



T H E



B E A C O N



A popular Christmas song announces that "it's the most wonderful time of the year." It can also feel like the busiest, most stressful time. Preoccupied with details and the hurry and worry of life it's easy to miss the song of goodness that promises to be present in our lives. Listen closely. The Divine melody plays. It's a song of Love and it's music for the whole world.

November 29 **Our Hope and Expectation**
First Sunday of Advent

December 6 **God's Promise Will Not Fail You**
Baby's First Christmas 3:00-4:30 pm

December 13 **Love Be Our Song**
Sunday School Program *Early Childhood*
9:00 & 10:15 am
Sunday School Program *Grades 1-6*
4:00 pm

December 20 **God's Great Wonders**
Senior Choir presents *Magnificat* at 9:00/10:15 am
7:00 pm "Early" Christmas Eve Service

Christmas Eve
2:00, 3:30, 5:00, 9:00 & 10:30 pm

Christmas Day Service of Holy Communion
10:00 am

Christmas Eve Comes Early! — Sunday, December 20, 7:00 pm

This is a service for all those who travel, for those who find themselves going in too many directions on December 24, and for those who can't sing the Christmas story enough. Tell your friends!

**8th Annual Alternative Gift Fair
December 6 & 13 in the Gallery**

The average American teenager spends \$110 per week! This can educate an AIDS orphan for more than a year. A latte at Caribou is about \$3. That will pay for 3 kids in India to have a medical checkup and medicine they might need before school starts. A child dies of malaria every 30 seconds somewhere in the world. For \$10 a bednet can save a life.

We welcome you to the 8th Annual Alternative Gift Fair at Bethlehem on Sundays, December 6 and 13. We'll be in the Gallery from 8:30-12:45 pm. In addition, we will be available before and after 7:00 pm worship (6:30-8:30 pm) December 6. There is a full "shopping list" to help you feed the hungry, provide clean water, look after the sick and educate the poor in many countries.

How does this work? Make your selections from the shopping list you will find online or at the table in the Gallery, pray for the missions that touch your heart.

Mark the items you want to support on the shopping list. Pick up the inserts that describe the wonderful projects you've supported, and a card (\$.50) if you wish, to give to Grandma or Uncle Mike or a teacher instead of that trinket or tie that sits forgotten in a drawer.

Give your shopping list and payment to the cashier and you're finished! Your gifts are tax-deductible and you will be fulfilling the Gospel and supporting God's people in need all over the world. They thank you!



INSIDE...

PASTOR'S WORD
Community News
Page 2

GROW
Carols that Pray Our Hope
Advent Longing in Pop Music
More Than Money Matters
Job Transition
Page 3

YOUR GIFTS
What Goes Around...
Council Minutes
Bridge Builder Dinner
Year End Giving
Page 4

CONNECT
Road to Bethlehem
Open Conversation Brunch
Staff Christmas Card
Mid-Day Book Group
Page 5

KIDS
SS Programs
Holy Families
Christmas Service
Parents' Day Out
Page 6

FOUNTAIN for Youth
Pages 7 & 8

SERVE
Safety Ministry
Christmas Eve Opps
New Staff

WORSHIP/ARTS
Greetings for Military
Senior Choir Presents
Magnificat
Page 9

HEALTH MINISTRIES
Coping With Grief
Healing Touch
Story from Gathering
Page 10

REACH
Giving Opportunities
Habitat Dedication
Page 11

Pastor's Word

One of my favorite Christmas carols is, "O Little Town of Bethlehem." When I was in 2nd and 3rd grade, my mother was the director of the Victoria Community Children's Choir in Texas, and every Christmas we performed a concert (modeled after the King's College Choir's Service of Lessons and Carols) in the University Arts Auditorium. It was a magical concert. I remember the enormous evergreen trees that decorated the stage; the calming, beautiful images being projected onto the backdrop of the stage; the sparkling white lights surrounding us; and the sheer silence of the darkened, packed auditorium. We sang, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" to the alternate "Forest Green" tune. The words *how still we see thee lie, above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by* painted a tranquil portrait of peace in my mind.

This early image of the song, however, is contrasted with one of HOPE-filled chaos many years later. Speed forward to Christmas 1995 when I was in Jerusalem and Bethlehem for my seminary internship, and my family had come to visit. It was right after the Oslo Accord, so Bethlehem had just been given autonomous rule, and the Israeli soldiers had been withdrawn. My family and I were in the city of Bethlehem for an interfaith Christmas program. I had borrowed my internship supervisor's car (my first time driving there). There were people everywhere chanting and singing, walking toward Manger Square. It was difficult for us to make our way to the car because of the crowds gathering to celebrate in the streets. When we finally squeezed into the car, I was shaking because I had no idea how I would drive through the crowd. Slowly, I began to inch forward, little by little. All of a sudden, a man pounded on top of the car saying that I had run over his child's foot. He and his crying daughter packed into the car as well, so we could drive them to the hospital.

