

BETHEL STAR

DECEMBER 2015

Newsletter



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It's hard to believe, but it's already that time of year when we starting gearing up for Christmas. That means we'll be busy with shopping and decorations, meals to prepare, parties to attend, and kids' programs to go to. So this year, maybe we can rethink Christmas and Advent a little.

As usual, Bethel will have Advent services on December 2nd, 9th, and 16th at 6:30pm. This year, we're planning something a little more – let's say – interactive, though. We are going to be focused on the greatest gift that we have ever received. How does that change us? How do we respond? Well, to say the least, we have been changed by the greatest gift ever. His name is Jesus, and His presence with us, and His death for us, is the greatest gift imaginable. So here's what we're thinking: The God who lavishes us with the gift of grace beyond measure is not impressed by the gifts we bring Him. So why not glorify the gift that He gave us instead. We find **HEALING** in God's gift of Jesus. So on December 2, therefore, we will invite you to bring your sins. You can write them down on a Christmas card. You can wrap them up in a package. You can simply write it on a piece of paper. Do what you feel comfortable doing. We'll send you home with a special gift.

God shows us that we have **HONOR** and worth in Jesus. On December 9, we will send each family home with a toy. This isn't for you to give to your kids. We will be encouraging you to bless another family, or child in need, with the gifts that we send home with you. We hope this blesses your family as you can focus together on sharing the heart of the season in Christ's gift.

We have **HOPE** in Jesus. On December 16 we will have our annual children's program during service. We also encourage you to bring a non-perishable food item to help feed the hungry during this season. It is our mission to give others that same hope that we have received from our loving God.

We hope that you can join us for these three worship services as we gear up from Christmas! May God richly bless your Advent celebrations and our preparations for the coming of our King!



FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN...

“Be Still and Know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth.”
Psalm 46:10 ESV

Consider these words: *Clamor, Commotion, Chaos, Demands, Uproar, Pandemonium!* Now consider these words: *Calmness, Peace, Quiet, Harmony, Silence, Stillness!* Now consider: *Christmas!* Does it fit better with the first group of words or the second?

Keeping your answer in mind, consider Psalm 46:10a-***“Be Still and Know that I am God.”*** God’s message breaks forth in the psalm as a rebuke. It could have been the same word Jesus used when He calmed the wind and storm in Mark 4:39. It is a rebuke to a restless, raging world in an already busy country when everyone’s already busy schedules escalate with shopping, tournaments, preparations, and concerts.

Does this verse strike you as a Christmas text? I am not sure I have ever heard Psalm 46:10 used as a Christmas verse. We usually hear things like:

She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 2:7

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. Isaiah 9:6-7

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Those are Christmas verses! And yet, the more I think about the clamor of the mall and “I wants” from family, the commotion of the numerous extra activities, the uproar of family celebration, and the total pandemonium that this season so often brings into our lives, the better this verse sounds for Christmas. -***“Be Still and Know that I am God.”***

But when we sit in silence with the shepherds, when we listen to the song of angels as it fades into the darkness, God’s peace descends. When we join those shepherds in their trek to Bethlehem, we grasp anew the uniqueness of Jesus’ birth.

Listen to Him whisper to us as we kneel before His manger. *I can take away your shame. I came to bear your guilt. I came to give to you hope and meaning beyond here and now. You are my beloved brother and sister. I am here that you know I watch you work so hard with so little thanks and I just want to wrap My arms around you. You are so precious to Me.*

When we pause to sit in the stillness beside Joseph and Mary, we join them in pondering *What just happened here? Who is this tiny little infant born to us, born for us?* It is in Him we can experience the love of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

“Be Still and Know that I am God” It is a heartfelt rebuke that is to shake us out of our busyness to come and kneel before the God who pours out His love and forgiveness for us in the cross. And when we do “stop” and acknowledge “Enough”, our heart is ready to receive the peace He gives in the very midst of the chaos that swirls around us.

