



THE BETHLEHEM STAR
JANUARY 2012



Sunday Worship: 8:15 and 10:45 a.m.

Wednesday worship at 6:00 p.m. in the Chapel

The 8:15 Sunday service is broadcast at 11 a.m. on KTOE 1420 AM / KTOE 102.7 FM.

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A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JAY DAHLVANG

Learning and Caring

The word “epiphany” means a realization or an understanding. The Epiphany season in the church year begins with the story of the Magi from the East coming to visit the newborn Christ. Jesus invites us to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. In response to his invitation, I want to lift up two of Bethlehem’s ministries as we begin 2012 with the season of Epiphany, and tell you about adult education and visitation of our members.

Learning

Ours is a tradition that values learning as a spiritual discipline, and there are many venues and opportunities at Bethlehem to grow in our knowledge of God and God’s ways in the world. Between worship services each week, we gather in the Heritage Room for our Adult Forum. On January 8, civic leaders from Mankato and North Mankato will offer a panel discussion on the challenges we face and how the church plays an important role in the life of our community. On January 15, representatives from our January mission partner, CADA, will tell us about how

domestic violence and sexual assault victims can find safety and hope. On January 22, you will be introduced to Financial Peace University (more on this below), and on January 29, following up on the recent series in the Free Press, we will learn about the degradation of the Minnesota River and efforts to restore it. There are other terrific adult education opportunities that abound at Bethlehem. Our women’s circle Bible studies, our Tuesday morning gathering and men’s lunch study at Tuesday noon, our Book of Faith series, and Wednesday afternoon women’s study all are places for you to have an informed faith. We begin our second Financial Peace University class in February. This course is designed to help families and individuals make the most of the resources God has given them, and to be wise and faithful stewards. It is entertaining and informative, and a scholarship program has been instituted to help with the tuition cost (more about that in the February Star). Come and check out our preview during the Adult Forum hour on January 22.

Caring

There have been well over five hundred home, care facility, and hospital visits made in 2011 by the pastors and members of Bethlehem’s care ministry team. We are most interested in sharing Christ with the lonely and the ailing, the mourning and the struggling. Because of the volume of need in our congregation, you may feel left out. Please call if you want a visit! Pastor Collette or I, or a member of our care ministry team, will be there. I promise. We want no one to be overlooked, but also don’t necessarily know your need unless you inform us. It is the great privilege of being a pastor or care ministry member to be invited into your lives. Thank you for your trust, and for sharing how God is at work bringing healing and hope to our lives. ~ Pr. Jay

DEADLINE for the February Star is January 15.



DO YOU GET E-NEWS? The Bethlehem E-news goes directly to the inbox of many Bethlehem members and friends, informing them of all that is happening in and around Bethlehem. Do you get the E-news? To subscribe, send an e-mail to blchurch@hickorytech.net with “subscribe to E-news” in the subject line.

PASTOR COLLETTE; JANUARY SERVING GROUP

Holy Water Everywhere

Growing up on the family homestead in Alaska, water was an integral part of our work and play. My grandmother tells the story of having to haul water from the lake near their cabin when they first moved to the property. For me, the lake was a never-ending source of fun and excitement. In the summer we swam, sometimes taking our bath in the lake. In the winter, we skated on the ice. In the spring, we caught tadpoles and rowed around the water's edge looking for bird nests.

When I got older, the lake was a quiet place to go by myself, to read, to think, and to pray. Floating alone on the raft in the lake's center, I felt both small in the scope of creation and close to the Creator. Though I wouldn't have said it then, the lake was a place of holy water in my child and young adulthood.

On January 8, we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus and have a chance to remember our own baptisms. That day we will also begin an exploration of the holy waters in each of our lives, from those in which we were baptized to those which have sustained us physically and spiritually since then. We will talk together about all the ways that God works through water, focusing on a few lessons assigned for the Epiphany season. And in an effort to recognize the holiness of this precious created resource, the Earth Stewards and I will give you opportunities to think more deeply about how you use water, what it means for our individual and communal life, and how we can protect our local lakes and rivers.

You may have seen the recent series on just this topic in the Mankato Free Press entitled "Amber Waves, Muddy Waters". The author of this series, as well as one of the

experts quoted in the articles, will be with us for the Adult Forum on January 29 to help us understand what is going on with our local bodies of water and how we can help make them cleaner and safer for all. My hope is that you will come to see all the water that flows through your life as holy, because God created it to cleanse, to give life, and to quench our physical and spiritual thirsts.

