

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9am to 2:30pm; Wednesday: 9am to 2pm
Office Telephone: (406) 761-1543
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BETHEL NOTES



Third Sunday of Advent

Readings:

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

This Sunday

Luke Bible Study will continue with Pastor Steve in the Fellowship Hall following worship.

Sunday
Dec 16

Serving this Sunday

Accompanist:

Lynn Ryan

Lay Assistant:

Kaye Van Gilder

Usher(s):

The Children's Choir

Projectionist:

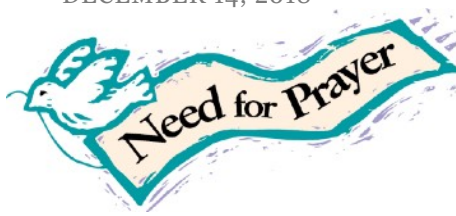
Tim Lightbourne

Counters:

Patty Braget
Marilyn Carlson

Nursery Attendant(s):

Adam Elkin
Lillie Erickson



Prayers of healing for **Jan DeGroot** (sister of Marj Vander Aarde) who is battling cancer.

Prayers for **Faith Crouch** (granddaughter of Bernice Johnson) who is awaiting a double lung transplant.

Prayers for healing for **Patsy Berkeley Brattain** as she recovers from surgery.

Prayers of healing for **Don Bisgard** as he battles stomach cancer.

Prayers of healing **Ed Pottratz** for healing as he resumes cancer treatment.

Prayers for **Sue Hesse**.

Prayers of healing for **Lee Klette**, son of Russ & Cheryl.

Prayers for **Terry Ryan** (brother of Patrick Ryan).

Prayers for healing for **Alex Bostic** as he recovers from surgery.

Prayers for healing for **Jean Humphrey** as she recovers from a fall.

Prayers of comfort for **Traci (Jason and Jack) Orthman** and family as they grieve the death of Traci's mother Dixie Hargreaves.



Christmas Eve Candlelight and Holy Communion Worship - Dec 24

4pm in the Gathering Place with Jubilate Choir

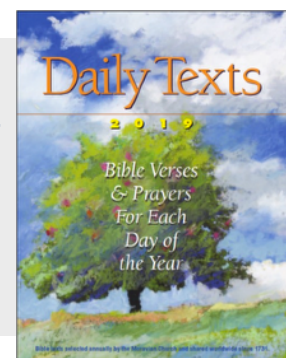
6pm in the Gathering Place with Karolina Pepos



2018 Advent Devotionals are available on the table in the Narthex. Both regular print (black and white) and large print (color) are available.

2019 Daily Texts

The 2019 Daily Texts: Bible Verses and Prayers for each day of the year will be available this Sunday. (No charge to you !) If you wish to take more than one, there is a suggested donation of \$6. and if you write a check, make it to Bethel and footnote it: Daily Text in the memo line.



A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

Are You Ready for Christmas?

I was sitting in the doctor's office this week, waiting for my turn, when I heard the man ahead of me ask the doctor, "Are you ready for Christmas?" Her response warmed my heart. "Good heavens, no! We've still got 2 weeks!"

Two weeks to finish the shopping and the wrapping, the addressing and the mailing. Two weeks to finish the baking and the decorating, the caroling and the year-end giving. Two weeks to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of the Lord. Wow.

There is a way in which we are never ready for Christmas, never ready for the surprise of the Incarnation, of the Word made flesh. Advent, with its troubling series of scripture texts, gives us a taste of disruption, but also hope. God coming to be among us, to be one of us is a major disruption of the status quo.

Mary reflects that in the Magnificat, as she visits her cousin Elizabeth.

My soul magnifies the Lord,

And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

For he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed ;

For the Mighty One has done great things for me,

And holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him

From generation to generation.

He has shown the strength with his arm;

He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

And lifted up the lowly;

He has filled the hungry with good things,

And sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,

In remembrance of his mercy,

According to the promise he made to our ancestors,

To Abraham and his descendants forever.

