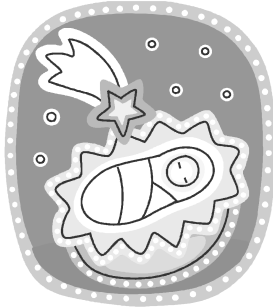




THE BETHANY BUGLE

DECEMBER 2013



The Christmas Season in our culture begins earlier and earlier each year. Did you see Christmas items and hear Christmas music in the stores before Halloween? I did. At first, I was disgusted and upset. I almost decided to boycott the store. Gradually, I realized this might not be such a bad thing – *as long as we keep calling this time of year the **CHRISTmas** Season* at least in our own families and extended circle of friends and coworkers. You do have control on how you see, understand, and talk about the extended Christmas season. I know there is a push to call this time of year the “*Holiday*” Season and as long as this “season” becomes earlier and earlier and encompasses not only Thanksgiving but also Halloween, I guess technically it is a multiple “Holiday” Season for Christians too. But, what if you took advantage of the early consumer hype and every time you see a Christmas decoration or hear a Christmas song, you recall that this is about CHRISTmas – Christ’s birth – love come down from God to dwell with us.

Christmas can be a difficult time for many people. The emphasis on family gatherings makes our longings for loved ones who have died or live far away grow more intense. The emphasis on traditions makes our inability to relive great Christmas seasons in the past stir up regrets. The emphasis on gift giving makes our bank accounts dwindle or our current economic downturn more depressing. But remember, this season is about CHRISTmas - Christ’s birth – love come down from God to dwell with us.

Jesus’ birth is all about God’s love coming to us and filling our lives and hearts with healing love. Jesus’ birth is all about God’s love coming into our lives to triumph over all causes of pain. God’s love coming to you through Jesus is the truest and the best Christmas gift. Remember, this season is about CHRISTmas - Christ’s birth – love come down from God to dwell with us.

How can you thank God for such a wonderful gift? There is a way to give back to God that pleases God because it shows that you trust God. What can you give to God? Give to God all your longings for loved ones not with you. Give to God all your regrets that Christmas is not like it was in the past. Give to God all your worries about your financial situation.

Jesus' love will soften the longing for loved ones, fill your heart with joy even in your current circumstance, give your mind clarity to focus on what is most important and precious in your lives today, and thus give you new hope and new life. Remember, this season is about CHRISTmas - Christ's birth – love come down from God to dwell with us.

Christ's Peace and Love is with you always!

Pastor Michelle Elfers

Prayer

December 1 begins Advent and a new church year. As the Vision Focus Team has met over the past 5 months, the Holy Spirit keeps guiding our focus to prayer. As we discerned a new Mission Statement and a focus for our ministry and where God is leading Bethany to grow, we keep coming back to the need for prayer. As we pray and listen to where God is leading Bethany, we want and need to include the whole congregation. With this in mind, Pastor Michelle is calling for this whole church year to be a year in which we give an extra special focus on prayer.



No matter how strong or weak your current prayer life, we can all deepen our prayer habits. Prayer in the most basic meaning is simply a conversation with God. We all deepen relationships with others through conversations – It is awesome that God interacts with us in the same way – the more we pray (converse with God), the deeper our relationship grows.

Warning: prayer is a powerful tool. It can heal you in ways you never thought possible, lead you down paths unseen, and change you in ways unimagined. Trust God. God at work in your life is always focused on what is good. Prayer opens our eyes and hearts to God's work in our lives and leads us to trust and love God even more.

This year commit to an extra special focus on prayer. There will be opportunities in worship, Sunday school, a new prayer ministry and newsletter articles about prayer to help you.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

October Financial Report

**Church Income Received:
\$14,707.69**

**Church Expenses:
\$15,159.24**

Balance: -\$451.55

November Budgeted Income Needed: \$16,562.25

SOCIAL MINISTRY ITEM OF THE MONTH

Soup & Crackers

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

CHOIR – Please meet for a short meeting December 1, 2013 immediately after worship, and before church decorating, to discuss Christmas Eve Service.

Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, December 1 following worship

Please plan to stay after worship on Sunday, December 1, to help decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. We will be hanging the garland and setting up the Christmas trees. People who can climb ladders are especially needed.



Wednesday Evening Advent Worship

Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Worship at 7:00 p.m.

December 4th, 11th and 18th

Our theme for Wednesday Advent gatherings will be on prayer and an ancient Christian practice of meditation that involves active engagement of your mind and all your senses to listen to God’s word anew.



Pastor Michelle will be using resources by Paul W. Meier, including his book *Thirty Days to Loving God with All Your heart*, which is available in print form

and as a download through Amazon.com. Consider the possibility of buying and reading this book as a Christmas gift to yourself and prepare to celebrate Christmas and the New Year with a deeper love for God.

Last year on the second Wednesday of Advent, the Friendship Group joined us. We are going to join together again this year because those who came had such a good time. On December 11, the Friendship Group will be joining us for dinner and worship.

If you are able, please sign up to help provide soup for Wednesday evenings. We will definitely need more soup on December 11 when the Friendship Group joins us for dinner and worship

IT'S TIME FOR ANOTHER FOUR SEASONS CHRISTMAS EVENT!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2013

5:00 P.M. AT BETHANY

SIGN UP ON THE POSTER TO TELL

WHAT FAVORITE PITCH IN DISH YOU'LL SHARE!

FUNDS WILL BE COLLECTED FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

FOR TYPHOON HAIYAN VICTIMS IN THE PHILIPPINES

ABIGAILS' TO SELL ABBY'S AGAIN

On **Sunday, December 8**, homemade pretzel treats with chocolate called "Abby's" will be available. These will make nice little gifts or can be a tasty treat for you to enjoy. All money raised from this event will go toward the heating and cooling HVAC repairs. So be sure to mark your calendars and have your sweet tooth ready for these goodies. A diabetic version will also be available.

Christmas Stockings for our Daycare Children

Thank you to Quilting Group and the Abigails for providing Christmas stockings for all the children of our daycare. The quilters made 100 stockings and the Abigails are stuffing the stockings with fruit and candy.

Angel Tree

Children at Lutherwood Residential Treatment Center

This year our annual Angel will be dedicated to gathering gifts for Lutherwood Residential Treatment Center. There will be tags on the tree in the narthex. **Please return the gifts to church by December 15.**

If you cannot shop but want to participate, Lutherwood also is accepting gift cards to buy gifts for the children who are staying at Lutherwood.



Lutherwood is a part of Lutheran Child and Family Services and is located on the east side of Indianapolis. In response to God's love and grace in Jesus Christ, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Indiana/ Kentucky serves human needs with the support of the church and community by providing programs of compassionate care and counsel to enhance the dignity and quality of life. Founded as an orphanage in 1883, Lutheran Child and Family Services is a faith-based organization that provides a wide range of social services to support children in crisis and vulnerable families. This includes: a 24 hour residential treatment center (Lutherwood) for children, ages 6 – 18 and a K-12 public school in partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools for the children who live at Lutherwood.

German Language Worship Service
With easy to follow English translation

December 15, 2013 at 3 p.m.
Zion Evangelical Church
603 North New Jersey Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Mit anschliessendem Adventskaffee
With Coffee Hour

If you would like to carpool or need a ride to this event, please contact
Pastor Michelle



Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service
December 24 at 10:30 p.m.

Join us, and bring your family and friends for this most holy of nights when we celebrate the birth of Jesus
and God's love coming to dwell with us.



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Qualified Charitable Contributions from IRAs

The following information is from Pastor Elfers tax preparers. If you have questions about this tax benefit, please contact your own tax preparer who will be familiar with the details of your own circumstances. Because we are raising money for our Heating and Cooling System (HVAC), this may be a way for you to give to the church and save money on your taxes.

