

January 2025

Volume 44 Number 1

Bethlehem Star

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Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." - Luke 3:21-22

On Sunday, January 12th we will be celebrating the Baptism of Our Lord Sunday. During worship, we will invite anyone forward, who has not been baptized before, to be baptized - baby, adolescent, teenager, or adult.

Baptism is central to our faith and identity as Lutherans. We believe that Baptism is the first step in our Covenant relationship with God. A Covenant relationship is a relationship built on trust, where both parties hold up an end of the bargain. God's end of the Covenant is that the time when we are Baptized we are initially received into the Christian community, we receive the Holy Spirit, and we enter into God's salvation.

We also have our end of the Covenant, which are the promises that we make to God and to our community of faith at Baptism. You can read through these promises on page 228 of the ELW (aka the cranberry hymnal in the pews).

We also believe that there is only one baptism. While we may mess up our end of the Covenant relationship - God remains faithful throughout. There is no need to be baptized multiple times, because we trust and believe that God follows through on the promises that God makes to us in baptism.

If you (or someone in your family) have not been baptized and want to learn more about Baptism, contact me (Pastor Calvin) and we can talk more.

On Sunday, January 12th, Baptism will be offered to all who have not been baptized who would like to be baptized. Even if we haven't talked before, even if it's at the last minute. And for the rest of the congregation, we'll give thanks for our baptism together at the beginning of the service, and be reminded of the Covenant relationship that we live in with God and with each other.

See you all on January 12th, Baptism of Our Lord Sunday!

Peace in Christ. Pastor Calvin Konop

Magnificent Christmas Tree!

I'm not sure how they do it, but Kent and Lyndsay Anderson always seem to find the most magnificent tree for our Christmas celebrations. Thanks to the Tree Crew: Anderson's, Mielie's (Aaron, Lyndsay, Oscar, Ty), Wallner's (Samantha, Cori & Rhett), Radloff's (Stephanie & Bristol), Youngdahl's (Mark & Brooke) and Kendra Berglund.

I'm sorry the picture doesn't do it justice.— Denise



First Communion. December 15, 2024. Bristol Radloff, Blake Williams, Cori Wallner with Pastor Calvin. It was a family affair with uncle Mark Youngdahl and Jack Radloff helping to service communion.



"Once a teacher, always a teacher"

Ed Bolstad with Oliver Johnson and Bevie Williams. (So cute!)





Devotions

By Pastor Calvin Konop

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him... Matthew 2:1-3

When the “wise men from the East” finally make their way to Jerusalem, following the star for who knows how long, they look for someone who might know the big news. And who might know the big news about someone being born the new “King of the Jews”? Probably the current royalty.

Here is the part of the text that really stands out to me: When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him. King Herod is frightened because he might lose his power. But why is all of Jerusalem frightened with him?

I think they're frightened because the idea of change is terrifying. It didn't matter if Herod was a good king or a terrible king - as the old saying goes, “Better the devil you know than the devil you don't.” The idea of new rulership is scary because it's unknown.

But Christ was born to lead us all into the unknown.

Before Jesus, there was the Law. A list of demands of what we need to do and not do, and if we messed up even once, the penalty was death. But Jesus came and brought grace, an unknown and frightening thing that accepts as where we are, and as we are. Grace that loves us through thick and thin, saves us against all odds, and leads us into a relationship with God

and our neighbors. So, as the angels said to the shepherds, “Do not be afraid.” The grace found in Jesus is good news of great joy for all the people.



Annual Meeting

Sunday, **February 2nd** after Service in the Fellowship Hall.

Mark your calendars now for our Annual Meeting! At our annual meeting we'll approve our annual budget, and this year we'll talk again about the future of our CYF Ministries. Last year our congregation voted to fund a full time CYF position, and we met that goal and hired a new Director. Sadly, Sarah has resigned from the position after an extended leave of absence. We wish her well and keep her in our prayers. At the annual meeting, we'll have a chance to talk about what the congregation wants for the future of our ministries for children, youth, and families.

We'll also take the time to celebrate the ministry that we've done together in the past 12 months. We'll hear from a few different ministry leaders, and we'll have a chance to celebrate together. I even ordered a little surprise for our celebration - come to the meeting to find out what!

See you at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 2nd after the 10am service.

Zoom: Meeting ID: 831 9572 1242
Passcode: 368304



RECONCILING *in* CHRIST

Dear Siblings in Christ,

This is Pastor Calvin writing to you on behalf of Bethlehem's Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Committee. The RIC Committee is an official committee of Bethlehem that is exploring what it means to be a welcoming church, and whether or not it is a good fit for Bethlehem to be an official RIC congregation.

