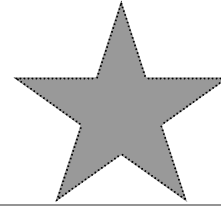


Bethlehem Star



January 2012
Issue 352

The Monthly Newsletter of the Bethlehem Covenant Church

from Pastor Eikenbary-Barber

A New Year's Resolution

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

How did you do on last year's resolutions? Did you lose the weight? Did you kick the habit? Did you floss daily? There is a reason why Alcoholics Anonymous and Weight Watchers have some success in helping people experience new life. When you join a recovery or weight loss group you are no longer alone with your problem. You have company for the journey into new life.

God doesn't just change individuals. God also changes cultures and communities. So while I encourage you to seek your individual transformation in the company of Bethlehem Covenant Church, I also would like to share a resolution for the entire congregation. It is not some hare-brained scheme that I have cooked up on my own. This comes from the countless conversations on the Church Council, Long Range Planning, the Vitality Team, and prayer groups. For 2012 we have resolved as a congregation to try some changes in worship. We will only be successful in our resolutions if we work together to make it happen.

Starting on Sunday, January 1 (a wonderful day for kicking off New Year's resolutions), our Classic Worship Service will begin at 11:00 am. The adult choir will sing at this service. In fact, there are no changes planned for our Classic Service, except that it will begin fifteen minutes later. If you forget the change and accidentally show up at 10:45, you'll have time for an extra cup of coffee and to pick out your very favorite pew.

The Sunday School time will be shifted to 10:00am. Lessons will be a little shorter, fifty minutes instead of sixty so that we all have time to transition to the sanctuary. The children will still gather at the beginning of Sunday School to sing. The adults will still gather in the Community Room to learn. Dave will still have doughnuts upstairs for the youth group, alert and awake after an extra half hour to sleep on Sunday morning.

We are also resolving to start a New Worship Service at 9:00am on the second Sunday of the month. The New Service will be downstairs in Fellowship Hall and will be more casual and contemporary. There will be four *trial* offerings of the New Service before summer: February 12, March 11, Easter, April 8 and May 13. The Adult Sunday School class will be cancelled these four weeks for an extended coffee and fellowship time to promote church unity. Then we will evaluate the attendance, interest and commitment to the New Service before attempting to officially launch it in the Fall. Even if you prefer the more Classic Worship Service I encourage you to invite friends looking for a different kind of service.

Is this God's plan to give us a hopeful future? Will this service lead to welfare and not to harm? Only stepping out in faith can possibly answer those questions. Let us resolve to give worship our best effort in the New Year, trusting in God to give us the plan we need for the future.

Adult Sunday School

(Beginning January 8th at 10 a.m.)

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR? COMPASSION, MERCY AND JUSTICE

In January the Adult Sunday School program will focus on the topic, "Who is our neighbor?"

Each Sunday will explore different aspects of concern in our neighborhood and city and ways we might make a difference. These sessions will lead into the Winter Seminar, weekend January 27-29, which is on Compassion, Mercy and Justice. It will be led by Boaz Johnson, Professor of Biblical Studies at North Park University.

Sunday Morning Assignments

Refreshments:

January	1	Marge Ramgren
	8	Nancy Nordenson
	15	Cheryl Hunstock
	22	Bev Hinseth
	29	Grace Bergstrom

Scripture Readers:

January	1	Evie Swanson
	8	Dick Sundberg
	15	Liz Compton
	22	Andy Bergstrom
	29	Theresa Lund

Ushers:

Lowery and Mary Ann Smith, Betty Hall and Kris Sheppard

January Greeter:

Ken Bacon

Child Care:

January	1
	8
	15
	22
	29

Nursery at 9:45 a.m.

NO Sunday School
Clausen Family
Ruth Dahlgren/Cheryl Hunstock
Compton Family
Frasch Family

Nursery at 10:45 a.m.

