of our public faith statements, that we might continually be strengthened to be witnesses to God’s activity in the world.

The 10th anniversary of 9/11 will be on peoples’ minds and this activity gives us a concrete way to remember how the world was changed that day while lifting up the message of hope we have in Jesus Christ, naming the promise that God is at work *right here, right now* creating heaven on earth. Let’s participate in this opportunity to be a *Living Lutheran Creed*. Pastor Mary has her sign made.



Pastor’s Word

When I was growing up MTV and Vh1 still played music videos as a part of their regular programming. By the time I reached high school, the list shows were all the rage, and I found myself regularly sucked into the 100 greatest rock ballads of all time or the 100 best of the 80’s. However, my hands down favorite list show was Vh1’s 50 Most Awesomely Bad Songs...Ever. The list was riddled with some gems of tragedy, *Sunglasses at Night* (Corey Hart), *Informer* (Snow), *Achy Breaky Heart* (Billy Ray Cyrus). But the undisputed champion of badness was *We Built This City* by Starship. If you aren’t familiar with this music treasure, you can easily find it on YouTube, but be warned it’s five minutes you can’t have back.

Believe it or not, I was reminded of this song while thinking about our upcoming sermon series, *Heaven on Earth*. We know too well the pitfalls of lifting up those things that “we’ve built” as models of perfection. In our last sermon series, we revisited the story of the Tower of Babel from Genesis 11, an early story of failed initiatives to construct our own models of perfection. As I write this, our own “more perfect Union” remains gridlocked, unable to fruitfully converse with one another to help move the country forward. It’s little wonder that Christians have long taken the tact of escapism, seeking a future hope of heaven that’s anywhere else but here.

Pastor’s Word continued on Page 2...

Pastor's Word continued from
Page 1 ...

*See, the home of God is among
mortals. He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples, and God
himself will be with them.*
Revelation 21:3

The striking witness of the Bible is that God is committed to us, to this world. Over and over again we are reminded that God is working in and through this world to redeem it. God is building a city, a heaven on earth kind of city, where all God's people will live. And what makes it heaven? It's God's presence in our midst. We glimpse something of that first in Jesus Christ, and then join God in the work of building that promised city of joy right here in our midst. It's a city where we encounter unexpected beauty, radical love and breathtaking grace. It's heaven on earth.

Pastor Ben Cieslik



What Are You Growing this Summer?

by Kurt Kreienbrink, Stewardship Ministry

Did you do any planting this spring or summer? Maybe you planted some flowers, or perhaps some vegetables. Isn't it amazing to watch the small seeds and plants turn into vibrant flowers or mouth watering fruits and vegetables? And what a terrific reminder of God's handiwork as seeds, soil, sun and water combine to produce these awesome gifts of God.



Still, even with all the abundance God has provided, something is not quite complete. As much as I enjoy watching the plants grow, and crave the end result, I think what I enjoy the most is sharing these gifts with others. Homegrown strawberries, raspberries and fresh vegetables all seem to taste better when you're sharing them with someone else who is enjoying them too.

So, as we are reminded of God's many gifts in many ways this summer, let's not forget to share this abundance. Whether it's sharing something you've worked hard to grow like flowers, fruits and vegetables, sharing time, or sharing monetary gifts. Also, don't forget to explore the different ways of sharing gifts electronically by visiting the Bethlehem website, so you can continue to share even when you're not at church. Have a great summer!

Minneapolis Synod News



Bishop Craig Johnson recently resigned from our Minneapolis Area Synod to serve as Interim Senior Pastor at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church. Bishop Glenn Nycklemoe has been called out of retirement to serve as Interim Bishop until an election is held February 16-18, 2012. Please keep the synod/church leaders in your prayers during this time of transition.

Living, Giving, Thriving Campaign Update

by Steph Smith

We have more good news to share! While many of us are enjoying the relaxing, renewing rhythms of summer, our Facilities Manager, Pat Noonan, is busy at work coordinating a number of property projects thanks to the campaign.

