

# The Star of Bethlehem



February 2018

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## The Book of Job: Blessed Be the Name of the Lord!

I find it difficult to be thinking ahead to Lent today. Seems like we just followed the star to Bethlehem and already I'm planning services about Jesus' suffering and death. Perhaps that is the necessary center of the Christian faith because Christ's suffering and death on the cross are always present - even in Christ's birth.

The ministry team and I have been planning our Lenten services for this year. We have decided on the theme: **"The Book of Job: Blessed Be the Name of the Lord!"** I've never used this theme before and I have never preached a series on the book of Job. However, while challenging, I know we will be blessed by it because one of the Bible's greatest wisdom books is the book of Job. Therefore, this Lent we will explore this magnificent composition that is numbered among the greatest literature of all time. We will dig deeply into Job's central message and supporting truths.

We all suffer-personally and privately. We also suffer in more public ways. A husband loses a job. A child gets divorced. A parent dies. And now, thanks to the media, we are able to see and experience more and more of the world's catastrophes and suffering. We need the book of Job, now, more than ever.

Martin Luther asserted that *"Job is magnificent and sublime as no book of Scripture."* Others have called Job *"the Shakespeare of the Bible."* The early Christian scholar Jerome perhaps put it best when he called the book of Job an "eel," since the more one tries to contain it, the slipperier it becomes! The purpose of our Lenten emphasis is to learn how to apply Job to our lives so that the book becomes less like an eel and more like a loving companion through life's dark valleys. Preaching plans are as follows:

Ash Wednesday *Flying Blind* (Job 1:1-12)

Lent 1 *Sweet Surrender* (Job 1:13-21)

Lent 2 *Learning to Lament* (Job 3:1-26)

Lent 3 *It Is Enough* (Job 14:1-14)

Lent 4 *Understanding How It All Works Together* (Job 23:1-17)

Lent 5 *God Speaks in the Storm* (Job 38:1-11)

Maundy Thursday *On Earth Is Not His Equal!* (Job 41:20-34)

Good Friday Tenebrae (Service of Darkness)

The Resurrection of Our Lord *I Know That My Redeemer Lives!* (Job 19:23-26)

Job's most famous statement appears in 19:25, **"I know that my Redeemer lives."** Christ is alive. He has conquered death and the grave. His word is sufficient. His grace is enough. His love brings comfort and healing. And this Lent these gifts come to us through the book of Job.

Please join us for the beginning of this Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday, February 14th, at either noon or 7:00 p.m. Yes, I know this is Valentine's Day but there is no better way to celebrate our love for each other than hearing about God's love for us. With the exception of Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday all Lenten services are held at both noon and 7:00 p.m.

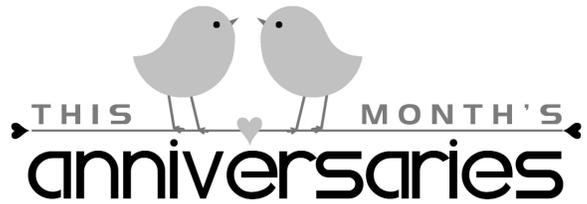
With you in the journey to the cross,

Pastor Dana Allen Brones

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**  
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1	David Thies
2	Wyatt Briggs
3	Logan Hunter Stephen Smith
4	Donald Losey
6	Wilma Corbitt Janelle Heumann Madilyn Wert
7	Christian Carr Jacob Clawson Christopher Johnson Doug Peacock Barbara Zikeli
8	Dale Mills Jr. Steven Pietrasiuk Mariah Thies
9	Charlotte Cobb Steven Corbitt
11	Robert Corbett
12	Julie Truax
13	Lori Bennett Steven Chao Sven Helberg Scott Kientz Mark Starkey
15	William Randolph
16	Deborah Donnelly Eleanor LoCricchio
17	Deborah Addis Elliott Randolph
18	Judy Grigg
19	Allan Werner
20	Teri Kientz Chad Lee Rebekah Romer
23	James Pitts III
27	Neil Robar
28	Debra Tate



9	Edward & Lorna Boyajian
15	Daniel & Janelle Heumann
23	William Randolph
26	Allan & Lisa Werner

**SENIOR  
GAME DAY**  
**February 5**  
**Cards @ 9:30 am**  
*Everyone is welcome!*  
*Contact MaryAnn Lawrence with any questions.*

