

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH BEACON

Winter 2023

Dear Bethel Members AND FRIENDS,

We are nearing the season when gift exchanges happen with friends and family. Often, we may ask someone for their "Christmas list" and children typically have no problem filling theirs with the toys and hopes for what will be in a gift under the tree.

This year when my 20-year-old niece sent her Christmas list it was prefaced with "all these things are so adultish" since she had included gifts like plastic mixing bowls and hand towels. It is true that different seasons of life have us needing or wanting different "things". Yet, life's ever-changing nature brings with it a yearning for gifts that are deeper than what can be wrapped up in a box or added to our accumulated "toys".

This Advent at Bethel will give us pause in worship to reflect on the deeper gifts that you may have included on your "Christmas list" this year.

Are you seeking hope for the future? Do you long for peace in our world, in your family, or in your heart? Where is the joy in your day-to-day life? Or, are you searching for a love that is steadfast and true? The Christ child gifts these things to you through God's mercy and grace. I look forward to seeing you in worship during this wonderful season of promise and light as we celebrate the greatest gift given, Christ the Lord.



PASTOR ANJANETTE BANDEL

The Gift of Jesus

Join us!

Christmas Eve: 9 am (Advent Service), 3, 4:30 & 6 pm*

Candlelight Worship: 11 pm (Christmas Eve)

*Christmas Day: 10 am**

New Year's Eve: 9 am (Only Sunday Service)*

Epiphany Service: 6 pm (January 6th)

***Live-stream service (through our YouTube channel)
with a sign language interpreter**



Featuring: Advent themes at Bethel | Advent devotional booklets | CYF activities | Message from the Stewardship Team

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ADVENT 2023

OUR DEEPEST GIFTS IN *Christ*

Much of Christmas is centered around gifts given and gifts received. As a child, wrapped packages brings us anticipation and excitement for what gifts will be under the tree to open on a Christmas eve or morning. And, if we are honest, even as we age there is joy in being a recipient of a gift or sharing a gift with someone else. Our Advent theme this year will unwrap the gifts of the Christ Child: hope, peace, joy, and love. These offer us deep blessings for the life of faith and are a pure gift from the giver of all good things, our Heavenly Father.

- Dec. 2/3: **"HOPE"** (The Prophecy Candle)
- Dec. 9/10: **"PEACE"** (The Bethlehem Candle)
- Dec. 16/17: **"JOY"** (The Shepherd's Candle)
- Dec. 23/24: **"LOVE"** (The Angel's Candle)

Advent A-Z



With Advent nearly upon us, the Devotional Ministry Team has been working hard on this year's Advent A-Z devotional booklet. Of course, the team wouldn't have a booklet to put together without the faithful writers who provide the devotions. **A huge thank you to everyone who signed up and shared their thoughts this year. Booklets will be distributed after the weekend services on Thanksgiving weekend, November 25 & 26, and then will be available by the devotion rack in the narthex.**

In addition, if you have received the Bethel devotions via email in the past, you will again this year. If you haven't and would like to, please call the church office to have your name and email address added to the list. We hope you enjoy this year's Advent devotions, and we thank you for participating in this Bethel tradition... whether as a writer or a reader!

Sunday School Christmas Program



DEC. 17TH @ 1:30 PM

Our Sunday School children will present a Christmas Program with narrators and actors telling the story of Jesus' birth. If your Forum 56 student or 3rd or 4th Grader is interested in having a role as narrator or character, please contact Susan Larson. We will have a cookie and punch reception following the program. Sunday School families are asked to bring 1 or more dozen cookies for the reception. The children will also sing in worship on Dec. 10th to practice Away in a Manger.

ADVENT SERVICE FOR BETHEL'S Middle School and High School Youth

Bethel's youth (5th – 12th grade) will be working hard again this Advent season to create beautiful Christmas cards for Bethel members that are home bound over the holidays. This traditional service project is a favorite for many of our students! We will also bake and collect holiday cookies, bars and treats so that we can arrange delicious cookie plates. The cards and cookie plates will be included with a beautiful poinsettia in the deliveries to our members over the weekend of December 9th and 10th. Cookies will be collected from the youth and the congregation from December 8th through December 10th. We usually have about 75-80 deliveries!

Bethel youth will also celebrate Advent through some other meaningful service activities like our "Random Acts of Kindness" Advent calendar. It is always fun to see all the ideas our students come up with for ways they can serve and study the Bible during Advent! Look for 2 devotionals in the Bethel Devotional booklet that have been written by our Bethel youth! Our students have shared some very sincere, heartfelt thoughts about Thankfulness and Youth!



HOLIDAY Party 5th -8th grade students

We will have a Holiday party for 5th -8th grade students on Friday, December 15th. The HS youth will be offered the opportunity to plan and host this gathering along with adult volunteers. Bethel students can invite a friend and break out their holiday PJ's for this fun evening! We will have our usual crazy games and activities, look for a new twist on building a gingerbread house! More information to come!



