



In the world the “Christmas season” starts right after Thanksgiving. But in the Church we start the “Advent Season”.



Advent begins the church year as we anticipate the coming of the Savior born into the world in Bethlehem. We’ll celebrate His birth on December 24th and 25th, but now we are preparing our hearts to meet and greet Him aright. Take time for that preparation and take time out for it too. Don’t rush to Christmas. Stop and smell Advent. Come to

worship on Sundays And **Wednesdays, Dec. 5, 12, 19 at Noon and 6:45PM.** Read carefully your Advent devotions. Slow down your life, your heart, your mind and get yourself ready – the Savior is coming!

An Advent Meal will be served each Wed. at 5:15pm. Cost is same as FFW, \$4.00/person or \$12/ family of 4 and up.

Menus for these meals are:

Dec 5. Pasta, Meat or Alfredo Sauces, Salad, Bread
Dec 12. Pot Roast, Potatoes, Gravy, Green Beans,
Dec 19. Soups, Salad, Hot Sandwiches

ADVENT DEVOTIONS from Lutheran Hour Ministries—*The Coming King!*

Once again, our Board of Witness & Outreach is providing the Lutheran Hour Ministries Advent devotional booklets to help you and your family focus on the true meaning of the coming gift of Jesus' birth. It is titled “The Coming King!”. Take some to your neighbors and friends.

There are two ways to receive the daily devotional reading: The easiest way is to subscribe to the devotion series online at <http://www.lhm.org/advent> . You can choose to receive the devotion in either email or podcast format. Arriving daily to your computer, it will serve as a reminder to spend some time in meditation each day during this busy season. As in the past, there will also be print copies (regular and large print) of *The Coming King* available at the Ushers' table in the Narthex. We pray that you and your family will find these devotions helpful as you prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus!

LIVE NATIVITY NEEDS & NOTES

CHRISTMAS MIX No, not something to consume. We are in need of some music to play outside in the “background” for Live Nativity. This can be either vocal or instrumental, but should be religious in nature and fairly traditional, and perhaps 30-45 minutes or longer, and preferably on a CD so we can loop the playback.

OLD SHEETS OF PLYWOOD/PARTICLE BOARD FOR A PLATFORM

As the grounds most likely will be wet we need several sheets of plywood or particle board to put on the ground to stand on. These will sit outside (rain or shine) during Live Nativity, so they don’t have to be “nice” pieces of wood.

SQUARE HAY BALES

We need 6 fresh bales of hay for the animals, plus 12-15 bales to help with the setting for the Nativity scene. You can have whatever is left over back after the event (some of the Nativity scene hay bales will be broken and scattered on the floor of that area.

Please see DCE Randy if you can help with this and he’ll pass the information along.

Please also note that if you are helping work Live Nativity that childcare will be available.

We look forward to the preschool children singing for the Live Nativity on Friday, December 7 at 6:30pm.



Look who’s nosing his way in to see the Baby Jesus.

HELP US GET THE WORD OUT, THE “FREE” WAY ABOUT OUR **LIVE NATIVITY!** Pick up **flyers** to put in coffee shops or at your workplace; also post the flyer to your social media accounts, especially **Facebook**. If you are on a **Next Door app or HOA website**, post the flyer to it. Pick up a **yard sign** for your yard. PLEASE HELP US **SPREAD THE NEWS!!**

AND, DON’T FORGET TO SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS COMMUNITY OUT-REACH EVENT. IT IS A LOT OF **FUN** FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY TO PARTICIPATE IN; SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE! All volunteer sign-ups, flyers and yard signs are in the **information center** next to the restrooms. THANK YOU!

Children's Christmas Program

Our annual Christmas program will be held December 16 during the 11:15 service (without Holy Communion). The theme of our 2018 Christmas program is "To Us a Child is Born."



Practice Schedule (Note that we will have childcare available for all practices)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1 9 AM to Noon for First Grade and up.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2 Sunday School hour for everyone

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9 Sunday School Hour for everyone

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15 9 AM to Noon for First Grade and up *-(2 year olds to 5 year olds from 10:30 to noon only).*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16 Sunday School Hour, and then program during the late service.