### Attendance Record

Date	8 am	9:30 am	11 am	Total
Dec 4, 2016	90	91	78	259
Dec 3, 2017	91	81	100	272
Dec 11, 2016	84	69	68	221
Dec 10, 2017	91	98	84	273
Dec 18, 2016	93	98	91	282
Dec 17, 2017	93	86	86	265
	<u>9:30</u>	<u>6:00</u>	<u>8:00</u>	<u>10:00</u>
Dec 24, 2016		140*	268	72
Dec 24, 2017	182	144	258	76
	Advent 1	Advent 2	Advent 3	
2016	84	78	81	
2017	88	94	87	
Dec. 25, 2016				72
Dec. 25, 2017				52
Dec 31, 2016				44
Dec 31, 2017	53	73	98	224



BLC serves the homeless the third Friday of every month at The Mission House. Please sign up in the Narthex. It only takes about two hours and is an amazing mission.

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

	December 2016	December 2017
<b>Worship</b>	<b>\$62,293.84</b>	<b>\$89,762.82</b>
restricted	6,069.50	5,333.41
<b>YTD Totals</b>	<b>\$608,951.35</b>	<b>\$670,034.21</b>
restricted total	\$53,566.76	\$58,140.87
<b>Operating Total</b>	<b>\$555,384.59</b>	<b>\$611,893.34</b>

Screen Operators			Greeters	Altar	
Feb. 4	8 am	Pat	Jackie F & Val G	Setup	
	9:30 am	Tami		Tami	Val
	11 am	Gina			Tami
					Kathy
Feb. 11	8 am	Sam	Rob & Deb B	Jenn	Susan
	9:30 am	Romaine			Brenda
	11 am	Carol		Diana	
				Jenn/Tami	
Feb. 14					Barbara
Ash Wed.					
Feb. 18	8 am	Susan H	Larry & Eleanor C	Anna	Val
	9:30 am	Candice			Amy
	11 am	Carol			Beth
				Jenn/Tami	
Feb. 21					Carol
Lent					
Feb. 25	8 am	Val	David B & Anna A	Carol	Susan
	9:30 am	Brenda			Brenda
	11 am	Toni			Carol
				Jenn/Tami	
Feb. 28					Val
Lent					

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 nanajoan55@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.

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

## Operation Barnabas

Sunday, November 12th we had our very first event celebrating Veterans Day with food and honoring many of our congregation veterans and military thru recognition by name, rank and service. General information about Operation Barnabas:

In 2007 the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod's Ministry to the Armed Forces launched Operation Barnabas.

Congregations are called to action to:

- . PRAY for our troops
- . Recognize and honor veterans, and all military in their congregations
- . Serve as a resource to other organizations that provide care to military families and veterans

The primary focus of the Barnabas local chapter is to listen to the needs of our veteran local community, create a strong fellowship, and support the Vet in walk of true faith to Christ and discipleship.

Barnabas local chapters should consider themselves as a missionary extension off their congregation for all military matters pertinent to their community.

Support may include deployments, re-deployments, support of families while loved ones are away serving, recognition for returning warriors, PTS, PTSD, and community good-will events.

Serve as a resource to other organizations that provide care to military families and veterans.

For more information about Operation Barnabas at Bethlehem, please contact Ben Bryant @ 904-318-1982.

## *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.

## 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](http://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.

## Celebrate!

In these seemingly dark days in which we are living, it becomes very important to celebrate the many blessings which have been visited upon us. We have just finished the glorious celebration of Advent and Christmas, and glorious it was! We have celebrated the coming of a new year and all the hope which we attach to that - the resolutions to do better in various ways: healthier habits, kinder words, and one of my personal favorites: "less barking, more wagging". But I digress, because what I really want to write about and celebrate is our very dear sister - Betty Bush - a true Southern Belle. Being that I am a Yankee, I am always intrigued by everything Southern, especially the pronunciation of the English language. So litting; so musical..... Betty was a very bright light in the choir (and everywhere else she happened to be). She could and would sing either alto or soprano, whatever was needed. She NEVER complained about climbing the stairs. She ALWAYS told me how much she enjoyed every rehearsal. She sometimes would forget which service we were attending, but would just stay and sing anyway. She served! As in servant's heart. She served meals at Mission House; she served in the choir; she served everywhere because she cared. On one of our choir retreats, we were all staying in the same hotel. We had been to a concert one evening and I had stayed after the concert to talk with the director, so Joseph and I were the last to arrive back at the hotel. As we were walking down the corridor to our room, we met all the other choir members, each with an empty glass in hand walking in the opposite direction. It was a parade of singers clearly on a mission. I asked where everyone was going; the reply: to Betty's room. She was serving her "recipe" - a nightcap of her special making. Once again Betty was serving! She was a very bright light among us, a very caring group. The choir is a family. We share each other's woes and joys. We watch out for each other, we pray together, play together and always sing together and Betty was always right there in the middle of it all sharing her humor and grace; her faith, her joy, all with the elegance that only a Southern Belle can do. To Betty we extend our appreciation, gratitude and love. Our lives are better for knowing her and we will all miss her. Rest in peace - no wait, rest in joy and love!!!!

