

# Bethel Notes

**Sunday, December 17, 2023**

*Third Sunday of Advent*

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## INTRODUCTION

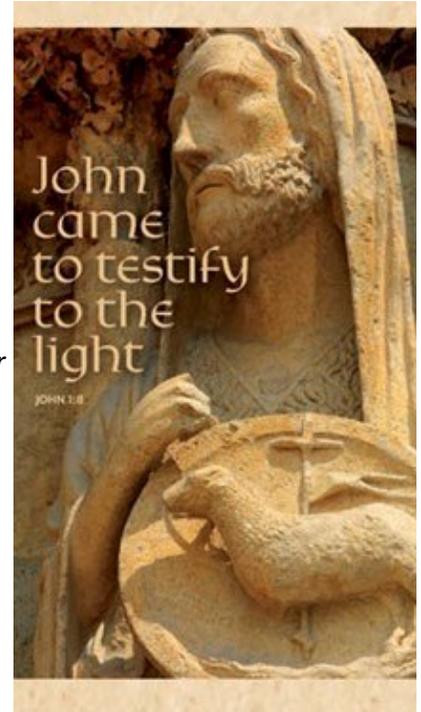
*“Rejoice always,” begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children got a robe,” go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.*

*First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11*

*Psalms 126*

*Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24*

*Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28*



**Join us Sunday 9:30 AM  
in person or online at  
[bethelmt.org](http://bethelmt.org)**

## THIS SUNDAY AT BETHEL...

We celebrate the **Third Sunday of Advent**.

Today we are blessed with the beautiful music of the **Bethel Handbell Choir led by Sharon Mueller**.

We also are thankful for the **Bethel Men’s Quartet** and their special music today, Steve Mueller, Patrick Ryan, Dave Scholten and Jeff Skogley.

**Thank you to Hope Circle** for all their hard work putting together our Christmas Bazaar in support of VBS 2024. There are still some items available so check out the tables in the Sunshine Room before you leave!!

**Upcoming important events:** January 21, 2024 Budget Meeting and **January 28, 2024 Annual Meeting**, both take place after worship. Voting members of Bethel are asked to make every effort to attend these meetings. We will be voting on new council members, church representatives for FLBC and Synod Assembly, nominating committee members and 2024 budget. We need a quorum for our Annual Meeting.



## Serving This Sunday

### Musicians:

Mary Seim, piano

### Lay Assistant:

Randy Gilbertson

### Usher:

Patty Braget

Laurie Turner

### Tech:

Gabe Smith

### Children’s Church:

Rylee Virts

Tyler Grosenick

### Counters:

Patty Braget

Laurie Turner

### Hospitality

The Grosenick Family



# Requesting Your Prayers

- ✝ Prayers of comfort and support for **John Korpela** who is in Peace Hospice.
- ✝ Prayers of healing for **Bonnie Barnes, Debbie McCarty's mother**, recovering after a fall.
- ✝ Prayers of comfort for the **family and friends of Bertha Ferguson** as they mourn her passing.
- ✝ Prayers of support and comfort for **Pat Berkeley**.
- ✝ Prayers of healing for **AnneRose Rogers** as she recuperates at home after a recent hospitalization.
- ✝ Prayers of health for **Don Bisgard** as his living center is under quarantine for Covid infections.
- ✝ Prayers of strength and healing for **Tim Olson**, as he prepares for upcoming outpatient surgery in December.
- ✝ Prayers of healing for **Dick Seim** as he continues regaining his strength.
- ✝ Prayers of healing and answers for **Anna Boucher** as they determine a cause and treatment for seizures.
- ✝ Prayers of healing and support for **Diane Young, Sandy Pepos' aunt**, recovering at home after a stroke.
- ✝ Prayers of healing for **Georgia Miller, cousin of Amber Erickson's**, as she has been diagnosed with aggressive breast cancer.
- ✝ Prayers of continued healing for **Travis Cushman** as he continues to manage health issues.
- ✝ Prayers of healing for **Harper Spurzem**, 8 year old student at Ulm School, receiving chemotherapy treatment for Hodgkin's Lymphoma.
- ✝ Prayers of support and comfort for **Pastor Jessie and Jade** as they mourn the loss of their precious baby boy, **Kai Wilder Metzler**.
- ✝ Prayers of healing for **Kristin, Bobbie Bowen's daughter**, as she manages a cancer diagnosis.
- ✝ Prayers of support for **Caleb Pottratz** who is struggling with depression.
- ✝ Prayers of healing for **Lynn Klaasen, sister of Jan Robitaille**, receiving treatment for cancer.
- ✝ Prayers of healing for **Lindy Coon, sister of former Bethel member Laura (Wandke) Overturf**, as she continues to slowly make progress as she recovers from a serious injury after a fall.
- ✝ Prayers of healing for **Alex Bostic** as he continues to manage his health.
- ✝ Prayers of strength in leadership for **Gustavo Driau**, Regional Representative of South America.
- ✝ Prayers of healing for **Ed Pottratz** as he continues cancer treatment.



