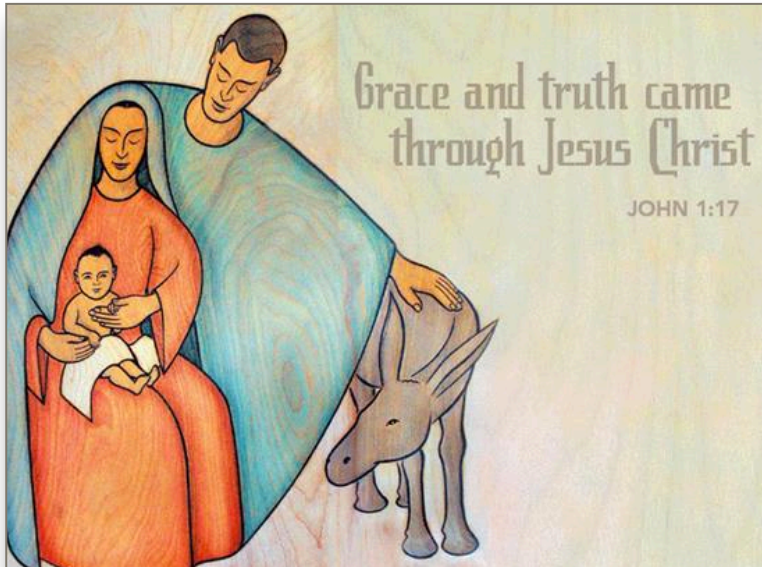


BETHEL NOTES



Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.



**World
Hunger
Sunday**

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In-person worship is on hold. Please join us Sunday at 9:30 am bethelmt.org

SERVING THIS SERVICE

ACCOMPANIST - LYNN RYAN, PIANO

PASTOR STEVE NELSON, GUITAR

VOCALIST - PATRICK RYAN

LAY ASSISTANT - SANDY PEPOS

TECH - COLTER MCCARTY & GREG GROSENICK

SUNDAY COUNTERS - STEPHANIE CUMMINGS

WARREN JOHNSON

Sunday, January 3rd

The Second Sunday of Christmas

JEREMIAH 31:7-14

EPHESIANS 1:3-14

JOHN 1:1-18

OFFICE HOURS:

MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY 9:00 AM TO 4:30 PM CLOSED FRIDAY

OFFICE TELEPHONE: (406) 761-1543 WEBSITE: WWW.BETHELMT.ORG EMAIL: BETHELGF.CHURCH@GMAIL.COM



- ✦ Prayers for **Faith Crouch** (granddaughter of Bernice Johnson) who is home and doing well.
- ✦ Prayers of joy for **Presley Jean Birnel** 9 month old, great granddaughter of Bernice Johnson who is had surgery and is back home and doing well!
- ✦ Prayers of thanks for **Ed Pottratz** as he responds well to cancer treatment.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Lee Klette**, son of Russ & Cheryl..
- ✦ Prayers for healing and strength for **Katie Madsen**, niece of Doug Sexe and granddaughter of Arlene Sexe as she is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- ✦ Prayers for healing for **Steve Young** (brother of Sue Hesse) as he recovers from back surgery.
- ✦ Prayers of health and healing **Kathy Meier** (friend of Dena Wagner-Fossen) as she prepares for knee surgery scheduled for January. Also for Kathy's father **James Trunkle** as he is undergoing medical testing.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Pam Hanson Alfred** as she continues treatment for cancer.
- ✦ Prayers of healing and support for **Bob Vander Aarde** as he undergoes cancer treatment.
- ✦ Prayers of comfort for **Trudy and Earl Terwilliger** as they mourn the passing of Trudy's father Robert Dillard.

**Prayer for Faith
and Hope in the
New Year by
Martin Luther**

.....

Dear God,
through Jesus Christ give us your Holy Spirit
that we may rightly be comforted by your resurrection,
and day by day increase in such faith
and certainty and hope, and finally be saved.
Amen.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS

Please mark your calendars and details will come as to how we will meet for these events.

Sunday, January 17th 11:00 AM Budget Meeting - we will look at the upcoming 2021 budget and answer any questions before we vote to approve on...

Sunday, January 24th 11:00 AM Bethel's Annual Meeting. Voting members of Bethel will look at the upcoming 2021 budget as well as voting in church positions such as Synod Assembly Representatives, FLBC Representatives and voting in of new Council Members Sara Sexe and Laurie Turner as we thank Donna Vinnedge and Doug Sexe who will be stepping down from Council from their extended years of service.

