

Bethlehem Star

A Message from Pastor Gary

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.
[Isaiah 7:14]*

*From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.
[Matthew 24:32]*

The signs are these: the trees drop leaves, the hours of daylight grow shorter, the temperature falls. The lessons learned from the repetition of these signs are many: Holiday season is upon us with the high festival of Christmas fast approaching; annual meeting dates are set, annual reports are due soon (January 5).

There is much to do. The old proverb says, "Many hands make light work." The proverb reminds us that in our busy times we need one another. Human nature might shout – leave me alone so I can get this done! Yet we all know that when we can share our burdens and our tasks that we get much more accomplished and in a shorter time, too. Sharing our work builds unity and peace. Many hands – let's join together to do what is needed!

Here are some things you can do to make the work light and the burden small:

- + Participate in the life of the congregation through worship and Christian Education.
- + Give generously – there are many people in the congregation, community, and around the world counting on us.
- + Volunteer – if you wait to be asked your moment may vanish.
- + Bring forward your ideas – small groups, Bible studies, special interests – all help build our congregation.

(continued on page 2)



November 27
First Sunday in Advent

December 3 5:30 p.m.
Ethnic Christmas Dinner

December 11
10:00 Annual Mtg. /
Poinsettia Deadline

December 24
7:00 Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service

December 25
Christmas Day
9:30 a.m.
(one service only)

Pastor's Message *(continued)*

- + Attend the annual meetings: Part 1, December 11; Part 2, January 29, 2012.
- + Submit your reports – short and sweet is just fine.
- + Ask – we will all do our best to help.
- + Speak well of us to friends and family.
- + Pray for your congregation, the Northern Illinois Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the world we share.

Christmas is coming, the season of goodwill and good cheer. We come together knowing that "Many hands make light work." I pray your burdens are light so that you have time for the important things of life: faith, hope and love.

Merry and Blessed Christmas to all of you,
Pr. Gary



Saturday Afternoon Movies at Bethlehem

Due to the busy holiday calendar schedule, movies will not be shown in December. Because of possible bad weather conditions, our Movie Theater will be closed in January 2012.

See you all in February for some great movies!!!



Children's Epiphany/Christmas Program

January 8 11:00 a.m.

"Hoshma and the Last Straw"

We still need to fill some roles such as camel, sheep, lambs, goats, magi, shepherds, angels, Mary & Joseph. Grownup helpers are welcome, too! Contact Valerie at (815) 825-2473 if you can help!

Membership Updates, Concerns and Thanks

Thank you for supporting Heartland Blood Centers with the recent Blood Drive. We were able to collect 8 units.

EACH WEDNESDAY AT 9:00 A.M. meet the C&C Group (Coffee & Conversation) at the Sycamore McDonald's. All are welcome!

"My family and I deeply appreciate the care given to us during the passing of my mother, Elvi Humo. We thank Pastor Gary for his caring support and all who were involved with the funeral. The meal after the funeral was wonderful. I know that your prayers have supported us and we thank you for them. God bless you all." Linda Hursh



**DON'T FORGET:
DEADLINE FOR ORDERING
YOUR POINSETTIA IS
DECEMBER 11!**

It's a busy time of year . . . ! Need to borrow something from the church? Don't forget to tell Marilyn or the church office. Thanks!

REMEMBERED . . .

We remember all who have died in the faith and now rest from their labors, made new in Christ. Since the last All Saints' Sunday we give thanks and remember: Laura Korpi Lester J. Klasing, Jr., Yvonne M. Schramer, June F. Whitney Bud Tyler, Marian A. Meisner, Pat Humo, Elvi Humo.

The second Sunday of each month is now **"Soap Sunday."** Please bring a bath size soap bar and place in the LWR box.

**ANNUAL MEETING-PART I
DECEMBER 11 — 10:00 A.M.**

PAPER TOWEL SUPPLY IS RUNNING LOW!



THANK YOU . . . THANK YOU . . .
Many thanks to all the Ushers, Greeters, Lectors, Communion Servers, Acolytes and Altar Guild for volunteering in 2011!
Your help is always greatly appreciated.

A great big thank you to all the following people that volunteered with the Sunday School program this fall:
Anna Fischer, Judy Sisler, Barb Luchsinger, Laurel & Dick Stokke, Mariana Vilchez, Pat Erickson, Sherry Krehl, Margie Hargrave, Jennice O'Brien, Nancy Grych, Mona Theisen, Gary Brooks, Julie Rowland, and Mary Bathje.
Your help was greatly appreciated!

