



THE BETHEL BEACON DECEMBER 2009

MISSION STATEMENT: We, the Bethel Lutheran Congregation, called by God, commit ourselves: to proclaim the gospel, to prepare our members for outreach and service, and to minister to human needs.



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COUNCIL CONTINUES TO RESPOND TO ELCA DECISIONS; MAKES PLANS FOR MEETINGS AND ANNUAL MEETING

Because of the high interest in matters of the ELCA, the Church Council wants to ensure that the voices of Bethel are heard clearly and that the annual meeting on January 31, 2010, best reflects the spirit of Bethel. To those ends:

1. The council has scheduled a question and answer session with Bishop Harold Usgaard on December 3, at 7:00pm in Bethel Hall.
2. The council will schedule a meeting in early January for Bethel members to look forward at what can be done next
3. The council has established a procedure that **all resolutions to be considered at the January 31 annual meeting need to be submitted to the council by January 15.** Thereby, the council will have some time to work with the authors for clarity and/or accuracy and even research what various resolutions may mean for Bethel so as to make the annual meeting as productive as possible. The resolutions may be emailed to the church council in care of wahl@bethellutheran.com, or sent to the church in care of Pastor Wahl, or placed in his mailbox at church
 - This rule will be effective only if the congregation agrees to this rule as a first order of business at the annual meeting
 - Even if the rule is agreed to at the meeting, it may be suspended at the meeting by a majority vote of the voters
4. The council will hold a chapel chat with the congregation on January 19, 7pm, to deal with all annual meeting issues, other than matters dealing with the ELCA sexuality decisions
5. In addition to the Q&A with Bishop Usgaard and the "what comes next" meeting for Bethel members, the council will have an open forum with the congregation on January 26 to deal specifically with *annual meeting resolutions* regarding the ELCA and sexuality decisions

Thanks to the council for good, careful, and faithful consideration of this process. We look forward to the generous spirit of Bethel participating in the process through the next few months.

NEXT BEACON

Articles Due:
Tuesday, December 15
by 12 Noon

Beacon Mailed:
Monday, December 21

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

SAVE A LIFE

Dear Members and Friends of Bethel:

You may be happy to know that seventeen of Bethel's staff have each spent six hours with Red Cross educators being certified in cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and in the use of our three defibrillators. We are told that the sooner people receive help in the event of a heart incident, the more likely there will be a full recovery. At some point in the future there may be a much simpler course offered to others at Bethel (such as ushers) so that we are even better prepared to handle an emergency.

Sprinkled through the day were examples of how CPR and defibrillators have actually saved lives. We have a living, breathing example of a life saved at Bethel in the last year—a man who has spoken publicly about his close call with death but who was saved at the YMCA. While it is wonderful to be trained, of course, it is hoped that the training will never be put to use (in the same way that we buy car insurance but hope we never need to make a claim). It is inspiring to know that we can make a difference—we might even some day save a life.

We could and should do all that we can to save lives. And I begin to think about the mission of the church in which salvation and life are constantly in use. In a few weeks we will be celebrating again the incredible gift of life that God sent to the world in the person of Jesus. John 3:16 explains that this Jesus was sent so that believers could have eternal life. That sounds much better than getting a shock to the heart!

CPR, I think. Yes—a very good thing. But could it be even more? **Christ Promises Resurrection.** I won't for a minute discount the importance of what we have learned through the Red Cross. Many thanks to them for their good work, locally, and throughout the world. And I will do my part with chest compressions and rescue breathing and defibrillators, should the time come.

But my day-to-day calling as a Christian is to lift up God's promises in Christ. From now on, CPR will have two good definitions in my mind.

May this be a season of Thanksgiving for you. May it be a season of preparing for God's gift of the Christ in the manger. We are blessed by God's promises.

In the Grace of Christ,
Pastor Norman Wahl

PASTORAL NOTE

On the insert in this Beacon you will read information from the Church Council and the Finance and Stewardship Teams about our critical situation for 2010. This is an extraordinary time in which we live. Circumstances beyond Bethel's control have put us into a precarious position. I pray that you will prayerfully consider the information presented and be part of the answer for 2010 and beyond. Many of our ministries will hinge directly upon your support. We live, as always, in the grace of Christ.