Special note for 3, 4 & 5 Year Olds During Sunday School on December 2 & 9 we will be taking pictures of these children in various Christmas "costumes." These pictures will then be shown on the screens during the program. As the children won't be in costume for the program but will be up front to sing, please dress them appropriately.

EXTRA HELP NEEDED: We need help with the risers as follows:

After practices on the 1st & 15th to take them down.
On the 16th immediately after early service to set up the risers and after the program (late service) to take them down.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS ANGELS

The annual Christmas Angel drive began November 17/18.

We are supporting the children and children of staff members at Still Creek Ranch as well as a group of young moms at Bryan High that our own Joyce Jones works with, in a ministry to help keep them in school. One of the biggest "predictors" of poverty is being a single parent and not being a high school graduate. We started out with 86 "Angels" to be adopted and at the time of this E-News we only have seven left. Many thanks to all who have chosen an Angel. If you still want to be a "Christmas Angel" it works like this:

1. You take an angel from the display (there will be some information on it about the needs and wishes for this individual).
2. Sign the check-off list so we know who has taken each angel.
3. Do your shopping.
4. Bring back the wrapped gifts (with the angel taped to the gift and/or the name on the angel clearly marked) by **December 16.**

Again, thank you for your tremendous support.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY IN A BAG

This year to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ at Bethel Lutheran Church we are collecting "Happy Birthday in a Bag." The Brazos Church Pantry will give this bag to families who have a birthday coming up. What is "Happy Birthday in a Bag"? Take a gallon Ziplock bag* place a cake mix, can of icing, candles, napkins or plates, and anything else to celebrate a birthday. Ideas for extras might be balloons, tooters, little toys, candy or anything else that would make for a fun birthday. These "Happy Birthday in a Bag" are for adults and children. Make it a themed party or generic, just make it fun. Bethel will provide you with a card to place inside with scripture, a prayer and Bethel information. You are welcome to place a handwritten note of encouragement or prayer and don't forget to say "Happy Birthday!" in the bag. Make sure you check the expiration date on all food products. The area Food Bank and Church Pantry are excited to partner with Bethel on this project. *There will be a collection box in the Narthex the whole month of December.* May Jesus Christ bless your efforts! Happy Birthday Jesus! As we bless others. Questions email Connie@blcbcs.org.

**The ladies at the food pantry said that gallon bags would work. Some of you who have put one together aren't so sure. We will have some 2 gallon Ziplock bags available at the display.*

SUNDAY SCHOOL/BIBLE CLASS REMINDER

Please remember that we *WILL NOT* have Sunday School or Bible Class on December 23 or December 30. We will continue to have the regular worship services on these days at 8:30 and 11:15 AM.

LCMS NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING—

We are blessed with having 26 youth and 6 adults registered (one of our highest totals ever). This event will be held July 11-15, 2019 in Minneapolis, with over 25,000 LCMS youth and adults attending. Due to the distance and other increasing costs, this Gathering will cost around 35% more than other gatherings, so we are planning additional fund raisers this spring, with several already approved by the Church Council. One thing you might consider is to "adopt" one of our youth that is going that might need some assistance (Monday night, for instance, I was handed a gift of \$100 by someone who in the past has had children attend a Gathering). We have some families with multiple children going, and also some single parents with a child attending. Again, thanks for your continued support.

YOUTH PECAN SALES—As part of our fundraising for the 2019 National Lutheran Youth Gathering our youth selling 1 lb packages of pecans. These are local, new crop pecans, and we're asking \$14 each for them. The pecans are here and can be purchased at the table in the Narthex. If you would like to get some during the week please see DCE Randy. As always thank you for your support of our 26 youth heading to Minneapolis next summer.



LWML Christmas Social Serving A Cup of Christmas December 3 at 6:30 pm



The LWML Christmas Party will be held on December 3 at 6:30 pm in the Parish Hall. All women of Bethel and guests are invited. Bring your favorite Christmas snack, sweet or savory. We will have a short program and assemble bags for the homeless. A list of items that will go into the bags is provided below. We would encourage and appreciate all donations. A box is provided at the LWML table next to the Parish Hall.

