

Bethel Lite

A publication of Bethel Lutheran Church distributed twice monthly.

bethelmadison.org/bethelite

ADVENT: A DIFFERENT KIND OF WAITING

Pastor Mike Brown

One of the all-time favorite cult classic movies is *The Princess Bride* starring Peter Falk, Fred Savage, and Billy Crystal, among others. One exciting scene has the character Inigo Montoya waiting atop the cliffs of insanity for the Dread Pirate Roberts to ascend so he can kill him in a sword fight. The impatient Inigo Montoya calls down to the Dread Pirate Roberts to hurry up. Roberts simply says "You're just going to have to wait" to which Montoya says "I hate waiting." Whether we have seen the movie or not, many of us could say "Amen!" to that. Waiting? Who likes to wait? No one, is what I would guess. Yet, waiting is precisely what fills the season of Advent. But the waiting we encounter the four weeks leading up to Christmas is not some empty idle waiting. It is not a do-nothing state of passive existence. It is not a time to twiddle our thumbs because nothing is happening. Instead, Advent waiting is waiting that draws

us forward. It has a direction and a purpose, because there is an object, or better yet, a subject for whom we wait. The one for whom we wait is the Holy One of God, the beloved child of heaven. It is the waiting of a woman with child, who waits with others for the big reveal. It is a waiting that generates a longing, and a yearning.

time, the returning Son of Man, and the babe, the Son of Mary. Advent time is both/and time and in its own way can be a little disconcerting. It fills our hearts with both present and future, the age at hand and the age to come. It generates a tension that springs us into a bit of an altered state of consciousness,

a centered place outside of space and time. It opens to us the possibility of experiencing something of the eternal. In Ecclesiastes 3:11, it says that "God has placed eternity in our hearts." In Scripture, the heart is simply the deepest place of one's true being. Advent waiting is a time to sit in



When we wait like this, we remain in the present but are drawn toward the future. We are caught in a tension of being in two places at one time, both here and there. This is precisely the purpose of the traditional lessons of Advent. The readings anticipate both the one who comes at the end of all

that place where we are at one with our deepest sense of purpose and meaning and where our being is flush with the presence of God. This is waiting we can embrace. 🌈

Sharing the Spirit of Christmas with a Neighbor



Sharing the hope and joy of the Advent and Christmas season is one of the hallmarks of caring communities. Members of our Bethel community always rise to such an opportunity with openness and

generosity, choosing gifts for “a neighbor” who they do not know and may never meet. Many households and families have made this a practice of giving over many years, known as the “Giving Hope for the Holidays” program.

Moving forward, let’s call it “Share the Spirit of Christmas With a Neighbor!”

Advent/Christmas 2020, our neighbors are once again clients of programs at MARC-South, a facility that provides day services and personal care to adults with developmental disabilities and the additional challenges of dementia.

This year, due to COVID-19, the gift tags will be chosen via SignUp Genius at www.bethel-madison.org/neighbors.

It’s different and new, but manageable, we promise! Here are the steps:

1. Go to www.bethel-madison.org/neighbors.
2. Click on the SignUp Genius Link
3. Choose a neighbor and follow the directions on the page to select one of the gift suggestions presented by the caring staff at MARC.
4. Purchase or order the gift EARLY and arrange delivery to Bethel by Monday, Dec 14.
5. Important instructions if ordering your gift online:
 - a. Specify that it is a gift and include GIFT WRAP
 - b. Have it labeled with the neighbor’s name @ MARC-SOUTH

The gift can be shipped directly to Bethel at the following address:

Bethel Lutheran Church
Attn: Sharing Gifts
312 Wisconsin Ave.
Madison WI 53703-2108



6. Important instructions if the gift is from a local source OR if you receive delivery to your home:
 - a. Wrap the gift and label it with the neighbor’s name.
 - b. Deliver or ship it to Bethel (address above) by Monday, Dec 14. 🌈

