

# Bethesda Life-Line



**Bethesda is now Live Streaming  
Sunday Worship Services on our  
YouTube channel!**

(<https://www.youtube.com/c/BethesdaLutheranChurchMalmöMN/videos>), as well as on our Facebook page



## **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

**December 5 Sunday Worship 9:00 AM  
Communion**

**December 12 Sunday Worship 9:00 AM  
Communion**

**December 19 Sunday Worship 9:00 AM  
Communion**

**Dec. 24 Sunday Worship 3:30 & 5:00 PM**

**December 26 Sunday Worship 9:00 AM  
Communion**

## Upcoming Events

Dec. 5 Annual Congregational meeting

**Dec. 17 Cantata 9:00**



**June 20-24, 2022-Vacation Bible school**



## 2021



## Choir News

The choir season is fast coming to an end for the year. We are busy getting ready for the Christmas Cantata. I have put a Cantata together using a couple of songs we have sung in past Cantatas and Hymns for the Congregation to sing along with the choir and the Christmas Story being read thru Bible passages and Ellie Mitchell reading "The Birth of Jesus". The Cantata will be presented on Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>. Then on Dec.5<sup>th</sup>, "A King has Come" and then the Cantata on Dec 19<sup>th</sup>. It has been great being able to get together to Sing and Worship, after not being able to Worship together last year. It has come with some challenges, but I hope everyone has enjoyed being able to practice and sing together in our Sanctuary!! Thanks to all of my choir members for giving their time and talents to the Choir I really appreciate every single one of you. God Bless all of you!!! Thanks for a great Choir Season and see you in the Spring!!!  
Sheila Penoyer/Choir Director



## POINSETTIA DONATIONS

Orders for poinsettias to be placed in the sanctuary Christmas poinsettia tree will be taken, the cost is \$15. A member of Altar Care will be in the Fellowship Hall between church services to take orders.



## From the Pastor

Merry Christmas, sisters and brothers in Christ!

Though it always seems to sneak up on me, I am a firm believer that we, as a church and as a people of

God, are often at our best this time of year. We live out our faith more powerfully and openly, and sometimes without even realizing it.

Of course, it helps that we have the Christmas story that we do. It is a story that people can quickly grasp. God's own son, a presence of the divine, born not in some palace hall, not born into all the trappings of earthly power and wealth. Not even born in some high priest's home or some other symbol of religious hierarchy. No, a child born into humble surroundings. The ordinary and the extraordinary combined.

And, yes, okay, if we are being honest, sometimes modern-day Christmastime can be a bit extravagant. We can indulge a bit too much in consumeristic and culinary pleasures. And yes, sure, sometimes our Christmas decorations are so bright they could help land aircraft, but I am not suggesting that we throw out our twinkling lights, tinsel, and trays full of cookies.

Certainly, we should not let all the superficial trappings of the holidays become so central in our hearts and minds that they squeeze out everything else or let ourselves get so stressed out trying to do everything we are "supposed to do." But I do think we are able to use superficial elements of Christmas to live out our faith.

Those Christmas lights make these long winter nights a bit less gloomy. Wreaths and garlands add a bit of green back into our lives. These are not bad gifts to share with our community. Sure,

some of us might get a bit burnt out on cookies and sweets even before the 25<sup>th</sup>, but even more reason to share your bounty with others. Nothing says "I am thinking of you" like some homemade goodies (and for non-bakers, don't feel the need to explain if it wasn't technically *your* home). This is especially true for those who might still be isolating due to Covid concerns. Whether cards, calls, or cookies, this is the time of year to share a little love.

The gatherings of family and friends, whether in-person or some digital alternative, also offer a time to share some love and fellowship. But even if your family is one that fully lives into that stereotype of bickering around the table, I don't think that is necessarily bad either. Here again, as long as it doesn't go *too* far, in a world where we are growing increasingly polarized, the fact that we are willing to sit down and have conversations with people with whom we might disagree can be a small victory.

