

Bethlehem Star

A Message from Our Pastor

“Behold, I am making all things new.” I guess I’m a little stuck on that...God making all things new, renewing heaven and earth: and it’s going on right now within our own church! God has even enlisted us to help in the process. Now that’s amazing. But how is this happening? Is it happening in our own lives? I often have people tell me of times in their lives when they read something, or experienced something, that changed them, or changed their perspective on something or someone—changed them for the better. I know in my life there have been times that my heart has been opened through conversations with others: other points of view, other perspectives, other experiences. Something has opened up.

During our Midweek Lenten Worship we will be journeying through possibilities of opening our lives in ways that we may not have thought of or expected. We will be journeying with our friends from First Lutheran, sharing worship, table fellowship, and scripture. We will gather in the hosting congregation’s fellowship hall each Wednesday for “healthy snacks” at 6:30. Then as part of our worship we will watch short video presentations and have conversation around these that may help us to live out our faith and values as we live out callings in our communities. We place our hope and trust in God and Gods call to “make all things new” in our own lives.

Here is our Midweek Schedule to be held jointly with our friends and neighbors from First Lutheran Church:

Open My Life, Lord

Open My Eyes, Lord
6:30 pm, Wednesday, February 21 at First Lutheran

Open my Hands, Lord
6:30 pm, Wednesday, February 28 at Bethlehem Lutheran

Open My Ears, Lord
6:30 pm, Wednesday, March 7 at First Lutheran

Open my Heart, Lord
6:30 pm, Wednesday, March 14 at Bethlehem Lutheran

Open My Life, Lord
6:30 pm, Wednesday, March 21 at First Lutheran

Highlights

Pastor’s Message	1
Updates	3
Pantry Grants	4
Ushers, Greeters	5
Youth Gathering	6
Ash Wednesday	7
Calendar	



Happy Valentine’s
Day
February 14!

Please come. Pastor Elizabeth

Visitor Volunteers Needed

Visitors Needed!

Do you feel called to visit those that are homebound—perhaps to bring them communion from our table? Please join me on **February 11th** for conversation and training around visiting and taking communion to those who are unable to be with us physically in worship. No prior commitment is needed to learn more.

Contact Pastor Elizabeth for more information.



Texas Bar-B-Que A Big Success!

Thanks to all of you who bought tickets, those who ate, those who helped serve and clean up. The totaling isn't complete but we think we made almost \$900.00 for our Youth Trip, *"This Changes Everything"* youth gathering in Houston this summer.

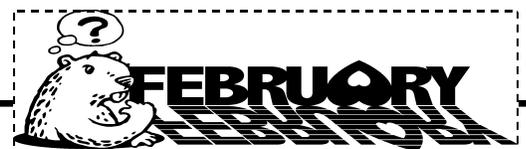
A big thank you also to Pastor Bob and Lynn for delivering some of the leftovers to Hope Haven.

Mark Your Calendars for World Day of Prayer, March 3

The World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement led by Christian women who come together to observe a common day of "informed prayer and prayerful action" in early March. The service will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Salvation Army, 830 Grove Street, in DeKalb.

This year focus is on Suriname with the theme of "All God's Creation is Very Good!" The service will include responsive readings, songs and prayers. An offering will be taken in support of The World Day of Prayer activities and fund grants to organizations worldwide working on women's and children's issues.

In the local area, we too have a long history of ecumenism related to the World Day of Prayer. Responsibility for hosting the service rotates through the community and women from multiple congregations often participate in various ways before and during the service.





Membership Updates, Concerns and Thanks

Lent begins . . .



Ash Wednesday

February 14

6:30 p.m. service



GALATIANS 5:13, NIV

Dear Bethlehem Women:

Thank you for your donation of \$100.00 to Twenty-Five and Four, Amanda's project that gives diaper shirts to neo-natal ICU families. www.twentyfiveandfour.com

Dear Members of Bethlehem,

"Thank you so much for your gift to the Nursing Project Tanzania. Your gift is going to help young people to have a career and improve the health conditions for the people of Tanzania. We are just \$25,000 from our \$100,000 goal thanks to the generous gifts like yours. Thank you!"

The Nursing Project Task Force

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF QUILTERS:

IN 38 YEARS, LWR QUILTERS HAVE MANAGED TO SEW 30 MILES OF QUILTS!

Our Cut-Ups meets every Monday at 8:30 if you are interested in some helping create quilts.

*Ariel, daughter of Dawn, had a baby boy on January 16.
His name is Greyson Steele*

Bell Choir is always looking for more

Bell Ringers

If you can donate one hour each Thursday at 6:00 p.m., please join us! Don't worry if you have never done this—we will teach you!



Dear Friends,

"Many thanks for the cards, visits and good wishes. Thanks to Pastor Elizabeth and everyone for their visits, too. We enjoyed the cookies from Sarah Circle."

Happy New Year to All, Margaret & Loren

Thank you to all those who helped with our Community Gardens this year—especially Joan, Nadine, Janet and Julie. Volunteers from Food Pantry (thanks Nadine!) picked over 900 lbs of vegies for our clients.

