

Bethel Tidings

December 2021



***Blessings to ALL who give of themselves to sustain our church. You are so appreciated!
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!***

From the staff at Bethel: Pastor Jim, Deb Wagner, Kellar Smith, Sue McAllister, Duane McNairn, Linda Barnhart, and Riley House.

Message from Pastor Jim

Isn't this a challenging time in history? As Walter Brueggeman wrote, "The Old and New Testament arose from a tug of war of competing ideologies. The Old Testament seeks to hear the Bible 'in the fray,' while the New Testament seeks to hear it 'above the fray.'"

We are in a combination of the two in our lives today, and we are aware of how deeply in the fray we are. The pandemic has taken the lives of millions of people worldwide, the insta-pot of politics is threatening to tear our society apart, and the economic issues are widening the division between the have-nots. There are racial tensions, and the loneliness and isolation of so many-this is what we live in and why we seek during this Advent. We are looking for signs of God's surprise appearance.

Advent season; we are waiting patiently in hope for the coming of God. Patience is worn thin, holding onto hope is challenging, and peace and joy of the Promised Christ child feel elusive. I think the Psalmist expresses it best in Psalm 42:2-3

Bethel Tidings

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?
My tears have been my food day and night,
while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

In this time of thirsting for God, cling in faith to the God who surprises us, providing springs in the desert and light into our world. May you have a blessed Advent and Christmas 2021.

Peace,
Pastor Jim

Thanksgiving Meals:

We would like to express our extreme appreciation to our congregation for their contributions to our Thanksgiving meals project. The response was overwhelming. As it turned out, this year we were able to provide Thanksgiving meals to **10 families**. Each family received a turkey, a box of items to prepare a meal and a gift card.



The families we helped were all Blessing Box families and are local to our area. This year, many of the families were able to come by the church and pick up their boxes so the need for delivery was limited. Many of the families asked us to pass their appreciation on to each of you. Thanks so much to each of you.

Christmas is right around the corner, please watch for an announcement soon on our plans for Christmas for these same families.

Pastor Jim, Deb, and Diane

**Look on the Hallway Door for tabs to provide a meal box
or the meat for a Christmas Dinner.**

Women at the Well

Women at the Well will have bible study on Wednesday, Dec. 1 & 8 - will resume our study January 12th.

Brunch will be Wednesday, Dec. 15th at 11:00 a.m. at Runways.

All are welcome.

Please RSVP to Beverly at shanda@myactv.net no later than Tuesday, December 14th, so we have a place for you.

All Women Together...

Quarterly the ladies of the Altar Committee, Caring Connections, Food Pantry/Blessing Box, Hospitality Volunteers and Women of the Well join together to discuss the upcoming needs of the church. Originally scheduled for Dec 1st the meeting has been moved to Wednesday January 5th at 10:00 a.m. Activities for Lent & Easter will be discussed.

Hat & Mitten Tree:

Thanks to all who participated by donating hats, mittens and gloves for infants through 5 years. We dropped off a total of 63 items on Monday, November 22nd to Head Start of Washington County and will continue to collect these items through December 19th, for a drop off on December 20th.

Children will be blessed by you!



Caring Connections

Supporting our Homebound

Let us not become weary of doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9 (NIV)

Please pray for our homebound as well as our other

members who have concerns and conditions that do not allow them to be out and about. They have expressed how much they enjoy receiving cards and so appreciated the fall flowers.

Preparing cards and helping to deliver poinsettias is our project for December.

The next birthdays are listed below with addresses. Cards and phone calls are always welcome. Call Pam Brubaker or the church office for addresses and phone numbers.



There are no December Homebound birthdays.
Food Pantry/Blessing Box Update



A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. Proverbs 11:25

The Food Ministry has continued over these many months due to the kind financial support and food donations of our church members. Please know your generosity is a true blessing to many families in our local area. Thanks so much to each of you.

