



Bethlehem Star

March 2017

Spirituality: an exercise in seriousness and playfulness.

Our spiritual journey is at times a difficult and fun challenge to describe. The difficulty arises as we attempt to put into words a spiritual reality that defies simple description. Why spirituality defies almost all description! The fun appears as we employ word pictures and metaphors to grasp even the hem of meaning we wish to convey. To me the whole project is full of seriousness and playfulness.

A favorite image in memory from my first call is of the creativity of a Sunday school teacher. She was one of those marvelous church members who loved children so much that she kept teaching long after her children had moved to other towns and churches. I'd see her on a Sunday morning gathered around the table spread with papers drawing joyously in crayon describing the life of Jesus and the light of God with her students. Another Sunday I'd see her and a huddled group of students sitting on the table turned upside as it became an imaginary boat, and they were rowing for all their might against a storm on the Sea of Galilee. And yet another Sunday morning she and the people of Israel were blowing their little paper horns as they faced the walls of Jericho, which was as you guessed it their table turned on its edge. She sparked the imaginations of each in her class who could not wait to return to the lesson next Sunday. I am confident that her teaching and her zest for explaining God with the ordinary things all around us mattered greatly to more than one generation of kids who grew up in that church. Did that teacher however also realize the effect her teaching had on the casual observer who was drawn to the joy of learning exhibited there? How versatile the imagination is.

This month we enter into the mysterious church season of Lent. It is a season that has some connotation with darkness due to the dark stain of the cruelty brought upon Jesus in Holy week. Nevertheless, Lent is also connected with our springtime of growing light. Yes, we will hear in hymns and prayer the concern for repentance, but we will also hear in Gospel stories appointed for Sundays about the light no darkness can overcome illuminating the faith of Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the man born blind, and the family of Lazarus. While Lent still carries with it that tone of sorrow for sin, the themes of God's great power creates a wave of life that washes over the sin sick soul. We begin Lent on Ash Wednesday hearing Jesus command us "store up treasures for yourselves in heaven..." Matthew 6:20. Right away we know he's not talking about things and stuff, but he is speaking of that indescribable quality of relationship with God for which we hope and strive. We will conclude our Lenten journey with the command of Jesus at the raising of Lazarus, "Unbind him and let him go." John 11:44. And we know that the burial shrouds falling from Lazarus are all our own worries and fears as we face the freedom of new life in Christ. God is challenging us always to see through things that are to perceive that which at first appears hidden.

I heard a wise commentator describe the Christian life by saying, "Lutherans live in the beautiful tension of *and*." Does that sentence sound incomplete to you? The clue is that the word "and" is used as a noun whereas we usually use it as a conjunction. As a noun the commentator was implying that we live in the beautiful tension of being a sinner *and* a saint. Entering Lent *and* knowing Easter is always here. We know that we are sinners *and* we cherish the forgiveness of Christ. We experience loss, we grieve *and* we are victorious filled with hope. To live in the beautiful tension of *and* requires some seriousness to be sure; it is a complex spirituality. But I also know that we do well to release our creativity and playfulness. Turn that table upside down and start rowing. Take another look at Lent, it is a season of surprising depth.

See you in church, *Pastor Mark*

Second Annual Singing for Joy Church Choir Festival

Sunday, February 26 at 4:00 p.m. Bethlehem Choir, the Congregational Church Choir, the Evangelical Free Church worship team, and a barber shop quartet from Bethlehem brought such great music and tremendous energy to the second annual Singing for Joy. Each church music team brought four

anthems, the audience had two songs to sing between each 'act' and in the process God was praised and every spirited lifted. You could feel the joy fill the sanctuary. The result is that the 3rd Annual Singing for Joy is in the works already, but also the hope for a spring hymn fest in May.

The diversity of style and the power of the spirit is a must see and experience. Moreover, the testimony of unity in faith, hope, and love in God is our mission for these events. These are not just music events, these are faith filled praise events. Watch for the next and join all your friends there!

Movie Night

Friday, March 17 at 7:00 p.m. **Evan Almighty**, starring Morgan Freeman as God (who else?) This movie is appropriate for all ages, and is a smashing comedy based on the building of an ark. Join us!!

We'll have pop-corn, and green ice cream for all the Irish! Bethlehem has purchased a movie license that allows us to show publically most movies. This annual purchase means that we will be able to offer movies for all age

groups, retreats, and activities without infringing on the rights of the producers of the movies.

1st and 2nd Street Payout Day, February 8th

The special celebration at the Senior Center was an exciting time to learn how the 1st and 2nd Store continues to make a wonderful impact on our community generating **\$60,159.69** distributed to many non-profits by the efforts of 75 volunteers. Compare that to their first year when they raised \$16,473.00.

What growth in serving! Bethlehem was one of those recipients again. Thanks to the volunteers who designated Bethlehem and its programs for their work hours we received a total total **\$5,214.71** distributed among our general fund, BLCW, and Youth programs.