More details to come.

Personal Reflections on 2020 and Beyond

Some 30 years ago I ran into a prayer that I found in *Christ In Our Home*, a quarterly ELCA devotional. This prayer had and has some relevance during the Covid-19 times.

Patience

Lord, you know how impatient we are. We want it all, and we want it right now! And this breeds all sorts of unrest within us. We are afraid we will run out of time before we get all that we want. We know that this is a sorry attitude. Grant us, Lord, the virtue of patience, patience with you and patience with others. Help us to see that your schedule may be quite different from ours, and that all you have to give us will be given in your good time. Amen

Who could have known how Covid-19 would affect the year 2020 during the first quarter of the year? As infection numbers increased progressively, we wondered how those increases would affect the religious life?

I was surprised by the impatience within whole religious communities after the lockdown closed the church buildings. Some groups insisted that churches remain open like other essential services. It was as if God could only be found in the church building on Sunday mornings.

Once Bethel reopened for worship there was an emphasis on masks, social distancing, and reduced capacity. It was not clear if other congregations took the same approach.



Just drive through Great Falls on any given Sunday morning and look at the number of cars in the church parking lots. Some parking lots are empty but some are as full as ever. I'm still struggling with the impatience displayed.

A short Bethel review

Quickly, Covid-19 affected church services and other church activities. After a week or so of in-person Lenten suppers, they were cancelled. In-person Holy Week services were cancelled. The annual Summer Youth Camp was cancelled.

To assist congregations in Great Falls, Croxford Funeral Home opened their Chapel for streamed ELCA Sunday services. Was it perfect? No, but it was a good first step.

Moves were implemented to stream worship services from Bethel's sanctuary. In addition, there were in-person Sunday worship services that followed clear social distancing guidelines. It took some time to improve the quality of the video/sound stream.

Long-term Pastor Steve retired from Bethel. 14 plus years of ministry at Bethel made a huge impact on many. I recall how his hospital visitation ministry affected Terree and I very positively when we were patients at Benefis over the years.

Currently interim Pastor Trina offers Bible studies on Zoom. Terree and I enjoy the weekly Wednesday study a lot.

This year, all Great Falls ELCA congregations offered taped Christmas Eve services.

Zoom, FaceTime, Duo, You Tube and other applications have become electronic avenues to keep in touch.

Looking forward to 2021

Patience should be the mantra for 2021. We don't know if business-as-usual or normal will return to our congregation.

What will be the definition of *normal*? Maybe change or adjustments, major and minor, would benefit the congregation. I do not envy the call committee's task of calling a new pastor to Bethel in these times. *Thinking about it, this is already the third decade of the 21st century.* What will be the look and feel of the congregation in the rest of 21st century?

There are still many issues that affect the Great Falls community. How will we now address food insecurity for many? How will we address housing issues for many? How can congregations and specifically Bethel help the community?

Questions and no quick answers.

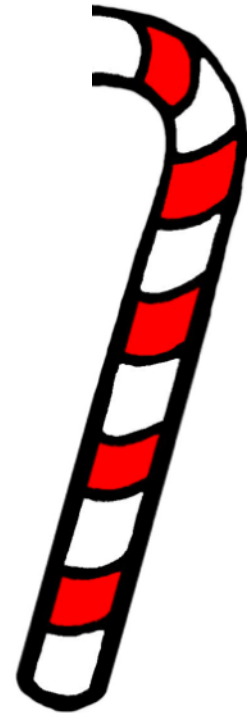
Let us walk patiently into 2021.

May God's Peace be with us in 2021.

Udo Wozny

We raised a total of \$2857.82 for The Alliance for Youth Recourse Center table and chair sets. That will purchase a total of 10.8 total sets!

Thank you all for your generous giving!