Sermon Series: Advent - Comfort My People

Nov 29-Dec 20



*"Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God."
—Isaiah 40:1*

The season of Advent, which begins on Sunday, Nov 29 and continues through Sunday, Dec 20, leads into the beautiful and grand, hopeful and celebratory season of Christmas. Unlike Christmas, Advent's beauty and hopefulness come from something more subdued than the grandness and celebratoriness of Christmas. The beauty and hope of Advent is found in the moments of calm, peace, prayer, preparation, quiet, reflection, and wonder that come our way thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit. Advent asks us to pause, and this year, unlike past years, we may have an increased opportunity to do just that. During Advent, we will be focusing on the theme, "Comfort My People" through our worship led by Pastor John Swanson, devotions, Sunday School work and much more. Please take the time to slow down with us at Bethel this Advent. 🌈

Advent Greetings

In this article, you will find the details about a number of ways we are inviting you to participate in a communal observation of the season of Advent. We hope they will help us all to feel connected as we mark this season constrained by Covid pandemic restrictions.

But first. While we are eager to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus, Advent is not just practice for Christmas. In our rush to joy, it's easy to lose sight of the purpose of Jesus' life which only becomes clearer at its end, in his death by crucifixion and in his Easter resurrection. During Advent, then, we are asked to focus less on the arrival of the baby and more on the resurrected Christ's return to us. Of course, Christ's return comes with the fulfillments of hope, joy, peace and love. But Christ's return also demands self-reflection and the transformation of our hearts before we can fully know the power of resurrection in our lives. During Advent, we reflect on the discouragement behind our need for hope, the despair that makes us long for joy, the emptiness within our need for love, and the anxieties that make us ache for peace.

There are multiple activities and practices that you can participate in, knowing that other Bethel households are doing the same.

- 1. Advent Calendar.** Every household will receive an Advent Calendar to guide your bible readings, prayer, meditations, service, and worship as we prepare our hearts for Christ.
 - Fridays are "Fill the Manger" days where you encouraged to donate needed items to Bethel's Food Pantry and Homeless Ministry. You can purchase them online and have them delivered directly to the church. Use the following address and be sure to note "Attn: Homeless Ministry" or "Attn: Food Pantry"
Bethel Lutheran Church
Attn: Homeless Ministry (or Food Pantry)
312 Wisconsin Avenue
Madison, WI 53703-2108

You can also purchase the items yourselves and drop them off in the blue barrel outside the church doors (parking lot entrance) on Sunday, December 20, from 7am – 12 noon, or on December 21-23, from 9am through 4pm.

- 2. Advent Candle Ritual.** Every household will receive a "snowflake" mat on which to place tea light candles to mark the Sundays in Advent, and a sheet of

five "Christmas countdown" cards. The Christmas Countdown sheet provides a bible passage to read, some questions to ask and answer with your household, and a prayer to pray as part of your weekly candle-lighting ritual.

- 3. Sharing responses to candle prompts on our Facebook page.** To encourage the entire church family's interaction with the questions, please consider sharing your responses by posting them on the church's Facebook page or emailing them to christal@bethel-madison.org (responses will be shared anonymously). The Facebook icon will appear on the calendar as a reminder to share with others.
- 4. Christmas multi-media celebration.** We invite you to prepare a small contribution to what will be a multi-media event to be shown on Christmas Day and the days following. The idea here is to share something with others at Bethel about the particular Advent preparations, Christmas celebrations, traditions, and spiritual reflections that make the season meaningful for you. What makes the season meaningful for you will make it meaningful for everyone! **The deadline for submitting your photos, video, sound files is December 10.**

Examples of what you might share

photos of: crèches, favorite ornaments, tapestries or linens, pictures that you or your children have drawn of their favorite parts of the Christmas story or holiday season, something that represents a family tradition, advent wreaths, outdoor decorations, a prayer; create a scene from the Christmas pageant, dress up as a family, and take a freeze-frame photo of the scene or a short video

sound files of: you and/or your family reading your favorite part of the Christmas story, singing a favorite Advent or Christmas hymn, playing an instrument, something that represents a family tradition, a prayer you'd like to share, a family story or memory

***Questions? Please contact pam@bethel-madison.org or cindy@bethel-madison.org
***Please send photos/videos/sound files to christal@bethel-madison.org.

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5. **“Tidings,” a Christmas cantata.** Tune into Bethel’s Facebook page on **Friday, December 18 at 6pm** for the livestream presentation of a beautiful cantata titled, “Tidings,” sung by a few Bethel choir members. Written for times when it might be a little harder to enter the spirit of the season, it celebrates the tidings of comfort and joy that can still be ours in times of tumult and sorrow because of Jesus’ birth. This will be available after December 18 for repeat or later viewing.

