

# The Bethlehem Star




The newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
www.bethlehembayridge.org

December 2017

## Advent & Christmas Highlights...

- 12/3 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Christmas Carol Sunday
- 12/6 @ 6:00 p.m. -- Healing Center Reception at TD Bank (99th & 4th)
- 12/8 @ 7:00 p.m. -- The Lighting of the Creche at LES
- 12/10 @ 12:00 p.m. -- Christmas Caroling to shut-ins
- 12/14 @ 6:00 p.m. -- Healing Center Client / Children Christmas Party
- 12/15 @ 6:30 p.m. -- Bethlehem Women's Christmas Party
- 12/17 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Sunday Worship, Christmas Pageant & Luncheon
- 12/20 @ 9:00 a.m. -- LES Christmas Chapel
- 12/24 @ 11:00 p.m. -- Christmas Eve Candlelight worship
- 12/25 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Christmas Day worship



For  
unto  
you is  
born this  
day in the  
city of David  
a saviour, which  
is Christ the Lord.  
Luke  
2:11



### Our Mission

To serve God and God's people. To live our faith daily through worship, and providing education, support, nourishment, compassion, good counsel, love, and service to the larger community welcoming all who join us in this mission.



### Our Welcome

Bethlehem Lutheran Church is a **Reconciling in Christ** congregation. People of all sexual orientations and gender identities are welcome within the membership of this congregation and are encouraged to share in the sacramental and general life of this Christian family.

## Pastor Paul's Monthly Message for December

Dear Members and Friends,

What should you do with someone clothed in camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, eating locusts and wild honey? What should you do with someone who calls the religious leaders a brood of vipers and tells them, "The ax is lying at the root of the trees: every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown in the fire"? What should you do with someone who teaches, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise"? What should you do with someone who doesn't want to draw attention to himself, but says, "One who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals"? What should you do with someone like this? The answer: Listen to him, for he prepared the way of the Lord.

What should you do with a baby born in the humblest of surroundings, in a cave for animals? What should you do with someone who was teaching in the temple at age 12? What should you do with someone who spent his adult life hanging out with common folk, tax collectors and sinners? What should you do with someone who taught, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you", and "You have heard it said, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth', but I say, 'Do not resist an evildoer. If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also.'"? What should you do with someone who defies the religious norms of his day and allows his disciples to pick grain on the Sabbath and has the audacity to heal people on the Sabbath? What should you do with someone who called the religious leaders hypocrites and white-washed tombs? What should you do with someone who spent his life living for others and said, "Whoever wants to be first, must be the servant of all"? What should you do with someone who entered Jerusalem with shouts of "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!", but ends the week crucified on a cross like a common criminal? What should you do with someone like this? The answer: Love him and give him your life.

In the words of the early Christian hymn in Paul's letter to the Philippians, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

In this beautiful time of the year, let us find Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Let us experience the peace, joy and love that comes from knowing him. John the Baptist prepared, and Jesus came...for us! Glory to God in the highest!

In God's Service,

*Rev. Paul H. Knudsen*

Pastor

## December at a Glance

- 12/3 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Christmas Carol Sunday (No Conf class or SS)
- 12/4 @ 6:30 p.m. -- Bay Ridge Center Board of Directors Christmas Dinner @ Chadwick's
- 12/6 @ 6:00 p.m. -- Healing Center Thank You Reception at TD Bank (99th & 4th)
- 12/7 @ 7:15 p.m. -- SW Brooklyn Lutheran Council @ Good Shepherd
- 12/8 @ 7:00 p.m. -- The Lighting of the Creche at LES
- 12/10 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Regular Sunday morning schedule w/ SS Pageant Rehearsal
- 12/10 @ 12:00 p.m. -- Christmas Caroling to the shut-ins
- 12/13 @ 6:00 p.m. -- LES Dinner for Janet Cerutti @ Chadwick's
- 12/14 @ 6:00 p.m. -- Healing Center Client/Children Christmas Party
- 12/15 @ 6:30 p.m. -- Bethlehem Women's Christmas Party in the Joy Room
- 12/17 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Regular Sunday morning schedule w/ Christmas Pageant & Luncheon
- 12/19 @ 6:00 p.m. -- Church Council Christmas Dinner in the parsonage
- 12/20 @ 9:00 a.m. -- LES Christmas Chapel
- 12/24 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Sunday morning worship (No Conf class or SS)
- 12/24 @ 11:00 p.m. -- Christmas Eve Candlelight worship
- 12/25 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Christmas Day worship
- 12/31 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Sunday morning worship (No Conf class or SS)

Coffee hours are held in the Fellowship Room.