THE MANGER'S SHADOW



IS ALWAYS A CROSS



MATURING ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Sunday

9:30-10:30 am

Breakfast Bible Class / P 1 & 2

12/6 through 12/20

Christmas in the Old Testament

12/27 NO Breakfast Bible class

First Place for Health

"God's Best for Your Life"

Room P3

Led by Carolynsue Wolf /
Mary Lou Nichols

Tuesday

Ladies Bible Study Romans

Tuesday 9:00-11:00 am
Room 110

Childcare available

Led by Sheila Lovell

*Please call church office
to register*

Living Way Bible Study James / 1 Peter / 2 Peter / Jude

Tuesdays 10:00 -11:00 am
Room P3

Led by Pastor Jeff

*Please call church office
to register*

Wednesday

6:00—7:00 am

Bethel Brothers

Wednesday 6:00 - 7:00 am

Variety of men's studies. A great way to grow in your Discipleship journey. Room 111

Led by John Lovell / Phil Zobrist

Friday

6:30am

Men's Bible Study

T.G.I.F.

Room 111

Men's class that meets each week. Led by Ken Newman. A great way to meet other men and grow in God's word.

Looking Ahead to Classes Beginning in January Sign ups for these will be December 3-20

40 Days in the Word by Rick Warren

40 Days In the Word is designed to help you Love the Word, Learn the Word, and Live the Word like never before. This study will guide you through what it means to not just be "hearers" of the Word, but also "doers" of the Word! Reignite and strengthen your passion for God's Word . 6 week study. Led by John Jacob Begins January 3

Bethel Discipleship

Come and learn about what Bethel Discipleship means and looks like. Pastor Jeff will go in to detail regarding Bethel's vision and how this applies to each individual. Begins January 3

Bethel Basics Class

This class will cover basic Lutheran doctrine and some specific practices here at Bethel. This is the class for people desiring to become members or anyone who would just like to review this information. A 4 week class led by Pastor Mark. Begins January 10

How to Lead Family Devotions

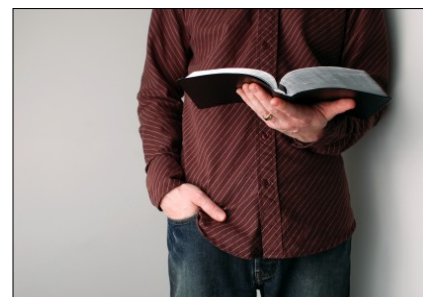
A George Barna survey says only 5% of today's Christian families have regular Bible reading and prayer time as a family. Would you like to help change this statistic? Unsure how to begin? Join us for a 4-week class for practical, applicable encouragement on how to establish this valuable practice in your family. Led by Karen Remmele Begins January 10

Complimentary Devotions

2015 Advent Devotions Fear Not!

From Lutheran Hour Ministries

"Portals of Prayer" and **"Living the Gospel Life"** are available at the Welcome Center. Please pick one up. These are a great way to begin a daily devotion.



Winter Brochure

Available at Connection Center. Please pick one up to decide which opportunities you will participate in for months of December - February.

We now have our Christian Greeting Cards on the shelf in our new Library. Cards can be purchased individually or by the box. We also have a supply of Christmas Cards with a Christian message. The proceeds will help to support our Mite Box mission.

FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

There is a need for more Food Pantry Volunteers to be trained to assist in packing and distributing food boxes on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month. Please contact Gary Abts to volunteer and donate your time to this very much needed ministry. Reach him at 309-925-3838 or garyg_abts_154@comcast.net.

LIGHTING TEAM

Have you noticed the lights during worship? The new building has a great lighting system and depending on the service you will see this system put to use. We are currently recruiting volunteers to run the lights. If this is something you are interested in or if you want more information please contact Julie Powell in the church office.



We are again giving you're the opportunity to order Christmas poinsettias that will be used to decorate our sanctuary for the holiday season. The plants will come from Johnson's Floral in Morton. Each plant will be \$15.95 and is complete with foil and a bow. *Checks should be made payable to Bethel Lutheran Church* and placed in the offering plate or turned into the church office. Please specify "poinsettia". The sign-up sheet is located in the foyer at the Welcome Center.