Pastor Norman Wahl

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

The following is from the 10/20/09 church council meeting. A copy of each month's council packet can be found in the Bethel Adult Library:

- The defibrillator training by the Red Cross will occur in November.
- The Endowment Team is ready to take requests for grants.
- All of the team goals need to be back to the council by November, so that long-term planning can be done.
- Melanie Hoppenworth and Barth Crane will be the council representatives on the nominating team.

WOW! You did it again!

Bethel members responded once again to the Christmas Shoebox program by donating **90** boxes for children around the world. Thank you for your interest and participation in this mission project. Because of your generosity 90 children will have a Christmas gift they can call their own. Thanks to all of you that helped make this program a success. You are a blessing to those less fortunate.

REFLECTIONS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Yep, you read that right; and, no, I'm not reading my calendar wrong. Happy New Year! One of the many ways in which the Church puts us out of step with the rest of the world is our marking of the passage of time. Whereas January 1st is generally acknowledged to be the start of a new year in the world, in the Church, the beginning of Advent is the start of our year. And whereas the start of a new year in the world is often marked by (usually well-intentioned, but often unachieved) resolutions to make ourselves into new and better people, in the Church it is marked by our waiting and yearning for the arrival of the One whose promise to make us new won't be forgotten by February. In the Church, we begin our year as we live our Christian lives — with patient expectation of the fulfillment of God's promises. So I say again, Happy New Year! And as you wait in faith, be on the lookout for the incarnate Christ — he has a way of showing up where you least expect him!

In Christ, Pastor Andy

LIBRARY NEWS

Anti-Affluenza Tips

Are you feeling the symptoms of the buying epidemic that strikes every Christmas season? "Affluenza" is highly contagious. Its symptoms include the perception that no matter how much stuff you've bought, it isn't enough; the inability to pass up a really great sale; and the conviction that your child/grandchild needs all the latest toys to survive in the world. Here is a sampling of the resources that the Bethel Library has to help you make this a meaningful season.

101 Things To Do For Christmas is full of good ideas and fun things to do to help you get ready to celebrate with the special children in your life. The activities don't take a long time and use supplies that you already have around the house. (You'll find this book in the Children's room.)

A Simple Christmas, authored by Sharon Hanby-Robie, offers seasonal inspiration including such topics as setting reasonable expectations, initiating new traditions,

overcoming the holiday blues and teaching children the importance of giving.

Elaine St. James has written a highly insightful book entitled Simplify Your Christmas. She gives practical tips for reducing the stress of the season and for recapturing the true joy. In addition to guiding you along the path she shows how to deal with kids, relatives, co-workers and others who try to make you feel guilty for the changes you are making.

Our wish for you is to intentionally add a little peace and quiet to your Christmas celebration and find the real treasure of the Christmas spirit.

THANK YOU!

The Defibrillation Team is thankful for your generosity in providing funding for the purchase of 2 additional defibrillators to Augsburg's donation of our first facility's defibrillator. The majority of the Bethel's on-site staff have now completed CPR/Defibrillator training in the past 2 weeks through the Red Cross and your donations have made this possible, too. We continue to ask for your financial support of the defibrillators as we are adding child pads to each of the 3 sets since so many children are often present in our facility. If you would like to make a contribution to this important health safeguard, please write "defibrillator team" in the memo line of your check donation. There will be on-going expenses as we seek to keep our defibrillators in optimal readiness and staff well prepared. Thank you for your generous support.

PARENTS' SHOPPING TRIP!

Are you looking for some time to do a bit of Christmas shopping? Would you appreciate those hours to be your own private hours...without children? If so, check out the offering by the Bethel youth (and youth team) on **Saturday, December 12 from 9am - 12 noon**. During these hours the youth (with adult assistance) will be providing free childcare (ages 3 (potty trained) - 5th grade) so that parents can go out and shop on your own, wrap presents, or just enjoy a cup of coffee! Registration materials may be picked up at the youth board. All materials (health form and activity waiver) are due in by **Sunday, December 6**. Cost: One or two canned items for Channel One; please bring the day of the event. Contact Darcy Youngstrom if you have any questions.