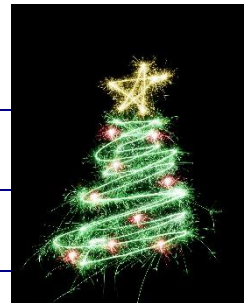
Another important part of this venture are all of those who pray for this ministry. It is amazing to see how often when we are nearly out of something that is the next item that is left in a bag in the hall or set on the island. Now that Pam Brubaker and Melissa Metzger are on board...the rotation lightens the load but more importantly gives others the pleasure of serving.

I personally felt called to this ministry and am blessed to be a part of it. I would love to share stories of this blessing with you. Call me for needs or donations.

Elaine Snyder 301-991-975

Lay Readers – December 2021

Dec 5	Torrie Smith
Dec 12	Martin Brubaker
Dec 19	Cathy Grantham
Dec 26	Elaine Snyder



Call Elaine to sign up! 301-991-9759

Virus Task Force:

Changes In the building:

Social distancing, using hand sanitizer and wearing masks while inside the building continue to be recommended. Girl Scouts and A.A. have restarted. Volleyball practice is planned to begin in December. Each group has provided COVID protocol for their distancing, masking and cleaning. The FLC is open again for events.



Please consider ways you might be able to serve your worshipping community.



The Bethel Coat Closet:



He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none.
Luke 3:11

We are happy to say that our church is joining the Reach Cold Weather Shelter event “Cold Hands & Warm Hearts” on December 11th. This event will be held at the St. Johns Lutheran Church in Hagerstown from 11 am to 2 pm. And will provide coats to those in need this winter.

Our goal is to donate 60 coats in a variety of sizes including men’s, women’s, and children’s. Please help us make this event a success by donating coats. Coats can be dropped off during church office hours or in a bag under the portico at any time. If you would like to help transport the coats or work at the event, please contact the church office.

We will continue to collect coats after the event to resupply our coat closet. (Of note, at this time, we are only accepting coats and cold weather items.) Many thanks for your continued support of our clothing ministry.

Diane Stevens

Blood Drive



The Blood drive at Bethel was on
Friday November 26th.

Thanks to all who continue to donate their gift of blood and to those who help by volunteering their time to serve in this mission.

Please call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit RedCrossBlood.org to schedule a visit.

Adult Sunday School:

A combined adult class led by Elaine Snyder is being held at 9:00 a.m. in the Parlor. Let us know if you are ready to create a new class or restart your adult classes.

**** Restarting Spiritual Fitness?????????

**** Or One Loaf?????

As Tom and Valerie are unable to be here to lead the Spiritual Fitness class. We have an idea to see if we could ZOOM them in. We would still need someone (physically here) to be the informal leader. COULD IT BE YOU?????? Talk to the Pastor.

Advent:

The Inn

Housing the Holy



We have problems to address. And so did the Holy Family that night. An oppressive regime had demanded everyone upend their lives and hightail it to their home towns to register for the census—for tax purposes, likely. Mary was on the verge of giving birth and the AirBnB app just wasn't an option. Whether they got to town late or for some other reason, they had a housing problem that night.

The Innkeeper is a figure of our imaginations. Not referenced in the sacred texts, we assume that since Luke said there was an “inn,” then there must have been an “innkeeper.” Often our stories cast him in a negative light, someone who banished a pregnant woman to where the animals were kept. But what if, since we are engaging our imaginations anyway, what if he was truly an entrepreneur? Someone who saw a problem and thought, literally, “outside the box” to solve the problem of where Mary could have her child? Instead of thinking “there’s nowhere,” he said to himself first, “there has to be somewhere.”

This worship series was inspired by churches who are asking these kinds of questions. I was honored this year to be the recipient of a Lilly Grant that allowed me to interview churches that are seeking to transform their property assets into solutions for various community needs and strengthen their own viability in the process. Some are offering affordable office space to non-profits that work to alleviate society’s problems, some are creating affordable housing, some after-school help, some food distribution. No one church can solve everything, but each one can do something. Just like the innkeeper. Housing the holy work of Divine Love can happen in many ways.