Property Enhancements: Tuckpointing might sound like a basic quilters behavior, but actually it's the process of refinishing old mortar joints on the exterior of our building. This project will take approximately 3 weeks to complete and should start mid-August. The majority of this work will be done on the north face of the parish house addition, the chimney, and the north face of the sanctuary. Hopefully, our crib will sparkle again just in time for Celebration Sunday in September.

Our sewer system is in need of an upgrade, and in fact the City demands it. So, we are working with experts on a plan that would allow us to run our roof water to green space on the west lawn. Corrections to the soil in the west lawn would be made, and downspouts and gutters would be fixed and directed to that space. This project will commence in late August or early September. Hopefully, this correction will reduce the amount of money we pay monthly for our storm water fees, but more importantly stop the threat of imposed fines from the City.

Mortgage Reduction: We just made another principal payment of \$125,000! Again, this is significant, for paying down our mortgage will free up monies to be spent on our mission and vision.

20/20 Vision: Pastor Ben continues his good work with us. He's been at work identifying congregations with whom we can partner to grow the kingdom together and exploring how Bethlehem can be a better neighbor to those people and businesses in our neighborhood. Ben's also been working with folks to launch a new initiative called MeaningLab, more news on that to come. And thanks to Ben, we now get to see our pastors dressed as parking attendants on Sunday mornings. Thanks for bringing the work outside our walls, Ben!



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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Email: church@bethlehem-church.org

bethlehem-church.org

Service Times:

- **Sundays— 8:00, 9:00, 10:15, 11:30, 7:00 pm**
- **Nursery available at 9:00, 10:15 & 11:30 am on Sundays**

*Connecting people
with God, each other
and their mission in
the world.*

Next Beacon Deadline:

August 10, 2011

pdunn@bethlehem-church.org

@ Beacon now online

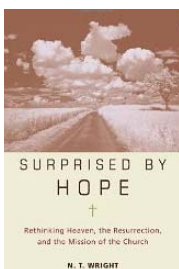
Love Wins—Wednesday August 3, 7:00 pm

Book Study with Pastor Ben

In February of 2011, Pastor Rob Bell released a video promo for his newest book “Love Wins.” The book wasn’t released until mid-March but in the intervening weeks the blogosphere exploded. People all over the Christian landscape had an opinion, some describing this book as the worst thing for American Christianity, while others welcomed it as a breath of fresh air. What’s all the excitement about? Read the book and join Pastor Ben for a discussion of the book, and the questions it raises. Wednesday night 7:00 pm August 3.

Small Group Resource Highlight for August

Each month we highlight different resources that will complement what you are hearing in the sermon series. If your group would like to use any of these resources, contact Pastor Beth, bwarpmaeker@bethlehem-church.org.



Surprised by Hope by N. T. Wright

Gain an exciting new vision for your life on earth in light of your future in heaven. In six sessions, premier biblical scholar N. T. Wright reveals the amazing full scope of what God’s Word has to say about the world to come and the world that is. What is heaven really like? Is our main duty as Christians simply to help non-Christians get there? What hope does the gospel hold for this present life, and in what ways does God intend for us to experience that hope personally and spread its healing power to the world around us? Used with the “Surprised by Hope” Participant’s Guide.

If you are interested in facilitating or participating in a group this fall, contact Pastor Beth.

Save the Date! Communion Assistant Training

Wednesday, September 7

Communion Assistants 6:30-7:00 pm

Lectors 7:00-7:30 pm

OR Saturday, September 10

Communion Assistants 9:00-9:30 am

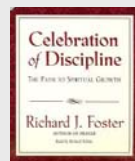
Lectors 9:30-10:00 am

This will be an opportunity to connect with each other, be strengthened in your service and to make known your preference for availability to serve (service times, special services such as Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.)