6. **Blue Christmas.** A Bethel tradition continues as a more gentle, quiet, and prayerful space is opened for those of us who are carrying extra burdens of grief and loss into this season. Blue Christmas will be livestreamed on **Monday night, December 21, at 6pm** and will be available after the 21st for repeat or later viewing.

The theme for this Advent is “Comfort my people” – a line from the prophet Isaiah. After this troubled and troubling year, may the power of God’s desire **that we be comforted**, be a blessing to us all. 🌈

A Call to Justice & Mercy

ACTJAM Questions and Answers

What if I haven’t finished reading or discussing *Stamped*?

Keep reading and talking! We’ll have a Big Read/ Watch/Sing each month alternating books, movies and sings. This gives us more flexibility to read, watch, and discuss when convenient. *Stamped* is helpful because it gives us the 400-year backdrop for racism in America and context for the Bigs to follow. If you haven’t read it, you have time.

Why the movie *Hidden Figures* as our Big Watch for November?

We all need something uplifting right now -- something everyone including families can enjoy. (*Hidden Figures* is recommended by Common Sense Media for ages 10+.) We also want to keep learning about racism in America. *Hidden Figures* is a close-up look at the Jim Crow period and an inspiring story of three Black women overcoming racial and gender oppression with smarts, tenacity, and dignity.

How can I watch *Hidden Figures*?

The movie can be rented on Amazon or YouTube.

What if I’ve seen *Hidden Figures*? Should I watch it again?

The story is just as inspiring the second or third time. Plus, you’ll see new things by focusing on the “separate

but (un)equal” barriers in the everyday lives of Black people during Jim Crow. You might also spot details you didn’t see before like the jewel-toned dresses of the women which give new meaning to the term “hidden figures.”

Is there a discussion guide to use with my family or group?

Yes, the discussion guide is posted on the ACTJAM page of the Bethel web site.

Will there be a women’s pop up circle to discuss *Hidden Figures*?

Yes. Watch for details in the Bethel Weekly.

What’s coming next?

Amy Hartsough is planning a December Big Sing. In January we’ll read the book *Evicted* as we explore the effects of racism on poverty and home ownership. *Evicted* takes us to present day Milwaukee. Our Big Watch for February is the film *Jim Crow of the North*, set in Minneapolis.

How can I connect with other Bethel members about ACTJAM?

Join the ACTJAM Facebook group. Send a note to ACTJAM@Bethel-madison.org. 🌈



Bethel Care Visitors

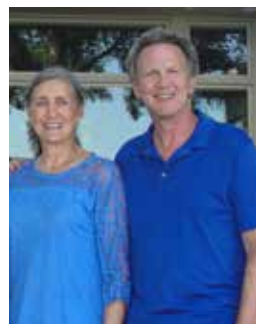
Bethel's Care Visitors Bethel members connected to other Bethel members. Care Visitors call, write and visit (when it is safe to do so) a fellow Bethel member who may be homebound or limited in some other way. Such connections are always important, but as homebound people face the increased challenges of life in the midst of a pandemic, the importance of such connections increases dramatically. We could absolutely use more Care Visitors. Can you say a prayer once a day, make a phone call once a week, and write a note once a month? If so, you may be the person for the job!! Please, send me an email at jswanson@bethel-madison.org and we can talk.



Hank and Sharon Starkey are part of the Care Team Ministry. They visit with long time Bethel member, Dorothy. For them, these visits are special because Hank and Sharon served for a number of years, long ago, with Dorothy and her husband on the Congregational Life Committee. We worked in the kitchen together and served meals to

members of the congregation. Now to continue to visit with Dorothy and hear about all her years at Bethel is indeed unique. Unfortunately, now our visits have to be via phone calls due to the Covid virus. But when we have visited face to face, we catch up with each other's families, tell her what is happening at Bethel and end with prayer. We feel fulfilled when we leave these visits. We can not stress enough how important it is to keep in touch with these wonderful people of Bethel that have their stories to tell. They just need people to listen to them. With a congregation that is getting older, the need for more members to be on this Care Team is vital.

