

# Bethlehem Star

## A Message from Pastor Gary

*“With all wisdom and insight God has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and on earth.”* Ephesians 1:8b – 10

In a book titled “Generous People,” Dr. Eugene Grimm says, “No year is complete until it leads to a better next one.” [p. 34] Paul speaks of Christ and Christ’s followers as participants in God’s “plan for the fullness of time.” These two statements open an avenue for thinking about Christ’s congregation at Bethlehem.

Dr. Grimm’s statement brings questions to mind: are we content with the same old-same old? Do we want our congregation to do more than just survive? Do we want Bethlehem to thrive? Do we want 2009 to end stronger than 2008? Are we willing to accept the unhelpful notion that things are the way they are and nothing can change them?

St. Paul accepted the fact that nearly everything changes in this life. He looked for a stronger church, a better future, a time when more people would call Christ their Lord. To the people of Ephesus he spoke of Christ as the fulfillment of God’s plan. And what is that plan? God’s plan is that all people should come to a vital and saving relationship with God through Jesus.

This discussion becomes more important when we see that the Greek word Paul uses for plan, “*oikonomia*,” is the same word he uses for stewardship. Let’s try Paul’s sentence with a substitution: “...according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as stewardship for the fullness of time.” This simple word study leads us to see that God expects us to participate in the earthly side of heaven’s work.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, of which Bethlehem is an active partner, operates under the banner, “God’s work. Our hands.” God expects us to participate in the earthly side of heaven’s work. We are all partners with God in the plan and stewardship that both reveals and demonstrates God’s work of gathering all things in Christ.

*(continued on page 2)*

Movies	2
Updates & Concerns	3
Lenten Schedule	4
Spring Banquet Date	6
Ushers, Greeters	7
Kid’s Page	8
Kid’s Midweek Program	9
Letter from Mary	11

## Pastor's Letter (continued)

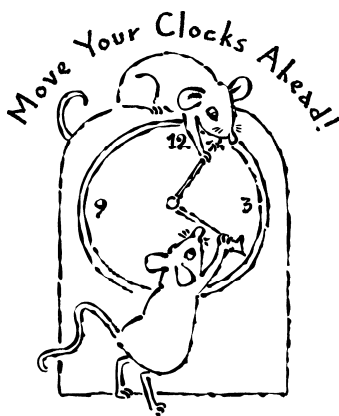
Lutherans believe and teach the theology of incarnation, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us..." [John 1:14a] The practical meaning of this is that we know the spiritual work we do in Christ's name cannot be separated from the physical/material world. In other words, God expects us to participate in the earthly, physical, material side of heaven's work.

How do we participate in the earthly side of heaven's work? Begin with prayer: while prayer is a spiritual exercise it is not done apart from your body. You pray, and that requires an open mind, a willing heart, a body in prayer, and your spirit in holy conversation with God's Spirit. But don't stop your participation there – participating in the earthly side of heaven's work requires time and intention. The work of the Church does not happen without the physical presence of God's people. That is just one reason why attending worship services forms an important part of God's work.

Praying and attending, can one stop there? Not by any means. We have often prayed, "Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – our selves, our time, and our possessions..." To participate in the earthly side of God's work requires these three things, our selves (to be present in the community of the faithful), our time (to involve ourselves intentionally in the community of the faithful), and our possessions (to give ourselves the tools needed to intentionally involve ourselves in the community of the faithful). All of the above can be summarized this way: after prayed and considered your financial ability, your offerings of self, time and finances really are measures of your spiritual health because they are symbolic of your intention to participate in the earthly side of heaven's work.

The challenge before us in 2009 is to become a spiritually stronger and more vibrant congregation. This transformation will only happen as individuals and families choose to participate physically through gifts of self, time and finances.

Amani,  
Pr. Gary



**MARCH 8**

## Saturday Afternoon Movies

### March Movies

**March 14**  
2:00 p.m.

"The Shop Around the Corner" starring Jimmy Stewart and Margaret Sullivan.  
1940/Black & White/1 hour 40 minutes  
(New updated version)

**March 28**  
2:00 p.m.

"You've Got Mail" starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.  
1999/Color/120 minutes

Popcorn and soda pop will be provided.

## Membership Updates, Concerns and Thanks

### Birth Announcement:

Congratulations to Benjamin & Alicia Pearson on the birth of their daughter, Anna Elizabeth Pearson, born February 14, at 1:54 a.m., weighing 6 lbs. 15.5 ounces.