~ Pr. Collette



JANUARY SERVING GROUP ~ Chairs: Lavon & Sally Burdick (388-6152); Co-Chair: Jean Thompson (625-6715)



**Monthly
Serving
Group**

Bill & Tara Burgess
 Brian & Elaine Carstensen
 Shirley Davis
 Conrad & Mary Dieken
 Brenda Hagen
 Bob Isdahl
 Joseph & Amanda Klanderman
 Carol Larson
 James & Melissa Matthies
 Chad & Sarah Mills

Arlene Neilsen
 Jim Norland
 Jerry & Marge Orness
 Dixie Ortley
 Les & Norma Peterson
 Pam Rhiger
 Hans Sageng
 Ken & Julie Schrader
 Donna Skarpohl
 Robert & Lorraine Smesrud

Jeff & Amy Smith
 Lee Snilsberg
 Ruth Spore
 Constance Watschke
 Gary & Charlene Zimmerman



**Monthly
Serving
Group**



A HUGE thank you to all the members of Bethlehem who supported the Holiday Sharing Tree Mission. The Holiday Sharing Tree provides each recipient with a gift (valued at approximately \$25) so that they will have a gift to open at Christmas. Bethlehem members graciously fulfilled that need for 80 recipients this year for the Holiday Sharing Tree.

~ The Fellowship Committee



LIBRARY NEWS...Come and see the changes!

Our Library Committee has made significant changes in the arrangement of the library! The new plan is easily recognized and well identified. All fiction is straight ahead and identified with labels as you come through the door. To the right, all of the books on that wall are non-fiction and are well labeled. Our biographies and junior books are on the remaining wall. You'll see the signs. Easy books remain the same.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPERS (in the Dining Room)

SERVED FROM 5:00-6:30

January Menus:

- January 4** Breaded pork chops, mashed potatoes, country gravy, & California blend veggies
- January 11** Baked ham, cheesy potatoes, peas & carrots
- January 18** Turkey noodle hot dish, biscuits, carrots & dip
- January 25** Tator tot hot dish, dinner rolls, cranberries & fruit



Dinner for Six



Dinner For Six (or Eight!)

Starting in the New Year, new groups will be forming. We shall have a sign-up sheet in the narthex on Sundays; during the week, the sheets will be on the counter in the church office.

We encourage all of our members to participate in sharing a meal and socializing with new and old members of our congregation.

There are no special requirements, other than to be willing to share your home for one meal with others. This will be our sixth social event, which will be from January 1 to July 1, 2012.

If you have any questions, please contact Roger and Dee Saman at 388-6756.



From the Evangelism Board...

We have been getting very positive feedback from visitors! One visitor said, "I just wanted you to know that while worshipping at Bethlehem, people greeted me with a smile and said 'hello'. During coffee, someone sat with me. Others came over and introduced themselves. Pastor Jay spoke to me before the service. I felt very welcomed and at home." Several of our new members have commented that "we joined because people were warm and friendly. This is a place we want to be."



Jean Benson recently moved from Bemidji to Minnetonka. Her new address is:

Jean Benson
18605 Old Excelsior Boulevard
Apartment #224

Minnetonka, MN 55345 Phone: 952-474-3977

We wish Jean well at her new residence!



"He's today's greeter."

January Mission Project:

CADA House

Bethlehem's monthly mission project for January is CADA House. CADA stands for the Committee Against Domestic Abuse. Their Mission Statement is: To provide safety and support to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault through education, advocacy, and shelter. CADA provides 24-hour crisis intervention, emergency safety shelter, short- and long-term safety planning, legal advocacy, a supervised parenting time center, support groups, community education, information, and referrals. CADA serves not only Nicollet County and Blue Earth County, but the counties of Brown, Waseca, Watonwan, Faribault, LeSueur, and Sibley as well. For many in crisis, CADA may be the only place they can turn to. Please join us for an Adult Forum to be given by Tammy Wachtel on **January 15** to learn more about CADA's work and how you can help.

