

The Tidings



Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin

February 2007

Lenten Midweek Services begin February 21

Midweek services for Lent begin on Ash Wednesday, February 21 at 7:00 p.m. and continue for the next 5 Wednesdays.

The services will focus on certain individuals in the life of Jesus who will be "put on trial." They will be asked who Christ is and what they know about Him.

A light supper will be served before each of these services beginning at 5:30 p.m.



Women's Prayer Service

Join women from our other churches in the Madison area for a Prayer Service at Bethlehem on Sunday afternoon, February 11 beginning at 2:00 p.m. Refreshments and fellowship follow. Sponsored by LWML Zones 20 & 21.

Ladies' Bible Study – Join In for Fun and Discovery



"The Quest for Spirituality" – join us as we discover

and discuss some of the most popular and growing "alternative" spiritual pursuits of today. This study, offered through Concordia, will run for six weeks. We meet on Mondays (except March 5) beginning February 12 at 6:30 pm. If you have yet to attend a Bethlehem Ladies' Bible Study, do consider signing up for this one—we have a great time getting to know one another, we are in the Word and of course we munch a little. Sign up sheet is in the Purpose Place in the hall. Questions: Lori Anacker 837-9189 or Beth Mielcarek 837-9716.

BLC Prime Time

Tired of the same old Wednesday night TV shows? Looking for a new mid-week option? Your search is over!

Bethlehem Prime Time is a new Wednesday night gathering for you, your family and friends. We'll kick things off on Wednesday, February 7 with a potluck dinner, from 5:30-7 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Come early on or later, whichever fits your



Potluck
SUPPER

schedule. Share your favorite dish to pass, (suggestion: if your last name begins with A-L bring main dish, M-R salad, S-Z dessert) then stick around for some fun family activities, or just to visit with fellow members.

Bethlehem Prime Time: It's must see entertainment for the entire church family!

Valentine's Day Family Celebration

Wednesday, February 14
5:30 p.m.

Bethlehem's Fellowship Hall

Catered Dinner:

Chicken Cordon Bleu
Roast Beef
Chicken Nuggets for the kids
Salads
Mashed Potatoes
Dessert

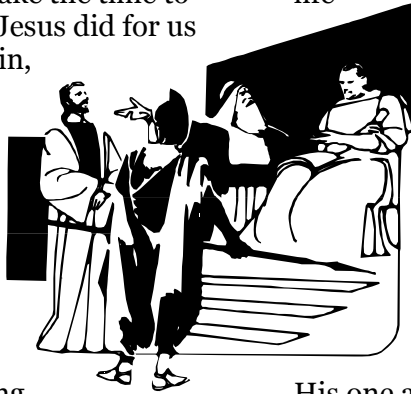
Very Special Entertainment

Cost is \$6.50/adult;
\$2 for Jr. High and under
(payable at the door)

Sign up as soon as possible in the narthex or purpose place.

Christ on Trial

Bethlehem Lutheran Church will soon enter the season of Lent. Lent, meaning “spring,” is the 40-day observance in which we remember the “passion” of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will take the time to remember what Jesus did for us to save us from sin, death, and the devil. The Church has observed this season for many, many years. Many Christians take the time to fast, or “give something up” during this season.



In Peter’s first letter we read, “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give a defense to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:15) One of the questions I’ve often asked myself (and others) is “if I was accused of being a follower of Christ would there be enough evidence to convict me?” The season of Lent gives us another opportunity to ask ourselves this question. Would any of us be ready, if put on trial, to give a defense of the hope we have in Jesus? Would we be able to state succinctly, and simply who Jesus is and what He has done for us? What would be the verdict?

In 1 Peter 4:17 we read, “for it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God...” If we were put on trial for being sinners we would surely be convicted because that is what the Bible tells us about our inborn condition. What would be the sentence? Death would certainly be the sentence for the “wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23a). There is no way around it - we would certainly be lost eternally if put on trial.

Lent is my favorite season of the Church year. Even though I know that I must die because of sin there is a reason for hope. The wages of sin is death, yes, but “the gift of God is eternal life

in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23b). By faith in Jesus Christ I know that I am forgiven and that heaven awaits. The innocent Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, was put on trial for all of us and unjustly accused of death.

This was God’s plan- His one and only Son would die for the sins of the world. Peter shares these words about our Savior; “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” (1 Pet. 2:22-25)

I ask you to “set apart Christ as Lord” during this season of Lent (and always!). Take the time to “set Christ apart” by attending our special Lenten services beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 21 and concluding with Good Friday on April 6. The services will focus on certain individuals in the life of Jesus who will be “put on trial.” They will be asked who Christ is and what they know about Him. All of the services will be on Wednesdays and begin at 7:00 p.m. Holy Week services include Maundy Thursday (April 5) and Good Friday (April 6). I pray you will

also be challenged to think about your own defense and share your hope in Jesus if you were put on trial. May our Lord bless our Lenten journey together!