My mother knew very few words in Arabic, but the one that came to mind was, "Asfeh,"— "I'm sorry." Before the man and his daughter even got into the car, she began saying over and over again, "Asfeh, Asfeh, Asfeh!" Then she yelled out the windows to those who were continuing to walk down the street: "Asfeh, Asfeh, Asfeh!" Evidently this strange American woman was making quite a scene yelling "Asfeh" to everyone because it silenced the young girl as she looked at all of us, baffled and entertained by the whole experience. The father began pushing on her foot to see if she was still in pain. When we were all satisfied that she was fine, he said that maybe she had just gotten scared in the crowd.



They thanked us, got out of the car and disappeared into the chanting crowd to celebrate the freedom of their city from the presence of soldiers.

My family still remembers this event every Christmas (of course, giving my mother a hard time about her hysterical "Asfeh's" and teasing me about my amazing driving skills). The song, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" has never been the same after that experience, especially the line: *the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

The sermon series during Advent is "You Shall Have a Song." Each week we will sing of the hope, promise, love and peace we receive through Christ. To help you reflect on these songs in your life, the Children, Youth and Family team has put together an Advent devotion book that highlights Christmas carols. We hope you'll pick one up at church and use it throughout the season. And whether you're a family with children, an empty nest, or a household of one; we hope this will prompt you to sing and tell the stories of these carols and how they have impacted and shaped your lives as well.

Blessed Peace and Hope this Christmas!
Pastor Beth

Community News

Deaths

Lorraine Gulsvig Olson, 10-23-09
Thelma L. Folstad, 11-6-09

Births/Adoptions

Marit Elise Bipes, 10-15-09
Parents: Jeff and Kristy Bipes *Big Sister:* Leila
Preston Alexander Ehlers, 10-14-09
Parents: Karla and Jeremy Ehlers
Big Brothers: Carter and Gavin
Brooke Marion Parry, 10-23-09
Parents: Sarah and David Parry
Otto George Melin, 9-24-09
Parents: Bethany and Erik Melin *Big Brother:* Henry
Dylan Sejoong Hughes, 11-21-08
Parents: Chris Hughes & Janet Hansen

Baptisms

October 25, 2009
Ethan Miles Hall, 10-25-08
Parents: Glenn Hall and Susan Veltum-Hall
November 8, 2009
Calvin Wallace Heers, 7-24-08
Parents: James and April Heers
Isabella Rose Masterson, 5-12-09
Parents: Larry and Lisa Masterson

Grow

Conversations with Dr. Phil

[Sunday Mornings, 9:00 am]

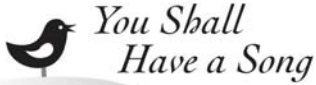
Discussion on the day's Bible readings every Sunday morning. Drop in when it works for your schedule.

More Than Money Matters: a workshop on financial health

[Wednesday, 6:30-7:45 pm]

Facilitators: Bill MacLean, Bethlehem Intern, and experienced financial advisors

Dec. 2 Budgeting and Net Worth—Learn how to build and manage a budget: assess current situation, set targets, formulate a budget and track progress.



Advent Speaker Series

[Wednesdays, 6:30-7:45 pm]

December 2: “Carols That Pray Our Hope” with Steve and Naomi Staruch

The Christmas creche is filled with characters and each is celebrated with songs that reference scriptural texts. These simple songs still delight us. The best carols are pathways to praying the Bible. Join us for a sing-along of sorts and an evening of prayer. You'll know all the tunes. Steve is classical music host at Minnesota Public Radio. Naomi is a member of the National Lutheran Choir. Both have sung in the Dale Warland Singers and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra Chorale.



December 9: “Advent Longing in Pop Music?” with Chris Scharen

Pop Culture and Faith? From U2 to Leonard Cohen, from Dixie Chicks to The Arcade Fire: How does popular music express the deep cries of longing and hope found in the Advent season? Scharen guides us in this intriguing and thought provoking conversation with profound spiritual questioning going on in pop music today. Chris Scharen is Assistant Professor of Worship at Luther Seminary and the author of *One Step Closer: Why U2 Matters to Those Seeking God*.



Job Transition Workshop
Mondays, 10-Noon

You CAN do what you love for a living!

November 30—Stand out from the herd
Get the tools you need (30-second pitch, resume, target market, job hunt action plan)

December 7—Network your way to a great new job
Where to go, what to say and how to follow up

December 14—Interview to win
Learn three important techniques.