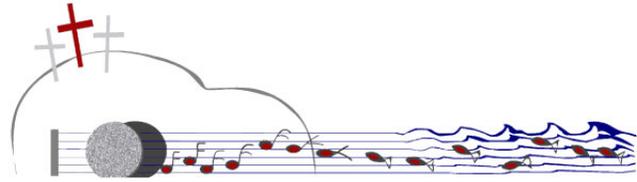
In His service and yours,  
Kathleen, Minister of Music

## Mites

*What is the purpose of the MITES box that is sitting in the Narthex?*

The money that is collected in the MITES box helps support mission work all over the world through the LWML. Each congregation is asked to collect "spare change" (or spare checks) from its members. That money is sent to the FL/GA District LWML and 10% of that money is sent to the national LWML. If every member gave **.50 a year** we would be contributing about \$150 a year. That's about what BLC contributes...actually a little less. If we change that to **.50 a month/person**, we could increase our contribution to \$1800 just by throwing in 2 quarters every month!!

Who knew that for just pocket change you can help support over 40 missions worldwide? Now you know!



## February News 2018

As everyone knows, it never snows in Florida and the desert is always hot. We have spent most of December and January in the "high desert". We bring you greetings from St. John's, Bullhead City, AZ; Ascension, Apple Valley, CA. The desert has its own unique beauty, especially if you like earth tones. It also keeps you on your toes with regard to maybe having to disconnect your water hose at night. We are currently parked in southern California, just 50 miles east of Santa Barbara, which has been ravaged by fire, then mud. The sound guy at our next church hasn't been to work since early December. His commute on US 101 North has been blocked since the fires started. Everything seems normal in this nice campground, but 'just over there' - not so much.

Living on the road we think about being prepared for many different scenarios. At any moment we could be in a situation that puts us 'just over there'. But being prepared really means being open to what happens next. You can't foresee every possibility. Stuff happens. Much you can prepare for. Some you just don't see coming. And we always have ideas - preconceptions - about that next place. When we get there, we have to empty out most of those notions and replace them with what we actually see. Even that is not the whole story. We're only there for a week. Case in point: our fourth trip to Apple Valley revealed some trails, and points of interest we had not known, but which now seem obvious. Out with the old...

When Jesus called his first disciples, they were not at all prepared for the adventure waiting for them 'just over there', but they were open (is that the right word?) to leaving their jobs, their families, and their stuff for Jesus' sake. They brought along a load of mental baggage, which Jesus patiently removed, piece by piece. Even Pentecost didn't clear all the clutter. (See Acts 10: "What? Even Gentiles can be in the Kingdom?!") I want to be prepared for Jesus to make me useful. And sure, you have to be open. But when Jesus arrives with a moving van and your house is already full...what happens then? Take heart. His moving van always arrives with a companion dumpster.

Horns

## Call Committee

*Volunteers for calling an additional pastor*

Dana Brones  
Alex Limbaugh  
Bruce Dellinger  
Tammy Barley  
Lee Fischer  
Liz Jaranowski  
Brian Kientz  
Pat May  
Carol Pietrasiuk  
Karen Wilhelm

## *How Can We Get To God?*

I was listening to a song by a Christian artist the other day, and he sang a line that caught my attention. The phrase was, "Have I tried to scale Your walls in vain?" Listening to the song, it was clear that this singer yearned to be united with His Maker, with nothing separating the two of them. The question of whether or not, or to what extent, that desire can be realized is a worthy question, but it wasn't the question that first came to mind. The question I asked myself first was, "Do we need to scale God's walls? Does He want us to scale His walls?" It got me thinking about the various ways that mankind has tried to close the distance between ourselves and our Maker over the centuries. Theologians typically divide these efforts into three categories.

1. **Morality.** This attempt to reach God involves the will. It's all about seeking to "do the right thing." Entire religions are built around this, with duties to be performed and checked off a list as the believer makes their way to God. It even creeps into our Christianity sometimes when we equate being a Christian with certain behaviors or political parties. Of course, as Lutherans we are pretty solid in our understanding that morality is not the way to reach God. And thank goodness, because who among us could ever say that he has done enough?!?