What does it mean to be an RIC Congregation?

Straight from the Reconciling Works website: The purpose of the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program is to ensure the welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; work for racial equity and commit to anti-racist work and support the national program.

This is our opportunity, as a church, to explore what it means to not only be a welcoming church, but to publicly and boldly say that we are welcoming to all of God's children.

What are the Steps for the RIC Committee?

The RIC Committee are the leaders in the exploration process at BLC. There is a curriculum that we use to help our congregation explore what it means to be welcoming, inclusive, celebratory, and advocates for LGBT+ folks and people of color.

The Committee will be reaching out to members of the congregation for informal one-to-one conversations in order to: 1) share

our statement of intent (printed on next page); 2) get to know you better; and 3) hear your thoughts and feedback on our welcome statement.

The Committee will also provide educational and explorative opportunities for the congregation to think and talk about what it means to be welcoming, and to learn more about our neighbors who are different from us.



As a church, we have a commitment to listen to each other. Jesus modeled this behavior during his life on earth. He asked people questions and listened to their answers ("Do you want to be well?"; "Who do you say that I am?"); he gave people on the margins time, love and attention; and he led with compassion and love. We, too, are called to listen to each other without judgment, to learn from each other, and to lead with compassion and love.

These conversations are deeply personal to many people, and often can be emotionally charged. My hope for Bethlehem is that we can listen to each other, love each other and care for each other, and continue to grow in our faith together. I will continue to keep this process in my prayers, and invite you to join me in praying for our community. Please contact me if you want to know more about this process - my office door is always open to you.



Statement of Intent

The Reconciling in Christ Committee at Bethlehem Lutheran Church intends to:

1. **Explore and develop**, along with the larger church body, a welcome statement, that specifically includes and lists people who have experienced oppression from the Christian church. People who have experienced oppression due to racial and social inequities, gender and gender orientation, and other types of oppression, need to know where they are safe.

2. **Invite all people**, which includes all races, ethnicities, genders and orientations, to full participate in leadership positions, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings and joys of our church community.

3. **Encourage** usage of spaces within the church building that support the needs of all people, and encourage discussion of physical changes to the church building to create a more welcoming space to all people.

4. **Encourage annual meaningful contributions** to local organizations and other synodical organizations, which support all people.



Ping Pong

We are hosting Pincushion Mountains Table Tennis Club in our Fellowship Hall on Thursday evenings. The Table Tennis Club invites everyone of any skill level or age to play. They'll be meeting in the fellowship hall on Thursday nights from 6:30-8pm, starting on January 16th.

Stop by for as long as you're able to play some ping pong and get to know others from town.



Youth Ministries

blcyouth@boreal.org

Confirmation:

Confirmation resumes on Wednesday, January 8th. Dinner at 5:30, service at 6:00, and Confirmation class from 6:30-7:30pm.

Middle School & High School :

This month, the middle school and high school students are invited to a fun night full of games, challenges and snacks. This game night will be held Friday night, January 24th, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. Everyone from 6th through 12th grade are invited, whether or not they go to Bethlehem. Looking forward to seeing you there. Thanks to Carin Gulstrand for leading this event.

Refreshed Busy Bags

Thank you to Joni Kristenson, Nan and Eddie Onkka, who added some new items to the Busy Bags. These are activity bags for young children that can be used during church. The bags hang on a wooden tree in the Narthex. All children are welcome to enjoy these fun activities.





The Church in Society committee has selected Global Refuge as our January Mission of the Month. **Global Refuge** is a faith-based organization with Lutheran roots that was formed in 1939 and was formerly known as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS).

Its first mission was to help settle refugees fleeing from the destruction and dangers of World War II. For 85 years this non-profit has been walking alongside immigrants and refugees as they become valued members of their new communities.

Global Refuge assists with finding places to live, connecting with services and resources, learning a new language, enrolling in school, finding employment, and building a strong economic foundation as they integrate into new communities. Here are some numbers reflecting the impact of **Global Refuge** in 2023 figures:

1,821 children served through foster care

8,507 asylum seekers received respite services

378 Ukranian refugees resettled

14,500 Afghans resettled in communities across the country

Member Challenge:

The **Global Refuge** website, globalrefuge.org, can connect you to many stories of families recently helped to build new lives in new communities. Please take a look and be inspired by this ministry of welcoming and sharing with neighbors from many places as they build new lives here in the United States.

In God's Care

President's Report

By Kris Hedstrom

The busy pace of Christmas events and celebrations are behind us. I hope we all have good memories to cherish—the Hanging of the Greens, the Advent bake sale and luncheon, the gorgeous tree in the sanctuary, the Borealis concert, the outdoor Nativity pictures and our two special Christmas Eve services.