# A Note From Pastor Jessie

Grace and Peace to you in this Advent Season,

As we continue to prepare for the coming of Christ during this season of Advent, I am struck by the push I have felt this year to “speed up”, “smile”, “get it done”, and “keep on going”. For most of my life I have been someone for whom most of these encouragements fuel my adrenaline and feel good. This year though, I have caught myself feeling the weight of those expectations in a new way. I feel myself pushing back at those imperatives and wondering why we do this so palpably during these

days leading up to Christmas? Why the rush? Why the insistency that we all must feel one sort of way as we long for the coming of a Christ who will make all things new? Why push through everything that is hard instead of slowing down and reflecting on how we might care for ourselves and one another in the midst of it all? While my own experience of this year has shaped these questions deeply, I can't help but see some of the burn out and exhaustion around me as well. I see folks who are tired, folks who are hungry, and folks who are lost in a world filled with problems that seem insurmountable and conflicts that seem unresolvable.

The temptation amid those realities during this season is to put some tinsel on it all, have some eggnog, and act like it's not real until after the New Year. Lucky for us, God refuses to do that. The arrival of Christ is an action that God takes to meet God's people exactly where they are and provide them with a sense of hope and belonging. God doesn't send Christ as a distraction to make us feel good, God sends Christ to us as a resounding reminder that God's love is enough to tend to our tired bodies, broken hearts, and confused minds. God sends Christ as a clear symbol that there is hope that we will always be made whole again on both our best days and worse days. So as we approach this great celebration of the coming of Christ, I invite you to walk into it knowing that this Christ child is so much deeper than just being merry and bright. This Christ child brings to us an eternal hope for a better tomorrow, and an eternal invitation to be a part of the creation of that better tomorrow as well. Praise be to God for that.

-Pastor Jessie



John Korpela passed away on December 10, 2023, at the age of 80.

At John's request a memorial service only will be held in January. A date to be determined. Cremation has taken place under the direction of Schnider Funeral Home.

John was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 17, 1943, to Jacob and Inez Korpela. He was raised in Southeast Minneapolis and Falcon Heights, Minnesota. He married Terry (Teresa) Eriksen on July 26, 1975.

He was educated in the Minneapolis, Falcon Heights and Roseville Minnesota school systems and later graduated from Mankato State University in 1965. He worked in the insurance industry from 1966 to 2000.

He retired in August of 2000 to pursue the "you should have been here Wednesday" syndrome and Powder Skiing at Showdown. Since retirement he and his wife have traveled, played golf and skied.