Joanne and Steve Borgwardt are part of the Care Team Ministry. When Joanne and I decided to become a member of the Care Team Ministry, little did we know that we would end up seeing an elderly gentleman that lived a block away from us. I knew the man as I had called on him when he was an active businessman in the community. Little did I know, toward the end of my dad's battle with dementia, this man drove him around to coffee meetings with a group of men. Blessed to be a blessing and to return the favor. 🌈



The Bible, the Body, and the Beloved

Nov 18 & 25

On Wednesdays at 7pm, Pastor Mike leads a study on what the Bible says about human sexuality. The Bible, the Body, and the Beloved takes people through several passages revealing the wide array of views on sexuality expressed in the Bible. Throughout this tour, Pastor Mike highlights the cultural contexts for these passages and how they set the stage for Jesus's positive affirmation of the wide diversity of human sexuality.

Please have your Bible at hand.

Please share this invite with others.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/94476869282> 🌈

Giving Thanks 2020 Ways in 2020



Sharing with our neighbors is a way to give thanks for our many blessings. The food pantry needs the help of children, teens, and adults to achieve our goal of collecting 2020 personal care items in 2020. We are holding a Personal Care Drive Nov 9-25,

and requesting shampoo, deodorant and 4oz or 5oz bar soap.

Curbside drop-off for the items will be during the Food Pantry hours—Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1-3pm in the Bethel Parking Lot.

Updates of our progress towards this 2020 goal will be posted in the Daily Devotion email.

Extended drop-off hours:

Saturday, Nov 21 from 12-2pm

Sunday, Nov 22 from 10am-12pm

For questions, please contact Bev Priefer at bapriefer@gmail.com. 🌈

WINTER Wonderland

@ **BETHEL HORIZONS**

Saturday

DECEMBER 19
1PM-7PM

TAKE A RIDE ON A HORSE-DRAWN SLEIGH!

CANDLE-LIT
CHRISTMAS CAROL
SING-ALONG ON THE HILL!

SNOW-SHOE HIKE!
SLEDDING!

WARM UP WITH SOME HOT
CHOCOLATE BY A COZY
FIREPLACE!

STORY-TELLING AROUND A BONFIRE!

ICE-SKATING!

Designed by: Rachel Brown



BETHEL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Winter Wonderful is a day-long event at Horizons on Sat, Dec 19, 1-7pm, for middle schoolers, their families, and high schoolers. Experience winter wonders and ride a horse-drawn carriage, skate it up on an ice-skating rink, go sledding down Main Hill, and hike through the woods by snowshoe. No snow? No worries! We have lots in store for our Winter Wonderland that we can do without snow. When it gets dark, prepare to ooh and ahh at our candle-lit Christmas song sing-along across Main Hill. Then, we'll gather around the bonfire to hear some charismatic story-telling. This event is free! Please sign-up at the link so we can get our winter gear ready! <https://tinyurl.com/y267r88u> 🌈

Fireside Chats

Pastor Mike has hosted Fireside Chats each Tuesday evenings to answer questions about the church, the Bible, etc. In October, Fireside Chats started branching out by inviting others into the Fireside Seat. There is so much going-on at and with Bethel that we want to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information and details possible. Starting in November, other staff, leaders, and ministry volunteers will take a turn responding to your questions especially as they relate to something that they are intimately familiar with. Tuesday Fireside Chats are live-streamed at 7pm on Facebook or viewed on YouTube any time after 8pm. If you have any questions you would like to ask, please send them to christal@bethel-madison.org.

Upcoming Fireside Chat Schedule

Nov 24: Pastor Mike with the Finance Team (Church Finances)

Dec 1: Pastor Mike with Horizons (Camp)

Dec 8: Pastor Mike with Walter Dewey (Foundation)

Dec 15: Pastor John with John Bauer (Strategic Plan)

Dec 22: Pastor Mike with St. Nicholas 🌈

Men's Current Christian Concern (Thursdays at 8:30am)

Men's Current Christian Concerns continues to meet each Thursday morning via a Zoom video conference. The meeting starts at 8:30am instead of 7am during this temporary rearrangement.

Nov 19 – Critical Race Theory in Education

If you have questions, contact Larry Larrabee at 608.249.9982.

