



THE BETHLEHEM STAR

T O K N O W C H R I S T . . . T O M A K E C H R I S T K N O W N



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

MEGAN FRYLING

Pastor

Advent Greetings!

Most years I'm a stickler for not starting Advent or Christmas preparation until after Thanksgiving.

Most years I feel annoyed by store displays of Christmas decorations up in October or Christmas music playing in November. Typically I wouldn't even consider putting up my Christmas tree before the Saturday after Thanksgiving and at church I usually favor a slow process of decorations leading up to Christmas Eve as we make our way through the season of Advent.

However, this is not a typical year! So this year, if you find joy, solace, and comfort in your Christmas tree, holiday decorations, and Christmas movies and you've already had this stuff out since October, I definitely understand! After all, it has been quite a year of things outside of the typical (I even bought a trampoline for my kids this week- something that I never in my life would have imagined I would do-it's that kind of year!).

This season, I think we're all looking for tidings of comfort and joy. During Advent, in these 4 weeks before Christmas, we are reminded of a birth long ago that wasn't typical- a tiny baby boy born in unusual circumstances in a dangerous world. We are reminded that we have a savior who knows and understands the very human struggles of life here on earth, who sees us and knows both our sorrows and our joy. As we'll be discussing, we know Jesus by many names- Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor, Savior, Christ- and this is because he is so many things to us all at once. No matter what else is going on in the world & our lives, we know we still find joy and comfort in remembering this blessed baby born for all of us.

I encourage you to remember the amazing birth of Jesus as you participate in the many opportunities this season- Sunday worship either outside in the courtyard at 9 a.m. (bring jackets and be glad we live in a warm climate!), livestreaming worship on Facebook at 10 a.m. (in the comfort of your own home!), our Wednesday midweek Advent discussions and music on Zoom, our recognition of sorrow and loss



SUNDAY WORSHIP:

TEMPORARY COVID-19 SCHEDULE

9:00 AM – IN-PERSON WORSHIP

10:00 AM – ONLINE STREAMING

STAFF:

PASTOR:

REV. MEGAN HUNT FRYLING
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on the longest night out in the front yard of the church, and for our all-ages Christmas Party Bingo! Then join us on Christmas Eve as we remember this holy birth with a mixture of joy, laughter, peace, and quiet.

May the presence of Christ bring you comfort and joy!
Blessings,
Pastor Megan

WELCA BOUTIQUE– 2 WEEKS LEFT!

WELCA (Woman of the Evangelical Church of America) wants everyone to know only **2 weeks** to go to Square and order Christmas items. The Boutique will close Dec.11th, with delivery Dec. 12th. We have beautiful Wreaths, Christmas Baskets, Christmas Table Runners, Christmas stockings, Table Pine Cone Decorations, Christmas Masks, Gift Card Holders and many more items. Please take a moment to check out the 2020 Virtual Boutique at <https://bethlehemwomenoftheelca.square.site>



THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR HELP

It's that time of year again and we've begun the search for dedicated Bethlehem members to join the church council.

As of the end of November, we have a few positions that we would love to fill:

- Vice President
- Fellowship
- Stewardship
- Evangelism

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact one of the committee members:

Jan Maseda – janicemaseda@gmail.com

Lisa Chow – girlgotbrains@hotmail.com

Beverly Compton – bev@comptons.org

Your response by no later than December 4, is greatly appreciated.

Beverly Compton

NOVEMBER COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

By Marilyn Fursman, Secretary

ACTIONS & ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Voted to authorize purchasing the cabinetry and sink for the back hall project if the school is willing to pay for it out of School Maintenance funds.

MANAGEMENT

1. In preparation for returning to worship in the sanctuary, Greg Imlay will look into the cost of sanitization equipment and air conditioning filters
2. Research is being done on how to include all members in the Annual Meeting if meeting in person is not possible in January.
3. The back hall renovation project is over budget; about \$10,228 remains to be paid.
4. School expenses are \$3,428 over budget.
5. October offerings are on target.

