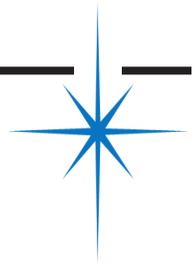


THE BETHESDA STAR



DECEMBER 2022

VOLUME 22

NUMBER 11



*O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.*

I love Advent and Christmas. It's my most favorite time in the church year.

Yes, my eyes still grow wide with child-like wonder at the candles and strings of twinkle-lights. I feel in my very being the crispness of the December air as I breathe it in, rich with the scent of balsam, orange, clove, and birch-log fire. The carols of my childhood and adolescent years ring in the recesses of my mind, taking me back to Christmas parades, live nativity scenes, coffeehouse music nights, and white elephant gifts. The mass-choir anthems from my Concordia days hum in my ears, too.

But more than any of these things, the words and simple tune of Dr. René Clausen's arrangement of "O Little Town of Bethlehem" settle upon my heart during the Advent and Christmas season.

Particularly, the final phrase of the first stanza: "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight."

I sense that. I feel that in the crevices of my heart where the dark wants to remain in control. I feel it in the joy of my children's laughter, their silliness, their simple yet strong love.



I feel it in the embrace of dear friends, especially after two years of Covid-19.

(cont'd on page 2)

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401 - 40TH AVENUE SOUTH
MOORHEAD MN 56560
(218) 236-1420
www.bethesdamhd.org

FROM THE PASTOR (cont'd)

What gets me, what speaks to my heart, is the vulnerability of the tremendous meeting of eternity and finitude in the infant, Jesus. How can it be that God would choose to be present in our flesh, in our bodies? Why would creator choose to become the created? Why would the almighty choose to inhabit the limited?

The incarnation of Christ as a baby, the person in whom all the hopes and fears of all creation from the beginning to the end, is a mystery that I am glad to allow to inhabit my heart.

I pray that this season would be for you, too, a time of resting in the mystery of the incarnation. I pray that you would be fed by the Bread of Life who is born in Bethlehem, the house of bread. I pray that you would be vulnerable just as God became vulnerable for you. It is in softness, mercy, and mystery amid the hardness of this world where God desires to meet us. Not as a warrior but as an infant. Not as a king but as a homeless truth-teller. Not as conqueror but as co-creator of justice and joy.

Peace be yours as we watch and wait together this Advent Season.

The Bethesda Star is an informative monthly newsletter made available to members and friends.

It is composed at Bethesda Lutheran Church, 401 - 40th Avenue South, Moorhead MN. The editor is Roxanne West.

Deadline for inclusion in the January 2023 issue is December 23, 2022.



KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN SICK / HOSPITALIZED:

Joyce Swenson James Kaplan
Geneva Rice (*Don Rice's mother*)
Emmy Falco (*friend of Katherine Graham*)
Donna Podratz

DEATHS

Teresa and Richard Norwig, at the death of her father, Leonard Joppa, November 16, 2022.

PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH
(218) 236-1420
in the event of any hospitalization, a death or birth, so we are made aware of your needs.

EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY

~ 50 Years of Service ~

The Emergency Food Pantry has been able to provide food to neighbors in need thanks to community support during the past 50 years.

Your support is needed to provide food and other essentials to neighbors in need.

TWO WAYS TO HELP:

A year-end donation will help meet the requests for food baskets, allowing us to provide a variety of foods. In recent months, we have purchased more food than past years. Currently 20% of those seeking help have not received a food basket before.



The Emergency Food Pantry's main purpose is to provide food, however we meet many people lacking basic hygiene items.

The pantry spends over \$12,000 a year purchasing toilet paper and soap so each household can receive those basics.

We rely on community donations for additional hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo and deodorant.