Deepest sympathy goes to Carolyn Siebens on the death of her brother, Jerry Niemenen, who passed away in Tennessee recently.

Dear Bethlehem Members,  
This is to thank you for all of the thoughts, prayers and concerns we received during Aaron's minor surgery and also John's recent unexpected stay in the hospital. It is really a great feeling to know that there are so many people you can lean on in a time of need. Thank you again, it was greatly appreciated.

The George Family,  
Dawn, John, Ariel & Aaron

Thank you to everyone involved in preparing the memorial luncheon for NIU students at Lutheran Campus Ministry on Sunday, February 15. Special thanks to Rob, Maria and Patrick McMillion for donating and delivering food, helping with set up, and then returning all items back to Bethlehem. A big thanks also to Betty Ruby and Elmie Carey for coordinating the event.

**St. Patrick, Bishop of Armagh** (d. 461), was a Roman citizen who was kidnapped and sold into slavery in Ireland. After escaping to his native Britain, Patrick heard a voice telling him to return to Ireland to serve the people he had met there. It is said that St. Patrick used the shamrock to teach about the Trinity. Its three-in-one leaf symbolizes Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one Supreme Being. The Irish people knew intuitively that God is present in all of creation, and St. Patrick showed them that, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity, God was beyond all creation as well. St. Patrick's Day is March 17.

*ALTAR FLOWERS ARE NEEDED FOR MARCH & APRIL. SIGN UP ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE HALLWAY! DON'T FORGET TO SIGN UP FOR YOUR EASTER LILY ON THE INSERT INCLUDED IN THIS STAR.*

**March 6,  
9:00 a.m.  
Trinity  
Lutheran—  
DeKalb**

*We thought you would like to know . . .*

*Rev. Wayne Victor Kuusisto, 92, of Zephyrhills, Florida, passed away on Saturday, January 31. Wayne was born on December 1, 1916 in DeKalb and was a member of Bethlehem. After the war he enrolled in Suomi Junior College and upon graduation entered Suomi Theological Seminary (now Finlandia University) in Hancock, Michigan, where he was ordained into ministry in 1951. He married Mary Pirttima of Atlantic Mine, Michigan. Wayne served a four-point parish in Floodwood, Minnesota from 1951-54. He was then granted a scholarship from the Church of Finland to study theology at the University of Helsinki from 1954-55. From 1966 to 1979 he joyfully served All Saints Lutheran Church in Wakefield, Michigan.*

*Wayne is survived by his wife of 57 years, Mary, and his 3 daughters. He was preceded in death by his parents; his brothers, Armas, Sulo, Thomas and sister Ino.*

*His sister-in-law is our member, Irene Kuusisto.*

## Lenten & Holy Week Schedule

### A Great Cloud of Witnesses Lent 2009

February 25 – April 1

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. [Hebrews 12:1-2]*

**Wednesday, March 11, 7:00 pm:**

“The congregation as one expression of Church.”

**Wednesday, March 18, 7:00 pm:**

“Congregation + Congregation = Church”

**Wednesday, March 25, 7:00 pm:** “We are what we do!”

**Wednesday, April 1, 7:00 pm:** “All together, now!”

#### Planning Ahead

**Maundy Thursday, April 9:** Worship at 7:00 pm.

**Good Friday, April 10:** Prayer vigil from 5:00 – 6:30 pm.  
Worship at 7:00 pm.

**Easter Vigil, April 11:** Worship at 7:00 pm.

**Easter Sunday, April 12:** Festival Worship at 9:00 am.

---

## Food Pantry Needs Your Help

***EASTER SPECIAL:  
WE ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE A SHIPMENT OF TURKEY  
BREASTS FOR OUR FOOD PANTRY CLIENTS.***

*We can buy 2 turkey breasts for \$3.24  
and each one is 8-9 pounds!*

*So if you donate \$10.00 we can get  
about 6 turkey breasts.*

*If you would like to donate to this important project, please make your check  
payable to Bethlehem with "Food Pantry Easter Turkey" on the memo line.  
Thank you for your continued support!*



---

**world day of prayer**

**trinity lutheran church  
303 South 7th St. DeKalb  
friday, march 6 — 9:00 a.m.**

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement of women of many faith traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer every year on the first Friday of March. Each year a different country serves as the writer of the World Day of Prayer worship service. For 2009, the WDP Committee of Papua New Guinea developed the theme, *In Christ, there are many members, yet one body*”.