We ask that you leave your plant in the sanctuary throughout the holiday services then take it home following the Christmas Service on December 25th. You may call the church office (263-2417) or Malena Rogers (387-2050) if you have questions.

On January 3, 2016 Pearl Bruns will celebrate her 1 Century Birthday! We would love to have you share wither and her family this huge milestone in her life. We are asking that you send her wishes and remembrances of her life at Bethel! Pearl is a long-time member of Bethel and the mother of Morrie Bruns. Her address is:



Pearl Bruns
Washington Christian Village
1210 New Castle Road #170
Washington, IL 61571



The Big Rake Recap!

The Big Rake was held on Sunday November 8th following the Youth Chilli Lunch. We had a total of 4 teams participate and 12 yards were raked. Hearing the stories of how both home owners and those raking were blessed has been amazing. The delicious cookie trays were a big hit as always and a great ice breaker when approaching random houses.

Thank you to our prayer team: Tammy Curtis, Elaine Stein, Wilma Reiman, Sheila Lovell, Dawn Singley, and Janice Gleason.

The delicious cookies were donated by: Pamela Chaffer, Tina Johnston, Rosalie Westerfield, Sharon Aubuchon, Cindy Wegner, Karen Simmons, Ruth Reinken, Sandy Elsas, Silvia Drafahl, Sharon Rumbold, Chelsea Phillips, Cindy Schmidgall, Deb Krupa, Linda Stidman, and Candee Krueger.

Our amazing rakers this year were: The Gilles Family (Scott, Angela, Kyle, and Ava) The Edwards Family (Kirk, Brandi, and Kamden), The Richter Family (Ben, Allison, and Jackson), The Wegner Families (Dan, Emily, Naomi, Grace, Asher, Bob and Cindy), The Phillips Family (Chelsea, Andrew, and Katie), The Moser Family (Howard and Katherine), Will Krupa, The Spengler Family (Phil and Carson), The Riggs Family (Gary and Nathan), April Gould, Pastor Jeff Anderson, The Ruxlow Family (Stig, Kristi, Sigrid and Anja), The Robertson Family (Michael, Robin and Alie), The Samp Family (Troy, Diane, and Jenna), The Stock Family (Angie and Rebekah), and The Newman Family (Brian, Carrie, and Emmie).



REJOICING MILESTONES

Birthdays 80+ Years

12/13 Irene Kaps	85
12/23 Dean Elsas	83
12/30 Jane Bailey	84
12/30 Bob Eicken	81

Anniversaries 50+ Years

12/02 Roy and Pat Kuykendall	59
12/09 Bob and Ruth Reinken	64
12/19 Bob and Marilyn Gossmeier	51

A complete list of member birthdays with addresses is outside the church office. Stop by and take a copy.

BETHEL STAR **ARTICLES DEADLINE**

DEADLINE: Please be reminded the article deadline for the January edition of the Bethel Star is Friday, December 11 which is early due to Christmas. Folders will meet at 8:15am on Friday, December 18 to assemble. No folding on Fridays, December 25 and January 1. Extra copies are made available in the church Narthex at the Connector Center and can also be accessed on our church website at www.blcmorton.org. Go to multimedia then file downloads. Highlights are posted there each week, also.

When it gets closer to the holidays, Fridays will have multiple services to fold due to Advent and Holiday services. Many hands make for light work and fun fellowship!

DECEMBER 2, 9, and 16
MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL
HYMNAL SERVICES ON
WEDNESDAYS AT 10:30am

Communion is served the first and third weekends of each month in all weekend services. Common cup is made available.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

10/28/2015 to 11/18/2015

MEMBERSHIP INS

Infant Baptism

Yohann Elijah Brinkmann
Weston Charles Skinner

Transfer

Robert Norman Wegner
Cynthia Louise Wegner

MEMBERSHIP OUTS

Carl Clinton Cannon
Marilyn Mae Cannon
Rebecca Rae Gleason
Rebekah Brooke Gleason
Timothy Allen Gleason

Bethel's Online

Media and Publications

Want to listen to previous sermons or check out this month's publications, including the Bethel Star, Highlights, and Kingdom Helpers? Simply go to www.blcmorton.org/media. From there you can open the media player to listen to previous sermons. Or on the right side bar (in the green box) you can click "publications", which will take you the page where you can download this month's publications simply by clicking on them!