___ Pastoral Acts at Bethel

We encourage you to share in the times of joy and sorrow with fellow members of God's family:

BAPTISMS

Go therefore and make disciples of the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19

10/24	Isabelle Ohm
10/25	Dylan Hoover
11/1	Molly Landherr, Benjamin Martin
11/7	Mia Johnson
11/8	Kaia Bicknese, Mason Siem
11/15	Bailey Shoemaker, Sophia Branstad

WEDDINGS

And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13

11/7	Jamie Abraham & Brad Heggstad
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FUNERALS

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable and we will be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

11/12	Glenn C Larrison
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ARE YOU EXPECTING A CHILD? COME TO THE PRE-BAPTISM CLASS



Bethel holds a monthly pre-baptism class on the 2nd Sunday of the month and the **next class** will be **Sunday, December 13, 6:30-7:30pm** in the Conference Room (note change of room). This class is held for those planning baptisms - even if the baby isn't due for awhile, call Judy in the office and tell her which class you'd like to attend. Parents and local sponsors are expected to participate in this opportunity to review the meaning of God's gift of new life. You are welcome to bring the child that is to be baptized as well. Even if this isn't your first child, we encourage you to attend one of the pre-baptism classes.

You must let the church office know the date you will attend the pre-baptism class to ensure that a pastor will be present to conduct the class. If we don't have anyone signed up for the evening, the class will not be held.

To **schedule a baptism**, please contact Judy Gittus, 288-6430 or jgittus@bethellutheran.com.

Ring to Help Others



Salvation Army Bell Ringer Volunteer Opportunity

Bethel Lutheran traditionally sets aside one day in the Advent season to partner with the Salvation Army Bell Ringing. If you (or you and another person) would be available to help with a 2 hour shift on Saturday, Dec 12 between the hours of 8am and 8pm we would like to know of your interest. Please let Judy Gittus know your time preference and we will contact you for a scheduled shift. Questions? Call Judy in the church office. Thank you!

WORSHIP AND MUSIC NEWS

CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Please join together as we go caroling to our homebound and shut-in members on Sunday, December 13. Your voices and Christmas spirit are needed! We will meet at the church at 4pm and split up to sing for shut-ins and care centers. This is a great family event and is very rewarding.

After caroling we will meet in the Commons for a potluck. Please join us – the more the merrier!! Good fun and fellowship is guaranteed. Let's try for 100 carolers this year.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The music department will present their Annual Christmas Concert/ Carol Sing on Friday, December 18, 7:00pm. Handbells, children, youth and adult choirs, brass, orchestra and organ will provide inspiration for the Christmas season. There will be a free will offering and the proceeds will go to support our growing music department.

THANK YOU!

Dr. Warner and Dorothy Kaese have repaired and put back in place the hardanger that had been damaged a year ago. It looks wonderful, if you get a chance, check it out. They also take care of the banners and altar furnishing throughout the year. Their efforts are appreciated.

Kim Schliesman and the decorating team have been putting up Christmas decorations throughout the church. If you are interested in serving on this team in the future, please let Kim know. Thanks to Sue Bouquet and Marcia Odenbach for putting up the fall decorations.

NEW WOODWIND ENSEMBLE

The Woodwind Ensemble has been rehearsing for the Christmas season and will be playing seasonal music in the narthex throughout Advent before the worship services.

THANK YOU TO BETHEL!

Your support for the Bethel Friendly Quilter's Sale raised \$2,941 on Nov. 1 - \$1,200 plus \$600 from Thrivent will go to Rochester's Crisis Nursery and the additional funds will go to other missions.

We have welcomed 9 new quilters in 2009 and those extra hands have helped us make projects for our quilt sale, 3 quilts for a benefit auction in Eyota, 184 quilts for LWR, 144 quilts for Marie Sandvik shelter, 74 quilts for the Mexico mission, 9 lap and 2 baby quilts for the Women's Shelter, 2 quilts to RLCS and 9 lap quilts were given to local nursing homes. 20 quilts were donated to Mayo for distribution overseas, 127 baby quilts were shared among Bundles of Love, Crisis Nursery and IHN. Monetarily our quilts have raised \$600 for Ronald McDonald House through the Harley Motorcycle Riders, \$477 for the Good Earth Camp auction and \$350 at Camp Knutson for a total mission amount of \$1,427. We couldn't accomplish this without your donations of fabric and batting. Thank you. And we continue to welcome anyone who wishes to join us on Tuesday mornings between 8am and 12 noon. No quilting experience is necessary!