Our deepest sympathies to Jay & Betty Ruby on the recent deaths of Jay's sister and Betty's brother.

"My family and I appreciate the care given us from Pastor Gary and the congregation during our sad time of losing my sister, Pat Humo. The meal provided after the funeral was wonderful. Words cannot express adequately the thanks I feel toward Bethlehem over my sister's lifetime. We are products of Bethlehem's love, beginning with our baptisms. Thank you for your love and support." Linda Hursh & family

Annual Meeting, Part II, will be held January 29. All committee leader reports are due by January 5. Thank you!

A Big Thank You and Appreciation . . .
For the ladies helping to fold and stuff the Bethlehem Star.
For all those decorating for the Christmas Season.
For all those helping with the Ethnic Christmas Dinner.

A huge thank you goes out to the Business/Accountancy Department of Northern Illinois University for their recent food Drive. More than 30 boxes including a variety of food items were donated to our Food Pantry right before Thanksgiving.
Thanks again!!!

Star Seminarian Greetings!

Wishing you a Merry Christmas ...



are the following people who made donations to the Star Seminarian Fund. This fund was established to support seminary students who are studying for pastoral ministry.

Pearl Belluzzi
 Elmie Carey
 Irene Ekstrom
 Gary & Pat Erickson
 Gladys Erickson
 Frank & Rose Mary Garcia
 Laura Hammes
 Carl & Marjorie Hargrave
 Kathleen Hunt
 Jerry & Annette Johns
 Lauri Koski
 Don & Sherry Krehl
 Irene Kuusisto

Eldon & Helen Miller
 Gordon & Virginia Rasmussen
 Doris Riippi
 Jay & Betty Ruby
 Marlene Schoonmaker
 Ed & Edna Schramm
 Ed & Judy Sisler
 Allie Wahl



The Greatest Gift

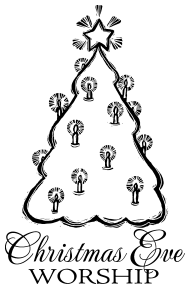
*Season's Greetings to all
 from the staff of
 Bethlehem Lutheran Church!*

Christmas Eve Service

CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT SERVICE AT BETHLEHEM

CHRISTMAS EVE

DECEMBER 24 7:00 P.M.



14th Annual
NIU

Choral Holiday Concert

Sunday, December 4, 2011
3:00 p.m.
Boutell Concert Hall

mark your calendars:

Christmas Day and New Year's Day

One service only at 9:30 a.m.
(offices closed December 26)

Christmas Decorating Assistance Needed



**SAVE THIS DATE:
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2011
9:00 A.M.**



I'm looking for volunteers to help with decorating the hallway, fellowship hall, and sanctuary for the Ethnic Dinner celebration and the Christmas season.

With many hands, arms, and legs carrying items up from the basement storage area, climbing step ladders, and hanging decorations, it won't take long to complete this task.

Contact Gordon Rasmussen (815)895-8956

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


SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3
8:30—9:30 A.M.

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!



Christmas Poinsettia Order Form

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDER FORM 2011

Remember a loved one and help to make the Sanctuary beautiful for our Christmas Eve Service! 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, December 11**. Please make your check payable to Bethlehem Lutheran Church and include with your plant order.

_____ plant(s) @ \$12.00 each



Name of Donor _____

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

I will take plant(s) home after Christmas Eve services

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

Ushers for Sundays in December 8:45 a.m.

December 4	Dick & Laurel Stokke Jane Bidstrup Norma Wiegartz	December 24 Christmas Eve	Louis & Lysa Wright Logan & Lucas Wright
December 11	Gary & Ann Brooks Noah & Abbey Brooks	December 25 Christmas Day	Wayne & Nancy Coffman
December 18	Paul & Julie Rowland Emily Rowland		



Greeters for Sundays in December 8:45 a.m.

December 4	Paul & Julie Rowland Emily Rowland	December 24	Heather Breuer Jessica Breuer
December 11	Ed & Judy Sisler	December 25	Pat Erickson
December 18	Marlene Schoonmaker Mary Lach		

Lectors 8:45 a.m.

