

Bethlehem Star

A Message from our Pastor

Come! live in the light!

Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!

**We are called to be light for the kingdom,
to live in the freedom of the city of God!**

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We Are Called by David Haas is one of our newer hymns. I don't know about you but it is a hymn that pulls me in and lifts me up. It does lead to some questions though. What are we being called to here at Bethlehem? What are we being called to as individuals or families? The answer is given in the refrain: *We are called to act with justice. We are called to love tenderly. We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.* As Bethlehem continues on what our council president Jerry Johns calls our "New Journey," I hope we can make that refrain our theme—justice, loving, serving, and walking humbly with God. Food, for the journey both

wanted to go on, can you? Abraham and Sarah didn't even know where they were going. Noah and his family were saved but it was not by going on a cruise. Joseph went to Egypt as a slave and Israel journeyed out of slavery in Egypt hundreds of years later, but it took them 40 years to travel a few hundred miles. Do you really think Mary and Joseph wanted to journey right before Mary gave birth? And what about that last journey to Jerusalem for Jesus. Many of our journey's we don't choose...and many are downright hard.

So, how is our "New Journey" going? I know some are asking how our financial situation is. Please ask a council person any questions you have. I can say, it's about the same, we're holding our own but continue to explore the recommendations of the Futuring Task Force to increase ministry sustainability. Those suggestions were: renting space, reevaluating staffing, Food Pantry Partnerships, and sharing our space with another church. We've discovered no other churches or entities that wish to share or rent space. First Lutheran Church has some members who have expressed interest in helping to maintain our community garden and have even talked of the possibility of enlarging it to produce more food for the pantry. Our staffing remains the same as we are definitely not overstaffed. We are keeping our ears open for the possibility of perhaps sharing our pastor with another church or ministry. It may not be ideal but it may open new doors for mission and ministry. Verse two of this favorite hymn goes like this: *Come! Open your heart! Show your mercy to all those in fear! We are called to be hope for the hopeless, so all hatred and blindness will be no more!* Journeys are not necessarily something we would choose to go on but they are before us. As we open our hearts to one another and to all who come through our doors we continue to work for justice, love tenderly, serve one another and humbly seek God.

Peace for the Journey, Pastor Elizabeth

Mark Your Calendars



May 13



Kishwaukee Concert Band
SPRING CONCERT
Sunday, May 20, 3:00
 NIU Boutell Concert Hall
 Free Admission
 Handicap Accessible

PANTRY INFO . . .
 Bethlehem's Food Pantry continues to help those in need. Each month our two big truck deliveries from the Northern Illinois Food Bank equal approximately 3-4 tons of food! We also receive items from Wal-Mart and Schnuck's Market. In March, our pantry helped to feed the following:
443 Households
1,614 Individuals
613 Children under 18
 Thank you for your generous donations for this important community mission.
Needed: Plastic bags

Bethlehem Mission Endowment Fund

The purpose of the Mission Endowment Fund is to enhance the mission outreach of the Church apart from the general operating budget of the congregation. Gifts will extend God's work within our church, the community, and the world.

We are in the process of identifying organizations or groups to contribute money to in 2018.

Do you know of an organization that you would like us to consider? Please let us know by filling out the bottom portion of this page and turning it in to the church office.

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**Please consider this organization for a Mission Endowment Fund gift.
Please return this form to the office.**

NAME OF ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF ORGANIZATION _____

YOUR NAME AND PHONE NUMBER IN CASE WE NEED TO CONTACT YOU FOR FURTHER INFO: _____





Membership Updates, Concerns and Thanks

A Note from Jessica,

“Thank you to everyone that sent me thinking-of-you cards and holiday cards. I enjoy them so much and I am grateful for the thoughts and prayers from everyone. I really enjoyed my Christmas cards. I pray everything went well with decorating the church. I miss helping out and decorating the hallway. I hope the tree lit without problems. . .

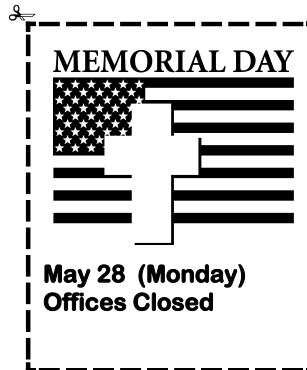
Happy Birthday to everyone who had a birthday so far in 2018. My prayers go to all who have been under the weather in any way. . .

