

Jesus loves you. Walk with him.

BETHELITE

DECEMBER 1, 2021: VOL. 70, NO. 23

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Ministry Support Manager*



BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Color Bethelite provided in part by
Bethel Endowment Foundation*

MISFIT FOLLOWERS OF A MISFIT SAVIOR

One of the most beloved songs of the Christmas season started out as an advertising gimmick. In 1939 Montgomery Ward tapped advertising executive Robert May to write a poem that their store Santa Claus could give away to children who came to visit him. The result? Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. The poem "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" first appeared in a little booklet published by the department store chain. More than 2.5 million copies were handed out. And by 1946 more than 6 million copies of the poem were distributed.



Beloved misfits of God.

Ten years later, Rudolph's story came to musical life when May's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, wrote the music. After it was turned down by Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore, singing cowboy Gene Autry recorded it. Today "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" is the highest-selling Christmas carol, at more than 25 million units. The poem-song came to life for TV viewers in 1964 with the stop motion animated feature aired on NBC. Despite its cheery holiday elements, the story was partly based on some of May's sadder experiences. The character of Rudolph who is shunned and derided by others somehow reflected May's childhood as he was a "shy" and "small" boy, who had known what it was like to be an underdog. It wasn't just during his childhood that he felt like an underdog. During the writing of the poem, his wife was dying. As the pages were coming along, his wife's condition worsened. "Spring slipped into summer. My wife's parents

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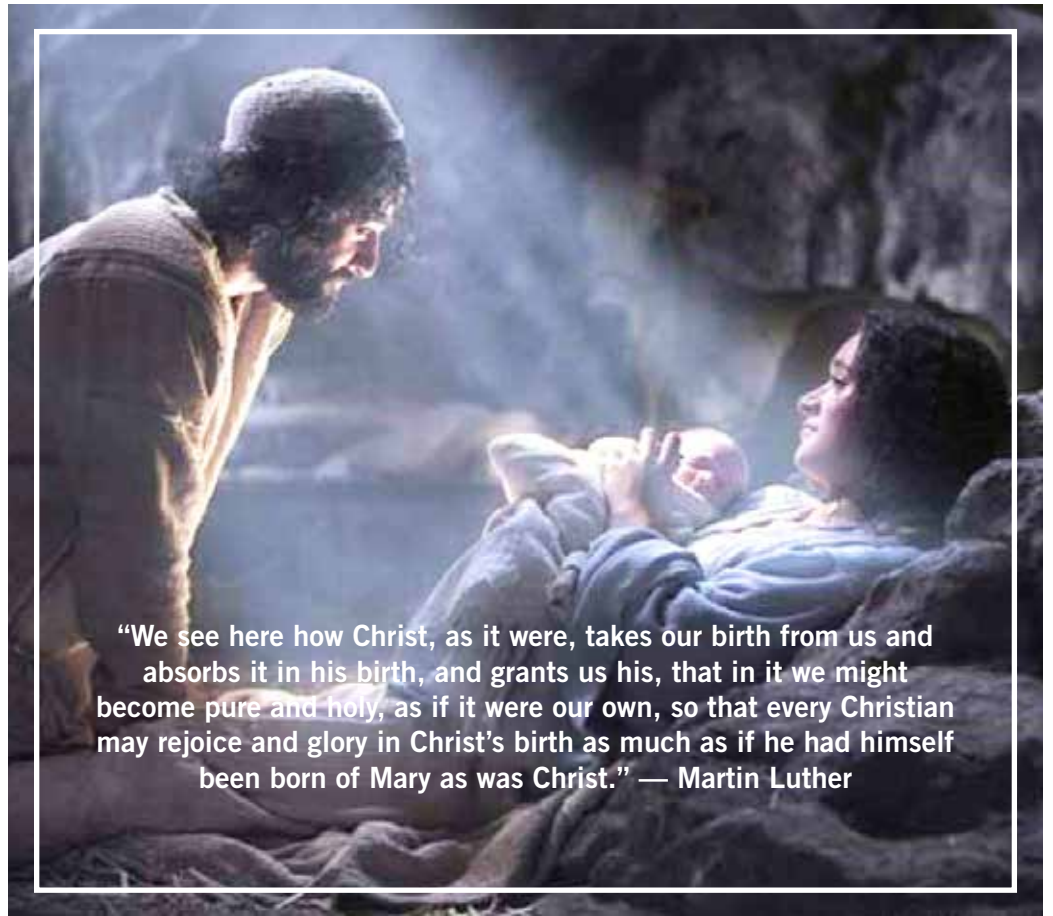
Pastor Mike

