

# Bethlehem Star

## A Message from Our Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

There is an old hymn of the church that underscores a foundational principle for Christian stewards, the principle being God as the giver of all things. The title of this hymn is "Count Your Blessings." It is a delightful hymn that recounts all that God has done for us and the blessings of God in our lives. The hymn's refrain is the most poignant observation of the reality of generosity and tells us this:

*Count your blessings, name them one by one;*

*Count your blessings, see what God has done;*

*Count your blessings, name them one by one;*

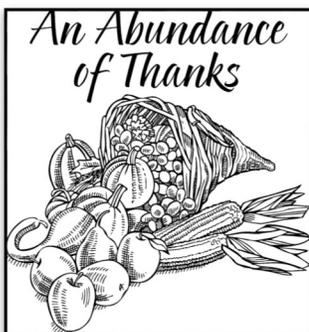
*And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*" (Public Domain)

During the month of October we were trying to be more mindful of those things; people and situations that we were grateful for. How do you live and give in gratitude? Sometimes we don't think of it in this way but it is a topic of discipleship and stewardship. It is a question that implores us to pause amidst our busy lives and consider how richly God has blessed, how we receive these gifts, and to what extent gratitude guides our living and giving.

There are two principles that lie at the core of our giving. The first is that our giving in gratitude is a joyful and faithful response to God's giving of Jesus Christ and the grace-filled life that comes through Him. The other reason for our giving in gratitude is that the ministries of our congregation can remain bold and vibrant in sharing God's grace by what we do in Christ's name for our members and community. Last year our giving enabled us to provide food for over 17,000 adults and children along with providing 100 families with full Thanksgiving Turkey Dinners. Through our pantry we helped individuals fulfill community service hours and give our volunteers an avenue to give back in service. Our giving has enabled us to support mission work abroad and locally, send youth to Gatherings and camps and support other local helping services that we rely on such as Safe Passage and 4-C supporting child care. Our blessings have blessed Grace Place Ministry. We are so blessed to be able to come together each week to worship and be fed by our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Abraham we too have been blessed to be a blessing to others.

All I really want to say is....Thank you for all of your giving that makes our ministry together possible. Blessings, Pastor Elizabeth

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## Notes of Thanks!

### **From Tanzania Development Support:**

“Many thanks to you, the Church Council, the staff & congregation for the use of the church and facilities for the recent Tanzania Development Support yard sale. We raised just over \$4,000 through this event.

We are very grateful that we have this partnership with Bethlehem Lutheran Church and are open to exploring other opportunities that may be mutually beneficial to our missions.”

Sincerely, Tricia DeBoo, Treasurer

### **Lutheran Bible Translators:**

“Thank you for your gift to Lutheran Bible Translators and those who do not yet have God’s Word in the language of their heart.” *God’s Blessings, Dr. Mike Rodewald, Executive Director*

### **4C: Community Coordinated Child Care:**

“It is with genuine heart-felt appreciation that I write this thank you letter for the generous donation from the Mission Endowment Fund Committee of Bethlehem.

This year this donation will be used in three ways. 1) to provide winter clothing for the children that were affected by the fires in DeKalb this past spring. 2) To provide education resources for in-home providers caring for children on the childcare assistance program. 3) To purchase needed items for families who have had to relocate due to unsafe living conditions. It is our mission to support families as they work toward economic independence by participating in educational and vocational programs as well as employment opportunities. Again, I thank you for enabling us to support these sometimes fragile families as they build better lives for themselves and their children. “

With Warm Regards, Susan Petersen, Exec. Director

## **Lutheran World Relief urges protection for civilians in northern Syria**

Fighting in northeastern Syria has forced more than 200,000 people living in the area to flee their homes. Shelling and airstrikes along the frontlines continue to affect communities. Already the worst displacement on the globe, the Syrian refugee crisis promises to worsen, increasing suffering for vulnerable families and communities.