WINTER MISSION TRIPS

Would you like to go south for a week in January? We can use a few more volunteers to join us in Bridge City, Texas during the week of January 9-16. We'll be repairing and rebuilding homes damaged in last year's hurricane. Everyone is welcome to come along - experience is helpful but not necessary. We also need 3-4 people to work in the kitchen that week.

We'll be taking a second trip a little closer to home, Feb. 15-20 - to Cedar Rapids, IA to work on homes damaged in last year's floods.

If you'd like to join us, contact Larry Vomhof, 867-3809 or email, dvomhof@gmail.com.

NEWS FROM **THE WOMEN OF BETHEL**

The December Mission of the Month is Project Comfort through Lutheran World Relief. Throughout the year quilts have been made, soap collected, layettes, school, and health kits have been assembled here at Bethel and at ELCA churches throughout the nation to send to those in need. These items are sent to LWR in Baltimore for shipping. Last year more than \$12 million worth of items were donated by Lutherans.

With more than 60 years of experience in navigating the pipeline by which the quilts and kits travel, and by working with qualified overseas partner organizations poised to assist with distributing millions of quilts and kits each year, it's possible to send an LWR quilt or kit to a person in need for little more than the spare change you might have in your pocket.

Your gift can be placed in Mission of the Month envelope found at the WELCA collection chest and placed in the collection plate during service or taken to the office.

And don't forget our ongoing collections of Cambell's labels, Box Tops for Education, and milk tops. These items can also be dropped off at the WELCA chest of drawers.

Thank you for your continued support.

Help Needed: The WELCA Board is anxiously searching for volunteers to fill vital roles. We currently are looking for additional Funeral Coordinators to assist the current Coordinators and also one or two people to chair the WELCA board. If you are interested or know somebody who may be great for the job, let us know!

No Bake-No Craft Fundraiser: This annual fundraiser is in full swing and has always been a great success. If you have not gotten your letter, it is not too late – just drop your donation off in the offering plate or in the office, and be sure to designate it for the No Bake – No Craft fundraiser. Thank you for everything you do for WELCA, Bethel and our community with money raised through this annual event!

Dates to Remember:

Saturday, December 5 – Christmas Tea

Monday, January 11 – WELCA Board Meeting

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all the CROP Walkers and everyone that sponsored them! Bethel had 14 participants this year and they raised \$1,196.35! The total raised in the Rochester CROP Walk was \$18,080.35 with 19 congregations participating. 25% of the total and 570 pounds of food went to Channel One. Thank you!

MOMS AND KIDS

As the year winds to a close, we continue with our study of "Finding God in the Present Moment" by Jean Maalouf. Our last study during 2009 will be December 3, a focus on friendship. On December 10 we will have our annual Christmas potluck, and we will resume our study on January 7. You may join us at any point in the study, and there is never a need for registration.

We are a relaxed group of moms with children of all ages that gather weekly on Thursdays for fellowship from 9-9:30am, and Bible study from 9:30-10:30am with other moms and Pastor Anjanette. Young children are cared for in the nursery by wonderful and caring volunteers while we meet next door in Room 115. Please join us for an informal time to enjoy motherhood in all seasons. For more information, contact Heather Schenck at 261-1702, or Dawn Mitchell, 206-0310.



Advent Book Sale

This year's **Advent Book Fair and Sale** will be held on the weekend of November 28/29. Sponsored by the Devotional Ministry Team, the sale will include new books, pamphlets, Advent calendars to help you journey through this most important season in the church year. Be sure to stop by the tables in the Narthex on Nov. 28/29 to see what is available to help you travel the road leading to Christ's birthday.

YOUTH NEWS

Up-to-date information can be found at
bethellutheranyouth.com

Youth Forum, Peer Ministry, Elevate will not meet on Sunday, Dec 27 or Jan 3. Frontline will not meet on Dec. 30 or Jan. 6. Updated schedules can be found at www.bethellutheranyouth.com

Youth and Parents! Are you looking for **opportunities to spend some time together** this holiday season? Are you interested in **volunteering some of your time** to help others? Check out the following **list of volunteer opportunities** coming up here at Bethel. Adults and students are needed for most activities!

