

The Star of Bethlehem



November 2020

Thanksgiving: Our Response to God's Provision for His Church

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, people are in a serious battle right now with worry and fear. I would be less than transparent if I didn't share that I have had my own worries and fears about COVID-19. This issue of worrying about external factors is an old one. It's in the Bible in many places, such as the story of King David worrying about the victory over the enemies of Israel.

In I Chronicles 21:1, Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel. There was nothing wrong with counting the men of Israel, but in David's case, his error was not trusting God in his heart. He wanted to count the fighting men to make sure he had enough for a victory. God had already given him the promise of the victory, but he was still going to count the fighting men and God counted that as sin against him.

I Chronicles 21:8 – Then David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."

In the midst of uncertain times, will we trust God's power and provision for His Church, or will we insist on doing what King David did and rely on the number of fighting men? You know the answer to that question. We must trust God and the power and provision He has for His Church.

Above all, remember that this is God's Church. He is in control and the ultimate results are up to Him. Don't be like King David counting the fighting men, trusting in the number of fighting men in Israel. Trust God's power and provision for His church.

I am amazed at how our gracious Lord has guided and protected Bethlehem during these past eight months. I am grateful for the BLC community of believers that, by God's grace, have navigated the issues surrounding Covid-19 so we would continue to be a healthy congregation. I am thankful for unity in the Spirit so we could move forward in ministry without conflict. I am thankful for the giving culture at BLC. Your generosity, combined with good stewardship of resources by staff, have allowed us to remain "in the black" during this season of pandemic – even though offerings are down. The reality is that just as Covid-19 has had an effect on attendance, so too has it impacted our giving.

The month of November and our national day of Thanksgiving is a great opportunity to offer a "thank offering" in thankfulness to our Lord's gracious provision. Please know there is no expectation for you to give a "thank offering." This is, rather, an opportunity for you (and me) to return thanks to the Lord for His constant generosity shown to us. At the very foundation of this "thank offering" is the gift of God's love, forgiveness and salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

If you have suffered economic hardship during Covid-19 please do not feel compelled to give. Instead, let the church know how we can help you. On the other hand, if you are able to express your gratitude, please prayerfully consider giving a special "thank offering." This is simply our response to our Lord's promised eternal victory and our trust in God's power and provision for Bethlehem.

In thankfulness for all of you,
Pastor Dana Allen Brones

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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Pastor Nathan McCarty, Associate Pastor . revnathan@bethlehemlutheranjaxbeach.org
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November Birthdays & Anniversaries

1-Nov	Travis Hardy	17-Nov	Logan Wortelboer
2-Nov	Dee Reichard	17-Nov	Robbie Wortelboer
3-Nov	Cyndi Briggs	18-Nov	Nicholas Huckaba
3-Nov	Matthew & Candace Gray	19-Nov	Jan Aleschus-Runko
3-Nov	Julie Gundian	19-Nov	Lillian Hart
3-Nov	Earleen Shord	19-Nov	Dave Horn
4-Nov	Kristen Randolph	19-Nov	David Lease
5-Nov	Jamie Mazzeo	20-Nov	Andrew & Holly Simpson
5-Nov	Ron Zarski	21-Nov	Rebekah Alenduff
6-Nov	Joanne Dengler	21-Nov	Isabella Cadet
6-Nov	Erik Siebert	21-Nov	Owen Carlson
7-Nov	Danny Barley	21-Nov	Jerry Kirkman
7-Nov	Maureen Murphy	21-Nov	Loren Sifferath
7-Nov	John & Cheri Porter	22-Nov	Sissie Krause
8-Nov	Abigale Hardy	22-Nov	Angela Smith
8-Nov	Cooper Heisler	23-Nov	Jeff and Robin Ford
9-Nov	Dennis Rickert	23-Nov	Arleigh Sherrill
10-Nov	Sean Cadet	24-Nov	Bob Van Ness
10-Nov	Jennifer Engelstad	25-Nov	Alex Limbaugh
10-Nov	Ava Garner	26-Nov	Dan Runko
10-Nov	Madilyn Garner	27-Nov	Becky Duck
11-Nov	Summer Porter	29-Nov	Jesse Shimp
13-Nov	Peyton Seim	29-Nov	Lolly Starkey
15-Nov	Dawn Barrett	29-Nov	Randall Wardin
15-Nov	Elizabeth Thies	30-Nov	Barb McCombs
15-Nov	Jackie Thompson	30-Nov	Candice Moore
16-Nov	Cheri Mcleod-Greene	30-Nov	Brook Porter
17-Nov	Brian Matthews		

