

After-Christmas Fellowship Have you ever woken up the day after Christmas and thought..."What am I going to do with all those cookies and snacks?" Bring them to church! Come for fellowship on **December 30** and bring a plate of cookies or snacks you may have left over from your Christmas festivities. Coffee and juice will be provided.



Your Offerings to God's Mission at Bethel Our offerings are our gifts to God in response to His Word and His Gospel, including our **tithes** (10% of earnings set aside for the Lord) and **offerings** (over-and-above gifts to the Church). The offerings Bethel receives go to support the work of the Church—here at Bethel, in our community, and regionally, nationally, and internationally through the missions which we support through our budget. For the congregation, our budget covers salaries, the property, and ministry needs (see graph below). We do this work together, and the ministry cannot happen without all of us supporting through our time, talents, and treasures.

*****Pick up your envelopes in the back of church.** Recycle your unused 2018 envelopes on January 1, 2019 and then start using the new box. Your new envelopes may have a new number, so please put your name and donation amount on the outside of the envelope to help our counters. Thank You!



Christmas Eve/Day Band Practice will be on Saturday, December 22 at 1:00 p.m.

Please remember to fill out the attendance cards on the lapboards at services.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS Today's Sunday School Lesson: *Matthew 1:18-25* Here's a small portion of a retelling (imagining) of the story by Lutheran writer Walt Wangerin, Jr., in his *The Book of God: The Bible as a Novel*. There was a baby in Mary's womb. Joseph's mind was filled now with one thought only: grant Mary a quiet divorce. While Joseph was sleeping on this, the voice of an angel called to him in a dream. [The angel said,] "Joseph, son of David, you should not fear to take Mary home as your wife, because the infant conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. God is fulfilling prophecies, Joseph!" When [Joseph] woke up on the following morning, he moved more quickly and more lightly than he ever had in his life. He donned his one clean tunic and his Sabbath robe, then fairly ran to the home of [Mary] and knocked on [the] door. But there was wailing inside the house, a voice filled with outrage and pain: "How could you bring such disgrace on—" Hearing that, Joseph pounded the door, saying, "Open [the] door and let me in! I will not leave until we've set the day for my wedding to your daughter...." [Mary's father] threw open the door and burst into tears. "I am overcome with happiness!"....He spread his arms and moved toward his son-in-law, but Joseph saw one figure only. He ran past [his father-in-law] and gathered Mary into his arms and held her tightly to [himself]. "I love you," he whispered in her tender ear. "Don't cry, don't cry. I love you, Mary, and I know [who the baby is], and I will love him, too. It is well. All is well. I know what God is doing, & I love you."



*****Thank you** to everyone who supported the Sunday School toy collection! Our estimate is that Bethel was able to provide *A Safe Place* with....9 crockpots, countless kitchen items (measuring cups/spatulas/pots/pans), 17 dolls, 6 packs of Legos, 4 star wars toys and much more!! Special thanks to Cindy Daluga for delivering the items to *A Safe Place*.

A special thank you also goes out to Ann Souza for giving us such a spectacular Christmas program! Kids - you were fantastic!!!

*****Sunday School** will be in session around the holidays EXCEPT for **December 30!**

Bethel Website: www.bethelgurnee.org **Office:** 847-244-9647 **Preschool:** 847-244-9672 **Email:** office@bethelgurnee.org

Pastor Ben Squires Cell: 224-419-5519 / pastor@bethelgurnee.org

Katrina Johns - Equipping Coordinator Direct line: 224-623-0800 / katrina@bethelgurnee.org

Linda Gifford - Disciple Care and Property Coordinator linda@bethelgurnee.org

Lisa Schwarz - Office Manager lisa@bethelgurnee.org

Donna Stutzman - Preschool Director preschool@bethelgurnee.org

LET THE GAMES BEGIN! – On Thursday, **December 27** we are having another Intergenerational Game Day. Everyone is invited to meet in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. for food and games. Bring your own game or play one provided. Bring a snack to share if you would like. Coffee and juice will be provided plus donut holes. Signup on the Hub, contact Karen Leicht at Johnleicht@comcast.net, or just come.

Winter Gear Collection Bethel is collecting winter coats, boots, gloves and blankets for COOL, PADS and Bernie's Blessings. You may bring items to Bethel anytime & put in the fellowship hall on the table before Thursday, **December 20**.

