



# ***Bethel Lutheran Church January 2024 Announcements***

## ***This Month's Events***

**January Noisy Offering –**  
Pastor's Discretionary Fund

**Coffee with Pastor Jaime –**  
Each Tuesday from 1-2 pm at  
Vintage Grounds Coffee,  
except January 2

**January 9 – Senior Dinner,**  
4:30-6 pm

**January 9 – Evening worship**  
with Holy Communion at 6 pm

**January 13 – Faith Family**  
Fun, Noon-2 pm. Please bring  
a bag lunch. Treats will be  
provided.

**January 16 – Council,**  
6-7:30 pm

**January 21 – Confirmation,**  
4-5:30 pm

## ***Annual Meeting***

Bethel's annual congregational meeting will take place immediately after our 8:30 am worship service on Sunday, February 11. If you are responsible for a report in our annual report, please send it to Debbie Zortman by February 1.

***We celebrate God's grace,  
and we reach out  
with Christ's love.***

## ***A Message from Pastor Jaime***

What star are you following? Where is it leading you?

On the first Sunday in January – January 7 – we will celebrate Epiphany in worship (even though the official day of Epiphany is, as always, January 6). We will hear the story of the magi, or wise men, who were led by a star to the Christ Child. They present him with three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (That's the only "three" in the story! Our songs and Christmas pageants often feature three wise men, but Matthew doesn't give us a number of people, just a description of three gifts.)

In recent years, a tradition of Epiphany "star words" has been growing more popular. You may remember receiving a star word last year. Perhaps you practiced this tradition in the past as well.

If you received a star word last year, do you remember what it was? Mine was "dwell." I have it tacked to one of my bulletin boards. When I look up from my computer, it's a reminder to pause, to be present in the moment, to dwell with the God who comes to dwell with us in Jesus. It's a reminder on my busiest days that I am not the savior, that the world keeps turning by God's power, not mine.

This year, you'll have another opportunity to choose a star word. How might that word guide you? Maybe it will guide your actions. Maybe it will guide your prayers. (Maybe you won't like your word, and you'll be guided to trade for a different word.)

In a newsletter article on the website of the Presbyterian Church (USA), a pastor from New York talks about introducing star words to her congregation: "Some people were intrigued with their word. Some traded their stars for a better word. There was even one woman who had a negative reaction to the word on her star, but she kept it anyway."

Whatever word you choose – or whatever word chooses you – let it guide you to be purposeful this year about what and whom you are following. Are the "stars" we follow guiding us to Jesus

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## ***Worship Schedule***

### **Worship with Holy Communion**

8:30 am Sundays

### **Evening Worship with Holy Communion**

6 pm on the second Tuesday, following Senior Dinner

## ***Please keep in your prayers ...***

Albert and Donna – parents of Jeff and Gerald; Barb; Betty; Cheryl; Carol, Ed, and Debbie; Courtney; friends and family of Danny – friend of Teri and John; Dan; Dennis; Dick – friend of Dan; family of Dennis, Debbie's brother-in-law; Doris; Edna; family and friends of Erv, Jean P.'s father; George – Heidi's brother; Ginny; family and friends of Jean – Jean P.'s mother; Jiggs – cousin of Jim; family and friends of Jim – son of Ginny; Ken; Landon; Lauren; Madaline – daughter of a friend of Teri; Mitch; Paige – granddaughter of Ginny; family and friends of Richard – Dave's father; Ron; Sharron R.; Teri; Terry; Todd – brother of Teri. Our confirmation students: Casey, Grayson, Landon, Liam, and Ryder.

## ***Contact Us***

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and his way of love? Or are they leading us down paths that are perhaps easier but less faithful – and less life-giving?

The magi did not travel an easy path. Herod, fearful at the prospect of another king, tried to trick them into a plot against Jesus. But they were warned in a dream to resist, and to take a different route home. A star led them to Jesus, and a dream guided them home.

May we be guided to Jesus, and guided to share his love and grace with the world, in this new year and always.

(If you won't be in worship to choose a star word, or if you can't get to in-person worship, let me know if you would like to receive a randomly selected star word in the mail.)

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## ***Offering envelopes reminder***

We have not ordered preprinted offering envelopes for 2024, in case you have been looking for them. You may place offerings in the plate without using an envelope or using any envelope you have from home. If you make a cash offering that you wish to have recorded on your giving statement, please place it in an envelope, and write your name on the envelope. Thank you! And thank you to Diane Conner for helping us make this shift to conserve paper and be better stewards of our resources.

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**Thank you for your generous response to our Friends of Jesus toy drive! We wrapped 68 gifts at Faith Family Fun in December, and our collection also included eight gift cards.**