

<p>2023 <i>January</i> ★ BETHLEHEM STAR MONTHLY PUBLICATION</p>	<p>BETHLEHEM  LUTHERAN CHURCH</p> <p>WEBSITE www.bethlehemstar.org</p> <p>490 Fourth Street North Bayport, MN 55003</p>
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A WORD FROM PASTOR LESHER



Luminosity is the quality of reflecting or emitting light. An important quality for Epiphany, a season we remember a star that guided mystics far away from their homes to pay homage to a newborn child. These "Kings" from the East welcome Jesus as one who reflected the mystery and goodness of God for all of creation. Other kings, Like Herod, tried to have this newborn child killed. He was a threat to their abuse of power. Stars and guidance have followed each other in many different traditions for all of time.

Likewise, we may find in our own timelines that there are other far subtler luminosities from which to take guidance. If we are curious enough this Epiphany season, we can look for the ways in which God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are manifest in our ordinary, everyday lives. In stars, but in other forms of luminosity, too. The laughter of a friend, a favorite Bible verse, or a cherished memory.

You might also notice that light and likeness imagery often go together in Scripture. Despite our apparent differences we all share in the likeness of God. And in sharing likeness, we all share God's light as well. It is notable that the Magi's encounter with Christ's light on that day also shined a light on their differences, in home, wealth, and livelihood. To imagine their comparatively lavish arrival with gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh alongside the humble nativity scene brings light to the fact that all kinds of light can exist in the same space, even if they seem contradictory.

During the Advent season, we prepared for the gracious arrival of God in Christ. For Christmas, we extended that grace to our relationships. And by Epiphany, just like the Magi, we are ready to witness the manifestation of Christ's light in all things, people, and the planet we call Earth. As we continue to notice these signs, big or small, there is an abundance of light and likeness to be found in our lives and all lives. And in response, we humbly offer our gifts and reverence for others and the world.

CHURCH NEWS

Taking Down The Greens

Helpers still needed on Saturday, January 6 **THANK YOU!!**



BLC Unhanging of the Greens January 3 - 7

Location	Task	Date Time	Volunteer
Connection Tree	Ornaments & lights removed & put away		
Connection Tree	Take down & put away		
Connection Balcony Garland & Fireplace Star	Take down & put away		
Entryway Banners	Take down & put away		
Large Wreaths in Sanctuary	Take down & put away	Sat Jan 6 10am	1. Beth Burns 2.
Small Wreaths in Sanctuary	Take down & put away	Sat Jan 6 10am	1. Beth Burns 2.
Sanctuary entrance tree: Ornaments & ights (unless prelit)	Take down & put away		
Altar Tree #1: Chrismon ornaments & lights	Removed & ready to store	Sat. Jan. 6 9am	1. Wilma 2
Altar Tree #2: Chrismon ornaments & lights	Removed & ready to store	Sat. Jan. 6 9am	1. Wilma 2
Altar Tree #1	Take down & put away	Sat. Jan 7 10am	1. Norm 2. Ian
Altar Tree #2	Take down & put away	Sat. Jan 7 10am	1. Norm 2. Ian
Choir Loft/Organ Wreaths/Garlands & Star	Take down & put away		
Front Entryway (outside garlands/ribbons/pinecones)	Take down & put away		

A Wall of History | January 8th!

After worship on January 8 (snow date January 15), the Mission Exploration Team (MET) will lead a congregational event that will help us visualize the history of Bethlehem Lutheran. We will create a timeline from the beginning of our congregation to the present. There will also be space on the timeline for future dreams. After we complete the timeline, we will gather in groups and discuss two questions, "What do you see?" and "What is missing?" The insight from these questions will allow the small groups to create a description of Bethlehem Lutheran. These descriptions will be used to create the Ministry Site Profile that is necessary for interviewing future pastoral candidates. Come join us on January 8th!

MET Team members:

Mark Schoolman | Julie Grams | Nancy Kuckler | Nora Tahtinen.

Friendly Reminder

If you unlock an exterior door, please lock and latch it when you are done. Please keep the doors by the office your main point of entry to our church as much as possi-

Ministry Site Profile

Survey questions are available for members to complete.

Please return by January 15.

Surveys are found near the sanctuary doors. You can also request that a survey be sent to you via USPS mail or email. Please return the survey by mail or in the return box near the sanctuary doors. -THANKS!

