

PASTORAL PONDERINGS



Do you remember last month when we were talking about God's Showers of Blessings in our lives? This month, we celebrate the greatest blessing we were ever given—the greatest gift ever. God lovingly gave his only Son as a redeeming gift to the world so that all would be saved, and so we celebrate Christmas, the birth of God's Son, with great joy. That single act defines the joy of giving for us: unselfish and unconditional, full of grace.

At this time of year, we are filled with renewed awe and wonder. This greatest gift of all inspires us to emulate it in some way with our own generosity. Not only do we give gifts to our loved ones at Christmas, but this is also the time of year when people so generously give to charitable organizations like the Salvation Army, the United Way and the US Marine Corps Toys for Tots.

As you look at your gift-giving budget for this season, and for the year ahead, keep these questions in mind:

- When have you felt the joy of giving? How can you share this feeling with someone else?
- During the holiday season, in what circumstances do you find joy in giving?
- What special giving opportunities are you looking forward to the most this year?
- Where do you think Jesus would find the joy of giving in the way we celebrate his birthday? How do you know?
- Why do you give Christmas presents?
- What are you "giving Jesus" for Christmas this year?

This Christmas, let us resolve to give freely of ourselves. When we give to others, we give to God. Acting as God's children, we put to use what was never really ours. There is no greater joy!

May you know the joy of giving in Christ, of sharing God's Showers of Blessings, this Christmas and always.

Pastor Paul Mai

PS - If you haven't returned your Faith Promise card to church yet, please do so. It is a great help to our church council and committees as they work on the 2008 church budget. Thanks!

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Gifts given to Bethany's Memorial Fund through November 25, 2007

Building Fund Gifts by: - Joyce Anderson, Keith & Lisa Anderson, Paul & Karen Caswell, Malcolm & Frances Flodin, Steven & Linda Howes, Dorothy & Clarence Zeno, Karen Dubrock, Kent & Sandy Anderson, Richard & Kris Anderson, Gerald & Betty Bolm, Paul Bolm, Phil & Melissa Norman, Bob & Nancy Gregg, Bruce & Martha Carlyon, Harold & Helen Cook, John & Suzy Decker, Paul & Karen Caswell, Dianne Gartland, Al & Marla Gossan, Karen Johnson, Gene & Alice Jones, Carol Kolinsky, Jack & Anne Magnusen, Mel & Ruth Karkkainen, Marian Nye, Donald & Fay Nyquist, Manley Oakman, Ralph & Jean Peterson, Carol Sachinski, Grace Seidl, Richard Servant, Robert & Jean Sovey, Elaine VanEffen, Ernest & Jean Vanlerberghe, Thomas & Donna Wilson, Ralph & Dorothy Zenker, Robert & Mary Anderson, John & Kim Beck, Leroy Cooper, Joyce Cook, John & Teri DePlonty, Tom & Joan Fugere, Ronald & Barbara Ball, Peg Hanson, Edward & Barbara Jenshak, Aarne & Salomi Holmio, Mildred Jerow, Donald & Kay Johnson, David & Elaine Klasell, Robert & Carol Lancour, Lewellyn & Marguerite Mineau, Terry & Karen Mokszycke, Jon & Julie Neisius, Ruth Oberg, Marie Pearson, James & Sandra Wilson, Don Aronson, Todd & Franci Myrick, Gary & Carol Butryn, Judie Dagenais, Pearl DeBoer, James & Sandy Goodyer, Bill & Lil Howe, Paul & Judy Mai, Barbara Schwalbach, Doug & Sue Scott, Hildur Tardiff, Willard & Debbie Carne, Do & Betty Goulais, Roy & Shirley Hivala, Michelle Carne, Mary Maercklein, Carol & Don Metor, Alan & Shirley Sanville.

In memory of Esther Dagenais by Bob & Joanne Dunstone.

In memory of Allen Timmer by Eleanore Beck, Harold & Nina Johnson.

In memory of Geoffrey Groh by Bill & Jeanne Sauter.

In memory of Jim Gonsowski, father of Alice Jensen, by Bill & Jeanne Sauter.

In memory of Eliza M. Dubord by her family.

In memory of Dorothy Olson by Lois Alperovitz, Harold & Nina Johnson, Mel & Ruth Karkkainen, Bob & Bernice Larson, Marie Jacobsen, Paul & Mary Jo Roll, Wally & Sandy Flinn, Bill & Jeanne Sauter, Sirkka Saarelainen, Norma Thomas, Ralph & Dorothy Zenker, Dorothy Westerback, Gene & Alice Jones, Rev. Dick & Carolyn Hutton.