pastormikebrown@bethel-madison.org

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came to stay with us to help," he later wrote. In July, she passed away. About a month later, before submitting the draft, he read it to his daughter Barbara and his in-laws in the living room. "In their eyes I could see that the story accomplished what I had hoped."

What makes this little story so loved? Some people might say that it's the grit and courage of Rudolph, the focus of the story. Or, maybe it is the abominable snowman and Yukon Cornelius, or the would be elf-dentist. But, for my nickel, the real beauty of the story focuses on grace. Rudolf's "defect," that big, annoyingly shiny red nose—that got him rejected from getting chosen for other reindeer games, saves the day.



"We see here how Christ, as it were, takes our birth from us and absorbs it in his birth, and grants us his, that in it we might become pure and holy, as if it were our own, so that every Christian may rejoice and glory in Christ's birth as much as if he had himself been born of Mary as was Christ." — Martin Luther

Sermon for Christmas Day (1521) on Luke 2:1-14

In much the same way, the Bible story points to the fact that Jesus, too, was rejected, cast aside, and put out. More than setting him on an island of misfits, the powers of the world nailed him to the cross and hung him up to die. Like ancient builders they tossed him aside like a stone they had no use for. But, the one born of Mary in the manger becomes the chief cornerstone in God's plan of salvation for the world (Matthew 21:42-44). In the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we see that God's speciality is to work through what the world considers refuse and unfitting to display divine signs and wonders. This does not only play out in the story of Jesus but in the story of every one of us who follow the living Lord. In some form or fashion,

*Uncover it.
Give it to
me.
Watch.*

each of us is a misfit. The apostle Paul puts it this way, "Take a good look, friends, at who you were when you got called into this life. I don't see many of 'the brightest and the best' among you, not many influential, not many from high-society families. Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these 'nobodies'" (1 Corinthians 1:26, The Message). In the same way that God made Jesus' rejection the basis for a new life, so God makes you with all your misfit ways a basis for the life to come. People tend to cover their defects. God invites the opposite, saying "Uncover it and give it to me. And watch what I will do." 🌈

JOURNEY THROUGH ADVENT

Now-Dec 19



Advent is a sometimes misunderstood stretch of time. It is a span of time taut with anticipation as Biblical stories spring back and forth between journey and arrival. During Advent we find ourselves wandering the open space between Christ's first and second comings. The stories focus on a feeling of being in-between, neither fully here nor fully there. We are all on a journey of some sort. The Advent journey anticipates both the new life in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the new life in the culmination of universal history in Jesus Christ.

To support you in your Advent journey, Bethel has planned a special series of worship and messages on the theme of journey and arrival, brought from four different perspectives. Each weekend of Advent at Bethel will have a different preacher.

November 27/28: Mike Brown

Pastor Mike started his journey with Bethel just over two years ago. Little did he know

that less than a year into his work at Bethel, a worldwide pandemic would completely alter the landscape.

December 4/5: Ryan Panzer

Ryan is a familiar face to many at Bethel through his consulting work over the past year. He and his consulting partner, Michael Chan, have led Bethel on a journey to expand and strengthen Bethel's online digital presence. While working at Google and another tech firm, Ryan heard God call him to seminary. Now Ryan combines his expertise in digital technology and theology to help Christian communities tell their stories.

