

Bethlehem Lutheran
CHURCH & SCHOOL 

1121 Georgia Ave. Sheboygan, WI 53081

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CONNECT WITH US

Bethlehem Lutheran

1121 Georgia Avenue
Sheboygan, WI 53081

www.ourbethlehem.com

Church: (920) 452-4331
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 [www.facebook.com/
ourbethlehem](http://www.facebook.com/ourbethlehem)

 [https://twitter.com/
ourbethlehem](https://twitter.com/ourbethlehem)

Rev. J. Patrick Niles
Administrative Pastor

Rev. Jeremy Hanson
Associate Pastor

Patrick Vanic
Principal

WORSHIP & BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

Worship Times

Saturday - 5:30pm

Sunday - 8:00am & 10:30am

Wednesday - 6:00pm

Bible Studies

Saturday evening ~ 4:15 to 5:15pm

Sunday morning ~ 9:15 to 10:15am

Dec 2023

MEMBERSHIP



Sheboygan Lutheran
High School
Association



Sheboygan Area
Lutheran Schools
Association

December 2023

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 <u>NO</u> Bible class Worship w/HC 5:30pm
3 Worship w/HC 8:00am & 10:30am Bible classes 9:15am Sunday School 9:15am Elders meeting 11:45am	4	5 LWML meeting 7:00pm	6 Reading Partners 1:00pm Advent Worship (Grades 4, 5 & 6) 8:30am & 6:00pm Soup Supper 5:00pm	7 Student Council meeting 3:15-4:00pm	8	9 Bible class 4:15pm Worship w/HC 5:30pm LHS Christmas Concert 7:00pm
10 Worship w/HC 8:00am & 10:30am Bible classes & Sunday School 9:15am LHS Christmas Concert 2:00pm Youth Group 4:00-5:30pm	11	12 Quilters 9:00am	13 Reading Partners 1:00pm Advent Worship (Grades 3K, 4K, 5K & 8) 8:30am & 6:00pm Soup Supper 5:00pm	14 January Visitor Deadline (noon)	15	16 Bible class 4:15pm Worship w/HC 5:30pm
17 Worship w/HC 8:00am & 10:30am Bible classes 9:15am Sunday School 9:15am	18	19	20 Reading Partners 1:00pm Advent Worship (Grades 1, 2, 3 & 7) 8:30am & 6:00pm Soup Supper 5:00pm	21 Student Council Christmas Party 3:15-4:00pm	22 NO SCHOOL	23 <u>NO</u> Bible class <u>NO</u> Worship
24/31 <u>Dec. 24:</u> * Sunday School Service 4:00pm * Family Service 6:00pm * Candlelight Service w/HC 11:00pm <u>Dec. 31:</u> * Worship w/HC 8:00am & 10:30am * Bible classes 9:15	25 NO SCHOOL (Church & school offices are closed) Worship w/HC 10:00am 	26 NO SCHOOL (Church & school offices are closed) Quilters 9:00am	27 NO SCHOOL <u>NO</u> Worship	28 NO SCHOOL	29 NO SCHOOL	30 Bible class 4:15pm Worship w/HC 5:30pm

◊◊ *Tischreden with Pastor Hanson* ◊◊

The season of Advent marks the beginning of a new church year in which we reflect anew on the meaning of the incarnation, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus for us. In the season of Advent, we focus on the threefold coming of Jesus Christ to the world in the flesh, in the Word and the Sacraments, and in glory. At this time each year we in the church should ask ourselves the same question that Martin Luther asked as he pondered the rich meaning of the Christmas story, *"Why would the Lord of all the universe care enough about us mortals to take our flesh and share our woes?"*

We learned from our teachers in grade school that there is no such thing as a bad question. While this may be true, it is also true that some questions serve a greater purpose than others. By asking ourselves, during the season of Advent, why God would care enough about us mortals to take our flesh and share our woes, two important purposes are being served.

First, the connection between the manger and cross are brought into closer companionship. Luther would often say that the manger and the cross are made of the same wood. That is to say that they are both made by wood stained with the blood of the sin and disobedience of God's creatures. They are also stained with the sweat and tears of our personal God who cares about his entire creation. His care is shown in his action to send his Son, Jesus and close the gap of distance and separation between him and creatures that have forgotten to hear, listen, and obey the good and holy Word of their heavenly Father.

The second purpose that is served by asking the question, *"Why would the Lord of all the universe care enough about us mortals to take our flesh and share our woes?"* is that it leads us to consider all the ways in which our God comes to us. Since the season of Advent occurs during the several weeks prior to Christmas Day, it can be easy for us to focus our eyes only on the baby Jesus cradled in the manger. But if we pull back the curtains a little farther, we can bring into view all the ways that God comes to us.