Spiritual Practices 101 Wednesdays, 9:30 am or 7:00 pm, throughout summer

Celebration of Discipline, by Richard Foster



Throughout the summer, two small groups of people are reading Foster’s well-loved book on the spiritual disciplines, along with daily Bible readings. You are welcome to join us if you’d like to learn more about the disciplines and practice them in community with others.

Conversations with Dr. Phil Sunday mornings at 9:00

Study of the Sunday Bible readings continues throughout the summer with Dr. Phil Quanbeck. Join us in Langemo as your schedule allows.

Travel to Holden Village October 23-30

Information Meeting August 14, 10:15 am



Travel to the Cascade Mountains of Washington for a week of work, worship and recreation as we help prepare the village (a unique Lutheran retreat center) for winter. Contact Pastor Kris Tostengard Michel to learn more, kristm@bethlehem-church.org, or meet with others interested in the trip on Sunday, August 14, at 10:15 am.

Invisible in the Pew

by Gretchen Porter, Parish Nurse

A recent study published in the Journal of Mental Health, Religion and Culture, found that mental illness is prevalent in church communities but is also accompanied by significant distress that is often ignored. Overall, *one in five families experiences some form of mental illness*. In this study, help from the church was the second priority of families with mental illness, but ranked forty-second on the list of requests from families that did not have a member with mental illness. Families with mental illness reported twice as many problems and tended to ask for assistance with more immediate or crisis needs compared to other families.

So what are we doing at Bethlehem to meet the mental health needs of one in five families?

Stepping up to plan: In June, Bethlehem members with interest in addressing mental health concerns in the congregation began to formulate an ongoing effort of awareness, education and service. Messages of recovery and the role of faith are in the emerging framework. *More participants welcome!*

Stepping out in the neighborhood: In response to our June volunteer request, five people are now connected to Vail Place, a community-based clubhouse for persons with chronic mental illness. Monthly blood pressure screenings, exercise guidance and nutrition presentations are underway as Vail Place members offer suggestions for future discussions. It's a great place to spend a few hours a month.

Sharing the path: If you or your family lives with mental illness, your concerns do not need to be invisible. Your insights are valuable to the Bethlehem community; the Care Ministry team wants to hear your questions and suggestions. We welcome more participants in any of the mental health initiatives. We're all in the pew together. Contact Gretchen Porter, Parish Nurse at 612.312.3414 or gporter@bethlehem-church.org.

Lay Eucharistic Ministers

by Marilyn Christensen, Lay Eucharistic Ministries Coordinator

Bethlehem's Lay Eucharistic Ministries began in March of this year. The Ministers, who receive training from Care Ministries staff members, bring communion to individuals unable to attend church on a regular basis. To date, thirty members have been served one or more times. We would like to connect with others who are in need of communion at home. If you or someone you know has not been able to come to church for an extended period of time and wishes a visit from a Lay Eucharistic Minister, please call Gena at 612.312.3364.

Parish Visitor Training

Wednesdays, August 10 & 24, 7:00-8:30pm

Parish Visitors are trained to provide compassionate listening to those who are struggling with life transitions. They participate in peer support groups, set aside time for visits, and are eligible to receive training for Lay Eucharistic Ministry. Register online at bethlehem-church.org or contact Gena, gkoeberl@bethlehem-church.org or 612.312.3364 to attend training.



Community News

Deaths

Gerald Allen Forkrud, 6-21-11

Betty Lou Kloster, 6-27-11

Baptisms

June 19, 2011

Elsa Eleonora Karlsson, 2-4-11

Parents: Toni and Mary Karlsson

Sam David Wiley Wood, 3-16-11

Parents: Scott and Kari Wood

June 26, 2011

Rory Michael Schornack, 3-25-11

Parents: Andrew and Jill Schornack

Tyler Brion Kraus, 3-10-11

Parents: Eric and Lori Kraus

Edie Jane Pellinen, 3-11-11

Parents: Brent and Melissa Pellinen

Alex Choi Prom, 12-19-10

Parents: Michael and Jieun Prom

July 3, 2011

Carmen Marie Lindley, 8-18-10

Parents: Nathaniel and Emilee Lindley

Foot Clinic

Available 10-2 pm by appointment:
September 2.