December 11/12: Dr. Michael Chan

Michael Chan is a professor of the Old Testament at Luther Seminary and also owns his own communication company. He partners with Ryan to help churches connect their stories with people in their communities.

December 18/19: Heather Moen

Heather is a longtime and beloved member of Bethel. A former pediatrician, Heather has heard God's call to ministry and is enrolled at Wartburg Theological Seminary in the Master of Divinity program. 🌈



Nov 27/28

Pastor Mike
Brown



Dec 4/5

Ryan
Panzer



Dec 11/12

Dr. Michael
Chan



Dec 18/19

Heather
Moen



WORSHIP SERVICES FOLLOWING CHRISTMAS EVE

Online Only

DECEMBER 25

Christmas Day
10am

DECEMBER 26

Service of Lesson and Carols
10am

Please join us online both
Christmas Day and the Sunday
after Christmas for an intimate
gathering in your home. 🌈



CHR

Becoming Part of God's Story

The stage is set. The music ready. The characters are familiar. On December 24, Bethel remembers and retells the story of the birth of Jesus Christ in four different worship experiences. At 3, 5, 7, and 9pm, the community gathers to hear once again the drama of how God is revealed in the babe of Bethlehem. Along with Jesus in the story are, of course, Mary and Joseph. There are angels, shepherds, and barnyard animals too.

The story and the characters are so familiar to many that we sometimes overlook one key player: You! The story of Jesus's birth is not just a story that took place almost 2,000 years ago, but a story that continues to play

out in your life today. The prayers during and around Christmas often call for Jesus to be born in us. His birth, his revelation, his presence break into our world again and again through the lives of those who follow him. His voice and love ring over and over again in the conversations of the faithful. Join us this year for one of four services that join your story to his.

DECEMBER 24

3pm - Family

5pm - Contemporary

7pm - Traditional w/Isthmus Brass/Organ/Choir

9pm - Traditional with Isthmus Brass/Organ

10pm - WKOW Channel 27 (1-hr special) 🌈



"In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." —Luke 2:1-7



Each service will be a candlelight service.

VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Coming Soon!

Coming to your home studio this Christmas! (Or at least to one of your devices!) A video offering from the children of Bethel and their families - part Christmas story readings, part families singing carols together, and part artistic meditations on Jesus' birth in a stable. This offering will bring you the



best parts of a traditional pageant while the children announce Christ's birth under the continuing constraints and influence of the pandemic. Release date: Christmas Eve Day! Final preparations will happen at the Bethel, Jr.+ AfterParty on December 5, so families, be sure to plan to be there! 🎉

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Dec 20 at 7pm
Good Shepherd Chapel

Bethel offers a quiet, contemplative Christmas worship service for those with a heavy heart. Sharing carols for listening or sing-along, comforting readings from scripture, prayer, silent and spoken, and lighting candles of hope, Bethel's Blue Christmas provides a safe space for mourners to come together at Christmas time. 🎉





NEW MEMBER NEWS

On December 19, Bethel welcomes the following new members:

Ashley McGoey and Jason Stolle
 Eric Clark and Joan Busch
 Kelly Wichmann
 Laura Ernst
 Annelise Ross
 Lisa Helms
 Patti McDermont
 Allison and Travis Malueg (Eli, Brady, Myah) 🌈

REFUGEES

Is There A Place In The Inn For Them?

As Christmas arrives, many of the over two billion people in the world who identify as Christians begin to refocus in a particular way, thinking about the meaning of this holy celebration. Along side the joy of the messiah's birth is the risk of a life on the run. King Herod wants to kill the baby, fearing the child may be a future rival. An angel appears to Joseph, and tells him to run with his young family and to hide in Egypt; Jesus becomes - at once - a refugee, on the run for his life. Fast forward some 2,000 years and we find several modern refugees in our town. Madison is now home to 36 Afghan refugees. These are families who have fled the violence of their ancestral home and are now in a fight for survival. They work to meet basic needs and to find their way through the complex landscape of legal, employment, health, language, and cultural demands.