# December 2017

Services | Activities | Special Events | Meetings

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 9:15 am—Adult Bible Class in the Parish Room NO SS or Confirmation 10:30 am—Christmas Carol Sunday Worship followed by Coffee Hour	4 6:30 pm Boy Edge Center Board of Directors Christmas Dinner @ Stud- wick's 7:00 pm—AA	5	6 6:00 pm Healing Center Thank You Reception @ ID Bank (99th & 4th)	7 7:15 pm SW Edge Lutheran Council @ Good Shepherd	8 7:00 pm The Lighting of the Creche @ LES 7:00 pm—Scouts	9 6:15 pm—AA 7:30 pm—AA
10 9:15 am—Adult Bible Class in the Parish Room 9:15 am—SS Confirmation 10:30 am—Worship followed by Coffee Hour 11:30 am—Christmas Caroling in Shrine	11 7:00 pm—AA	12	13	14 6:00 pm Healing Center Client/Children Christmas Party	15 6:30 pm BLC Women's Christmas Party in the Joy Room 7:00 pm—Scouts	16 6:15 pm—AA 7:30 pm—AA
17 9:15 am—Adult Bible Class in the Parish Room 9:15 am—SS & Confirmation 10:30 am—Worship w/SS Christmas Pageant followed by Luncheon	18 7:00 pm—AA	19 7:00 pm Church Council Christmas Dinner In the Parsonage	20 9:00 am LES Christmas Chap- el	21 7:15 pm—AA	22 7:00 pm—Scouts	23 6:15 pm—AA 7:30 pm—AA
24 NO Adult Bible Study NO SS or Confirmation 10:30 am—Worship 11:00 pm—Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship	25 10:30 a.m. Christmas Day Worship 7:00 pm—AA	26	27	28 7:15 pm—AA	29	30 6:15 pm—AA 7:30 pm—AA
31 NO Adult Bible Study NO SS or Confirmation 10:30 am—Worship						

## SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

11/5 – 14  
11/12 – 109  
11/19 – 130  
11/26 - 73

Bethlehem: The Growing Church!

## MONTHLY OFFERING

September: \$9,482.00  
October: \$13,288.00  
November: \$8,726.00

God's great work at Bethlehem needs your financial support!

## FELLOWSHIP

12/3 - Coffee Hour  
12/10 – Coffee Hour  
2/17 – Christmas Pageant Luncheon  
12/24 – NO Coffee Hour  
12/31 – NO Coffee Hour

## ADULT BIBLE CLASS

Every Sunday morning In the Parish Room  
9:15 – 10:15 a.m. led by Carl Jacobsen  
Please check as the schedule may change due to holidays and special Sunday observances.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

12/10 – After Worship Christmas Caroling to shut-ins



## VOLUNTEER?

Anyone interested in partaking in the Worship Service, as Communion Preparers, Communion Assistants or Lectors, please speak to Dennis Monsen!

Coffee Hour Volunteers ~ so we can enjoy food and fellowship every week! Please sign up!

## BIRTHDAYS

12/6 – Tom Schaefer  
12/8 – Mildred Johansson  
12/9 – Andrea Tuccillo  
12/12 – Bill Tuccillo  
12/13 – Frida Mesa  
12/16 – Janice Hansen  
12/19 – Lisa Whelan  
12/20 – Barry Chester  
12/22 – Carl Jacobsen  
12/23 – Steven Solby  
12/25 – Carol Saliu  
12/30 – Grace Elisabeth Knudsen