Imagine life without toilet paper



November 28 thru December 9
Caring Catalog

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Can you believe it's December already? It's the beginning of the new church year with the season of Advent. We now have the blue paraments on the altar and pulpit. The prayer of the day on the first Sunday of Advent started with "Stir up your power Lord Jesus Christ, and come." A dear one from another congregation, now in another part of the kingdom, would say she listened for the "stir up" prayers because then she would know it is time to start her Christmas baking.

December marks the end of our calendar year. The council evaluates how the year has gone and also looks ahead to 2023. Thank you to all for supporting Bethesda financially this year. The giving has been excellent, consistent with our budget, and we are truly grateful for your faithfulness. We are unfortunately behind as the utilities and other operating expenses have exceeded the budget. We all realize our dollars don't go as far when we fill our gas tank or buy groceries. The council estimates we are behind by over \$25,000 at this time. There were some additions to the partnership churches for Table of Mercy as well as the Vendor Fair that helped Bethesda's budgeted \$10,000 commitment to Table of Mercy. So, as you are able, please consider giving an end of year Christmas monetary gift so that we can end the year breaking even. Don't forget your "Forward 50" donations for end of year accounting also. Your partnership in the ministry at Bethesda is vital. We can do this together! Yes! Thank you!!

The Vendor Fair helped with Bethesda's part toward the developing ministry of Table of Mercy comprising half of Pastor Grant's call to Bethesda. Thank you to Karen Henschke for organizing the vendors, the Parish Life Team (Sharon Olson, Linnea Dimich, Katherine Graham, Kristine Olson-Johnson, Sue Reinhart, Sandy Retzlaff and Shannon Vanderford) for running concessions and organizing the raffle. Thanks to Su Legatt for donating baked goods for the vendors and concessions. Thanks to the quilters (Laurie Anderson, Clarice Erickson, Gwen Erickson, Donna Hendrickson, Sharon Pake, and Joyce Swenson) Dale Current, Kristine Olson-Johnson, Roger Reinhart, Petra & Grant Vanderford, Roxanne West, Church Council, and Choir & Bells who provided the raffle items. Wow, so many people contributing time, talent, effort and funds for our ministry at Bethesda through the Vendor Fair. Again, thank you!!



As you fill out the pledge card and top 20 ways to say Yes!, also consider saying Yes! to a leadership position on the council. The Nominating Committee is calling and contacting people to serve on council and other important positions in our church life. There are three council positions open on the nine-person council and each are for a three-year term. The executive committee (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer) meet the first Tuesday of the month and also serve as the personnel committee. The full council, nine people plus a youth representative, and Pastor Grant, meet the second Tuesday of the month. Each council member serves on a committee/team, shares a devotion at one meeting per year, and is Council Person On Duty (CPOD) six to seven Sundays a year. So yes, there is a time commitment and some duties that need to be fulfilled serving on council. But you get to learn about how the church functions and together you get to plan, vision, engage, and laugh with wonderful, talented, caring people about the mission and ministry of Bethesda. You do what you can, at this time and place, to proclaim the love of God in Christ Jesus. Please give serving on council your prayerful consideration. **Say Yes!**

Be sure to check out all the opportunities for worship, study, service, and giving in December. Wishing you a blessed Advent and a Christmas filled with wonder, peace, and joy.

Sue Reinhart, President

Advent
AT BETHESDA

Eucharist
Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m.

Holden Evening Prayer
Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.
Dinner at 5:30 p.m.

The Longest Night
A Service of Healing & Eucharist
Wednesday, December 21 at 6:30 p.m.

YOUTH CONNECTIONS

Merry Christmas

Sunday School has been going well this school year! We are following the lectionary, with our lesson coming from one of the readings we hear in worship. We have a lot of fun hearing a story, making a craft, and playing a game or singing a song. We have up to about 10 kiddos join us Sunday mornings. They are a welcoming bunch too! We have had visiting kids join us for Sunday School and our Bethesda kiddos welcome them right in. It is a real joy to work with our little ones. I have been working on changing up the Worship Bags, adding new items (pictured at bottom of article). Inside you'll find a coloring sheet to match part of worship, a prayer pop it, a popsicle stick puzzle, a lacing activity, and a Lord's Prayer labyrinth. If you're curious about what those things might be, grab a bag and check it out!

