

# Bethesda Life-Line

## Worship Services\*

Sunday 9:00

Service of Holy Communion is celebrated on the First and Third Sundays of each month.

Coffee fellowship is held in the fellowship room following the Sunday Worship service. All are invited to share in conversation and warm fellowship.



Feb. 4...Sunday Worship 9:00 AM  
Communion

Feb. 11 Sunday Worship 9:00 AM

Feb. 18 Sunday Worship 9:00 AM  
Communion

Feb. 25 Sunday Worship 9:00 AM

### Bethesda Mission Statement:

We will **LIVE** and **SERVE** through **FAITH**  
we will **ACT** with **LOVE** and **KINDNESS**  
we will **GIVE** hope and **SUPPORT** to all

## Upcoming Events

Feb. 10 "Sweetheart Dinner"

Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday



Snow Birds have fun in the sun!



# 2018

## Bethesda Outreach to the World

There is now a bookcase along the west wall of the Fellowship Hall where our mission outreach projects have been consolidated into one area. Check out the things we are doing for our community and our world and see how you can help. Currently our projects include the Food Shelf, Hope Lodge, Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes, eyeglass and hearing aid collection. Watch for information about the upcoming newborn kits that will be put together by Bethesda Women.

## Feed My Starving Children event:

The date is set!! Please join us in packing meals at Feed My Starving Children on Thursday, April 12 from 12 noon-2pm in Coon Rapids. Those interested in car-pooling will meet at Bethesda Lutheran at 9:30 am. Registration is required so please email the church with the names of those interested in participating.

If packing isn't for you, but you are interested in supporting a special donation from Bethesda Lutheran of Malmo, consider any or all of the following opportunities:

1. Blessing box offering in February and March
2. Mark your envelope with a special donation for Feed My Starving Children (FMSC)

There are over 15 people already registered; sign up soon!



## "Sweetheart Dinner"

WELCA & Malmo Area Lions would like to invite you to a "Sweetheart Dinner" on Saturday, Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>. Doors open at 4:30 with dinner at 5:30. Cost \$15. Reservations can be called into the church office, deadline is Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>.



## **From the Pastor**

Greetings sisters and brothers in Christ!

It is a pleasure to finally be sharing a few thoughts with you in our monthly newsletter. I want to begin by thanking everyone for

the warm welcome as your new pastor of Bethesda Lutheran Church. Many thanks also for all the Christmas cards, gifts, and tasty treats!

Minnesota's welcome, at least in terms of weather this past month, has not exactly been "warm," but re-adjusting to life in the Midwest has otherwise been going well. Though I am not 100% unpacked, I have settled in quite well to life in the new parsonage. All in all, a great place to call home!

Though I appreciate all the amenities *inside* my new house, particularly those that I lacked in my old apartment, I have especially enjoyed the new surroundings *outside* the parsonage. All those beautiful mornings as the sun breaks through the trees and the birds sing and squawk happily at the backyard feeders. Of course, my old apartment had trees and birds too, but there was also the hum and dust of nearby AC units and ventilation systems. Garbage trucks idling outside. The garlicky smell of the nearby Thai restaurant. A bit different environment to be sure.

Not to say that I didn't enjoy living in downtown Bethlehem. I got takeout from that Thai restaurant many Sunday afternoons. Bethlehem at Christmastime is like something out of a postcard or a movie. Horse-drawn carriages. Outdoor Christmas markets. Displays in store windows. Musicians playing on the street. Only thing missing was a cart selling roasted chestnuts. Though the stand selling the local beloved pastry- the "kiffle" - in a wide variety of flavors was a decent substitute. So, as wonderful as it was to spend Christmas with all of you here in Malmo, I did feel a bit nostalgic this December for Pennsylvania.

"Change" so often is a topic of mixed emotions both in our personal lives and in our communities of faith. At times it can feel like change is a topic that is only pulled out and dusted off in times of challenge and stress, but, of course, that is part of the problem. Few congregations (and few lives, for that matter) become or stay healthy without learning how to handle and plan for change as a regular, ongoing part of life.

At my first congregation "change" quickly became a buzzword that I preached and taught and discussed over and over again (along with other leaders in the

congregation). We were a church that was facing a long-term decline in number of active members and a budget that grew redder ever year.

In situations like these, it is almost inevitable that people wonder "why?" How did we get here? And, much less helpfully, "whose fault is it?" Usually if you go looking for blame, you find it, because we are human, and humans make mistakes. You are always going to find missteps by councils and congregation members and bishops and synod staffs and, most especially, pastors. There are always things that could or should have been done differently. Ministries that that could have been tried. Arguments that should have been avoided... and others we should have been willing to have. Times when we should have given more or spent less or been willing to take a risk or two.