## ANNIVERSARIES

12/7 – Marge & Joe Greco  
12/8 – Katherine & Elliot Okun

## NURSING HOME

Christine Scanlon, Reymundo Lariosa

## HEALING & STRENGTH

Robert Serrano, Hermicenda & Hery Vallecillo, Billy Whelan,  
Doris Whelan, Donna & Indal Balkissoon, Bob Muselli,  
Lon Dayhoff, John Maceda, Caroline Hildreth,  
Shirley Tuccillo, Peter Fistanic, Marcus Caban,  
Ann DeMarco, Lenny Thompson, Anna Aboltins,  
Karen Kozoriz, Dawn Valentine, Helen Wires,  
Ed Shipwright, Carl and Mindy Jacobsen, Anne Okun,  
Anna Marie Zarr, Anna Atiles, Laura Woltman,  
Rose Barron, Marietta Blanchette, Helge Henriksen,  
Edna Weber, Ken Weber, Mia Frangoulis, Joseph Musco,  
Sheri Wilborn, Beverly Malmbeck, Kevin Flannery, Sr.,  
Mike Riquier, John Fowler, Kristine Larsen, Adam Torres, Ruth  
Kennedy, Robert Hofmo, Mike Roszko, David Stayer, Julie  
Dawson, Cathy Keogh, Maureen Whalen, Marie Lane,  
Maryann Clark, Sal Turturici, Christine Landi,  
Twins – Cody and Owen, Kent Norvin, Claire Capron, Gianna  
Pizzimenti, Jerry Farnen, Shawn Walters, Edith Zito, Barbara  
Muselli, Dottie Gizzarelli, George Stuart,  
Lynne McLaughlin, Gary Solberg, Ed Creen

*Best Wishes*

*In Our Thoughts  
& Prayers* 

## IN SYMPATHY

John Wallrabe  
October 28th  
Condolences to Doris  
Whelan and family



## Church Council Highlights — November 21, 2017 Meeting

### **Bay Ridge Center (presented by Pastor Paul)**

- Architectural plans were shared for the potential new senior center on the 456 Ovington Ave. property. Approvals are proceeding and a final decision from the NYC Department for the Aging is expected in the February timeframe.

### **Worship & Music (presented by Dennis Monsen)**

- Significant worship services went very well (LES 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, Reformation, Healing Center, Thanksgiving).
- More wonderful worship experiences are planned for December (Christmas Carols, Pageant)
- There will be two services on Christmas Eve, since it is a Sunday. Regular worship service at 10:30 a.m. and the Candlelight service at 11:00 p.m.
- Reminder that we are going back to the 1<sup>st</sup> setting in the hymnal beginning December 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Continue to be very happy with Maria, our new Music Director and organist.

### **Lutheran Elementary School (presented by Al Koehler)**

- The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary worship service and birthday party took place on Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. There were 235 people in church and approximately 170 people at the party in the school. It was a wonderful event.
- The LES curriculum continues to be enhanced (Spanish for grades 6 & 7, and specialized science in the early grades).
- Enrollment is currently 188.
- Special events included Breast Cancer Awareness fundraising sale, Brooklyn Bridge trip for the Architecture class, Pumpkin Patch pictures for the younger students, National Unity Day “Love thy Neighbor” tee-shirt giveaway.
- Janet Cerutti will be retiring in December. We are so thankful for her many years of service to LES.
- In order to balance the LES budget, the School Board requested the church council to once again include the school utility expenses in the church budget. A motion was made and unanimously approved to include this expense in the 2018 church budget.

### **Property (presented by Steve Solby)**

- Sidewalk cement work completed in the front of the 415 Ovington Ave. apartment building. The entire sidewalk was replaced due to damage from tree roots and age.
- Future property work items will not begin until the next calendar year.

### **Sunday School (presented by Kathy Finkelstein)**

- Very happy with the Sunday School children. Very good children and the Sunday School continues to grow.
- Some children have been assigned leadership roles for the church service and they enjoy them. Aidan Costadura is the Head Youth Greeter and Michael Smith leads the presenting of the elements for Holy Communion.
- Several Sunday School families will be going to Koinonia for the Advent weekend December 1 – 3.
- The Sunday School Christmas pageant will be Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Sunday School giving programs include a monetary gift to a church in Houston, Texas affected by the recent hurricane and gift to Lutheran World Relief to provide an animal gift to a family in need.
- Kathy now has a 3 year cycle of Sunday School curriculum organized in binders for continual use.

### **Healing Center (presented by Laura Caruso)**

- Healing Center Sunday was November 12<sup>th</sup>. It was nice to accentuate this ministry and commission the Board of Directors and Healing Center staff.
- TD Bank once again came through as the host of our annual Thank You Reception. This will take place on Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the TD Bank branch on 99<sup>th</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. All are encouraged to attend and support this incredible ministry.]

## Church Council Highlights — November 21, 2017 Meeting (continued)

- The Board will be asked to take on a fundraising focus going forward. Some grants were not approved for next year and special attention needs to be made to expand our income sources.
- The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for January 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The client/children Christmas Party will be December 14<sup>th</sup>.
- The council thought it would be worthwhile to approach the executives of our sports leagues for funding. In the current environment of intimate partner violence, our mission is needed more than ever.

### **Evangelism (presented by Deacon Tony)**

- Deacon Tony continues to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries with our church family. In November, Deacon Tony did his best Frank Sinatra imitation as he sang happy birthday to Ann DeMarco over the phone.