~ Bethlehem Community & Global Mission Board

Monthly Mission Projects for 2012

- January** ~ CADA House
- February** ~ ELCA malaria net project
- March** ~ ECHO Food Shelf
- April** ~ Iambi Secondary School
- May** ~ Bethlehem Child Care Center
- June** ~ VINE Faith In Action
- July** ~ Global Health
- August** ~ ELCA World Hunger
- September** ~ Lutheran Campus Ministry
- October** ~ Lutheran Social Services
- November** ~ The Jacobsons (missionaries)
- December** ~ God's Global Barnyard

2011 Nordic Bazaar Disbursement

Good Earth Village	\$ 200.00
Green Lake Bible Camp	200.00
CADA, Inc.	300.00
ECHO Food Shelf	2000.00
Holiday Sharing Tree	25.00
Partners for Affordable Housing (Theresa House & Welcome Inn)	500.00
Salvation Army	500.00
Backpack food program	400.00
Crossroads Lutheran Campus Ministry	200.00
LSS (The Reach)	500.00
LSS (Crisis Nursery)	750.00
MSU/M International Student Fund	150.00
Marie Sandvik Center	200.00
Habitat for Humanity	300.00
Bethlehem Quilters	500.00
Bethlehem Radio Broadcasts	200.00
Bethlehem Staff	450.00
Bethlehem Library	500.00
Bethlehem Youth (for Kids Against Hunger)	200.00
Bethlehem Youth (for New Orleans)	300.00
Bethlehem Child Care Center (for strollers and changing pads)	1000.00
Bethlehem Midwife Kits - GHM	1200.00
Kids Against Hunger	200.00
Bethlehem Nursery	200.00
Hot Meals on Wheels	200.00
Mankato LAH/BNP	300.00
PACT Ministries	<u>300.00</u>
TOTAL:	\$11,775.00





CALENDAR

Wednesday Evening Schedule



- 5:00 – 8:00 Child care available (infant to age 5, nursery area located in basement)
- 5:00 – 5:55 Chancel Choir (adults, meets in Choir Room - basement)
- 5:00 – 6:30 Supper served (all are welcome – dining room)
- 5:15 – 6:00 Junior Gospbells (practice held in Sanctuary)
- 6:00 – 6:30 Worship in the Chapel
- 6:00 – 6:40 Kids' Club (meets in the "Moved by the Spirit" room downstairs, for kids in kindergarten through 6th grade -- a time of music, a message, lessons, and activities)
- 6:00 – 7:45 TIMES (Teens In Mission Enthusiastically Serving) in Grounds for Joy
- 6:00 – 7:45 Confirmation classes (grades 7 – 9, Youth Room on 3rd floor)
- 6:30 – 7:30 Bethlehem Gospbells (practice held in Sanctuary)
- 6:45 – 7:40 Gather Choir (adults, meets in Choir Room – basement)
- 7:45 – 8:30 The Messengers (music & drama group for Youth grades 7 – 12, meets in the Chapel)