Keynote speaker
Catherine Byers Breet, 12-year recruiting veteran, author and creator of *The Job Hunt Coaching System*, jobhuntworkshop.com. Since March of 2009, Catherine and her job hunt coaching system have helped over 2000 job seekers.



\$20 per session. Register online www.bethlehem-church.org or call Gena, 612.312.3364.

What Goes Around. . . Comes Around

by Dave Dronen, Stewardship Ministry Team

I was sitting down to write my article for the Beacon when I received a story in an email from a friend. It summarized for me what is going on at Bethlehem with "Sharing my Abundance." I hope it strikes a chord with all of you:

The man slowly looked up. This was a woman clearly accustomed to the finer things of life. Her coat was new. She looked like she had never missed a meal in her life. His first thought was that she wanted to make fun of him, like so many others had done before. "Are you hungry?" she asked. "No," he answered sarcastically, "Now go away." The woman invited Jack into a nearby cafeteria and sat with him at a table in a corner.

She stared at him intently. "Jack, do you remember me? I'm a little older perhaps than when you worked here, and I came through that very door, cold and hungry. I had come to the city looking for a job, but I couldn't find anything. Finally I was down to my last few cents and had been kicked out of my apartment. It was February and I was cold and nearly starving. I saw this place and walked in on the off chance that I could get something to eat. You made me the biggest roast beef sandwich that I had ever seen, gave me a cup of coffee, and told me to go over to a corner table and enjoy it. I was afraid that you would get into trouble. Then, when I looked over and saw you put the price of my food in the cash register, I knew that everything would be all right."

They finished their meal and stood outside the cafeteria. "Thank you for the meal," he said. She replied "Don't thank me, thank God. God brought us together long ago and once again today."

On behalf of the entire Stewardship Ministry Team we thank you for continuing the Bethlehem legacy of generosity through the "Sharing my Abundance" campaign and for your generous commitment to our congregation.

Year End Giving

It's that time again! As we count our blessings here are some giving options you may want to consider:

- Stock – A gift of stock can be deducted from your income tax at fair market value and will allow you to avoid capital gains tax.
- Simply Giving – This may be a good time to consider electronic giving through Simply Giving. This is a convenient way to give because there's no need to write checks or bring cash to church, and Bethlehem receives your contribution even if you are unable to attend. If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn at 612.312.3402 or cogrady@bethlehem-church.org. Please note that year end gifts must be postmarked or received in the church office by Thursday, December 31 and that stock gifts take a few extra days to process.



Council Highlights

The Bethlehem Council met on October 20.

Capital Campaign Forums were held in Iverson to answer questions. Additional questions can be forwarded to Jeff Seidel or the pastoral staff. A gathering of Bethlehem members was held at 7500 York to talk about the capital campaign and to see the video.

Pastor Beth presented information on the Adult Ed/Small Group Ministries.

Giving during September was behind the TYD plan; however, expenses were less than the plan, which is a result of spending management and control.

Council information is available on the Bethlehem web site; minutes of the meetings are available at the mailboxes across from the office; and there are Council people available for your questions in the Gallery on many Sundays. You can also email us at council@bethlehem-church.org

Bridge Builder Dinner Set for December 6

This year's Bethlehem Foundation Bridge Builder Dinner will be held at the Marriott Hotel Southwest December 6, 6:00-9:00 pm. Cost is \$35 per person. Pre-paid reservations are due December 1. Register and pay on-line at bethlehem-church.org/register/bridge.

Richard K. Davis, Chairman, President & CEO, U.S. Bancorp, will be the keynote speaker. The Corda Mor Irish Dancers and the Augsburg Suzuki String Ensemble will perform.

Join fellow Bridge Builders and others from the Bethlehem Lutheran Church community for an evening of celebration and recognition of the Bethlehem Foundation, its mission and accomplishments during 2009.

The social hour begins at 6:00 pm, followed by dinner, a brief activity review, keynote address and entertainment. The Marriott Southwest is located at 5801 Opus Parkway (Highway 169 and Bren Road) in Minnetonka.

If you have included Bethlehem Lutheran Church Foundation in your estate plans and have not received an invitation, please call 612.312.3400 and join the celebration.

share the spirit

Please note: Any gifts made to the *Share the Spirit* capital campaign should be made by December 31, 2009. Any gifts received after that date will be credited towards our new capital campaign, *Living, Giving, Thriving*.

Open Conversation Brunch Sunday, December 6, 10:15-11:30 am in Langemo Lounge

Many people regularly attend Bethlehem for several months or years yet have not taken the step to become members of the congregation. That is just fine. Members and non members alike are fully engaged, walking side by side in our journey of faith. However we are curious to learn about your perspectives regarding membership and your relationship to Bethlehem.

