

Bethlehem News



JANUARY



Dear friends in Christ,

The year 2020 is over, how do you feel about it? Many years past you might have looked back with fond memories. But the year 2020, while we still have fond memories; well, do you remember not being able to find toilet paper? I was truly amazed when my wife Ginny could not and cannot as of today find canning lids in any of the stores. It seems that the uncertainty of 2020 has caused many people to want self-sufficiency, and to rediscover traditional activities like canning food. This has been frustrating for us, but the shortage caused us to order reusable canning lids, which will, in the long term save money and resources. Often when we think there is a roadblock it often brings out something much better.

And while we are talking about canning food, this brings me to another topic: resolutions. I don't know about you, but resolutions for losing weight are always at the top of the chart. And this year is no different. Resolutions take a commitment on your part to follow through on them. You set a goal and then strive to get to the goal.

What about your relationship with Our Lord and Savior? Have you wanted to make a resolution to "Get closer to God," or "Be a better person?" I tell you, throw the idea of resolutions out the window. We have something better than a resolution on our part.

We have a promise. It's not a promise of man or of this earth. It is not a promise like we make with our friends or relatives. And it is not a promise that has conditions of behavior on your part. So I tell you don't make a resolution. Don't tell Your Lord and Savior you will do better this year. Don't tell Him why you have failed or fallen short. Tell your Lord this. "I believe but help me with my unbelief. Help me with my weakness when everything around me seems to be out of control."

Psalm 40:17 But as for me, I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; you are my God, do not delay.

This Psalm we can pray daily. What a beautiful Psalm, We are all needy and fall short of His glory. But God is our help and he will deliver us today and when Jesus comes on the last day.

This year 2021 is unknown so remember this Psalm. Remember in the Lord's time, he will help us and deliver us from suffering. Our Lord and Savior knows what we need and when we need it.

Amen.

Pastor Karl

News and Updates



We have secured a new church mortgage which will reduce our monthly payment from \$3318/month to \$2162/month. The council decided to postpone our monthly dinners until we can safely have them later in 2021.



Operation Christmas Child

These special boxes go to areas of the world where access to the Gospel is restricted. In one of these countries, Elena received a shoebox gift and then participated in a discipleship course. She accepted Christ as a result and told her parents who also followed. Today, 50 of her relatives now follow Jesus Christ, too. Thanks to all who helped in this effort.

Terri Gerlach



Are you aware that you can make a tax-free gift to Bethlehem from your 401k or IRA?

If you're 70 1/2 or older the IRS requires you to withdraw a minimum amount from your IRA/401k. This is known as a required minimum distribution or RMD. The IRS computes this annually at the beginning of the year based on your IRA/401k balance. You are taxed on this withdrawal at your regular tax rate. If you fail to withdraw this amount the tax penalty is 50% each year. However, if you make a contribution to a charity (Bethlehem Lutheran Church) as part of your RMD, you are not taxed on this amount. The contribution is known as a qualified charitable distribution or QCD. It helps ease the burden on your church contribution while it benefits Bethlehem Lutheran. Please consider this in helping the church and reducing your taxes.

Bob Jurs
Stewardship Board



The Ladies will meet Monday January 4 at 1:00 pm in the fellowship hall. All Bethlehem ladies are welcome.

Pam Rugenstein



The 2021 flower calendar is now posted in the narthex. Please sign up for open dates that you can select to honor special occasions for yourself or family members. Please don't forget to sign up and place your check or cash for \$40 in an envelope marked for Altar Flowers.

Thanks so much for your help.
Pam Rugenstein



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday school, confirmation and Bible study have restarted. It is great to study God's Word at church with the church family. Pastor is leading Sunday Bible study right after the morning service. Wednesday morning Bible study is in full swing in person at the church and on zoom.

Even during this pandemic, yearn to learn.
Sandy



FOOD BASKETS

This year we provided 45 Christmas hams and bags of non-perishable food items to Buckingham Exceptional School just down the road from our church. Thanks to all who contributed to this effort. See the photo on page 4

Paul Rugenstein



2020 Thrivent "Action Team" card donors: Janice Bradmiller; Gary Driescherf; Joann Erdman; Terri Gerlach, Dick Gerlach; Pastor Glander, Sandy Grage, Doug

Grage; Jeff Kirsch; Pam Rugenstein; Gale Smith; Betty Willis and Ralph Willis. Together, these cards contributed \$3,200 to support various Bethlehem activities. If you are a Thrivent member, please contact me to learn about how you can sponsor an "action team" in 2021.