But please know your limits. It is okay to call a time-out in heated conversations and it is okay to give yourself permission to hit the pause on a particular tradition that is stressing you out. Still, being willing to tolerate a little chaos and stress in service of one another is a good and holy thing.

So be mindful of that balance this coming month – love yourself (by caring for your own mental and physical health) and love others too. And remember that through it all, through the joys, through the stresses, and, perhaps, the moments of grief that can accompany the holidays, that Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God-with-us, is with us still.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor James Muske





Bethesda Lutheran Church of Malmo  
Minutes of Nov. 15, 2021 Council Meeting

In attendance: Mary Braun, Ron Haglund, Joanne Stueven, Karen Carron, Pastor James Muske, Cheryl Malotky, Sharon Whipple, Judie Birk and Dennis Hennessy.

The meeting was called to order by council president Dennis Hennessy

Pastor James gave opening Devotions.

Secretary's Report:

Motion was made to accept the minutes of the October meeting by Sherry Whipple, seconded by Cheryl Malotky, and passed.

Treasurer's Report:

Financial view and current month activity for October was presented by Mary Braun. Motion was made by Ron Haglund to accept the treasurer's report, seconded by Cheryl Malotky and passed. Mary reported that there were two large expenses this month: down payment for "Live Stream Worship" project (\$2025); and renewed Parishsoft software (\$1579 for accounting, offerings, family directory, and payroll). It was suggested to take money from the Centennial fund to pay for the new advent stand that's needed.

Pastor's Report (October 11-November 15, 2021)

Here are some highlights from the past few weeks:  
Enjoyed a couple weeks of vacation!  
Made lefse and baked bread for the Bazaar, as well as taking photographs.  
Assisted with Trunk or Treat, including making hot chocolate.  
Helped organize a meeting around Adult Education with the Mission & Evangelism committee.  
Led a funeral for Lori Hauglid Houle.  
Pastoral care visitations and contacts for the past few weeks include 4 in-person visits and approximately 15 phone calls.

Old Business

New Sign Posts to be installed in Spring (by Gary, custodian/maintenance person) with suggestion to have a flood light too.

Live Stream Update is being installed this week  
Faith Practices Survey results — Council reviewed the survey results and will share ideas to subsequent committees. There were many great ideas. We hope to get volunteers to champion some of these.  
The Grief Support group is going well.

New Business

Board member nominations/volunteers needed.  
Please consider joining council!  
Budget was discussed. Ron Haglund made a motion to accept the proposed budget to present at the annual meeting. Seconded by Karen Carron and passed.  
The oldest of our three furnaces is being replaced by Property.  
Annual Meeting / Digital Signage will be discussed.  
Property would like to look at installing Solar Panels for electrical needs. This issue will be brought to the annual meeting.

Committee Reports:

***Stewardship & Finance Committee***

Attendants: Donna Ansell, Mary Braun & Barb Forrester  
The Stewardship & Finance committee met to discuss annual budget request for calendar year 2021.  
Budget worksheets for each committee were handed into the committee.  
The Committee worksheets were assembled and entered into our software program to compile the 2021 budget which was presented to the Council on November 15<sup>th</sup>.  
Expenses for utilities were increased with concerns for the higher predicted costs of Electricity, Fuel Oil, etc.  
Annual Committee reports was submitted to Judie Birk so she can assemble it into our annual congregational meeting which will be held on Sunday, December 5, 2021.  
Cost of Sundays and Seasons (a web-based software that accesses texts and readings for the worship service) was included in the Worship Supplies budget as suggested last month.  
Working on a new Time and Talent survey to go out in December's Newsletter.  
Stewardship Committee will meet again in December to discuss Annual Meeting comments and concerns.  
Respectfully submitted by Mary Braun

***Worship & Music Committee***

October 26, 2021 at Bethesda after choir  
Present: Jim Christensen, Sheila Penoyer, Sherry Whipple, Pastor James, Julie Swaggert

Updates/Discussion Items:

Special Services: Pet Blessing, Native American Sunday and Polka Service well received.