Come and share "A Cup of Christmas."

Items needed for the Homeless

Granola bars	beef jerky
small bottles of water	combs
warm socks	warm caps and gloves
Chapstick	band aids
Travel size soap	shampoo
Toothpaste	toothbrush
Handi-wipes	

ORDER YOUR POINSETTIAS



ORDER YOUR POINSETTIA! Sign up sheets are on the bulletin board by the elevator and in the narthex. Or you may email the church office, office@BLCbcs.org. Cost is \$15.00 each. The deadline to order is December 16th. Make your check payable to Bethel and write Christmas flower on the memo line. You may designate who they are in memory of or in honor of. Please indicate if you will take your plant or leave it for us to deliver to a homebound member. We will decorate the altar with them on Dec. 22nd—Jan. 1st.

ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE AT CHRISTMAS TIME!!

Being a house parent at Still Creek Ranch is undoubtedly the most difficult job on the ranch. It requires constant patience, love, and fellowship with Christ. House parents are domestic missionaries, in the trenches day in and day out helping kids work through their hurt and guiding them to Hope. Like most parents, their needs often come last . . . Which is pretty far down the line when there are ten people in your house! And yet, our house parents serve joyfully. *Please consider caring for our house parents this Christmas so that they can continue to selflessly pour into our children!*

To donate, mail gift cards to Still Creek at 6055 Hearne Rd, Bryan, TX 77808. Thank you so much!

Christmas Worship Schedule

Saturday, Dec. 22nd—Advent 4 Worship at 5:00 pm (no Bible Class)

Sunday, Dec. 23rd — Advent 4 Worship at 8:30am & 11:15am (no Sunday School or Bible Class)

Monday, Dec. 24th — Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship with the Lord's Supper

At 4:00 pm (Child Care Available) and 7:00 pm

Tuesday, Dec. 25th—Christmas Day Worship at 10:00am

Saturday, Dec. 29th—Worship at 5:00 pm (no Bible Class)

Sunday, Dec. 30th—Worship at 8:30 am and 11:15 am (no SS or BC)



*O Come
Let Us
Adore Him*

LEMS

Stewardship

Ministry

December 2018 newsletter article

Throughout his epistles and his preaching recorded in the Book of Acts, St. Paul refers, in one way or another, to thanksgiving and thankfulness nearly 50 times. Whether vertically toward God, or horizontally toward the neighbor, thanksgiving is a major theme within St. Paul's body of work.

What does this mean? It means thankfulness is intrinsic to the life of those baptized into Christ. In other words, giving thanks is what Christians do as they live out their lives in this world.

The problem is that we often forget this. Consider your average, run-of-the-mill, normal day. When you get home, and your parents, your spouse or your children ask about your day, what first comes to your mind? After 99 percent of things went right, went exactly as planned, were enjoyable and blessings, we tend to focus on and remember the 1 percent of things that went poorly, that didn't go as planned, and that were nuisances.

We remember the bad things. We focus on discontent. And we fail to give thanks in all circumstances for everything (Eph. 5:20) and to rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4).

Thankfulness and contentment go together. We are content with things for which we are thankful. St. Paul could be content with having plenty or when in need because He gave thanks to the Lord for all things. He thanked the Lord for those who had prayed for him and listened to his proclamation of the Gospel. He gave thanks for their good works in and for the Church of Christ. He gave thanks for the grace of God in Christ Jesus and found that God's grace was sufficient for him.

So, give thanks for all things and in all circumstances dear brothers and sisters in Christ. For you have been saved from sin, death, and hell by the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. You have been added to the very family of God in an adoption of grace through Holy Baptism. God is your Father. Our Lord, Jesus Christ is your brother.

