

The Star of Bethlehem



January 2018

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Christ
THE POWER OF
GOD AND THE
WISDOM OF
God
1 Cor. 1:24

2018 AD: the Future Is In God's Hands

"Even to your old age . . . I . . . will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you"
Isaiah 46:4

Not long ago, Diane and I were sitting in a local restaurant preparing to order our meal. Then I noticed the "Senior Prices" for those sixty and older. Of course I took advantage of the deal but wondered why it had taken me so long (four years) to notice these special senior rates. Perhaps it was denial and I just didn't want to admit it. Or, it may be that I don't feel like a "senior" so why order a meal like one!

I am noticing that there are constant reminders that I really am a "senior." As soon as I turned sixty I began receiving almost daily mailings from AARP, Social Security, Medicare, Financial Planners, and Retirement Seminars. Each organization had a promise that they could make my life better in the future.

However, while different organizations promise a better future, I am noticing that, by and large, those who qualify for senior rates seem to have little confidence in the future. Granted, we didn't do much of a job at the helm of humanity's ship while it was our turn. Unlike the "greatest generation" the baby boomers seem to have presided over a wholesale abandoning in our lifetime of all that is chaste and decent. And when you take a hard, long look at the movers and shakers of the next generation, it prompts you to shake your head and raise your eyebrows. What are our children going to face in the next few decades? What about our grandchildren? How will they manage? But God reminds us, and we take comfort from it, *"I have made you and I will carry you."*

It's the same old reminder to keep our hands off. It isn't just that we have done a less than creditable job in our own immediate past. It's that it isn't our job in the first place, directing the course of this world. It isn't on your shoulders or mine. Oh, we have responsibilities all right. God expects us to be faithful. He has bought us with a price; we are His, and that means obedience and following in His steps. But there is an overwhelming arrogance about our despair for our children and the future of God's world. Remember, God is this world's creator, and He has not left it nor forsaken it.

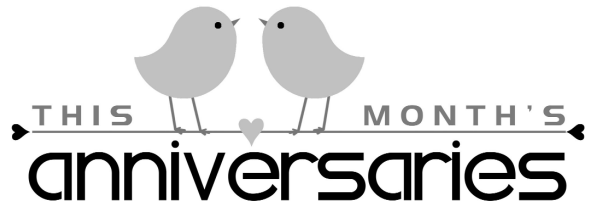
The worshippers of Baal, 600 or so years before the birth of Jesus, were forever having to pick up their idols and cart them off for safe-keeping whenever the enemy threatened. They had to take care of their gods instead of their gods taking care of them. There are religions which are little more than a burden, dead weight, a load to carry. But our God, insists, *"Even to your old age I will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you."*

As we enter the Year of Our Lord, 2018, may we be assured that what our Lord has begun in us He will perfect. And we pray that just as He has sustained those of us who have "senior status" so too will He sustain those faithful still to come. We commend our children and children's children to our Lord's care and keeping. Indeed, until the closing of this world's book of life.



A blessed New Year to all,
Pastor Dana Allen Brones

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(904) 249-5418 Church or 249-1204 Preschool
www.bethlehemlutheranjaxbeach.org



- 1 Joe McHan
Annie Moffitt

- 2 Teneil Brinkman

- 3 Jeff Carr
Gloria Gregg

- 5 Stephen Huber
Dorothy Loftin
George Zikeli

- 6 Kameryn Roberts

- 7 Sobra Horn
Aliya Smith
Debra Smith

- 8 Austin Duensing
Leland Lammle

- 9 Peter Bennett III
Kenneth Thompson
Tyler Zarski

- 10 Charles Singleton III

- 11 Erik Hunter
Thomas McNeil
Jamie Seim

- 13 Christopher Gregor
Courtney Ray

- 14 James Padgett
Melissa Starkey

- 16 Adelle Edwards
Arielle Edwards

- 17 Mason Gray

- 19 Stacie Stanfield
Janine Thackston

- 20 Elizabeth Dellinger
Melissa Estervig
Janice Flock
Robbie May

- 22 Adam Carr

- 23 Ann Cirillo

- 24 Mark Christ
Mary Miles

- 26 Larry Orr

- 27 Andrew Alenduff
Mary Dorsett

- 28 Nancy Russell
Gabriel Smith

- 29 Connie Machurick
Barbara Streeter

- 1 David & Barbara Jacobs
- 19 Al & Diana Clawson Jr.



**SENIOR
GAME DAY**
January 8
Cards @ 9:30 am
Everyone is welcome!
Contact MaryAnn Lawrence with any questions.

Online Sermons

We are so blessed and thankful that we now have the capability to upload our weekly sermon to our church website for all to listen to. Simply log on to <http://www.blcjaxbeach.org/> and under Current Sermon Series you can click on the sermon you want to listen to.