Our God splits the heavens and comes down not just during the event that we celebrate one month from now on Christmas morning. The purpose of the season of Advent is not so that the church can transport itself back two thousand years ago and pretend to be first century Jews who are waiting for their Messiah to be born. We live in the twenty-first century. So let us believe more firmly the truth that God has already come to us, is continuing to come to us, and will come back to us.

We certainly take time within our congregation and within our families to celebrate God's coming to us on Christmas morning. However, at the same time we embrace the fact that our God who is beyond time and space comes down to us in time and space every Sunday morning to deliver the fruit of his Son's crucifixion and resurrection over two thousand years ago through his Word and Sacraments. He comes to us through his instruments: the water and the Word of God, the bread and the wine, the mouth of the pastor who forgives our sins, and the Bible which contains all of God's promises in Christ. In these ways we receive, Immanuel, *"God with us,"* now! As we live in a world where the evidence of the sin, suffering, and brokenness of creation is all too evident, we receive God's peace on earth as he comes to us "hidden" in the Word and Sacraments. We also embrace his promise of Christ to restore his broken creation and to completely "reveal" his victory over suffering and death in his coming again to us in glory, just as he said.

The truth that God cares enough for us mortals to take on our flesh and share our woes is shown to us in the wonderful Christmas story which we eagerly wait to celebrate. But take comfort now in this truth as it is made known to you now through God's Word and his Sacraments. As members of His church, we should equip ourselves to share this good news with others who live among us and are confused in their questioning, suffering, and despair. And as you equip yourselves this Advent season and share the reason for the hope that you have in Christ, rest assured that he is coming again soon.

◊◊ Pastor Hanson



Fun in the First Grade



First Grade took a field trip to Bookworm Gardens in September. We enjoyed eating our lunch, reading a story, feeding the fish and exploring the gardens.

In December, we will take a field trip to the Weill Center for a performance called *Buckets N Boards*. The show hopes to teach us that anyone can create rhythm and music on their own. Mrs. Bult is going to come along so we can use what we learn in music class.

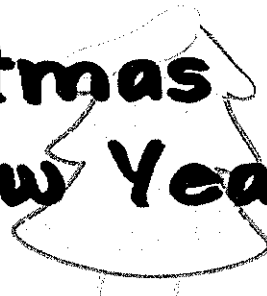
Pastor Niles came to visit first grade on Reformation Day! He used his pumpkin carving skills to remind us about Jesus' love for us!



Together we worked as a class to disguise a turkey! We each designed a feather or two to help our turkey hide so he would not be found in time for Thanksgiving!

We also created Christmas ornaments for a tree at the Sheboygan County Historical Society. If you have a chance we hope you stop in and see our tree. We had help decorating from other classes here at school! We want people to see our lights that we shine for Jesus through our tree!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



by Ms. Lolitta

December News

DON'T MISS READING THE NEXT FEW LINES

Words to live by from a devotion by Rev. Richard E. Lauersdorf:

"I was not born the first time because I wanted to be, but because my parents wanted me. I was born the second time (through baptism), not because I wanted to be, but because God wanted me. Thank God for His grace in making me twice born."

GET IN THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT WITH LWML

You're invited to come to LWML's Christmastime gathering (and short meeting) on Tuesday, December 5th in the Century Room, beginning at 7:00pm.

Featured will be a skit entitled, "*Three Wise Women*" (not Wise Men). Songs and hymns of the season will be sung and refreshments will be served. Even if you've never attended before, please come and be our guest. LWML loves company!

CHRISTMAS BREAK

There will be NO SCHOOL beginning Friday, December 22nd. School will be back in session on Tuesday, January 2nd, 2024.

LIVING NATIVITY

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, located at 441 Millersville Ave. in Howards Grove, is once again presenting their Living Nativity display. FREE admission, parking and refreshments.

Friday, December 1st: 6:00-9:00pm

Saturday, December 2nd: 6:00-9:00pm

Sunday, December 3rd: 4:00-7:00pm

NOEL

A Lutheran High School Christmas band and choral concert.

Saturday, December 9th: 7:00pm

Sunday, December 10th: 2:00pm

Reserve your free tickets at www.lutheranhigh.com/pac

UPCOMING SALES AT NEAT REPEATS

12/5—12/9: purses, duffels and luggage are 50% off

12/12: everything in the store is 30% off

12/13—12/16: Christmas items are 50% off

WELCOMED THROUGH HOLY BAPTISM

Louis Charles Smith - November 5, 2023

WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT

Jackie Fischer - November 10, 2023



OH HOLY NIGHT!

