

<p>2024</p> <p><i>January</i></p>  <p>BETHLEHEM STAR</p> <p>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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CHURCH OFFICE • 651-439-3450 • office.BLCBayport@gmail.com

A WORD FROM PASTOR AMY



Happy New Year Bethlehem family,

I have a favorite little cartoon that came across my Facebook feed a few years ago. It's a conversation between two characters and goes like this:

“Aren't you terrified of what the new year could be like? Everything is so messed up.”

“I think it will bring flowers.”

“Yes? Why?”

“Because I'm planting flowers.”

What we decide to bring into the new year- what we decide to “plant” determines, at least in part, what the year will bring. As God's people, we are called to plant seeds of faith, hope and love. We are called to bear fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity, faithfulness, and self-control. We are called to lead lives of justice and peace. We are instructed to care for the least of these, the poor, the hungry, the sick, the imprisoned, the widow and the orphan. These are not things we bring to the table on our own, but by the grace of God and the working of the Spirit in us. If we plant flowers, it is more likely that flowers will grow. If we plant kindness and justice, it is more likely that 2024 will bring kindness and justice. If we desire a world where people are treated with dignity and conversations are civil and diversity is valued and children are safe, then we must live this way and plant this way of being in our own relationships and community. We are given agency to live in such a way. We have the power of Christ in us- through Water, Word, Bread and Wine- to be people of grace.

I used to write resolutions at the New Year- so many resolutions, all about doing more, living healthier, and setting goals. Those always went well for a month or so, then life would get in the way or I'd get distracted. Then I switched to picking a word for the year, posting it in different places that would catch my eye, even wearing a bracelet with the word on it. That went well for a good part of the year the first time, but every now and then I'd realize I forgot about my word. The second and third year of choosing a word, my attention just wasn't there. This year I didn't write any resolutions, although I've thought about different things I

want to do differently in my life. I'm realizing that having good intentions doesn't get the job done, action is necessary. I can scroll through social media looking at pictures of nice homes and living rooms I like or food that looks delicious, but until I pick up a paint brush and rearrange furniture, or get some groceries and follow the recipe, nothing is going to change in my living room or kitchen. So what is the plan? What is the recipe for making this year different than last year? Rather than lose hope about the future of the world, we decidedly, intentionally, passionately choose to love; choose to listen; choose to act on behalf of peace and goodness and justice. We take the risk and start a conversation. We venture across the street, hallway, or aisle and meet someone new. We help someone who needs help. We listen, without judgement, to a young person's struggle, or an elderly person's concerns. We write that letter, make that phone call, or knock on that door. We invite. We welcome. We build friendships and connections and community. We live as the Christians we want the world to see. We live as little-Christ, in Martin Luther's words, so the world might know *the* Christ; so the world might remember they are loved by God *and by the Church* too.

Let's plant what we hope to see in 2024 knowing God goes before us.

Much peace,

Pastor Amy

CHURCH NEWS

Taking Down The Greens | January 7

All are asked to consider lending a hand and stay after worship to assist in putting the Christmas decorations away until next year. THANK YOU!

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 possible.

~Thank You!~

Adult Forum | Resumes January 14

We meet in the forum room for "Connection Conversations" led by Pastor Amy each Sunday after worship! Grab your treat and coffee and join in anytime.

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



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January 2024 Newsletter



**Bethlehem
Lutheran
Church**

490 N 4th Street • Bayport, MN 55003
<http://www.bethlehemstar.org>

Place Label here

New Small Group Conversation | The Holy Spirit

Sunday Evenings @ 6:30pm | Zoom

Join Pastor Amy for a 5-week conversation on the Holy Spirit. We will meet on Zoom, Sunday evenings, January 14 through February 11 from 6:30-7:45pm. Our regular 10 am Tuesday morning in person meeting time will follow the same outline beginning January 16 and run through February 13. Join in whichever time best fits your schedule for the week! Contact Pastor Amy for the Zoom link @ pastor.blcbayport@gmail.com

We will be looking at what scripture says about the Spirit of God, asking questions, offering insights, and sharing in a few practices to better understand how the Holy Spirit interacts with us, the Church.

Maybe it's cold and icy out, or maybe you're a snowbird who's gone south for the winter, or maybe daytime doesn't work in your schedule. This time is for you and you can stay in the comfort of your own home.

<u>Session 1</u>	January 14 at 6:30pm (Zoom) or January 16 at 10am (in person)
<u>Session 2</u>	January 21 at 6:30pm (Zoom) or January 23 at 10am (in person)
<u>Session 3</u>	January 28 at 6:30pm (Zoom) or January 30 at 10am (in person)
<u>Session 4</u>	February 4 at 6:30pm (Zoom) or February 6 at 10am (in person)
<u>Session 5</u>	February 11 at 6:30pm (Zoom) or February 13 at 10am (in person)

Tuesday Bible Study | Tuesdays @ 10am

Croixdale Senior Living Center, 750 HWY-95

Resumes on January 16th with discussion on "The Holy Spirit"

Pastor Amy leads the conversation as we take a closer look at what scripture says about the Spirit of God. All adults are welcome to participate by asking questions, offering insights, and sharing in a few practices to better understand how the Holy Spirit interacts with us, the Church. Our new Sunday evening Zoom Small Group Conversation will follow the same outline. Join in whichever time best fits your schedule for the week! See above.