Empty and rinsed **soda cans** can be dropped off in the container provided in the church Food Pantry. Funds are used for Mission Trip expenses. Any questions can be directed to Terry Johnson @ 309-387-6833

Bethel's Monthly Blood Pressure Screening

Blood pressure screenings are held immediately following church services in the Church Library on:

Saturday, December 12
7:00 pm

Sunday, November 13
9:00 am and 11:45 am



THANK YOU

Thank you everyone who sent me BIRTHDAY cards. I really enjoyed them.

Dylan Bailey

I would like to thank everyone on behalf of the Joe Zimmer family for all of the prayers, concerns and cards during the past 6 months. Dad had a rough journey but it is comfort to us that he is no longer suffering and no longer in pain. We are pretty sure he is cutting grass and planting flowers in heaven since that was his passion. Also, thank you Pastor Jeff for praying with me over the phone when I got a call and needed to head back to my parent's house. God's Blessings!

Donna Patterson

Thank you to all the small groups and families who donated items for our Thanksgiving dinner baskets. We provided 32 baskets to our friends in need. The food pantry hosts appreciate your help with this valuable ministry.

Thank you ... thank you ... and once again thank you! My name is Fannie Reeder. I live at 101 S. Louisiana Avenue here in Morton. On Sunday November 8 as I was taking what seemed to be an ocean of leaves, an angel from your church approached me and told me she was from Bethel Lutheran Church and asked if they could take care of my leaves for me. A few minutes later I was inside with a plate of homemade cookies and an army of angels with rakes were in my yard. I cannot express my gratitude enough!! What a wonderful blessing was bestowed on me by your members that day! I didn't get my names, but please express my heartfelt thanks to your leaf brigade. God bless them all! What wonderful representatives of your church they all are!

Sincerely ... Fannie

I do not cease to give thanks for you.

Ephesians 1:16 (RSV)

Dear Pastor Jeff and Crew ... Thank you so much for raking the leaves in my yard. I appreciate that so much. The cookies are wonderful, so many varieties, lot of people doing that, too. Love and Thanks,

Penny Henderson



If you would like to donate baked goods to the Cookie Walk to benefit the Benevolent Fund at Lutheran Hillside Village, please contact Sandy Elsas 309-266-7517 or elsas2@comcast.net It will be Friday, December 4 from 8:00-11:00am at Hillside Vil-

SEASONED SAINTS

Lunch on Saturday, December 5th at Sazanis in Pekin at 12:30 pm. "Friends in Harmony" 10th Anniversary Christmas Show at Washington Grade School in Pekin. A sign-up sheet is on the Connectors table as you come into the church. \$10 per person for show. Please pay by Nov. 27th to Rosalee Bayless (309-613-2417) or Dee Tracy (309-353-1427).

PANAMA MISSION BAKE SALE

The Panama Mission Team will hold a Bake Sale at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 12, and from 9-10:45 a.m. on Sunday, December 13, in the Parish Hall to raise funds to send one Pastor and one other individual to Panama in January 2016 to determine the needs of the Panama missions and assist with VBS at the "God is Great Lutheran Church" in Loma Cova, Panama. Please drop off your donated baked goods on Saturday, December 12, between 12-3:00 p.m. A sign-up sheet will be available in the church Narthex.

Men's Basketball

Guys college-age and up basketball at Bethel School on Queenwood in Morton

Sunday nights from 7:00-9:00pm through April

Any questions?