Dave & Tessa Johnson
Sue & Ruth Johnson
Ramgren Family
Christiansen Family
Chris & Maya Simon

When necessary, please arrange your own trade and notify the church office of the changes so that the Sunday bulletin will be correct. Office Phone number with voicemail (Administrative) : 612/721-5768. Thank you.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

(No Meeting on January 4th)

We are beginning the New Year with a brunch on January 11th at 9:30 a.m. All are invited to join us as we gather to break bread together and catch up after the whirlwind of Christmas activities. If you would like to attend and need child care, please call the church office and let us know. We will resume our regular study of the (next) Sunday morning texts on January 18th.

Remember: Sunday Worship will be at 11:00 a.m.!!!

Staff Lines

Jo Anne Taylor
Director of Music and Worship
joanne@bethlehemcov.org

New Worship

The new worship opportunity is taking shape for February 12, 2012 at 9:00 am! Please pray for the planning team as they continue to work out all the details that go into this endeavor, and watch for news in the Sunday bulletin as plans unfold in the next few weeks.

Help Wanted:

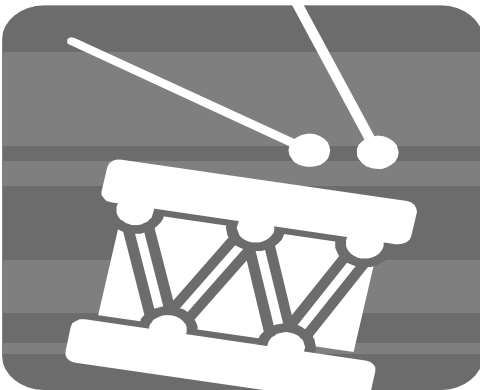
Sound technician for 9:00 am worship. If you have experience running a sound system (or a burning desire to learn!) and God is calling you to invest your time and expertise in the new worship service that begins February 12, please contact me immediately:
joanne@bethlehemcov.org.

Singers for 11:00 am worship.

Come sing with us in the choir! We rehearse weekly on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm, and meet at 10:30 am on Sundays to warm up and prepare for the worship service. All voices welcome!

Thank you!

Many thanks to all the musicians who made Christmas Eve such a wonderful and worshipful experience! Special thanks go to the Howlands (Chas on trumpet, Maddie and Charlotte on violin, and Claire on viola), , Rick Chynoweth, Dick Sundberg (sax), Paul Compton and Ian Taylor (cello), and Phil Swanson (bass) for providing the pre-service music in the atrium before each service!



Drummer.

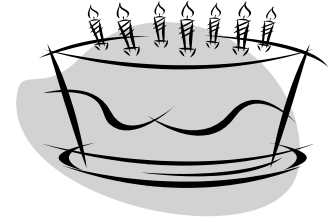
We need someone to lay down a groove and keep the beat steady. Bring your own drums (but we will help you load and unload your gear!).

Interested? Please contact me immediately:

joanne@bethlehemcov.org.

Don't Forget: Sunday Worship moves to 11:00 a.m. January 1st

January Birthdays



2	Kristi Tamte Bergeson		
3	Rachel Isaacs		
7	Linda Spohr		
8	Elena Kauls		
10	Peter Jensen	21	Tracina Paige
	Tyler Nygren		Byron Becker
12	Jan Norman	22	Soren Lundheim
	David Otterness		Ellison Frasch
	Derek VanderMolen	23	Dana Becker
13	Mary Ann Smith	24	Kristi Hokanson
14	Will Clausen		Haley Hutchinson
15	Bev Adamson	25	David Redlin
16	James Carlson		Arianna Grace Krongard
17	Ruby Lodien	27	Mattie Widen
	Samuel Hokanson	28	Linnea Forsell
18	Christina Anderson		Phil Swanson
	Elissa Cedarleaf-Dahl		Ron Swanson
	Daniel Jacott		Tyler Nelson
	Virginia Larson	29	Linda Merriam
	Mandy Martinson		Tessa Jade Lundheim
19	Thomas Williams		Eric Johnson
	Randi-Lynn Leonard	31	Jenny Hokanson
20	Carrie Kwok		Chris Jensen
	Christian Stokes		Ed Pajunen
	Tom Hansen		Sonja Swanson

Youth Calendar—From David Johnson, Director of Youth Ministries

(Postcards, phone calls and emails to the youth will follow-up as the dates approach.)