But so often change happens on scale beyond our control. Quite often, in fact. That is one of the great lessons the natural world might teach us. Constancy and change go hand in hand, the sun shines and the earth warms and cools with a bit of regularity, but lots of variation too. Plants and animals flourish and decline based on random variations that happen one year to the next. Yet, sometimes we are responsible for that variation. Development, pollution, agriculture, and management all have their impact. As stewards of this world, we have the potential to both harm and help. So, we ask for God's help facing all the changes of our world and our lives. So that we will do our best to plan and prepare, but also respond well to the unexpected. And realize that along the way we will make mistakes, and ask God to help us forgive others and ourselves when we do. Life brings change, so as long as we are alive, change happens whether we want it or not. We may not have control over all the factors that bring change to our lives, but hopefully we do our best to embrace change, rather than run from it. We pray that we might see and help lift up God's presence in the midst of change, whether that change brings challenge or celebration.

Because God's presence in our lives will never change, no matter what environment we find ourselves in. No matter where we are, no matter what changes we have experienced, no matter if it is warm or cold (or even really, really, cold), whether it is the smell of pine trees or Thai food that fills the air, God's love will always find us. I am glad to have found this place. I hope you are glad that you found me. And I am glad that God will always find us, no matter where life's journeys may take us.

Yours in Christ, Pastor James Muske



## **Bethesda Lutheran Church of Malmo**

Minutes of January 19, 2018

In attendance: Mary Braun, Melody Lackner, Ron Mehlhop, Judie Birk, Kathy Berland, Ron Haglund, George Smith and Jenny Schuett.

Council president Ron Mehlhop called the meeting to order. Pastor James gave opening Devotions.

### Secretary's Report:

Motion was made to accept the minutes of the December meeting by Mary Braun, seconded by Melody Lackner, and passed.

### Treasurer's Report:

Financial view and current month activity for December was presented by Mary Braun. It was noted that we would be paying back the \$30,000 we borrowed from ourselves once we finish paying off the loan. Motion was made by Ron Haglund to accept the treasurer's report, seconded by Ron Mehlhop and passed.

### Old Business:

Administrative Tasks: Change Signature Authority on: Bank Accounts - signature cards from the bank are coming in the mail to get Ron and George's signatures. Safety Deposit Box - keeping Security Bank - cheaper  
Picture Directory for late 2018 — Mission and Evangelism got information on Lifetouch; Melody Lackner also interested in doing this and will check on pricing and present to M&E.

### New Business:

Video camera is now working in sanctuary, so we can now watch the service from the Fellowship Hall when needed. Just turn the TV on to channel 5.1. Looking at live streaming or putting recording on web site. Needs to be researched. Pastor James will look into this.

Blessing Box to Feed My Starving Children for Feb & March — Stewardship requested this as they are going to serve at Feed My Starving Children in April and would like to take a check to them at that time. Council also discussed the need for local school lunches for Isle or Aitkin children and the

need there. George Smith made a motion to accept the request from Stewardship for the Blessing Box monies to go to Feed My Starving Children for February and March, seconded by Melody Lackner and passed.

The Lions and WELCA would like a Sweetheart Dance and was wondering if dancing is allowed. Mary Braun made a motion to accept dancing at the event, Jenny Schuett seconded and passed.

Property committee would like to hang the wooden artwork that was previously in the sanctuary in the Fellowship Hall. Council approved.

Installation of new pastor will happen this Sunday, January 21 during the service. Pastor James' family will be in attendance. George will represent council. Melody will take photos. Speakers have been chosen and cake ordered.

Membership Roll — council members were given a list of members, active, homebound and associate members to review and return to Mary Braun. We are trying to update our membership rolls.

Bishop's Convention is scheduled for Saturday, March 17 at Zion Lutheran in Grand Rapids. Synod is encouraging all council members and other lay people to attend along with their pastors. It is entitled, "Nuts & Bolts and a Few Loose Screws". There will be workshops on church constitutions, Youth & Family Ministry, Church Finances, training for church council members, etc. Basic tools that will help each congregation. Mary will get more information.

### Committee Reports:

#### Property Committee:

Meeting January, 2018 — Attending were Lee Forester, Diane Jones, Judy Wuorio, Ron Mehlhop and Pastor James.

Energy source for heat, gas or electric — Lee checked into the cost difference and gas is still a better and cheaper choice for heat.

Placement of wooden art from Sanctuary — The property committee would like to hang the wood art from the Sanctuary in the Fellowship Hall. They need the church council to approve as to where they would like to hang them.