JANUARY 2012



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00-9:30 - Coffee 9:45 - Worship	2 Church Office Closed 5-9 pm - Mankato Children's Chorus 5:45 pm - TOPS	3 7 am - Café Ambrosia Bible Study 8:30 am - Quilters Noon-Men's Bible Study 1 pm - Library Board 1 pm - Comm. at OMV 5:15 - Stewardship Board 6 pm- Music & Worship, Children's Board 6:15 pm - Earth Stewards 7 pm- C&G Missions, Evangelism, Facilities	4 9 am - TOPS 10:30 am - Book of Faith Bible Study 1 pm- Staff mtg. Wed. Evening Activities 7:30 pm - Adult Ed. Board	5	6	7
8 8:15 & 10:45 - Worship 9:30 - Ed. Hour, coffee 6:30 - Financial Peace University-Heritage Rm.	9 5-9 pm - Mankato Children's Chorus 5-7 pm - McEducator Night at McDonald's 5:45 pm - TOPS 7 pm-Youth Band	10 7 am - Café Ambrosia Bible Study 10:15 am - Communion at Pathstone Noon-Men's Bible Study 1 pm - Library Board 5:30 pm - Youth Board	11 9 am - TOPS 10:30 am - Book of Faith Bible Study 1 pm- Staff mtg. 3:30 pm - Women's Bible Study - GFJ Wed. Evening Activities	12	13	14 10 am - 2 pm - Sons of Norway in the Dining Room
15 8:15 & 10:45 - Worship 9:30 - Ed. Hour, coffee 9:15 & 11:45am - Prayer Team in sanctuary	16 Church Office Closed 5-9 pm - Mankato Children's Chorus 5:45 pm - TOPS 6:30 - Mom's Circle 7 pm-Youth Band	17 7 am - Café Ambrosia Bible Study 8:30 am - Quilters Noon-Men's Bible Study 1 pm - Library Board 4 pm - Website Comm. 7 pm - Council meeting	18 9 am - TOPS 9-11 am - Women's Circles Bible Study - GFJ Noon - Staff planning mtg. Wed. Evening Activities NO Confirmation	19 6-9 pm-BCCC - Heritage Rm.	20 3 pm - Book Club - Library Confirmation Retreat at Gustavus through tomorrow	21 Confirmation Retreat at Gustavus (ends today)
22 8:15 & 10:45 - Worship 9:30 - Ed. Hour, coffee 5 pm - Movie Night	23 5-9 pm - Mankato Children's Chorus 5:45 pm - TOPS 7 pm-Youth Band	24 7 am - Café Ambrosia Bible Study Noon - Men's Bible Study 1 pm - Library Board	25 9 am - TOPS 1 pm - Staff mtg. 3:30 pm - Women's Bible Study - GFJ Wed. Evening Activities	26	27	28
29 8:15 & 10:45 - Worship 9:30 - Ed. Hour, coffee	30 5:45 pm - TOPS 5-9 pm - Mankato Children's Chorus 7 pm-Youth Band	31 7 am - Café Ambrosia Bible Study Noon - Men's Bible Study 1 pm - Library Board				

CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

January LIGHT News


NO LIGHT on **Sunday, January 1**, due to the New Year holiday.

The 4th Rotation will begin on **Sunday, January 8**.

Save the date: The children will sing in church on **Sunday, February 26, at the 10:45 service.**


LIGHT is in need of YOUR help!! We are always looking for Light Keepers and Facilitators. It takes 25 volunteers each Rotation to make the program run successfully! We need YOU! Please consider donating your time for either a 3-5 week period or the whole year! Contact Leah Garry at 507-382-2205 or at

lgarry@hickorytech.net to volunteer or just to learn more about the exciting LIGHT program.

We Welcome Children! We want children to know they are welcome in our church. We offer children's worship bags with activities each week as well as a children's bulletin to help them with their worship experience. Please see the ushers for bags & bulletins. We also have a professionally-staffed nursery with a parent paging system available. *Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." ~ Matthew 19:14*


Wednesday Night Kids' Club is here at Bethlehem!



Bethlehem Kids' Club is a group of students (kindergarten through 6th grade) who meet in the "Moved by the Spirit" room on Wednesday nights from 6:00-6:40. During this time, we grow in our relationship with Jesus. We praise God through music, and we take time to learn from our Bibles.

On **Wednesday, February 1**, the children of the Bethlehem Kids' Club will sing at the 6:00 p.m. Wednesday worship service in the chapel.

If you have questions about Kids' Club, please see Leah Garry or Laurie Rossow.



Save the dates for the following opportunities provided through Green Lake Lutheran Ministries:

- * **April 20-21** -- an overnight retreat for the 2nd-5th graders of Bethlehem.
- * **June 10-14** -- Day Camp at BLC. Registration will begin in May.

And, of course, it's never too early to think about a week-long summer camp adventure for your child! Camp is one of the best feeder systems the church has, helping to provide future leaders for ministry. We are corporate members of Green Lake Lutheran Ministries in Spicer, MN. This will get our members special rates to attend camp.



"And this is one of the new offering envelopes for the kids."



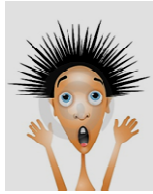
Come join us for a night of fun, family, and fellowship.

Bring friends!

Sunday, January 22, at 5:00 p.m.

Feature presentation to be decided. Pizza, pop, and popcorn will be provided for a free-will offering.

Please RSVP to Leah Garry at 507-382-2205 or lgarry@hickorytech.net.