Altar Flowers

You can remember or mark a special occasion with Altar Flowers? Each of the beautiful arrangements are \$30 per vase and a sign-up sheet for each Sunday of the year is in the Narthex. This is a great way to acknowledge a birthday, anniversary, and to remember a loved one who has gone before. You can choose to take them home with you after the 11 am service or mark for them to be delivered to a homebound congregant or someone in the hospital. Please put your donation in the offering plate and mark it for altar flowers or mail it to the church.

If you would like to volunteer:

Screens—Romaine Moore @ 422-2881
 Altar—Val Gruhn @ 536-2912
 8 am greeters—Anna Arno @ 223-1766
 9:30 greeters—Joan Richards @ 463-6703
 11 am greeters—Jean Shimp @ 249-2040
 BFF—Holly Dellinger @ 349-6059

Stewardship

	Sept 2019	Sept 2020
Monthly Totals:	\$60,939.90	\$40,666.14
Restricted:	5,664.17	2,986.00
YTD Totals:	\$499,994.36	\$486,019.65
	\$46,245.40	\$37,990.77

September Attendance

Date	8 am	9:30 am	11am	Total
Sept 8, 2019	64	71	86	221
Sept 6, 2020	27	45	51	123
Sept 15, 2019	79	95	90	264
Sept 13, 2020	43	56	42	141
Sept 22, 2019	64	72	95	231
Sept 20, 2020	39	63	55	157
Sept 29, 2019	65	84	102	251
Sept 27, 2020	33	61	55	149

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

SENIOR GAME DAY **Hand and Foot**

Monday, November 9

Disciples Hall at 9:15 am

Talk with MaryAnn Lawrence 708-9492

Please wear your mask

Schedule for November

	<u>Screens</u>	<u>Altar</u>	<u>Elders</u>
<u>Nov. 1</u>	8 am 9:30 am 11 am	Tami Val Brenda Beth	Paul & Gordon Bernie Alex & David
<u>Nov. 8</u>	8 am 9:30 am 11 am	Jenn Tami Diana	Paul & AJ Bernie & David Dan & John
<u>Nov. 15</u>	8 am 9:30 am 11 am	Anna Susan Barbara Bonnie	Jamie & Paul Bernie & Paul Dan & Bruce
<u>Nov. 22</u>	8 am 9:30 am 11 am	Susan Val Brenda Carol	Gordon & AJ Bernie & Alex John & Bruce
<u>Nov. 29</u>	8 am 9:30 am 11 am	Carol Susan Barbara Kathy	Jamie & AJ Bernie & Al John & Dan

An Imagination is a Terrible Thing to Waste

"Finally, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (Philippians 4:8)

I love this verse. It captures the complex reality of being a human. I'm a fan of logic and critical thinking. I believe in absolute truth. I like facts and the pursuit of the objective. Sure. All that's great. But that's only the first clause of this Philippians verse. What about those things that inspire honor, purity, beauty, excellence? What about those things that take your breath away or that cause your mouth to drop open? Sterile truths might do that sometimes. But I'm thinking of things like sunsets. Things like a Beethoven symphony or a Bach cantata, or a masterful concept album from a talented rapper or rock band. Or a gourmet meal. These things are different. Truth is true, and truth is good, but there's more that the Christian mind and imagination should be marinating in than simple, cold hard facts. At least according to the Apostle Paul.

In my younger years, prior to seminary formation, I earned my undergraduate degree doing Theatre at a state university. I can tell you firsthand, this world is hungering for beauty. People – including people who don't know the love of Jesus - are drawn to beauty. Of course, Christianity is true! But it is also beautiful. And I fear that if in our conversation with unbelievers, with our children, etc., if we only focus on the logical, factual, didactic elements of our faith heritage, we are only seeing one facet of an incredibly bright diamond.

I was reminded of this recently while watching the television show *The Chosen*. If you haven't seen it yet, you simply must. I will not brook excuses. It had my family laughing, crying, and binge watching. It is superb art. A fine example of Christians pursuing beauty and excellence. Parents and grandparents, *this* is what our imaginations are meant to marinate in. Not *Will and Grace*. Not *Friends*. (Sorry. Not sorry.)