The Magnificat is a hymn to transformation, and to justice, sung by a young woman just plucked from obscurity. Was she ready for what was ahead? Certainly not. And yet God chose her to carry the child. God entrusted her to nurture and protect God's own self, in the form of a baby.

I just learned that a friend was diagnosed with breast cancer. Not what she was planning for this Advent. And yet, there it is, shattering her plans, redirecting her energy and the prayers of those who love her. Her diagnosis has thrown a wrench into plans. But it has also re-focused Advent on what really matters.

No matter how organized we are, no matter how much we plan ahead, we can never fully prepare for God coming among us. We are never really ready for Christmas. And that's as it should be.

Jessica Crist, Bishop

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Blue Christmas Service supports those for whom the holidays are not joyful; they are lonely, filled with grief and feelings of being alienated from celebrations. This service is designed for people who may be experiencing depression and sadness and yet are often compelled to "put on a happy face" for others, denying their true feelings. The service is composed of music, scripture and a candle lighting

ritual to help acknowledge feelings and connect with the light that shines in the darkness during a difficult time in life. **This service will be held at New Hope Lutheran Church (3125 5th Ave S) on Thursday, December 20 at 7 PM.** Please share this with those who may be struggling this Christmas. Or consider inviting someone to come with you. That may be the best gift you can offer- acknowledgment of their feelings.



CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY SURVEY

Thanks to all who have completed and returned the Congregational Vitality Surveys. We appreciate your feedback in helping our Strategic Directions Committee discern our future together. We have received to date approximately 145 surveys and are reaching out to others. The deadline is December 28th to submit a survey.

FAMILY PROMISE

I want to share some good news with our Bethel congregation. The family that we hosted last week received keys to a four bedroom house and have begun to move. They are all excited and so thankful to the Family Promise program for all of the assistance they received along the way. The family has a very positive attitude, worked diligently to complete every step in a timely manner. They understand there is more work to be done and the program staff will continue to assist them.

Ed has started work at Great Falls Public Schools in the kitchen. For now he will be a floater - going to wherever he is needed. Ashley has accepted a position at Benefis in the housekeeping department and will start Monday. Everyone is so excited about the future and will continue their journey to a more independent life. Judy, Charlie and Skyler are good students at their schools and understand that they are in charge of their success. The family is excited about working together to attain their goals.

Please keep this family and the Family Promise program in your thoughts and prayers. We are making a difference in the lives of many in our community. It isn't just the families that are changed - we are as well. I thank you all for your comments, your concerns, your continued growth as we remain supportive of this mission - to give a hand up to the children and their families in need.

In this holiday season, as we remember how Jesus entered into this world - know that we do have room in the Inn and in our hearts to do God's Work With Our Hands. God has called us. God has transformed us. And God has sent us. Thank you - each and every one of you. Our next hosting in Feb 24th week. We did move our hosting up due to a busy church schedule.

Merry Christmas to all. May our New Year be one of good health and happiness.

Dew Elkin

Family Promise is in need of gift cards to Walmart or Target for \$20 to give to parents to buy gifts for their children. They need the cards by Dec 18th as their Christmas party is Dec 20th. Target is very supportive of Family Promise and does whatever it can to help our families.



Family Promise is hosting a free estate planning seminar on: Assisted Living, Nursing Homes, Medicare, Medicaid, Wills, Trusts, Powers of Attorney and Other Confusing Stuff! This seminar is a discussion; bring your questions. The moderator, Randall Knowles, has over 30 years of practical experience with these topics.

Join us at Central Christian Church on December 19th! This seminar is open to the public. We will be taking a free will offering for our mission to end childhood homelessness, one family at a time in Great Falls, MT!

CALLING ALL USHERS

I am looking for 4 ushers for the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve service and 2 Ushers for the 6:00 pm Christmas Eve service. If you are interested, please let Tami Grosenick know at bethelmc.church@gmail.com or write your name in the usher/greeter book on Sunday. Thank you for helping with these worship services.