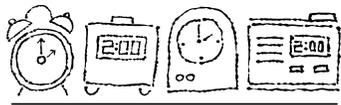
Lutheran World Relief has staff and partners working in northern Iraq and Lebanon, already assisting Syrian refugees who have fled years of war and conflict. Our staff in the area are preparing for a possible influx of refugees into surrounding areas to ensure a coordinated response.

To learn more about Lutheran World Relief’s work in the Middle East, visit <https://lwr.org/middle-east>. To donate, go to [donate.lwr.org/middleeast](https://donate.lwr.org/middleeast)

## Membership Updates, Concerns and Thanks

### Feed My Sheep Food Pantry September

# of households served: 424  
# of individuals: 1,417  
# of children: 540



**November 3  
2 A.M.**

DAYLIGHT-SAVING TIME ENDS

### November Confirmation Schedule:

November 10—Liturgical Seasons

November 20—LWR Quilt Work

**Congratulations** to Emily R., the recipient of an ELCA Church and College Scholar award for this school year. Emily will dedicate 30 hours per semester of direct volunteer service and meet with other scholars monthly to reflect on their experiences and faith formation.



This opportunity is provided through a grant from the ELCA and the three partner churches of the ELCA in the DeKalb/Sycamore area (this means you)!

*“Thank you for partnering with Grace Place. Your financial contribution to Grace Place allows us to offer a variety of programs for free to the NIU community. Our students leave Grace Place having been fed and knowing they are loved. We could not do this ministry without you. Thank you!”*

*Pastor Mack, Grace Place*

Consider donating your winter gloves, mittens, and warm coats to our Food Pantry. We could also use your clean plastic shopping bags! A good way to recycle them!

**ANNUAL MEETING—PART I  
COMING UP IN DECEMBER**  
Watch your bulletins & newsletters for reminders.

**Happy Thanksgiving to all!  
Offices &  
Food Pantry closed  
Thursday, November 28**

SEPTEMBER FINANCIAL INFO	
Income	11,612.50
Expenses	-14,184.17
Net	-2,571.67

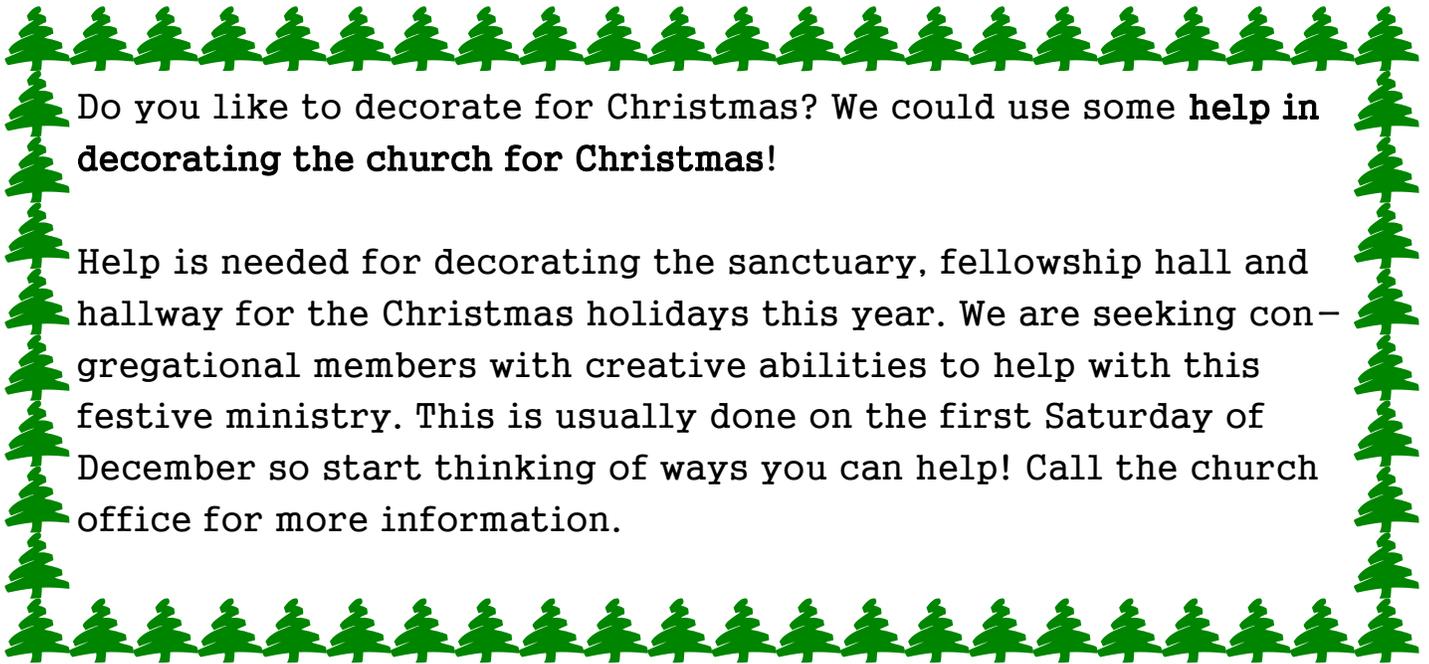
Dear BELC Friends,  
“John and I want to extend our sincere thanks for your thoughtful notes, memorial donations, hugs—and prayers this last month. It was all appreciated and really provided great support after losing Skip. We feel blessed and are thankful.”

