

# THE VISITOR



Volume 67, No. 1

January 2017

**“Blessed to serve God  
and share our faith with all!”**

## Join us for Church on Sunday:

Choir Practice	9:04 a.m.
Sunday School for all ages	9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship	10:30 a.m.
Fellowship	11:30 a.m.

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## CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

1312 S. 45<sup>th</sup> Street; Omaha, NE 68106

Phone: 402-551-1063

Email: [blchurch1@q.com](mailto:blchurch1@q.com)

Bethel Home Page - <http://bethellutheranomaha.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BethelLutheranChurchOmaha>

~ Pastors Rich & Rebecca Sheridan ~

~ Pastor Rich Cell: 402-680-3901 ~

~Pastor Rebecca Cell: 402-658-7792 ~

~ Pastor Rebecca: [pastor.rsheridan@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.rsheridan@gmail.com) ~

~ Pastor Rich: [rich@nebraskasynod.org](mailto:rich@nebraskasynod.org) ~

## Church Council Executive Committee:

LeAnn Ryan, Pres. (402-639-7190)

Stephen Huetter, Vice Pres (402-813-0084)

Tom Haskell, Treas. (402-391-7966)

Patty Shalberg, Secretary (402-572-7621)

**Administrative Assistant:** Laura Davis

**Choir Director:** Stephen Lawrence

**Organist:** Teri Davis

**Custodian:** Corey McDaniel

## PASTOR'S MESSAGE

*See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them. ~ Isaiah 42:9*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! This time of year often spurs me to tackle projects I've avoided when the weather's nicer outside, like cleaning out the closets. Out with the old, in with the new! As the temptations of holiday gatherings with good food subsidies, many people turn to New Year's Resolutions like mine: exercise more regularly, eat healthier, declutter the house. Even our scriptures for this season remind us how God is calling us to refresh our spiritual lives, to see what new things God is up to.

Our Worship and Education Committee has been discussing ways that we can engage more deeply in growing in our faith. In this season of making New Year's resolutions, we are encouraging all of us to make a faith resolution to be healthier spiritually. This resolution could be starting a new individual devotional or prayer practice daily, or joining a group at Bethel that can help you grow in your faith. What new thing might God be calling you to? Here are some ideas:

**Personal/family devotion time:** We will be handing out Faith 5 bookmarks throughout the month of January that you can put on your fridge, in your Bible, or tape to your bathroom mirror. The five steps in the Faith 5 process are sharing your highs and lows for the day, reading a scripture passage, talking about how God might be speaking to your highs and lows through that Bible reading, praying for one another, and blessing one another. This is a great practice to end or begin your day as a family. If you live alone, consider journaling your thoughts or talking to a good friend or family member over the phone daily or weekly using the Faith 5 practice. In addition, we have Daily Bread devotionals, Living Lutheran magazines, and suggested daily Bible readings available at the back of the church – please take one! We are also working on creating a daily devotional posting on our Facebook page that you can read and reflect on to start or end your day.

**Join a faith conversation group:** We have many opportunities at Bethel to grow in your faith in a group setting. Pastor Rich will be leading a study on Lutheranism at 9am on Sundays from

January 8 through February 26. We have two women's Bible study circles that meet on the third Thursday of the month, one at 9:30am and one at 7pm. Our prayer group meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm in the Bethel sanctuary, and Theology on Tap meets at the Crescent Moon on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm. You are always welcome to start your own group or join another group in the community, as well.

One thing I love about being a Christian is that no matter how old we are, we can always learn new things. No matter how many times I read the same passage of scripture, God speaks to me in new ways through it. Our Christian faith is a lifelong journey with Jesus – how is Jesus calling you to follow him and grow in your faith in 2017?

*Pastor Rebecca*

### **Pastors' Out of the Office**

Pastors' Rebecca and Rich will be on vacation December 26 - January 4 with family in New Jersey. Pastor Jan Peterson at Augustana Lutheran Church will be on call for any pastoral care emergencies during that time: (402) 689-7201(Cell).