In service to Jesus,
Pastor Mueller

“For I resolved to know nothing while with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (1 Cor. 2:2)



Welcome to the ReFocusing Process

Change is tough...tough to lead and tough to live through. It is difficult, emotionally expensive, unnerving, and always raises fears of loss. What's more, thriving in a climate of rapid-fire change is even more demanding. Welcome to the challenge facing the church of our generation.

Bethlehem has chosen to tackle this challenge head on. ReFocusing is a journey of discovery, a quest really, to discover God’s unique calling for our church in the day and community in which we now live. This process is not a scheme for guiding our church to a pre-determined destination. Rather, this is literally an opportunity to come together and hear from God in a fresh way, and then move into alignment with His purposes and calling.

What's more, we are not alone. All over North America, churches, including many LCMS churches, are discovering that a process like this can restore hope, clarity, and courage for ministry. Consider this:

- between 3500 and 4000 churches **close their doors** each year.
- 80% of churches are in **decline** or have **plateaued**.
- **Only 37%** of the American population is in church on any given Sunday morning.
- The North American Church is at a **cross-roads** and so are it's leaders!

Behind the process are a number of convictions. One is that the Spirit of God is more eager to lead His people than we are to be led. The ReFocusing process will create multiple opportunities for the people of Bethlehem to listen together for His voice.

Another conviction is that the level of ownership in the outcome is directly related to the level of participation in the discovery process. We have all participated in those moments when a boss or leader announced a plan or agenda about which no one had any say. It went over like a lead balloon. As people, we understand things presented to us, but we own the things we discover. This is why our involvement in "A Fresh Start" and Raving Members is so key.

The answers Bethlehem needs regarding its future are likely present in the lives of our members and the wisdom God has given them. ReFocus is a process which will involve a good number of members to discovering those answers and insights together at every step of the way.

A third deep-seated conviction is that God calls every church to a unique ministry. Discovering that calling gives a

congregation freedom from any pressure to be like some other church and the freedom to embrace their uniqueness for the sake of the kingdom.

Ephesians 2:10:
For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

How do we create a process where the whole church really has a chance to give significant input? Answer: By doing it in stages. The big events of the journey will be three Leadership Summits. Please keep the following dates open:

Summit #1: Assessment
 Saturday, March 17

Summit #2: Discovery
 Saturday, April 21

Summit #3: Implementation
 Saturday, May 19

Peter R Imlah
 Youth & Family Minister
 Equipping, Encouraging &
 Empowering the Body of Christ

Youth Events

February 4

Super Bowl Party



5:30pm at the Sun Prairie Youth Center (Basement of the Sun Prairie YMCA, 160 South St.) for Jr. High and Sr. High Youth. (Can be dropped off at 5:00, plan to stay at least through half-time.)

Pizza, Chips, Drinks and a powerful half-time testimony. **Friends are invited - Come Cheer on the CHICAGO BEARS to a VICTORY**

February 9-10

Lock-In and Tubing at St. John Lutheran in West Bend. Leave Friday after school and return Saturday evening. Open to 7th Graders through High School. Parent chaperones are needed.



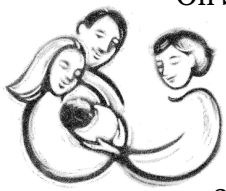
Cost is \$15.00 and includes meals, tubing and coffee house concert.

Calling all high school juniors and seniors to experience Concordia University Wisconsin!

Join us for visit day on Saturday, February 24, 2007! Come check out first hand what CUW is all about. During your visit you will: tour campus, learn more about financial aid, have the opportunity to ask questions to a panel, meet with the faculty in your major, and experience campus life! The day will begin at 8:30 am and end at 1:30 p.m. or Spend a night in a residence hall with current CUW students! Please join us for Preview Weekend on February 18-19, 2007. The weekend will begin on Sunday, February 18, and conclude on Monday afternoon. Experience for yourself what it is like to be a CUW student. Sunday night you will be able to join in on campus activities and Monday's events will include campus tour, financial aid, chapel, and the chance to sit in on a class.