MINISTRY

1. Pastoral Acts:
 - a. A new member class is being held in December; call Pr. Megan for details.
 - b. There is a baptism scheduled for Dec. 6.
2. Worship:
 - a. Sundays in-person, outdoors at 9 a.m., and online at 10 a.m.
 - b. Advent music and Bible study led by Pr. Megan on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. for 4 weeks beginning Dec. 2. Materials available in the church office.
 - c. Christmas Eve Services, 12/24/20:
 - 5 p.m. to 6 p. m.—Drive-through for a blessing and distribution of care packages containing real candles, candy canes cookies, cocoa mix. Volunteers needed to assist.
 - 7 p.m.—Live-stream, family-style service featuring two skits by Chriselle Almeida.
 - 8 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.—In-person in courtyard, if not raining, with lessons, carols, candle lighting.
 - 9 p.m.—Live-stream candlelight traditional service while singing at home with candles.
3. Adult Education: Wednesday night's Zoom book review, Love Without Limits, has 14 participants.
4. Fellowship:
 - a. "Spiritual Breathing" led by Pam Shea via Zoom, Sundays, 7 p.m. to 7:20 p.m.
 - b. Connie Troe is looking into having the women's Christmas party virtually.
5. Service:
 - a. Bev Compton is looking for a volunteer to serve as liaison to our two Boy Scout troops, if Bethlehem is to continue as sponsor.
 - b. Keira Nussbaum is engaging the congregation in her research on the environmental impact of video screens in the sanctuary to cut down on use of paper for bulletins.
 - c. Mary Fisher organized a drive-through food collection for L.S.S. on 11/08/20.
6. School: Emily reported the Trunk or Treat event was a very successful school fundraiser.
7. Youth:
 - a. Virtual Sunday School meets via Zoom every other Sunday at 11:30 a.m. with 14 children.
 - b. Youth meet 2nd and 4th Sundays, at noon, in-person in the church courtyard (weather permitting) with COVID safety precautions in place.
 - b. Nicole reported the mask project raised \$682 for the 2022 Youth Gathering in MN.
8. Women of the ELCA: The first virtual holiday boutique has raised about \$700 to-date for charities.



MUSIC NOTES

VICENTE DITTO

Senior Music Minister

vicenteditto@bethlehemlutheran.net

The music staff will provide musical pieces for the Wednesday evening study group this Advent season. Each of us signed up to provide a piece correlating to the themes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Christmas Eve has a variety of events scheduled that will allow people to participate according to their level of risk tolerance. I'm sure a more detailed description of each event exists elsewhere in the newsletter so I will mention them very briefly: 5 p.m. - Drive Up Blessing and Communion, 7 p.m. - live stream of the Family Service which will include the yearly skit and a song parody, 8 p.m. - a brief In-Person Candlelight Service in the courtyard, 9 p.m. - live stream of an expanded Candlelight Service which can be viewed anytime after it is released.

Please keep Matthew's partner Michael in your prayers as he tested positive for Covid-19 the weekend before Thanksgiving. Matthew has fortunately tested negative and is currently in quarantine at home.

(Update from the office: Since the time that Vicente wrote this letter, Matthew also tested positive for covid-19, but both he and Michael are doing better and recovering well.)

SCRIPTURE-CENTERED BREATHING SESSIONS BY PAM SHEA

On 10/18/2020 we began our Scripture-Centered Breathing Sessions on Sunday evenings at 7 p.m. This has been a wonderful experience for me, and I appreciate the opportunity to connect in this way with my fellow Bethlehem Lutheran members. During these difficult pandemic days, it is important to manage our stress and anxiety as well as nurturing our personal relationships. We have incorporated hymns, contemporary music, and poetry into our sessions, and I look forward to seeing this ministry grow further in the months ahead. If you have any questions, contact me at pamelasheapoet@gmail.com. Please join us on Zoom: Meeting ID: 852 2906 5708; Passcode: 083416.

PAUSE, PRAY & REFLECT

December 21st is the longest night of the year and in recognition of the sorrow and difficult times that we have faced, here at Bethlehem we are setting up a place for people to pause, pray, reflect on your sorrows, and find some hope that evening.

At 4:30 pm (just before sunset) on Monday, December 21st, we will have an area set up with luminaries near the front of the church right by the parking lot. You are invited to step out of your car, but please make sure to practice safe distancing and covid-19 precautions. This is an individual moment of contemplation, so you can come any time between 4:30 pm and 6:30 pm that evening.

CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS EVENT

Feel some holiday spirit by joining in the congregational Christmas event! Begin your fun by stopping by the church on Wednesday, December 9th between 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. to pick up a gift bag. If you are unable to pick up your gift bag at that time, stop by the church before December 13th, ring the office doorbell, and Wanda will greet you with your gift bag. Enjoy the little gifts in your bag, but save the Bingo card and candy kisses if you wish to play Bingo!



We will also be accepting your donations for the LSS Christmas Toy and Food drive on this day. The need is greater than ever this year. Please help community parents provide a happy Christmas for their children. Thank you!