Recycling at the Church — Anyone interested in helping was to meet last Sunday in the Fellowship Hall after church to make plans for recycling.

Aluminum is to be put inside the fence behind the small shed and the veggie stand will take care of it from there. Cardboard will have to be collected inside the small garage.

Well water — Our well water was tested for quality and the test came out good.

Driveway — Lee and Darrel have agreed to mark the driveway with a small post. With the snow, someone had drove off the driveway.

Maintenance Coordinator — Rick Hartmann has been hired as our church maintenance coordinator.

Rick is a former contractor from Isle. Rick will work closely with the property committee and Judy Wuorio.

#### Stewardship & Finance:

Summary of meeting January 10, 2018:

We recommend that the Blessing Box for February and March be used for Feed My Starving Children. Reason: We have scheduled our Bethesda trip for April 12 and we would like to bring a donation. At present, there are 35 slots with 15 people signed so far.

A notice will be added in the Sunday bulletin each Sunday a Time and Talent small group meets during coffee fellowship. In some cases those that signed up on the Time and Talent sheet will be called.

Groups will meet throughout January and will begin again in April.

Church Recycling was discussed and a plan to coordinate with property is being put in place.

Special containers will be marked and information will be posted.

The budget report was reviewed. More information will be available on the parsonage mortgage in the January budget report and the committee will again review the budget figures in February. Pledges are on target and general envelope is slightly less than projected.

Pastor James talked about on-line giving. We will discuss in more detail when Barb returns.

Next meeting is Monday, February 12 at 1:00 submitted by Pat Becker

#### Worship & Music:

Members Present: Pastor James, Randy Tofteland, Carol Bakken, Jim Christensen, Ron Haglund, Paula Spetz, Julie Swaggert and Sharon Whipple  
The meeting was held on January 4 and opened with prayer by Pastor James. The Committee discussed the recent Christmas Cantata and thanked Paula Spetz for her oversight of the fellowship hour. A discussion of committee Chair role was held and Randy agreed to Chair the committee again in 2018, but informed the committee he intends for this to be his last year on the committee. Sharon Whipple agreed to work with Pastor James to organize and lead the February and March Committee meetings in Randy's absence. The Committee discussed some comments that had been received regarding the Christmas Eve services and agreed that it was unfortunate that the music for these services lacked planning and quality. It was agreed that Pastor James will attempt to prescreen the music for the services and that the Committee will attempt to find an organist/pianist for special services like Easter and Christmas to improve the worship experience. Pastor James upcoming January 21 Installation Service was discussed and it was noted that WELCA will be overseeing the fellowship hour for this service. The Committee discussed preliminary Lent & Easter plans and Pastor James shared that mid-week services will be held and that the area synod Pastors would be rotating amongst area churches. More Easter planning will take place at the February Committee meeting. Pastor James shared with the Committee a new approach for the readings and preaching cycle called The Narrative Lectionary. It is a four-year cycle of readings and preaching that covers the bible in its entirety. There was strong interest in this from the Committee and it was agreed that it will continue to be discussed along with other potential worship changes over the coming months. Following the reciting of the Lord's Prayer, the meeting was adjourned.

The council closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The next council meeting will be February 9 at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted by Judie Birk, council secretary.

## Treasurer's Report

<u>December</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income Actual	\$30,079	\$88,738
Income Budgeted	\$17,021	\$68,083
Expense Actual	\$20,837	\$89,024
Expense Budgeted	\$16,369	\$65,476
Over / (Short)	\$9,243	(\$286)



### PIANIST/ORGANIST WANTED

The Worship & Music Committee would like to identify a skilled pianist/organist that could play for special worship services like Easter & Christmas. If you are interested, or you know someone, please contact any of the members of the committee or Pastor James and they will follow up.

**We need** coffee servers, please sign up

### Attention

#### New Church Recycling Program

The church is getting serious about recycling. Everyone who uses the church is encouraged to read the signs marked on all the wastebaskets and cans. There will also be instructions posted for what is garbage and what needs to go into the recycling containers. **Please read the instructions on what can be recycled and what cannot.** In addition there will also be a container for aluminum cans. The Veggie Stand is collecting aluminum cans. Members of the recycling group will take the recycled material to Westerlund's Citgo twice a month for deposit. A container provided by Aitkin County for recycled material will be available. See schedule posted. If you are interested in helping with this project, the contact person is Dianne Jones. Community members are encouraged to support the Aitkin County drop-off program so that it will continue here in our area.