Celebrate the Ministry event focuses on *“Bethlehem - For Such a Time as This”*

On November 9th, over 100 members of Bethlehem gathered to celebrate the ministry that God has given to Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School at this time. The event started with some food and fellowship, and ended with a presentation by Pastor Niles.

The presentation focused on God's blessings to Bethlehem and the work that God has done through us in the past. It, then, moved into some of the challenges that face Bethlehem currently. We are a demographically changing church and school in a demographically changing community. Increased opportunities presented by these changes have also led to an increase in financial need to do the things that need to be done.

Despite the challenges that are around every corner, God continues to bless Bethlehem in many ways to make us His light in a dark world for a time such as this. He continues to bring people into our church doors and children into our school that need to know the love of Jesus. And we get to be a part of that. This congregation stands to bring life to a dying community. But it takes courage. It takes intentionality. It takes determination and sacrifice. It takes trust.

We would love for you to join us in this beautiful ministry! Take an inventory of the time, talents, and treasures with which God has blessed you. Intentionally commit to being an active part of Christ's light in the world with us!



CHURCH DECORATION FUND



Please consider donating a monetary gift to the Altar Guild's Church Decoration Fund. All donor names, along with the designation as to whether the gift is being given in memory of, in honor of, or for blessings received, will be published. ***Please designate which category, by circling in memory of or in honor of.***

Make checks payable to **Bethlehem Altar Guild.**

**Deadline for submitting donations to the church office is
noon on Tuesday, December 12, 2023**

Given by: _____ in memory/honor of _____

Given by: _____ in memory/honor of _____

Given by: _____ in memory/honor of _____

Given by: _____ for blessings received

Given by: _____ for blessings received

**BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
FINANCIAL INFORMATION AS OF**

September 30, 2023

ASSETS	September 2023	August 2023	
Cash	\$ 170,977	\$ 61,196	
Endowment Funds – Principal Only	\$ 840,123	\$ 840,123	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 6,501,276	\$6,407,601	Includes buildings & land
 <u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>			
General Accounts Payable	\$ 135,794	\$ 126,579	
SYNOD	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,668	
Lutheran High School	\$ 7,500	\$ 5,000	Monthly Pmt \$2,500
 <u>LONG TERM LIABILITIES</u>			
Mortgage Thrivent	\$ 1,501,169	\$ 1,509,551	Monthly Pmt \$11,778
Total Liabilities	\$ 1,791,335	\$ 1,780,055	
 <u>REVENUE</u> (selected accounts)			
Adult Envelopes	\$ 66,670	\$ 56,458	
Tuition	\$ 32,931	\$ 40,105	
School Choice Program	\$ 172,797	\$ 0	
Total Monthly Income	\$ 291,291	\$ 120,621	
Total Monthly Expenses	\$. 216,413	\$ 168,595	
Total Monthly NET INCOME	\$ 74,878	\$ (47,973)	
<u>TOTAL REVENUE 2023</u>	\$ 1,426,922	\$ 1,135,630	
<u>TOTAL EXPENSES 2023</u>	\$ 1,522,070	\$ 1,305,958	
<u>NET INCOME 2023</u>	\$ (95,147)	\$ (170,327)	

Received the WI Voucher pmt in September. It increased cash by \$110,000 and increased our net income by \$75,000.

Thank God for all your support!

**BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
FINANCIAL INFORMATION AS OF**

October 31, 2023

ASSETS	Oct 2023	Sept 2023	
Cash	\$ 87,556	\$ 170,977	
Endowment Funds – Principal Only	\$ 840,123	\$ 840,123	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 6,401,552	\$6,501,276	Includes buildings & land
 <u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>			
General Accounts Payable	\$ 88,468	\$ 135,794	
SYNOD	\$ 3,332	\$ 2,500	
Lutheran High School	\$ 10,000	\$ 7,500	Monthly Pmt \$2,500
 <u>LONG TERM LIABILITIES</u>			
Mortgage Thrivent	\$ 1,492,769	\$ 1,501,169	Monthly Pmt \$11,778
Total Liabilities	\$ 1,737,754	\$ 1,791,335	
 <u>REVENUE</u> (selected accounts)			
Adult Envelopes	\$ 67,913	\$ 66,670	
Tuition	\$ 21,432	\$ 32,931	
School Choice Program	\$ 0	\$ 172,797	
Total Monthly Income	\$ 161,562	\$ 291,291	
Total Monthly Expenses	\$ 185,475	\$ 216,413	
Total Monthly NET INCOME	\$ (23,912)	\$ 74,878	
<u>TOTAL REVENUE 2023</u>	\$ 1,588,485	\$ 1,426,922	
<u>TOTAL EXPENSES 2023</u>	\$ 1,707,500	\$ 1,522,070	
<u>NET INCOME 2023</u>	\$ (119,015)	\$ (95,147)	