CHRISTMAS BINGO!

Save your Bingo card and candy markers that were included inside the gift bag. On December 13th at 7:30 P.M., join others on zoom to play the ever-popular Bingo! Yes, it's Bingo time! Pastor Megan will post a link for Bingo in the weekly emails. Join the fun! Play from home! Win a prize! Add some merriment and Christmas spirit to your Sunday evening!





YOUTH NEWS

JENNIFER ADKISON

Director of Youth Ministry

youthdirector@bethlehmlutheran.net

Happy Advent Season to you and yours! It's hard to believe that we are entering our last month of 2020!

During the month of November we had the Drive Thru Pet Blessing and Youth Group. At youth group we have been reading some of the Psalms and encouraging the youth to meditate on them and how they apply to our uncertain world today. A couple of the Psalms we have read are 46 and 115, which I find hopeful during high stress and anxious times such as these.

As long as state, county, and city guidelines allow us to meet in person, the youth group will be having their Christmas party on Friday, December 18 at 6:30 p.m. in the church courtyard. More details will be sent out to the parents. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me at youthdirector@bethlehmlutheran.net.

Now, more than ever, may the God of Peace bring you Joy as we anticipate the birth of the Son. Blessings!

JILL'S KNIT SALE

It's been a strange unusual year for all of us and it has taken me some time to figure out what I want to do with the sale I have loved sharing with you these 15+ years. As much as I want to host the sale again this year it really is about losing touch, in more ways than one. Besides being able to help agencies like Heifer, Good Gifts and World Vision, it was always about the touch, picking out the right yarn color and how it feels against the skin. Part of the joy I get from my sale is when you go through the tables and touch the items, feel how soft and warm they are and try things on. I love seeing the smiles and hearing the stories about people who have enjoyed their purchases or shared their gifts. Current situations make it impossible to host onsite and online sales, so regretfully and sadly I have to cancel the sale for this year. With time slipping away until Christmas I am able to take a limited amount of special orders and can check inventory if you have specific items you might be interested in. You are welcome to contact me at my e-mail address jigoddard@earthlink.net (preferred way) or on my cell 661-495-6503 (I am admittedly bad at phone). Again 100% of purchases will go to World Vision <https://www.worldvision.org>

Merry Christmas,
Looking forward to when we can be together again.
Peace be will You,
Jill



Handcrafted
Christmas Sale

NEWS FROM OUR SPONSORED MISSIONARIES

Dear friends,

Greetings from Columbus OH! We are still here—BUT NOT FOR LONG! We have received approval and booked tickets, and will be back home on campus by the middle of next month! We're grateful, excited, and looking forward to seeing our students and colleagues soon. The 2020-2021 academic year starts in late November, so we are happy to be able to plan to be back home. WE ARE TAKING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS—masks, distancing, and monitoring of any sign of symptoms will be part of our life for the foreseeable future.



CONGRATULATIONS PASTOR MARIAM CHARITY! Pastor Mariam Charity defended her MTh thesis in Missiology, entitled "On Being a Married Woman Pastor: The Cost of Service as Pastor, Wife, and Mother", late last month. Cynthia served as supervisor of this research project, which outlined the ways in which identities as pastor, wife, and mother create overlapping burdens that can become unsustainable. As the defense was set for morning in Tanzania (7 hours ahead of EDT), we took part in the wee smalls! (check out the clock on the computer!)

Pastor Mariam's work is superb and should serve as a guide for the church to move toward greater justice and inclusion.

Read what they're up to in Tanzania on their blog at <https://mcintz.wordpress.com/>



Your support makes a world of difference!

To help your congregation fulfill its covenant sponsorship, give directly through your church. You can include your missionary support donation in your weekly offering just indicate on your offering envelope how much is being contributed to the missionaries.

HOW TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING BETHLEHEM

Ways to Financially Support Bethlehem

- Mail in your check
- Through your bank's Bill Pay Donate
- On-Line through our church website (www.bethlehemplutheran.net) Enter through the Church site and locate the orange DONATE NOW button at the top right. You can set up an auto pay or one-time donation.
- Download the GivePlus+ app on your smartphone. Find Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Granada Hills, CA and donate.

Ways to Care

- Pray for our world, our leaders, our doctors and nurses.
- Follow the guidelines of the CDC.
- Check on family, friends, and those most vulnerable in our community during this time.
- Be generous in your giving of financial & material resources. Many people are in need and we want to be a blessing to them.