Individuals age 70 ½ and older may contribute up to \$100,000 in 2013 directly from their IRA to a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. The contribution must be made directly from the account to the charity by the organization holding the IRA.

This contribution keeps the income from the IRA completely off the tax return, thus reducing income. The amount cannot be double counted as a charitable deduction. Unfortunately, this provision is scheduled to end this year.

A word of warning: while banks, brokerages and mutual funds have more experience with handling the paperwork on this transaction, you should give yourself and them a good deal of time to make the contribution accurately. You should contact them as soon as possible.

Charitable Giving Tips: If the gift is more than \$250, you will need a receipt from the organization. Your cancelled check is not sufficient documentation. Cash of any amount is not deductible unless you have a receipt.



November 17th Congregational Meeting:

All congregation members received a letter 10 days prior to the Nov. 17 Congregation Meeting. Council members listed in the letter were elected, and the 2014 budgets included in the letter were approved. The congregation also approved the \$89,500 HVAC repair and replacement project recommended by the HVAC Working Group, Finance Committee, and Church Council. Thank you to the 20 individuals who, during 2012 and 2013, have contributed \$46,554 for this project.

SPECIAL MATCHING FUNDS OFFER ANNOUNCED

With the project costing nearly \$90,000 and over \$40,000 already contributed, if two requirements are met, an anonymous donor has made the offer to match contributions if the total additional congregation contributions for the HVAC project are between \$20,000 and \$25,000. The two requirements are:

- 1) A minimum of a total of \$20,000 additional funds must be contributed for the HVAC Project before the project starts, and
- 2) Each congregation member's special HVAC contribution must be in addition to the congregation member's normal giving for the 2014 Congregation Budget.

The HVAC project is scheduled to start around March 1, and the goal is to have as many special contributions as possible made by mid-January so the mortgage refinancing can be finalized by mid-February.

Special HVAC project funds that are contributed will lower or eliminate the need to borrow additional funds. Because of the Matching Funds, if the \$20,000 minimum requirement is met, every dollar contributed will save the church more than \$1 in future loan interest expense. Contributions should be marked "HVAC Project." It may be possible to receive tax savings if funds come directly from IRAs to the church. (See page 5 & 6) Contact any Church Council Member for additional information.

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Congregation Report of November 4, 2013 Council Meeting

Pastor Michelle's report included information that in October she visited with members who have been in the hospital and health care facility and are shut in. She is beginning to plan meetings with several youth for confirmation classes. The new Adult Sunday school topic is the Augsburg Confession and Lutheran roots and theology. There has been good feedback about the candle lighting on All Saints Sunday. More people have been at the church's door looking for food.

Treasurers reported that October expenses exceeded income by \$451.55. Finance committee presented the 2014 Church and Daycare budget plans and council passed the recommendation that the budgets be presented to the congregation at the congregational meeting, Sunday, November 17. Council members also voted to accept and present to the congregation the proposal to upgrade and repair Bethany's Heating and Cooling system that the HVAC committee and council has decided is the best value for the price.

Bethany Daycare is suffering the brunt of negative statewide media publicity scrutinizing church daycares this past month. During the recent state inspection, the inspector noted some deficiencies which suspended voucher payments for several children. Staff immediately corrected all deficiencies and now waits for the re-inspection that will reinstate voucher payments.

Property chairperson, Lisa Nichols, said that the carpet in the sanctuary will be professionally cleaned November 14. She is collecting quotes to fix the cracks in the parking lot and hopes to have that work done before winter weather.

Plans for the Thanksgiving service on Tuesday, November 26, at 5:30, include an invitation to Daycare families which involves dinner after the service. Worship and Music committee has planned the hymns for Advent. Joni Webb reported that Bethany had 8 walking participants

in the Crop Walk on October 20. Money from sponsors is still being collected by Lisa Nichols.