Thanks to Praise Team for Polka Service (and fellowship root beer and pretzels) and Pastor James for his Synod work and videography with the Native American Service

Upcoming Services: Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> Reformation Sunday, Nov 7 All Saints Sunday

Christmas Services: Suggestion of 2 Services on Christmas Eve (3 and 5pm?) which is a Friday. No service Christmas Day but service at 9am on Sunday, Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>. This is subject to Council approval.

Choir updates: Sing Oct. 31, Nov 7, Nov 21, Dec 5<sup>th</sup> and CANTATA December 19<sup>th</sup>. That will be the last choir performance until spring (God willing!)

Praise Team update: Praise Team will continue to sing monthly (mostly 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday) as they are able.

Bells (checking with Jeannine)

Fundraisers: A new "Bird Themed" basket fundraiser will be held in Nov/Dec. Thanks to Joanne Stueven for materials and idea!

Live Streaming update: Thanks to Council approval and generous donations, the Live Streaming equipment has been ordered from Stewart Technologies. Equipment and installation should arrive within 2 weeks. We hope to train several people in the use of the equipment (Jim, Pastor, Mary and Julie....plus others!). This will be great for those snowbirds and others who cannot attend in person. The service will be live streamed and will also be available to watch later on YouTube.

Budget: Budget was discussed and completed. There should not be any major purchases next year but there are electronics (cords etc.) that need to be replaced. Sheila and Jim hope to continue in their roles.

### ***Mission & Evangelism*** —

November 3, 2021 in attendance: regular members present: Pastor James, Sandy Pullen, Sue Samuelson, Joanne Stueven Guests: Pat Becker, Jeannine Bruesewitz, Darlene Christensen

With the help of the group present and some on line suggestions we brainstormed a list of possible education and fellowship activities to consider at Bethesda. The list and survey results will be shared at the next council meeting.

Our regular business was not addressed at meeting but will be handled with on line communication. The November World Hunger will be displayed, a video will be shown, and Pastor will mention World Hunger concerns in sermon or announcements.

The traditional Christmas Giving display will be put up in Fellowship Hall and advertised in newsletter. Maybe on the Facebook page.

The Christmas Care and Share box will be out in December and gift cards given to families.

The clipboard Sunday school is working for now, as teachers say they will return as health and jobs permit.

Trunk or Treat had only a few families....Judie has an exciting possible plan for a Pumpkin Race Event over MEA in October.

Confirmation has not started at this point. Pastor will be contacting families trying to set up a program.

Mission and Evangelism budgeted for Adult Education not knowing what the possible cost of any additional education and fellowship programs might be. We will be involved in moving forward with additional opportunities at Bethesda. Submitted by Joanne Stueven

### ***Brainstorm ideas for Education/Fellowship Activities***

Members present: Pat Becker, Sue Samuelson, Sandy Pullen, Darlene Christensen, Jeannine Bruesewitz, Joanne Stueven, and Pastor James

Mission and Evangelism Committee and Pastor James invited church members to share suggestions about education or fellowship opportunities at Bethesda.

- Learning By Serving ...
- Feed My Starving Children
- Programs for misplaced families
- Help couple with firewood (local member)
- Organize high school students who need to do service projects
- Physical Education, Art or Music...
- Explore pickle ball courts
- Exercise classes
- Pottery classes
- Music sessions
- Game day with corn hole bean bags
- Continue snow day outdoor activities
- Walking , snow shoe or skiing group
- Speakers or Programs...
- Ask energy companies to teach about solar energy and electric cars
- Ask a lawyer to present on estate planning

- Ask funeral homes to present on funeral planning
- Ask our church what is needed to plan funeral service
- Check into a program called “ First Aid for Mental Health”
- ( helps us recognize when someone may need help)
- Native Blanket Experience
- Environmental...
- Environmental learning offered at Long Lake Conservation center
- Environmental advice on management of our property
- Entertainment and Outreach...
- Continue Movies and or games
- Instead of Trunk of Treat , plan an MEA Pumpkin Event
- ( maybe add a food truck, with hot chocolate at the veggie stand)

Mary Vukelich is trained in First Aid for Mental Health.