Cell 952 994-2213 ~ Email dsjohnson2@gmail.com

High School

www.six12.org
 Wednesdays at 6 p.m.
 NO Sr. High Jan. 4th
 Sunday, January 8th
 Important CHIC Information
 Students (and parents)
 Noon in the Youth Room
 Please *don't miss this meeting!*

Middle School

www.crossroadyouth.org
 Fridays at 6 p.m.
 NO Confirmation January 4th
 Friday January 27th
 (Winter Seminar Weekend)
 No Middle School Activity
 Plan to attend the 7 p.m. seminar
 Community Room

Mark Your Calendar: Worship Time moves to 11:00 a.m.

Freshly Brewed Gratitude From a Cup that Runneth Over!

Thanks to all who helped serve for ***Loaves and Fishes*** on October 31:

Ruth Dahlgren, Carol Epp, Marilyn and Ted Erickson, Claire and Maddie Howland, Charlotte Jensen, Jim Johnson, Sue Johnson, Pat and Peter Koontz, Lowery and Mary Ann Smith, Ann and Dave Swanson.

Our next serving date is January 30, 2012.

(Beginning last year, River of Life church is host to an overnight shelter for the homeless, open November 1 to April 1. Any leftover food that we have from serving our meal is shared with those in the shelter.)

Ten Very Grateful People

Each one of us appreciates the opportunity to work here at Bethlehem, helping to make our church be what it is and to help create an environment where we join together to worship God and to be Christ to one another. It is a joy and a privilege to be a part of this endeavor.

Thank you for our Christmas gifts and for the ability we have to be a part of the family of people who call our church their place of employment! We are sincerely appreciative.

Cindy Bergstrom

Ryan Eikenbary-Barber

Bennie Frykman

Tom Hansen

Diane Jelle

David Johnson

Jan Norman

Evie Swanson

Jo Anne Taylor

Derek Vander Molen

Reminder: Our Worship time has changed from 10:45 a.m. to 11 a.m.

(our cup continues to overflow...)

We wish to thank all of you who sent condolences after Christine’s death. Your thoughts are very much appreciated.

Joanne Hall, Bill Hall
and the rest of the Hall family.

We are learning to live differently and are missing many great events at church. Thanks to everyone who has been so kind and thoughtful, especially Marge and Evie for their gifts of food. Having the carolers remember us was a gift; we continue to enjoy the poinsettia as a reminder of the evening.

I’ve been a member of Bethlehem for 35 years. That’s 35 years of joining the congregation in shaking hands, giving pats on the back, offering words of encouragement for good health, sending get well cards and prayers. I guess I always thought that I was one of the lucky ones who would always have good health and no serious illnesses. This came to an abrupt stop the night I blacked out in our car and woke up at St. Joseph’s Hospital. The first Sunday morning that I felt well enough to come to church, many, many people shook my hand, patted me on the back and spoke words of encouragement for my good health. There was also a steady stream of get well cards in the mail and prayers for my recovery. I realized that I’d almost come full circle from being a care giver to being a care recipient. As I sat in the pew before the service, tears of joy streamed down my face as I felt the love of the church around me—but most important, I felt in my heart that the Lord Jesus was with me. Thanks to you all and to Pastor Ryan for his visits and prayers. Thanks be to God.

Bob Merriam

Reading Scripture Together

Here are some Bible stories on compassion, mercy and justice to help prepare us for our Winter Seminar on January 27-29. Our speaker will be Boaz Johnson and he will be speaking on these three themes. We will also be discussing these stories during our Wednesday informal Bible discussions.