Council members were reminded that the congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, November 17, after worship service. On the agenda will be the 2014 Church and Daycare Budget, presentation of the HVAC proposal and election of Council members for the positions of Membership, Worship and Music, Youth, Finance and Mutual Ministry committees.

Committee reports can be found in the Council Notebook in the Narthex and Pastor and Council members are available to answer questions.

Prayerfully submitted,
Ilze Bye
Bethany Congregation President

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It is never too late to sign-up to receive the Bethany Bugle Newsletter via email!
Please call the church office at 786-7854 or
Email the church at BethanyIndy@gamil.com
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NOTES FROM THE DAYCARE OCTOBER 2013

Once again the Christmas season is upon us. All of the decorations will soon be in place. It is always a very special time in the life of the Daycare. We look forward to seeing the building transform with the splendor of so many lights. These physical decorations remind me personally that God sent His only Son as a baby to bring light to a lost world. The beautiful twinkling stars that adorn our hallway remind me daily of the true Light of The World and how we use the Ministry of the Daycare to proclaim Jesus as the light to all of our children and their families. It is my favorite time of year. Perhaps this year, we need the Light of Christmas more than ever as Ministry Daycares have come under more scrutiny.



What the media forgets to address in all of their scathing criticism of Ministry Daycares is that we serve a very important and underserved population who desperately need quality care for their children. One will not find "name-brand" Daycares located in the inner city. It simply is not a profitable place to be for their business. Churches fill that void and most do so in an outstanding manner. Childcare is a very difficult business. It is extremely hard work for minimal pay. At Bethany, most staff earn between

\$7.50 to \$8.75 per hour. The rewards are given through the emotional connection that teachers have with the children. A true love of children is very necessary to be a childcare teacher. And yes they do earn the title of teacher even though their educational backgrounds do not compare to public school teachers. They do very important work. Many of our children spend more time with us than they do with their own family. Those reasons are numerous and vary depending upon the family. If a daycare teacher earns \$8.50 per hour and works 40 hours per week, he or she will have earned \$340.00 per week before taxes and \$17,680.00 per year. They cannot survive without government assistance of Food Stamps and Medicaid for their children. They cannot afford to pay for minimal health care for themselves. The bottom line is even though they hold productive jobs with a steady income they are forced to live in poverty.

In years past, we have had a "Sharing Tree" for the children of the Daycare. This year, we will collect gift cards from grocery stores, preferably Walmart or Kroger and cash contributions. Those gifts will be used to provide gift baskets of food for our staff who could use some "Christmas Cheer" this year. They need to know that our Church values their gifts and talents in caring for children. We look forward to bringing a little extra joy to their lives.

Our annual Christmas program will be Saturday, December 14 beginning at 10:30 a.m. The children will present songs and poetry selections for their parents and families. We will welcome our special "Visitor from the North" to our Christmas wonderland. This is always a very delightful time for our children. We will have a special Christmas lunch for everyone in attendance. We hope you will join us and share in the joy of the holiday season as seen through the eyes of our children.



Welcome!

GREETERS FOR DECEMBER

Tom Baer

Cheryl Mullin

PLEASE KEEP OUR BRAVE MILITARY MEN AND WOMEN
AND
THEIR FAMILIES IN YOUR PRAYERS.



An * denotes currently deployed outside of the United States.

Bob	Battema*	Air Force	Son	Terry & Marlys Battema
Tyler	Bell*	Army	Coworker's Son	Sally Graybeal
John	Campbell*	Army	Family Friend	DuPriest Family
Rick T.	Duncan	Navy Reserves	Son	Rick & Gladys Duncan
Jimmy	Du Priest	Navy	Son	Terry & Sandy Du Priest
Jacob	Edwards	Air Force Reserves	Grandson	Gene and Dottie Hussey
Alex	Gurley*	Army		
Jerry	Gustafson	Army	Family Friend	Graybeal Family
Mark	Hamilton	Navy	Grandson	Norbert & Benita Matthews
Dennis	Lambert	Army	Grandson-in-law	Tony Scheidelmeier
Brett	Lauerman*	Army	Friend's Son	Judy Smith
J.C.	Mikits*	Army	Son	Janis & Judy Mikits
Patrick	Porter	Naval Reserves	Nephew	Bill Porter
David	Timmons	Navy	Grandson	Rick & Gladys Duncan
Austin	Van Lue	Army	Grandson	Melba Van Lue
Jeremy	Wood	Air Force	Great Nephew	Mable Hulfachor