Wednesday Night Live Streamed Lord's Supper - Join us on Wednesdays at 6:30pm for the Lord's Supper. Just because we are unable to meet in person for worship doesn't mean we can't share the Lord's meal. There are few features more central to the life and teaching of Jesus than the common meal. Every Wednesday until we are able to celebrate in person, a pastor will lead us in a live-streamed Lord's Supper at 6:30pm on Bethel's Facebook or you can watch any time after 8pm on our YouTube channel. Of course, no Lord's Supper is complete without the bread and wine (or juice). So, everyone is asked to have wine/juice and bread ready for the evening's communion (any type of bread and wine/juice will work). A pastor will lead the blessing over the internet. We will all share the body and blood together and the goodness of God.

The **Men's Friday Book Study** currently meets every Friday from 8-9am via Zoom. The group is discussing *Why Does The World Exist?* by Jim Holt. Contact Larry Larrabee at lar3car2@gmail.com or 608.249.9982 for the Meeting ID and Password.

TEXT TO GIVE - Text "BLC" to 73256 to give.

GIVE ONLINE - www.bethel-madison.org/giveonline

CHRISTMAS

Flowers, Food Pantry & Homeless Ministry 2020

Please write **separate checks** for Poinsettias, Food Pantry & Homeless Ministry. The **Deadline is Monday, Dec 7**, to return this form and money to Bethel for donations to be included in the Bethel Weekly listing.

POINSETTIA GARDEN

CIRCLE ONE: In Memory In Honor

NAME

BY

X \$20 =

OF PLANTS

TOTAL DUE

Flowers may be picked up starting Dec 28 or after. The deadline for all gifts to be recognized in the Bethel Weekly listing is Dec 7.

HOMELESS MINISTRY

CIRCLE ONE: In Memory In Honor

NAME

BY

AMOUNT

FOOD PANTRY

CIRCLE ONE: In Memory In Honor

NAME

BY

AMOUNT

— — — — —

CASH/CHECK #

ENVELOPE #

PHONE

Return entire form to: Bethel Lutheran Church
Attn: Christmas Giving
312 Wisconsin Ave, Madison, WI 53703

VIEW MORE OPPORTUNITIES: www.bethel-madison.org/events



BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

312 Wisconsin Avenue | Madison, WI 53703

Bethelite (USPS 053-160) Published bi-weekly by Bethel Lutheran Church
608.257.3577 | Email Christal Swigart: christal@bethel-madison.org
Emergency Cell: 608.216.3600

24 PENTECOST

Pastor Mike Brown - Nov 22 at 7:30am, 9am, & 11am

1 ADVENT

Pastor John Swanson - Nov 29 at 7:30am, 9am, & 11am

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

- 7:30a Worship Service (live-stream Facebook & YouTube)
- 9:00a Worship Service (viewed on Facebook & YouTube)
- 10:00a Virtual Coffee Hour (Zoom)
- 11:00a Worship Service (live-stream on Facebook & YouTube)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)
- 12:00p Food Pantry Open 1-3pm (MWF)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)
- 7:00p Fireside Chats (Facebook)
- 8:00a Fireside Chats (YouTube)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)
- 6:30p Lord's Supper (live-stream Facebook)
- 7:00p Bible Study - The Bible, the Body, and the Beloved with Pastor Mike
- 8:00p Lord's Supper (YouTube)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

- 8:30a Men's Current Christian Concerns (Zoom)
- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)
- 10:00a Contemplative Scripture Reading with Pam Shellberg (Zoom)
- 8:30p Contemplative Scripture Reading with Pam Shellberg (Zoom)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27

- 8:00a Men's Friday Book Study (Zoom)
- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)

PASTORAL STAFF

Pastor Mike Brown - Lead Pastor
pastormikebrown@bethel-madison.org

Pastor John Swanson - Director of Congregational Life
jswanson@bethel-madison.org

SUNDAY FLOWERS

Nov 8: Altar Spray was given in loving memory of our daughter Kerry by Marilyn & Bob Cleveland and extended family.

Nov 15: Altar Spray was given in loving memory of Dennis Buege by his wife Catherine Buege.
Pulpit Flowers (A Peace Lily) was given in memory & grateful honor of our Veterans by XYZ (eXtra Years of Zest)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL: REQUESTED IN HOME BY NOV 20 2020

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PAID

MADISON, WI
PERMIT 602