2012! We made it. The December 21, 2012, prediction of doomsday has arrived, at least by year. They made a movie about this. (It must be true?) I remember well the panic of year 2000, when the corporate computers were not going to accurately record the date. What that panic did do is put the financial records in a safe place with back up, so when the attack on the Twin Towers occurred in 2001, financial records were intact (a good thing). We have too much information, and not all of it is accurate. You can get


on the internet and read anything you want to about anything. Even the news is premature. Is this a good thing? Sometimes and sometimes not. Too much information clouds the truth. The truth is, we will have good things happen in 2012 and not such good things (my prediction). I put my faith in Jesus. As Pastor Jay tells the confirmation class, Jesus is the answer. Jesus tells us what to expect and what not to expect. He says, "Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour." -- Matthew 24:44. If we are in a relationship with Jesus, we are doing what He wants us to—not perfectly, but we believe with our heart that God's grace will intercede for the imperfections. Are these scare tactics

a bad thing? They provide drama in an already drama-filled life (not so good for us – but good for the drug companies). A real question is, "What can we do about it if it is true?". We can get closer to God. A lot of people attended church during the 2000 fiasco and the tsunami (a good thing). Fear is part of life, but we have enough hardship and real situations to factor in without the drama. I guess I better get the planning for 2012 done. I am thinking about having the kids work on the global warming problem. Obama called yesterday and wondered if we had any solutions. Jesus probably won't come back soon enough for me to avoid my work. In the meantime—see you in church. ~ Lance

Who: 6th-8th Graders
What: Jr. High Retreat
Where: Kids Against Hunger, WOW Zone, & Bethlehem Church
When: Friday, March 16-Saturday, March 17
Cost: \$10.00

Activity Line-Up:

We will be heading over to Kids Against Hunger to pack meals for those in need. Afterwards, we will enjoy some FUN at the WOW Zone! Enjoy a meal of pizza and do some bowling! We will finish the day off by coming back to the Attic (Youth Room) for a LOCK-IN! It will be an evening filled with munchies, fun, and fellowship.



The Youth Experience

Worship	Education	Faith
Christian Fellowship	Leadership	
Creative Expression	Welcoming New and Different Faces	
Local Stewardship- Serving Our Community	Trip Ministry	

Bethlehem Lutheran can provide you with a solid Christian foundation and Spiritual resources so you can share the good news of God's love... just by being you!

Youth Trip



BIG PLANS, BIG GOALS FOR THE "BIG EASY"!

Fourteen youth have made the commitment to attend the youth gathering in New Orleans in July, 2012. This is just the beginning of the planning and preparing to gear up for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many of these teens. All youth have made a financial commitment towards this trip, but they will be working to raise funds throughout the next several months to subsidize the cost. Please prayerfully consider what you can do to help support these youth. The youth are also planning an exciting evening of food and entertainment for "Fat Tuesday" with a New Orleans party theme in February. Later in the spring, they will use some elbow grease to spiff up your vehicles at a car wash. Any and all financial support and prayers for a safe and successful trip are greatly appreciated!



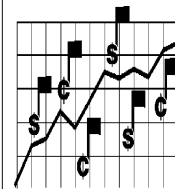
FROM THE
ENDOWMENT BOARD

In May, the Endowment Board announced the 17 scholarship recipients for 2011. Many requests were received for year-end earnings dollars distribution of \$3500. The following requests were included in this disbursement: Bethlehem Child Care Center, Leah Garry (seminary studies), Campus Ministry, VINE (building fund), and House of Hope (building fund).

Looking ahead, we see a potential of 29 possible applications for scholarships in 2012. If you are a senior going on to school or a returning college student,

don't forget to get your application in **by May 1, 2012.** Forms are in the office.

The Endowment Board invites you to attend the Educational Forum on **Sunday, February 19, 2012!** It is important that everyone understands the rules and regulations of our Endowment Fund, and the forum will give you the opportunity to meet the committee members. You will also have a chance to get answers to any questions you may have. Meanwhile, should you have a question, please contact Mavis Saxton, Chair (387-3346) or Robert Qualset, Treasurer (388-4970).



**Financial
NOTES**

As we push forward to year-end, our financial situation remains stable. Our general fund balance at the end of November was a deficit of \$3,275. At this time last year, we were struggling with a deficit of **\$30,000.** We have certainly come a long way!! Our goal at this point is to end the year with a positive balance. We have also been presented with a new challenge. Hopefully all of you received a letter explaining the "Magi Fund". With the upcoming building renovation and repair project, a member has offered \$20,000 to be matched by members of the church. So far, we have received over \$2,000 for that purpose. Thanks to all of you, Bethlehem has been able to reach a healthy financial position. Let's continue this positive trend into 2012!