- Assist our youth on Wednesday, December 9. Students will be making various treats for Bethel's homebound members.
- Assist with the Parent's Private Shopping Trip: Saturday, December 12, 8:45 am — noon (shift work available). Adults needed to help with crafts, games and assisting with the younger children.
- Donate holiday cookies (homemade with your youth) to be delivered to Bethel shut ins. Cookies need to be at the office by Friday, December 11. (We need approximately **100 dozen** total cookies! - sign up at youth board.)
- Assist with the youth "Service Sunday" on the morning of, December 13. This would include helping with the service project (putting together cookie plates for shut ins) for 1 hour - either 9:00 or 10:30am.
- Deliver cookies (along with poinsettias) to shut ins on Sunday, December 13.
- Participate in the lefse bake on Saturday & Sunday, Dec. 19/20.

Contact Darcy or Michael if interested in assisting or sign up at the youth board.

HS WINTER RETREAT- Jan. 28 -Jan. 31 - The information for the HS Winter Retreat is posted!

We will be heading to Duluth again this year and hitting the slopes at **Spirit Mountain** and staying at **Mountain Villas! 2 days of skiing/boarding and 3 nights in an awesome villa!** This weekend is the end of the quarter for Rochester students and there is no school on Friday, Jan. 29!

To register we must have \$150 deposit, health form, and release form! Space is limited to 10 girls & 10 guys! See Youth Board or Website for up to date Registration Information!



Registrations continue for the upcoming summer mission trips! Brochures are available at the youth board with more details about each of the following trips:

Where: Twin Cities Area
 When: August 5–7
 Who: Completed Grades 6-8
 Contact Persons: Pastor Nelson or Darcy Youngstrom

Where: St. Louis
 When: August 1–6
 Who: Completed Grades 9-12
 Contact Person: Michael Beckmann

Where: Mexico
 When: July 22– Aug. 1
 Who: Completed Grades 7-12 (plus adults)
 Contact Person: Pastor Anjanette

Registrations and \$50 deposit due for each mission trip you plan to go on by Sunday, January 10, 2010.

GIFTS & MEMORIALS

- Robert Onkka Seminary Fund and Channel One from family and friends in honor of Pastor Bob Onkka on his retirement
- Children's Ministry from Ardell and Judy Brede in honor of Lauren Brede's 1st Bible
- Organ Fund in memory of Cleo Paullin from family and friends
- Organ Fund in memory of Rod Daniels from family and friends

2009 STEWARDSHIP GIVING			
<u>General Giving</u>		<u>Building Fund</u>	
10/25	\$16,238.05	Offerings to Date (as of 11/15)	\$175,172.20
11/1	\$27,885.65	Number of Families Pledging	420
11/8	\$14,471.24		
11/15	\$23,984.03		
As of 11/15/09:		<u>Simply Giving</u>	
YTD Projected Envelope Offerings	\$903,177.50	General Offerings Rec'd in 2009	\$217,174.30
YTD Actual Envelope Offerings	\$869,164.59	Building Offerings Rec'd in 2009	\$93,110.18
Difference	-\$34,012.91	% of General Offerings Rec'd 2009	27.0%
		# of Families Participating	180

BETHEL'S STAFF

Church Office - 507-288-6430

Pastors:

Norman Wahl Executive Pastor
 Anjanette Rist Pastor of Visitation, Outreach & Missions
 Andrew Nelson Pastor of Education & Youth
 Roy Satre Assisting Pastor of Visitation

Program Staff

Chris Zabel Parish Administrator
 Gary Thorn Minister of Music
 Dave Gross Youth Music Assistant
 Michael Beckmann Youth Director
 Daryl Jans Children's Ministry Director
 Darcy Youngstrom Assistant Youth Director
 Susan Larson Children's Ministry Assistant
 Avis Hagen Shared Ministry & Small Groups
 Lorrie Schuchard New Member Coordinator

Office Staff

Judy Gittus Communications/Membership
 Janet Hoffmann Administrative
 Patricia McEwan Education & Youth
 Sylvia Ramaker Receptionist/Secretary