*“There is no remedy for love  
but to love more.”  
—Henry David Thoreau*

## Nursing Home Outreach small group discussion January 14, 2018

Several interested people joined Pastor James and Darlene Christensen Sunday January 14<sup>th</sup> during the fellowship hour to talk about the current types of Home and Nursing Home out-reach and possibilities for future opportunities.

Darlene mentioned that there was previously an organized group that has dwindled as time went by and changes naturally occur, although there are still church members that continually reach out to others. She agrees this is a good program to bring back into focus for people who would benefit from even just a little bit of time.

Discussion included the different types; Home visitation, Nursing Homes, and/or Phone calls. There could be commitment options for short term, long term, or revolving teams for persons able to give small increments of time. There was also discussion of possible training for ‘do’s and don’ts’ and helpful hints.

The possible kinds of help for home-bound persons may include conversation, pick up groceries, bank or post office trips. Nursing Home visits could include conversation, group bingo, cards or other small games. Connection with the Nursing Home coordinator was suggested.

Questions that came up included, “How do we find out who would like help or visits” and “How do we match willing persons”, along with “Where do we start”, and “What shall we call this group”? Some ideas on that question were ‘Bethesda Cares’ and ‘Heart to Home’.

To move forward with this Community Service, people who are interested in joining or just have questions should call/email Darlene Christensen at 320-684-2846 / jimdarl@hotmail.com or Donna Ansell at 320-537-1016. If you know of persons that need out-reach help or would like to have visits, contact Pastor James 320-684-2123 or leave a message with the church office.



*Ash Wednesday  
February 14<sup>th</sup>*

### From the Parish Nurses

We are seeking knitters and crocheters who are looking for a simple winter project. There will be a basket of "Pocket Prayer Squares" available in the narthex and we need squares made to fill the basket. Much like a prayer shawl, the squares are made while offering prayers of healing and encouragement for the person who will receive it. Patterns are available in the narthex by the prayer square basket or from Darlene Christensen.

There is also a prayer shawl rack where some of our beautiful prayer shawls will be displayed. These are available if you know someone who is undergoing extensive medical treatments or has suffered the loss of a loved one.

*Reminder that the Soup and Cookie Ministry has soup and cookies available in the pantry freezer for anyone to take when visiting. Also feel free to bring containers of soup or cookies if you have any extra.*

### Bethesda Women of the ELCA

Jan 17, 2018

Chairwoman Jeannine opened the mtg w/15 members present. The luncheon prayer was read. Refreshments were served by Bev W & Linda S. The purpose statement was read. Pat Becker gave devotions. The Nov 2017 secy's report was approved as written in the Dec newsletter. Dianne gave the treasurer's report with a balance on hand of \$13,788.04. Motion by Char & second by Lynn to accept the report. Motion passed.

Old business:

The Lions Club Valentine dinner on Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> was discussed. Sharon Whipple asked for volunteers for various jobs.

The 2017 bazaar proceeds were voted to be distributed as follows:

(The first 3 items were paid out of the bal. on hand at the last mtg.)

Parsonage deck-Raffle money	\$1577
Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry – 4 children	1200
Lutheran World Relief – hurricane relief	3000
Lutheran World Relief – Calif fire relief	500
Solar Power for Curan Hospital	500
Food Shelves – Aitkin & Isle \$750 each	1500
Elem Children's needs – Aitkin & Isle	1000
Aitkin County CARE	1000
Vacation Bible School	500
Advocates Against Domestic Abuse	500
Teen Challenge	500
Dara-Palliative Care in Mozambique	1000

Russian Ingrian clergy travel to MN Synod Assembly	500
Freedom Ranch-home for victims of human trafficking	
1000Kids Against Hunger – Brainerd	500
McGregor Camp for military families	500
Hope Lodge	1000
Lutheran Social Service-Duluth shelter for older teens	500
Total	\$16777

Motion by Char, Second by Lynn to accept the distribution of monies list. Motion passed.

New business:

Pastor's installation is Jan 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Motion by Elsa, second by Ruth H to change dispensing with bazaar proceeds from the January mtg to the November mtg each year. January mtgs will be eliminated.

Darlene C presented a plan to have church project bins where people can see them easily. They will contain project plans & materials.

In-kind gifts for newborns will be collected at the June 4-6 synod convention.

Pat B reported on recycling services in the Malmo area.

The Lord's Prayer was prayed. Mtg was adjourned. The next mtg will be Wed, April 18<sup>th</sup>. Refreshment servers will be Char B & Arty H.

Char Berg, secy.



