



CHURCH OFFICE • 651-439-3450 • office.blcbayport@gmail.com

A WORD FROM PASTOR LESHER

During the Christmas season, it is easy to reflect upon connections. Christmas is, after all, a time of gathering. We are surrounded by family and friends, and enjoy that place where there is more than enough in the form of food and drink, a full list of Christmas traditions, and sharing stories with our most beloved connections. Especially important is that we connect through music. Christmas carols connect us to God and each other. They connect us to memories of past Christmases and bring hope and joy to our present Christmas celebrations. The birth stories found in the New Testament prompt important meditations about how we are connected to Christ, both in the future and the present.

It is also a matter of significance that Jesus shares in our humanity; his very flesh, while also fully divine, links us that much more concretely to God's self, just as described in the book of Genesis. Jesus as mediator between us and God connects us to the Divine who often manifests in distant, removed, and sometimes even aloof ways in response to our human problems. But in having a son, born of Mary, Jesus is importantly our corporeal connection to God's grace. His birth, his literal manifestation of God's grace, is so, so sacred. It was what makes the Christmas story so powerful for so many.

Questions

How will you celebrate God's grace born for you every day? How will you extend the grace of God to your loved ones, your neighbors, and the strangers you do not know yet?

CHURCH NEWS

ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICES

This year's theme is "Magnificat: My Soul Magnifies the Lord".
Midweek services run 7pm-7:30pm

- **Week of Advent 2: December 7**

My soul magnifies the Lord

Mary responds to Gabriel's message with an ecstatic song of praise.

How do we respond to

God's call?

- **Week of Advent 3: December 14**

God has brought down the powerful and lifted the lowly

God's sense of justice overturns our human constructs.

In a world dominated by power and privilege, what does this "overturned justice" mean for us?

- **Week of Advent 4: December 21**

According to the promise God's promises are trustworthy and sure.

Do we have the faith to watch and wait for the promise to be fulfilled?

BLC BOUTIQUE - Saturday, December 3, 8am

Saturday, December 3, 8am - 2 pm. BLCW is happy to announce the return of the Christmas Café with homemade soups, breads, and desserts! Come shop Homemade Crafts and wearables, Christmas decorations, and BAKE SALE then stay for a bite and fellowship at our Café. *No premade cookie orders this year

GIVING TREE - Donations Due December 4

Contact Lori Gleason or Ann Gilman with questions.

BLC QUILTERS - Next Quilting Day, Thursday, January 19, 2023



There will be no official quilting during December. We will reconvene on January 19, the third Thursday of January at 9am. If anyone would like to have fabric to take home to iron so someone else can cut into squares, that would be wonderful. We also need squares cut and the squares sewn into a quilt top. Call Mary Olson, 439-7652. or Mary Trenda, 439-5478 and we'll be sure you get what you need.

QUILTS FOR TANZANIA



The Bethlehem Women Quilters have donated five colorful quilts to Huruma Orphanage in Iringa. The orphanage serves children ages 0-14. A group from the Forest Lake area will hand-carry these quilts, along with 95 other quilts from St. Paul Synod congregations, to Huruma. The group will be going in January 2023. The quilts will be given to the children who can then use them throughout their stay at Huruma and beyond.

Thank you to the quilters who put time, talent, and love into the quilts they make. Many of us who have visited Tanzania have visited Huruma and we are sure the children will make good use of the quilts and treasure them as their own. The Huruma Orphanage is just one of the projects within the Bega Kwa Bega partnership. Look for more information on other projects in the future.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT UPDATES

Capital Improvement Updates As discussed at the annual meeting, October 30, 2022, we have two major capital improvement projects in our future - the elevator and the roof. Updates on both projects are summarized below. Council will continue to keep the congregation updated on these projects as our bid gathering and financing needs become clearer. Please contact an executive council member if you have any additional questions. Elevator: We currently have one bid from MEI, who installed our elevator in 1991 and with whom we have a service contract. They have offered us two options, one which replaces the 32 year old hydraulic power unit and one that does not. The price savings to replace this unit when it breaks vs replacing when the other work is being done is significant (approx \$25k later, approx \$14k now). Additionally, there is related work that must be done in the elevator equipment room, hoistway/pit, and lobbies that require updated wiring, HVAC, etc to bring the elevator and surrounding systems up to 2016 code, which is required with this current repair work. The estimate from MEI is \$93,611 the related work is \$19,606 plus \$5,979 to replace the 32 year old HVAC system and install a new ductless split AC. Council is seeking other bids before moving forward to see if there is a better repair &/or cost scenario ahead of us. At that time, we will also start to explore financing options. Roof: The church currently has three roofs covering our education wing, connection/office, and sanctuary. The hail storm that occurred May 19, 2022 caused damage to our roofs and the insurance company has strongly recommended that we replace all three roofs at the same time. We are working with two roofing companies, but are awaiting a follow-up meeting with the insurance company's engineer on December 2, 2022 to ensure that the full scope of damage to our three roofs is included in their coverage.