### **BETHEL NEWS:**

**Bethel's annual meeting is January 15, 2017** at 11:30am. At this meeting, we will be electing council members, Synod assembly voting members, and an Endowment board member, approving revisions to our constitution and by-laws, and celebrating a full and fruitful year of ministry at Bethel in 2016. All baptized and confirmed members are eligible to vote at this meeting. Please plan to attend. Annual reports and copies of the updated constitution are available on the table in the narthex.

**Endowment news:** Our Thrivent Representative, John Halweg, will be with us in worship on Sunday, January 29 and presenting a brief "Charitable Opportunities" seminar following worship in Pilgrim Hall. Come learn how Thrivent can assist us with our ministry here at Bethel and beyond!

### **Worship and Education:**

Wear your pjs or comfy sweats for a worship service of singing Christmas songs and reading

Christmas scriptures on Sunday, January 1 at 10:30am. There will be no communion this Sunday. Bring your leftover New Year's Eve snacks to share in fellowship afterwards!

Christmas De-Decorating: We'd welcome any help taking Christmas decorations down at Bethel on Saturday, January 7 at 10:30am.

Welcome! We are blessed to welcome into our Bethel family Todd, Lisa, and Evelyn Davis on Sunday, January 8. Todd and Evelyn will be baptized that day and Lisa will be affirming her baptism. All are welcome to celebrate at a reception in Pilgrim Hall following the worship service.

On Sunday, January 29, we will have a healing service with time for individual prayer.

### **Upcoming Study: Lutheran Handbook II:**

Last summer, Bethel's adult learners walked through the "Lutheran Handbook." In January, we'll be studying the "Lutheran Handbook 2!" Whether you're a lifelong Lutheran, joined us later in life, or just want to learn more, there's something for everyone in this study! And even if you didn't make Part 1, come join us to dig into our tradition—what makes it unique, and what it means for our lives today! This 8-week Study starts January 8 and will run at 9am on Sundays. Talk to Pr. Rich if you'd like to participate!

### **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mission Gifts**

Through your generous giving to our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund, we were able to disburse \$4720 to ministry outside our walls in celebration of our anniversary. The Anniversary Committee in consultation with Bethel's Council designated gifts for three areas to impact the global church, synodical/national ELCA ministries, and a local ministry.

**Global:** Through ELCA World Hunger, we are building a water well for \$2500. You can read more about this project in the insert in this letter. This year ELCA World Hunger is supporting water projects in more than a dozen countries. These projects are building wells, training farmers to operate with less water, teaching hygiene skills to prevent disease and digging irrigation canals to supply water to crops. Below are a few examples of projects that are currently being supported by

our gift to ELCA World Hunger to construct a water well:

1. In the Central African Republic, Madagascar and Uganda ELCA World Hunger is supporting projects that construct wells to serve a community as a main source for drinking water. Each of these projects also has an educational component addressing sanitation.

2. In Liberia and Burkina Faso ELCA World Hunger supports projects that construct wells primarily to provide water to livestock. This has all sorts of positive effects as it can guarantee greater access to food and income for a community.

3. In Liberia and Cambodia projects focus on providing water for irrigation of crops, which ensures a farmer's crop can provide for their family.

**Synodical/National:** We are giving an extra \$1450 to mission share for 2016 as a thank you to the Nebraska Synod, whose predecessor helped start Bethel 100 years ago. This increase represents 1% of our budget in "honor" of the request individuals received as part of our fall stewardship campaign to increase their giving by 1% of their income – and in special recognition of those who responded to that request. The Synod continues to start new ministries, support existing congregations, and build up leaders for the church today.

**Local:** Our mission project for 2016 was connecting to CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Douglas County to provide for basic clothing and other care items for children in the court system. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to give an additional gift of \$770 to impact children and families in our county.

### **Thank yous**

Dear Pastor Rebecca and Bethel friends,

Thank you for giving me communion & bringing me a beautiful handmade cross – it's great! May everyone have a great and wonderful Christmas. God Bless - *Ron Marsh*

Dear Rev. Richard Sheridan and Friends in Christ at Bethel Lutheran Church,

Thank you very much for supporting Freed for Life 2016! The prison ministries of Followers of

Christ, Our Savior's Lutheran FEAST program, and Bridges to Hope appreciate your support as we share God's love with prisoners and those reentering our communities. Your generous donation helped us raise over \$143,000 in support for these ministries!