This is a great way to see what CUW has to offer! To sign up for either dates please call Julie Schroeder, the Visit Coordinator, at 262-243-4560 or email Julie.Schroeder@cuw.edu

International Adoption through LCFS



On Saturday, February 24, 2007 at the LCFS Administrative Office located at 3800 N. Mayfair

Rd. in Wauwatosa, Lutheran Counseling and Family Services will have an international adoption talk about the many children waiting to be adopted from various countries. JP Maschke of LCFS and Kate Ingalls-Maloney of Children's Home Society and Family Services will discuss various adoption issues. The 2 hour program begins at 9:30 a.m. with refreshments. Please contact LCFS at 800-291-4513 to sign up.

Sponsor the Altar Flowers or Bulletin



The 2007 Flower and Bulletin charts are now up. If you would like to sponsor a bouquet of altar flowers or the Sunday bulletin in honor or memory of someone the cost this year is \$20 for one bouquet or the bulletin. You may take the flowers home following the late service that day, or leave them to be taken to a shut-in member or nursing home.

Bethlehem's Women in Mission

The next Women's Guild meeting is Monday, February 5 at 7:00 p.m. At the beginning of the meeting a representative from Life Line Screening will talk about major health risks we face today and ways to prevent them.

You will learn how to assess your own health risk factors and discover how to potentially save your life or that of someone you love! All are welcome to attend! Take Steps Towards Your Own Personal Wellness Program. Come join us to get the opportunity to win a free screening and receive a discount for signing up for the health screenings!

All confirmed women and girls are invited to attend.

Knit or Crochet Bandages

We have an ongoing project to knit or crochet simple cotton bandages for tropical skin ulcer patients (size 8 needles or H hook). Pick up directions at the Women's Guild table by the mail slots. Finished bandages can be placed in the basket there.



Bethlehem Angels Made a Joyful Noise!

Many thanks to everyone who helped make the Angel Tree program such a success this year. I was happy to see so many members of the congregation give of their time and treasures to purchase gifts for kids that may have been less fortunate this Christmas Season. A special "Thank You" to my fellow confirmation class friends that gave of their time and talents to purchase, wrap and deliver the gifts to the Angel Tree families.

This year the Angel Tree helped 28 families with 61 kids receiving 122 Christmas gifts. Hopefully, the evangelism materials included with the presents helped introduce them or bring them closer to the greatest Christmas gift of all – our Savior!

We had a great time working on this project with everyone and look forward to doing it again next year.

God bless you all.

- Zak Waldschmidt

The Chaplain's Corner

A Change of Heart

February 2 is one of my favorite holidays – Ground Hog Day. Every year we look to the furry rodent to predict the extension of winter or the coming of an early spring. Celebrations are held in many cities, books are written and even a movie bears the name of the day.



In the film, *Ground Hog Day*, actor Bill Murray portrays a cynical, self-centered weatherman for a TV station. Reluctantly he travels to Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania where he is to cover Phil's (the national ground hog) antics regarding the weather forecast. After giving a half-hearted report, Murray packs up to head back to town to fill his agenda with no regards for anyone else. A snowstorm turns him back to Punxsutawney where he turns in for the night at a Bed and Breakfast. In the morning he wakes at 6:00 am in his usual sarcastic manner. At night he returns to the B&B for sleep, again rising at 6:00 am. The strange thing is – it is a repeat of Ground Hog Day. This happens over and over day after day. Bill Murray at first tries in vain to put a stop to it himself, but to no avail. After a few days of failed attempts to alter his fate, he experiences little changes of heart towards those around him. He improves his personality, helps others in

need, better his talents as to share them with others – but the best change was one of the heart towards a woman whom he degraded, but now sees her virtues. He was able to be loved and to share love because of a change of heart. It was then that his life changed, and he moved on to February 3rd.

Our lives are very much like that of the reporter in Ground Hog Day. We often repeat our mistakes in life without regard to God or those around us. We are so comfortable in our sins at times, that we don't realize how we offend each other, or tarnish the image of God that we were created in. When guilt or shame enters in, we try to fix ourselves – often half heartedly to appease our own interests. But, when given by God's Holy Spirit to have a change of heart by experiencing His love through Jesus Christ, we have a new beginning like the weatherman in *Ground Hog Day*.

That love that come from God is described in St. John's first epistle:

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His One and Only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” [1John4:7-11]

Year after year we do the same thing on Ground Hog Day. Day after day we sin, and day after day we have forgiveness through Jesus. Share that love and forgiveness with your family and friends, and espe-

cially with Your Savior who brings about a true change of heart!