We have 2,000 years of Christian influenced art to draw upon. Music, poetry, fictional literature, paintings, sculpture. We have an inexhaustible treasure trove of beauty. Does the world know it? Do we know it? Do our kids or grandkids know it?

So, take this as encouragement to pursue those things that are worth letting your imagination soak in for a bit. Watch *The Chosen*. Dive into some of C.S. Lewis' poetry, or go sci-fi with his *Space Trilogy*. Check out the more modern musical stylings of Andrew Peterson, especially his Christmas and Easter concept albums. These are just a few of my favorites. I have many more if you are looking for recommendations! Don't be afraid to pursue beauty. Beauty is our turf, not the world's. We know the one who created it.

Ground yourself in the truth. Then pursue excellent things. Even with your imagination!

~ Pastor Nathan

LWML

One thing has not changed. The mission of the LWML to reach out to the people near and far with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Savior. How we reach out will be different for every group and maybe every person.

This year most of what Bethlehem LWML women were planning got put on hold or changed. But one thing did not. The date changed but we are still celebrating LWML Sunday this year. We will be doing this on November 8th. We are planning a table display in the courtyard. We will have some goodies to give away. But most importantly we will be holding a food drive for the Beam Food Bank. Please bring your non-perishable donations on November 8th and drop them in the bins we will have by our tables.

By November 8th we should know the Mission Grant Projects for the District. Remember to pick up your mite boxes to support these outreach projects!

If you have any questions about LWML please feel free to email me at bicnbec2@gmail.com or give me a call at 605-949-1608.

Becky Bicknase

Please remember to sign in as
you enter the Sanctuary.

Midweek Advent

Worship Services

with Holy Communion

December 2nd, 12 noon & 7 pm

December 9th, 12 noon & 7 pm

December 16th, 12 noon & 7 pm



What is the Angel Tree Program?

The Salvation Army **Angel Tree program** is a holiday program designed to raise in-kind gifts to assist families who are in crisis as a result of medical issues, unemployment, homelessness, medical issues or other difficult circumstances and who otherwise wouldn't have the resources to celebrate Christmas.

Coming soon to Bethlehem!

Break A Leg!

Have you ever heard the phrase that someone is using a crutch? It means that you are learning how to do something new, but you're using a tool in order to avoid the hard work. So if you're learning a new language, constantly looking up words on Google translate instead of doing memory work is considered a crutch. The concern is that if you never learn how get by without the crutch, you will forever be dependent upon it.

But as much as we look down upon crutches, they can be also be necessary. For example, I was serving as a youth leader some years back playing dodgeball with a group of kids before we kicked off the Scripture lesson for the day. Turns out I'm not as young as I used to be, and I took a fall, landing on my foot a little funny. I told the kids: "I need a minute." After a minute, I realized I might need a bit more than a minute. For the next few days, I hobbled around on a sprained ankle. Finally, my wife persuaded me to have my ankle looked at by a medical professional. Even though they told me it wasn't broken and I could hobble around, I was told to use crutches or I risked injuring myself further by walking on it. The more I used crutches, the faster things would go back to normal.

Crutches can be necessary for growth and healing. God has given us a great gift in His Word, but too often we try to hobble around in this life without it. But when we walk without God's Word, we risk damage to our souls. Rather, we should always depend upon God's gifts to us. His grace and forgiveness help us to get by in this world. One day we will be completely free from sin and we won't need these crutches. We will be restored in God's world. But until then, let God's Word support you through this life.

There is no shame in leaning in on the gifts Jesus gives to us. His church, His Sacraments, His forgiveness are designed to restore us to God and strengthen us for our walk here on this earth. Allow me to share the words of Jesus found in Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." For those in need of grace, come to Jesus and live. He gives us strength for today and a bright hope for tomorrow.

God's blessings,
Vicar Andrew Simpson

Advent by Candlelight

By Bonnie Arndt

Advent by Candlelight is rapidly approaching, and this year's theme, "Fear Not," is filled with comforting assurances that God is in control.

The message, which was so important 2000 years ago that God sent his Angel Gabriel to convey it personally to Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, and the Shepherds, is equally meaningful today during Covid-19. All of us have had moments of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty as we have watched our lives dominated and disrupted by this serious pandemic.