Notice: there is no Sunday School December 25 and January 1, and no Confirmation class on December 21 or December 28.

Confirmation has also been going well this school year. We are looking at Lutheran History and Catechism this year, looking at what it means to be Lutheran. We spend time learning together as well as eating meals and playing games. I am very thankful for this bunch of 7th, 8th, and 9th graders as we explore and grow in faith and life together.

Jessica Berndt



HEALTH MINISTRY

THE LONGEST NIGHT

December 21 is the shortest day of the year. And along with the shortest day comes the longest night. If you were to get a glance of your shadow on this day around noon, it would be the longest shadow you would see all year. We are in the middle of a season of great joy and light. But for many of us it feels more like a season of great darkness and shadows. The festivities going on around us bring a great contrast to our own situations: loneliness, grief, loss, separation, pain, sickness. This night we gather to acknowledge the contrast we feel inside. We gather, maybe wondering if God has really come in Jesus. We gather with some who we know, and others we don't — yet we are a family brought together by brokenness. I invite you to be honest and vulnerable, for God has promised to meet us here and welcomes us just as we are.

Throughout the Bible, people expressed their lament to God. In the book of Psalms—a book of worship—complaints, anger, frustrations, tears and bitterness were often laid bare upon the table. People of Jesus' day would show their sorrow by wearing scratchy sackcloth, tearing their clothes, and putting ashes upon their face and head. Somewhere along the way, however, we began to think that this was not ok. We do the opposite—we wash the tears from our faces, put on our best clothes, our best smile to show God, and others we are handling our troubles just fine.

It is our prayer that we can begin to feel the darkness around us as the embrace of God—a God whose Spirit is hovering ever near to us, a God who is present— maybe even more powerfully in our pain, and a God who promises that it will not be dark forever.

On December 22 the days will begin to get longer. It will be imperceptible at first. But over time winter will give way to spring and then summer. May it be the same way as God brings the light of hope into your life.

On December 21st, we have an opportunity to be honest before God. It is an opportunity to acknowledge grief and sadness. It is an invitation to let the disappointments you carry bring you into deeper relationship with God. I hope you will join us to worship together. Please extend the invitation to friends, neighbors and family who may be longing to feel the embrace of God.

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4322/longest-night>

Peace, Tammy Costin, Parish Nurse

STEWARDSHIP

Dear Siblings in Christ,

In the course of year-end tax planning, you may find yourself considering special one-time donations in 2022. There is a growing trend among donors to make online contributions to their favorite organizations during the final weeks of the year. As you contemplate year-end gifts, please keep Bethesda in mind. Bethesda could use your financial support specifically in a couple areas:

Table of Mercy – \$25,000 of contributions from Bethesda and partner churches are needed this year, and to-date contributions total only \$15,000, leaving a revenue shortfall of \$10,000. Table of Mercy reaches out to those who struggle with housing security.



Forward 50 – We know the construction costs for roofing will be well above our original estimate of \$113,000.

Forward50 strives to continue our proclamation of God's love for all by taking care of our building, which houses our congregation and Bethesda All Stars, our preschool and childcare ministry.

We welcome your donations for these or other ministries of Bethesda. Gifts may be given through the online giving page on Bethesda's website www.bethesdamhd.org, donating during worship, mailing or dropping off a check in the office.