Submitted by Joanne Stueven

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mary Braun and seconded by Sherry Whipple and passed.

The council closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The next council meeting will be Dec. 20 at 10 am.

Respectfully submitted by Judie Birk, council secretary.

### 2021 TREASURER'S REPORT

<u>General Fund</u> (Envelope Giving)	<u>OCTOBER</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income Actual	\$10,992	\$119,011
Budget Actual	\$11,333	\$113,333

### All Funds

Total Income Actual	\$14,408	\$171,484
Total Income Budget	\$12,446	\$124,458
Expenses Actual	\$15,178	\$145,571
Expenses Budget	\$12,502	\$125,023
Over/(Short)	\$(770)	\$ 25,913

### Thank You's

*Cliff would like to thank you for all of the prayers and get well wishes for his recovery. We feel so grateful for the support of our church family.*

*Your friends, Cliff and Sharon Roberts*



Thanks for your service.

A special thank you to Barb Macioch for years of serving on the Mission and Evangelism Committee. We will miss you, Barb , but enjoy your new home in FL.



### Christmas Caring and Sharing

Again this season, we are asking for names of a neighbor who maybe in need of a grocery gift card. If you know of someone in need please contact the church office with a name and address and we will make every effort to help them out. Please turn in these requests by December 18.

Thank You, Mission and Evangelism Committee

**Come one, come all WELCA ladies of Bethesda Lutheran.** We are having a meeting on Wednesday, December 15th at 10:00am. We will be having punch, hot apple cider and Christmas cookies. So please bring a sampling of your favorite cookie and we can enjoy fellowship together. Please join us as we distribute the Bazaar \$\$'s that everyone so diligently volunteered their time and energy on, therefore having a fantastic outcome of our yearly event.

May God's peace be with you all this Christmas season. Susan Samuelson, chair

### Save the Dates

We hope to have our traditional in person Vacation Bible School the 3 rd full week in June which is June 20-24, 2022.

When you see your family over the holidays, ask them to mark their calendars for the special week in June. Ages 4 to 94 are welcome!! Teens , parents and loving grandparents make it all happen!!

## Bethesda Holiday Bazaar Raffle Winners

Thank you to all participants for this year's holiday raffle. It was exciting to have more items for the raffle and that makes for more happy winners. Here's the raffle winners:

Birch flower and vase - Ginny Wander  
Nut Cracker-Elsa Carlson  
Pine Cone Wreath - Kelly Anderson  
Gourd Goose - Geri VanDruil  
Hardanger - Gail Harrison  
Pottery (Plate/Bowl) - John Muske  
Pottery Vase - Ruth Hammon  
Pottery Platter - Cheryl Malotky  
Jelly Basket - Joanne Haglund  
Afghan - Wendy Bryant  
Wooden Bowl - Chuck Carlson  
Old World Santa - Beth Forrester  
Chair - Leeann Konuegry  
Wall Hanging - Sandy Miller  
Queen Size Quilt - Elsa Carlson

**PRAYER SHAWLS** We are in need of more Prayer Shawls to be knitted or crocheted. There are kits with yarn and instructions available in the nurse's office or from Darlene.

## LOOKING for TEMPORARY PART-TIME HELP IN FEBRUARY

We're looking for a secretary to fill in on a part-time basis (Mary is taking a vacation this winter!) Previous experience in a similar role is helpful but will train as required.



As our secretary, you will be asked to handle some of our staff members' clerical tasks. This can include typing, copying, and printing, and managing office supplies.

Contact Mary for a more complete job description.



## LIVE STREAM OUR SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

Bethesda is now live streaming our Sunday morning worship services. Tune in at 9:00am on our YouTube

channel to worship with us (or view at a later time)  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/bethesdalutheranchurchmalmomn>

## Operation Christmas Child

Twenty five shoeboxes were packed on Sunday, November 14th for Operation Christmas Child and will be sent to needy children around the world. Thanks to Kristen, Ellie, Eldon, Sheila Penoyer, Vicky, Joy, Chayton Vossen, Anna Berry, Darlene Christensen and Julie Swaggert for helping with this project. The money for the postage for each box had been donated by Carol Hass.