Come to Advent by Candlelight December 5 and recall the comforting words of the angel. The worship service will include readings devoted to each of the four angelic appearances. Following the readings, hymns will be sung by the congregation or by soloists.

The service begins at 2 p.m. in the church sanctuary. Social distancing will be in place, so seating will be limited to approximately 100 women. However, the service will be live streamed into Disciples' Hall, where approximately 40 more seats will be available. The live streaming will also be available through Bethlehem Lutheran Church's Facebook page and will be recorded for later online posting.

Due to the pandemic, the formal tea following the service has been cancelled. However, members who do not wish to attend the service in person are encouraged to hold private teas with family and friends in their homes on December 5 during the afternoon and tune in to the live-stream program.

Anyone wishing to host a tea, as well as anyone wishing to attend one, please contact tea coordinator Holly Dellinger at jaxbulldogs@comcast.net or 349-6059.

For any other questions, please contact ABC coordinator Bonnie Arndt at arndt.bonnie@gmail.com 652-5401.



Join the Hunger Fight

**Monday afternoon . November 2nd
4pm-6pm for the annual packing event**

Across the First Coast, Hunger Fight provides 14,807 children with a 4-serving nutritious meal every weekend through our Feed the Backpacks program. In addition, Hunger Fight provides over 2,348 preschoolers with age-appropriate books, mailed directly to their homes, every month through our Feed the Need to Read program.

Your help and support are vital as Hunger Fight continues its mission to provide food and books to children and families in our community. In times like these, we are reminded of how interconnected we all are. Thank you for being a part of our community. Without you, none of this is possible.

We need 12 people, sign up in the Narthex, please.

2935 Dawn Road (Off Powers Road)
Questions? Holly Dellinger 904-349-6059

CHANGING PATHS

Recently, Korea celebrated Hangul Day. Hangul is the phonetic system invented over 500 years ago that forms the basis of the written Korean language. This provoked some contemplation on words. Depending on one's physical condition and situation, words may be processed differently - by sight, through sound, via touch. Words can teach, encourage, harm, anger, soothe. In one's own home culture, they can be taken for granted - understood without much effort. In a foreign land, words can be easily confused - causing frustration and setbacks. Perhaps this last year, one with diminished face-to-face interaction, the value of words has increased in some ways.

In terms of our relationship with God, words have always been paramount. The Word of God comes to us in written form (the Scriptures), spoken form (a sermon, a word of forgiveness,...), and in the person of Jesus. As Christians, we are called to take this Word into the world. How we do this depends on our location and vocation. Maybe you are a teacher, accountant, farmer, seamstress, medical professional,... You may also be a spouse, parent, sibling, grandparent... All are valued and can be used by God to share His love through deed and through words. Just as hangul is the key that unlocks one of the world's most difficult languages, so does the Word of God open to the world a true understanding of the source of our salvation - Jesus.

Please pray with us for the following in these days: Matt has re-engaged in language study which is a continual process. He also has been asked to assume new responsibilities on a team of LCMS missionaries whose role in Asia revolves around education. Dee Dee maintains regular communication with women in our community, supporting them through various challenges. She also has been writing for the LCMS International website (international.lcms.org), connecting the Church at large to the important work happening in this region through a wonderful team of missionary colleagues. Lily and Olivia continue to adapt to an English-based curriculum, and are happy to once again be at the same school. Our family anticipates a busy fall with guests and activities as Korean society begins to open up. Thank you for all the ways you support us!

To support the LCMS through the work of the Wasmund family, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; P.O. Box 66861; St. Louis, MO 63166-6861 -OR Mission Central; 40718 Highway E 16; Mapleton, IA 51034.

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or LCMS. Include 'Wasmund - Korea' in the memo line. Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website at www.lcms.org/wasmund.

Matt, Dee Dee, Lily and Olivia Wasmund
matthew.wasmund@lcms.org

Bread for the Journey

Thanksgiving Eve Worship . November 25, 2020 at 7 pm

Every family should bring a loaf of bread – any bread of your choice – and put your family name on it or inside the wrapping. When you arrive at the service bring your loaf up to the front of the church and put it on the table. At the end of the service as you are leaving, go to the table and take a loaf – not your own. On Thanksgiving Day as we sit at our family table and include the loaf we received from the service with a family's name, we include in our blessing a special prayer for the family whose loaf we have. It is a very meaningful way for us all to pray for each other and be reminded of our many blessings.