Pastor Tom Fleischmann
Matthew 25:40

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[920]-892-2211
South Wisconsin District
Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
Brotherskeeper99@yahoo.com

Parish Planning Council Minutes

January 16, 2007

Present: Tim Mielcarek, Pastor Mueller, Pete Imlah, Jim McCourt, Mary Kazda, Anne Meyer, Keith McCredie, Pat Schommer, Betty Isaacson

Executive Director Tim Mielcarek called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Pastor Mueller opened with prayer.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as distributed.

Treasurer Pat Schommer announced a good December with the extra services helping out. 92% of the budget was spent in 2006.

Pastor Mueller noted in the annual statistics that though number of members has gone down a little from last year, attendance at worship and communion are up.

Pete Imlah presented an overview of the ReFocus program that we are implementing.

For the Board of Properties, Keith McCredie brought up some concerns about “renting out” the fellowship hall to non-members for family events – liability being a big factor especially when the kitchen is used. Representatives from Properties, Evangelism and Fellowship will get together and discuss pros and cons.

Next Voters Meeting will be March 4 where the nominating committee will be announced.

For the Board of Lay Ministry, Jim McCourt announced that the board agreed to implement every Sunday communion once things have been worked out with the Altar Guild and attending Lay Ministers. Contemporary Service will now be held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Isaacson

Opportunities to Volunteer:

At the Sun Prairie Food Pantry



Bethlehem provides volunteers for the Sun Prairie

Emergency Food Pantry every Monday evening from 5-7.

Right now help is needed on the first Monday of every month. On the job training provided by those you'll be working with. Call Karen Est 825-4296.

At the Bethesda Thrift Store

201 Cottage Grove Rd.
Madison, WI

Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services, Inc.,



runs resale stores with 100% of the profits going to their clients with developmental disabilities. They provide for the spiritual as well as the physical needs of

their clients. They are in great need of volunteers in their new Madison store located at 201 Cottage Grove Rd.

To volunteer or to have an information packet sent to you, please call Sherry at 920-261-3050 ext. 3531 or 800-383-8743 ext. 3531. You can also contact the area District Director Jim Clary at ext. 4437 or call Alice Hanson, store manager at the store on Monday mornings – 608-223-1228.

At Oakwood Village East

5565 Tancho Drive
Madison, WI 53718

Contact Kim Viney, 230-4238 or kim.viney@oakwoodvillage.net to volunteer for any of the following or for more information.

Village Mercantile –

Volunteers needed weekdays and Saturdays once a month for the gift and grocery store, M-F 9:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. or 12:30-3:15 p.m. or Sat. 12:45 – 3:15 p.m. Training provided.



Aviary Volunteer –

needed to help with light house-keeping for the caretaking of birds in the Community Center, Oakwood Seasons, Meadows and Knoll (4) aviaries once a week, most any day/morning or afternoon for about 1-2 hours.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

300 Broadway Drive
Sun Prairie, WI 53590
608.837.7446



Worship:

Sundays 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School/Bible Class 9:10

Rev. Stephen M. Mueller, Pastor
Mr. Peter Imlah,
Youth & Family Minister

At the Colonial Club Senior Activity Center

301 Blankenheim Lane
Sun Prairie

Would you like to put a smile on a senior's face, meet a growing need in your own backyard, and reap the rewards of volunteerism? If you answered yes, and we sure hope you did, we invite you to team up with the Colonial Club to assist in one (or more!) of several areas.



Home-Delivered Meal Driver

Deliver noon, one day per week, to seniors in northeast Dane County. Routes and substitute opportunities available in Sun Prairie, Marshall, Cottage Grove and Deerfield. Route takes under one hour – a great chance to provide a hot nutritious meal and a friendly face to a senior in your community, enabling them to continue living independently in their home. Mileage reimbursement available.

Friendly Visitors



Visit with an area senior in their home. Provide a friendly face, pleasant conversation and perhaps an activity such as cards or

reading. Weekly visits are a welcome addition to lives of seniors with little or no family in the area.

Kitchen Assistant

Provide general assistance for our nutrition program. Set tables, package meals for home-delivery, clean dishes, etc. Fast-paced environment

Lunch Helper

Help prepare lunch in our Adult Day Center. Set tables, set out food, and visit with seniors. 10:30 – 12:00. Monday and substitute volunteers needed.

Transportation Assistant

Assist our drivers as they transport seniors to and from our Adult Day Center. Prepare wheelchair lift, write down mileage, visit with seniors and other tasks. Morning (6:45 – 10:30) or afternoon (2:00 – 5:30) shift Tues. or Thurs.

Contact Lynn Pawelski, Volunteer Coordinator at the Colonial Club to find out how you can get started. Call 837-4611 ext 120 or email lpawelski@colonialclub.org. Won't you please consider these opportunities to serve and make a difference?