# The Dual-Parish Review



## Message from Pastor

It's almost impossible to miss how the world around us tries to push the start of the so-called "Christmas Season" to an earlier and earlier time each year. Retail businesses begin selling decorations as early as the middle of October or even the end of September, and as December 25th gets closer and closer their shouts of "Sale! Sale!" get more and more shrill. The Hallmark Channel begins their annual Christmas movie marathon at the beginning of November with nonstop Hallmark movies that have little to do with the actual reason for Christmas, and they can't seem to resist pushing that back a little bit each year with some of those same movies shown just before October ends or even previewed a bit for a special "Christmas in July" event. The radio stations begin broadcasting their collections of old and new Christmas songs on Thanksgiving night most years, and our old friends in the church of The Salvation Army begin placing their red kettles out a couple of weeks before that.

For a world that wants nothing to do with Christianity and that does its best to push it out of the public square, this incessant need to "get into 'the Christmas Spirit'" (whatever that is) earlier every year is puzzling to say the least. Attempts have been made year after year to do the same thing with Easter, but it never seems to reach the fever pitch that Christmas does. Maybe it's because of the happy feelings and nostalgia that are associated with it. Maybe the anticipation of getting newer and better stuff appeals to our innate and greedy desire to get more and more things. Maybe the time of year itself is the explanation as the shorter days and lower temperatures encourage people to seek after something that will make them feel better.

In reality it's probably a combination of all three of these reasons which ultimately find their basis in humanity's sinful nature. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that it's sinful to enjoy the season or to watch the movies or listen to the music, and I'm not saying that we shouldn't begin to prepare for Christmas. In fact, that's what the season of Advent is all about, preparing ourselves for the Christmas celebration of the Lord's first arrival as we look ahead to too His second coming. It's not just a time to count down the days to December 25th, and to open a bunch of smaller gifts in the trendy Advent calendars that you see lately. This is a season for us Christians to actively prepare for His arrival.

Advent (which we get from the Latin word, *adventus*, which means "coming") is the season that prepares us for Christmas as it focuses on a progression from darkness to light. During this season we anticipate the second coming of Jesus, and we prepare to celebrate His first coming as the very Light of the world that pierces the darkness of sin. Christians prepare together for this special celebration with special times of prayer and devotion. This year you can join us in preparing at St. John at 1:00pm or at Bethlehem at 7:00pm. Be sure to join us in this time of prayer, and also make use of this year's special Advent devotions from the Higher Things Lutheran youth organization.

History shows us that the season of Advent has been a part of the Christian calendar year since 550 AD. We know that when Christians come together to worship here on earth we are joining together with not just the people sitting in the pews, but with the believers in Christ who have lived throughout all of human history. When you pray the Lord's Prayer, you are joining with the apostles who were first taught those words by Jesus Himself. When you kneel at the communion rail it is not just you and God, but you join together with Christian believers from all of history and from all over the world. You join with "…all of the company of heaven" to receive the gifts of God. And when you join with us here on Wednesday evenings and on Sunday mornings during this Advent season you will participate once again in the longing prayer of the Church throughout all of human history to say, "Amen. Come quickly, Lord Jesus! Amen!" – *until next month! Pr. M.*

# December 2026

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church, LCMS**
233500 County Road E
Milan, Wisconsin 54411
**Sunday Worship at 8:00 am**
**Sunday School at 9:15 am**
**Adult Bible Study at 9:15 am**

**St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, LCMS "High Steeple"**
119415 Huckleberry Road
Edgar, Wisconsin 54426
**Sunday Worship at 10:30 am**
**Sunday School at 9:30am**
**Adult Bible Study at 11:45 am**

**Pastor Rev. Michael Mathey**
Pastor's Office Hours: M—T
Pastor's Number: 715-352-2888
OR 715-330-5599
**Not a cell phone.**
**Please leave a message**
Pastors Email:
lcmsrevmike@gmail.com

