

DECEMBER
2011

In This Issue:

A Long Hill

Pastor David Foss

Parish Nurses

Christmas @ Bethel

Adults

Youth

Children

Finance, Facility &
Stewardship Update

Bethel
LUTHERAN CHURCH

702 West Alcott Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
(218) 736-5654
staff@bethellbc.org
www.bethellbc.org

Briefly Bethel



Charlie Brown said that Christmas is at the top of a long hill. I think that's a pretty good description of how Christmas seems when you are young. I know it was that way with me. Christmas was the most highly-anticipated day of the year as far as I was concerned. Bigger than my birthday and the last day of school...combined!

But it seemed that Christmas would never come.

Christmas is at the top of a long hill. An eternity away.

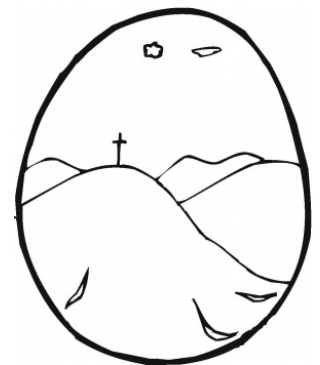
For adults the perception gets reversed, doesn't it? For adults Christmas is at the bottom of a long hill, and we are in a runaway sled racing faster and faster toward it. Grown ups, remember what it was like to be so full of anticipation you could hardly contain it? Most of us would like to have that feeling back, but the busyness and clutter of the season often smother the sparks of childhood wonder and amazement.

So listen again and be amazed:

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:9-11)

My prayer is that...this year...
you would experience Christmas
at the top of a long hill.
Long for it. Enter into the wonder of it.
A savior has been born.
Salvation accomplished
"at the top of the long hill".

Mount Calvary.



Parish Nurses

Vascular Dementia

What is Vascular Dementia (VaD?)

It is a decline in mental abilities such as memory, which occurs when the brain tissue is damaged because of reduced blood flow to the brain, most often by a stroke or series of strokes. As a result, brain cells have difficulty working together to process information. This can lead to memory loss, confusion and decreased attention span affecting activities of daily living.

Risk Factors

Risk factors for VaD are the same as for strokes. High blood pressure, history of previous strokes, Diabetes, heart disease, smoking, high cholesterol, lack of exercise and obesity.

Symptoms of Vascular Dementia?

VaD often deteriorates in a step-wise manner, with symptoms becoming greater with each new stroke.

They include:

- Memory loss
- Confusion
- Mood swings and personality changes, including depression-like behavior
- Language problems
- Difficulty paying attention or following a conversation
- Visual orientation problems
- Difficulty with calculations, making decisions, and solving problems

They can come on abruptly as a result of a single stroke, depending on the size and location of the damaged brain area. Sometimes it is so gradual it may be difficult to distinguish it from Alzheimer's disease. The dementia in these cases is likely due to chronic inadequate blood circulation in the brain, caused by small silent strokes or TIAs.

Should you have any of these symptoms, consult your doctor immediately for diagnosing and treatment. PREVENTION is the best strategy by reducing the risk factors of a possible stroke.

THANK YOU: To those who shared in the loss of my sister-in-law Muriel Gaines, I thank you. She will be missed by her family and friends. ~ *Mary Wold*

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION: All are invited to attend the 101st birthday Open House celebration of Lillie Lundberg on Sunday, December 4, 2:30-4:00 pm, (1st floor dining room), Mill Street Residence, 802 South Mill Street, Fergus Falls



Christmas @ Bethel

As followers of Christ we know that there's much more to "preparing Him room" it than sending out the cards, baking the goodies, wrapping the gifts and attending the office party. As you select your Christmas celebrations this year, we've tried to offer a few to help you "leave room" for the one who dropped everything to come to earth for you!

Poinsettias: Honor a loved one and help deck the halls of Bethel as we prepare to celebrate Christ's birthday this month! Simply pick up a donation form and envelope at the Welcome Center in the narthex and place completed form and check to Bethel Lutheran Church in the drop box or offering **by the week of December 4.**

Keeping Christmas: Where else could you actually get "ahead" on your Christmas To Do list while learning to keep it all in balance? Come **Tuesday, December 6, 7:00 pm** and find out! Details in the Adult Ministries section.