And so I invite you to spend this Advent and Christmas seeing your church’s situation in a different light... the light of the Star of Bethlehem that shone that night on an unlikely house for the holy, a stable. It doesn’t matter what state your church is in at the moment (and we are all feeling a bit uncertain about that at the moment). The Light of Christ is shining on you, inviting you to become a beacon of hope to others. What one thing could you do (or add to what you already do) that could alleviate someone’s suffering? And how could this series inspire you to think bigger and beyond this holy-day season with purposeful solutions for your community housed in your church? We are called to “make room” in our inns, to create a welcoming space for the flourishing of humanity. That’s what the inn, the stable, the manger, became that night.

Stewardship November 2021

Date	In person S.S./Church	Special Events
Nov 7	65	Communion
Nov 14	66	
Nov 21	58	
Nov 28	78	1 st Sun of Advent



Children's Sunday School:

Currently Children's Sunday School for children ages kindergarten and younger are meeting in the Nursery and grades 1-4 are upstairs. The time 9:00 a.m.



The COVID restrictions are being followed.

We want to keep our little ones safe.

Abbie is back with her helpers to tend to babies thru pre-k during Sunday School and during the church service.

F.R.O.G. (fully rely on God) Sunday School for grades 4 - 8 and has started and a new venture... for youth grades 5 thru 8 Youth Fellowship on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays monthly from 6:30 to 7:30.

You can call the office 301-733-8387 to ask for a monthly lesson packet,

Or

You can see the online info @ <https://tinyurl.com/y7g752ut>





Advent Calendar 2021:

Sun. November 28 – **1st Sunday - HOPE**

“How do we make room?”

11:00 a.m. Centerpiece making and cookie decorating
Child care and light lunch

Sun. December 5 – **2nd Sunday - Peace**

11:30 a.m. “A place at the table” shared meal.

Invite someone to join you for a ham and trimmings meal.

Sun. December 12 – **3rd Sunday – Joy**

10:00 a.m. “How much is enough?”

3:00 p.m. Family Movie with cookies,
popcorn & drinks. Then caroling.

Sun. December 19 – **4th Sunday - Love**

“A room with a view”

10:00 a.m. A Ragman visit.

Fri. Dec 24 – “The Inn”

Christmas Eve Services:

5:00 p.m. – Gifts of fruit, nuts and chocolates for the children.
Family Service

7:00 p.m. – Donation offerings for the Board of Childcare.
Traditional Candlelight Service

11:00 p.m. – Donation offerings for the Board of Childcare.
Midnight Candlelight Service

Thank you Kathy Rice!

For many years Bethel Church has been wonderfully taken care of by Kathy Rice. She has been here more than 15 years cleaning and tending to the Sanctuary, balcony and classrooms on the 2nd floor and the Family Life Center. As well she gave her attention to making sure the Parlor and Choir area were always ready and welcoming. Happy retirement!

Preparing for Advent...



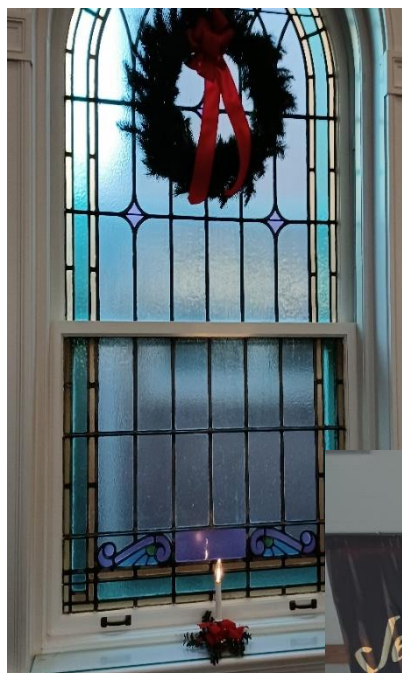


HOPE!

PEACE!

JOY!

LOVE!