He is survived by his wife, Terry of Great Falls; children, Corey (Heather) Korpela of Johnson City, Tennessee, Chris (Heidi) Korpela of Centennial, Colorado; Mamie (Leia) Korpela of Portland, Oregon; and Brett (Marly) Korpela of Alta, Utah; grandchildren, Justin Korpela, Tess (Kenneth) Buchler, Ian (Greta Holdheide) Korpela, Tadem Korpela, and Khyber Korpela; and brother, Gary (Ruth) Korpela of Shoreview, Minnesota.

John requests any memorial donations be sent to Bethel Lutheran Church in Great Falls, Montana.

# LOGOs Christmas Program



# Giving Tree 2023

Lack of access to safe water is one of the biggest challenges to overcoming poverty. It's also one of the most powerful opportunities to create change. **With a simple water well, spring box or other water point, as many as 500 families gain access to clean, safe water.** Communities are healthier. People spend less money on medical expenses and more on food and education. And instead of spending hours each day gathering water for the family, women and children have time for work and school. Talk about a future filled with hope!



At Bethel, donations for our Giving Tree will go toward the construction of a simple water well. Our goal is \$2500.00 to make this happen. When you donate any amount to this project, take an ornament from the Giving Tree to hang on your tree at home. These simple ornaments were made by our LOGOs Youth Ministry and read "Christmas 2023. This year I gave the gift of clean water."

There are other needs that can be met through the Good Gifts Program from ELCA World Hunger. If you would like to donate to Good Gifts for other items such as goats, chickens, bibles, etc. pick up a Good Gifts catalog located in the Narthex and you can donate directly to ELCA World Hunger Good Gifts.

If you have any questions about this project you may contact any member of the ELCA World Hunger Committee Colleen Walker-Nelson, Judy Johnson or Shirley Cayko.

For questions about donating to this Giving Tree Project, see Tami Grosenick in the Bethel Office.

Merry Christmas.

**WATER**

At an average cost of \$2,500, a spring box is one of many types of water projects supported by your gifts. Water wells can range from \$2,500 to \$10,000 or more, depending on the location and cost of materials.

**Simple water well**

One of the biggest challenges to overcoming poverty is lack of access to clean water. **With a simple well, or spring box, as many as 500 families gain access to clean, safe water.** Communities are healthier. People spend less money on medical expenses and more on food and education. And instead of spending hours each day gathering water for the family, women and children have time for work and school. Talk about a future filled with hope!

**\$2,500** Simple water well

**\$250** Share of a safe water project

With this new well... the water is better and clear, clear. This water fountain brought relief to us. We are isolated, and with this good water, we can help families who are without.

—Sivlei, Brazil

Gifts on these  
**ELCA.or**

# GOSPEL MESSAGE

December 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent

## Patterns of Grace

People who sew often use patterns to guide their creations. To make a skirt, suit, or quilt of a certain size, one cuts out the pattern, pins it to fabric, and then cuts along the pattern to get pieces of cloth that are the right sizes and shapes to be sewn together.

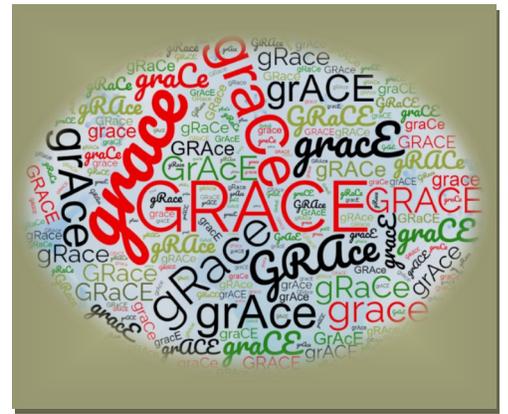
In today's gospel reading we find a pattern that is repeated throughout the biblical narrative: a person of faith does something that draws the attention of others, which gives them an opportunity to share the story of their faith. The prophets often performed public actions that led to them speaking the word of the Lord. It is not surprising that the conspicuous work of John the Baptist at the Jordan River caused the priests and Levites to wonder if he was "the prophet."