Women (and men) are invited to experience, pray and learn more about the country of Papua New Guinea on March 6.

**MEN'S BIBLE STUDY**  
(First Saturday of each month)

**SATURDAY, MARCH 14**  
8:00 a.m.  
*(Mark your calendars for April 4.)*

We spend an hour reading Scripture and talking about issues important to faith, life and the issues that face us publicly and personally.  
Come once, or come each month, the coffee's always on!

Weekly Men's  
Breakfast

This group meets Friday mornings just before 8:00 a.m. at the Lincoln Inn in downtown DeKalb.

Come as often  
as you can!

\* \* \* \* \*  
\* MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR THE WELCA \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

SPRING BANQUET

SATURDAY, MAY 2 – 12 NOON

Spring  
is Here!

\* \* \* \* \*

---

## Ushers for Sundays in March

March 1	Larry & Joan Vandre June Whitney Norma Wiegartz	March 15	Wayne & Nancy Coffman Jane Bidstrup Anne Hietikko
March 4	Carole Asbell LaVern Burhop	March 18	Don Davidson Lorna Knuuttilla
March 8	Ed & Judy Sisler Lorna Bemis Kathleen Hunt	March 22	Frank & Rose Mary Garcia Loren & Margaret Hayes
March 11	Butch Burrignt Paul Gilbert	March 25	Jerry & Annette Johns
		March 29	Virginia Luedtke Leland & Evelyn Hoffman Bob Hongisto

---

## Greeters for Sundays in March

March 1	Ann, Noah & Abbey Brooks
March 4	Wayne & Nancy Coffman
March 8	Elmie Carey and Anne Hietikko
March 11	Bob & Marilyn Hongisto
March 15	LaVern & Louise Burhop
March 18	Jerry & Annette Johns
March 22	Pat Erickson and Pat Humo
March 25	Eldon & Helen Miller
March 29	Dick & Laurel Stokke

---

## Lectors

March 1	Sarah Trostle
March 4	Pat Erickson
March 8	Richelle Johnson
March 11	Anna Fischer
March 15	Brittany Nelson
March 18	Margie Hargrave
March 22	Lorna Bemis
March 25	Gordon Rasmussen
March 29	Paul Gilbert

## Communion Asst.

March 1	Dick & Laurel Stokke
March 8	Ray Steinbis Valerie Talsma
March 15	Myron Bond Wayne Coffman
March 22	John Metzler Beth Metzler
March 29	Margie Hargrave Virginia Luedtke

## Wednesday Evening Program for Kids

### Lenten "Getaway" for 1st-6th Grade

Join us for fun, food and games for the six weeks of Lent!! We'll begin at 5:30 p.m. starting on Ash Wednesday, and end at 6:30/7:00 p.m. "Getaway" will continue every Wednesday for the following 5 weeks.

We'll begin the evening with a lesson!

Cook dinner and eat about 6 p.m.

Have some games!

Go Home - "Getaway" officially goes until 7 p.m. but we understand evening routines.

This series will be lead by Pastor Diane Dardón who leads Campus Ministry at NIU. If you have any question please feel free to contact Mary Lasits 815.756.4169.

### Global Health Ministries

Hospice Kit Project

Tanzanian Lutherans call for help

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has added enormous challenges to health care world wide. Missionaries, their health care worker colleagues, and patients' families in third world countries must provide daily care to AIDS patients. But what can we do to help? An AIDS/Hospice Kit can provide cleanliness and comfort and hope. Our prayers and generosity can reach far into the lives of those who have been affected. As you pack the kit, pray for the church visitation teams and medical professionals who provide spiritual and medical care and place the kits in the hands of those who are affected by AIDS.

Kit Contents: New or gently used items; Regular sized bath towel, wash cloth

New items;

1 bath sized bar of soap (wrapped, any brand), 1 toothbrush and medium or large toothpaste

1 "pick" style comb (see web site for details), 1 nail clipper, 6 band aids

1 jar or tube of petroleum jelly, 1 heavy duty pair of kitchen type household gloves (size: medium)

1 small devotional booklet (Christ in Our Home),

Wrap all items in the towel and place in large (2 gallon or larger) "Ziploc" plastic bag

Include note: "AIDS/Hospice Kit" (the note should be visible through the bag)

Bring the kit to Bethlehem

Video instructions and more information are available at:

<http://www.ghm.org/resources/hands-on/hospicekit.html>

---

## Sycamore History Museum Offers Event

If you are looking for an interesting day trip—here it is! Steeples of Sycamore is a guided tour of five historic churches in beautiful Sycamore, Illinois.