Secretary Office Hours:
Tues. - Fri., 9 am - 12 pm
Dual Parish Office:
715-352-2888
Office Secretary Email:
secretary@stjbeth.org
Dual Parish Website:
www.Stjbeth.org
Facebook page: Bethlehem Lutheran Church-Milan, WI & St. John Lutheran Church-Edgar, WI




**January Newsletter deadline is December 28th**

## Bethlehem Birthdays

| | |
|---|---|
| Sutton Kilty | 12/02 |
| Sequoia Miles | 12/04 |
| Tammi McKee | 12/06 |
| Lucy Geisking | 12/09 |
| Kurt Denzine | 12/10 |
| Justin Schwarting | 12/12 |
| Rosie Kunze | 12/13 |
| Elizabeth Kirchner | 12/14 |
| Joshua Bernt | 12/16 |
| Marnie Neumann | 12/18 |
| Kelly Mathey | 12/18 |
| Christian Kirchner | 12/20 |
| Karleigh Rinehart | 12/21 |
| Janessa Thomas | 12/28 |

## St. John Birthdays

| | |
|---|---|
| Samantha Myszka | 12/01 |
| Valerie Myszka | 12/01 |
| Stephan Schneider | 12/01 |
| Audrey Telschow | 12/01 |
| James Ulrick | 12/02 |
| Delayna Noller | 12/05 |
| Emma Koepke | 12/08 |
| Lauryn Hartwig | 12/09 |
| Amanda Kopplin | 12/09 |
| Raegene Rodman | 12/11 |
| Theodora Hamann | 12/15 |
| Steven Koepke | 12/18 |
| Kelly Mathey | 12/18 |
| Lisa Wussow | 12/19 |
| Victoria Myszka | 12/20 |
| Holly Meaders | 12/30 |

## Bethlehem Acolyte Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| Dec. 6 | Madalynn Johnson |
| Dec. 13 | Aleah Kosik |
| Dec. 20 | Evan Strack |
| Dec. 24 | Kelly Mathey |
| Dec. 25 | Kylee Johnson |
| Dec. 27 | Aubree Kirschner |

## St. John Acolyte Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| Dec. 6 | Marcus Pehlke |
| Dec. 13 | Kassidy Thompson |
| Dec. 20 | Isabelle Kramp |
| Dec. 24 | Lauryn Hartwig |
| Dec. 25 | Kelly Mathey |
| Dec. 27 | Les VanDerLeest |






## Bethlehem Anniversaries

| | |
|---|---|
| Clarence & Arlette Molthen | 12/02 |
| Matthew & Janessa Thomas | 12/19 |

## St. John Anniversaries

| | |
|---|---|
| Ryan & Samantha VanDerLeest | 12/15 |
| Stephan & Catherine Schneider | 12/26 |

## Bethlehem Greeter Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| Dec. 6 | Justin Schwarting & Kara Schwarting |
| Dec. 13 | Ray & Sarah Vanluven & family |
| Dec. 20 | Pastor & Deb Mathey & family |
| Dec. 24 | Dawn Gumz & Beth Kosik family |
| Dec. 25 | Duwayne & Susan Gumz |
| Dec. 27 | Bruce & Jolene Gumz & family |




Advent Worship Service Schedule

Wednesdays, December 2nd, 9th, 16th, & 23rd

St. John: 1 pm

Bethlehem: 7 pm




Christmas Eve (12/24)

Bethlehem: 5:00 PM

St. John: 7:00 PM

Christmas Day (12/25)

Bethlehem: 8:00 AM

St. John: 10:00 AM




**Bethlehem's children's Christmas program** will be Sunday, December 13th brunch will follow the church service.

**St. John's children's Advent program** will be Sunday, December 20th, with a light meal provided following church service and the children's program at 1:00 pm.

**To reserve the parish hall or schedule an activity at church call the church office.**




**December 2026 Parish Hall Reserved / Activity at Church**

Bethlehem:

December 2nd – 5th Soup, Craft and Bake Sale

December 9th – Advent Supper (Youth Group)

December 13th – Sunday School Brunch

December 16th – Advent Supper (Youth Group)

December 19th – Private Christmas party

St. John:

December 20th – Sunday School Advent meal and program

YOUTH GROUP

**Advent Supper**
Where: Bethlehem
Dates: December 9th, 16th & 23rd
Time: 5:30p-6:30p or until gone
The Youth Group will be serving savory casseroles with dessert. Free will donations are accepted to support 2027 Higher Things Youth Trip.