Early in the Gospel of John we are told that John the Baptist was a witness who would testify to the light that is Jesus. John's answer to the religious leaders' queries continues with the language of

testimony, as he confesses that he is not the Messiah. We see the pattern at work here: John's actions are a proclamation all their own, but those actions draw others' attention, and that gives him an opportunity to testify, to share his story of God's way.

This pattern keeps going with us today as God continues to stitch grace into the world. Whose actions of faith have drawn your attention? How have their stories of faith been a comfort or challenge to you? Our actions need not be as ambitious as baptizing a whole community in the river for people to take notice. Our following the way of Jesus will draw people's attention, and their curiosity then gives us an opportunity to testify, to share our stories of transformation, faith, hope, and love.

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For Unto Us A Savior is Born.

SPONSOR AN INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY WITH

### CHRISTMAS GIFTS



RSVP: LYNNE STAIGMILLER (406) 205-0691

Take the opportunity to share in the spirit of generosity this season and provide one of our families or individuals with special gifts for Christmas Day. Some gift ideas are listed below.

Gifts will need to arrive at the Great Falls Rescue Mission Administration Office by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, December 18, 2023. We will gift wrap them the week of December 18-21, before giving them to the residents at the Men's Shelter, Women's Shelter and the Cameron Family Center.

For more information contact Lynne Staigmiller, volunteer coordinator at (406) 205-0691 or [lynne.staigmiller@gfrm.org](mailto:lynne.staigmiller@gfrm.org).

You can also visit our website for the list of current needs: <https://gfrm.org/ways-to-give/current-needs/>

Scan the QR code if you'd like to donate online.



**WWW.GFRM.ORG (406) 761-2653**  
408 2ND AVE S

Children	Adults	Gift Cards
Bibles, Craft Kits, Jewelry, Hair Accessories, Nerf Toys, Games, Dolls, Action Figures, Sports Equipment, Headphones, Earbuds, Warm Gloves, Coats & Hats	Robes & Slippers, Pajama Sets, Make-up Sets, Shampoo Sets, Nail Gift Sets, Shaving Kits, Deodorant Sets, Jeans @ Walmart, Fuzzy Socks, Warm Gloves, Perfume, Lotion Sets, Heavy Duty Gloves, Blankets	Walmart, Old Navy, Ross, Target, TJ Maxx, Claire's, Zumiez, Google Play, Subway, McDonalds, Burger King, Taco Bell, Taco Johns

CURRENT NEEDS FOR DECEMBER

Milk	Twin Sheets/Blankets	Cleaning Supplies
Meat	Towels	New Underwear
Eggs	Aleve, Ibuprofen,	Vitamin C
Coffee	Tylenol & Kids Tylenol	Cough Drops
Canned Veggies	Diapers (All Sizes) & Wipes	Chapstick



# Just for *YOUTH*

## Be the light...Invite!

How can you tell people that Jesus is coming? Invite them to come to worship with you on Christmas Eve!

Decorate the invitation and give it to a friend or neighbor.



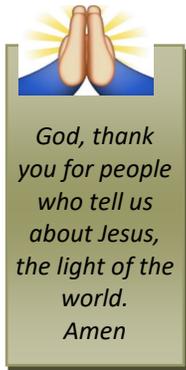
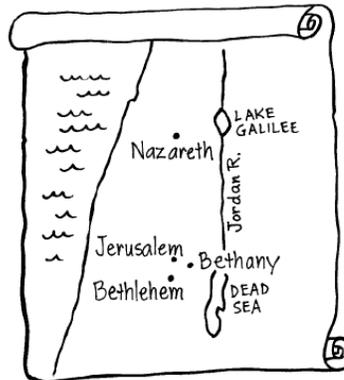
**This Week...**  
Make candles to share with friends and neighbors.

## The light of the world is coming!

John 1:6-8, 19-28

John the Baptist was born just a few months before Jesus, and they were relatives. John spent most of his adult life in the desert between Jerusalem and the Jordan River baptizing people and telling everyone to get ready for Jesus' coming.