Together, by supporting ministry and programming opportunities in and outside of prison, by welcoming reentrants into our communities and churches, providing housing and employment, we can help our brothers and sisters get out, and stay out of prison. Thank you for your support!

*Rev. Robert Bryan*

*Followers of Christ Prison Ministry*

Dear Friends at Bethel Women of ELCA,

Thank you for your generous gift of quilts and kits for LWR's distribution overseas. These gifts of your hearts and hands are beautiful expressions of God's grace and love to people all around the world.

Your quilts and kits provide important necessities to our neighbors around the world, and serve as reminders that they are not alone or forgotten.

On behalf of our neighbors in villages, schools, hospitals and refugee camps around the world, I extend deepest thanks for your contribution, and pray God's richest blessings on your life and work! In Christ,

*Melanie W Gibbons*

*Lutheran World Relief*

*Quilt & Kit Ministry Manager*

Dear Friends at Bethel Lutheran Church,

Thank you for opening your doors for our community health screening in your community. It is because of your generosity that Life Line Screening continues to be able to bring these health screenings into your area and for that, we are very appreciative.

We look forward to working together again!

We appreciate all your help and support with hosting this community outreach event. Sincerely,

*Bob Schmill*

*Life Line Screening*

Dear Bethel Lutheran Church,

Thank you for the use of your facility during the 2016 Statewide Presidential General Election

held November 8<sup>th</sup>. Without your cooperation, the Election Commission would not be able to provide the quality polling places that the voters of Douglas County have come to expect. Your efforts helped to ensure the success we experienced administering this election.

We look forward to working with you again for future elections. Sincerely,

*Brian W. Kruse*  
*Douglas County Election Commissioner*

Thank you so much to our wonderful musicians who provided glorious holiday music for the services. These wonderful musicians are Shari Burns, Zoe Smith, Emery Leitch, David Leitch, Robert Ranney, Patricia Ranney, Corey McDaniel, Tom McDaniel, Melissa Hoeman-Carlberg, and Lisa Nielsen. *Teri Davis*

**Lutheran Women of Omaha:**

Lutheran Women will meet at Rejoice Lutheran Church, 2550 S 138 St., January 10, 2017 at 12:00 p.m. The program will be Burl, from the Omaha Fire Department. The Free Will offering will be The Ronald McDonald House. Send your reservations to Mardelle Gocek at (402) 292-1328 by January 8.

***SERVING IN WORSHIP***

**SERVING AFTER CHURCH FELLOWSHIP**

**\*\*Please sign up to host after-church fellowship. The calendar is in the kitchen. Thank you\*\***

***ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS:***

- 01/01 Jan Kammerer/Rich Ryan
- 01/08 Todd & Lisa Davis
- 01/15 Mike & Shanna Harald
- 01/22 Connie Mahoney
- 01/29 Shelley, Tim & Cade Williams

***READERS/COMMUNION ASSISTANTS***

- 01/01 Erica Heiden, Melissa Carlberg, Ellen Schroeder, & Patty Shalberg
- 01/08 Rich Ryan/Mike Harald
- 01/15 Connie Mahoney/Tom Haskell
- 01/22 Mary Kay Boschee
- 01/29 John Schmidt

***BIRTHDAYS***

- 01/01 Dan Vacek
- 01/02 Gene Hansen
- 01/03 Ruth Roberts
- 01/09 Merry Kay Johnson
- 01/10 Emery Leitch
- 01/12 Rhame Seydlitz
- 01/14 Liam Peterson
- 01/19 Laura Davis
- 01/19 Mark Mahoney
- 01/24 Melanie Henderson
- 01/25 Katelyn Roark
- 01/27 Cassidy Williams
- 01/28 Roger Anderson
- 01/28 Emily Ordal
- 01/29 Darlene Boehnke
- 01/29 Erica Heiden

***ANNIVERSARIES***

- 01/07 Mike & Shanna Harald

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