A note about cancellations... In case of inclement weather on Sunday mornings, listen to KTOE 1420 AM/KTOE 102.7 FM for cancellation announcements for worship and church activities. In case of inclement weather on Wednesdays, our evening events will follow the cancellation decision of the Mankato Public Schools.

A New Year's Blessing

May God make your year a happy one!
Not by shielding you from all sorrow and pain,
But by strengthening you to bear it as it comes;
Not by making your path easy,
But by making you sturdy to travel any path;
Not by taking hardships from you,
But by taking fear from your heart;
Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping your face bright,
even in the shadows;
Not by making your life always pleasant,
But by showing you when people and their
causes need you most, and by making you
anxious to be there to help.

God's love, peace, hope, and joy
to you for the year ahead.

— Author unknown



**Bethlehem
Women's Circles
Bible Study**

Pastor Jay will lead a Bible study for **all circles** on **Wednesday, January 18, 2012**, at 9:30 a.m. in Grounds for Joy. Invite your friends! Also save the dates of **February 15 and March 21.**

ECHO FOOD SHELF

In January, we'll be collecting pasta.

**Things NOT to take
into the New Year:**

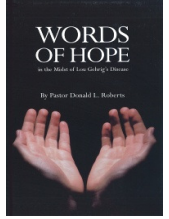
- **A tape measure** -- Consider only God's standards; don't compare yourself to other people. *(See Luke 18:9-14.)*
- **A rear-view mirror** -- Don't live in the past. You'll miss out on what God is doing in your life now. *(See Philippians 3:12-14.)*
- **A gavel** -- Instead of judging others, pray for them, help them, and team with them. *(See Luke 6:37-38.)*
- **A life vest** -- Don't be overly cautious spiritually. Peter experienced Jesus in a real way because he dared to step out of the boat. *(See Matthew 14:22-33.)*

DEVOTION/BIBLE STUDIES

A Devotional from Pastor Don Roberts

Pastor Don Roberts served as pastor at Bethlehem from 1989-1996. He was diagnosed with ALS/Lou Gehrig's Disease in 1995 and continues to be an inspiration of life and faith to our congregation. His devotionals are written with the aid of a letterboard and an assistant. Pastor Don's book is available in the church office ~ \$15 each.

*The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
The Lord is good to all and his compassion is over all that he has made."
~ Psalm 145:8-9*



Many of us have angst as we enter a new year. Will the economy improve? What will happen in Afghanistan? What will the world look like 365 days from now? What will happen to us this year? That's why I think that the above verses are appropriate as we enter a new year. They give us hope. These verses were fulfilled in Christ. The death and resurrection of Christ made these verses come true. Many things happen in the world that are not the will of God. Things like wars,

oppression, hunger, abuse, and illness happen that aren't the will of God. Why do these things happen? It is because we live in a sinful world. It may not be because of our sin, but because we live in a sinful world. As evidence of this, God came to us in Christ. What did we do? We crucified him. As we look at the world, God doesn't have every word. What is important is that God has the last word. These verses tell us that. God made us. That means God has compassion on everyone in

the world. God made the world. That means God has compassion on the world. We should be optimistic as we enter the new year. These verses tell us so. If this is your last year, you have eternal life. If you are mired in guilt because of sin, you have forgiveness in Christ. If you are slow to serve God, remember that God is slow to anger. Because of these verses, we have every reason to be optimistic.

ADULT FORUMS -- 9:30 a.m. in the HERITAGE ROOM



January 1
January 8

January 15
January 22
January 29

No forum (one service at 9:45)
Community Representatives panel with local government leaders
CADA House
Financial Peace University
Bethlehem Earth Stewards

Prayers Wanted! Our Bethlehem prayer team invites you to join us twice a month for a time of prayer, learning, and ministry to God's people at Bethlehem. The Prayer Team meets on the first Sunday of each month for a time of conversation, learning, and prayer. **We will meet after the services on the third Sunday of each month to pray with those who long for healing.** All are welcome -- tell Pastor Jay if you are interested.