**Put it on your calendar: December 22, 2026!** Red Robin will be giving 20% of the food sales on 12/22/26 to the Youth Group for their trip to the Higher Things Gathering. All you need to do is have a delicious meal at Red Robin and show the flyer or mention the fundraiser to your server. See flyer on this page.

*Red Robin® will give*

**20% OF FOOD SALES* BACK TO**

**BETHLEHEM & ST. JOHN YOUTH GROUP -HIGHER THINGS**

**Show this flyer or simply mention the fundraiser to your server to have your sales counted.**

**FUNDRAISER DETAILS**

**225548 Rib Mountain Dr, Wausau, WI 54401**
**December 22, 2026 All day**

**If ordering online, please follow these instructions:**

1. Start your order at **redrobin.com/order** and select the restaurant above.
2. In the menu, go to the category labeled "Fundraisers (To-Go Only)" and click on that item.
3. Click the "add" button, and then "add to bag."
4. Add your meal items and check out.
5. Arrive at Red Robin, come in, say hi, grab your food and be on your way! If your location has curbside pick-up, we can bring it to your car too!

*Fundraiser during restaurant operating hours. Visit redrobin.com and find this location to view hours. Donation based on all eligible net dine-in and to-go food sales only. Excludes sales from catering (at select locations), 3rd party ordering and delivery sites, alcohol, gift cards, retail, tax and gratuity. Offer void if flyer is distributed in or near the restaurant during fundraiser day & hours.

Red Robin

St. John Members: Make sure all your events and church activities are on the monthly calendar. With the snowy months approaching, the parking lots will be cleared out for Church Services and events listed on the monthly calendar.



# SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

**St. John Sunday School**

Milestone Gifts will be presented on December 6th

## Bethlehem Sunday School Christmas Worship Service:

Please join us Sunday, December 13th following the 8 a.m. service for a special presentation as our children share a joyful celebration of the CHRISTmas season. This is a wonderful opportunity to gather as a church family and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. We will be having a light brunch following the presentation. Please invite your family and friends.

**Bethlehem Sunday School**

There will be no Sunday School on December 20th & 27th.

**St. John Sunday School**

There will be no Sunday School on December 27th & January 3rd .

**St. John's children's Advent program** will be Sunday, December 20th, with a light meal provided following church service and the children's program at 1:00. Practice will start on Sunday, November 29th.




## Bethlehem Soup, Bake & Craft Sale

**Pick up Soup on Friday, Dec. 4th or Saturday, Dec. 5th - 9 am to 3 pm**
**Must PRE ORDER—Soup, CARRY OUTS ONLY - $9.00 per Quart**
**Order November 24th — December 4th by calling Dorean Freimund at 715-680-0078**

**Homemade Soups : Chicken Dumpling, Chili, Sauerkraut Chili, Cheesy Broccoli Cauliflower**






**Each Bethlehem family is asked to bring baked goods (cookies, bars) to help make this a successful Soup, Bake and Craft Sale! Drop off baked goods by Thursday, Dec. 4th. The back door will be open Nov. 30th – Dec. 4th 8 am to 4 pm. Please drop off baked goods in back room.**

***"Happenings in the District"*** - Check out our district (North WI District) monthly newsletter at www.nwdlcms.org. The website has plenty of church resources as well as event registrations, calendars and more. Each week highlights from around our district are added to the NWD Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nwdlcms

**LCMS Family Ministry**

**Waiting on the Lord**

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

Advent is a time of waiting. Waiting for Christmas morning, especially as a child, can seem very long. Even while we are waiting to celebrate Jesus' first coming at His birth, we are also waiting for His Second Coming on the Last Day. Throughout the Bible, God gives promises to His people. He promises a Savior, salvation and deliverance. Genesis 3:15 is God's first promise to send a Savior. The Israelites had to wait for that Savior, and we continue to wait for the Last Day when all God's promises will be fulfilled. Talk with your family about how God keeps His promises to His people, but in His own time, not ours.