Love, Beth & John

**FREE CLOTHING DISTRIBUTION  
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1-3 P.M.  
320 FISK AVE. (ST. MARY’S FOOD PANTRY)**

**WARM WINTER CLOTHING FOR INFANTS  
THROUGH ADULTS!**  
*Sponsored by St. Vincent de Paul*

# Hanging of the Greens



Do you like to decorate for Christmas? We could use some **help in decorating the church for Christmas!**

Help is needed for decorating the sanctuary, fellowship hall and hallway for the Christmas holidays this year. We are seeking congregational members with creative abilities to help with this festive ministry. This is usually done on the first Saturday of December so start thinking of ways you can help! Call the church office for more information.



## TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

**November 17, 5:30 p.m.  
Westminster Presbyterian Church**

For the past 2 years, Westminster Presbyterian Church in DeKalb has hosted an ecumenical memorial service for Transgender Day of Remembrance. The special calendar day is on November 20 and honors transgender and gender variant individuals who were murdered due to anti-transgender violence over the previous twelve months. The Day of Remembrance began in 1999 to draw attention to the issue of anti-transgender violence.

This year, we will have our memorial service on November 17, at 5:30 p.m., at Westminster. If you would like to be a participant in the service or want more information, please contact Rev. Blake Richter at (815) 756-2905.



# Safe Passage Thanks You & Mission Endowment Fund

“On behalf of the Safe Passage Board of Directors, staff and clients, I would like to thank you for your generous donation. The work we do at Safe Passage is so vitally important to the safety of our clients but also to the safety of our community. We are honored to be a part of this life-saving work. Because of your generosity, we’re able to help adults and their children find safety and hope for the future and we are able to work toward a future where no one experiences violence.

Over the last few months, we’ve seen the children and adults in our shelter find peace and healing in tending our small vegetable garden and enjoying the harvest they’ve helped create. Our kids have been anticipating a new school year and enjoying the new books, pencils, and friends the year has brought! Because of your gift, we’re able to provide shelter, counseling, and legal support, but even more we are able to provide a safe place for children and adults to heal and thrive.