January has arrived and the Wednesday Contemporary Services will resume on January 8th. All are welcome to the meal at 5:30 PM. My favorite meal is the Hot Dish theme. Church begins at 6:00 PM and Confirmation classes start at 6:30 PM.

The Indigenous Conversation group is sponsoring a Book Group event. The book is *Walking the Old Road* by Staci Drouillard. The group will meet on Thursdays, beginning January 9th, from 6-7 PM in the Church library. The expectation is to meet weekly and discuss a few chapters each week for 6 weeks. The book is available for purchase or the Grand Marais Public library has several copies to borrow.

The church council approved buying a second ping pong table. At least one table will be up in the fellowship hall most of the time. The second table will be put up for Thursday evenings. The Pincushion Mountain Table Tennis club will meet at Bethlehem on Thursday nights from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. This is another way to welcome people into Bethlehem and notice the opportunities we have to enrich our lives and benefit our community.

Our Annual Meeting is set for February 2, 2025. Reports will be available later this month.

In God's Care,

Kris Hedstrom, President

You can *change* lives.



Long-time members, dear friends and neighbors, Lyle & Shelby Anderson have moved to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Their new address is 935 Cove Court NW, Sauk Rapids, MN 56379-4597.

Shelby's legacy continues in our library. Please check it out, and remember we have a vast collection of books, awaiting you.

<https://www.librarycat.org/lib/LibraryOma>



Giving Your Best

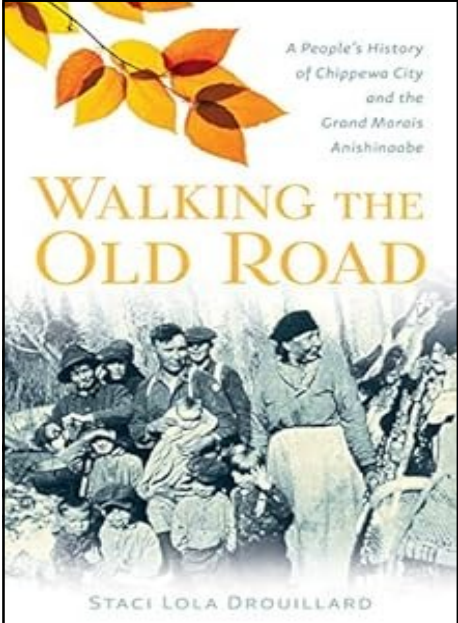
Like the Magi, we can respond with our best gifts — our work, our community, our devotion, our very lives. We disciples are Christ's tangible presence in the world. That same Child whose light brought such joy to the Magi now, through us, offers his mercy to every person.

Through us, every day, Christ feeds multitudes; he heals, teaches and guides countless people. Through individual volunteers and major institutions, through simple acts of kindness or worldwide coordinated efforts, the world can encounter, through the Christian community, the enduring, tangible presence of Christ. —Michael Simone, Church Art Online

Indigenous Conversation Book Group

“Walking the Old Road: A People’s History of Chippewa City and the Grand Marais Anishinaabe” by local author, Staci Lola Drouillard. The story of a once vibrant, now vanished off-reservation Ojibwe village—and a vital chapter of the history of the North Shore.

Discussions will be **Thursdays from 6:00 to 7:00 pm** at Bethlehem, beginning on **January 9 through February 13**. We will meet in the church library for Zoom access and if we don't have any zoom participants we may move it to someone's house. (Bring your own book.)



Sue Hennessy (218.370.0224) and Kristin Lindholm (507.301.8379) will be leading this book discussion. Please contact them for more information.

To access via Zoom:
Meeting ID: 872 6850 0524
Passcode: 555595

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Quilt Auction

**Attention: Quilters,
crafters, woodworkers,
and those who love all
things handcrafted:**

The 2025 Northeastern Minnesota Quilt and Marketplace Auction for World Hunger will be back for the 2025 Synod Assembly, May 3-4, 2025 at Breezy Point, Brainerd!!

Since the first year of the Quilt Auction in 1999 and the addition of the Marketplace a few years later, nearly \$300,000 has been raised for World Hunger. This could not have been done without the many talented quilters and artisans who have shared their gifts so that others might be fed.

So as you hunker down this winter, please consider working on an item to donate. If you have questions, please contact Amy Loken at 218-391-4260 or Marybeth Jacob at 218-830-0355 or email at: marybeth.jacob56@gmail.com

"We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

—Joseph Campbell



"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

—Martin Luther King Jr.