BLC Council Meeting Minutes

Approved minutes are always available and posted outside the office on the COUNCIL note board. Take a few minutes to look them over and keep up with all things BLC.

Where Can You Serve?

Music Ministry

Contact Daniel Baumgartner for more information.

Sunday School Leaders

No experience necessary!
Contact Ali Staloch

Hospitality Ministry

Please see the Sign-up in the Connection. Openings may be viewed on our church calendar found on our website

<https://www.bethlehemstar.org> or contact Julie Grams or Constance Nelson.

Ushers

Ushers are a foundational part of worship service. Contact Brad Pederson.

Audio Visual Team

We welcome anyone that would like to learn the AV skills to join our team.

Altar Guild

Prepare the Altar for worship. Contact Becky Cummins.

Reader/Worship Assistant

Assist in worship with the Readings and Prayers for each service.

A Wall of History! Come join us on 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.

MET Team members are Mark Schoolman, Julie Grams, Nancy Kuckler and Nora Tahtinen.

Church Doors

For safety reasons, **ALL DOORS** except for the Main Entry door **should be kept locked**. If, for some reason, you need to unlock another door (an event or meeting, for example). Please make certain to promptly lock it again making sure the door is **securely shut and latched**. Thank You!

VACTV Community Channel 14

Rebroadcast of Sunday worship is scheduled to air on

- Wednesdays at 6pm
- Thursdays at 12:00AM (Midnight), 6:00AM and 12pm (Noon)

HOSPITALITY VOLUNTEERS

There are many opportunities to volunteer in JANUARY.

Volunteers bring treats, set-up & serve them along with coffee, tea, & juice after our Sunday Worship, then stay to tidy up The Connection area. Please sign-up in the Connection or by contacting Julie Grams or Constance Nelson.

View openings via Bethlehem Star calendar @ <https://www.bethlehemstar.org>

CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILIES

Sunday School Christmas Program

A Not so Silent Night Christmas Pageant December 18th

in the Sanctuary



Christmas Program Rehearsal: Saturday, December 17,

Youth Sunday: December 18

Please be to church by 8:40 am.

Sunday School: We will NOT meet on December 25 or January 1

WASK: We will NOT meet on December 21 or December 28

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND GROWTH

SUNDAYS

- **Worship** at 9am
- **Sunday School** Weekly after worship
- **Connection Conversations** 10:30am in the Forum Room. Lively discussion of current events and themes that affect our lives. We also look at biblical connections to give us perspective.



TUESDAY MORNINGS

- **Tuesday Bible Study**, 10:00 am in the Forum Room. Contact Pastor Eric or Nora Tahtinen.

FRIDAY MORNINGS – **Centering Prayer** led by Pastor Eric on Zoom at 8:00am. Please let Pastor Eric know if you would like to receive a ZOOM invite. We will NOT be meeting on **December 23 or December 30**

Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders & Conference Assemblies

Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders is an annual event designed to equip lay leaders with new resources, ideas and connections. **Mark your calendar for Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023**, at Shepherd of the Valley in Apple Valley. A variety of workshops will cover a wide range of areas relevant to both church staff and lay leaders. Conference assemblies will also be held on Feb. 25. This event will run from 8:30 am - 2:45 pm. Watch for more details in the coming weeks!

National Lutheran Choir's Christmas Festival

The Basilica of St. Mary, Minneapolis

Friday, Dec. 9 - 4:30 & 8 p.m. | Saturday, Dec. 10 - 8 p.m.

Join the National Lutheran for the 37th annual Christmas Festival, "Jesus Christ Yesterday, Today, Forever"! A free-to-all livestream of the performance will be broadcast at NLCA.com on Dec. 9 at 8 p.m. and will be available as a recording throughout the Holiday Season.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 24
Candlelight service at 4:30 pm

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 25
Lessons and Carols at 9:00 am

Car-

dlelight service with communion 10pm

OFFICE NEWS

Contact Lori by emailing: office.blcbayport@gmail.com

Office Closed: December 23, December 26 and January 2

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year 2023!

Altar Flowers

Sign up is located by the office or contact Lori @ office.blcbayport@gmail.com

Deadlines

Altar Flower Orders: Tuesday at Midnight the previous week

Weekly Announcements: Thursdays at 10 am

Monthly Newsletters: the 23rd of the month prior to publication

Call Process Update

PHASE II: MISSION EXPLORATION PROCESS

(6 months or more)

Mission Exploration Team (MET) is formed and briefed on tasks
Members are: Mark Schoolman Nora Tahtinen
 Nancy Kuckler Julie Grams

MET explores vision & ministry needs of the congregation

MET with assistance of interim pastor, council and synod staff develops online Ministry Site Profile (MSP) including gifts/skills needed in a pastoral leader

Call Committee is formed (as per congregation's constitution)
Members are: Norm Grams Amy Lesicka
 Hope Pederson Ali Staloch
 Nora Tahtinen _____

Congregation holds a town hall meeting to review and comment on MSP

MSP is reviewed by synod staff, approved by council, and posted on the ELCA site

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



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