As leaves change color and the weather turns cool, our staff are reminded of how the seasons in our lives change. There may be times of tragedy, loss, and pain, but with help and support, that season can turn to a time of growth, healing and hope. We’re honored to walk alongside our clients through every season of their lives and it is such a gift to see the growth that blossoms in the lives of people who finally feel safe. Thank you for your support to our clients! “

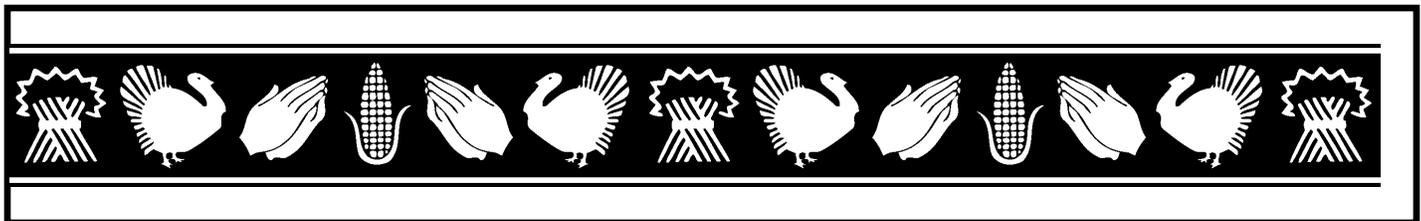
With gratitude,  
Mary Ellen Schaid  
Executive Director

# More Thanks from Voluntary Action Center

“Thank you for your very generous offering of \$350.00 in support of Voluntary Action Center’s Meals on Wheels program from your BELC Mission Endowment Fund. Your gift enables VAC to preserve the dignity, health, and nutrition needs of the elderly and other persons in need throughout DeKalb County. As VAC continues to feel the challenge of reduced Meals on Wheels funding, it is comforting to know that there are those whose mission includes assisting VAC provide nutritious meals to those in need in our community. Meals on Wheels enables individuals to remain safely in the comfort of their own homes. This vital service also allows MOW’s clients to have contact each day with someone who is concerned about their well-being. These important benefits could not be provided without the kindness of donors like you.

Voluntary Action Center would like to thank you for your philanthropy and dedication to our agency. On behalf of our Meals on Wheels clients and our entire community, we thank the Mission Endowment Fund for their thoughtful gift to enhance our Meals on Wheels program.”

Sincerely,  
Ellen Rogers, Executive Director



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## Pastor Mack Patrick—The New Pastor at Grace Place

The following is a letter from the Board of Directors for Grace Place Campus Ministry at NIU:

Dear Siblings in Christ,

“Pastor Mack Patrick is a self-proclaimed nerd that hails from the great state of Colorado. He is a graduate from Midland University in Fremont, NE, and holds a Masters of Divinity with a concentration in Youth, Culture and Mission from Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Ia. Pastor Mack is an ordained pastor of the ELCA and is an avid reader, fighter of injustice and a compassionate soul. Outside of Grace Place, Pastor Mack is heavily involved in Extraordinary Lutheran Ministry’s Proclaim Community, a professional network for LGBTQIA+ rostered leaders and seminarians, or in planning youth events on local and national level including the ELCA’s The tAble, a pre-event to the National Youth Gathering for youth with disabilities. Pastor Mack can be contacted for speaking at [campuspastor@graceplaceniue.com](mailto:campuspastor@graceplaceniue.com).

In different stages of our search process, we had the blessing of meeting many amazing clergy who were discerning their possible next stages of their calls to ministry. We got to see, first –hand, how the Holy Spirit is moving in both big and small ways through these servants’ lives.

The Spirit’s momentum was particularly noticeable in Pastor Mack’s life. In every engagement with Pastor Mack we saw a humble and hopeful leader that we could see proclaiming to a very diverse campus community that God’s faithfulness is overflowing with life-altering love.