## Interested in E-Giving?

The easiest way to set up E-Giving is through the church website (stjbeth.org). Under each congregation's tab is a link for e-giving. You can set it up for automatic giving at the interval you desire (weekly, monthly, etc.). If you have questions, please direct them to your church financial secretary or treasurer.

**Preparing for 2026 Dual Parish Annual Report.**
At the November Church Council meeting, the chair of each committee should have received an informational letter regarding the 2026 Dual Parish Annual Report. If you did not receive the informational letter, please talk to Alan, Linda or Tabitha.

Thank you to all who have volunteered as members on church boards. Your service is greatly appreciated. Thank you for volunteering your time to service others and our church with your talents and abilities.




**Part-time Bookkeeper Wanted:**
St. John is looking to hire a part-time bookkeeper. This is a paid part-time position starting as soon as possible. Resumes can be emailed to the church secretary at secretary@stjbeth.org. Please call to confirm delivery of resume. (emails can be delivered to junk mail).

**Church Cancellation Procedure:**
**PLEASE NOTE:** If there is a need to cancel Church Services or Meetings due to bad weather, you can find out by checking waow.com (Channel 9) or wsaw.com (Channel 7). Every effort will also be made to change the message on St. John's answering machine as soon as possible, and please, if you are not comfortable with the weather conditions, be safe and stay home!




**LCMS Health Ministry**

**The word "advent" means "coming." It is a somber season of the church year that reminds us of our in-between status as citizens of heaven. We find ourselves in the middle — we are living in the time between Christ's first coming and His final Second Coming. As people of the in-between, it begs the question: how do we spend our time? We repent, we forgive, we worship, we commune, we baptize! We are the church! We also engage in good works, we extend mercy toward our neighbors, we support each other in every bodily need. We are the Body of Christ! While we wait, we worship and we work (Hebrews 13:15-16)! We receive mercy from our Lord and we also extend mercy to the neighbor (Luke 6:36). "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus," and while we are living in the in-between, keep Your church faithful in the worship and work she has been given (LSB 338)! Amen. Visit lcms.org/mercy to learn how mercy work is joyfully joined to the worship life of the Church.**

**St. John Monthly Council Meeting**
**November 10, 2026**

Linda Strunk called the meeting to order with Mary Schultz, Peter VanDerLeest, Stephan Schneider, Cathy Schneider, Danni Seibert, Jeff Werner, Bob Strunk and Pastor Mathey present. Pastor opened with prayer.
A motion was made to accept the minutes from October 13, 2026. MMSP.

**Pastor's Report**

- Thanksgiving services will be on Wednesday, November 25th at St. John at 1:00pm and Bethlehem at 7:00pm.
- Advent services start December 2nd at St. John at 1:00pm and Bethlehem at 7:00pm. There will be four weeks of services with last one being December 23rd.
- Due to low numbers signed up for the "Every One His Witness" workshop on November 7, it will be postponed to next year, possibly early February.
- Life Light Bible study is coming to a close. There will be a winter session with the topic to be determined.

**Elders Report**

- No report

**Evangelism (Formerly Outreach) Report**

- Received the $1000 mission grant from North Wisconsin District that we applied for. This will be used for radio advertising.

**Board of Education Report**

- Board of Ed would like to remove some old Confirmation pictures to make room for new Confirmation pictures. Also, may bring up some children's books to the upstairs library.
- Sunday, Nov 29th will begin Sunday School Christmas program practice for 4 weeks. The Children's Christmas Service will be December 20th at 1:00pm with a light lunch between morning service and Christmas program.
- Milestone gifts will be given on Dec. 6th.

**Trustees Report**

- Snow plowing will be done by the same person as last year, Jason Bohman.
- Crack near the east side of the entry way. Sealing that crack.
- Contracted to get some landscaping done around the parsonage.
- Getting the countertop in the Narthex fixed.