Does this sound familiar? If so, please stop by to talk with us about your involvement or questions about Bethlehem. Drop in anytime after 10:15 am on Sunday, December 6. Enjoy good food and conversation. Our goal is to hear your impressions about Bethlehem's membership process and why one chooses to take the step to become a member of a congregation.

Please RSVP by Thursday, December 2 to Pamela Paulson 612.312.3415, ppaulson@bethlehem-church.org.

Wednesday Mid-Day Book Group Chooses Reading List

December—"One Thousand White Women" by Jim Fergus is a novel based on an historical event in 1854 when a northern Cheyenne chief requested the U.S. Army for a gift of 1000 white women as brides for his young warriors. Request denied, but the journals of May Dodd give life and voice to the native people of the American West.

January—"Thy Father's Will" by Kirsten Jacobson Stasney is based on a true story (1907-1918) of a family forever altered by damaging consequences of decisions made for all the right reasons.

February—"Sarah's Key" by Tatiana de Rosnay is a story of Sarah as a 10 year old girl in occupied France during roundup of the Jews, and 60 years later intertwined with an American journalist investigating the roundup.

You are welcome to join the discussions on the second Wednesday of each month at 2:00 pm at 7500 York Ave. S., #101.



Thanks to all of the Bethlehem family for your prayers, cards, and other signs of concern during my recent hospitalization. I'm still recuperating, so I would appreciate continued prayers.

Dave Grube

The "Road to Bethlehem"

During Advent come see the road to Bethlehem.

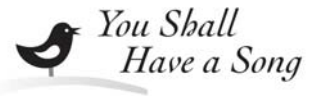
"Road to Bethlehem" is the title of the new banner that is hanging in the Gallery for the Advent and Christmas season. This quilt-inspired banner was created by member Judy Nelson. It depicts the well known figures of the Christmas story as they journey to Bethlehem.



Judy Nelson

We are so fortunate at Bethlehem to have many talented artists who create works for our space, sharing their time and their talents. These artists share their faith as they minister to us through their work. Judy has been working in textiles all her life, learning from her mother and grandmother. She says, "Working with fabrics and quilting brings special joy to me, and I thank my friend Gladys for inspiration and encouragement."

Judy dedicates this banner to her friend Glad as well as to the Bethlehem community. Make sure you stop by the Gallery to see "Road to Bethlehem."



We wish you a Merry Christmas!



Children

Christmas Carol Lullabies

By Kris Tostengard Michel, Director of Children's Ministry

When both our kids were born, Dave's mom came and stayed with us for a week or two to help us get settled as a newly configured family. Grandma Val loved to hold the babies and rock them to sleep. She would sing Christmas carols to them - in October. As I think back to those days, I smile and say, "Why not Christmas carols!" She was reaching deep into her memory and singing the faith songs of her childhood. Although my kids don't remember those early lullabies, seeds were planted, and now they sing the carols of their grandma's early faith, too - Christmas carols that help them celebrate the gift of Emmanuel, God with us.

This Advent, keep your eyes open for the family devotion resources available from the Children, Youth and Family team. The devos center on well-known Christmas carols.

"I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and...now lives in you also."
2 Timothy 1:5

Sunday School Christmas Program Sunday, December 13

Early Childhood

Christmas programs for the youngest kids (age 2 - Kindergarten) are in Iverson Hall during the 9:00 and 10:15 Sunday School hours on December 13.

Elementary

Elementary kids have just one program this year! The 9:00 and 10:15 Sunday School kids will be together on **December 13 at 4:00pm**. *The Cherub Choir and Choristers are also part of this program.*

Rehearsal Schedule: Saturday, December 12

- 9:00-10:30 am - Actors and narrators
- 10:30-11:45 am - Everyone else, including choirs and Sunday School singers.

Please let us know if you would like to help with the program or refreshments following. Contact Heather, hrothjohnson@bethlehem-church.org or Kris, ktostengardmichel@bethlehem-church.org

No Sunday School on December 20 or 27.

Sunday School resumes January 3, 2010!

Baby's First Christmas

Sunday, December 6 from 3:00-4:30 pm

Create a lifetime memory. We are making ornaments of your child's hand, having their picture taken in the manger in the Sanctuary and doing other fun activities. Childcare is provided for siblings up to age 7. Share in this heartwarming event with other parents and babies at Bethlehem who are celebrating their first Christmas. Please RSVP by December 1 to Joannie Schwalen, 612.312.3401 or jschwalen@bethlehem-church.org

Holy Families - Christmas Eve

Be part of a Christmas Eve tradition. As parents dress up as Mary and Joseph, they carry their baby down the aisle and place him/her in the manger as we celebrate the birth of the Christ-child. Siblings are included as various nativity characters. Please sign up for either the 3:30, 5:00, 9:00 or 10:30 pm worship service by December 15 with Joannie Schwalen at 612.312.3401 or jschwalen@bethlehem-church.org

Christmas Service Project

Sunday School kids are encouraged to bring a small "stocking stuffer" gift for the kids at Journey Homes, an outreach program of Lutheran Social Services. Please see your Sunday School teacher for exact details of age and gender that your child's class will be supporting. Thank you for making a difference!