ADVENT FAMILY NIGHT

We want to inform everyone that considering the continued rise in COVID cases in the LA area, we have decided to cancel this Friday's Advent Family Night. Even though this event would have been mostly virtual, we think it is wisest to avoid any potential points of contact with the assembly and distribution of the supply bags, to help keep everyone as safe as possible. As has been the case with many things during the pandemic, this is a sad and disappointing decision for us to make, but our top priority is the health and safety of our school and church families, so that must come first and foremost. We are praying for everyone who has been affected by the virus and for our entire community as we continue to navigate this situation together.

HOLIDAY BOOK DRIVE

Julia Fisher's place of work, the New Orleans Children's Advocacy Center/ Audrey Hepburn CARE Center (Child Abuse Center) is having a holiday book drive this season!

The NOCAC/CARE Center is a comprehensive child abuse center providing pediatric forensic interviews and medical evaluations when there is an allegation of abuse. At the center, a child talks with a forensic interviewer about what happened, and gets a check up with a child abuse pediatrician to make sure their body is safe and healthy. It is our hope this holiday season that we can send each child home with a book of their choice, which makes their time with us a little easier, and is a way of showing thanks for their bravery of speaking up.

Holiday Book Drive

Audrey Hepburn CARE Center / New Orleans
Children's Advocacy Center



Children's Hospital
New Orleans
LCMC Health

What is the CARE Center/ NOCAC?

- The Audrey Hepburn Children at Risk Evaluation Center / New Orleans Children's Advocacy Center is a **comprehensive child abuse center** providing pediatric forensic interviews and medical evaluations.
- We support children who have **experienced trauma** and help **keep them safe**.



How can I help?

- Your **book donation** will go straight into the hands of a child awaiting an interview or medical exam. They can even take their book home-- a huge deal for many of our patients.
- Scan the QR code to view our Amazon wish list, or purchase a book from your **local bookshop** and donate in-person on **December 12th, 2020**.

Thank you for supporting local businesses and
the children of New Orleans!

Contact us for more information! ● (504) 894-5484 ● 1101 Calhoun St. New Orleans, LA 70118 ●
<https://www.chnola.org/our-services/audrey-hepburn-care-center/>

NEWS FROM LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES

WOW – Christmas is almost here!

But first: Thanks to all of you for your very generous donations to our Thanksgiving food give-a-way. We had enough bags of “all the fixings” for everyone that came to the Pantry, and over 100 turkeys that we gave away also. One of our churches, Salem Lutheran in Glendale, had all of the kids in their school decorate brown paper bags with a Thanksgiving theme, and then put Happy Thanksgiving messages inside the bags. It was really adorable. So many families came this year, and we were so happy that we could serve everyone. This is all due to each and every one of you and your thoughtful contributions.

A special thanks to Mary Fisher for organizing the drive-thru food collection on Sunday, Nov. 8th. Thank you, thank you! And thanks be to God!

So on to December! Normally, LSS provides a one day toy store for all of our guest families, but because of COVID, we will have three days of the toy store so that we will be taking one parent at a time over the course of a day for social distancing and to keep our staff (and the parents) safe. The dates for the toy store are Monday, Dec. 14, Tuesday, December 15th and Friday, December 18th from 9 to 12. We are asking for unwrapped, new toys for the age groups of infant to 12. You can bring your toys to Bethlehem and we will pick them up, or you can deliver them to LSS in North Hollywood.

A big Thank You to Linda Zurich for doing a Thrivent project for this event, which gives us a \$250 gift card to buy toys. Thank you, Linda!

If you, or anyone in your family, would like to help on any of those toy give a way days, just give me a call. You would be our “elves” helping the parents through the toy store picking out their gifts for their own children.

And a blessed Christmas to all of you!

Jan Maseda/Director/LSS San Fernando Valley (818)288-7054

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

ADVENT RITUALS FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES

“When will we be able to go anywhere again?”, a small child questioned his mother. When will we be able to celebrate holidays traditionally? When will change make life just and fair for all people? So many questions arise during uncertain times. We long for lasting change and comfort. But how long must we wait? Waiting is hard.

Advent is a time of waiting. But for what are we waiting? We wait to celebrate Christ's birth. But advent is more. Advent is both a time for celebrating and lamenting. We celebrate the world as it is, and we lament the world as it is. How are both possible? In the December GATHER Bible study, we will explore Mary's days of waiting. Discover how she travels spiritually and emotionally during times of uncertainty and transition. Learn how we, like Mary, can travel through uncertain times waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus and working, pondering, and praying for an end to uncertain times. Explore helpful practices for yourself and for family and friends.