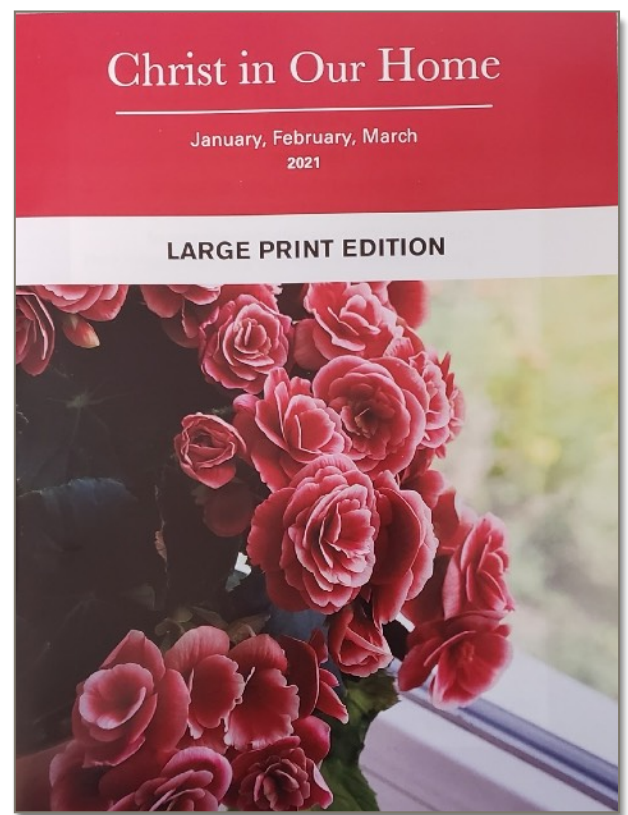
Giving

Total!

\$1256.0



**BETHEL OFFICE
WILL BE CLOSING EARLY AT 1:30 PM
ON NEW YEAR'S EVE AND CLOSED
NEW YEAR'S DAY.**



JANUARY ISSUE OF LIVING LUTHERAN AND FIRST QUARTER CHRIST IN OUR HOME ARE IN. PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL THE OFFICE IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COPY MAILED TO YOU!

BETHELGF.CHURCH@GMAIL.COM OR 406-761-1543

1st Monday Night Quilters

The 1st Monday Night Quilters WILL NOT meet Monday, January 4, 2020, 6-8 p.m. at New Hope Lutheran due to COVID numbers increasing. We hope to resume again Monday, February 1, 2021. Thanks to all who have been cutting squares, and sewing tops. We

will be in good shape with a plentiful supply when we resume after this two-month break. Questions – call



Altar Flower Sign Up 2021

Altar Flowers are sponsored by members of Bethel, who can honor special people or events such as birthdays, anniversaries, or other special days. The donation amount is \$15.00 per Sunday and can be mailed in or paid through our online donation at bethelmt.org.

To sign up to sponsor the altar flowers for 2021 are available. Since we are not meeting in-person the link to sign up online is below. If you prefer, call or email Tami to sign up and reserve your spots.





WHAT IS HAPPENING AT CAMP!

Summer 2021 Staff Application Open! We are excited to assemble a team of talented, dedicated, and overall wonderful people to provide a summer of awesome ministry in 2021! Visit <https://flbc.net/employment/> to learn more and to apply.

Summer 2021 Volunteer Application is now open to ALL adults (Montana residents and out-of-state volunteers). Help us make it a great summer! <https://flbc.net/donate-volunteer/#volunteer>

We are excited to open our Ski & Snowboard Retreat (January 8-10) to families! Come join us for a weekend winter getaway at camp. Contact the FLBC office for more information.

Upcoming FLBC Retreats & Events

Visit <https://flbc.net/annual-programming/> to learn more about our year-round programming and to find additional COVID-19 related information.

Winter Environmental Education Field Day ❄️🌲

January 23, 2021

\$25/person

Join FLBC for a day of fun and learning! Visit <https://flbc.net/field-trip/> or call [406-752-6602](tel:406-752-6602) to register.

Tea Party - "It's all about God's love!"

February 13, 2021 2-4pm

\$10/person

Grandparents, guardians, parents, bring your kiddos to a Valentine's Day "Tea Party!" All ages are welcome; our programming will focus on children ages 4-10.

Day Camp Workshops

March 6 in Great Falls

March 13 @ FLBC

\$10/person (lunch included! Overnight housing at FLBC available if needed)

Join us for a workshop exploring FLBC's Day Camp program, where camp comes to you! Gather to learn more about hosting a Day Camp team, preview the Bible study curriculum, or get more information about potentially hosting a Day Camp in the future!

Adult Spirituality Retreat

April 18-20, 2021 (Sun - Tues)

\$165/person

Join us for a few days focusing on the theme "Shepherd Me, O God" with Pastor Brenda Satrum!