Healing Touch

Available in nursing homes, hospitals, member's homes, or at Bethlehem. Call Cheryl Salter to schedule, 952.250.8857.

Gathering

2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. Can be a volunteer or participant. Call the church office to reserve a spot, 612.312.3400.

Children Staff Training

Attend **ONE** of these dates:

Wednesday, August 31 OR

Wednesday, September 7

6:15-7:00pm

- Risk Management in the Commons
- 2 year old Sunday School in Room 08
- Early Childhood Sunday School in Assembly Room

7:00-7:30pm

- Overview training in Assembly Room

7:30-8:30pm

- Risk Management in the Commons
- Nursery training in the nursery
- Elementary Sunday School (Grade 1-4) in Assembly
- 5th & 6th Grade training in Drama Room

Sunday School Begins

September 11

Age 2 through 6th Grade

9:00 or 10:15am

Please register by September 1

Registration forms are available at Bethlehem's church office or online at: bethlehem-church.org

Get ready for a great time on Sunday mornings as we encounter God, discover new friends and serve one another.

Help in the Nursery

September through May

9:00 or 10:15am Worship Service times

The Nursery is looking for volunteers to come and play with the littlest member of Bethlehem **one Sunday a month** from September to the end of May. You may choose to volunteer either at the 9:00 or 10:15am worship times. Contact Jess Wood at 612-312-3400 or nursery@bethlehem-church.org

Answering God's Call by Heather Roth Johnson

You can ask just about anyone in the Bethlehem office and they will tell you how much I like my job. With much enthusiasm, I approach children's ministries with your children in mind to provide a safe and fun environment yet teaching basic Bible stories in a creative way. I always look back on an event and marvel on how everything came together realizing that it is God's unfolding work. But if you really pressed me into what aspect of my position that I absolutely love? Hands-down it would be working with all the great parents, grandparents, young adults and youth that serve in children's ministries.



It is that time of year when I start thinking about and praying for great volunteers to come forward. So how do I get started? I use Bible stories as my inspiration. God did not take a backseat approach waiting for people to volunteer. God often went to extraordinary measures to recruit workers. For example: God used a burning bush to get Moses' attention. God used a storm and a big fish to emphasize to Jonah about preaching in Nineveh. It was not until after Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord on the throne that he said, "Here I am. Send me." Or maybe the most drastic is when Paul accepted God's call in his life after hearing the Lord's voice in a blinding light.

Volunteering in children's ministries is *not* about filling a spot or reaching a Sunday School teacher quota. It is about answering the call to make a difference in the spiritual formation of the kids at Bethlehem. So how do you know if God is calling you? Open your Bible and read a story from your childhood. Listen to the words and remember how they made a difference to you as a child. You can do the same now in a young child's life. **Teach Sunday School!**

IMMEDIATE NEEDS:

2-year olds teachers

Early Childhood teachers (Age 3-K)

Elementary teachers (1st-4th grades)

Preteen teachers (5th & 6th grades)

Music leaders

Large group leaders (Early Childhood & Elementary.)

One-on-One special needs companions



Know, Grow, Show

Contact Heather Roth Johnson for more details at hrothjohnson@bethlehem-church.org

WEST VIRGINIA 1

2011





THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Journey to Ethiopia Sunday August 14 10:15 am in Langemo

In May three Bethlehem members traveled with Holistic Ministry to Children of the Horn of Africa on a mission trip to Yerer, a beautiful but extremely poor area not far from the capital of Addis Ababa. We saw churches over 1,000 years old, learned, ministered and came to love the families and staff of this wonderful partner organization of Bethlehem.