Adult Forum | Sundays after Worship

On Sunday mornings during education hour after worship, we meet in the forum room for "Connection Conversations". Join us anytime, with an open mind, open heart, and willingness to be in dialogue with one another. (no forum on January 8 due to History Wall.)

Tuesday Bible Study | Tuesdays @ 10am

We welcome all seekers and learners. You may join the study at any time. We meet on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in the Forum Room at BLC. Contact Pastor Eric if you have any questions.

Prayer Circle | Fridays, 8am

Every Friday morning at 8:00 a.m. we meet for Centering Prayer for about one hour. We take time to check-in with each other and talk about where we have seen God. We discuss a focus verse of the week. We study a book on Centering Prayer together. And we spend time in silence, clearing our minds, and simply entering into the presence of God together. We meet on ZOOM. Please contact Pastor Eric if you would like to receive the link each week.

BLC Women | January 12 @ 1pm

BLCW will be held on Thursday, January 12 beginning at 1pm. We welcome all women and are excited to kick off the New Year with study, service, fellowship and treats! Contact Wilma McGowan for more information.

BLC Quilters | January 19 @ 9am

Quilting will be held on Thursday, January 19 from 9am - Noon.
No experience needed. We will tie quilts and share in fellowship and treats!
Contact Mary Olson or Mary Trenda or Wilma McGowan for more information.

Giving



You can now give anytime by clicking / entering the link below or scanning the QR code on your phone!

https://bit.ly/BLC_online_giving

https://bit.ly/BLC_online_giving

(this link brings you directly to the GIVING page on our website)

Sunday Hospitality Volunteers

Please sign up in the Connection or contact Julie Grams or Constance Nelson.
View openings via Bethlehem Star calendar @ <https://www.bethlehemstar.org>

Volunteers bring treats, set-up & serve them along with coffee, tea, & juice after our Sunday Worship, then stay to tidy up The Connection area.

January 8 Chris & Kathryn Staloch
Janet Radke

January 15 Constance Nelson

January 22 CONTACT JULIE OR CONSTANCE TO SIGN UP

COMMUNITY NEWS

Epiphany with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Friday, Jan. 6 - 7 p.m. | Gloria Dei Lutheran, St. Paul. Reception to follow.

You are invited to join members of the Conference of Bishops and others for a Celebration of the Epiphany on Jan. 6 at 7 p.m. at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 Snelling Ave. S., St. Paul. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will preach at this special service of candle-light and Holy Communion. The service will be live streamed at www.gloriadeistpaul.org, click on "Join Online Worship."

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration

Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day on **January 16, 7am-9:30am** with a breakfast and presentation at Trinity Lutheran Church, 115 4th St N, Stillwater. There will be a local program by the Stillwater Student Leadership Council and the Stillwater Human Rights Commission, followed by the Minneapolis program broadcast with entertainment and Valerie Jarrett speaking. Tickets are available by calling Stillwater City Hall at 651-430-8800. The MLK Breakfast celebrates a 33-year legacy of leadership in the Twin Cities and is a landmark event known for uniting our community and benefiting UNCF Twin Cities local scholars. Our goal is to celebrate the legacy of service of Dr. King and create an imperative to live out his legacy today in our homes, our communities, and our world.

Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders

Mark your calendar for Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023. A variety of workshops relevant to both church staff and lay leaders will be offered at Shepherd of the Valley in Apple Valley from 8:30 am - 2:45 pm. **Sign up begins January 3.** Contact Lori in the office if you wish to attend. Workshop lists available at:

<https://spas-elca.org/events/tool-kit-congregational-leaders/>

Tanzania Travel Opportunities

Trinity Lutheran in Stillwater is planning a 2-week trip to Tanzania October 7-21, 2023 and would welcome anyone from Bethlehem that would like to join them! Firm dates, activities, and costs are still to be decided but recent trips have run around \$5,500. You would be with Trinity except for a day or two when they visit their partner parish and you would visit Image with a representative from Bega Kwa Bega. If you have any interest at all in this trip, contact Linda Forcier ASAP so that you can attend Trinity's planning meetings. Another Tanzania trip will be in November 2023 led by Pastor Karsten Nelson of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in St. Paul. Talk to anyone who has made this amazing journey to discover the true value of connecting with the lovely people of Tanzania.

Mary Pilquist | Linda Forcier | Loretta Stafford | Neil Stafford

*In Partnership with God,
with each Other,
with the World!*



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**Bethlehem
Lutheran
Church**

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