Toys for Tots - Grades 4-5-6

Saturday, December 12, Noon to 6:00 pm

Meet at the church, right after rehearsal for the Christmas program and go out to eat lunch. Then, we'll shop at Target for toys. **We'll deliver the goods to KARE-11 TV and appear on the 5:00 pm News!** *Parents are needed to drive.* In the meantime, invite your friends and relatives to support this worthy cause. Thanks to Bob Pratt for once again coordinating this much anticipated event.

Parents' Day Out

**Saturday, December 5, 9:00 am-12:00 noon
Ages 6 months to 5th grade**

We give thanks for the parents of Bethlehem. Let Bethlehem's Youth take care of your children while you catch your breath, take a nap, run some needed errands, or simply enjoy some alone time. No charge. Donations toward Mexico Mission Trip are accepted and can be given at the event or online using your checking account. **RSVP DEADLINE: Tuesday, December 1** Must RSVP, no walk-ins & space is limited. Register online or contact Gena at 612.312.3364 or gkoeberl@bethlehem-church.org

Bethlehem Youth Have a Song

Four High School Students Share Their Experience in Youth Choir



John, Luke, Eliza and Rebecca are just four of the students currently singing in the Bethlehem Youth Choir, directed by Dr. David Mennicke. 7th through 12th graders are invited into this opportunity to not only share their gift of voice or love of music, but to learn and grow together through the varied and often times challenging choral pieces.

Eliza Thompson is a 9th grader in the Edina School District, and she particularly enjoys the challenge of singing in Youth Choir and celebrates when the piece seems just right. “It’s hard to explain, but it feels so cool.” Eliza, has been singing at Bethlehem since Kindergarten. There are 5 different choirs for Bethlehem’s children and youth, beginning with 3 year olds who call themselves “Little Lambs.”

Luke Albrecht, a senior at South High, remembers his days as a 7th and 8th grade singer. Each Wednesday, he enjoyed watching the upperclassmen singing and clearly having lots of fun. Luke admits he is “not a very good vocalist, but has so much fun.” Luke is also an accomplished pianist, so he appreciates the high quality of the choir and the excellence of the directing.

Rebecca Chapin, a junior, is another musician who hopes to one day work in a music related field. At Southwest High, Rebecca sings in Southwest Singers, while maintaining piano lessons, leading children in Sunday school music, at Vacation Bible School and on youth retreats and trips. Along with good friend, Anna Michel, she can be found strumming a guitar and bellowing out a camp favorite! “Music is

basically my life,” expounds Rebecca, “I was in youth choir in 7th grade and tried to find time in 9th grade.” Her schedule is a hectic one, but her return to choir as a junior came from simply “making time to do it.” She sees it as an opportunity to help her toward “becoming an elementary music teacher.”

John Bennett, is a senior who has a passion and gift for music. At Edina High, he performs in musicals, Concert and Chamber Choirs. His connection to Director Mennicke goes beyond the Bethlehem choir room. He also takes voice lessons and says “David is an amazing teacher.” John is already making plans to major in musical theater and vocal performance. One of John’s most unforgettable memories comes from 7th grade, his first year in Youth Choir.



He says his voice hadn’t changed yet, so he and friend, Luke, sang alto. There was a song with a particularly high note with the lyrics, “your branch.” Both boys would compete to see who could indeed hit that note well, depending on the particular day and puberty’s uncontrollable effect. He jokes that after squeaking out “your branch,” we had only enough to “mumble the rest.” The song has officially been dubbed *Your Branch Song*.

When asked if they would recommend Youth Choir to others, they said absolutely. The why’s varied. For some it is a type of expression, for the individual vocalist, the choir of joint voices, or of faith and life. For Eliza, “The First Song of Isaiah” became an expression of loss. After a classmate died, she discovered that this song they were singing at Youth Choir was the very same song sung at her classmate’s funeral. She felt a sense of connection each time it was sung. When frustrated or tense, John finds release of energy and positive direction in Youth Choir. For Rebecca, Youth Choir is teaching her new skills and techniques, helping her discern a career in music. “The music is cool,” says Luke, “and what we accomplish in such a short time together is extraordinary.”

Bethlehem youth certainly have a song. We sing, like these youth, because we are overflowing in God’s grace and have been given new life again and again. As you listen to the next piece sung by any choir, may you know the song of God’s grace, mercy, compassion and love.