Wednesdays:

January 4	No discussion	
January 11	Matt. 18:21-35	Unforgiving Servant
	Luke 18:1-8	The Unjust Judge
	John 8:1-11	The Woman caught in adultery
January 18	Amos 8	Selling the poor for the price of sandals
	Micah 6:6-8	What does the Lord require from you?
January 25	Matt. 25:31-46	Sheep and goats
	Luke 10:25-37	Good Samaritan

Bible memory verse for January: Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

ATTENTION - ALL AGES AND ALL ABILITIES

PLEASE JOIN US AS WE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

WHO: EVERYONE (including our "snowbirds")
WHEN: January 1, 2012 through Easter (April 8) - 98 days
WHAT: A Prayerful "Pilgrimage" (from Minneapolis to Jerusalem.)

We will do this by accumulating the miles, or mileage equivalent, from all forms of exercise or other activity, that each of us does every week.

During our exercise activity we are encouraged to pray for the needs of our church and neighborhood as provided on the prayer calendar *.

The goal is that our cumulative mileage will take us on our journey from Minneapolis to Jerusalem in time for Easter.

HOW: Any mode of movement - walking, by wheelchair, jogging, swimming, biking, rollerblading, treadmill, Big Wheels, stroller, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, stair climbing, aerobics, Curves, snow shoveling, walking along the beach, etc. We will have a conversion chart *, by the atrium poster, to help you convert your activity from steps to miles.

We have purchased 100 pedometers. For those interested in one, please see Pastor Derek. Each week, keep track of your miles and put your total in the special atrium box names are optional. It will be fun to see our collective progress as we watch the marker move along the route from Minneapolis to the coast and then on to Jerusalem (yes- we will walk on water!) The map will be in the community room.

The Spiritual Life and Adult Commissions encourage everyone to start the New Year praying for the needs of our church and neighborhood as together we "Journey to Jerusalem" promoting a healthy body and healthy spirit.

* Call the church office if you would like to have a conversion chart or a prayer calendar mailed to your home.

Contact Carrie Hokanson if you have additional questions.

**The Winter Seminar at Bethlehem
(Community Room)**

**Friday, January 27th from 7 to 9 p.m.
Saturday, January 28th from 9 a.m. to 12 noon
Sunday, January 29th—Adult Sunday School—10 a.m.**

A Warm Welcome to our Guest: Professor Boaz Johnson

As a child growing up in a slum of New Delhi, where children were sold into slavery, Rajkumar Boaz Johnson experienced a chain of life-changing awakenings and came to view Jesus and his teachings as the answer to poverty and slavery in India and beyond. A dedicated instructor from a young age, Johnson has been teaching at the university level for 24 years.

As Professor and Chair in the Department of Biblical and Theological Studies at North Park University, Johnson has fostered a generation of new ideas through faculty collaboration on journal articles and worked to build a strong academic relationship with North Park Theological Seminary faculty. His courses represent a wide spectrum of topics, from “Introduction to the Bible” to “World Religions in Light of World Crisis Today”.

Professor Johnson holds a B.A. in economics, M.Div. in New Testament studies, and Ph. D. in Hebrew Bible/theological studies. He lectures extensively on the topics of global slavery and human trafficking, evangelicalism and world religions, and Biblical principles of environmental stewardship. In addition, he is currently working on a book titled *The Feminist Theology of the Wisdom Traditions of the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near Eastern Texts*.

***Together, we will explore the personal imperatives of a commitment
to ministries of Compassion, Mercy and Justice***

Middle School and High School students are especially encouraged to participate.

Need Volunteer Service Hours (or have a bit of time to spare)?

We are searching for two people to update the sign on the lawn once a week. They would alternate weeks to insure that the job would be covered when one or the other needed to skip a week. Please call the church office if you would like more information.

If you have organizational skills and a car we need your help January 23-27.