Sincerely,
Stewardship Committee

**ADVENT
AT BETHESDA**

(Wednesdays)

5:30-6:15 pm Advent Suppers
6:30 pm Advent Vespers
~ ~ ~

Nov. 30 Homemade Soups
Assorted Breads

Dec. 7 Chili *(vegetarian option also)*
Cheese and Crackers

Dec. 14 Pancakes & Sausage
Fruit

Dec. 21 Homemade Soup
Assorted Breads

Winners of the 2022 Vendor Fair Raffle

Saturday, November 12th

Asst. Bread Basket	Jody Hoffman
Christmas Stockings	Terrie Jo Wold
Wildlife Quilt	Sharon Larson
Hand-knit Afghan	Karen Henschke
Octagon Quilt	Sharon Olson
Christmas Tree	Shannon Vanderford
Cowboy Quilt	Barb Bernhardson
Patchwork Rose Quilt	Cindy Gunnerson
Cross Stitch	Carol Grettum
Blessings Basket	Laurie Anderson
Rustica Certificate	Kris Knutson
Mezzaluna Certificate	Teresa Norwig
Pencil/Ink Drawing	Luther Anderson
Lefse Making	Cathy Erickson

*Thank You to all who supported this event
by coming or buying raffle tickets.*

Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church
 2022 Bethesda Budget

OCTOBER 2022

(Church only)

	MTD			YTD		
	Actual	Budget	over Budget	Actual	Budget	over Budget
Total Income	\$19,535	\$21,618	(\$2,083)	\$214,034	\$216,180	(\$2,146)
Total Expenses	\$20,683	\$22,318	(\$1,635)	\$245,923	\$223,180	\$22,743
Net Income	(\$ 1,148)	(\$ 700)	(\$ 448)	(\$ 31,889)	(\$ 7,000)	(\$24,889)



**ADVENT
 MEDITATION**

Thursdays in Advent
 @ Noon
 in the Lounge

Join Pr. Grant for a brief, 20-minute time
 of quiet reflection in the midst of the
 busyness of the season

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Present: Susan Reinhart, Rev. Grant Vanderford, Chris Carlson, Theo Baspaly, Connor Henschke, youth representative, Nancy Lund, Jay Johnson, Absent: Marty Ohren, Mary Wallum and Carol Hamilton.

Devotions by Connor Henschke.

President Susan Reinhart called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

Secretary's report (Minutes) for October. Minutes approved.

Treasurer's report by Nancy Lund. We continue to run behind in income. We are currently \$31,000 behind budget, of which about \$10,000 can be attributed to lack of funding received for Table of Mercy. Treasurer's report approved.



Nancy updated us on the custodian discussion with BAS. We are in agreement with BAS regarding hiring out the service to Ambassador Cleaning. Nancy is working with Teresa Norwig to accept the contract with Ambassador. Motion to approve hiring Ambassador Cleaning approved.

Motion to approve the facility use policy attached to the council packet. This use policy is based on a template offered by Concordia. Pastor tweaked/edited the policy to make it fit Bethesda. This came out of the return of the piano teacher who uses the facility and instrument. Discussion about sufficiency of fees, and when to charge fees. The fee structure is still evolving. A challenge for us is understanding our peers and what are fair and reasonable for the facility and infrastructure we can offer. Motion was carried.

Stewardship bags were distributed last Wednesday and Sunday. Nancy distributed lists based on neighborhoods to those who were willing to take.

Vendor Fair is on Saturday. Please come and support the fair, and the recipient of the funds raised - Table of Mercy.

Pastor described the Laundry of Love event on November 26, 3-6pm. Those who come are able to wash and dry two loads of laundry, and be fed by Good Shepherd, the partner church for November with Table of Mercy. The intent is to extend a true gift to the community.

Nancy and Pastor lead the discussion and presentation of the 2023 budget.

Pastor reviewed his report handed out prior to the meeting, but wasn't included in the packet.

Parish Life and Worship and Music reports included in the packet. Move to accept committee reports. Motion Carried.

Looking ahead to scheduling Strategic Planning meetings. We will discuss further, but we need to schedule periodic meetings to keep our mission, and our execution of our mission, in mind.

Reports for the next council meeting are due by December 9. Our next meeting will be Dec. 13.

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer and adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Submitted by Chris Carlson



FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP Luncheon

Friday, December 9
12:00 Noon

Eats... Treats...
Caroling

RSVP by December 8th
by calling Roxanne
in the church office.