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2012-2013 Bethany Lutheran Church Council Members

The Rev. Michelle Elfers

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Earleen Ashbrook –Vice-President | –Stewardship |
| | – Mutual Ministry |
| Bruce Bye | – Finance |
| Ilze Bye – President | – Membership |
| Barbara Campbell | – Worship & Music |
| Marcia Cowen | – Outreach |
| Donna Shaffer | – Christian Education, Financial Secretary,
Assistant Daycare Director |
| Melissa Van Lue – Secretary | – Youth Ministry |
| Lisa Nichols | -- Property |

Non-Council Ministry Team Leaders

- Richard Mathes – Co-Treasurer
 Charles (Chuck) Webb – Co-Treasurer
 Deborah Rohrman – Daycare Director, Organist, Choir Director

DECEMBER	LAY ASSISTANT	USHERS	COUNTERS
1 st	Karen Deere	Erv Schreiber Betty Shalter Donna Shaffer Tom Baer	Todd Nichols Donna Shaffer
8 th	Erv Schreiber	Erv Schreiber Betty Shalter Donna Shaffer Tom Baer	Donna Shaffer Debbie Rohrman
15 th	Carole Stockton	Erv Schreiber Betty Shalter Donna Shaffer Tom Baer	Terry Battema Marlys Battema Mildred Baxter
22 nd	Sally Graybeal	Erv Schreiber Betty Shalter Donna Shaffer Tom Baer	Donna Shaffer Debbie Rohrman
24 th Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	Sally Graybeal	Erv Schreiber Betty Shalter Donna Shaffer Tom Baer	
29 th	Melissa VanLue	Erv Schreiber Betty Shalter Donna Shaffer Tom Baer	Donna Shaffer Debbie Rohrman



December 2013

		December 2013							January 2014						
		S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	26	27	28	29	30	31	
		29	30	31					27	28	29	30	31		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 1 "Presence of Prayer" 8:15am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship 11:00am Choir Meeting 11:00am Hanging of the 2:00pm Chin Worship	2 7:00pm Council	3 8:00am Men's Breakfast 7:00pm Friendship Bible Study	4 6:00pm Advent Supper 7:00pm Advent Midweek Worship	5 11:30am LAFF at Hlbachi Grill	6 5:00pm Four Seasons Christmas Party / Dinner	7									
8 8:15am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship 2:00pm Chin Worship 2:30pm Kenyan Fellowship	9	10 6:00pm Advent Supper w / Friendship Group 7:00pm Advent Midweek Worship w / Friendship Group	11 6:00pm Advent Supper w / Friendship Group 7:00pm Advent Midweek Worship w / Friendship Group	12 10:30am Daycare Christmas Program	13	14									
15 8:15am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship 2:00pm Chin Worship	16	17 1:00pm Bible Study 7:00pm Friendship Bible Study	18 11:00am Abigail's Stuff Stockings / Lunch at O'Charley's 6:00pm Advent Supper 7:00pm Advent Midweek Worship	19	20	21									
22 8:15am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship 2:00pm Chin Worship 2:30pm Kenyan Fellowship	23	24 Christmas Eve 10:30pm Candlelight Worship Service	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28									
29 8:15am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship 2:00pm Chin Worship	30	31													

Bethany Lutheran Church

Bethany Lutheran Church
4702 S. East Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46227-1652