Tired of pouring over the kid's lists? Let them focus on giving. Bethel's Women's Ministry Fellowship is sponsoring "**The Giving Tree**" ...a gift project for students attending Lutheran Brethren Seminary and their families. If you wish to participate in this year's giving, please choose and ornament with a dollar amount from the Christmas tree in the narthex. Place your gift in an envelope and drop in a secured drop slot at the Welcome Center by **Sunday, December 11.** The ornament is yours to keep. Please make checks payable to Bethel WMF and designate in the memo line "Seminarian Christmas Gift. We will distribute gifts to the seminarians and their families before they leave on Christmas break.

Do you know any Christmas music lovers? Invite them to hear the vast selection of music provided by our local talent right here in Fergus Falls. **Bethel's Adult Choir sings several Christmas selections on Sunday, December 11 (8:30 am & 11:00 am), HLA Christmas Concert on Saturday, December 10 and Sunday, December 11 (7:00 pm), and the Student-led Worship Service on Sunday, December 18 (11:00 am).**

Finally, plan to gather with the Bethel and loved ones at the **Christmas Eve Services: Saturday, December 24, 3:30 and 5:00 pm.** A special offering received at both services will be used to purchase and distribute grain to Africans suffering from a severe food shortage. We are partnering with our sister church in Chad, which eliminates administrative costs. 100% of your donations will be used for grain and distribution.

Note: Worship services on Sundays, December 25 and January 1 are at 8:30 and 11:00 only. The church office is closed Mondays, December 26, 2011 and January 2 for the holiday weekends.

Children & Students



Sunday School (3 yrs– gr. 6)*

Sundays 9:45 am

**Final day: Dec. 18. Resumes: January 8*

KidVenture/Club 56 **

Wednesdays 3:45—4:45 pm

Bus pick up @ Kennedy parking lot

Junior Choir **

Wednesdays 4:45—5:45 pm

***Final day: December 21. Resumes: January 4*

Join us Sunday, December 18th at the 11:00 am worship service to see our 1st –6th graders in action. They will be in charge of worship, announcements, call to worship, ushering...basically everything but the preaching. Join us in encouraging the children in becoming a part of church services as they learn ways they



Confirmation:

Sundays, 9:45 am

JH Youth Group: (gr. 7-8)

Final day: Dec. 18. Resumes: January 8

Wednesdays 3:45—5:30 pm

Bus pick up @ Kennedy parking lot

SH Youth Group: (gr. 9-12)

Final day: Dec. 21. Resumes: January 4



Junior High Lock In - 12/16—10:00 pm

Midnight run to Perkins: bring \$\$. Pick up Saturday @ 9:00 am

Ski/Snowboard/Tube/XX Skiing - 12/18

Leave: 2:30 pm, Return: 10:00 pm

Cost for lift, rental, bus: \$15 Sign up by 12/14

Mall of America Trip: Wednesday, 12/28

Leave: 9:00 am, Return: 9:00 pm

Cost: \$10 Sign up by 12/21

SAVE THE DATE!

Senior High Winter Weekend: Feb. 17-20

Life Ministry Groups—resumes January 8, 2012

Adults

Pilgrims (Stillpoint Café)

- o Teacher: Daniel Berge
- Topic: *The Old Testament Viewed Through the Gospel of John*

Firesiders (Fireside Room)

- o Teacher: Richard Risbrudt
- Topic: *Galatians*

Fortifiers (location: TBD)

- o Teacher: TBD
- Topic: *TBD*

Fellowshippers (Archive Room)

- o Teacher: TBD
- Topic: *TBD*

Bridges (location: TBD)

- o Teacher: Solveig Nelson
- Topic: *Christians Connecting with Muslims*

Life Ministry Groups meet on Sunday mornings at 9:45 in various locations. Feel free to visit different groups as they study God's Word, fellowship and share life together.