December 4	Julie Rowland
December 11	Sarah Trostle
December 18	Laurel Stokke
December 24	Lorna Bemis
December 25	Judy Sisler

Communion Assistants

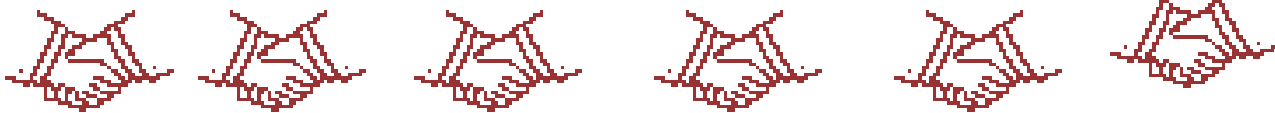
December 4	Wayne Coffman Myron Bond
December 11	Margie Hargrave Sherry Krehl
December 18	Jerry Johns Annette Johns
December 24	Virginia Luedtke Dick Stokke
December 25	Judy Sisler



Ushers for Sundays in December 11:00 a.m.

December 4	Don & Sherry Krehl	December 18	Maria McMillion Tammie Farley
December 11	Barb Luchsinger Amanda Luchsinger	December 25	one service only at 8:45

Greeters for Sundays in December 11:00 a.m.



December 4	Jesse & Karen Schramer
December 11	Dick & Laurel Stokke
December 18	Wayne & Nancy Coffman

Lectors 11:00 a.m.

December 4	Virginia Rasmussen
December 11	Laurel Stokke
December 18	Myron Bond

Communion Assistants

December 4	Karen Schramer
December 11	Dick Stokke
December 18	Tammie Farley



Kid's Fun Page



The Son of the Highest

A new baby brings joy and the anticipation of what he or she will grow up to become. Jesus' birth was miraculous, but His life was prophesied and planned by God.

Unscramble the words below, matching them to their correct spelling. Then use the numbers to fill in the correct words to complete Luke 1:32-33 (NIV).

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------|------------|---------|
| 12. taerg | he | 2. noS | forever |
| 8. eh | Jacob | 11. seouh | end |
| 13. gHhi | father | 5. northe | Son |
| 7. aDvid | give | 1. roevfr | house |
| 10. bocJa | great | 6. dingmok | throne |
| 3. reafth | High | 9. den | kingdom |
| 4. vieg | David | | |

"He will be _____₁₂ and will be called the _____₂
of the Most _____₁₃. The Lord God will _____₄
him the _____₅ of his _____₃ _____₇,
and _____₈ will reign over the _____₁₁
of _____₁₀ _____₁; his _____₆ will
never _____₉." *Luke 1:32-33, NIV*

Answers: 1. forever 2. Son 3. father 4. give 5. throne 6. kingdom 7. David 8. he 9. end 10. Jacob 11. house 12. great 13. High

PAPER BAG LUMINARIAS

Lead your family and friends to your house this holiday with luminarias celebrating Jesus' birth.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Pencil
- Brown paper lunch bags
- Hole punch, tack or pushpin
- Sand
- Votive candles or tea lights

WHAT YOU DO:

- 1 Draw a simple picture, word or symbol of Jesus' birth on the bag; for example, a star, a manger, a heart, a lamb, a wise man or the word "JOY."
- 2 Using a hole punch or pushpin, punch holes along the drawing, leaving a little space between each hole. Punch all the way through both sides of the bag so you end up with the same design on both sides when the bag is opened. When using a pin, place a piece of cardboard under the bag or work on carpet so nothing gets damaged.
- 3 Open the bag and fill each luminaria with about two inches of sand. Then sink a votive candle or tea light in the center of the sand.
- 4 Place the luminarias along a walk, patio or porch. Have an adult light the candles.

November Council Minutes

Present: Beth Metzler, Annette Johns, Van O'Brien, Pastor Gary Erickson, Anna Fischer, Maria McMillion, Gordon Rasmussen, Bill Gulke, Tammie Farley, Lysa Wright

Call to Order – Beth Metzler called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

Approval of Agenda – Annette Johns moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Anna Fischer. The Council approved the agenda.

Approval of Minutes – Anna Fischer moved to approve the minutes to the October 2011 Council Meeting, seconded by Van O'Brien. The Council approved the minutes.

Pastor's Report – Pastor Gary's report included the following:

The 2011 holiday schedule includes the following highlights: 11/23 Evening Worship 7pm; 12/3 Ethnic Dinner; 12/24 Christmas Service; 12/25 (Sunday) 9:30am service only; no Sunday School; 1/1(Sunday) 9:30am service only; no Sunday School.

