



CHIMES Newsletter

JANUARY 2024 VOLUME 86, ISSUE 1

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Into a new year with blessings

As a new year arrives council members for Bethlehem Lutheran Church want to share with everyone that we are excitedly continuing on with our strategic plan. Here is a review of our goals for the next three years:

We will grow in our relationship with God.

- Pray
- Practice Sabbath
- Share stories
- Explore spiritual practices

Growing our Relationship with God - We want to start recording the different options and numbers of people who participate in activities for spiritual growth. We will continue to evaluate the variety of options for worship.

We will grow in our relationship with our neighbors and our community.

- Listen
- Practice hospitality
- Be present
- Explore ways to engage and provide for others

Growing our Relationship with Community - We will track our events and numbers of people involved to evaluate community reach and impact. We will continue to evaluate Bethlehem's relationships with our neighbors.

We will grow our financial sustainability.

- Give
- Practice Stewardship
- Communicate regularly
- Explore additional resources and income

Financial Sustainability– Bethlehem Lutheran Church will continue to replenish our general reserves with a profit of at least \$5,000 per year and generate enough building-designated funds to maintain our pristine church.

We have a good start on our goals. We hope to strive to keep learning how to better serve our church and its members.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 3

6:30 pm Confirmation Resumes

JANUARY 7

10:15 am Sunday School

JANUARY 8

Committee Reports for Annual Report due to office

JANUARY 11

9 am Women's Group

JANUARY 13

9 am Take Christmas Tree Down

JANUARY 13-20

Dominican Republic Mission Trip

JANUARY 18

6:30 Church Council

JANUARY 21

10:15 Sunday School

JANUARY 28

9 am Worship & Annual Meeting

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, ELCA

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Email: office@blcportage.org
www.bethlehemLCportage.org



Our annual meeting will be on Sunday, January 28 right after our 9:00 am service. There will be a vote on our financial budget for 2024 as well as the election of council members. We will also look to nominate two members for the ELCA synod meeting in May, always an inspiring event. Please plan on attending the annual meeting and help our congregation with a strong beginning to 2024.

Kerry Melby

Happy New Year

A bright, shiny new year,
empty, neat, pristine,
Waiting, ready
for us to get it right.
Another chance
to love and forgive.
Another chance
to make another a real effort
to give more than we get.
Another chance
to make a difference.
A good new year.
A Happy New Year!

OUR CHURCH

CHRISTMAS TREE TAKEDOWN



On Saturday, **January 13th at 9 am** the Christmas tree will be taken down along with the Christmas decorations. We are looking for people to come and help that morning. Please contact Margaret & Del Molden with any questions.

GIFTS OF BETHLEHEM UPDATE

Thank you to all the talented members that gifted us with music and words at the Gifts of Bethlehem Concert. Thank you to all who donated items and/or bid on items during the silent auction. It was a great success, as we raised over \$2300 for the Clergy Relief Fund, ELCA mission support and BLC mission support.



ELCA GOOD GIFTS



The Good Gifts Tree will stay up through January 18, so there is still time to make a difference in the lives of people who are in need of everyday items, that we may take for granted.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Due to pricing increases we are moving away from fresh altar flowers. Ginny Paulson will be making seasonal silk arrangements for the altar. You can still honor people and events by making a \$20 (suggested) tribute gift to the church, we will continue to list the information in our weekly bulletin.



There will be special envelopes available in the narthex.

SAVE THE DATE – FEB. 4TH



Sunday, February 4th the youth and adults going on the Dominican Republic Mission trip will share their experiences with us. Please join us to hear all about their trip!

LENT REMINDER

Lent will be upon us shortly. Ash Wednesday is February 14th. The Lenten soup supper schedule will be published shortly. Please keep an eye out for that.

TAI CHI UPDATE



TAI CHI EXERCISES

Tai Chi will be postponed for the month of January.