Mom's Circle Bible Study

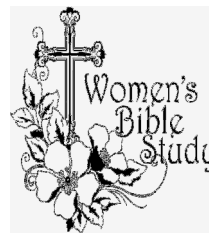
Mom's Circle is a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Our callings are to engage in ministry and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world. A group of moms with young children meets at **6:30 p.m.** on the third Monday of every month during the year. **We will meet at Amanda Neubert's home on Monday, January 16.**



Men's Tuesday Noon Bible Study meets at 101 Main in the downtown City Center Hotel.

Wednesday Women's Bible Discussion Group

will meet on **Jan. 11 & 25** at **3:30 p.m.** in Grounds for Joy.



Come to Café Ambrosia!

Join us every Tuesday morning at 7:00 a.m. at Café Ambrosia, which is located at 1720 Commerce Drive in North Mankato.

Men & women are welcome.

*Come and join us --
we have room for more!*



A Musical Note from Laurie Rossow, Coordinator of Music

As I write this article for our January 2012 newsletter, we are in the final days of the year. Another twelve months have ticked by. How can this be? Memories of the year's meaningful events are forever engraved in our minds. We celebrated many milestones this year: our 30th wedding anniversary, our oldest daughter's wedding, summer vacation spent at home attending to the "honey-do" list, our youngest daughter's 21st birthday and her graduation from college, then Thanksgiving and my favorite holiday - Christmas!

Now a new year is here, and with it a new calendar. I see 12 months of fresh pages. I have 365 blank squares stretching ahead of me (actually 366 in this leap year!). That's 366 days of unwritten pages in my journal, 366 unsung songs, 366 unspoken prayers, and 366 unclaimed blessings. There is something exciting about the newness of these blank white pages. It's the future laid out before me. I want to fill up these blank pages with more milestones. I want to make more memories. I want to live life! But I

am curious to know what the future holds for me and my family.

We have an inquisitive bunch of children here at Bethlehem, and it is such a joy to work with them. They want everything written down so they know when things are going to happen. They, too, are curious and our time together is always filled with questions (some are very profound!). They often ask questions about tomorrow, about life, about time -- "What time is it?" "Is it time to go home?" "When are we going to sing? Tomorrow?"

We all have a curiosity of what tomorrow will bring. We all have questions about the future. God has created us curious creatures, placing questions in our minds and placing the answers in our hearts. The answer to our questions is eternity. We will not find out about tomorrow without God. We are not ready to handle life until we are ready to face death. God has already set it all in motion. God has a timetable for each of us.

Beginnings and endings are created to capture time. But in eternity, time

will be no more. We won't need time anymore, since we will be living in the eternal present. There will be no clocks, no calendars, no schedules, no deadlines, and.... NO STRESS! There will only be the never-ending now.

The interesting thing is that as believers in Christ, we are actually living eternity now! So we begin a new and different agenda in 2012 with plans to sing praise to God for the love He has shown us; to love Him for the grace He has given to us; to thank Him for the many blessings he sends in our lives; to reach out to Him always in prayer; and to share His love with others. Happy Eternity!!

Scripture Verse: Ecclesiastes 3:10 -- "He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover He has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end."

Read: Psalm 148

Sing: ELW Hymn #823 "Praise the Lord! O Heavens"

Hymn History

"We Three Kings of Orient Are"

WOV #646

Matthew 2:1 -- "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem....."

Strange but true: A visit from St. Nicholas paved the way for "We Three Kings". It happened like this: After the War of 1812, Anglicans in America decided to establish their own seminary for training Episcopalian ministers, and they voted to locate the school in New York City.

Clement Clarke Moore, son of New York's Episcopalian Bishop and an up-and-coming land developer, owned a large estate in the undeveloped northern regions of Manhattan. He referred to it as "a quiet, rural retreat

on picturesque banks of the Hudson". Hearing that the Episcopalians needed land for their seminary, he offered a portion of his estate -- and thus was born General Theological Seminary. Moore, also a linguist and a Hebrew scholar, became one of General's first professors, teaching biblical languages.