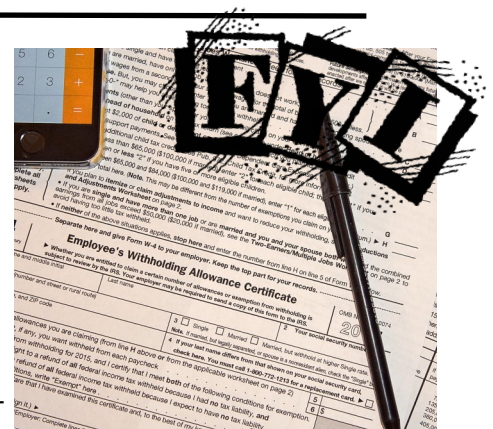
But He not only provides for your spiritual well-being, He cares also for this body and life. Your Father in heaven provides food and clothes, house and home, husband, wife, and children. He gives you reason and all your senses. He has given you the raw talents that you have developed into careers. Everything you are and everything that you have is a gift from His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in you.

Give thanks for these things. Make a list – every morning if you must. Say them out loud. Sing about them within the congregation of the saints. And remember this: God has given you these things so that you may be of service to those around you – your family, your neighbors, your brothers and sisters in Christ. For to whom much is given; much shall be required (Luke 12:48).

2019 offering envelopes are now available for pick-up on the table at the cross wall in the Narthex. If you do not have a box of envelopes, please call Kathy Herwald at 822-2742.

2018 Contributions must be received in the church office by December 31st or postmarked by that date to be recognized as a 2018 donation.

BEFORE You File your 2018 Tax Return – According to tax law, “donors may not be able to deduct individual contributions of \$250 or more if they file a tax return before receiving a contribution summary from their church.” Therefore, **DO NOT** file your 2018 tax return until after you have received your contribution statement from Bethel. We will be mailing 2018 Annual Statements in January after all contributions have been posted.



Stewardship of Our Lives

Did you know?

The BOARD OF WITNESS & OUTREACH is responsible for studying and promoting a greater understanding of the mission of Christ's Church. Our great desire is to promote, educate and inspire all of our members to Witness their faith to those around them every day, and to Outreach to the Lost in the world!

Publicity is ongoing for Bethel and the neighborhood/community we live in. Advertising our presence during the year, especially at special times of the year, in magazines, radio, TV, newspapers and social media is an active part of our committee. However, we know the very best way of advertising and inviting people to come worship is via each member. Connecting to people around them, letting the Holy Spirit work through them and just being loving in outreach!

We are also working on **Bethel's Web Site**, to update and make more user friendly.



In the summertime, our board takes **VBS out into the neighborhood with Mission VBS**. This has been held at an apartment complex, Still Creek Ranch and for the past two years assisting SOS Ministries of Bryan with their VBS. Going into a neighborhood, knocking on doors and escorting children to the playground for games, snacks, crafts and bible study has been amazing. After 4 Monday evenings, you really get connected to many children, listening to them, teaching them God's Word, and praying with and for them.

The Live Nativity is under the Board of Witness/Outreach due to the significant outreach into the community. It was established and is put on each year by an extremely dedicated group of people. They are continually evaluating and revising the program to make it an amazing welcome to outsiders. It is the only Live Nativity in the Bryan/College Station area and God is working through this effort to connect people to the true meaning of Christmas!

Every year we also provide **Advent & Lenten Devotions** from the Lutheran Hour Ministries. Find the Advent Devos "The Coming King" in the narthex on the Welcome Center and Elder's Credenza.

Join Bethel's Ladies in Bible Study and Fellowship

Ladies Lunch Bunch - meets the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of each month (**Dec. 5th & 19th**) at Blue Baker on University Dr. at 11:30 or whenever you can get there. We'll gather for our devotion and have great conversation and food. We hope you can join us for a spiritual respite from your hectic day.

Ladies Tuesday Morning Bible Study meets 10:00-11:15AM in room 232, led by Pastor Bard. Child care is provided upon request only. **Please Note: We will take a break and not meet on Dec. 18, 25, & Jan. 1. We will start back on Jan. 8.**

LWML Helping Hands will meet again, Monday, December 10th at 8:30am in the Parish Hall. All are welcome to come anytime between 8:30am—2pm to help tie quilts. Their goal this year is to make 100 quilts. The quilts are shipped to Lutheran World Relief. <http://lwr.org>.