And so we must give a very big thank you to Lois Johnson, Kaye Tavernier, Phyllis Parker, Gwen Lenz, Bev Johnson, Annie DeBevec, Shirley McAlister, Lori Singleton, and Carol Berg.

Augsburg College Choir coming! Wednesday, May 3rd at 7:00p.m.

Can you picture it? We will have a choir ensemble of 50 college students along with an orchestra of 30 more. Plus we will hear a faculty piano soloist, Jill Dawe. And this is under the direction of Mark Sedio, well known composer. They contacted us to see if we would be willing to host this event as they make a tour of Minnesota. For their stay, they also hope that some homes will be able to provide accommodations for two or more of their students.

That will help greatly with their tour costs. Families who had home stays when the Gustavus choir toured years ago said that was a delightful time with very polite guests. I hope you will make sure to come for this great event. We will also be hosting a meal for them and all our Wednesday participants.

New Directory Coming:
Lifetouch to return for a 2017 Church Directory. The dates will be **Wednesday to Saturday, May 17 – 20, 2017.**



Mission of the Month

The mission this month for March is **Touch Nepal**. Touch Nepal empowers indigenous pastors and leaders who are reaching into remote villages, leper colonies, jails, slums and orphanages, to touch the

people of Nepal with the love and good news of Jesus Christ. See their work on www.touchnepal.org. Please use the envelopes in the pews or send your gift in to the office.

Still NEW: Text Messages from God: Mondays at Java Moose for a lunch or coffee break to read and consider the Bible lessons appointed for the next Wednesday and Sunday worship. 12 noon each Monday.

Memorial Bench project for Joyce Kehoe

Our group of members building the memorial benches included Mike Youngquist, Ed Hedstrom, Ellen Seltz, Craig Peterson, Jim Schmidt, Jim Ringquist, John Muus, and Pastor Mark. Randy Schnobrich led us through this project in record time. And thanks to Butch Schulte for trailering the benches to the Youngquist's barn waiting for warmer weather and the finish coat.



New Members Welcomed

On February 26 we welcomed Ellen Seltz and Jess Markusen to membership at Bethlehem. Ellen and Jess moved to Grand Marais this past summer as Jess was offered a job at the Grand Marais Art Colony as the Office Manager. Ellen is employed by the Cook County YMCA where she serves as the School Aged Childcare Coordinator. Ellen is

originally from Winona, MN and Jess grew up in Forest City, Iowa. Most recently, Ellen and Jess were on long-term staff at Holden Village, a Lutheran retreat center located in the beautiful North Cascades of Washington state. Though new to calling Grand Marais home, the North Shore has been the go-to vacation spot for Jess' family for several generations.

Ellen and Jess enjoy knitting and movie-watching and look forward to getting out and exploring the beautiful surrounding area come spring. Welcome Jess and Ellen to our fellowship in Christ.

Bible Studies at Bethlehem

Circle Bible Study Leaders: Pastor Mark will meet again with the Bible study leaders of the Circles to go over the monthly Bible study in the Gather magazine.

Our next meeting will be **Thursday, March 30 at 1:00 p.m.** as Circles prepare for April meetings.



REMIND SUPPORTERS THAT 2016 CHOICE DOLLARS EXPIRE SOON!

Now is the time to promote Thrivent Choice. All 2016 Choice Dollars have been made available for members to direct so there is no reason to wait. Use the free promotional materials available on the [Thrivent Choice page](#) on [Thrivent.com](#) to easily remind your supporters about Thrivent Choice® and the positive impact

that can be made by directing Choice Dollars to your organization. As a reminder, 2016 Choice Dollars expire on March 31.

Daylight Saving time starts March 12 set your clocks ahead!



BLCW Valentine Cookie Pack

This year the BLCW was amazed at the response. Such generosity in sweetness. We had plenty of cookies for the delivery to our recipients. We had extra cookies that supplied Coffee An' as well as church dinners. We hope that next year we may be able to recruit

more members to deliver the Valentine Packs. We head out for delivery in the afternoon of Valentine's day. Please keep that in mind for next year. You will be such a blessing.



Quilters need help

The Bethlehem Lutheran Quilters meet weekly on Thursdays at 9:00 AM. They create over 200 home-made quilts each year and distribute to a variety of charities in the northland as well as creating

Personalized Quilts for our graduating seniors every year. They need help with the sewing of quilt tops. You can come create at church with them or do it on your own at your homes and drop them

off to be quilted, tied and assembled at church.