Three agencies deserving of our support are Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service, Lutheran Social Services, and Jewish Social Services. The only officially designated local resettlement agency is Jewish Social Services. JSS provides services in Madison through an all-volunteer partner – Open Doors for Refugees – including collecting furniture, household items for apartment set-up, providing transportation and translation, childcare, ESL instruction, help in finding employment, modest financial support for the first year, advocacy and social events.

To help support Madison-area Afghan refugees, please contact Jewish Social Services online at <https://tinyurl.com/sm834cee>, or by email at info@jssmadison.org, or by phone at 608.442.4081. JSS is seeking gift cards for refugees to Target, Woodmans, or Walmart which can be mailed to 6434 Enterprise Lane, Madison, WI 53719. 🌈





Sacred Ground

A Film-Based Dialogue Series on Race & Faith
Starting January, 2022

INTRODUCING SACRED GROUND AT BETHEL

Sacred Ground is a film-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith, developed by the Episcopal Church. Nearly 1,000 Sacred Ground groups have formed since 2019. Now Bethel members have the opportunity to join the Sacred Ground community.

Bethel members Ellie Millam and Marlynn May have led many Sacred Ground groups at their winter church in California and they have generously offered to lead Sacred Ground for Bethel, starting Jan 2022, via Zoom.

The 10-part series is built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories. Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of

family story, economic class, and political and regional identity.

The series is especially designed to help white people talk with other white people about race. Participants are invited to peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divides of the present day – all while grounded in our call to faith, hope and love.

To enroll, go to: www.bethel-madison.org/sacredground. There is no cost to participate. We will begin the series in Jan 2022, with groups of 8-10 who will be in dialogue with one another, listening, learning and deepening our personal understanding and response to the history of colonialism and the church's involvement since the beginning of our country. This series reflects a deep commitment of time over 6-7 months, watching films, reading books (chapters) and articles and sharing one's reflections on what we are learning together. 🌈

MASKS & MORE

Dane County has extended the mask mandate to January 3, 2022. Even though many at Bethel are weary of the ongoing mask requirement, Bethel will continue to adhere to the county requirements. All individuals coming to Bethel for indoor events, meetings, and gatherings must wear a mask that fully covers the mouth and nose at all times. 🌈





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Christmas Giving 2021

ONLINE FORM:

www.bethel-madison.org/christmasgiving

Please write **separate checks** for Poinsettias & the Hephatha Strong Baby Sanctuary. The **Deadline is Monday, Dec 6**, to return this form & money to Bethel for donations to be included in the Bethel Weekly.

Poinsettia Garden

CIRCLE ONE: In Memory In Honor

NAME

NAME CONT

BY

X \$20 =

OF PLANTS

TOTAL DUE

Flowers may be picked up after worship on Dec 25 or after.

Hephatha Strong Baby Sanctuary Donation

CIRCLE ONE: In Memory In Honor

NAME

NAME CONT

BY

AMOUNT

CASH/CHECK #

ENVELOPE #

PHONE

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

BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

312 Wisconsin Avenue
Madison, WI 53703

WELCOME KEVIN HONAKER Ministry Support Manager



Kevin Honaker
Ministry Support Manager

Bethel celebrates its newest addition to the talented staff already in place. As a lifelong member of Bethel, Kevin brings a special commitment as someone who has been baptized, confirmed, and married at Bethel. With degrees in mechanical engineering and an MBA, Kevin has a deep understanding of complex systems. As Ministry Support Manager, Kevin will provide administrative support for the pastors and staff, manage the church data base, maintain membership records, provide business administrative support with grants, IT support, web programming, and support the annual updating of the Bethel Strategic Plan. Please welcome Kevin at kevin@bethel-madison.org. 🌈



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bethelmadison



BethelLutheranTV

Worship Times: Sunday at 7:30am & 9am - Traditional; 10:30am - Contemporary
Saturday at 5pm - Acoustic Casual; Thursday at 5:30pm - Sacred Space