Moore's fame made his name a household word, and his increased income allowed him to be generous. Moore had recently become well-known because of a poem he had written, which began:

*"'Twas the night before Christmas,
when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring,
not even a mouse..."*

Some years later, John H. Hopkins, Jr., enrolled at this seminary and graduated in 1850. In 1855, he was

hired as the school's first instructor of church music. It was Hopkins who wrote words and music for "We Three Kings" as part of a Christmas pageant produced by General Theological Seminary in 1857. In 1863, it was published in his *Carols, Hymns, and Songs*. The hymnal went through three editions by 1882, establishing Hopkins as a leader in Episcopal hymnody. He wrote other hymns, but most have fallen into obscurity. "We Three Kings" was his crowning achievement, which was made possible, in a way, through the generosity of another poet whose famous work ends:

*"But I heard him exclaim,
'ere he drove out of sight,
Merry Christmas to all,
and to all a good night."*

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES, LECTIONARY, & PARTICIPANTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>8:15 a.m.</u>	<u>10:45 a.m.</u>	<u>Special Events</u>
1/1	<u>ONE SERVICE AT 9:45 a.m.</u>	--	Youth Band Youth lead the service
1/8	WOV #5 Chancel Choir	Contemporary Gather Choir	Choir appreciation reception between services (see page 12)
1/15	Gather Service Bethlehem Octet	Gather Service Gather Choir, Bethlehem Octet	
1/22	ELW #1 Bethlehem Gospbells	Contemporary Bethlehem Gospbells	
1/29	ELW #8 Junior Gospbells	Contemporary Junior Gospbells	

LECTIONARY FOR JANUARY

<u>Date</u>	<u>First Reading</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>Second Reading</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
1/1	Numbers 6:22-27	8	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:15-21
1/8	Genesis 1:1-5	29	Acts 19:1-7	Mark 1:4-11
1/15	I Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]	139:1-6, 13-18	I Corinthians 6:12-20	John 1:43-51
1/22	Jonah 3:1-5, 10	62:5-12	I Corinthians 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20
1/29	Deuteronomy 18:15-20	111	I Corinthians 8:1-13	Mark 1:21-28

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS FOR JANUARY

DATE	TIME	READER	USHER	COMMUNION ASSISTANTS				GREETERS	COMM. SET-UP	COFFEE
1/1	9:45 a.m.	Bob Ihrig	3	Lorraine Carpenter	Lowell Carpenter	<u>Need Volunteer</u>	Sandy Kuper	Selma Braun & Cheryl Eigen	Eunice & Florence Sassenberg	Janice Ahlness & Jack Halvorson
1/8	8:15 a.m.	Sandy Kuper	4	Karen Sandersfeld	Brad Groth	Betty Groth	Sally Burdick	Wayne & Gail Date	Bob & Ginger Erlandson	Tom & Betty Sanger
1/8	10:45 a.m.	Etta Poole	5					Jack & Pat Bengtson		
1/15	8:15 a.m.	Kathy Croswell	6	Chuck Piehl	Linda Engstrom	James Erdman	Melissa Matthies	John & Sharon Finucane	Lavon & Sally Burdick	Tim & Amy Heiser
1/15	10:45 a.m.	Jessica Hagen	7	Tom Sanger	Betty Sanger	Madi Bentdahl	Gordy Larson	Arlo & Carolyn Hovick		
1/22	8:15 a.m.	Melissa Matthies	8	Frank Larsen	Lorraine Carpenter	Lowell Carpenter	Karen Sandersfeld	Don & Ardis Grotta	Brad & Betty Groth	Florence & Eunice Sassenberg
1/22	10:45 a.m.	Kathryn Freyberg	1					Shannon Butler & Deloris Guenther		
1/29	8:15 a.m.	Linda Engstrom	2	Karen Sandersfeld	Sandy Kuper	Bruce Royer	Sally Burdick	Deloris Guenther & Mary Hall	Tom & Betty Sanger	Lavon & Sally Burdick
1/29	10:45 a.m.	Signe Lervaag	4					Denny & Shirley Ferris		

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The **FIRST-EVER** National Choir Appreciation Sunday is scheduled for **Sunday, January 8, 2012!** On this day, churches across America plan to celebrate their choirs.

There are more than 32.5 million choir members in churches around the nation, who collectively volunteer 8.5 billion hours every year! (WOW!)

What would our weekly worship be without the volunteers that share their musical talents? Come and show your appreciation to our church musicians. We will have cake and coffee between services in Grounds for Joy on **Sunday, January 8.**



This day has been dedicated to thank our choirs for the joyous noise they provide each week.

"Music is the shorthand of emotion."
~ Leo Tolstoy