In memory of Albin "Bud" Pearson by Lois Alperovitz, Eleanore Beck, Harold & Nina Johnson, Ray & Doris McDonough, Bill & Jeanne Sauter, Jason & Shayne Dix, Dr. Ellen Arnell-Marcell, John Vanlerberghe, Jon & Julie Neisius family and friends.

Undesignated Fund - *in memory of Oliver Swanson by his family.*

Music Fund - *Jon & Julie Neisius.*

In memory of our friend, Dorothy Olson, by the Eleanore Beck family, Scott & Mary Fritz, Art & Lois Anderson, Bob & Jean Sovey, Ernie & Jean Vanlerberghe, Fred & Ann Strieter, Larry & Lorraine Haack, John & Char Cavadeas, James & Sandy Goodyer, Roberta Hove.

RADIO BROADCASTS

The cost of broadcasting the 10:45 a.m. worship service on Sunday mornings is \$85.00. Two people may share the cost for the same Sunday for \$42.50 each. Available dates for 2008 are: **January 20, 27; February 3; March 9, 30; April 6 (\$42.50), 13, 20, 27; June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; July 13; August 3, 17, 31; September 7, 21; October 26; November 9, 23, 30; December 7, 24.**



November 4 - 273 November 18 - 220
 November 11 - 303 November 25 - 196

Average year to date this year 258
 Average year to date last year 261

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Members and friends wishing to remember loved ones or to honor someone in the bulletin on Christmas Eve, may do so by using the "blue" envelope marked FLORAL/RADIO which is provided in your packet of envelopes. Indicate on the envelope how you would like the wording in the Christmas Eve bulletin. These acknowledgments must be into the church office no later than **noon** on Monday, December 17th. Any amount of money may be given.

Funds received will help undergird the expenses of Christmas decorating plus other floral decorations used in worship throughout the year.



The special Christmas offering that will be taken this year will be divided in thirds between:

- ◆ Reformation Lutheran Church of Milwaukee, WI
- ◆ Fortune Lake Lutheran Bible Camp
- ◆ Sunday School & Church Equipment for Bethany

Please use the BLUE envelope in your packet marked December 25th with the picture of Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus on it for this special offering gift.

SENIOR CLUB

A Christmas dinner of baked ham, baked beans, potatoes, vegetable, salads and dessert will be served to those who make a reservation for Senior Club by noon on December 7th. Members who wish to partake in this meal are asked to call the church office (786-6642) to make a reservation or sign up on a pew card when you are in church. The cost is \$8.00 a plate for the meal and new members and friends are welcome. The meal will be served at noon on **Tuesday, December 11th**.

Mrs. Connie Schmidt, will be here for the program to tell you about her recent trip to Germany.

CHOIR CONCERT

All of Bethany's choirs will participate in the **choir concert on Sunday, December 9th during the 10:45** worship service. Please try to have your child in Sunday School and choir the next couple weeks so they will be able to practice several times before they sing.

At 3 p.m. on Sunday, December 9th you may come back to listen to the Delta Youth Chorus share their holiday music. This choir is under the direction of Vicki Schuh.

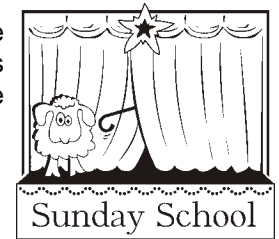
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Bethany will two worship services on Christmas Eve. The first one will be at 4:00 p.m. and the second one will begin at 8:30 p.m. with beautiful prelude music from various singers and musicians and the festive worship service beginning at 9 p.m.

COMMUNITY HOLIDAY GRIEF WORSHIP

A Community Holiday Grief Worship Service will be held at Central United Methodist Church in Escanaba (across from the Escanaba High School) on Thursday, December 6th at 7 p.m. This will be an opportunity to share with others

who grieve loved ones time of the



Christmas Program

the loss of at a special year.

The Sunday School Christmas program will be held during the 10:45 worship service on Sunday, December 16. We are asking all parents to let us know a.s.a.p. if your child will be absent on the 16th. The Cherub's will be presenting "**Christmas All Around**" and the Cherub Christmas parts have been mailed to you. Please practice with your child so they know his/her part. We will also be practicing during Sunday School and choir.

The Children's Choir will practice on **Tuesday, December 11 at 4:00 p.m. in the church sanctuary**. The Children's Choir will be presenting "**Simple Gifts**". Please make every effort to have your child in Sunday School and at the practice so he/she knows what to do the day of the program.

Both groups have been practicing since October and are looking forward to performing for you on their special day. We thank Sara Beck and Traci Harris for their help and leadership with the two programs.



Bethany is collecting hats and mittens for those

children who are without. You may bring any of these items to the educational building and place them under the Christmas Tree by Sunday, December 16.