Cash is at \$87,556 and accounts payable is at \$88,468. We will receive a WI Voucher pmt in November for \$172,797 and that should bring us to or very close to a break even for the year. We will need to up our giving by approximately \$30,000 in December to end the year in the black.

Hope you had a blessed Thanksgiving.

BLESSINGS BOARD

The Blessings Board has replaced the Angel Board previously set up. The board will be set up in November and there will be no need to pick a tag, take a tag or record your name.

Please help us provide Christmas blessings for our Bethlehem families and our neighborhood friends.

Choose from suggestions listed below for the Blessing Board and return the gifts, **unwrapped**, at any time but no later than Noon on December 10, 2023. Items bought can be put in our basket in the Century Room or under the Christmas tree in the Century Room when it is set up.

Listed below are **suggestions only**. Any and all gifts are appreciated and will be distributed to Bethlehem families, local nursing homes and schools. YOU decide how much you buy and how much YOU spend. THANKS for helping us make Christmas brighter for others!!!

Items for nursing homes

Lap blankets

Individually wrapped candy (regular soft candy and sugar free soft candy)

Wisconsin team apparel--t-shirts & sweatshirts--(Badgers, Brewers, Bucks & Packers (especially XL, XXL and XXXL) (this is most requested item from nursing homes)

Easy to do and easy to see LARGE print coloring books and fat crayons

Large print Word Searches (no crossword puzzle books please)

Items going to Bethlehem School and other local schools

Any size (s, m, l, xl & xxl) boys and girls tops and bottoms

Sweat shirts and sweat pants

Wisconsin sports team apparel

Any size (s, m, l, xl, xxl) boys and girls socks, underwear & pj's

New mittens, gloves, hat & scarves for both boys and girls (all sizes for school aged children).

Additional items for school aged children:

Kohl's Cares children's books with matching stuffed animal

Toys & games for school aged children--both boys & girls

Some suggestions would be Legos, Play-Doh, action figures, Barbies, Craft kits for boys and girls, etc. etc.

Young person makeups, lip gloss, body sprays

If your child would wear it or play or build with it these kids will too!!!!

Gift cards to help us help others

We are looking for gas gift cards, grocery store gift cards, Walmart gift cards. Any amount (please write on back of card the amount of the card and the month the card was purchased)

We also gladly accept cash or checks and we will do the shopping for you. Checks should be made payable to Bethlehem Social Ministry.

Save this sheet for when you are shopping. Remember, unwrapped gifts are due back by Noon on December 10, 2023.

Together we can make a difference.

Thank YOU!

Board of Social Ministry

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

PERSONAL INFORMATION CHANGES

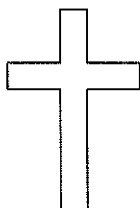
If you have changed your name, address, phone number or email address, please notify the church office with your information. You can call the church office at 920-452-4331 or email amy.weir@ourbethlehem.com with your new/current information. Thank you for your help.

ROOM RESERVATION REMINDER

Just a reminder to make sure that you let the church office know if and when you need to reserve a room so we can be sure that there are no conflicts. Thank you!

VISIT US ONLINE

Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School is on Facebook. Please also visit us at our website, www.ourbethlehem.com. Check out the main page where you will find information about upcoming events and activities. Scroll down to see a calendar of important items. Find helpful information by clicking on the various tabs under *Church* and *School*.



VISITOR SPONSORSHIP

To help us defray expenses for producing and mailing our monthly newsletter, we have established a sponsorship program which includes a congregational contributor for a cost of \$50 per year; and a commercial contributor for the cost of \$120 per year. If interested, please drop off your payment or call the church office at 920-452-4331.

Congregational Sponsors

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Sandra Fischer
Leonard Johnson
George & Karen Haecker
Jim & Ruth Behrens

Bev Fischer
Bob & Lori Gottowski
Linda Nikisch
Beverly Bauer
Linda Hulbert-Ertel

Jim & Judy Heinecke
Cliff & Gail Schlegel
Anita Krimmel
Keith & Christine Wyckoff
James Schmidt

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Advanced Comfort Systems
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Boneck Printing
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Knier Storage