**Treasurer's Report**

- The LCEF loan for the Refresh Project is paid in full.
- Detailed printed financial reports reviewed and discussed for October.
- A donation was given to pay back the interest from the LCEF certificate note that was used to pay off the loan. We will not be able to add that donation to the account until February due to certificate restrictions.
- Budget funding for church operation was met for October 2026. Bills are paid but we have a continuing deficit for meeting our budget on a weekly basis.

**Finance Report**

- A new person has been added to the counting team. We are always looking for more people to count money.

Motion was made to accept all reports as given. MMSP.

**Unfinished Business**

- Have not received any applicants for the bookkeeper position. We will go outside our congregation to get a bookkeeper. Danni will be done at the end of 2026.
- Linda is still looking into the new facility insurance that is offered through Concordia Plans Services.

**New Business**

- Reminder to get all Annual Reports to Tabitha by the end of December.

Motion made to adjourn. MMSP.
Closed with the Lord's Prayer

Cathy Schneider, Recording Secretary

# Lutheran Hour Sermon Schedule

- December 6, 2026 "December Gives You Wings (results may vary)"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

December's festivities can provide a temporary boost but cannot satisfy our deeper longings. The words of Isaiah point to God's enduring promises, fulfilled in Christ. Isaiah 40:4

- December 13, 2026 "He Will Be Our Peace"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies

Christians are a 'waiting' people, waiting for the King to return, waiting for His promises to be completely fulfilled. Micah 5:2-5

- December 20, 2026 "Messiah Sing-Along"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

Dr. Michael Zeigler shares the surprising backstory of Handel's "Messiah." 2 Samuel 7:16

- December 27, 2026 "Redeemed at the Right Time"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Glenn Nielsen

At just the right time, God kept His promises by sending His Son, Jesus, to meet our deepest need. Galatians 4:4-7

| Station | City, State | Freq. | Day | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WDLB | Marshfield, WI | 1450 AM | Sun | 8:00am |
| WRVM | Marshfield, WI | 91.3 FM | Sun | 10:00am |
| WRVM | Medford, WI | 98.7 FM | Sun | 10:00am |
| WRVM | Wausau, WI | 101.3 FM | Sun | 10:00am |
| WSAU | Wausau, WI | 550 AM | Sun | 8:30am |
| WSAU | Wausau, WI | 99.9 FM | Sun | 8:30am |
| WAXX | Altoona, WI | 104.5 FM | Sun | 6:30am |

**You can also go on line at www...lhm.org or download the free App @ LHM.ORG/APPS**




### Daily Devotions

Daily Devotions from LHM will help strengthen and encourage your faith as you do the same for others. Have them delivered right to your inbox, podcast the audio devotional, access them on your mobile device through the FREE app, or listen with Spotify, iHeartRadio, Alexa, or Google Home.

## Lutheran Hour Radio Broadcasts

**Lutheran Hour Ministries -** God has called all laypeople to be powerful witnesses for Christ to their families and communities. At LHM, we strive to create convenient ways for you to connect with Jesus and share your faith with others. Our products are free, easy, and digital so that you can use them in your home, on-the-go, or wherever you may be.

Issues, Etc.

*Talk Radio for the Thinking Christian*

www.issuesetc.org

Issues, Etc. is a ten-hour weekly syndicated radio talk show and podcast. The program features expert guests, expansive topics, while extolling Christ. The program is hosted by Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Pastor Todd Wilken and produced by Jeff Schwarz.

**HIGHER THINGS REFLECTIONS: Two minutes. It takes two minutes to read a daily *Reflection* full of the Gospel of Christ crucified for you. Each day you get a reading, a devotion, and a prayer to help you confront the devil, the world, and your own sinful flesh with hope in your Lord's victory over all of it.**

**Bethlehem & St. John Lutheran Churches, LCMS**
**119415 Huckleberry Road**
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Bethlehem Milan

St. John
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*Where the Light of Jesus Christ Always Shines*