Attendance Record

<u>Date</u>	<u>8 am</u>	<u>9:30 am</u>	<u>11 am</u>	<u>Total</u>
Nov. 6, 2016	77	71	80	228
Nov. 5, 2017	100	86	91	277
Nov. 13, 2016	92	62	92	248
Nov. 12, 2017	102	84	75	261
Nov. 20, 2016	86	99	92	277
Nov. 19, 2017	91	124	106	321
Nov. 23, 2016	Thanksgiving		83	
Nov. 22, 2017			64	
Nov. 27, 2016	98	75	94	267
Nov. 26, 2017	89	79	100	268

Stewardship

	November 2016	November 2017
Worship	\$52,698.41	\$45,108.46
restricted	10,191.78	1,770.00
YTD Totals	<u>\$546,657.41</u>	<u>\$580,271.39</u>
restricted total	\$47,497.26	\$52,807.46

Like us on Facebook for the latest in news, photos and fun!

Screen Operators

Greeters

Altar

Jan. 7	8 am	Pat		Setup	
	9:30 am	Candice	Joan R	Tami	Val
	11 am	Gina	Lee & Joan F.		Brenda
Jan. 14	8 am	Sam		Jenn	Susan
	9:30 am	Tami	Joan R		Amy
	11 am	Susan S	Rita W & Julie T		Carol
Jan. 21	8 am	Val		Anna	Val
	9:30 am	Brenda	Joan R		Barbara
	11 am	Toni	Bruce & Holly D.		Diana
Jan. 28	8 am	Val		Susan	Susan
	9:30 am	Romaine	Joan R		Tami
	11 am	Carol	Mary D. & Barbara W.		Kathy

Please contact Kristine Perryman if you are interested in serving as a screen operator and what service you attend, 904-536-0826. If you would like to serve as a greeters, please contact Anna Arno, anna202358@hotmail.com (8 am) Joan Richards, 463.6703 nanajoin55@icloud.com (9:30 am), Jean Shimp, rlshimp@comcast.net (11 am) It is a great way to get to know more members. If you are interested in acolyting, please call Tammy Barley 704-5117 - or email tarnot@bellsouth.net.

2018 Offering Envelopes

They are now available in Disciples Hall. If you do not see a box with your name on it and would like to have envelopes, let the office know at 249-5418. Giving is also available online, please go our website to set that up. Thank you for your generous contributions.

Dear Friends

Your recent gift means so much. Not just for today or tomorrow but also for the longterm - because your gift is helping to ensure the ongoing formation of our church's future pastors, deacons and missionaries for generations to come!

Our beloved Seminary president, Dr. Dale A. Meyer, often says, "It's an exciting time to be in the ministry of our Lord Jesus?" I sense that excitement over and over again as I speak with students as our paths cross on campus. If you were able to be here, I think you'd sense that too, and it would be a source of joy and hope for the future.

This is absolutely thanks to you. Our mission would not be possible without you. Please know how grateful I am - and truly, all of us are -- for you and your support for Concordia Seminary. you are a blessing indeed to our students today and to the church for the sake of future generations.

Thanks again!

Vicki J. Biggs

Senior VP, Seminary Advancement Concordia Seminary

Emails....

Are you receiving email notifications from the church? If not, it may be that we do not have your correct email address on file. When you sign the attendance book, please include the email address you would like for us to use when sending out notifications. Notifications may be funeral announcements, events or just general communication to all members. We don't want anyone left out. Contact Carol at carolpiet@aol.com for more information.



*Many thanks from the staff at BLC
for your cards, goodies and
encouragement this Christmas season.*

Amazon

Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. Consider using this method of buying and designate Bethlehem as your charitable organization. Go to www.smile.amazon.com for more information.

Guatemala

The Bethlehem Lutheran Guatemala mission team 2018 is now looking for participants. We will begin interviews in January. Our mission dates are April 28-May 6, 2018. You will need a valid passport and updated travel vaccinations so start planning now. Contact Holly Dellinger for more details.

"I Saw the Light..."

