



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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E-Weekly Special Edition

12/9/24

Siblings in Christ,

If you have not heard already, Sarah Rhodes has resigned from her job as Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries at Bethlehem. Sarah's letter of resignation is attached to this e-weekly, and in it she explains that she needs to step down to focus on her health. If you were close to Sarah and you have her contact information, it would be appropriate to reach out and wish her well.

What does this mean for our Children, Youth, and Family (CYF) Ministry? I (Pastor Calvin) will be stepping in to lead middle school and high school ministry once again for Bethlehem. We also have a strong group of volunteers who are leading our Sunday School, and a great group of folks who are on our CYF Committee who are committed to keeping a strong youth ministry at Bethlehem.

Are we hiring again? We will talk about what the next steps could look like at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 2nd after service. We saw some exciting growth when we had a full-time CYF Director, and I think that our ministries at Bethlehem certainly warrant another full-time position – but the congregation will have the final say. If you have thoughts or ideas about the future of our CYF Ministry, reach out to me and let me know.

A word of encouragement: If you have every come to church on a Wednesday evening, you'll find a building that is bustling with energy. We have a shared meal, a fun and Spirit-filled service led by talented musicians and vocalists, and all generations represented (seriously, from babies to grandparents). We have 22 students involved in Confirmation, about a dozen high schoolers, and a whole herd of Sunday School aged kids. We're still getting our groove after Covid when it comes to different ministries, but we are so blessed to see how many young people we have, and how God continues to work in their lives.

In Exodus 34, God makes a proclamation who God is to God's people. God says, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and

abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation.” Through changes in staffing, through questions about our future, through thick and thin – God is faithful and abounding in steadfast love.

Please reach out to me with any questions, and in the meantime keep Bethlehem, our volunteers, and our children, youth, and families in your prayers. May God bless and keep you always.

Peace in Christ.

Pastor Calvin Konop

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Bethlehem Lutheran,

Thank you for the countless moments that made my time here so wonderful. I’m stepping away from my role to focus on my health, and I can sincerely say that I will miss this congregation. A few of my favorite memories include the Olympics themed Vacation Bible School (specifically the obstacle course), our 125th Anniversary Celebration, and seeing the Northern Lights with a group of 12 BLC women. It was an honor to lead the youth of this congregation. For all of their chaos, they are an endearing bunch!

In closing, I’d like to circle back to my children’s sermon during our 125th anniversary. I find myself smiling when I see paper clips now (after all, they share a birth year with BLC). As I said to the preschoolers that day, if you can see God in little things like paper products, then you’ll see reminders of God’s love everywhere. But I don’t need to tell you that! You have an inherent understanding of how to feel God’s love and reflect it so that others can feel it, too. I feel blessed to have been a part of this community- it’s truly something special.

With peace, light, and joy,

Sarah Rhodes