On Saturday, April 25, the Sycamore History Museum will showcase five historic buildings with both guided tours and self tours. Steeples of Sycamore will feature the following churches, including three of the oldest church buildings in Sycamore:

- 1) Bethel Assembly of God
- 2) Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- 3) Federated Church
- 4) St. Peter's Episcopal Church
- 5) Sycamore Baptist Church



To better appreciate the beautiful church windows, Dr. Jerry Meyer, an art historian retired from Northern Illinois University, will give a presentation of how stained glass has evolved through the ages. His presentation will take place at 12:30 p.m. at the Federated Church. In addition, some churches will present special displays and offer light refreshments or lunch. The Sycamore Baptist Church will provide a free “stained glass” activity for children.

Tickets are \$20 for general admission and groups are welcome. Seniors are \$17 or \$15 for groups of ten or more. Families are encouraged to attend, so children under 14 are free. You can contact (815) 895-5762 for more information or check out [sychist@tbc.net](mailto:sychist@tbc.net).

---

## Powerful Tools for Caregivers

Powerful Tools for caregivers is an education program designed to provide you, the caregiver, with the tools needed to take care of yourself. You will learn how to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Better communicate your feelings
- Balance your life
- Increase ability to make tough decisions
- Learn to locate helpful resources

Classes consist of six 2 1/2 hour sessions held once a week. Two experienced class leaders will conduct each session. Interactive lessons, discussions and brainstorming will help you take the “tools” you choose and put them into action in your life.

For more information or to register, contact Helen or Val at DeKalb Co. Hospice (815) 756-3000. Classes will be held Tuesday, March 24 through April 28, 6-8:30 p.m. at the DeKalb Co. Hospice office. There is no cost for class participation. Each participant receives a copy of [The Caregiver Handbook](#).

# Easter Lilies

## EASTER LILY ORDER FORM 2009

To order your plant, please complete this form and give to an usher; place in the offering plate, or **leave in the church office no later than Sunday, March 22.** Please make your check payable to Bethlehem Lutheran Church and include with your plant order.

# \_\_\_\_\_plant(s) @ \$11.50 each

Name of Donor

---

In memory of

---

In honor of

---

I will take plant(s) home after Easter services

I will share my plant(s) with a shut-in.

## Save the Date!

Members and Friends –

We need you to make our Bethlehem photo directory complete.

Our Directory Committee has chosen *Lifetouch* to help us put faces with names and tell our story.

Tentative photo dates are:

**Tuesday, April 28, through Saturday, May 2.**

Watch for details in the coming months!

---

## Planting Seeds—A Letter from Mary Lasits

I wanted to share with you more of the results of the Planting Seeds. I am aware of some of the feelings at Bethlehem and that some believe the only reason for this long-range plan is to get a second service. I wanted to write a letter from the heart to share my reasons and thoughts.

I have been thinking about a long-range plan since last summer. Initially, my goals were to get more adults and children involved in Sunday School but after I saw the hurt feelings that were brought up over the discussion of a second service my thoughts shifted to getting us moving forward. My heart hurt for all those who are still so wounded by the actions of past leadership. My thoughts were if I could get us to look forward, and not in the rearview mirror, maybe some of the hurt would heal and we all could be excited about some mission that would make the world a better place and share the Gospel with a world that is also so full of hurt and pain. Pastor, just today during the children's sermon, said that when we help others it helps us heal, or at least not think about, our own hurts and problems. This was my ultimate "hoped for" with doing Planting Seeds.

Now onto some other thoughts/insights regarding my original reason for a long-range plan— Sunday School. This school year has been really hard not only on myself, but my teachers as well. Our attendance has not been growing in this area at all and it's getting harder and harder to find volunteers to help with the program. Don't get me wrong there have been some victories— senior high students now participate and thanks to Pastor Diane we are starting a weekday opportunity for all ages. Along with attendance numbers speaking for themselves, I have had several conversations with families and they, too, worry. Some expressed not being able to make it to church on time in the morning thus getting discouraged and choosing not to come at all. All of the above was why I went to Church Council and talked to them about doing a long-range plan.