Betty Willis

JANUARY 2021


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 10:30 Worship 11:30 "Undecorate" Church	4 1:00 LWML Meeting	5	6 10:30 Bible Study	7	8	9
10 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Study; Sunday School & Confirmation	11	12	13 10:30 Bible Study	14	15	16
17 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Study; Sunday School & Confirmation 12:30 Council Mtg	18	19	20 10:30 Bible Study	21	22	23
24 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Study; Sunday School & Confirmation	25	26	27 10:30 Bible Study	28	29	30
31 10:30 Worship 11:30 Voters' Meeting						

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES	
5	Karen & Edison Johnson
15	Rita and Norm Wellman
17	Debbie and Frank Jackow
22	Gale & Melvin Smith

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS	
3	Linda Stuehrenberg
5	Rollin Duckwitz; Jan Larson
6	Gary Schaeffer
15	Edison Johnson
20	Linda Kirsch
26	Janice Bradtmiller
28	Caydance Albert
29	Chip Rinehart
31	Linda Hedrick


**May God Bless Each One of You As
We Celebrate Your Special Day!**

ELDER SCHEDULE- JANUARY COMMUNION			
Sunday	January 3	10:30 a.m.	Kurt
Sunday	January 17	10:30 a.m.	Gary
Friday	January 31	10:30 a.m.	Paul



DEC. Offering: \$ 11,801
DEC. Expenses: \$ 9,695

Thank you to all those who have sent in their offerings. In addition to mail, you can give online on the church website (blcef.m.org) or through your bank's bill pay system.
We need your continued support.
Richard Gerlach, Council President



Voters' Meeting Please plan to attend the Voters' Meeting on January 31 after the service. Each church board will present their plans for 2021 programs.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
 14531 Old Olga Road
 Fort Myers, FL 33905
 Phone: 239-694-3878

Website: www.blcefcm.org
 Email: bethlehemlc@gmail.com

Sunday Worship

10:30 AM Worship Service

Rev. Karl Glander

pastorkarlglander@gmail.com

239-293-1489

Organist: **Holly Bell**

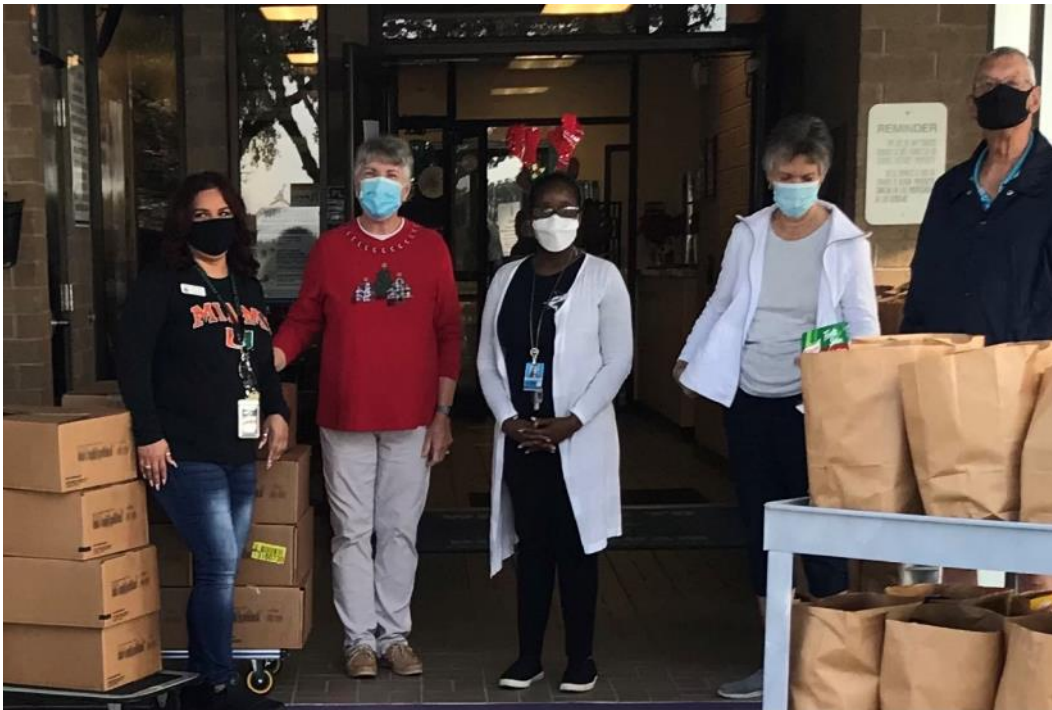
Church Secretary: **Linda Kirsch**

Prayer Chain Needs

Do you know that Bethlehem has a prayer chain that prays for the sick, dying and hurting needs of our church family?

Call or email Linda at (239) 693-5026 or
jlkirsch3@comcast.net

Your needs will be taken to the Lord!



Pam and Paul Rugenstein, and Terri Gerlach delivering the 45 Christmas hams and grocery bags from Bethlehem to the staff of the Buckingham Exceptional Student Center on Dec.16th. The food was distributed to needy students and their families.



On Wednesday, December 30th, Pastor Karl Baptized an eight month old baby at Bethlehem. The family was vacationing with relatives in Fort Myers. They were anxious to get their baby baptized but could not find a church that was open and able to perform the baptism until they contacted Pastor Karl at Bethlehem. The family is related to John and Judy Wittenberg who are winter members of Bethlehem. John is a member of our Elder Board