Zoom in on December 15th at 4:00 P.M. to discover how to celebrate during waiting and to de-stress yourself during times of uncertainty. You are welcome to click on the link that is shared in the Monday Weekly Schedule prior to Tuesday, December 15th.

MEN'S MONTHLY BREAKFAST

The men's breakfast group will not meet due to the updated LA County restaurants restrictions that prohibit outdoor dining.

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

If you would like to stay in touch and get updates of events happening at Bethlehem, please visit www.facebook.com/BethlehemGranadaHills and like us!

Also, check out our preschool Facebook page at www.facebook.com/bethlehemplutherschool. Bethlehem's teachers and staff have been sharing videos of readings on the school Facebook page. If you have children in your lives or you would like to share with friends and family who have children, please do so!

BOOK CLUB

Our Book Club will take a break for the holidays.

SPECIAL ZOOM PRAYER MEETING 12/6/2020

In light of recent events, we thought it would be good to have a zoom prayer session. This has been scheduled for 12/6 at 6:30 p.m. You can pray yourself or you can submit special prayer requests to me at pamelasheapoet@gmail.com if you would prefer that I pray for you. I will also include the prayer requests from the office as well as those from Sunday morning's online worship.

Zoom Meeting ID: 852 2906 5708
passcode 083416

You are welcome to join our Scripture-Center Breathing Session which will follow at 7:00 p.m.

In service,

Pam Shea

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 4 John DeCoursey-Thomas
- 4 Ryan Nakata
- 5 Leslie Petit
- 7 Alison Rubinstein
- 13 Jonelle Miller
- 15 Sue Akin
- 16 Shirley Cooper
- 27 Marilyn Galins
- 28 Dave Compton



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES



- 14 John & Jennifer Adkison

NOVEMBER STATISTICS

November to date , as of 11/22,

Offerings \$14,636.21

Budget \$ 20,833

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 <u>9AM In-Person Worship</u> <u>10AM Online Worship</u> <u>11AM Zoom Fellowship</u> <u>7PM Scripture Breathing Sessions</u>	30	1	2 <u>6:30PM Wednesday</u> <u>Night Bible Study</u>	3	4	5
6 <u>9AM In-Person Worship</u> <u>10AM Online Worship</u> <u>11AM Zoom Fellowship</u> <u>11:30A Virtual Sunday School</u> <u>2PM Confirmation Class</u> <u>6:30PM Zoom Prayer Meeting</u> <u>7PM Scripture Breathing Sessions</u>	7	8	9 <u>10AM-8PM Gift Bag</u> <u>pick up @ church</u> <u>6:30PM Wednesday</u> <u>Night Bible Study</u>	10	11	12
13 <u>9AM In-Person Worship</u> <u>10AM Online Worship</u> <u>11AM Zoom Fellowship</u> <u>12PM Youth Group</u> <u>7PM Scripture Breathing Sessions</u> <u>7:30PM Christmas BINGO!</u>	14	15 <u>4PM WELCA</u> <u>Bible Study</u> <u>via Zoom</u>	16 <u>6:30PM Wednesday</u> <u>Night Bible Study</u>	17	18 <u>6:30PM Youth</u> <u>Christmas Party</u>	19
20 <u>9AM In-Person Worship</u> <u>10AM Online Worship</u> <u>11AM Zoom Fellowship</u> <u>11:30A Virtual Sunday School</u> <u>2PM Confirmation Class</u> <u>7PM Scripture Breathing Sessions</u>	21 <u>4:30PM</u> <u>Pause, Pray</u> <u>& Reflect on</u> <u>our front</u> <u>lawn</u>	22	23 <u>6:30PM Wednesday</u> <u>Night Bible Study</u>	24 <u>5PM Drive Up Blessing</u> <u>& Communion</u> <u>7PM Live Stream of</u> <u>Family Service</u> <u>8PM In Person</u> <u>Candlelight Service</u> <u>9PM Live Stream of</u> <u>Candlelight Service</u>	25 <u>Office Closed</u> 	26
27 <u>9AM In-Person Worship</u> <u>10AM Online Worship</u> <u>11AM Zoom Fellowship</u> <u>7PM Scripture Breathing Sessions</u>	28	29	30 <u>6:30PM Wednesday</u> <u>Night Bible Study</u>	31	Jan. 1 	2



Bethlehem
LUTHERAN
CHURCH & SCHOOL

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