Keeping Christmas

Tuesday, December 6, 7:00 pm

There are so many things a person seems to have to do for a happy Christmas and focusing on the Christ child seems to be a struggle. This evening there will be a panel of women to talk about balancing the Christmas tasks while not losing focus on our Redeemer!



Our panel members, JoAnn Gundersen, Barbara Egge, Trena Martinson and Denise Risbrudt will share some of their thoughts and answer some of your questions.

We will also enjoy a wonderful time together singing Christmas carols, led by our new worship leader, Erika Lundberg.

And to help you with your Christmas baking tasks are some tasty doorprizes: homemade lefse by Elaine Kavlie, Arna Stedjan's krumkake, Mary Jo Tonneson's flatbread, ViAnn Sampson's mini-kronsekage, Arlys Svaren's fudge, Connie Vigesaa's sandbakkels and Candis Berge's decorated sugar cookies. Also a handmade Christmas quilted table topper by Lois Rogness and a sought-after 2002 Bethel Cookbook! Wouldn't it be fun to have your name drawn?

ALL women are invited! Childcare is available. Coffee and dessert served at 7 p.m., evening concludes by 8:30 p.m.

Stay connected!

Women of Bethel's blog: www.womenofbethelfergusfalls.blogspot.com

and on facebook: ***Women of Bethel Connections***

Finance, Facilities and Stewardship Ministry Team Update

The budget income for October was \$75,729.58 and our budget was \$60,139.44. For October, giving was over our budget by \$15,590.17. Mission Goal giving was \$15,241 and we have a goal of \$14,711.34. For October, we finished over our Missions goal by \$529.48. Year to date through October, we are below the combined Budget Income and Mission Goals by \$42,471.82. Year to date giving to Bethel through October 2011 is \$793,481.97 compared to \$749,296.41 through October 2010.

Items of Business & Discussion:

- Building progress along with a timeline of moving.
- Overages and extra work needed as progress was made on the building
- Plans for the keyless entries to the church
- Painting contract for the building interior
- Accepted bid proposal for blinds in new building
- Information on the completing of the Thrivent Grant for our food ministry. Thrivent matched 50 cents on the dollar for money raised during July, August and September. A total of approximately \$12,000 was raised and we received about \$6,000 from Thrivent.
- Discussion about additional space needs for Kitchen Storage, Youth Room space, and Children's Ministry classroom space. Discussion to continue.
- Handling and disbursement of Estate Gift.

Our next meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2011. If you have something that needs to come before our meeting for discussion and action, be sure to let Eldon Linscheid or LaWayne Rogness know and we will be happy to accommodate.

On November 13, 2011 we were privileged to have Brad Martinson come to Bethel and present a seminar entitled "Maximizing Your Giving". At the meeting, he presented different areas where we are privileged as tax payers to be able to maximize our ability to give. In the next few months we will take one of the areas and feature them in our Bethel Newsletter. The one we are featuring today is the Charitable Gift Annuity. Point "E" of Brad's notes refers to Rate Sheets. Just a note of information; we were informed that those rates are going to change just after the first of the year. Unfortunately they appear to be going down, so if this should interest you please seek counsel on this soon.

The Charitable Gift Annuity

1. An unfortunate well-kept secret, especially in these times of historically low interest rates. These agreements offer attractive fixed income payments for life, especially for people who are in the "seasoned" stage of life.
2. The agreement is between the donor and the charitable organization, and is "backed" by the financial strength of the charitable organization (i.e., gift annuities are not FDIC-insured like bank CDs are.)
3. The "gift" resulting from a gift annuity agreement is typically 45-55% of the original annuity funding. The gift annuity also provides partial tax-free distributions, so the effective (after tax) rate of return is higher than the stated distribution rate.
4. The Church of the Lutheran Brethren has done gift annuities for many years and is equipped to handle the administrative aspects of gift annuities. Our preferred minimum funding is \$10,000, but will consider allowing a \$5,000 agreement.
5. Rate Sheets are available for Single Life and Two Lives.