Go Green

Bethlehem is posed to do even better as an ecological steward, but your church needs your help. As you have heard we have been given a designated donation as an inspiration to think more in the direction of adding either solar thermal or solar photovoltaic power. We have church gardens that may be used by members for the community good, we have

have the possibility of reducing our garbage by composting more, and by reducing use of non-recyclable materials. But Bethlehem needs your help. Join the Green Team to explore more possibilities on **Thursday, March 16th at 7:00 p.m.**

Homestead: We will continue to meet each Monday at 2:00 p.m. in the sun room. All members of Bethlehem living at Homestead are indeed warmly welcome to join us for an excursion deep into the lessons for the next Sunday worship. Join us for a warm discussion and prayer.

Third Annual Potato Sausage Dinner a great success!

On Friday, Feb. 24 the Men's Bible Study group, the Mission Endowment Fund committee, with help from Thrivent Financial held the third annual Potato Sausage dinner. They raised close to \$1000.00 for the replacing of the Bethlehem kitchen floor. So many thanks to Craig and Dianne Peterson our chief chefs! And a multitude of thanks to the teams of sausage makers, lefse makers, white

sauce and dessert makers: Jim Ringquist, Jim Schmidt, Stacey Hawkins, Kathleen Johnson, John and Cindy Muus, Thomas Stamps, John and Susan Bragstad, Ed and Kris Hedstrom, Greg Hanson (Thrivent Financial planner), Nathan and Joni Kristensen, Mike and Teresa Chmelik and Teresa's brother Brad, Sarah Hallberg, Barb Coe, Laurie Spry, Cathi Williams, Kaye Tavernier, Joan Ege, Linda

Zenk, Phyllis Parker, Wendy Hanson, Martha Rosebacka, Lyle and Shelby Anderson, Barb Youngquist, Pastor Mark and Janet Ditmanson.

First Communion Instruction starts on Ash Wednesday

Our instruction time for third graders and others who wish to start receiving Holy Communion will be on Wednesday afternoons during the after school program time of Holy Moly and Connect. We will plan on three sessions ending on March 15, so that all the Wednesday school kids can be part of the end of the year party on

March 22. As we have done so in past years, we will again hold a special dinner on Maundy Thursday, April 13, at 5:30 p.m. open to the families of the first communion kids and all other members who wish to be part of this liturgy of a Seder meal. Our meal will be potluck. The Seder elements will be provided.

Reformation Bookstore right here at Bethlehem

Augsburg Fortress Publishers is offering a Reformation Bookstore right here at Bethlehem.

In the narthex is a display of books commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Browse the books, select the titles you'd like to order. Fill out the order

forms by the display, include your phone and e-mail. We will be placing the total order for the congregation soon after March 12th. We will notify you when the books arrive and you may bring your payment in at that time. The books are

50% off and we get free shipping. A great way to celebrate the Reformation.

Matthew - Gospel of the Year

March 14 - April 11: Starting in March 2017 we will take another attempt to follow a five week tour through the Gospel of Matthew. Commentators have perceived an ordering of the Jesus story according to Matthew in a five book sequence.

On three Tuesdays of March and two in April at 7:00 p.m. we will follow that pattern and make our way through Matthew. As this the Gospel readings for this year primarily are from Matthew,

this study will help hold the worship texts in larger context. Our final session which will focus on the crucifixion and resurrection appropriately will be on Holy Tuesday of Holy week.



Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 150-200 words.

One benefit of using your newsletter as a promotional tool is that you can reuse content from other marketing materials, such as press releases, market studies, and reports.

While your main goal of distributing a newsletter might be to sell your product or service, the key to a successful newsletter is making it useful to your readers.

A great way to add useful content to your newsletter is to develop and write your own articles, or include a calendar of upcoming

events or a special offer that promotes a new product.

You can also research articles or find “filler” articles by accessing the World Wide Web. You can write about a variety of topics but try to keep your articles short.

Much of the content you put in your newsletter can also be used for your Web site. Microsoft Publisher offers a simple way to convert your newsletter



Caption describing picture or graphic.

to a Web publication. So, when you’re finished writing your newsletter, convert it to a Web site and post it.

Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 100-150 words.

The subject matter that appears in newsletters is virtually endless. You can include stories that focus on current technologies or innovations in your field.

You may also want to note business or economic trends, or make predictions for your customers or clients.

If the newsletter is distributed internally, you might comment upon new procedures or improvements to the business. Sales figures or earnings will show how your business is grow-

ing.

Some newsletters include a column that is updated every issue, for instance, an advice column, a book review, a letter from the president, or an editorial. You can also profile new employees or top customers or vendors.

“To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”

Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 75-125 words.

Selecting pictures or graphics is an important part of adding content to your newsletter.

Think about your article and ask yourself if the picture supports or



Caption describing picture or graphic.

enhances the message you’re trying to convey. Avoid selecting images that appear to be out of context.

Microsoft Publisher includes thousands of clip art images from which you can choose and import into your newsletter. There are

also several tools you can use to draw shapes and symbols.

Once you have chosen an image, place it close to the article. Be sure to place the caption of the image near the image.

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*Belonging to Christ, Sharing Christ on
the North Shore and beyond.*