Grants Given for Food Pantry

In the month of January, our Feed My Sheep Food Pantry and a few other large pantries in DeKalb County were given a special grant for free meat, soup and oatmeal. Because of this grant, we have been able to order over \$1,000 worth of free food items including country sausage, ground beef, ground turkey, ground chicken and turkey, chicken and rice soup, and oatmeal. This was especially great for us because the free commodities from the Northern Illinois Food Bank for part of January and February did not include the usual meat items.

Another grant for \$1,000 was given to our pantry for a new freezer from the Social Ministry Committee of the Northern Illinois Synod. This was a timely grant because one of our freezers was cracked on the bottom and had a poor seal around the door frame making the door susceptible to popping open at unexpected times—not good for keeping food at the appropriate temperature!

Stated in the grant letter: *“Congratulations! We are grateful to support the good work you do with your neighbors in the name of Jesus, and we are excited congregations across the synod can partner with you in this important feeding ministry.”*

We also want to thank Schnuck’s Market for choosing our pantry for their “Every Bag Feeds A Neighbor” project in January. For every bag sold in January, we will receive \$1.00.

A Few Statistics—The Face of Hunger

In 2017, 18,701 individuals and 5,565 families were served at our pantry.

- 36% are children under age 18
- 77% have a member of the household that has been employed
- 78% of our hungry neighbors have a high school diploma or GED
- 30% have some post high school education
- 15% are over age 60
- 40% are White, 33% Latino or Hispanic, 17% African American, 10% Other
- 26% report that one member of household has diabetes
- 53% report that one member has high blood pressure

Have you ever heard of "Youth Engaged in Philanthropy"?

It's a club at DeKalb High School that enables young people to learn about our community, the needs of the community, and how to help! The DeKalb County Community Foundation sponsors the club but it is entirely student led. Emilie is part of this group. She was challenged this month to "give away" \$100 and she chose *Feed My Sheep* to help. When I asked her why she chose us she said, "Well, our food pantry helps a lot of people in our community and I wanted to help that happen"! Last year \$11,588 in YEP grants were awarded. Thanks Emilie!

Bridges Out of Poverty

Join Live Healthy DeKalb County on **Friday, February 23**, at Kishwaukee College, for the Second Annual *Bridges Out of Poverty Training*. The *Bridges Out of Poverty Workshop* provides both the social service provider and the community member key lessons in working with individuals from poverty. Topics include increasing awareness of the differences in economic cultures and how those differences affect opportunities for success.

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. and the training will start at 8:30 a.m. Lunch will be catered by Kishwaukee College. Cost of training is \$15 per person. To register, please email lisa.cumings@nm.org. Deadline for registering is February 16.

For more info you can call (815) 756-1521 x 152426.

Safe Passage Thanks You

We are so grateful to the generous community members and businesses who donated to our annual giving campaign. This year's appeal featured an update on Sally, a previous client. Sally explained that her time at Safe Passage helped her become a better person, parent and friend. "*I've learned true love for myself and boundaries to make my life better and more positive,*" she said. Sally trained to become a nursing assistant and is living a healthy and happy life with her children.

This year's appeal also featured a beautiful hand drawn snowman, pictured right. The image was particularly special this year because it was designed by a current client.

This year, Safe Passage is committed to ensuring that #MeToo is not just a moment, but becomes a movement. Consider how you can partner with Safe Passage in 2018 to make our community safe for all. Visit www.safepassagedv.org.



Ash Wednesday Ashes

Did you ever wonder: Why and how do we use ashes on Ash Wednesday?

Why? Ash Wednesday is the Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter and the first day of Lent. The day is named for the practice of imposing ashes, a practice that many Lutheran congregations have found to be a very meaningful part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy. Using ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in the Bible (e.g., Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26; Matthew 11:21). The early Christians adopted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence. Ashes symbolize several aspects of our human existence:

§ Ashes remind us of God's condemnation of sin, as God said to Adam, "Dust you are and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19).

§ Ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. They were used anciently in the absence of soap. Even on Ash Wednesday, this most penitential day, we receive ashes in the form of the cross, the same symbol placed on our bodies with water in our baptism. Even in this ashen mark of death, we anticipate the new life of Easter.

§ Ashes remind us of the shortness of human life, for it is said as we are buried into the ground; "We commit this body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

§ Ashes are a symbol of our need to repent, confess our sins, and return to God.

In the liturgy, the confession and imposition of ashes follow the sermon and hymn of the day. Following an Invitation to Lent, confession marks the beginning of a season of penitence. The Maundy Thursday absolution is the structural response to the Ash Wednesday confession, marking off Lent as a penitential time. At the conclusion of the Ash Wednesday confession and imposition of ashes, a declaration of grace is used, coupled with a plea for mercy.

How? Those who desire to receive ashes come forward and may stand/kneel. Ashes are applied with the minister's thumb in the form of a small cross on the forehead of each person with the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Pastors and one or more assisting ministers may impose ashes. Several prie-dieu (kneelers) can be stationed in appropriate places for the imposition so that people can freely move to them as they choose.

Join us for the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday, February 14th at 6:30 pm.