Contact Michael Remmele @ 447-6273



Youth Basketball

The church's high school youth basketball team invites possible high school youth basketball players to join them for practice from 8:00pm-9:00pm on Monday nights at Bethel Lutheran School gymnasium. Questions may be directed to Coach Dave Kinsinger at djksnnger@mtco.com or 309-472-1023.



NEW TRAFFIC PATTERN!

At long last we are able to use our completed parking lot to its fullest extent! With the completion, there are some significant changes that are taking place. The biggest change is that our parking lot will now have an ENTRANCE ONLY DRIVEWAY and an EXIT ONLY DRIVEWAY. Please use this diagram as a reference

The yellow lines indicate the traffic pattern for automobiles.

-The solid yellow line indicates the flow of traffic for parents who are dropping off or picking up their students at the front or back entrances. Sidewalk pick-up will still be in the back parking lot; sidewalk drop-off will be at the front door. -The dotted yellow lines indicate the flow of traffic for parents who wish to park and walk their students in or out of the building.

The short, red lines indicate the route for bikers and walkers. All bikers and walkers are to stay on the sidewalk.

It is recommended you DO NOT park in the spaces adjacent to the sidewalk, as traffic will more than likely be lined up behind those spaces and prevent you from backing out. Since we no longer have designated crosswalks, please use extreme caution as you approach the building in your vehicle. Make sure your child stays with you and that drivers see you.



GO TO bethellutheranschool.org website for enlarged map in color.

REMEMBER: OUR TRAFFIC PATTERN WILL NOW BE ONE WAY ONLY. THE ENTRANCE IS ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE PARKING LOT AND THE EXIT IS ON THE WEST SIDE. Thank you for your attention to these details and for your patience and understanding throughout the construction process!

REFRIGERATOR NEEDED

Bethel Booster Club is looking for a gently used refrigerator that could be used for our concessions for Bethel School home sporting events. If you have one to donate, please contact Laura Reiman at 231-5673. Thank you!



With the holidays fast approaching, our preschoolers are busy learning new songs, reciting new poems, and creating new projects – all of which point to the Baby in the manger and the gift of salvation that He brings! Join us in the church sanctuary on Monday, December 7 and Tuesday, December 8 at 6:30 p.m. for our Christmas programs as we praise God for the greatest gift He ever gave – Baby Jesus! When we return to school in January, we'll begin our Winter Books Unit. Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!



Chili Lunch Thank You

Thank you to everyone who contributed to and attended this year's Bethel Youth Chili Lunch. We raise \$1370! This annual fundraiser is a great way for Bethel's youth to serve the congregation, promote fellowship, and earn a little money to help pay for youth ministry activities. This year's proceeds were donated to the WeRaise campaign. Lutheran youth from around the world are raising \$25,000 to fund 500,000 meals for people in need. The food packages will be put together at the National Youth Gathering in July, 2016.



Church Basketball

Bethel's high school church basketball team has begun practicing. The team meets at the Bethel Lutheran School gym on Monday nights to practice and will play local church teams beginning in December. A schedule will be posted soon. Contact the church office if you're interested in playing.



Jr. High News

Bible Study—Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:30 in the youth room.

Confirmation

- Class will take place from 7:15-8:30 PM on December 2, 9 & 16 in room P3.
- There will be no Confirmation on December 23 & 30.
- Class will resume at 7:00 PM on January 6th.

National Youth Gathering

Our Gathering group is raising funds to help pay for attending the LCMS National Youth Gathering. It is going to cost about \$1200 per person to go. You can help by submitting donations through the *Giving for the Gathering* display in the church Narthex, purchasing a *God's House, Our Home* Christmas ornament, or by simply sponsoring one of our youth. Call Scott Brown at the church office (309-263-2417) for more information.



December youth Topics

Advent: A Light in the Darkness

Explore the meaning of the candles in the Advent Wreath.

- 1st CANDLE – (purple) THE PROPHECY CANDLE or CANDLE OF HOPE
- 2nd CANDLE – (purple) THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF PREPARATION
- 3rd CANDLE – (pink) THE SHEPHERD CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF JOY
- 4th CANDLE – (purple) THE ANGEL CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF LOVE
- 5th CANDLE – (white) THE CHRIST CANDLE

Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights.