Custodial Staff

Bill Freytag Properties Supervisor
 Bryan Kohn Custodial Supervisor
 Tony Wright Custodian
 Dustin Christopherson Part-time Custodian
 Principal Organist Dale Mundahl
 Saturday Organist Jim Bahler
 Weekend Receptionists Barb Larson, Lois Graif
 Financial Secretary Alice O'Groske
 Nursery Coordinator Shelly Savage

ADULT EDUCATION NEWS

BIBLE STUDIES AND MORE: All of our studies welcome new members and meet in various rooms (check the calendar on the kiosk in the Narthex):

- **Monday Night Bible Study** - 6:30pm in room 115 - study Sunday's lessons
- **Wednesday Early Morning Bible Study** (6:30am – read through the Bible) - rm 115
- **Wednesday Morning Bible Study** (10am – studying Sunday's lessons), room 115
- **WELCA Bible study**, 10:45am on the first Thursday of each month, room 115
- **Strength for the Journey Bible Study** - Wednesdays, 6:30pm in room 115 - study of Old Testament characters (last on 12/2).

SUNDAY ADULT FORUMS: 10:30am in room 115 (unless otherwise noted):

- November 29 - NO adult forum - enjoy church with your family!
- December 6 - "Founding Fathers and Their Faith" - Led by retired Chaplain Paul Baker, we will explore the religious faith and practices of America's Founding Fathers.
- Dec. 13 - Genesis 14: An Outsider's View of Abraham" - Bill Bakken (Bethel member) will lead a discussion on how Genesis 14 doesn't fit the usual story about Abraham in the rest of Genesis.
- Dec. 20 & 27 and January 3 - NO adult forums - we start again on Sunday, Jan. 10.

Faith 'N Friends - Ladies: for our December social, we plan to meet at Papa George's (Michael's Restaurant) Tuesday, December 8 6:30pm. See you there!

HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL (HPI)

Looking for a Christmas gift for someone who has almost everything? Consider honoring with them with the gift of an animal that will be given to someone who has almost nothing.



Heifer Project International gives struggling families around the world and in the US the gift of a better life — self-reliance, income, education for their children, and many other benefits that result when people have the means to take care of themselves. It provides a new future filled with hope and promise. HPI gives people the means to lift themselves and their communities up to self-reliance through gifts of livestock as well as bees and trees that increase crop production and help to protect the environment - fulfilling its mission of ending hunger and saving the earth.

Now you will have the opportunity to make this season of giving even more meaningful, a true celebration of the holiday spirit, by sharing your gifts with others. Visit the HPI display to learn more about HPI and to pick up a shopping list. The wonderful thing about giving a HPI gift is knowing that the recipients will pass on offspring of their animals to others, spreading the benefits in a growing circle of life and hope.

There will be a table in the Narthex on December 6, 13 & 20, offering you the opportunity to purchase a HPI animal as a very special gift. Thrivent Financial Lutherans will provide matching funds of up to \$500.

Consider honoring a family member or friend with a gift to HPI. For people on your list who say "surprise me," how about a water buffalo?

CHRISTMAS SHARING TREES

Bethel will have two Christmas Sharing Trees this holiday season.

Warmth for our Young Neighbors Decorate this tree with warm waterproof mittens and hats (sizes infant through 6) for preschoolers at the Hand in Hand program at Hawthorne school. We are also asking for warm waterproof mittens, hats, boots and snow pants for the students at Riverside Elementary School. Cash donations to purchase some needed items will be welcome. Some of our young neighbors do not have appropriate clothing for the cold Minnesota winters. Let's help them have a warm Christmas.

Operation Hometown Gratitude Decorate this tree with items to put into "care packages" for our men and women in the service. A list of needed items will be available near the tree. Cash donations to pay the cost of postage will also be welcome. Please select an ornament or an envelope from the trees if you wish to make a donation.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE AT BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH - 2009

Advent 1 - November 28/29

11/28	Worship with Communion	6pm
11/29	Worship Services	9 & 10:30am

Advent 2 - December 5/6

12/5	Annual Christmas Tea (ticket needed)	2pm
12/5	Worship with Communion	6pm
12/6	Worship Services with Communion	9 & 10:30am
12/6	Birthday Party for Jesus (ages 2-K)	2pm