POINSETTIA PICK UP

If you ordered a poinsettia, please pick them up by January 21st.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

OPEN COUNCIL SEAT



Looking for members interested in being on the church council. There is one open seat at this time, and it is only for a one-year term, with an option to be renewed for an additional 3-year term. You must be a voting member. Term would start

at the end of the 2024 annual meeting. Let Pr. Jaime, a current council member, or the office know if you'd like to put your name on the ballot.

OPEN PERSONNEL SEAT

Do you have gifts and/or experience in personnel related matters such as maintaining an employee handbook, hiring policies, and job descriptions? Do you have a passion for creating a positive



employee atmosphere here at Bethlehem? If so, please consider this volunteer opportunity! There is a seat available on the personnel committee and we would love to have you! The committee meets at most a handful of times per year and guides/advises on employee best practices. Below please find a description of the Personnel Committee:

It shall handle all employee related matters, specifically the employee handbook, hiring policies and procedures, and job descriptions. It will follow all duties written in Personnel Committee description. Members of the Personnel Committee will not hold a concurrent seat on the Church Council. The Treasurer will a member ex officio.

If you are interested, please contact Pastor Jaime or one of the current members, Robin Kvalo and Barb Olson-Rothwell.

CHURCH TREASURER NEEDED



Looking for someone with financial experience to fill the Church Treasurer position that will be vacant this month. This position oversees the financial processes of the church,

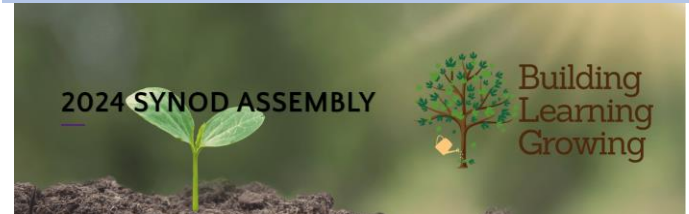
helps develop the annual budget, as well as oversees and organizes the annual audit. Please contact Pr. Jaime if interested.

ANNUAL MEETING & ANNUAL REPORT



Our Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, **January 28** and will take place right after 9 am worship. In case of inclement weather, it will be held on February 11. The 2023 Annual Report will be emailed and made available after the January 18th Church Council meeting.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY REPS NEEDED



We are in need of four voting members to represent Bethlehem at Synod Assembly on May 18 in Janesville, WI. We can have one male and one female adult rep., as well as one male and one female youth rep. Youth is defined by voting members under the age of 30. We will vote on these at the annual meeting which is January 28th. You can find out more about this event [here](#).

COMMITTEE & MINISTRY GROUP REPORTS



Committee and Ministry Group reports for inclusion in the Annual Report are due to the office **no later than January 8th**.

CHURCH DIRECTORIES

We are happy to announce that our Church Picture Directories have finally arrived! If you had your picture taken, you will receive a directory. Those will be in the narthex with your name on it. If you didn't have your picture taken, extras were printed and can be purchased from the office for \$15.

OFFERING ENVELOPES



If you received offering envelopes last year, your new envelopes are ready to pick up. Numbers did not change this year.

For those without envelopes, please make sure to put your offering in an envelope with **your name and number**. This makes our counters' job much easier.

If you want envelopes and currently don't have them, contact the church office. If you are interested in ways to make giving simpler by using automatic electronic payments, please see our website's "[Giving](#)" page. Thank you for your continued generosity and support.

STAFF UPDATE

Janice Petersen, our Parish Nurse and Financial Assistant, will be working remotely during the months of January through March. She can still be reached by email. Pastor and other volunteers will continue to go on member visits during her absence.

WINTER WEATHER POLICY REMINDER



Now that winter has officially arrived in the form of snow, this will be a good time to go over our Winter Weather Policy.