I already shared with everybody that the number one suggestion was to make our building more accessible physically. The number two and number three suggestions were to offer a service at a later time and to have more fellowship opportunities with each other—somebody even gave a calendar of events. I am well aware of the thoughts on a second service and have struggled immensely on how to share this with everybody; hence, my letter this month. I thought to delay sharing it and some suggested not sharing it at all but that would not have been fair to those who suggested having a second service and those who have told me they need one.

I am excited so many people are so passionate about making Bethlehem a place where they can come and deepen their relationship with God. We have a unique gift to offer, especially in a world so full of fear and pain lately. Bethlehem has a message of grace, hope, and love to give to the local community and the more we listen to what is needed the more successful we will be in accomplishing that ultimate goal. Now more than ever, we are called to share our own personal and corporate stories of pain, triumph, and how God helped move us forward. I appreciate your prayer, patience, and thoughts on helping Bethlehem continue to follow where the Holy Spirit is leading us. Thanks for all your support.

Peace,  
Mary Lasits

# Buy A Degree Fundraiser

To repay the Mission Endowment Fund for the purchase of the new heating system.

Vision: The congregation borrowed \$34,000.00 from the Mission Endowment Fund for the replacement of the building's old heating system. The Mission Endowment Fund made the money available to the congregation without interest. This program is designed to repay the Mission Endowment Fund.

Goal: The goal of this program is to raise the temperature on a thermometer from 0 degrees to 95 degrees, representing the warmth provided by the new heating equipment. If all 95 degrees are raised the Mission Endowment Fund will realize \$34,200.00.

Details: Each degree on the thermometer represents a gift of \$10.00 per month for a 3 year period. Degrees may be purchased over the three years, or paid off at a faster rate. Each degree on the thermometer cost \$360.00 ( $360 \times 95 = 34,200.00$ ).

Methods: Individuals and families will be encouraged to buy as many degrees as they feel comfortable buying. Pledges may be paid off over three years, or any other way that suits the pledging party. Individuals and families are encouraged to be creative in meeting their pledge. Some suggestions are:

- Host the Coffee Fellowship after worship and designate the funds to "Buy a Degree".
- Plan and implement a fellowship meal with proceeds going to the fundraiser.
- Pack a lunch one or more times each week and set aside the money for the fundraiser saved over purchasing a prepared meal.
- Set aside \$2.50 each week to meet your pledge.
- Save loose change (33 cents per day will pay a full pledge).
- Share one or more degrees and split the pledge with others.

Please be sure that all money given to the fundraiser is clearly marked so that it can go to the Mission Endowment Fund.

+++++

## Buy a Degree Pledge form:

(I)(WE) plan to buy \_\_\_\_\_ degree(s) at \$360.00 per degree. This pledge will be paid:

*(Please mark the appropriate line)*

In one payment: \_\_\_\_\_ Annually: \_\_\_\_\_ Quarterly: \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly: \_\_\_\_\_ Weekly: \_\_\_\_\_

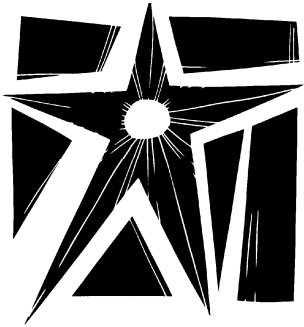
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Offering Envelope # \_\_\_\_\_ -

Pledges may be placed in an envelope, dropped in the offering plate, dropped off at the office, or mailed to:

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
1915 N. First St.  
DeKalb, IL 60115

Bethlehem Star



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
DeKalb, IL 60115  
Permit #121

Bethlehem Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
1915 N. First Street  
DeKalb, Illinois 60115

Phone: 815-758-3203  
Fax: 815-758-1411  
Email:  
belcdekalb@comcast.net  
website: bethlehemdekalb.org

Address Label Here

## Birthday List for March

March 2009

### Birthday Greetings to:

- 1 Eric Johnson
- 3 Michael Stone
- 5 Sandy Dumdie
- 7 Linda Hoffman
- Katherine Signorella
- 8 Tammie Farley
- 10 Emil Hampa
- 12 Jerry Johns



- 15 Amanda Luchsinger
- 16 Tom Carey
- Samantha Johnson
- Catherine Pfeiffer
- 17 Jessica Wilhelm
- 19 Hannah Turk
- 21 Sarah Cooper
- 25 Jessica Breuer
- 26 Brian Knuuttila
- Dustin Inboden
- 30 Diane McCaslin
- Louis Wright

If you don't find your name on the Birthday Lists, please call the church office at 758-3203.