Thank you for the beautiful birthday cards I received from BELC and friends. Thank you also for the prayers and greeting cards I received from all of you so far this year. It cheers me up so much that I am loved so much.”
God Bless, Jessica B.

***Jessica would like to continue to receive cards and letters!**

Dear Women of Church,
“Thank you for your generous contributions to VAC. Your support helps VAC continue to provide many vital services to seniors and persons with disabilities in our Community. We are grateful for your support of our efforts and for your commitment to our Community.”

Ellen Rogers, Exec. Director



Do you know the name of a student graduating this year? If so, please give their names to the church office as soon as possible. Thanks!



For Your Information

BACH IS BACK

Saturday, May 5—7:30 p.m.
Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra

Boutell Concert Hall

*Adults \$16, Senior \$11
Children \$6*

Congratulations to . . .

Vicar Preston Fields on his first call to Salem Lutheran Church in Sycamore!

****See next page for his graduation Invitation.**

The Bethlehem Gardening Group would be delighted with the addition of a couple new members. We are especially in need of help watering during dry spells. Please contact Joan Vandre or Julie Rowland if interested.

Thank you and FYIs

Dear People of God at Bethlehem Lutheran,

"Please accept this card as both an announcement of my upcoming graduation and a huge "thank you" for the scholarship money given to me last weekend. I'll admit that I was surprised at the generosity when I opened the envelope at home! Your scholarship helped pay for my remaining fees, including my graduation fee and graduation robe rental. A huge help! Of course, more than the money, thank you for your love and support through a challenging senior year."

In Christ, Vicar Preston

The next **New Neighbor Outreach** will be May 5th. Meet at First Lutheran at 9:30 a.m., assemble welcome bags and go! This is a welcoming ministry of Bethlehem and First together reaching out to our neighbors. All are welcome!!



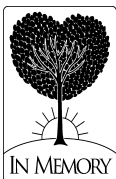
Dear Bethlehem,

"Many thanks to you and to the congregation for the use of the church hall by Tanzania Development Support for our recent garage sale. You make us feel very welcome and we appreciate the fact that you are willing to accommodate such a major event.

You may be happy to know that we raised over \$4,500.00! The proceeds from the sale will enable TDS to purchase books and computers for students and adults in the Mara Region of Tanzania.

Thank you for your help.

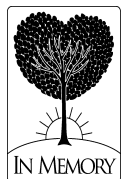
Sincerely, Tricia
Treasurer, TDS



Altar Flowers are needed for June and summer months.

WE LOVE GARDEN FLOWERS TOO!

Coffee & Fellowship sponsors are needed for July & August



Hope Haven “Night by Night” Annual Campaign

The month of May will kick off Hope Haven’s annual “Night by Night” campaign to raise funds for the homeless living in DeKalb County. Over the years, local churches, schools, business, organizations, individuals and families have sponsored nights of shelter, adequate food, and supportive services that promote education, life skills and growth. In the last 15 years, as a community, we have raised over \$300,000 during the campaign through \$25.00 a night sponsorships!

We ask for your continued help this year by sending your \$25.00 tax deductible donation to Hope Haven at 1145 Rushmore Drive, DeKalb, IL 60115, or call (815) 758-5765 for more information.

Safe Passage and *Give DeKalb County* May 3

Your generous donation this **May 3rd** will help a victim of domestic violence find safety in our shelter, a college student get free counseling after the trauma of a sexual assault or a classroom of 1st graders learn how to prevent or find help if someone tries to abuse them. In 2017, our donors helped us raise over \$28,000! This year we are hoping to continue the momentum and raise funds to renovate our long term housing in a safe and more healing environment for our clients. Your gift to Safe Passage makes all that and more possible. Givedekalbcountry.org on May 3 and pick Safe Passage or call (815) 756-5228.

Love Inc and *Give DeKalb County*

Your donations on **May 3rd** are much needed in helping us to meet our goal for the day! If you would like to drop off a check in person you may do that on May 3 at the DeKalb County Community Foundation located at 475 DeKalb Avenue in Sycamore. Or you can follow these steps online:

- Visit www.givedekalbcountry.org
- Click “see more participating organizations”
- In the search box type in *Love in the Name of Christ DeKalb/Sycamore*
- Click our name
- Click the donate button you desire to contribute

Happy Mother’s Day—May 13!