Young Adult Bible Study

Come have a candid conversation about life and faith. Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:30 in the Prayer Room.



KIC Night December 2

December's KIC night will take place on Wednesday the 2nd. 5th & 6th grade students will meet from 7-8:30 PM in school gym and Commons for games, snacks, and a devotion. The topic of the night is "Waiting for Jesus". Please contact Scott Brown at 309-231-4878 for more information.



Bethel Church building Christmas ornaments for sale!



Sold by Bethel's youth group. Proceeds will help Bethel youth attend the National Youth Gathering in 2016. High quality, full-color, metal keepsake ornament. Cost is \$20. See examples at the display in the Narthex at church. Order at the display, or contact Jen Behnke (266-7757) or April Gould (657-9507) to place an order by phone.



First Bible Classes in January

2nd graders with accompanying adults are invited to attend the first Bible classes on January 10, 17 & 24. Classes will meet from 9:30-10:30 on Sunday mornings in the 2nd grade Sunday School room. Students will receive a free Bible and highlighter. Please call the church office for more information.

LWGP DINER BOOKS

The **Lutheran Women of Greater Peoria** is offering the **Peoria Dining Tour Coupon Book** again this year. They are available in the church office during regular business hours until Tuesday, December 15. Coupons are valid until November 1, 2016. The cost is \$30 with check made payable to **LWGP**. Ten dollars from each book will go equally to LWGP, the Lutheran Hillside Village, and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. There are over 200 valuable **BUY-ONE — GET-ONE FREE COUPONS VALID AT LOCAL AREA RESTAURANTS**. There are 30 new restaurants this year and 105 restaurants total. These books make great birthday or Christmas gifts for family and friends.

E-Mail Prayer Ministry

There are currently 64 people participating in our Email Prayer Ministry.



Twice a week an email is sent with prayer requests from the congregation and those received from the church's website.

If you would like to join now, there is a **sign up sheet at the Welcome Center** or contact the church office # 263-2417.

Note: If you would like your prayer request in corporate church prayers, please call the church office or notify one of the pastors. Any prayers received after Wednesday may not appear in the weekly bulletin, but if received by 3:00pm on Friday will be printed in the copies available at the Welcome Center each week.

Bethel Lutheran Ministries

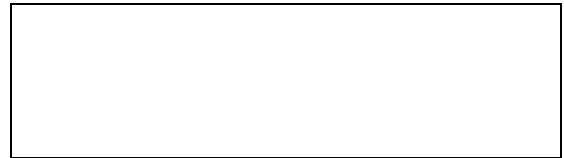
325 E. Queenwood Road

Morton, IL 61550

(Return Service Requested)

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Morton, IL
Permit #50

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CELEBRATE THIS SEASON WITH BETHEL!

Wednesday Advent Services

December 2 and 9

10:30am & 6:30pm

December 16

10:30am - Traditional

6:30pm - Children's Christmas Program

Saturdays

December 5, 12, and 19

(No December 26)

6:00pm

Sundays

December 6, 13, 20, and 27

(Adult Christmas Cantata December 13)

8:00am and 10:45am

Education Hour for all ages – 9:30am to 10:30am

Christmas Eve

6:30pm Family 11:00pm Candlelight

Christmas Day 9:00am



When it came time for God to send His Son to earth, He did not send Him to the palace of some mighty king. He was conceived in the womb of an unwed mother – a virgin! – who lived in the lowly village of Nazareth. In choosing those who would represent Christ and establish His church, God picked some of the most unusual individuals imaginable: un-schooled fishermen, a tax collector(!), a mystic, a doubter, and a former Pharisee who had persecuted Christians. He continued to pick some very unusual persons down through the ages. In fact, He seems to delight in such surprising choices to this very day. So, let God be God.

Expect the unexpected and be available to be chosen!