Prayer Circle | Fridays, 8am, Zoom

Every Friday morning at 8:00am we meet for Centering Prayer for about an 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 Amy for the Zoom link. pastor.blcbayport@gmail.com

BLC Women | Thursday, January 11 @ 10am

BLCW will be held on Thursday, January 11 beginning at 10am. 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 18 @ 9am

Quilting will be held on Thursday, January 18 from 9am - Noon. No experience needed. We will tie quilts and share in fellowship and treats!

Contact Mary Olson or Mary Trendera or Wilma McGowan for more information.

Sunday Hospitality Volunteers

Please sign up in the Connection or contact Julie Grams or Constance Nelson.

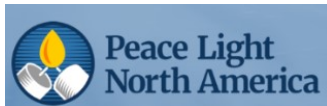
View openings via Bethlehem Star calendar @ <https://www.bethlehemstar.org>

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

CONTACT CONSTANCE NELSON OR JULIE GRAMS TO SIGN UP

January 7	Ginny & Dan Peulen
January 14	Julie Grams
January 21	
January 28	

A Word of Thanks



We wish to thank Roger Knuteson for keeping the flame burning and lighting our Christ Candle so we all had the chance to share this light during the singing of "Silent Night" on Christmas Eve. May God's peace go with you into all the world and may you carry peace into all your encounters.

For more than 1,000 years, oil lamps have continuously burned at the grotto at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. "The Light of Friendship & Peace" is symbolic of the Light of Christ and is especially meaningful at Christmas, being that it promotes peace, harmony, and unity among all people of the world - every race, ethnicity, and creed, through sharing of the flame. The Peace Light was first introduced to the United States in the year 2000. The Peace Light quickly spread to six states in America's heartland. From there, the Peace Light has been shared by hundreds of Scouts, and others throughout North America.



The family of Karen McCloud wishes to express their heart-felt appreciation for the outpouring of thoughtfulness from our Bethlehem Family as they grieve the sudden and unexpected loss of Tim. Everything happened so quickly during the time families typically gather to celebrate, and it was more than a blessing to feel the support and comfort from those that took the time to attend the services and reach out with calls, cards and prayers.

YOU ARE a living expression
of God's kindness."
Mother Teresa

Fundraisers | More Information

If you are interested in more information, have any questions about Raise Right or Got Sneakers fundraisers, or would like help setting up a Raise Right account to purchase gift cards, please see Amy Lesicka after church on **Sunday, January 7 and Sunday, January 14** at the information table in the Connection. She is eager to help everyone make a difference!

Got Sneakers

We have already filled up two giant “Got Sneakers bags that were dropped off this past week! As a reminder, we are only collecting SNEAKERS for this fundraiser.

RaiseRight Gift Cards

Pre-purchase Gift Cards to give or use them yourself for everyday shopping.

To Enroll, Scan QR Code

or go to <https://www.raiseright.com/enroll?enrollCode=3CDI4Z9HKW27>



Office Notes | contact Lori @ office.blcbayport@gmail.com

Altar Flower Orders Due: Tuesday at Midnight the previous week

Weekly Announcements Due: Thursdays at 10 am

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

Altar Flowers

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

BLC Financial Snapshot | November 2022-2023 Fiscal Year

	November 2023				November YTD [Month 2]			
	Revenue / Expense		Variance		Revenue / Expense		Variance	
	Actual	Plan	\$	%	Actual	Plan	\$	%
INCOME								
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 21,127	\$ 22,160	\$ (1,033)	-5%	\$ 46,091	\$ 46,420	\$ (329)	-1%
EXPENSE								
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 25,297	\$ 25,074	\$ (223)	-1%	\$ 50,946	\$ 48,263	\$ (2,683)	-6%
NET INCOME / (LOSS)	\$ (4,170)	\$ (2,914)	\$ (1,256)	-6%	\$ (4,855)	\$ (1,843)	\$ (3,012)	-6%
Line of Credit (current balance)			\$ 51,189					
Church Mortgage (current balance)			\$ 111,405					

Direct Online Giving

Scan QR Code



BLC

Website <https://www.bethlehemstar.org/>

Children, Youth, & Families



All Kids
pre-K thru 5th grade
meet upstairs in the
Sunday School Room
each Sunday
from 10:15 -11:00am.

Contact Ali Staloch a
cyf.blcbayport@gmail.com
with questions or if you would like to help.



Wednesdays
5pm: Dinner
5:30-7 Class

Mentoring Begins Feb 14

Contact Jenny Schoolman at
mjschoolman@comcast.net with
any questions.

Music

Wednesday night rehearsal schedule: JOIN US!

6:00 - 7:00 pm	BOH rehearsal (every other week)
7:00 - 7:45 pm	Handbell Choir rehearsal
7:45 - 8:30 pm	Chapel Choir rehearsal

THE WIDER CHURCH

National Lutheran Choir

The National Lutheran Choir announces its 38th season and its inaugural season with Artistic Director Jennaya Robison, which includes four concerts. Season passes and individual concert tickets are available now, along with virtual subscriptions. [Learn more.](#)

- Winter Concert - Feb. 25
- Spring Concert - April 28

MLK Breakfast | January 15, 2024 | 7:30 am - 9:30 am

Leading



Onward

All are WELCOME! Trinity Lutheran Church, 115 4th St. N, Stillwater. Please call 651-430-8800 to register (preferred) or cash at the door. \$10 Individual, \$20 Family, Students are FREE.

• Keynote Speaker, Marley Dias. An activist, author, contributor, cultural influencer speaker, founder and producer.