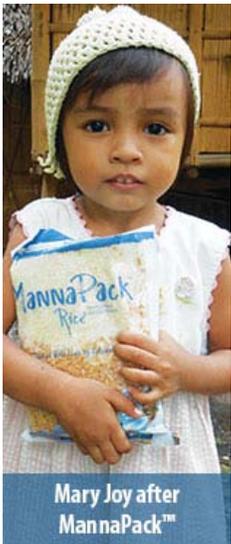
### **Pastor James is officially installed At Bethesda!**

Pastor Amy Odgren, Assistant to the Bishop, gave the sermon along with addressing

**"The Rite of Installation" of our new pastor,  
Rev. James Muske.**



## Your Compassion at Work



In the Philippines, sweet Mary Joy was weak from malnourishment and sick all the time. Access to food was difficult in their mountain village. Her parents struggled to feed her.

In the middle of their hopelessness, you reached Mary Joy's grateful family with FMSC meals. She started eating the nutritious food and quickly gained weight!

Mary Joy's mother said happily, "I am very thankful for the

MannaPack meals you gave us. They are a blessing from above."

This is your compassionate heart at work, saving the lives of precious little ones like Mary Joy every day.

### **Bethesda is Ready to Help**

The date is set!! Please join us in packing meals at Feed My Starving Children on Thursday, April 12 from 12 noon-2pm in Coon Rapids.

Those interested in car-pooling will meet at Bethesda Lutheran Church at 9:30 am. Registration is required so please email the church with the names of those interested in participating.

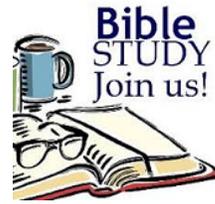
If packing isn't for you, but you are interested in supporting a special donation from Bethesda Lutheran of Malmo, consider any or all of the following opportunities:

1. Blessing box offering in February and March
2. Mark your envelope with a special donation for Feed My Starving Children (FMSC)

There are over 15 people already registered; sign up soon!

### **Turn Hunger into Hope with Your Own Two Hands**

*"...let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy." Psalm 5:11*



### **Wednesday morning Bible Study changes to 9:00.**

You are invited to join in the Bible study called Genesis to Revelation. This audio study is by Craig Koester who is a professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary. He says, "Through my teaching I want to help people enter the world of the scriptures, so that the old story takes on new life for them." He takes specific stories in the Bible and highlights key ideas, making them more understandable. Please consider this class as a way to get to know your Bible better. There is room at the table for you.

You can access the topics and the audio at [http://www2.luthersem.edu/ckoester/gen\\_to\\_rev\\_audio.asp?pf=y](http://www2.luthersem.edu/ckoester/gen_to_rev_audio.asp?pf=y)

These topics are covered in Professor Koester's class:

- Creation to Babel
- Abraham and Sarah
- Isaac, Jacob, Joseph
- Moses, Exodus, Sinai
- Wilderness Wanderings
- Deuteronomy, Joshua
- Judges, Ruth
- Samuel and Saul
- David's Reign
- Solomon's Reign, Proverbs, Psalms
- Psalms, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes
- Elijah and Elisha
- Amos, Hosea, Fall of the North
- Micah, Isaiah, Hezekiah
- Josiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Jeremiah
- Jeremiah, Fall of the South, Ezekiel
- Exile: God and Questions of Suffering
- Haggai & Zechariah, Malachi, Ezra & Nehemiah, Joel, Jonah
- Esther and Daniel
- Between the Testaments - 1 Maccabees
- Gospels (I) - Jesus' Birth and Public Ministry
- Gospels (II) - Jesus' Death and Resurrection
- Acts 1-15
- Acts 16-18, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Galatians
- Corinthians 1-2
- Romans
- Prison and Pastoral Epistles
- Hebrews, 1 Peter
- James, Jude & 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John
- Revelation

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### ***The Lifeline Mission***

We will **LIVE** and **SERVE** through **FAITH**  
we will **ACT** with **LOVE** and **KINDNESS**  
we will **GIVE** hope and **SUPPORT** to all



Bethesda Telephone Directory

Church	email: <a href="mailto:blcmalmo@frontiernet.net">blcmalmo@frontiernet.net</a>	(320) 684-2123
Fax		(320)-684-2836
Toll Free		(877) 684-2123
Church Web site	<a href="http://blcmalmo.org">blcmalmo.org</a>	
Facebook page	Bethesda Lutheran Church of Malmo	
Pastor	James Muske	(320) 684-2123
Council President	Ron Mehlhop	(320) 537-4948
Vice President	George Smith	(320) 537-1020
Parish Nurse	Darlene Christensen	(320) 684-2846
Parish Nurse	Kathy Berland	(218) 838-6181

**To share articles and/or information, mail to:**  
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**c/o Bethesda Lutheran Church**