The bird doesn't sing because it has an answer; it sings because it has a song.

- Maya Angelou

What Are Your Gifts, Interests & Passions?

In the One to One's with 9th graders this fall, Pastor Beth asked the question: *What are your gifts, interests and passions?* Since our Sermon Series for December is *You Shall Have a Song*, here are just a few of the many gifts God has given our youth and the ways they are "singing their songs" in the world. This is how they described themselves in their own words.

I Am...

- ◆ A good listener,
- ◆ A helper when others have a problem,
- ◆ Easy-going, charming
- ◆ Proud to be who I am with challenges and advantages,
- ◆ Sensitive and caring about other people,
- ◆ Good at treating others respectfully.

I Like...

- ◆ Helping people and being there,
- ◆ Gardening,
- ◆ Understanding people and culture,
- ◆ Talking, just talking,
- ◆ Figuring out technology,
- ◆ Using my imagination and creativity,
- ◆ Making inventions and stories,
- ◆ Climbing trees,
- ◆ Helping with mentally challenged people at a group home,
- ◆ Helping people because I like volunteering without any other motivation,
- ◆ Hospital work and making people feel better and making it a happier place,
- ◆ Working with kids in theater and how this helps boost confidence,
- ◆ Helping kids with bully problems,
- ◆ Taking care of people like my grandma,
- ◆ Connecting with other people and learning their stories and names,
- ◆ Bringing people together,
- ◆ Telling other people about God.

I Have...

- ◆ Infectious joy,
- ◆ Good sportsmanship,
- ◆ An aptitude for languages (Latin, Norwegian, Greek, & Spanish),
- ◆ Love for music,
- ◆ Ability to keep the spirits of a group up,
- ◆ ADHD which was a blessing and a curse at times.

Next Junior High Ministry Team Meeting

- ◆ Tuesday, December 1 @ 7:00pm

Parents' Day Out

Saturday, December 5, 9:00 am-12:00 noon

Ages 6 months to 5th grade

We give thanks for the parents of Bethlehem so Bethlehem's Youth will take care of your children while you catch your breath, take a nap, run some needed errands, or simply enjoy some alone time. No charge. Donations toward Mexico Mission Trip are accepted and can be given at the event or online using your checking account. Youth interested in participating contact Mandy, 612.312.3406 or

mlickliderbaseman@bethlehem-church.org



Announcements

- ◆ No Wednesday Confirmation Nights on December 24 and 31.
- ◆ Current Sunday Morning Class Session ends Sunday, December 13. ***No Sunday classes on December 20 and 27.***
- ◆ New Sunday Morning Class Session Begins Sunday, January 3.
- ◆ Mentor News: If confirmation students or mentors do not have discussion booklet, please contact Gena at 612.312.3364 or **gkoeberl@bethlehem-church.org**
- ◆ Christmas Eve Worship times are 2:00, 3:30, 5:00, 9:00 and 10:30 pm (Early Christmas Eve, 12/20 at 7:00 pm)
- ◆ **SAVE THE DATE:** 30 Hour Famine Overnight Retreat is February 19-20.

www.bethlehem-church.org

Help Bethlehem be Merry on Christmas Eve

Christmas is a wondrous experience at Bethlehem and we welcome many, many visitors. This year, the Welcome Ministry is looking for a few extra smiles and hands to open doors for those attending the Christmas Eve worship services. Please contact Anastasia Pydych, 612.312.3368, a_pydych@hotmail.com, if you can greet for the 2:00, 3:30, 5:00, 9:00 or 10:30 pm service.

Safety Ministry Celebrates One Year

by Anastasia Pydych, Ministry Director

S This January marks the first-year anniversary of the Safety Ministry Team. Much has been accomplished including publication of Bethlehem's Emergency Action Plan, developing and conducting training for safety lay ministers and staff, signage for shelter-in-place, fire evacuation maps, holding a Health and Safety Event, installation of AED's (Automated External Defibrillator) and the purchase of CPR dummies. This could not have been accomplished without the generous grant given by the Bethlehem Foundation, teamwork with Health Ministries and the hard work of the Safety Leadership Team.

The Safety Leadership Team is made up of various lay ministers that represent the congregation. I give thanks for the vision, dedication and care shown in the last year by this team. Ending a one-year commitment are Nancy Garwick, Cindy Tintner, Doug Reitan and Debbie Freed. Continuing on for a second year are Pat McChesney, Jack Swan, Rob Rimington, Nels Thompson and Pat Noonan.

Worship/Arts/Music

Greetings of Hope for our Military

Bethlehem has 17 members and friends who currently are serving in the military. This Christmas season, let us reach out to them in appreciation for their service to our country. On Sunday, December 13, there will be a personalized note card inserted in the bulletin on which you will be invited to write a short note of hope and support.