A Diakonia study series sponsored by the Synod for those interested in knowing more about the Bible and theology is available for five straight Mondays from 6:30-9:30pm at BELC starting on November 17th.

\$225 was transferred from General Funds to the Good Samaritan fund to assist an individual in emergency financial need.

It has been recognized by the Council that the sound system has not been functioning in an acceptable manner for some time now.

Pastor Gary is looking into securing an estimate (hopefully free).

Community service workers at BELC now total three with the potential of losing one in the near future. These individuals put in about 60 hours per week combined.

Property Committee (Anna Fischer) – The following issues were relayed to the Council in regard to the Property Committee:

The dead tree has been removed from the property.

A project to install a historical framed picture collection in the main hallway is in the works. This project would be permanent. These pictures would be presented chronologically to tell the story of the church. The Committee requested \$400 from the Council. Annette Johns moved to use up to \$400 in memorial funds for the project, seconded by Lysa Wright. The Council approved the motion.

Christian Education (Pastor Gary) – Valerie Talsma has volunteered to be Sunday School Superintendent but wishes to change the title to Sunday School Coordinator, or similar. The appointment requires approval by the Council. Pastor Gary moved to appoint Valerie to the position, seconded by Anna Fischer. The Council approved the motion.

Pastor Gary is going to experiment with the confirmation students to insert them in other spots during the worship services in addition to being acolyte; i.e. announcements, psalm reader.

Evangelism & Stewardship (Pastor Gary) – New envelopes have been ordered. Less have been given out. The committee is currently figuring out how to account for e-givers.

Worship & Music (Pastor Gary) – This committee has not met.

Social Ministry (Annette Johns) – The food pantry has met the goal of giving out 100 turkey boxes (even went over by nine). The food pantry served 2,645 persons/688 households in September 2011. 244 of those households got food with food stamps.

Finance – (Tammie Farley) A financial summary for October 2011 was provided to the Council with the following highlights:

- Total gifts received from January 1st to October 31st is \$216,238 (74.1% of 2011 budget)
- Total gifts distributed from January 1st to October 31st is \$216,019 (74.0% of 2011 budget)

Net cash as of May 31st, 2011 is \$561

Additional financial discussions included the following:

- Van O'Brien moved to approve the proposed 2012 Ministry Funding Plan, seconded by Annette Johns. The Council approved the motion. The budget will be presented to the congregation during the December annual meeting.

BELC received a stock gift. Annette Johns moved to sell the stock gift, seconded by Beth Metzler. The Council approved the motion.

Old Business – The following old business was discussed:

- The Vision Task Force has had four meetings. The next step is to prioritize tasks and communicate them to the congregation.
 - Staff has been contacted with request to locate job descriptions and update them. The Council currently has everyone's but two.
- The Council will work with the staff members to ensure that all of the job listings are accurate by the end of the year.

A healthy discussion was had regarding communicating with the congregation on financial matters.

New Business – The following new business was discussed:

It was suggested that for baptisms, a note be created that lists some options and suggestions for baptisms; almost a half-sheet mini-guide for each sponsor/parents, etc. Beth Metzler volunteered to make a list and pass it along to Pastor Gary for review. Anna Fischer move to approve this action, seconded by Maria McMillion. The Council approved the motion.

The first annual meeting has been scheduled for December 11th. The meeting will involve congregation approval of 2012 budget, election of new council, new committee members. A letter announcing the meeting will be sent out.

Next Meeting - The next council meeting is set for Tuesday, January 10th at 6:30 pm. The annual meeting will be on December 11th.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:37.

Minutes submitted by: Van O'Brien

Christmas Tree Giving



2012 ELCA Youth Gathering Christmas Giving Tree

Looking for that perfect Christmas gift for the youth of Bethlehem?

Select an envelope from the Christmas Giving Tree located in the lounge.

Your gift will help to make the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans a reality for our high school students - Stefany, Anastasia and Jake.

Gifts may be placed in the offering plates or given directly to Pastor Gary.

Thank you for your generous support!

Tips for a More Meaningful Christmas

Did you know that the average American plans to spend \$700 on Christmas gifts this year? Challenge yourself to rethink the tradition of gift-giving by purchasing one of the items in the ELCA Good Gifts Catalog. They have more than 50 unique, meaningful opportunities to offer support for ELCA ministries and honor loved ones at the same time. Included among the gifts this year is an alpaca, farm animals, irrigation canal, water purification, textbooks, surgery to restore sight to the blind and medicine to treat malaria. Each of these gifts has the remarkable capacity to transform lives — all in God's name. You can order your catalog from www.wlca.org/good_gifts or call 1-800-638-3522.