Like many who have lived before us, we live in a time of great uncertainty and many reasons to be fearful because of so much injustice currently happening in the world. It might seem innocent to think that campus ministry can have much of an effect in helping us realize God’s dream for the world; but we have seen the radical transformation that can happen in students’ lives when they are heard, prodded, and shown how someone else sees God moving with them as they become new versions of themselves. We are excited for Pastor Mack to continue encouraging Grace Place to be a place of radical openness at the crossroads of the NIU campus. As we transition out of our interim time, we are extremely grateful to Rev. Bob Hansen who served for two years as our interim Campus Pastor, and to the Rev. Amy Fallon, who served as the previous Campus Pastor. We are grateful for the support we continue to receive from the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA and the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. We are also thankful for you! Grace Place would not exist without the continued support from our vast and wide network of individuals and churches.

Going forward:

We ask for your prayers for Pastor Mack and the leadership of Grace Place.

We ask for continued ways to connect and re-connect.

We ask for insight in how we can support each other in doing ministry in our places.

We ask the Spirit for continued blessings that simultaneously surprise and frighten us into response.”

Pastor Mack had his Service of Installation on October 22 at First Lutheran Church.

# Thanksgiving Boxes for Food Pantry



**We are part of the way there!  
Your help can make a difference!**

**Please help us with our  
Annual Holiday Meal Boxes!**



*Thanksgiving*  
D I N N E R S

**You can help some needy families have a nice  
dinner this Thanksgiving!**



*Thanksgiving*  
D I N N E R S

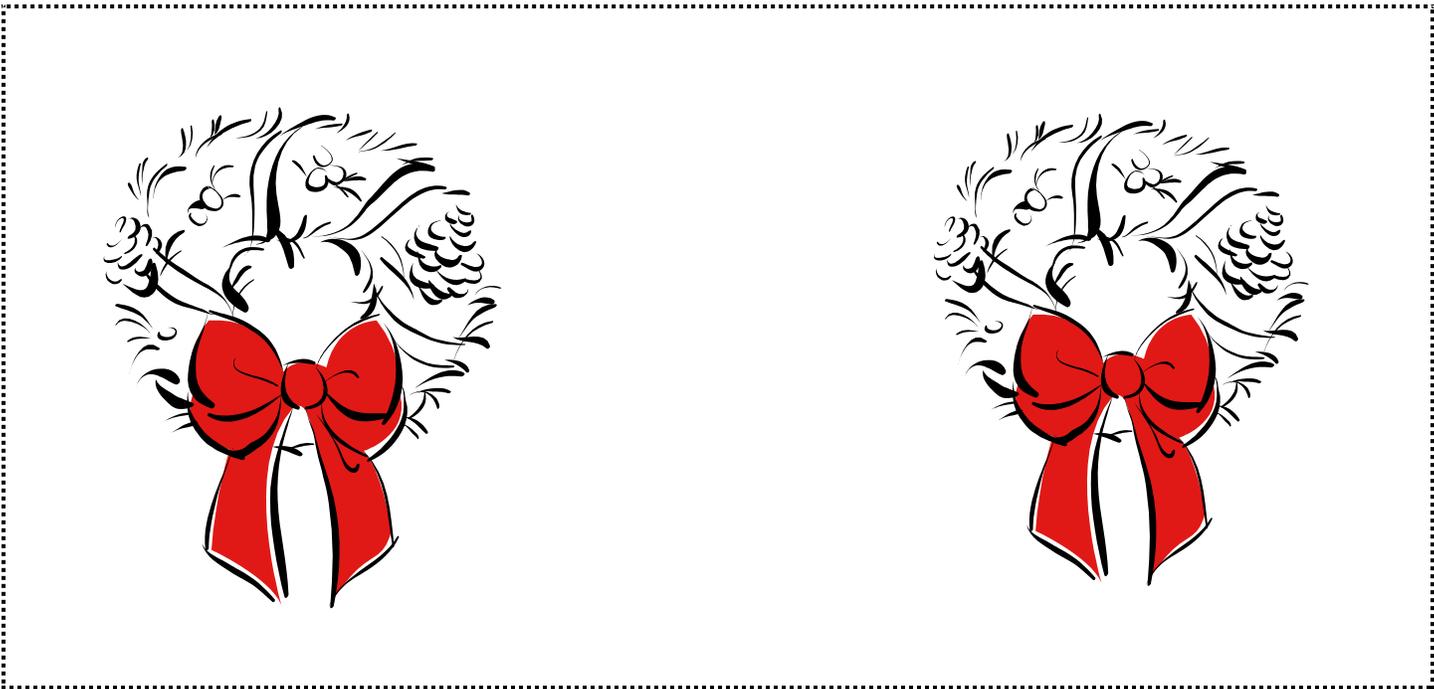
The Northern Illinois Food Bank is offering holiday meal boxes that serve 8 which include a 12-14 pound turkey, stuffing mix, instant potatoes, two veggies, cranberry sauce, dessert and more for just \$16. We had to order early, so write your check for the Food Pantry soon.