Join Bethel's Men in Bible Study and Fellowship

Men's Monday Evening Bible Study & Fellowship Group meets at 7:00 PM in Room 232. They are studying LHM's Men's Network study titled: *Out of Nothing: The Word, Creation and Faith* by Rev. Steve Misch.

Friday Morning Men's Bible Study/Breakfast Group each Friday morning at 6:30 AM in the Parish Hall. **The Journey from Unbelief to Faith**. A DVD series with Rev. Dr. John Nunes. This Bible study conveys in frank language the lives of individuals who traveled from the outer edge of unbelief and apathy to the Christ-centered faith they now devotedly embrace.



BETHEL OWLS (Older, Wiser, Lutheran Souls)

Thirty OWLS met on Thursday, November 15th for their Thanksgiving Feast. Thanks to Jim & Joan Wuthrich for preparing two delicious turkeys for the group and our guests. DCE Randy Moerbe led the opening prayer of thanks. We welcomed back Ed & Kathy Zelenka.



The Sunshine Strummers of the Franklin United Methodist Church performed for us after the meal. The Sunshine Strummers is a unique Ukulele band that performs at local events, retirement homes, church, and other locations in the Brazos Valley. Their beautiful music, humorous performance, and lovable personalities made hearing them a memorable experience. The band was organized about five years ago to help raise money to rebuild their sanctuary after it was destroyed by a fire. The group has sixteen members and performs from a repertoire of more than 100 songs.



Several pre-school children joined us for a portion of the performance.

The OWLS will not meet in December. We will see you in January.

Merry Christmas!



Bethel's Preschool News

The Preschool children and families had a wonderful Thanksgiving Feast on November 16. We had around 200 people here (including parents, grandparents, children and staff) for the singing program and Thanksgiving meal. A special thanks to Pastor Bard, Connie, Ruthie, Jean Workman and Nancy Yung for their help. *We praise God for truly blessing this event!*

The preschool children are having a fun and busy time as we prepare for Christmas! **One of the special events for December is the preschool children's Christmas Program on Friday, Dec. 7, at 6:30 in the church sanctuary. All are welcome to join us for this special event.** The children will sing Christmas songs and play the children's bells. We'll also be showing pictures of the children dressed up in nativity costumes. This is always a wonderful evening for the children, their families and all the people attending the Live Nativity. We ask for your prayers for that evening as some of these families do not have a church home and this is a great way to reach out to them.

The children are looking forward to our Christmas classroom parties on Tuesday, Dec. 18. Our last day of preschool for this semester will be December 21 and the first day of class for the second semester will be Tuesday, January 8. Our Christmas holiday is Dec. 24 through January 7.

Please keep our preschool in mind when you do your CHRISTMAS SHOPPING this year. When you order online through AmazonSmile, a portion of the sale will be sent to the preschool. To shop at AmazonSmile, simply go to smile.amazon.com from the browser on your computer or mobile device. On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you will need to select Bethel Lutheran Church to receive the donations for

the eligible products. This selection will then be remembered the next time you use smile.amazon.com. The eligible products are marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail page. **It costs you nothing to help out the preschool while getting your shopping done also! Thanks for considering this benefit to the preschool!**



Thank you to Thrivent Choice Dollars and Bethel's Altar Guild for Bethel's brand new Advent Wreath. It is dedicated to the glory of God, the Father, Son & Holy Spirit!

Happy Birthday!!