VBS Update The Board of Christian Education would like to add to the information that has been shared with you in regards to the changes to our Vacation Bible School format. During the last four years, our Bethel VBS has experienced challenges, especially a lack of available adult volunteers. We must have enough adult volunteers to provide a safe environment for our children. We were blessed to find creative ways to use our adult volunteers so that our children could have that wonderful Christ-filled, safe experience, but that is becoming increasingly difficult to do. After four years of thoughtful research, weighing pros and cons, discussion and much prayer, the Bethel BOCE decided to go to a 3-day weekend format for the 2019 VBS program. We hope that this new schedule will allow for more adult volunteer participation, as it will not conflict with as many work schedules. There are many possibilities of what this can look like and how it could be implemented. The BOCE is assembling a team of 6-8 people who would be willing to codirect this new venture. There are a couple of veteran people who are willing to work on the team. **HOWEVER**, we cannot go forward with the 2019 VBS until this key team of people is in place. The team needs to be in place by the end of January in order to be ready for the summer of 2019. Please consider serving our Bethel family on this team. Contact Carla Thompson, BOCE chairperson, (carlajothompson@gmail.com) or Katrina Johns, Equipping Coordinator (katrina@bethelgurnee.org), for more information about this opportunity. Also, please pray for our Board of Christian Education as we work to meet the needs and provide education opportunities for our Bethel family.



New Portals of Prayer are on the Hub.

Lutheran Church Extension Fund  **LCEF**
Over the past 40 years, our investors have made it possible for LCEF to support the work of tens of thousands of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod individuals and ministries through loans and ministry support services. To meet future loan demand and help support growing ministry opportunities, we need to raise an additional \$100 million. Which is why we invite you to a special, limited-time investment opportunity: our 40-month 40th anniversary note at 4%. \$500 minimum to open, \$40,000 maximum per note. If interested go to LCEF.org to get an application.

This Week's Calendar

- Monday, December 17**
12:30 p.m.—Staff Meeting
- Tuesday, December 18**
11:00 a.m.—Gurnee Meadows
5:30 p.m.—Uline Basketball
- Wednesday, December 19**
9:30 a.m.—Women's Bible Study
6:30 p.m.—Advent Worship— Confirmation
Students & Families Attend Worship
7:30 p.m.—Exploratory Explore God Group
- Thursday, December 20**
6:00 p.m.—Girl Scouts in Fellowship Hall
7:30 p.m. - Adult Vocal Choir
- Friday, December 21** Pastor & Katrina's Day Off
- Saturday, December 22** Pastor & Katrina's Day Off
1:00 p.m.—Christmas Eve/Day Band Practice
- Sunday, December 23**
8:00 a.m.—Worship in Gym
9:00 a.m.—Fellowship
9:30 a.m.—Sunday School & Bible Study
10:45 a.m.—Worship in Sanctuary

Serving Wednesday Advent Worship - 6:30pm

Elders: Jeremy Little
Comm/Asst. Elder: Randy Gifford
Acolytes: Jake Kruse, Kate Kruse
Lay Readers: Cheryl Ross, Dave Ross
Ushers: Sam Squires, Open
Greeters: Kay Antonopoulos

Worship Schedule

Sunday 8AM & 10:45PM

Communion

1st, 3rd, 5th Sunday

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 9AM—3 PM

Friday 9AM - 12PM

Last Week's Attendance

Sunday 8:00 AM—130, 10:45 AM—85

Serving Next Week

Sunday 8:00AM

Elders: JJ Jones
Comm/Asst. Elder: Mike Bandman
Acolytes: Jeremy Leicht, Kaylee Leicht
Lay Readers: Sandy Lahera, Tony Young
Ushers: Tony Young, Open
Greeters: Bill & Eileen Smith, The Silasiri Family

Fellowship: Kazarian / Mulley
Dec. Altar Guild: Kathy Schwartz
Dec. Counters: Dave Ross

Sunday 10:45AM

Bob Souza
Jack Warneke
OPEN, OPEN
Linda Peters, Larry Peters
Lance Rasmussen, Jay Souza
Gene & Ellen Bartelt,
The Hoonstra Family

Sheila Bunnell
Cheryl Ross