Pick up the meals for Meals-On-Wheels from Nokomis Square and organize the drivers to make the deliveries. It takes around two hours. Call the office if you would be willing to help.

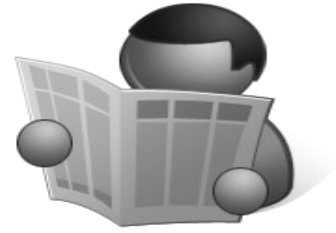
Bethlehem Church Office (with voicemail—”Administrative”) 612/721-5768

Worship at Bethlehem on Sunday Mornings at 11 a.m.; Sunday School for all at 10 a.m.

STAR Articles for February

Please submit to the office by
Monday, January 16.

Articles for the *Longfellow Messenger*
are due the same day.



Did Santa Bring New Clothes?

If your child outgrew or replaced his or her winter clothing the Minnesota Council of Churches has an urgent need for children's outerwear for the refugee families. Please leave the coats, scarves, hats, boots, and mittens in the boxes located in the atrium hallway.

If you are a savvy second-hand shopper, check the store racks for any gently used items that could be donated as well.

Welcome to First Fridays!!

Who: All Adults

When: January 6th – 6:30–9:00 p.m.

If you are looking for an opportunity to spend time with other adults in a casual, relaxing setting, please join us in the Fellowship Hall (east end). It will be an evening of conversation and/or games (for those seeking the thrill of friendly competition). Feel free to bring a favorite snack or game to share. Beverages will be provided.

Spread the word, come when you can and bring your friends. All are welcome!! Also, let us know if you are interested in being part of a core group to help organize future Friday night gatherings.

Phil & Juli Swanson (612-724-1318)

Rhonda Isaacs (651-646-1790)

New Year's To Do List

Sunday, January 1st

SLEEP IN

Worship Begins at 11 a.m.

(No Sunday School)

Steve and Barb Swanson will join us this morning and he will be preaching during Worship.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM REPORT # 8

(COMPOSED OF VITALITY/LONG RANGE PLANNING TEAMS AND OTHERS)

JANUARY 2012

***“Create the highest, grandest vision possible for your life, because you become what you believe.”
Oprah Winfrey, entertainer.***

While Oprah may be speaking to a different audience there is a lot of truth in her quote. Bethlehem’s Strategic Planning Team is trying to define our vision and we don’t want it to be a “small” vision or have a “small” mission. How our team defines our vision and mission has been challenging. We continue to pray for God’s guidance and we feel the prayers of our congregation.

Our team has met only once in December because of so many activities going on during the Christmas holidays. During our December 1st meeting we generally felt that Bethlehem’s core values are:

<i>Christ-centered</i>	<i>Biblical</i>	<i>Participatory worship</i>
<i>Teaching and Learning</i>	<i>Mission & Evangelism</i>	<i>Children</i>
<i>Inclusiveness</i>		

We then asked ourselves, “*What specific needs does our church fulfill?*” Within our list we came up with: *being a neighborhood church and a place for a faith based childcare facility.*

We have made good progress during 2011 but we still have a long ways to go to have our 8 to 12 page Strategic Plan written and approved by our congregation by the end of May 2012. Watch for our progress on the Post-its in the community room.

We have tentatively developed Bethlehem’s Vision and Mission Statements that will be presented to the Church Council at their January 12th meeting .

Members of the Strategic Planning team are: Bev Adamson, Jim Carlson, Liz Compton, Charlotte Sjoberg, Cheryl Hunstock, Mary Ann Smith, Mary Morris, Pastor Ryan, Linda Solie, Lori Frasch, Alyssa Isaacs, Duane Johnson, Dick Sundberg, Phil Swanson, Matt Ridenour.