Advent by Candlelight

will be held Saturday afternoon
December 5, 2-5 pm

please contact Bonnie Arndt at 904-652-5401
or arndt.bonnie@gmail.com.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>All Saints' Day</p> <p>8am - Liturgical Worship @</p> <p>9:30am - "Misfit" Bible Study @</p> <p>9:30am - Adult Bible Study @</p> <p>9:30am - Contemporary Worship</p> <p>11am - Liturgical Worship w/</p> <p>12:30pm - 8th grade</p> <p>12:30pm - LWML Meeting @</p>	<p>2</p> <p>All Souls' Day</p> <p>5pm - Hunger Fight @ Hunger</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9:30am - Preschool Chapel @</p> <p>11am - Staff Meeting @</p> <p>5:30pm - 7th Grade Confirmation</p> <p>6pm - New Member Classes @</p> <p>7pm - Adult Bible Study @</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>5pm - Wedding Rehearsal</p>	<p>7</p> <p>8am - Gideon's prayer meeting</p> <p>10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @</p> <p>5pm - K Gruhn wedding</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Food collection</p> <p>LWML Sunday</p> <p>Twenty-third S. a. Pentecost</p> <p>8am - Liturgical Worship @</p> <p>9:30am - "Misfit" Bible Study @</p> <p>9:30am - Adult Bible Study @</p> <p>9:30am - Contemporary Worship</p> <p>11am - Liturgical Worship w/</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9:30am - Senior Game Day @</p>	<p>10</p> <p>7pm - Elder's Meeting @</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9:30am - Preschool Chapel @</p> <p>11am - Staff Meeting @</p> <p>5:30pm - 7th Grade Confirmation</p> <p>6pm - New Member Classes @</p> <p>7pm - Adult Bible Study @</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>8am - Gideon's prayer meeting</p> <p>10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Feed My Sheep Sunday @</p> <p>Food collection</p> <p>Twenty-fourth S. a. Pentecost</p> <p>8am - Liturgical Worship @</p> <p>9:30am - "Misfit" Bible Study @</p> <p>9:30am - Adult Bible Study @</p> <p>9:30am - Contemporary Worship</p> <p>11am - Liturgical Worship w/</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7pm - Executive Council Meeting</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9:30am - Preschool Chapel @</p> <p>11am - Staff Meeting @</p> <p>5:30pm - 7th Grade Confirmation</p> <p>6pm - New Member Classes @</p> <p>7pm - Adult Bible Study @</p>	<p>19</p> <p>9am - Circuit Pastor's</p>	<p>20</p> <p>6pm - BLC supports Mission</p>	<p>21</p> <p>8am - Gideon's prayer meeting</p> <p>10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Last S. of the Church Year</p> <p>Mites Sunday</p> <p>8am - Donut Sunday @ Disciples'</p> <p>8am - Liturgical Worship @</p> <p>9:30am - "Misfit" Bible Study @</p> <p>9:30am - Adult Bible Study @</p> <p>9:30am - Contemporary Worship</p> <p>11am - Liturgical Worship w/</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>9:30am - Preschool Chapel @</p> <p>11am - Staff Meeting @</p> <p>5:30pm - 7th Grade Confirmation</p> <p>7pm - Thanksgiving Eve Worship</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Thanksgiving Day</p> <p>7am - Preschool Closed</p> <p>9am - Church Office Closed</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7am - Preschool Closed</p> <p>9am - Church Office Closed</p>	<p>28</p> <p>8am - Gideon's prayer meeting</p> <p>10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @</p>
<p>29</p> <p>First S. in Advent</p> <p>First Sunday of Advent</p> <p>8am - Liturgical Worship @</p> <p>9:30am - "Misfit" Bible Study @</p> <p>9:30am - Adult Bible Study @</p> <p>9:30am - Contemporary Worship</p> <p>11am - Liturgical Worship w/</p> <p>12:30pm - 8th grade</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>9:30am - Preschool Chapel @</p> <p>12pm - Midweek Advent Worship</p> <p>1pm - Staff Meeting @ Disciples'</p> <p>5:30pm - 7th Grade Confirmation</p> <p>7pm - Midweek Advent Worship</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>8am - Gideon's prayer meeting</p> <p>9:30am - Youth Decorate Trees</p> <p>10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @</p>