

# Bethlehem News



DECEMBER



Dear friends in Christ,

With Thanksgiving in the mirror behind us Christmas is within sight. Many of you might have a feeling of relief that 2020 will soon be coming to an end. While 2020 has been eventful we never know what the future will bring us. The Prophet Jeremiah tells us in Jeremiah 29:11 **“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”**

At the start of the chapter God speaking through Jeremiah sent a letter. Verse 1 This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. 4 This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. 7 Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

As we enter into Advent be reassured God is with us. Just as those in Exile God will care for us and bring us out of adversity and suffering. Seek peace with those who try to hold you captive in mind and spirit. Pray for others to have peace and prosperity so all will have it. Our nation has taken the Christ out of Christmas. Seek peace and show them the love of God through the example of the life you live.

God speaking through Jeremiah told His people don't listen to those whom I have not sent, do not be deceived. God told them he will come for them to set them free and He also sent Jesus to us to free us from sin and death. Many might not proclaim Jesus as King but this Christmas lets put Christ back in Christmas. Let your light shine in the darkness of the world.

Go about your lives in a world apposed to God not being deceived but by holding to Gods promises seeking peace and prosperity for all. Jeremiah 29:11 **“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”**

Christ will return  
Christmas Blessings  
Pastor Karl



Pastor Glander was installed on November 22nd. Pictured (above left) are Pastor with his family and Rev. Keith Lingsch who officiated at the ceremony; and (above right) with Pastor Bob Selle, Pastor Mark Eisold and Pastor Seth DeBartolo was also participated in the service.

### News and Updates



We have secured a new church mortgage which will reduce our monthly payment by from \$3318/month to \$2162/month.

The council decided to postpone our monthly dinners until we can safely have them.



#### Operation Christmas Child

This year our congregation packed over 85 boxes to be sent to children around the world.

Thanks to all who

helped in this effort.

Terri Gerlach



The Ladies will meet Monday December 7 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



Sunday school 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.

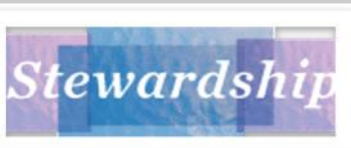
Even during this pandemic, yearn to learn. Sandy



As of December 1, Bethlehem has received \$1893

in Choice Dollars from our members. It is now time to direct your Thrivent choice dollars to Bethlehem Church for next quarter. Do it on line or call Thrivent at 800-847-4836.

Betty Willis



You may remember from last year's report about the three T's of stewardship: time, talent, and treasure.

Examples of the giving of time can be helping to decorate the church for special occasions; helping in the kitchen when we start having our monthly dinners; ushering during our weekly services; preparing the altar for communion; participating in LWML; preparing the Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets. Participating in these activities can be very rewarding.

Each of us has talent that can be valuable to the church. Volunteering for church council membership to fill the various duties is very important to the church. Helping the elders in church maintenance is very helpful and rewarding.

The last T of stewardship is treasure. Giving some of our treasure to the church is vital in order to pay the many costs we incur. You can see in the weekly bulletins that on a monthly basis our cost is just shy of \$10,000 while the monthly contributions are about \$6,000-\$8000. Hopefully, we'll see more snow birds during the winter to help with our expenses. The church council has renegotiated our mortgage to save about \$1100 per month but there will be a balloon payment at the end of the term. Pray how you can help in sharing as much of your treasure as you can afford to help our church.

Stewardship Board



This year we provided 45 Thanksgiving turkeys and bags of non-perishable food items to Buckingham Exceptional School just down the road from our church.

Thrivent allowed us to use one of the \$250 cards they give us to buy turkeys. Publix provided \$150 in gift cards for the turkeys. Members of the congregation provided additional funds and the LWML made up the difference so that we could purchase 45 turkeys

We have begun collecting non-perishable food items again for Christmas baskets. Since we won't have a dinner, all donations to purchase the hams are appreciated

Paul Rugenstein

# DECEMBER 2020


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Class Sunday School	7 1:00 LWML Meeting	8	9	10	11	12
13 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Class Sunday School 12:30 Council Mtg	14	15	16	17	18 10:00-12:00 Senior Food Distribution	19
20 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Class Sunday School	21	22	23	24 Service 7:00 PM	25 Service 10:30 AM 	26
27 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Class Sunday School	28	29	30	31 Service 7:00 PM		

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES	
14	Nancy and William Weyl
29	Jean and John Rousch

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS	
3	Janet Cessna; Melvin Smith
10	Jean Rousch
12	Ryan Kirsch; Gale Smith
18	Dennis Hartman
19	April Czaplewski
24	Judy Young
26	Audrey Vine
28	Jim Keiper

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

ELDER SCHEDULE- DECEMBER COMMUNION			
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>December 6</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Kurt</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>December 20</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Gary</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>December 25</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Paul</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>December 31</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Edison</b>



**Nov. Offering: \$ 8150**  
**Nov. Expenses: \$9975**

Thank you to all those who have sent in their offerings. In addition to mail, you can give online on the church website ([blcefm.org](http://blcefm.org)) or through your bank's bill pay system.

*We need your support.*

Richard Gerlach, Council President



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

Website: [www.blcefm.org](http://www.blcefm.org)  
Email: [bethlehemlc@gmail.com](mailto:bethlehemlc@gmail.com)

**Sunday Worship**

**10:30 AM** Worship Service

**Rev. Karl Glander**

[pastorkarlglander@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:jlkirsch3@comcast.net)

Your needs will be taken to the Lord!



Pastor Glander, Pam and Paul Rugenstein, Sandy and Doug Grage deliver the 45 Thanksgiving turkeys and grocery bags from Bethlehem to the staff of the Buckingham Exceptional Student Center on November 18th. Pastor received the following note from the principal.

“Thank you all for the Thanksgiving meals today! You all are such a blessing and I thank you for your continued support!”

Vicki Lotti Gohagen-Mosley, Ed.D.  
Principal, Buckingham Exceptional Student Center