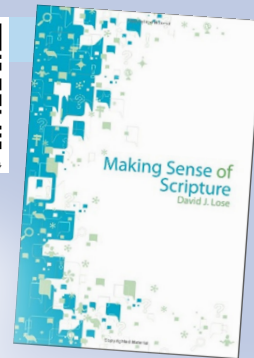
WEDNESDAY NIGHT BOOK STUDY:

MAKING SENSE OF SCRIPTURE BY DAVID LOSE

Wednesdays in January @ 6:40-7:45pm
(Online or In-Person)

This five-session course, taught by Pastor Anjanette, will help you ask the big questions about how we, as Lutheran Christians, interpret the Bible. In *Making Sense of Scripture*, author Rev. David Lose invites the reader to engage in a conversation, one that he imagines discussing around his kitchen table, about seven major questions of the Bible. You are encouraged to read the chapters assigned to each week's discussion in advance of the class. **Register by Dec 20th and you will receive a complimentary copy of the book or you may purchase it online.** Once registered you will also receive the Zoom link to the class so you can

attend remotely if that is a helpful option. To register, call the church office, scan the QR code, or visit: www.bit.ly/january-bookstudy



- **January 3rd:** What is the Bible? Is the Bible True? (Chapter 1 & 2)
- **January 10th:** How is the Bible the Word of God? Where did the Bible come from? (Chapter 3 & 4)
- **January 17th:** How can I read the Bible with greater understanding? (Chapter 5)
- **January 24th:** Is there a Center to Scripture? (Chapter 6)
- **January 31st:** What Kind of Authority does the Bible Hold? (Chapter 7)

Young in Spirit

Fellowship for Adults aged 50+



Young in Spirit meets for lunch, friendship, and a program on the third Thursday of each month. **Join us December 21st at 12 pm for a catered meal followed by inspirational Christmas music performed by the talented Brock Besse and Jan Matson on organ and piano at 1 pm.** The next meeting will be on January 18th with a program to be determined. The meal costs \$15.00 and can be paid at the door. Reservations are required the Tuesday before the meeting by calling Judy Pucci at (507) 282-0155 or by leaving a message at the church office. Gluten free meals are available upon request.



SAVE THE DATE: SAVE THE DATE: BETHEL LUTHERAN'S Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 28th at 12 pm (In person)

THANK You!



Where Your
HEART Is
- Matthew 6:21 -

Bethel's Stewardship Team would like to extend Christmas greeting to all. We're in the season of giving and if you're looking for that "perfect" gift, let us be mindful that this gift was already given to us through the birth of Jesus Christ.

And since it is never too late to offer thanks, the Stewardship Team would like to say a big thank you to all who committed to our recent fall campaign. Our theme was "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," words spoken by Jesus on His Sermon on the Mount. The campaign featured video presentations, pizza dinner and brunch along with Ron, Bethel's intrepid reporter.

Again, as a team we want to thank all who responded to our campaign. Your gifts are making Bethel's ministry and mission a vibrant one, and we want to keep it growing.

For those yet to make a financial commitment for 2024, it is never too late. There are many of ways to **contribute** (www.bit.ly/donateonline-bethel or text "BETHELGIVES" to 73256.) Please prayerfully consider; your gifts are important. And, again, thank you. and Merry Christmas and a blessed new year.



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Worship CALENDAR

For more information about Bethel events, visit
www.bethellutheran.com/calendar-events

Four weekends of Advent

Dec. 2/3 | Dec. 9/10 | Dec. 16/17 | Dec. 23/24*

- Saturdays: 6 pm (In-person worship)
- Sundays: 9 am** & 10:30 am (Traditional Liturgy)
10:10 am Gate of Life (Contemporary Service)

* 9 am (Only morning **Advent** service on Dec. 24)

** 9 am in-person worship offers a sign language interpreter and is Live-streamed through our YouTube channel. Watch videos of our services at: www.bethellutheran.com/worshiponline

Christmas Eve

12/24: 3, 4:30** & 6 pm | Candlelight Worship: 11 pm

Christmas Day

12/25: Worship with Communion - 10 am**

New Year's Eve

12/31: 9 am** (Only Sunday Service)

Epiphany Service

1/6/24: Worship with Communion - 6 pm

Christmas Concert

Bethel's Music Department celebrates the Christmas Season by presenting a free concert on Wednesday, **December 13, 2023 at 7:00 pm** in the Bethel Sanctuary. Everyone is invited to attend and celebrate the music of Christmas with the Chancel Choir, Blessings, Sing For Joy, Bethel Ringers, Bethel Brass and other various individuals sharing musical offerings. Please come and support the dedicated and talented volunteers who give of their time to share the Love of God through song each week!

Confirmation students will be offered an opportunity to serve by helping with ushering, greeting, narrations, artistic contributions, music, and hosting the treat table.



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