Lowery Smith, Chairperson of Strategic Planning Team

Yes...we are repeating ourselves—Worship will be at 11 a.m. starting January 1st

CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone 612-721-2290
Website www.bethlehemkids.org
Email bethlehemchildcare@yahoo.com



On December 15th BCCC hosted its fifth annual Preschool Christmas program. The sanctuary and balcony were full as parents, grandparents and friends came to watch their child sing. Pastor Derek read portions of scripture that shared the Christmas story in between which the children sang traditional Christmas songs that followed the Biblical story. Cindy Bergstrom helped us out by playing piano during the program. Pastor Derek concluded the service by extending an invitation to the families to join BCC for the Christmas services. Whether they sat in the pew smiling at their little ones or stood on the stage & risers singing their joyful songs, everyone seemed to have an enjoyable time. Following the concert we shared “Happy Birthday Jesus” cake in Fellowship Hall. Marge, Evie, Ruth J, Carrie H. & MaryAnn S. volunteered their time to serve 240 pieces of cake to our families, “Thank You”!

January means it is already time for BCCC to prepare for fall 2012 tours. We will be busy compiling packets of paperwork in early January for the fall enrollment. Currently enrolled and BCC church families will have the first chance to sign up for the Beginners and Pre-K programs; they can begin registering on January 30th. Families will want to turn in applications before February 20th. On February 20th we will open registration for all other interested families, which I predict will be a busy day in the BCCC office. Last year we had about 15 parents waiting at the door to leave their applications. We typically fill up all Beginner and most Pre-K openings on that day. We have a tour schedule ready so if you would like to come along on a tour please sign up on this doodle page: <http://www.doodle.com/wrc6pthydm36ns7w>, you can find it on our website too. We typically invite three families per date, so we don't overwhelm the children in attendance. The tuition fees for next year will be confirmed at our January 17th board meeting, therefore paperwork will be available after that meeting. Contact Jill to get the paperwork.

Last year we had so much snow by this time—that is all the children talked about. So far this year they've talked about what they'll do when the snow comes, and we all know it will, but while they wait they are able to continue building their forts, playing on the slide, using the asphalt for “floor hockey” and can make use of the circle cycle. The children are out in the play yard every day that the wind chill is above 0, which thankfully has been almost every day this season.

Thank you, Bethlehem Church, for reinforcing the work we are able to do each day with these children through sharing your support and your space.

Jill and the BCCC Staff



Bethlehem Covenant Church
 3141 43rd Avenue South
 Minneapolis, MN 55406

Rev. Ryan Eikenbary-Barber
 David Johnson, Dir. of Youth Ministry
 Derek VanderMolen, Dir. of Children's Ministry
 Jo Anne Taylor, Dir. of Music and Worship

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Contact the church at:

Telephone: 612-721-5768
 Web Address: www.bethlehemcov.org
 Email: office@bethlehemcov.org

W	SUNDAY	10:00 a.m.	Sunday School for all (Note CHANGE in time!) ****
		11:00 a.m.	Worship (15 minutes later than our previous schedule) ****
	MONDAY	7:00 p.m.	Community activities evening
	TUESDAY	8:00 a.m.	Breakfast at Bridgeman's (2nd and 4th Tues.)
		9:00 a.m.	Properties Work Day at church
		6:30 p.m.	Gathering for Prayer—Church Community Invited
	WEDNESDAY	9:30 a.m.	Women's Bible Study (No meeting Jan. 4th)
12:30 p.m.		Staff Meeting	
4:00 p.m.		Hosanna Choir	
4:45 p.m.		Alleluia Choir	
5:45 p.m.		Wonderful Wednesday Meal	
THURSDAY	6:30 p.m.	Adult Choir, Sr. High, Children's activities	
		Confirmation (No meeting Jan. 4th)	
FRIDAY	9:45 a.m.	Bible Encounter (No meeting Jan. 5th and 12th)	
	6:30 a.m.	Men's Breakfast and Bible Study	
Y		9:00 a.m.	Walk and coffee at Mall of America

**** Please Note These Two Permanent Changes in time!!!