2. **Mysticism.** This one is trickier. It's focused on the emotions, bent on establishing some kind of visceral, gut-level, connection with God. It tends to use a lot of "personal relationship" language and is focused not on doing the right things so much, but rather, feeling the right things. If you have ever left church saying, "God was really at work today - I could feel it," (as I admit I have done,) you know how sneaky mysticism can be. It can be oh-so tempting to evaluate God and His work based on how we feel about things. Unfortunately, as Scripture states, "the heart is deceitful above all things." So our feelings are not exactly reliable, and thus, neither is mysticism.

3. **Mind.** This one is probably the trickiest, most misleading way of the bunch. It has to do with the intellect; with learning, reason, and logic. The path of the mind tells us we can get to God by thinking the right thoughts. The reason this is so tricky is because we do, of course, want to think and believe only true things about God. However, we are not saved by our works - including our mental works. Just thinking the right stuff cannot save us. After all, who among us is able to claim that we always think and believe correctly, with no straying thoughts whatsoever?

These three attempts to reach God - morality, mysticism, mind - have a couple things in common. First, the motion; they all move from us, upward, to God. Striving to "get at Him." Second, they all fail. But that's ok. Because we don't need to "get at God." He has gotten at us. We don't need to scale God's walls. He has entered our world. That's what Christmas was about. That's what Epiphany was about. That's what Lent is about. God entering our world, putting Himself among us. For us. In Christ, God bridged the gap. In Christ, He closed the distance.

God is not holed up in a castle, waiting for us to use our will, feelings, or intellect to connect with Him. In Christ, God has come to us. And He continues to come to us. This truth is particularly worth pondering this Lenten season. Our efforts to scale God's walls will always fail. The only way we get connected with God is if He comes to us. This Lent, I would strongly urge you to make regular attendance at our Lenten services a habit. It is there - in Christ's Word proclaimed and His Body and Blood distributed - that God comes to you. No climbing gear needed.

Vicar Nathan

## **Bethlehem Lutheran Preschool Mission Statement**

We exist to proclaim Christ's love and forgiveness to children and their families. To that end, our experienced, loving teachers provide the highest quality care and education for infants and children in a safe Christian Preschool

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### *Philosophy*

We believe that a Christian home is the most important factor in a child's development. We complement the Christian family in order to promote the child's healthy development. We believe children deserve a nurturing, safe, and happy Christian environment which promotes their natural curiosity, play and desire to learn. We believe in the promise found in Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is older he will not leave it."

We believe that teaching and living Christ's love, trust, respect, and forgiveness makes children capable of loving, trusting, respecting, and forgiving others. By teaching and modeling Christian ideals, we want children to develop spiritually as well as physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. We integrate the faith in all curriculums as we want them to grow and develop as Jesus did: "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" Luke 2:52. The curriculum provides our children with a quality Christian education that will help them develop to the fullest of their capabilities and help them to realize that they are children of God.

We hire Christian teachers who are capable and caring, and whose Christian values and lifestyle enable them to fulfill this Christian vocation. They help lead their class in the knowledge that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and it is through him that we have eternal life. All activities are centered on this premise.

# February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study	9:30 am Senior Cards 6:45 pm Gideon's Meeting	 ASH WEDNESDAY	9:30 Chapel 11 am Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Bible Study	6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg		8:45 am AA Mtg 9 am Grounded in Faith 10 am Music Practice
4 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study 3 pm LWML Mtg	5 7 pm Over the Ditch Small Group	6 6 pm Bells 7 pm Elders Meeting	7 ASH WEDNESDAY 9:30 Chapel 12 noon Worship 1 pm Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Worship	8 9:15 Prayer Meeting 9:30 Bible Study 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg	9 6 pm Mission House	10 8:45 am AA Mtg 10 am Music Practice
18 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study	12 PRESIDENT DAY Preschool Closed	13 6 pm Bells 7 pm Executive Council	14 ASH WEDNESDAY 9:30 Chapel 12 noon Worship 1 pm Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Worship	15 9-12 Circuit Mtg 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg	16 6 pm Mission House	17 8:45 am AA Mtg 10 am Music Practice
25 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study Missions Fundraiser	26 7 pm Over the Ditch Small Group	20 6 pm Bells 7 pm Executive Council	21 9:30 Chapel 12 noon Worship 1 pm Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Lenten Worship	22 9:15 Prayer Meeting 9:30 Bible Study 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg	23 6 pm Mission House	24 8:45 am AA Mtg 10 am Music Practice
		27 6 pm Bells	28 9:30 Chapel 12 noon Worship 1 pm Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Lenten Worship			