MLK on What Really Matters

Exactly two months before his assassination, Martin Luther King Jr. preached his final sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. On February 4, 1968, the civil-rights icon spoke about how he wanted to be remembered at his funeral. He preferred that people recall not his education or achievements but that he "tried to give his life serving others" and "tried to love somebody."

Adapting a 1952 homily by J. Wallace Hamilton, King decried the "drum major instinct — a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade." Humans often want to be great and first, as evidenced by the disciples James and John requesting prime seats in paradise. But King urged listeners to focus on the "reordered priorities" of Jesus, who wants us to *"be first in love."*

As Jesus showed, "everybody can serve," King said. Your background or status doesn't matter, as long as you have "a heart full of grace" and "a soul generated by love."

January 20th is the national observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The church offices will be closed that day.

New Year's Blessing

*The eighth day of Christmas,
the eighth day of Creation,
the Next New Day,
New Year's Day.*

*May every day be a new year's
day for you:*

*a chance to forgive and be
forgiven,
to start again.*

*May you take courage to begin
anew. ...*

*As you let go of the year past,
may you ... in your free fall find
yourself held*

*by an eternal love that has come
ages to be with you,
and will carry you all the way
to the end. ...*

*Every day may you trust your
belovedness,
your freedom from having to
prove yourself,
and receive the grace that is
given to you.*

*May this year be a year of grace
and hope.*

—Steve Garnaas-Holmes

*"Cease to inquire what the future has
in store and take as a gift whatever
the day brings forth."*

—Horace (1st century B.C.)

*"Between God and the soul there is
no between."*

—Julian of Norwich

January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day Office is closed	2 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	3 Clarity Hearing Appts	4
5 10:00am Worship & Sunday School	6 Epiphany 11:00am Staff meeting 	7	8 8:00am Church in Society Meeting 5:30pm Community Meal 6:00pm Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	9 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 9:30am BLCW Circle & Bible Study 6:00 Book Group	10	11 National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. #WearBlueDay
12 Baptism of our Lord Sunday 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Worship & Sunday School 2:00pm Care Center Worship Service 	13 11:00am Staff meeting 3:30pm Girl Scouts 6:30pm Executive Committee meeting	14	15 5:30pm Community Meal 6:00pm Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	16 8:00am Monthly Council Reports due to office 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 6:00 Book Group 6:30pm Ping Pong	17 Clarity Hearing Appts 8:00am Deadline for changes to Council agenda and reports 12:00pm Monthly Reports distributed to Council members	18 Memorial Service for Darold Rosbacka 11:00am Visitation; 12:00pm Service; 1:00 pm Fellowship meal
19 Pastor Calvin's Vacation 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Worship & Sunday School	20 Pastor Calvin's Vacation MLK Holiday  Office is closed 6:30pm Church Council Meeting	21 Pastor Calvin's Vacation 6:30pm Worship Planning Meeting	22 Pastor Calvin's Vacation 5:30pm Community Meal 6:00pm Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Confirmation Newsletter articles due	23 Pastor Calvin's Vacation 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 6:00 Book Group 6:30pm Ping Pong	24 Pastor Calvin's Vacation 6:30pm Game Night: Middle & High School Youth 	25 Pastor Calvin's Vacation
26 Pastor Calvin's Vacation 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Contemporary Worship & Sunday School	27 Pastor Calvin's Vacation 11:00am Staff meeting 3:30pm Girl Scouts	28	29 5:30pm Community Meal 6:00pm Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	30 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 6:00 Book Group 6:30pm Ping Pong	31 	

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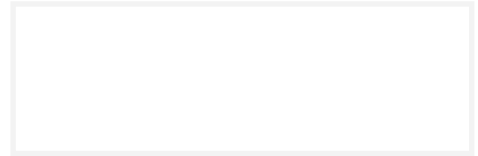

Belonging to Christ,

Sharing Christ on the

North Shore and beyond.



Evangelical
Lutheran
Church in America

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."
Luke 2:10-11

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your staff at Bethlehem Lutheran. During this season of celebration, we want to thank you for being a valued member of our community of faith. Your commitment to sharing God's love through your ministry is truly inspiring.

As we enter a new year, may you experience God's peace and abundant blessings in every area of your life.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" — Isaiah 9:6.

May God's grace guide and uplift you in the year ahead. - Pastor Calvin and Denise



GAME NIGHT
FRIDAY JAN. 24
6:30—8:00 PM
GRADES 6 -12

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS, EVEN IF THEY DON'T GO TO BETHLEHEM, AND WE'LL SEE YOU AT GAME NIGHT!