Please come with us to Yerer on Sunday morning August 14 to meet some of our Ethiopian friends and hear our story. Find out how you can be part of this ministry.



Bethlehem member Roy LaFayette enjoying conversation with new friends.



Children's Choir in Yerer

Get Ready for Bethlehem's Habitat 2011 Project ~ August 15-19 ~

We are ready for action for our Habitat 2011 Summer Project! Craig Schiller is set once again as our on site coordinator for the week and Melissa Sternal will have lunches covered. We have a new construction site in north Minneapolis on 4307 Girard Ave N. – a part of the city that needs much attention after the devastating tornado. And now all we need is you!



Please consider setting aside a day during the week of August 15 – 19 to help build a home! For those not familiar with Habitat, all we ask is that you set aside one day minimum during the work day, that is 8:30 am – 4:30 pm with lunch provided. You will be asked to work within your abilities and will have supervision for all aspects of the day. Of course we will not turn away those looking to volunteer multiple days.

To register, please contact Rick Jackson, jacksrc@dept56.com or 612.929.2881.

Serve a Meal with Loaves and Fishes on Friday, August 19

Bethlehem participates in this city-wide program for providing free meals for women, children, and men who are hungry. We prepare and serve the meal on the third Friday of every other month at the River of Life Lutheran Church in north Minneapolis. The mission of Loaves & Fishes is to provide nutritious meals to the hungry of the Twin City Metro area in an atmosphere of hospitality at site locations where the need is greatest. It also develops joint ventures/partnerships with like-minded organizations to assist guests with additional basic needs and in becoming self-sufficient. To help serve the meal on August 19, contact Marcia Bell at bell.marcia1@gmail.com or register on the Bethlehem website. (This month we will only be serving since the kitchen is under renovation.) Each participant is asked to make a small donation to offset the cost of the meal.



The next time to help prepare a meal for Our Saviour's is Sunday, September 25. Contact Mary Tinkham to volunteer at mltinkham@mmm.com. Mark these dates on your calendar today.

Quilting at Bethlehem—A Labor of Love

For many years countless numbers of women have come to Bethlehem to make quilts for those in need. The tradition continues and in the quilting season recently completed 16 women met on 18 days and spent approximately 700 hours piecing, sewing, tying, visiting and eating. The women come and go; some women are there for every session and others drop in when it works with their schedule.

On a typical day, 2-10 quilts are produced in assembly line fashion—two women work at the assembly table, putting together backs, fillers and tops—then it's on to the sewing machine operator who sews around the edge of each quilt—then to the tying table where 1-4 women complete the quilt. Before they are ready to tie, they choose the yarn color and mark how the knots should be arranged. It's a labor of love. All the fabric for the quilts is donated. They are especially in need of material for the middle layer (e.g. flannel sheets, light-weight blankets, mattress pads). Drop off your donations at the church office.



93 quilts were made this year.
Where do the quilts go?

- ✘ 40 quilts were taken to the Lutheran World Relief warehouse in South St. Paul. From there they are shipped to Africa, India, Central America, the Near East and Russia.
- ✘ 20 quilts were sent to Haiti, through Lutheran World Relief, after the earthquake.
- ✘ 30 quilts were given to refugee and housing programs through Lutheran Social Service. Baby quilts were given to workers at the food service at Messiah Lutheran.
- ✘ 4 quilts were given to the Karen refugee family sponsored by Bethlehem.
- ✘ There are still quilts in our closet which will be given to Harriet Tubman Women's Shelter and the Minneapolis Crisis Nursery.

Are you interested in joining this ministry? Our fall session begins on Monday, September 26. We quilt for three days of the last week of each month except in December. The quilting team would love for you to become part of this valuable service.