Education Opportunities



Winter Thursdays (and 1 Tuesday) with NRIT

Join us for the following Zoom classes in 2021:

Covenant as Care: Cherishing Our Relationship with God and Each Other

Explore this year's Lenten texts from the Old Testament with Rev. Dr. Julie Faith Parker.

Dr. Parker is highly recommended by Dr. Mark Allen Powell and also our own Pr. Kim Peterson (Trinity in Choteau) who studied with Dr. Parker at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Ohio.

Thursday, Jan 14 10am to noon (lunch) 1pm to 3pm

Grief: A Class in 3 Sessions

Jan 21 Class 1 – Complicated Grief, an overview of current grief theory and discussion of grief with Monica Trimble, MSW, LCSW 10am to Noon

Jan 26 Class 2 – Congregational Grief, a look at how loss and grief impact congregational life with Rev. Michael Girlinghouse, Bishop of the Arkansas-Oklahoma synod. 1pm to 3pm

Feb 4 Class 3 – Traumatic Grief, focusing on pastoral care during trauma and traumatic deaths in congregational and clinical settings, led by Pastor Grant Barnett Christenson, pastor and hospital chaplain in Bozeman. 10am to Noon

Classes are two hours each. Registration includes all three classes. Attend as you are able.

Congregational Vitality

Learn more about this process happening within the Montana Synod. (More info coming soon.)

Thursday, Feb. 11 10am to Noon

To register: www.montanasynod.org – Click on the “Faith Formation” tab, top of the page and click on NRIT. Scroll down to find these class.

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD



*A Worship service led by the
ELCA bishops elected in 2019*

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

8pm Eastern | 7pm Central

**LIVE on synodical Facebook pages
and websites across the ELCA**

Interfaith Opportunity

Colleagues and friends,

We have an interfaith group of clergy and faith leaders that are organizing across the state with the intent to bring faith values and voices to the state legislative process this upcoming session starting in January. Our goal is to build relationships with legislators, speak to issues that matter to us, and follow particular bills with the intent of giving voice as needed. We are looking for two things:

1. Faith leaders who are interested in this work (perhaps yourself, or leaders in your congregation, or colleagues in your town)
2. ELCA, mainline, or other faith identified legislators who we can be in relationship with.

If you are interested in being in the work or have names of leaders or legislators please contact John Lund at John.lund@mso.umd.edu or 406-396-4974.

MINISTRIES MEETING ONLINE

ELECTRIC CITY BIBLE STUDY

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 loli51gus@icloud.com for a link to join the meeting.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Join us for a fun and engaging conversation, and insightful discussion of this week's Lectionary texts as we meet via Zoom, Tuesday mornings at 7:00 am. Contact Dave Scholten at dscholten@dlsconsulting.net for a link to join the meeting.

WEEKLY TEXT BIBLE STUDY WITH PASTOR TRINA

This bible study is offered on Wednesdays at 10:00 am and Thursdays at 7:00 pm (except the Thursday when Hope Circle meets). This group studies the lessons for the upcoming Sunday together. Each week stands alone, you can join anytime! No experience necessary! Contact the Bethel office bethegf.church@gmail.com for a link.

HOPE CIRCLE

This group meets once a month usually on Thursday evenings. Bible study and fellowship are celebrated with this group of ladies. Contact Laurie Turner at loli51gus@icloud.com for a link to join the meeting and Terry Korpela to be on the group email for meetings and prayer requests terry.korpela@gmail.com.

Calendar Of Events

Tuesday 1/5

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am
- Men's Breakfast, via Zoom 7:00 am

Wednesday 1/6

- Bible Study with Pastor Trina Zoom meeting at 10:00 am

Thursday 1/7

- Exec Board conference call 5:30 pm
- Bible Study with Pastor Trina Zoom meeting at 7:00 pm

Friday 1/8

- Bethel office is closed.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday 1/12

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am
- Men's Breakfast, via Zoom 7:00 am
- Bethel Church Council meeting via Zoom 6:30 pm.

Wednesday 1/13

- Bible Study with Pastor Trina Zoom meeting at 10:00 am

Thursday 1/14

- Bible Study with Pastor Trina Zoom meeting at 7:00 pm

Friday 1/5

- Bethel office is closed.

Interim Pastor Trina Johnsten Contact information:

Email: bethegf.pastor@gmail.com

Bethel number non-emergencies:

406-761-1543 ext 202

Cell number for emergencies: (402) 984-4306