Tami Grosenick

Bethel Giving Tree Advent & Christmas 2018



Once again this year Bethel will be offering you the opportunity to share your many blessings with others in need through alternative gifts.

This year we have chosen to support two ministries of the Montana Synod and our Companion Synod in Bolivia.

The Giving Tree Ornaments:

*\$10 – Provides a hank of beads and package of beading needles for Spirit of Life on the Fort Peck Reservation

*\$30 – Helps provide a much needed new roof for Our Saviors Lutheran Church on the Rocky Boy's Reservation

*\$40 – Provides a tuition scholarship for one month for a student at a Lutheran school in Bolivia. The Montana Synod is a Companion Synod of the Lutheran Church in Bolivia

Choose an ornament(s) and write a check to Bethel for the amount on your ornament(s), listing the recipients on the memo line (e.g. Spirit of Life beads, Rocky Boy roof, or Bolivia scholarship). After Christmas Bethel will send the donations to the MT synod to be dispersed appropriately.

Join together in doing God's work for the life of the world.

Thank you for your generosity!

Fall & Winter 2018 Adult Forums

**Session # 6 December 16, 20: Theme of Salvation in Here & Now (Today!)
Scripture Focus: Luke 23: 26 - 49**

**Session # 7. December 30 & Jan. 3
Resurrection Life, Now !
Scripture Focus: Luke 24: 13 - 35 (Road to Emmaus)**

RESCUE MISSION

Christmas Opportunities

With Christmas right around the corner, there are many opportunities to volunteer at the Great Falls Rescue Mission. We will distribute wish lists to our guests and those in our Christian Recovery Program. Volunteers and GFRM supporters will have the opportunity to sponsor a Family or Male or Female in our recovery program. Stay tuned to our Facebook page for more information about how to sponsor Christmas gifts for those at the Great Falls Rescue Mission. We have many opportunities for volunteers to help us prepare for the holiday.

December 17th - 21st: Wrap Gift

January 5th - Undecorate the mission

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

- \$30 MAXIMUM
- TOYS; SMALL & MEDIUM
- SMALLER INEXPENSIVE ELECTRONICS (NO IPADS OR TABLETS)
- FOOD GIFT CARDS
- HYGIENE ITEMS

FOOD NEEDS

- HAM
- POTATOES
- STOVE TOP
- CHICKEN BROTH
- DINNER ROLLS
- BAKED PIES
- CANNED VEGGIES

THE DEADLINE TO SPONSOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS IS DECEMBER 14TH. TO SIGN UP TO HELP WITH ANY OF THESE CHRISTMAS EVENTS HELD AT THE GFRM, PLEASE CONTACT THE VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT AT 406-761-2653.

FROM THE COUNCIL

Dear Bethel Congregation:

Thank you to all who provided feedback on the new Giving Statements. Please accept my apology on behalf of the council for the format that came out looking like a bill versus a giving statement, as well as for their tardiness.

We moved to a new software this year and are working with our financial secretary to develop a different reporting solution for the December end-of-year giving statements. Your feedback has been critical in making our processes better.

Dena Wagner-Fossen, Treasurer

bethelgf.council.treasurer@gmail.com

Council Meeting Summary

Bethel Council Meeting, Tuesday, 13 December 2018

Dena presented the Financial Report. As discussed, the completed drainage issue and the Gathering Place bathrooms are the 2 large expenses we've had in our budget. Continued giving is important throughout the rest of the budget year.

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	Budget	Actual	Difference
Total Income	\$239,296.09	\$225,130.00	(14,166.09)
Total Expenses	\$256,960.80	\$237,608.50	(19,352.30)
Net	(\$17,664.71)	(\$12,478.50)	(\$5,186.21)

Tami presented the Ministry Report. The Aitz Chaim community will be holding services the 1st Friday of each month. Family Promise hosting was successful. The next week to host is February 24 to March 3. Logos will have Family Worship December 12, 2019 and then break until January 6. Logos is still in need of a 6th grade teacher to help Johanna Lightbourne co-teach. Pie auction was a huge success: \$3869 Total (\$3216 VBS, \$652 FLBC scholarships). The generosity of the church continues to amaze. The new silver pouring chalice was a memorial gift from Mim Mikulecky in memory of Dave. Bethel Directory is needing to be updated and will look at completing this in 2019.