Vacation Bible School Supports Local and Global Mission

- ✓ \$606.12 for Park Town School in Chennai, India to buy books for its library
- ✓ 515 pounds of food for Simpson Food Shelf
- ✓ 2 grocery bags full (over 44 items) of swim gear for the kids at St. Joseph's Home for Children
- ✓ 4 boxes (over 330 items) of school supplies to be taken on mission trip to West Virginia
- ✓ 74 bags of pet food for TRUST Meals on Wheels program

Way to go Vacation Bible School!

Mission/Outreach Donations for August

Every month, money is designated to go to three of our mission partners. This month's mission partners are St. Joseph's Home for Children, Lutheran World Relief and Starfish Ministry.



What is St. Joseph's Home for Children?

A program of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis serving children and families by addressing immediate needs for shelter and stability and offering long-term solutions to emotional and behavioral issues with quality mental health care. It is located at 46th Street East in Minneapolis.



What is Starfish Ministry?

A ministry of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Judson Memorial Baptist that strives to help individuals who are in need of financial assistance, grocery cards or gas. It is supported by donations. With the government shut down and the budget cuts ahead, the needs will be mounting. Please consider making a donation to this fund. Checks can be made out to Starfish Ministry and mailed to the church office or drop it in the offering plate on Sunday morning. If you have questions, please call Diane, 612.312.3375.

August 7 —Heaven on Earth/*Keep the Faith*

Psalm 85:7-11 Matthew 14:22-33

August 14—Heaven on Earth/*Extend Grace*

Psalm 67 Matthew 15:21-28

August 21—Heaven on Earth/*Name God's Activity*

Psalm 138 Matthew 16:13-20

August 28—Heaven on Earth/*Set Your Mind on the Divine*

Psalm 63:1-7 Matthew 16:21-28

Service times: Sundays – 8:00, 9:00, 10:15, 11:30, 7:00 pm

Nursery available at 9:00, 10:15 & 11:30 am Sundays



Visit us at www.bethlehem-church.org or

Email at church@bethlehem-church.org

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DATED MATERIAL

Reading the Bible in 2011



The readings in worship this month are from Matthew and the Psalms. You are invited to read a little each day in anticipation of the Sunday readings. To help you dig in a bit deeper, take a moment and write down on a slip of paper a phrase that jumps out at you. Then put it somewhere

you'll come across it throughout the day – the bathroom mirror, the kitchen sink, your pocket, wherever you'll see it. When you come back to it, hold it in your mind, and let it prompt you to prayer. Repeat throughout the day.

Blessings on your quiet time with God!

Week of August 1-7

- Psalm 145:18
- Matthew 14:22-23a
- Matthew 14:23b-33
- Psalm 85:8
- Psalm 85:9
- Psalm 85:10-11

Week of August 8-14

- Matthew 14:34-36
- Matthew 15:21-28
- Matthew 15:29-31
- Psalm 67:1-3
- Psalm 67:4-5
- Psalm 67:6-7

Week of August 15-21

- Matthew 16:13-20
- Psalm 138:1-3
- Psalm 138:4-6
- Psalm 138:7
- Psalm 138:8
- Matthew 16:18-19

Week of August 22-28

- Psalm 63:1
- Matthew 16:21-23
- Matthew 16:24-26
- Psalm 63:3-4
- Psalm 63:5-7
- Psalm 63:8

Week of August 29-September 4

- Matthew 18:15-20
- Matthew 18:21-22
- Matthew 16:19
- Psalm 95:1-2
- Psalm 95:3-5
- Psalm 95:6-7



SAILING !

September 23-25

Join in the fun as we sail the Apostle Islands. Register at

bethlehem-church.org.



Worship Every Sunday 10:00 am at the Lake Harriet Bandshell.

www.outdoorworship.org

8/7: Linden Hills UCC

8/14: First Universalist

8/21: Lynnhurst UCC

8/28: St. Joan of Arc

9/4: Mount Olivet