We are limited only by our own imaginations. God has not put limitations on us. There are laws both from the Scriptures and that we have created for ourselves in order to make our lives civilized and safe. But there are no limitations for creativity. There are endless ways to express hope and joy and comfort and thanks and especially praise. Sometimes I get bogged down in the old tried and true ways of expressing these messages to God in our music. Sometimes people will say "well, I don't know that song, so let's sing something we know." Stuff you already know is good. There is strength and comfort in it. BUT, I am always on the lookout for something just a little different. Sometimes just a little difference can make you see, hear and subsequently think about things with just a new slant and: Bingo! I saw the light. I recently had a Bingo moment. It is such a great feeling; after the initial Bingo, it begins to grow and flower in your mind and you are charged with making it happen. My Bingo Moment: I was playing a little concert recently with Pete Reideler at the Proton Institute in downtown Jacksonville. It is a facility where people literally from all over the world come for a specialized treatment of cancer. Having survived cancer myself three times, I can offer the folks there music as well as hope for "yes-there-is-life-after-cancer". When we finished our performance a gentle man approached me to express appreciation for the music. In talking, he told me about members of his family who played piano and how it was generally a musical family. He then casually mentioned that he played TheSaw. BINGO MOMENT! He then told me that he frequently played in his home church in Columbia, SC. Double bingo moment! So, of course I asked him if he would like to play at our church. He was excited to accept, but then told me that he had not brought his saw and bow (a violin bow) and rosin with him. No problem; Pete said I have a saw (just a regular ole Home Depot type saw) and I assured him that I would locate a bow and rosin. We spoke on the phone several times, mostly to reassure each other that we were both serious and we both were. When you are in treatment at the Proton center, you receive treatment every day, so he and his wife Alice were here for the duration (3 months), however they went home for Thanksgiving and he returned with his own saw, bow and rosin. During the course of our conversations we discussed specific songs and what keys would be most advantageous for the saw. I told a couple people about the plan and they thought that it perhaps was nothing more than a personal Bingo Moment for me, but not necessarily such a great idea for church. Clearly their imaginations needed some polishing up. The day arrived and John and Alice showed up, saw and bow in tow and a lot of joy. "Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this Place" played on a saw is every bit as heavenly as a host of angels. It brought tears to my eyes. It was a very special Sunday because following the saw, we had Rusty Huseman singing "Joseph's Song", another glorious offering of the season. In spite of recent back surgery, Rusty sang at all three services. We were certainly more than blessed as we always are everytime someone sings or plays music in praise. I know 'I saw the light' and hope you all did also! Many thanks to Rusty and to John DeMars and to all our regular musicians who lead us in song every week.



God's blessing for a Happy New Year!
In His service, Kathleen Olive, Minister of Music

Please remember to sign the attendance book and let us know of any address, telephone or email changes.

Christmas Baskets

Bethlehem donated ten wonderful food baskets to military families at Mayport Naval Base the week before Christmas, coordinated by Pat Robar and delivered through Operation Barnabas! Thank you for your generosity! Merry Christmas!



Chaplain Stanley and Commander Master Chief Houlihan accepted the baskets for the Navy.

2018 Executive Board

President Bruce Dellinger
Vice President Brad Moe
Treasurer George Parnaby
Financial Secretary Ann Cirillo
Recording Secretary Susan Setina
At-large AJ Alenduff
At-large David Jacobs

Thank you for your service.

Youth Investors (Y.I.) Club

Welcome to the Y.I. Club

Where saving money is fun... and helps others learn about Jesus.

You know it's important to teach children to give thanks for God's many blessings and use those blessings wisely to serve Him. Learning to understand the value of sharing, saving and spending money is a good place to start.

When you help your child save for the future through the LCEF Young Investors (Y.I.) Club, those dollars can also help someone else learn about Jesus. Through the Y.I. Club activities, newsletters and web pages, your child can learn valuable stewardship concepts while empowering ministry through LCEF.

Join the Y.I. Club with a Y.I. StewardAccount

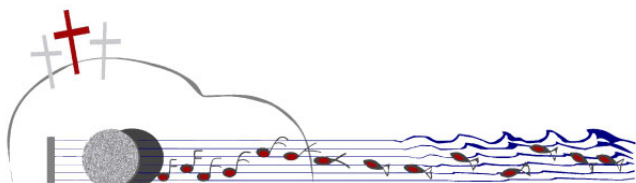
With an investment of just \$25 to open the Y.I. StewardAccount, your young investor becomes a Y.I. Club member with special fun activities that grow with three different age levels.

- . Minimum of \$25 to open account
- . Premium interest rate on balances up to \$1,000
- . Savings grow with the child, but are accessible
- . Checks and debit card available to custodian
- . Debit card available at age 16
- . Interest compounded and paid monthly
- . Make additional investments with checks or Y.I. Stamps

Note: The Y.I. StewardAccount is not available to investors living in South Carolina. StewardAccount access services are offered through UMB Bank, n.a.

If you are interested we have brochures in the Narthex at the back of the church.

Please keep our country in prayer.