December Anniversaries:



4 – Mike & Justina Bennett
16 – Chris & Amy Mitchell
16 - Frank & Kathy Morrisey
20 – Frank & Heather Rucci
23 – Rick & Debra Hose
29 – Don & Kathy Francis
30 – Barry & Penny Sprecher
31 – David & Pamela Newman

December Birthdays:

1 Jon Snyder	
2 Diane Stevens	
Randy Crist	
3 Penny Sprecher	
Elizabeth Johnson	
4 Devin Keefer	
5 Daniel Rishell	
7 Paul Boyer	
8 Makiya Claiborne	
10 Larry Lipsitz	
11 Glenn Springer	
Pamela Deal	
13 Karen Keefer	
Becky Campbell	
14 Deb Wagner	
15 Erika Johnson	
17 Jensen Bachtell	
McKenna Luther	
18 Dillon Smith	
20 Madison Bachtell	
Olivia Keckler	
22 Bret Leisinger	
23 Grayson Belella	
25 Jesus	
26 Holly Gelsinger	
27 Sadie Leisinger	
Michael Staley	
28 Tom Edwards	
29 Roxanne Terry	
30 Joyce Belella	
31 Ruth Clevenger	




**Do you see a name of
someone who is a
member but has not
been here?**

**Reach out and give them
a call!**

*Homebound –
None for December

Bethel Tidings

December Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
11/28- 11:00 Centerpiece making with cookie decorating and light lunch 			1 10:00 W@W/Parlor with All Women Together	2 5:00 Volleyball/FLC	3 6:00 Girl Scouts/ Parlor & Up x 3	4 9:00 A A
5 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual Service Worship 11:30 "A Place at the Table Meal"	6 5:00 Volleyball/FLC	7 5:00 Volleyball/FLC	8 10:00 W@W/Parlor 5:00 Volleyball/FLC	9 5:00 Volleyball/FLC	10 8:00 Organ Tuning	11 9:00 A A
12 Communion 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual Service Worship 3:00 Movie and Caroling	13 5:00 Volleyball/FLC	14 5:00 Volleyball/FLC	15 11:00 W@W lunch@ 5:00 Volleyball/FLC	16 5:00 Volleyball/FLC	17 6:00 Girl Scouts/ Parlor & Up x 3	18 9:00 A A
19 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual Service Worship 10:00 Ragman visit	20 Newsletter Deadline 5	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 5:00 Family Service 7:00 traditional candle service 11:00 Midnight Candle service	25 Christmas Day
26 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual Service Worship FM 97.9 Sermon by Phone	27	28	29	30	31 Office Closed	New Year's Day

Bethel United Methodist Church Chewsville

Our Mission: To be the people of God on the move for Jesus and to transform the world by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our Vision: To be the Church of Jesus Christ to all God's children through discipleship grounded in God's Holy Word. We pledge to God and each other to accomplish our mission: Through prayer, worship and education, we will be seekers of God's will. Through witness, we will kindle the fire of spiritual and physical growth. Through Christian community we will love, nurture and support each other and those in need throughout the world.

Church Office:

Phone: 301-733-8387

Email: bethel.church@myactv.net

Pastor: Jim Johnson

Email: pastorjim@myactv.net

Administrative Assistant:

Deb Wagner

301-733-8387

hours: 9 am – 1 pm Mon.-Fri.

of a Email: bethel.church@myactv.net

Newsletter Editor:

Deb Wagner

Phone: 301-733-8387

Email: bethel.church@myactv.net

Bethel Connect:

Be connected, join our Google Group, search for Connect @ Bethel.

Sunday Service Times:

Traditional mixed with Contemporary

Worship @ 10:00 am

Sunday School 9:00 am

Online Sun 10:00 am @ www.bethelumchurch.org

Family Care Ministry:

Please let us know if you or a family member wish a pastoral visit during a time of Office grief or hospitalization, including the birth child. We will pray and minister to you.

Telephone Prayer Chain:

Beverly Miller

Phone: 301-739-6270

Email: Shanda@myactv.net



Bethel Tidings



Pastor Jim Johnson
Bethel United Methodist Church Chewsville
21006 Twin Springs Drive
Smithsburg, MD 21783
301-733-8387