*May each of us this Advent season bring a message of joy and love to one another. May we find new meaning in our lives as we welcome the Christ child into our hearts.*

# TAX SAVINGS

## What is an RMD?

Once you hit age 70½, the IRS requires you to start withdrawing from—and paying taxes on—most types of tax-advantaged retirement accounts, this is known as “Required Minimum Distribution”. You will also need to take RMDs from any retirement accounts you inherit. In most cases, RMDs are treated as ordinary income for tax purposes.

## Can I donate my RMD to charity and avoid the taxes?

YES. These “Qualified Charitable Distributions” (QCDs) will not be added to your taxable income for the year. A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA, payable directly to a qualified charity, as described in the QCD provision in the Internal Revenue Code. Amounts distributed as a QCD can be counted toward satisfying your RMD for the year, up to \$100,000. The QCD is excluded from your taxable income. This is not the case with a regular withdrawal from an IRA, even if you use the money to make a charitable contribution later. If you take a withdrawal, the funds would be counted as taxable income even if you later offset that income with the charitable contribution deduction.

Making a QCD as opposed to a normal charitable gift has two main advantages. First, a QCD counts toward satisfying the individual’s required minimum distribution for that year. Second, the distribution is excluded from the taxpayer’s income. (Information taken from the website:

<https://www.fidelity.com/learning-center/personal-finance/retirement/qcds-the-basics>)

## Is Bethesda Lutheran Church a QCD?

**YES!** A charity must be a 501(c)(3) organization in order to receive tax-free IRA charitable contributions. Bethesda is a 501(c)(3) organization.

If you are 72, own an IRA, and donate to charity, QCDs may make sense for you; *as always, consult your tax advisor or accountant to see if this is to your advantage.*



## BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Blue Christmas (also called the Longest Night) in the Western Christian tradition, is a day in the Advent season marking the longest night of the year. On this day, some churches hold a church service that recognizes the loss and loneliness that can be felt during the holidays due to death, disease, poverty, or abuse. It is a service that specifically enables individuals to experience their grief, as well as express what they are feeling, so they can find a sense of calm and hope.

Bethesda will be holding a Blue Christmas service on Tuesday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:00pm. All are welcome.



## Advent Colors

One of the season’s symbolic colors is blue, representing hope. During Advent, we wait in hope to celebrate again God’s coming in human form, and we look forward in hope to Christ’s coming in glory at the end of the age. Purple symbolizes the royalty of Jesus, the coming Prince of Peace, and the penitence with which we receive him. Some congregations also use pink or white candles in Advent wreaths, with pink symbolizing joy and white symbolizing the Christ child.

Bethesda Lutheran Church of Malmo  
21590 State Highway 47  
Isle, MN 56342

NON PROFIT ORG  
Paid  
Permit No. 25  
Aitkin, MN 56431

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



### ***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	<a href="mailto:blcmalmo@gmail.com">blcmalmo@gmail.com</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 A. Muske	(320) 684-2123
Council President	Dennis Hennessy	(651) 247-2283
Vice President	Karen Carrom	(952) 210-9508
Parish Nurse	Darlene Christensen	(320) 279-0097
Parish Nurse	Kathy Berland	(218) 838-6181

**To share articles and/or information, mail to:**

**Sue Stebbins, *Lifeline Editor***  
**c/o Bethesda Lutheran Church**  
**Email address: [blnews@juno.com](mailto:blnews@juno.com)**

All articles due on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month



# Activities & Events

December 2021

If anyone is unable to fulfill an assignment below, please find your own substitute or notify the coordinator

## Ushers **Jim Christensen**

- Dec. 5 – Ron & JoAnn Haglund
- Dec. 12 – Nancy Hansen & Winnie Zahradka
- Dec. 19 – Chuck & Elsa Carlson
- Dec. 24 – 3:30 Dick Stebbins & Darrell Kelly  
5:00 Barry & Donna Ansell
- Dec. 26 – George Larson & Darlene Christensen