The Longest Night

A Service of Healing & Eucharist

Wednesday,
December 21
6:30 p.m.

Bethesda Lutheran Church
401 40th Avenue S
Moorhead, MN

Bethesda All Stars would like to send a huge thank you to all the church volunteers who cleaned the education wing over the past months! We appreciate you so much!!!

— You are Rock Stars!!! —

Thank
you!

Ting-A-Lings A MUST for Christmas!!

1 # milk chocolate	1 cup coconut
1 cup chocolate chips	1/2 cup walnuts
5 cups corn flakes	

DIRECTIONS:

Melt chocolate in double boiler or in microwave. Add remaining ingredients. Drop on wax paper.



I've been making these at Christmas for 60 years!!

— Laurie Anderson

\$ MONEY COUNTERS ARE NEEDED! \$

A team of two is needed to join our three existing teams in counting offering each week. Each team counts once a month.

Member giving has reduced the weekly time requirement to between 30-60 minutes. If you have some basic Excel skills, we need your assistance!

Please consider counting once a month.

Thank you!

Please contact Roxanne or Nancy Lund.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Your Property Committee has been hard at work with the nuts and bolts (literally) of what keeps our building together! We are discussing how to get various projects going, and assembling the pieces of our Forward 50 project.

In the meantime, feel free to walk around and see how clean our building is, as we now have a professional cleaning crew from Ambassador Cleaning! They will be in our building five days a week scrubbing and cleaning to keep us shining bright!

We continue to work with the Stewardship Committee on our Forward 50 campaign. While there has been minimal communication, we are hard at work preparing the formal announcements and planning which will take place as we launch our campaign. Stay tuned for updates!

Thank you all for all you do; we make sure you can keep it going!

Theo Baspaly and Property Committee

Memorials

UNDESIGNATED

In honor of:
70th Anniversary
of Robert and
Dorothy Belsly

From:
Donna & Mike Podratz

FORWARD 50 - SOUND SYSTEM

In memory of:
Leroy Sletten

From:
Earl and Lois Johnson



Walk-On Christmas Pageant

**Sunday,
December 18
4 p.m.**

Rehearsal + Activities | 1-3:30 p.m.



JOIN CANTOR DILLON SWANSON FOR:

Christmas Caroling

**Thursday, December 22
6:30 p.m.**

Caroling books provided
All are welcome! Dress warm!

Meet at Bethesda at 6:15 p.m.



Christmas Eve

**CANDLELIGHT EUCHARIST
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24
5 P.M.**

*Bell Choir Prelude
by the Bethesda Carillon Ringers
beginning at 4:30 p.m.*

CHURCH STAFF

Pr. Grant Vanderford Pastor
Roxanne West Office Manager
Jessica Berndt Youth Connections
Dillon Swanson Cantor
Tammy Costin Health Ministry
Billi Jo Townsend Financials

OFFICERS

Susan Reinhart President
Mary Wallum Vice President
Chris Carlson Secretary
Nancy Lund Treasurer



WORSHIP SCHEDULE for December

December 1, 8, 15, 22 —

12:00 PM Advent Meditation

December 4 — 9:30 AM Eucharist

10:30 Fellowship; 10:45 Sunday School

December 11 — 9:30 AM Eucharist

10:30 Fellowship; 10:45 Sunday School

December 18 — 9:30 AM Eucharist

10:30 Fellowship; 10:45 Sunday School

1:00 rehearsal; 4:00 Christmas Program

December 21 — 6:30 PM Eucharist

'The Longest Night' Service

December 24 — 5:00 PM Eucharist

December 25 — 9:30 AM Eucharist

From Bethesda's Staff

Pastor Grant, Roxanne, Dillon, Jessica and Tammy

*May you and your loved ones experience
the gift of faith, the blessing of hope,
and the peace of God's love at Christmas
and in the coming New Year.*

Thanks for being a special blessing to us during the past year.