Follow the directions underneath the map to learn more about where John worked, then solve the puzzle to discover what John told people about Jesus.



Draw a  next to Bethlehem.

Draw John the Baptist next to the Jordan River.

Draw a  next to Jerusalem.

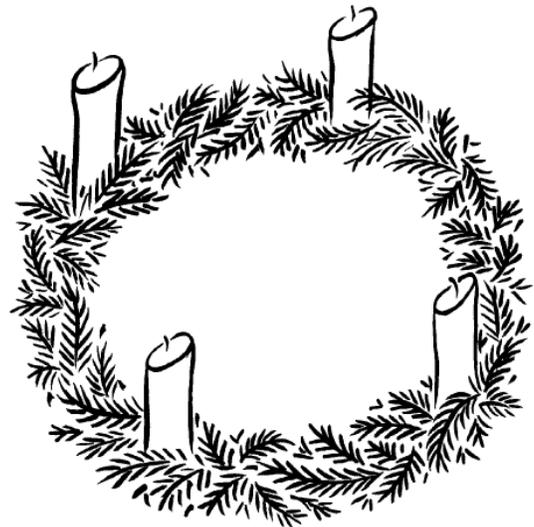
Color the Jordan River blue.

Draw a  near Lake Galilee.

J			E	
S		U		
S	I			S
	T		H	E
		L	I	G
H			T	
O			F	T
H		E		W
O	R		L	D

1. Color in all the squares with candles in them.
2. Start at the top left and go across each row, filling in the blanks at the top of the puzzle with the letters.
3. Read John's message!

Welcome to worship. Today is the third Sunday of Advent. While we wait for baby Jesus, we can also tell people about Jesus, just like John the Baptist did!



In the Advent wreath above, color three candles, then draw pictures of people who have told you stories about Jesus. Around the outside of the wreath, write the names of people *you* can tell Jesus' stories to.

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### **Tuesday 12/19**

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am
- Men's Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall 7:00 am

### **Wednesday 12/20**

- Bible Study on Zoom led Pastor Jessie Obrecht
- No LOGOs Youth Ministry

### **Friday 12/22**

- Bethel office is closed.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Sunday 12/24**

- Christmas Eve Worship Services led by Pastor Jessie Obrecht in 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm

### **Monday 12/25**

- Merry Christmas, Bethel Office is closed.

### **Tuesday 12/26**

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am
- No Men's Breakfast
- Bethel Office Closed, Christmas Day observed

### **Wednesday 12/27**

- No Bible Study
- No LOGOs Youth Ministry

### **Friday 12/28**

- Bethel office is closed.

## **Fellowship Ministries**

### **Electric City Bible Study—online**

What a great way to connect with one another! Join our bible study via Zoom, Tuesday mornings at 7:00 am. Contact Laurie Turner at lolli51gus@icloud.com for a link to join the meeting.

### **Men's Breakfast**

Join us for a fun and engaging conversation, and insightful discussion of each week's lectionary texts as we meet in the Fellowship Hall Tuesday mornings at 7:00 am. Contact Dave Scholten at dscholten@dlsconsulting.net for more information.

### **Hope Circle—in person**

This group meets once a month usually on Thursday evenings. Bible study and fellowship are celebrated with this group of ladies. Contact Terry Korpela to be on the group email for meetings and prayer requests [terry.korpela@gmail.com](mailto:terry.korpela@gmail.com).

*January*

### **Weekly Text Study**

#### **with Pastor Jessie**

Wednesdays, 10:00 am via Zoom, Pastor Jessie will be leading discussion on the text readings for the upcoming Sunday. Dig deeper in the interpretation of the readings and discuss ways they give us guidance in our daily lives. If you would like to join this meeting, email [bethelgf.pastor@gmail.com](mailto:bethelgf.pastor@gmail.com) to be added to the mailing list.