In January we will be moving from Bullhead City, Arizona to Apple Valley, California. Our schedule has us moving around the Los Angeles basin. We have never spent time in LA before and we are looking forward to meeting new people and singing for a lot of kids during National Lutheran Schools Week. We will be in Crest Park, Camarillo, Lancaster, Orange, Diamond Bar, South Gate, Anaheim, and Alhambra. If January is about "new", we are on it!

We think of you often and when we do, always thank God for you and your work among the salty people of the sea. May the Lord breathe His holy wind into your sails and take you far along your journey with Him this year. Phew! That's it. We're plumb out of symbolism for now...

Horns

A New Year For Good Works

Happy New Year! Did you make a New Year's resolution this year? I must admit, I'm not particularly good at making these... or sticking to them. I've usually forgotten them by February. But that won't be you. Surely not.

Seriously though, the New Year is as good a time as any to take stock and evaluate our lifestyle, our actions and habits, you name it. This is an important thing for us Lutheran Christians to do, because we believe that what we do with our lives in the here-and-now actually does matter. Of course, as Lutherans we always want to emphasize that we are saved solely through the gift of faith in Christ Jesus. We place the credit for our salvation totally in Christ and not at all in our own efforts, resolutions, or good works. And all of that is indeed rightly emphasized, and we must never forget it. Still, Lutherans have a very strongly developed teaching on the great value that good works have in the life of a Christian. And in his Christian Dogmatics, Lutheran systematic theologian Francis Pieper outlined five reasons why we (along with Scripture!) praise good works so highly. Perhaps these will offer you some encouragement as you pursue those resolutions...

1. "Good works have such great value because they are done according to the norm of God's will." You can't get much better, much more "fulfilled," in life than following the design of the One who made you! God's will is good, and so anything that brings you into line with it is bound to be good, too!

2. "Good works are God's work." Because you are a baptized Christian with the Holy Spirit actively working in your life, any good work that you produce is truly and ultimately a result of God working through you. "Scripture expressly calls the good works of Christians God's work, God's operation." (Phil. 2:13, "It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose.")

3. Good works are the Holy Spirit's external evidence that you are, in fact, one of God's Christians. (1 John 3:14, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death.")

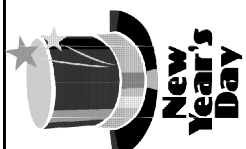
4. Your good works last. "All the earthly possessions of men, of Christians too, will be consumed by the fire of Judgment Day, but the good works of Christians, also those performed by means of their perishable possessions, will not be consumed, but will follow them into eternity." (Rev. 14:13, "'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.'") What's more, God has heaped grace upon grace, and promised that your good works will be rewarded. (Matt. 10:42, "Anyone who gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.")

5. Finally, doing good works is what you're here on this earth to do. It is your purpose in life. For all of the reasons enumerated above, "Christians are admonished to make the most of their short stay on earth by performing good works." (Eph. 5:15-16, "Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity.")

Our good works could never save us. Only Jesus does that. But they're nothing to sneeze at either. So actually, now that I've written all this... Perhaps I do need a resolution after all.

~ Quotations from Christian Dogmatics, Vol. III (Saint Louis: CPH, 1953), 60-61.

January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 6 8:45 am AA Mtg 9 am Grounded in Faith 10 am Music Practice	1 OFFICE & PRESCHOOL CLOSED	2 OFFICE CLOSED 6 pm Bells	3 9:30 Chapel 11 am Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation	4 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg	5	6 8:45 am AA Mtg 9 am Grounded in Faith 10 am Music Practice
7 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study Epiphany Observed	8 9:30 am Senior Cards 6:45 pm Gideon's Meeting 7 pm Over the Ditch Small Group	9 6 pm Bells 7 pm Elders Meeting	10 9:30 Chapel 11 am Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Bible Study	11 9:15 Prayer Meeting 9:30 Bible Study 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg	12	13 8:45 am AA Mtg 10 am Music Practice
14 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study	15	16 6 pm Bells 7 pm Call Comm Mtg.	17 9:30 Chapel 11 am Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Bible Study	18 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg Circuit Meeting in Orlando	19 6 pm Mission House	20 8:45 am AA Mtg 10 am Music Practice
21 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study	22 7 pm Over the Ditch Small Group	23 6 pm Bells 7 pm Executive Council	24 9:30 Chapel 11 am Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Bible Study	25 9:15 Prayer Meeting 9:30 Bible Study 6 pm Preschool Board Mtg. 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg	26	27 8:45 am AA Mtg 10 am Music Practice
28 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study	29	30 6 pm Bells	31 9:30 Chapel 11 am Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Bible Study			