### **Fellowship (presented by Kim Tran)**

- The Bethlehem Women's Group met on November 10<sup>th</sup>. A Christmas party is scheduled for December 15<sup>th</sup>.
- There will be a Christmas sale at the pageant luncheon on December 17<sup>th</sup>.
- The women will rent a table at the Bay Ridge Center sidewalk sale in the Spring.
- Several women will be attending the Koinonia Women's Retreat in April 2018.

### **Public Relations**

- No report this month.

### **Finance Report (presented by Pastor Paul)**

- The October 2017 financial report was reviewed and accepted as presented.

### **Pastor's Report (presented by Pastor Paul)**

- Visitations (11), Funerals (4), Baptisms (1), Weddings (0)
- Will be recommending a change in our worship schedule for next year. Marathon Sunday is not well attended and is so difficult to schedule around the marathon. The Worship/Music Commission will consider the option of a Saturday evening service to replace the Sunday morning worship on Marathon Sunday.
- Youth group will go Christmas caroling on December 10<sup>th</sup> and will have a Koinonia winter retreat in the January/February timeframe.
- Pastor Paul gave the invocation at the Salam Arabic Lutheran Church fundraiser at the Bay Ridge Manor. It is important for us to continue to support this Christian ministry to our Middle Eastern population.
- Maimonides Medical Center once again included us in their "Celebration of Light". A gift of \$1,000 was presented to us at a wonderful luncheon in their board room. Pastor Paul attended.
- LES has resurrected "The Lighting of the Creche". Our church/school community is invited on December 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Christmas carols will be sung and hot chocolate will be served.
- Property sale: No change in status to the sale of our 415 Ovington Ave. apartment building.
- A motion was made and unanimously passed to purchase a defibrillator for the church sanctuary.
- The Southwest Brooklyn Lutheran Council received a \$10,000 grant from the Metropolitan NY Synod ELCA to hire a consultant to perform a needs assessment for a "Welcoming Center" in this area of Brooklyn. The study will determine whether there are any gaps in our services to the immigrant population in our community that the church community could possibly fill. Since Pastor Paul is the treasurer of the SWB Lutheran Council, Bethlehem will serve as the financial conduit for receiving the grant and paying the consultant.
- Christmas bonuses were approved for the Bethlehem Lutheran Church staff.





Dear Members and Friends,

This year I have decided not to put up a Christmas Tree. For many of the younger members of my family, this is a cause for alarm. They worry that I am depressed, that I am sad, that I am losing interest in the world. For me, it is not so earth shattering a decision. Putting up a tree is difficult, involving moving furniture, taking things out of storage, climbing ladders, and stringing extension cords throughout the living room. It is pretty when it's done. But it only lasts a week or two. I loved having a big tree when I was younger. Now I love looking at other people's big trees. Putting up my own is now a chore...and a rather big one. So it has become one of the many compromises that I've made to make my life a little less stressful. I have a couple of small little things that I put around the house to remind me that the holiday is coming. But really, I don't need a wreath or a yule log to remind me that this is a solemn yet festive season. It is abundantly well advertised almost everywhere I look.

As I have grown older, I have found that many of the decisions that I make, which are perfectly sensible to me, are viewed as anything but reasonable to others. I used to try to hide those decisions from others. I almost felt ashamed to acknowledge that I had to slow down a bit. But around the holidays, when everyone is running hither and yon, I have begun to relish the absence of some of the "trimmings" which have become confused with what the winter holidays are really about.

Many of you know that I am a practicing Buddhist. I was not born to the Buddhist faith nor tradition. I was raised as a Roman Catholic. I have a deep reverence for my Christian Catholic tradition. Christmas was and still is a very important holiday to me. It is, as well a solemn and holy time for many faith traditions. It marks a time when nearly all people pause to recognize that Light came into a dark world and changed it forever. So when I hear people angrily remarking about why we say Happy Holidays, rather than Merry Christmas, I stop to wonder. To me, celebrating light and love is what Christmas is about. Everybody's light and love – whether it is symbolized by Hanukah Menorahs, or with Kwanzaa Candles, or with a Wiccan Yule Log.

Whatever the name, we are all celebrating our faith in the inherent goodness of humanity. We are longing for the same Peace on Earth, that the Angels proclaimed that holy night in Bethlehem.  
Happy Holidays to all and a blessed New Year.