Staff News

Welcome Whitney!



Whitney Stofflet has been added to the administration team as the new Receptionist/ Ministry Assistant. Whitney moved to Minneapolis from Beaver Dam, WI to art school. She graduated from The Art Institutes International of Minnesota with a B.S. in Graphic Design. She's very happy to be helping out with communication work and getting to know people in the congregation. Feel free to contact her at wstofflet@bethlehem-church.org.

Welcome Katy!



Health and Shared Ministries welcomes new administrative assistant Katy Ajer. Katy hails from San Diego, CA and moved to Minnesota to pursue school in public health. She has worked previously in a church as a youth director and is excited to become involved in new ministries here at Bethlehem. Feel free to stop by and say hello or contact her at 612.312.3413, kajer@bethlehem-church.org.

Save the Date! Congregational Retreat
Saturday, January 30, 2010, 10:00-Noon
Lunch follows with the Annual Meeting at 1:00 pm.
Guest speaker—Rolf Jacobson, Professor at Luther Seminary.



Senior Choir Presents *Magnificat*

On Sunday, December 20, at 9:00 and 10:15 am worship, the Bethlehem Senior Choir, under the direction of Dr. David Mennicke, will present Rob Landes' *Magnificat*, an extended 3-movement work which is scored for choir, organ, large brass component and colorful percussion. This exciting and energetic setting captures Mary's emotions of exultation and praise as she celebrates and anticipates the birth of the Christ child.



Health Ministries

How to Cope with Grief through the Holidays



Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” - Matthew 5:4

There is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays when grieving. Some individuals wish to follow family traditions, while others may choose to do something very different. Know whatever way you choose, you will still remember your loved one. Here are a few thoughts about coping with the holidays.

- ✦ Focus celebrations on winter. Go to the mountains, go sledding or skiing, take a walk outside, enjoy what nature has to offer this time of year.
- ✦ Include your loved one in conversations and celebrations.
- ✦ Hang a stocking for your loved one and have family members write notes, memories, thoughts and put them in the stocking.
- ✦ Look at pictures and tell stories. Make a memory book and have others help.
- ✦ Light a candle in memory.
- ✦ Keep in mind the feelings of your children and family and try to make the season as joyous as possible.
- ✦ Be with people you enjoy.
- ✦ Do something for others. Volunteer at a soup kitchen or food shelf. Visit the lonely or home-bound.
- ✦ Express your feelings.
- ✦ Remember that the anticipation of the holiday is generally worse than the actual day.
- ✦ Eat well and get rest.

“May the healing love and grace of God be in every corner of your heart, crevice of your mind, and cell of your body.”

-Avery Brooke

Yoga Devotions will be on hold for the next few months with plans to resume in the spring. Keep an eye out for upcoming announcements!

Think Before You Drink

A 12 oz. can of Coke contains 23 grams of sugar and a small amount of battery acid.

Foot Clinic

Friday, December 4

10:00 - 2:00 Room 204

Call 612.312.3400 to register.



Give the Gift of Healing Touch

Healing Touch is a compassionate energy therapy in which practitioners use their hands in a heart-centered and intentional way to support physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. It's commonly used for managing all types of pain, side effects of chemotherapy and medications, stress reduction, and for maintaining good health. Bethlehem's trained Healing Touch volunteers offer this service to support God's gift of self-healing and wholeness to all people.




Individual sessions are available without charge, however, donations to help defray program expenses are greatly appreciated. **Healing Touch gift certificates or donation envelopes are available through the health ministries office.** (612.312.3405). To schedule a Healing Touch session, contact Cheryl Salter 953.894.2229 or salter.cheryl@gmail.com.

Gathering Update

The Gathering has been bringing joy to participants and volunteers since opening at Bethlehem in May 2009. It is a group respite program for people in early to mid-stage memory loss and provides caregivers a much needed break for 5 hours, on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. Dedicated and trained volunteers provide 1:1 care.

Since the Gathering opened, we have served over 10 different participants all in various stages of memory loss. One participant in late stage Alzheimer's disease, was unable to function in traditional Adult Day Center due to high staff ratio and behavior concerns. At the Gathering he did wonderfully with the compassion and attention of his 1:1 volunteer. His wife had tears in her eyes when she picked him up because of the care he received. We were privileged to care for him until only one month before he passed away. **Gathering volunteers have expressed how caring for him and others brings joy to their hearts.**

If you have a loved one that could benefit from the Gathering, or you feel called to this ministry please contact Julie McChesney at 612.312.3405 or jmchesney@bethlehem-church.org.