SNACK ESSENTIALS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

Needed every week: paper towels, napkins and/or baby wipes, paper bowls and paper plates, plastic knives, forks and spoons, 5 oz. Glasses, and 1 jug of juice

December 9 - "Bowling Bagels"
All Donated - Thank You!

December 16 - "Heavenly Wedding Cake"
All Donated - Thank You!

SPECIAL THANKS

A hearty thank you to Monte Morrison for leading the group in putting up the big Christmas tree! We can't thank him enough for his continual support in this endeavor – it's a huge job! We would also like to thank Rick Anderson, Will Carne, Michelle Carne, John Cavadeas, LeRoy Cooper, Al DeBoer, Gregg and Rosemary Hendrickson, Steve Lindahl, Leah Lindahl, Mary Maercklein, Pastor Paul, Eli, Maddie and Olivia Mai, Jon & Julie Neisius, Bill Sauter and Bob Sovey for all of their help. We really appreciate all of you and thank you for making our Christmas at Bethany special. Our sanctuary is beautiful because of you!

THANK YOU TEACHERS!!!

We really appreciate all of the **time, energy and talent** you have given to our young people every Sunday morning. We thank....

DISCOVERY LEADERS

Tracy Harris: Cherub Music Director
Raquel Zelenak: Accompanist
Don Aronson: Organist
The Voice of Theo: Todd Dahlquist

Learn-it . . . Todd Dahlquist, Sub: Alisa Madden
Play-it Leader Ernie Burch
Make-it Leaders Sue Scott, Becky Leisenring,
Shayne Dix, Chrysta Christensen
Snack-it Leader Sandy Wilson
Third-Fourth Paula Cook & Karen DeZiel
Fifth-Sixth Julie Roll-Phillips & Sue Roll
Seventh-Eighth Greg DeZiel, Mary
Maercklein, Tim Mulvaney
Ninth-Tenth Dr. Don Nyquist

The Sunday School staff would like to thank the parents for the opportunity of teaching their children and for those of who provided food, paper products and/or money for our Cherub Sunday School program. The children are enjoy the program and as a staff we feel it is a success!

Our appreciation and thanks to our confirmation teacher Dr. Don Nyquist and sub Tim Mulvaney.

Confirmation classes for 6th-8th grade students will resume on Wednesday, January 2, 2008 and continue on January 9, 16, 23 and 30. The last three weeks will be completed at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp on Friday and Saturday, April 25

and 26.

There will be **no Sunday School or Adult Forum** on **December 23rd or December 30th**. Sunday School will resume on January 6.

AN APOLOGY

Each year on All Saints Day we remember all the members of Bethany who have departed this past year. This year, two individuals were not indicated in the bulletin on All Saints Sunday and we apologize to these families. The two saints we are talking about are:

Margaret Patenaude, who lived with her daughter and son-in-law, Harry & Jean Bourassa and came to church with them every Sunday, attended Adult Forum, helped with making quilts and was a member of the Morning Doves Circle. Margaret belonged to a church in Wisconsin. When she passed away, her funeral was held at her home church. So consequently, Bethany's church office had no record of death and it did not get in the bulletin on "All Saints Sunday". Margaret was very much a part of this congregation for many years and we all know the inexpressible joys she brought to many.

Jennie Winchester, mother of Dale & Sherry Winchester was not a member of Bethany. Rev. Peter Andersen presided at her funeral and we felt she should of been mentioned as one of our Bethany's saints.

We pray that God will keep us in communion with all the saints until that day when all rejoice eternally!

ANNUAL REPORTS



All committee chair people are reminded to turn in their committee's annual report to the church office by January 2. In order to type,

run off and assemble these reports for the annual meeting on Sunday, January 27th, it essential to get them in early!

PRAYER SHAWL

MINISTRY

In the past few years, many congregations have begun Prayer Shawl Ministries. This involves women (and men) coming together to knit soft, warm shawls which are then given to people in the congregation who are encountering illness, sadness, loss or crisis in their lives.

If you enjoy knitting, you are welcome to come and learn about this ministry. Yarn will be available for you to actually begin a shawl, and we'll pray for God's blessings on the people and families who receive them.

Contact Elaine Peterson for any questions at 786-5144. You will need to have size 13 needles.

HELP FOR CHRISTMAS

If you or someone you know needs help with food, clothing, and/or toys this Christmas, the Salvation Army can help. The Army is taking applications and you can sign up for a Christmas basket as follows:

Where: Salvation Army
3001 5 Ave South, Escanaba

When: Monday, December 3
Tuesday, December 4

Times: 9 a.m. to noon or 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

If interested go and sign up at one of the time above. Questions? Call 786-0590