The full policy can be found on the Council bulletin board in the narthex, as well as on our [BLC website](#). In summary it states: "If Portage Public Schools are closed or dismissed early due to inclement weather, the church office will be closed, and all church activities, **except worship**, will be cancelled for the day and that evening. If there is a delayed start, the church office may be closed until staff can safely travel. Notifications will always be posted on the BLC website and Facebook page and when called for an email and text (for those that have opted in for text messaging) will be sent out to those involved in the activities.

For Worship services: "If Portage is under a Winter Storm Warning, and many other area churches are

cancelling their services, a decision to cancel worship service will be made 2 hours prior to the start of worship. If Sunday worship is cancelled, Sunday School will also be cancelled." If worship is cancelled, it will be posted in the following places:

- BLC Facebook page & website
- Email will be sent to all those on the monthly newsletter list
- Text message for those that have opted in for text messaging
- Local TV and radio stations

TEXT MESSAGE OPT-IN REMINDER



Just a reminder, that we have a great feature in our church database that allows us to send out text messages to our members. These messages would be for the following: meeting

reminders, special announcements, event reminders, Christian education updates, inclement weather closings. You can sign up by going to this website: <https://bethlehempottage.360members.com/opt-in/texting>

You can take a picture of this QR code with your smart phone's camera and it will take you directly to the website to sign up.









JANUARY 2024 WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Date	Usher	Reader	Video Production	Communion Assistant	Communion Assistant	Altar Guild	Acolyte	Music	Coffee Hour
Wed 1/3 5:30 pm					Cheryl Hebel	Cheryl Hebel	Lindsay Nickel	Carla	
Sun 1/7 9 am	Larry & Sandy Sween	Lisa Cook	Jeff Melby	Ann Ciske	Kerry Melby	Kerry Melby	Kathryn Thiele w/ Gabe Bishop	Carla	
Wed 1/10 5:30 pm					Judy Donahue	Judy Donahue	Dayne Wagner	Jody	
Sun 1/14 9am	Bonnie Dixon	Bonnie Dixon		Lynn Holmes	Nancy Loether	Nancy Loether	Oleatta Guenther	Praise Team	
Wed 1/17 5:30 pm					Kathy Lawrence	Kathy Lawrence	Kenzie Schmidtke	Samantha	
Sun 1/21 9am	Ellen Kabele	Bobbie Goodman		Bobbie Goodman	Sue Conner	Sue Conner	Mikayla Bovre	Jody	
Wed 1/24 5:30 pm					Cara Druckrey	Cara Druckrey	Clara Georgeson	Samantha	
Sun 1/28 9am	Jim Crawford	Darlene Anderson		Kathryn Crawford	Marie Kucksdorf	Marie Kucksdorf	Zane Bovre	Choir & Carla	
Wed 1/31 5:30 pm					Cara Druckrey	Cara Druckrey	Avri Anderson	Jody	

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

January 2024

General Church Grounds x → Conference Room x → Music Room x → Fellowship Hall x

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 31 ← From Dec 25 9:00am Lessons and Carols	Jan 1 Pastor Jaime Out of Office Office Closed 1:00pm Card Club	2 9:00am Quilters	3 5:30pm Worship 6:30pm Confirmation 6:45pm Praise Team Practice	4	5	6
7 9:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School	8 1:00pm Card Club 	9 9:00am Quilters	10 Food Pantry Helpers 5:30pm Worship 6:30pm Confirmation 6:45pm Praise Team Practice 	11 9:00am Women's Group 	12	13 DR Mission Trip 
14 8:00am Praise Team Warmup 9:00am Worship	15 1:00pm Card Club 6:30pm SRA Meeting	16 9:00am Quilters	17 DR Mission Trip 5:30pm Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	18 6:30pm Church Council 	19	20 Jeanette Gessner 10:00am Chimes Articles Due
21 9:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School	22 1:00pm Card Club	23 9:00am Quilters	24 5:30pm Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	25	26	27
28 Annual Meeting following 9 am worship 9:00am Worship 	29 1:00pm Card Club	30 9:00am Quilters	31 5:30pm Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	