 *You Shall Have a Song*



Reaching Out With Hope this Christmas

Gifts of Love for Ebenezer & Wreath of Love for TRUST

Purchase a gift for a resident of Ebenezer or Redeemer. Specific gift tags are available at the church office. Deadline is Sunday, December 6.

Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC)

serving underprivileged youth in north Minneapolis, is planning their annual Children's Gift Sale. Over 900 children make reservations for their "shopping" trip to choose presents for their loved ones. Each child donates \$1 for five gifts for their family members. Donate **new and unwrapped** gifts in the \$3-5 range. A list of suggested items is posted outside the church office. Cash donations are also appreciated. **Deadline is Sunday, December 6.**

Toys for Tots

Grades 4-5-6 will be raising money to buy toys for kids who might not otherwise receive them for Christmas. Bethlehem students invite you to support this worthwhile project. Monetary donations will be collected prior to December 12.

LOCA (ladies of a certain age) are collecting women's unmentionables for the Simpson Emergency Shelter for Women. Please bring in your donations of **NEW** pajamas, thermal underwear, panties, undershirts, socks! All sizes are needed. Bring your donations to the table in the Gallery on Sunday, December 6. Or if you can't find the table bring them to the church office.

Adopt a ZOOM House Family for Christmas

16 families need adopting. Adopters provide Christmas presents for up to three family members, including a food gift card for the parent and an educational toy for the children. Call Sara at ZOOM, 612.825.2825.

Aliveness Project Holiday Basket Program

Provide holiday baskets for people living with HIV/AIDS. Find more information on the west hall bulletin board at church or go online to www.aliveness.org.

Habitat House Dedication

*I*t was a cold brisk November evening but plenty of warmth inside 464 Charles Avenue in St. Paul, Minnesota, the newly renovated home of Dawit Lakew and Emebet Debela. On November 12 Habitat for Humanity held a formal dedication at their home for which Bethlehem was a contributing sponsor. This past summer a number of people from Bethlehem worked in partnership with others to create a beautiful, safe living space. Pastor Mary, Rick Jackson, Bill and Kathy Tolo participated in the dedication with Kathy wearing two hats, representing Habitat for Humanity and members of the Bethlehem community. The family with two young children served a fabulous Ethiopian meal for the event and smiles were worn by all as we rejoiced in the partnerships that made this home possible and in the new friendships that had been formed.



The whole, happy family.



Heremela has already started to make this room feel like her own.



THE BEACON

**November 29—Our Hope and Expectation**

Jeremiah 33:14-16 Luke 21:25-36

December 6—God's Promise Will Not Fail You

Malachi 3:1-4 Luke 3:1-6

December 13—Love Be Our Song

Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18

December 20—God's Great Wonders

Micah 5:2-5a Luke 1:39-45

**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****Early Christmas Eve: December 20, 7:00 pm****Christmas Eve: 2:00, 3:30, 5:00, 9:00 & 10:30 pm****Christmas Day Service of Holy Communion 10:00 am**Visit us at www.bethlehem-church.org orEmail at church@bethlehem-church.org

Telephone 612.312.3400 Fax 612.312.3399



As our intern in ministry, Bill MacLean continues to be involved in many of Bethlehem's activities. In November, he facilitated a Wednesday evening "More than Money Matters" financial workshop series. This

experience convinced him that help with job transition would be beneficial for many and he initiated a comprehensive offering on that subject. In addition, he's working on promoting a men's ministry. A men's breakfast is being planned for Saturday, January 9, 7:00-9:00 am so men, save the date!

Bill will preach at all five services on November 29, the first Sunday in Advent. His position requires many meetings and he's getting experience with making pastoral calls. Bill appreciates our support and prayers.

National Lutheran Choir Christmas Concert

The Choir, under the direction of David Cherwien, performs their annual Christmas Festival concerts on Friday, December 11, 4:30 pm and 8:00 pm, and Saturday, December 12, 8:00 pm at the magnificent Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis. Tickets: \$25. Visit nlca.org for more information.

THE POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 4100 Lyndale Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55409-1499

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DATED MATERIAL**PEP Club Event***Singing the Christmas Story***Saturday, December 12, 6:30 pm
in the Commons**

There are 35 Christmas hymns in our Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal. Carrie Bliss will lead us in an old-fashioned hymn sing. We will not only sing these hymns, but Carrie will tell us about the authors and tune writers. It will be a lot of fun. If you like to sing, this is your chance. There will be a time for sociability, a delicious dessert, and a grand start to the holiday season. If the PEP Club Choir is good enough, who knows what the future holds. *Join us!*

**Spirit Garage "Garage Band Christmas"**

at the Music Box Theater

Tuesday, December 8, 7:00 pm.

Christmas carols in a new way.**Next Beacon Deadline: December 10, 2009****pdunn@bethlehem-church.org**