We have ordered 100 boxes for our Food Pantry clients this year so your generous donations would be greatly appreciated. *Make your checks payable to Bethlehem and note that it is for the Thanksgiving boxes.* Thank you for your continued support!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# of boxes at \$16 each \_\_\_\_\_





## Christmas Poinsettia Order Form

### CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDER FORM 2019

Remember a loved one and help to make the Sanctuary beautiful for our Christmas Eve Service! To order your plant, please complete this form and give to an usher; place in the offering plate, or leave in the church office no later than **Sunday, December 16**. Please make your check payable to Bethlehem Lutheran Church and include with your plant order.

# \_\_\_\_\_ plant(s) @ \$13.00 each



Name of Donor \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

I will take plant(s) home after Christmas Eve services

I will share my plant(s) with a shut-in.

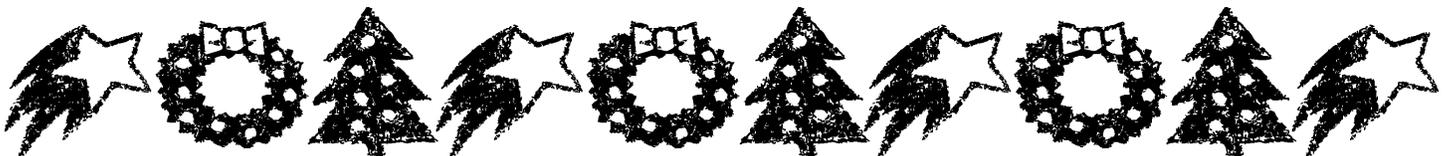
## Ways to Help with Christmas at DeKalb Co. Rehab

You can support them this year by purchasing a gift for a special resident or with a monetary donation that will be used to purchase beauty shop gift certificates from our in-house salon or Peddlers Shop gift certificates. The money is put right into the client's own personal account, in our business office, marked for getting their hair done or gift shop sales.

If you would like to have the name or names of a special resident, please let the office know and they will send you a list of names and needs. If you choose a gift of clothing, we will send needs and sizes. If you would like to donate something other than the certificates or clothing, residents can use gripper socks, large print books, EZ-grasp puzzles, large-faced watches with elastic band, blankets, shawls, small stuffed animals, pens, coloring books/colored pencils, artificial flower/plant arrangements that can be hung on doors or walls, caddies (bags), hats and gloves. **NO FOOD ITEMS.** Gifts will be delivered to residents on December 23 during the day.

If you have any questions or are interested in helping to make the Christmas Season special for our residents, please call Jennifer H-Giannini, Community Life Director, (815) 217-0344 or [jhgiannini@dekalbcounty.org](mailto:jhgiannini@dekalbcounty.org). **Donations must be to us by December 18 for processing.**

Thank you for your time and consideration!



## Star Seminarian Reminder

*It's almost the Season . . . !*

It's time to start thinking about supporting the **Star Seminarian** project at BELC. This fund was established to support seminary students who are studying for pastoral ministry. Your donations will be greatly appreciated and as an added bonus your name will appear in the December *Star* with special Christmas Greetings to the congregation.