Advent 3 - December 12/13

12/12	Christmas Shopping for Parents	9am-12pm
12/12	Worship with Communion	6pm
12/13	Worship Services	9 and 10:30am
12/13	Distribute Poinsettias and Cookies to Homebound	
12/13	Christmas Caroling for Homebound	4pm
12/13	Caroling potluck	6pm

Advent 4 - December 19/20

12/18	Bethel Christmas Choral Concert	7pm
12/19	Worship with Communion	6pm
12/20	Youth Lefse Sale	8:30am & after
12/20	Worship with Communion	9 & 10:30am
12/20	9am SS Christmas Program	1:30pm
12/20	10:30am SS Christmas Program	3:30pm

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24

12/24	Festival Worship Services	3, 4:30 & 6pm
12/24	Candlelight Worship	11:00pm

Christmas Day Worship, Friday, December 25

12/25	Worship with Communion	10am
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Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him

Bethel Lutheran Church ELCA
810 Third Avenue SE
Rochester, MN 55904-7394
Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
Permit No. 346
Rochester, MN





**THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR
MORE AT BETHEL ... SEE PAGE 11
TO PLAN ALL YOUR
WORSHIP EXPERIENCES
DURING ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS**

*If you would prefer not to have
your name appear in any Bethel
publications, please contact the
church office, 288-6430.*

WORSHIP TIMES

Saturday	6:00pm
Sunday	9:00 & 10:30am

OFFICE HOURS

Mon-Fri	7:30am-5:00pm
Sat	8:30am-12 Noon
Sun	8:00am-12 Noon

**DECEMBER 2009
BETHEL BEACON**

Staff e-mails can be found at:
www.bethellutheran.com



MEMO

To: Bethel Lutheran Church Members
From: Bethel Church Council, Finance Team, Stewardship Team and Pastors

Results of Fall Stewardship Campaign Overall estimated giving for 2010 is down about \$215,000 compared to 2009 budget. This includes both the general and building funds. This is about a 14% decrease and will have a significant impact in our benevolence, programs, and staffing for 2010.

Building Fund Building pledges show that we will be \$135,000 short in 2010 of meeting our mortgage payments

- About 420 families are currently pledging to the building fund. This is down from 575 with the Growing God's House II campaign.

General Fund Projections for 2010 giving for the general fund will be \$80,000 less than 2009 budgeted giving.

- Projections each year are based on the pledges received and careful assumptions for those members who regularly give but choose not to submit a pledge card.
- Significant drop of 7.5% for the projected 2010 budget as compared to the 2009 budget. Bethel has averaged about a 3.1% gain each year over the past 5 years.
- Received about 22 fewer pledges than for 2009 (down 92 pledges from 2008).
- The number of giving members dropped by 93 in 2009 compared to 2008. This is at a time when attendance at Bethel is up.

We know that some of this drop can be attributed to both the recent ELCA decision on sexuality and to economic impacts to some members. If you have decreased your giving due to the ELCA decision, we urge you to talk to one of the pastors about your concerns.

Impact With this outlook, our congregation will have to make some difficult choices:

- Benevolences would have to be cut drastically
- Program team budgets would be reduced. Possibly up to 25% or more.
- Personnel would have to reduce through fewer hours and layoffs

Refinancing the mortgage is not a good option at this point since we would go to a higher interest rate, pay refinancing fees, and extend the mortgage period.

What is next? The Council, Finance Team, Stewardship Team, and Personnel will have to make some difficult proposals at the 2010 annual meeting.

What can you do? It is not too late for you to help in this difficult situation:

- If you have not submitted a pledge for 2010, a pledge to the general fund, building fund, or both, will help the teams better plan for 2010.
- If you have already pledged for 2010, we ask that you prayerfully consider making an increase.
- If you have any insight into possible reasons for these decreases, we would love to hear from you, please contact Pastor Wahl.

You can give your pledge information (either a change in your pledge or a new pledge) by:

- Contacting Janet Hoffmann at Hoffmann@bethellutheran.com or call her at Bethel, 288-6430 (Monday-Wednesday).
- Using online submission on the Bethel Website, or
- Filling out a pledge form (located at the usher stand or in the office)

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Pastor Wahl (wahl@bethellutheran.com) or Chris Zabel (zabel@bethellutheran.com).