## Altar Care Dianne Jones

- December... Winnie Zahradka and Dianne Jones
- January, Elsa and Sylvia
- February, Linda and Karen
- March, Winnie and Sylvia
- April, Elsa and Dianne

## Recycling



## Greeters Lynne Meidlinger

- Dec. 5 – Del & Dianne Jones
- Dec. 12 – Pat Becker & Carolyn Morris
- Dec. 19 – Don & Donna Myhre
- Dec. 24 – 3:30 Shirley Moe & Sue Stebbins  
5:00 Sherry Whipple & Winnie Zahradka
- Dec. 26 – Julie Swaggert & Patti Smith



- Dec. 4 Penny & Ken Sjoquist
- Dec. 9 Lucy & Dennis Liljenquist
- Dec. 18 Kelly & Larry Liljenquist
- Dec. 27 Barb & Michael Macioch



- Dec. 4 Judith Birk
- Dec. 5 Elsa Carlson
- Dec. 6 Anna Westerlund
- Dec. 8 Maynard Berland
- Dec. 11 Larry Darmer
- Dec. 13 Joseph Timmers
- Dec. 17 Dean Hanson
- Dec. 18 Dennis Liljenquist
- Dec. 18 Irene Manning
- Dec. 18 Albert Samuelson
- Dec. 19 Roy Berry
- Dec. 21 Kevin Skow
- Dec. 23 Rollie Halvorson
- Dec. 23 Ronesha Keil
- Dec. 24 Carol Raymond
- Dec. 25 Laury Nyberg
- Dec. 26 Ruth Hamman
- Dec. 26 Edmund Simonson
- Dec. 28 Hanna Gordon
- Dec. 28 Neil Honl
- Dec. 30 Cole Trotter
- Dec. 31 Eve Christensen

---

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS I'D LIKE TO SHARE

Included in this month's Newsletter is a new "Spiritual Gifts I'd Like to Share" Survey.



Please complete the survey and return to the church office.

Thank You! Stewardship Committee



# December 2021

## Bethesda Calendar of Events



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<i>1</i> 9:00 Women's Bible Study	<i>2</i> 8:00 R.o.m.e.o.s 3:30 Bells	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>5</i> 9:00 Worship Communion <b>10:00 Annual mtg</b>	<i>6</i> 11:30 Pinochle 7:00 p.m AA & Alanon mg	<i>7</i> 4-6:00 Grief Support Group 5:30 Choir practice	<i>8</i> 9:00 Women's Bible Study	<i>9</i> 8:00 R.o.m.e.o.s 3:30 Bells	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>12</i> 9:00 Worship Communion	<i>13</i> 10:00 Women's Devotional Bible study 11:30 Pinochle 7:00 p.m AA & Alanon mg	<i>14</i> 9:00 Quilters 4-6:00 Grief Support Group 5:30 Choir practice	<i>15</i> 9-4:00 WIC 9:00 Women's Bible Study 10:00 WELCA	<i>16</i> 8:00 R.o.m.e.o.s 3:30 Bells	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>19</i> 9:00 Worship Communion <b>Cantata</b>	<i>20</i> 10:00 Council mtg 11:30 Pinochle 7:00 p.m AA & Alanon mg <b>Newsline Deadline</b>	<i>21</i> 4:00 Blue Christmas / Longest Night Worship Service	<i>22</i> 9:00 Women's Bible Study	<i>23</i> 8:00 R.o.m.e.o.s 3:30 Bells	<i>24</i> 3:30 Early Service 5:00 Late Service <b>Christmas Eve</b>	<i>25</i> Worship Service on YouTube <b>Merry Christmas</b>
<i>26</i> 9:00 Worship Communion	<i>27</i> 11:30 Pinochle 7:00 p.m AA & Alanon mg	<i>28</i> 9:00 Quilters 4-6:00 Grief Support Group	<i>29</i> 9:00 Women's Bible Study	<i>30</i> 8:00 R.o.m.e.o.s	<i>31</i> <b>New Years Eve</b>	<i>1</i> <b>Happy 2022</b>