Our Bethel Family

December

Gladys Byer	2	Brandon Smith	12	Holly Cheshire	20
Jacob Spence	2	Sandra Wedemeier	12	Scott Schautschick	20
Jennifer Massey	3	Monica Criswell	13	Aaron Scheffler	20
Sherry Schulenburg	3	Esther Synatschk	13	Sally Wedemeier	22
Joanna Barnes	4	Gene Garrison	14	Lexie Black	23
Fritz Deike	4	Margaret Eimann	15	Brianna Groves	23
Roy Schoenfeld	4	Heather Goodenow	15	Kimyra Hobson	23
Bridget West	4	Natalie O'Neill	15	Frances Matcek	23
Emma Duncan	6	Clayton Brasington	16	Tim Pannkuk	24
Darlene Eastman	6	Erik Bronstad	16	Crystal Drager	25
Wren Sisco	6	Martha Dobrovolsky	16	Larry Thomas, Sr.	26
Virginia McPhail	7	James Fleeger	16	Stacey Donathen	27
Ron Chase	8	Kay Thigpin	16	Donna Boyd	28
Don Hackney	8	Gene Eastman	17	Artie Brocksmith	28
Christi Everett	10	Scott Goodenow	17	LaRue Welch	28
Pat Wallace	10	Nathan Markert	17	Cindy Smith	29
Helen Grimes	12	Emery Nored	17	Jarvis Lehmann	30
		Katie McClelland	18	Jane Dill	31
		Matthew Hagemann	19	Taylor Kouba	31
		Philipp Hoffzimmer	19		
		Ray Schreiner	19		

November 27, 2018

Dear Christians at Bethel, Bryan,

Greetings in Jesus' Name.

This comes to inform you that I have returned [*declined*] the Divine Call to Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in La Grange. This means for the time being I will continue as the pastor of Bethel, Bryan.

As is proper, we very seriously considered this Call away. Connie and I appreciated the great many words of encouragement which came from our Bethel congregation. While we are unsure what is next for our family, whether to serve Bethel as associate pastor, senior pastor, or move on elsewhere, it seemed the Lord's direction for us to remain at Bethel for now.

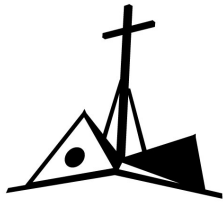
Thank you for your prayers, your encouragement, and your overwhelming kindness toward us during these last four weeks. We pray our Lord's Spirit will continue to bless Bethel, Bryan and our partnership together.

Jesus' joy!

Pastor & Connie Bard

Please Note: These letters were sent to all members either by mail or email. If you know someone who did not get this announcement or the previous letter from Pastor as an E-Bulletin or a letter in the mail, Please call the church office to let us know (822-2742). We may need to correct their address in our computer system.

The Lutheran Hour is on KAGC, 1510 AM on Sundays at 12:30 p.m. sponsored by Bethel. If you would like to sponsor a week's broadcast for \$25 or for a month for \$100. Thank you to all who have given to this ministry.
The Lutheran Hour for the Month of DECEMBER is sponsored to the glory of God by
David and Rita Baumann



Bethel Lutheran Church

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www.BLCbcs.org | office@BLCbcs.org
Preschool phone: 485-9835 or cell: 446-1578

Staff:

Rev. Randall Bard, Pastor, (979) 422-0046
Rev. Steve Wiechman, Care Ministry
Rev. K. Lynn Stroud, Pastor Emeritus
Mr. Randall Moerbe, Director of Christian Education
Mrs. Debbie Sadler, Dir., Bethel Lutheran Preschool
Mrs. Kathy Herwald, Director of Operations
Mrs. Ruthann Stroud, Church Secretary
Mrs. Connie Bard, Children's Ministry Coordinator
Mr. Nic Duncan, Facilities Manager
Mrs. Katie Bentley, Office Assistant
Mr. Jeremy Shilling, *His Praise* Band Leader



Celebrating the Lutheran Reformation

November 29—December 13, 2018



Church Office Hours	
Mondays—Thursdays	9am - 5pm
Fridays	9am - 3pm

Join us for

Saturday Night

Worship at 5PM

Bible Class at 6PM

Sunday Mornings

8:30 AM Divine Service (Traditional)

9:30 AM Fellowship Time

10:00 AM Bible Class/SS

11:15 AM Divine Service (Contemporary)

Holy Communion is served on the 1st, 3rd, & 5th weekends of the month.

Wednesday Advent Devotions on Dec. 5,12,19

At Noon and 6:45pm