Matt presented on the Building Report. Bathrooms in the Gathering Place are getting closer to being done. Thanks to Matt Crampton and Mick Davis and their efforts, time, and in-kind donations.

The Council decided to meet as a whole group in 2019 rather than break into a smaller Memorial Fund Committee to discuss how best to disperse non-earmarked Memorial Fund money.

Strategic Planning Committee has been having the congregation fill in the Congregational Vitality Survey, developed by the ELCA synod, during the Offering for the past 2 Sundays. Our benevolence to the synod helps to pay experts like Linda Bobbit to develop this survey for ELCA congregations.

This survey will help guide the Committee in a direction the congregation would like to take. In addition, several will be mailed to people who do not attend worship regularly.

A Mission Endowment Committee has been formed and will meet the beginning of 2019. The members include Jo Ann Dullum, Donna Vinnedge, Johanna Lightbourne, Janet Smith and Jim Carlson. This is a Constitutional requirement. This committee decides how to distribute up to 5% of the accrued interest in the Mission Endowment Fund. For more information on the Mission Endowment fund, please see Bethel's Constitution.

If anyone is interested in serving on the council, please contact the Nominating Committee for more information. This includes: Kris Voorhees, Dave Scholten, MaryLou Norbie and Jenny Will.

The Council voted to increase our Montana Synod benevolence by 1% for 2019.

The Annual Meeting date has been set for January 27, 2019 immediately following the service.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Dullum

Bethel Council President

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bethel is so excited to welcome new members Joe Baumgardner and the Stordahl family Greg, Cherie, Jessica, and Jeremy to our Bethel Family. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce them to you.



The Stordahls have been life long Lutherans and have been members of St. John's Lutheran Church here in Great Falls. Greg is the Bureau Chief for the Montana State Grain Lab (Department of Agriculture) here in Great Falls. Cherie works for the Great Falls School District as a special education teacher at Morningside Elementary. Jessica is an employee of Hallmark in the Mall and coaches gymnastics for several children in Great Falls. Our son Jeremy is employed with Walmart - Eastside. He is also working toward Youth Adults in Mission through the ELCA this next year.

Joe is a familiar face at Bethel and joined by affirmation of faith. He retired from the Air Force and his last station was at Malmstrom AFB where he served for 16 years. When he retired he moved to Ogden, Utah where he lived until he moved back to Great Falls when he married Sonja (Blue) Baumgardner on July 21, 2017 in the front yard of the house they later purchased. Pastor Steve presided over the ceremony with a dancing dinosaur in the background (ask Joe for details!)

We are so excited to welcome these wonderful people to our community and church. We look forward to many years of getting to know each other and serve doing God's work with our hands.





Mark your calendars!!
Wednesday evening 7:00 PM
Family Worship

January 30th

March 6th - *Ash Wednesday*

April 3rd

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9:30am-Worship Luke Bible Study after worship New Member Sunday 1-4pm - Synod Open House 6-8pm - Carols and Beer @ 'Do Bar	6:15pm - Boy Scouts	7am - Men's Breakfast 6:30am-Bible Study @ Electric City Coffee 6:30pm - Church Council Meeting	6pm-Family Worship Night	Luke Bible Study @ 10am	Pastor Off	9am - Close Knit Bethel Bunch at 5:30pm at Earl & Trudy Terwilligers: 141 17th Ave. N.W.
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9:30am-Worship Luke Bible Study after worship				7pm-Blue Christmas service @ New Hope 12pm: GFMA Meeting & Lunch Luke Bible Study @ 10am	Pastor Off	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9:30am-Worship Luke Bible Study after worship	Christmas Eve worship @ 4pm and 6pm Office Closed				Pastor Off	
30	31					
9:30am-Worship Luke Bible Study after worship						