*Marianne Nicolosi*  
Executive Director



## The Healing Center

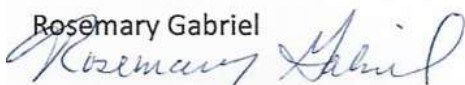
For the next couple of months, you will hear from Healing Center staff and their work. This month our Youth Coordinator talks about our Daughters of the Lotus teen program.

Dear Friends,

At this special time of the year, let us be mindful of all those who are suffering due to family violence. As the coordinator of children's services at the Healing Center, I have witnessed young children who are trying to make sense of incomprehensible family dynamics. These children often present with school adjustment issues due to feelings of anger, self-blame, and the uncertainty of whether or not to trust adults.

In our Hi-5 Children's Project, these children are provided a safe, nurturing environment where they are accepted as they are. Some children are initially silent, angry or withdrawn, but after only a few sessions in the play room I begin to notice positive changes. What is the secret you may ask? Well, it's not a secret at all. Simply put, all children are encouraged to play! Play is the primary way that children begin to make meaning of the world, as it helps children form ideas, and seek solutions. In the Hi-5 playroom, the children can choose to engage with art materials, puppets, playdough, story books, games and other materials. When the children come to the playroom, I tell them that I expect them to have fun! This is their special time. At first, some children see me as the facilitator and caretaker of the playroom. At times, some children appear to forget that I am in the room, other children immediately include me in their play. Despite each child's preference, I make sure to be fully present for them, showing them that I am interested in whatever they choose to do. The time I spend with each child, has proven time and time again to be very rewarding. If I ever doubt the effectiveness of this program, it is the children who remind me of how much they value their time with me in the playroom. For example, a six-year-old boy had been coming to the playroom on a weekly basis for some time when I was forced to cancel a session due to an emergency. This boy preferred to play by himself, and did not engage with me very much each week. However, the week after the cancelled session, he ran into the play room, wrapped his arms around me and said he missed me. Another boy, asked his mother if he stopped being angry would that mean he couldn't come see me anymore! All children in the project have become more verbal and are learning skills to help them with the challenges in their young lives.

On December 14, 2017, the Healing Center will be hosting an annual Christmas Celebration for the children and mothers impacted by family violence. This year, we are excited to present live entertainment for our families. I personally want to thank all those who have supported our very important work with these families. May this season of love, hope, compassion, kindness, empathy, and goodwill towards all persist throughout the New Year!

Rosemary Gabriel  
  
Coordinator of Children's Services



**CHRISTMAS CAROL  
SUNDAY**

**THE WONDERFUL  
GIFT OF CHRISTMAS**

**December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**@**

**10:30 Worship**

**Come join us in singing your  
favorite**

**Christmas Carols  
and listening to the story  
of Jesus' birth!**



JOIN US  
FRIDAY DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>  
AT  
7:00 P.M.

FOR AN LES TRADITION



THE LIGHTING OF THE CRECHE  
AT 440 OVINGTON AVENUE

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

HOT CHOCOLATE AND COOKIES



**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**  
**The Fourth Sunday in Advent**

**Come join us in celebrating Christ's birth**



**Sunday School Christmas Pageant**  
**Sunday, December 17th**  
**At 10:30 a.m.**

**Followed by a luncheon in the Parish Room**

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**  
**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 p.m.**

**Christmas Day Worship Service**  
**Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m.**





Each year poinsettias are purchased to decorate the sanctuary. Would you like to dedicate one of these as a memorial, in celebration of a special date or simply to celebrate Christmas? If so, please make a donation of \$15.00 to cover the cost of the

plant. You can put it in the offering plate or mail it to the church with the information below. Please submit your request no later than Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>. Please indicate whether you will be taking the plant home or leaving it and having it sent to a homebound person.

\*\*\*\*\*

**A Christmas poinsettia:**

In loving memory of

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In celebration of the anniversary or birthday of

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In celebration of the birth of Christ \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

I will take the plant home.  I will leave the plant.

**SPECIAL CHRISTMAS  
MUSIC**



\*\*\*\*\*

*A Christmas gift of music:*

*In loving memory of*

---

---

*in celebration of the anniversary/birthday of*

---

*in celebration of the birth of Christ* \_\_\_\_\_



*Given by:*

---

Adult **Bible**  
*Class*



Sunday Mornings  
**9:15 – 10:15 a.m.**  
**In the Parish Room**

led by Carl Jacobsen

## Bethlehem Lutheran Church

4<sup>th</sup> & Ovington Avenues

Brooklyn NY 11209

718-748-9502

[www.bethlehembayridge.org](http://www.bethlehembayridge.org)

### Sunday Worship Service at 10:30 AM

All are welcome here



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