Tell others about the ELCA Good Gifts you have given in their honor. Visit the website for a selection of printable certificates, cards and e-cards. With each online donation of \$10 or more, you may request a printed card to be mailed to your home.

Buy-A-Degree Project

Warmhearted Thanks! ***from the Mission Endowment Fund Committee*** **Buy-A-Degree Boiler Repayment Project**

Vision

The congregation borrowed \$34,000 from the Mission Endowment Fund to replace the building's old heating system. The Mission Endowment Fund Committee made the money available to the congregation without interest.

Goal

The Buy-A-Degree project was a 3-year financial campaign designed to repay the Mission Endowment Fund.

**As of October 31, 2011, \$29,506.90 has been received,
leaving a balance of \$4,493.10.**

ALL GIFTS SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 31, 2011.

**Please be sure that all gifts given to this project are clearly marked
"Buy-A-Degree Boiler Repayment Project"**

+++++

Buy-A-Degree Boiler Repayment Project Gift Form

ALL GIFTS SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 31, 2011.

Enclosed is my/our gift of \$_____.

Name: _____ Offering Env. # _____

*Enclose your gift in an envelope and drop it in the offering plate or at the church office, or mail it to:
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1915 N. First St., DeKalb, IL 60115.*

Our Ethnic Christmas Party is December 3 at 5:30 p.m.



Is your family a little bit German, Finnish, Norwegian, Irish, Scot, Dutch, Greek, Cambodian, Guatemalan, Thai, Danish, Masai, or All-American? Then it's time to start planning for Bethlehem's Ethnic Christmas Party on **Saturday, December 3, 2011.**

Our Ethnic celebration started out as a Finnish tradition called *Piisku Joulu*, or Little Christmas—a party to both start the Christmas season and to help let off some of the “steam” of hyper-excitement that builds-up in the children.

Now it has developed into a celebration of Bethlehem's *melting pot* where everyone brings a dish to pass from his/her own ethnic roots—and it's fun to see how many countries are represented. If, however, you're not in touch with your “roots,” bring a dish for the American table. Table service and beverages are provided.

We begin at 5:30 p.m. with English Wassail in the Lounge while the food is set up on the tables. About 6:00 pm, when all is ready, we choose our food from the different traditions and eat in Fellowship Hall. There will be a short program highlighting Christmas Traditions from around the world and carol singing, the appearance of St Lucia, ending in time to get the kids home to bed.

If you have an ethnic or folk-outfit, please wear it or your favorite seasonal attire.
=====

Please check below and return to the church office.

Dinner Reservations

Family Name _____ Phone _____

Number of adults _____ # of children (under 16) _____

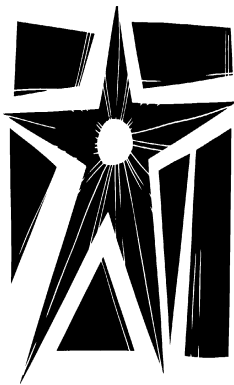
Ethnic Tradition (Food origin): _____



S.O.S (Save Our Somasipadi)

You are making a difference! We are more than halfway there! One lakh of rupees has been asked of us to help lift 250 students out of poverty through the Danish Mission High School at Somasipadi. One lakh is approximately \$2,200.00 US. You can make the dream of an education a reality by giving to S.O.S. project through Bethlehem. Mark your gift S.O.S. and it will work miracles!

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

Address Label Here

email: belcdekalb@comcast .net

Return service requested



Birthday List for December

Birthday Greetings to:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|----|------------------|
| 1 | Richard Stokke | 15 | Randy Huffman |
| | Hem Lach | | Ariel George |
| 2 | Chandy Lach | | Molly Humes |
| | Doris Nordstrom | 20 | Noah Brooks |
| 4 | Christopher Holley | 22 | Perry Spohn |
| 5 | Karen Schramer | 24 | Julie Clark |
| 8 | Elizabeth Luchsinger | 25 | Christina Vandre |
| | Joe Inboden | 26 | Kristin Olson |
| 9 | Helen Vlahakis | | Margaret Hayes |
| 12 | Chong Zheng | 27 | Sue Huhta |
| 13 | Gordon Rasmussen | 29 | Greg Stokke |
| | Russell Bloyd | | |



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