

BETHANY NEWS

Bethany English Lutheran Church

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Cleveland, OH 44111-3022
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DECEMBER AND JANUARY 2023/2024

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Robert Ferro, Pastor
Jason Aquila, Organist
Jesse Lange, Choir Director
Melissa Todd, Director of Christian Education
and Youth Ministries & Church Secretary
Sarah Todd, Financial Secretary

Sunday Morning Worship
December 3 & December 10
8:30am & 11:00am
Sunday School 9:45am

December 17
One Service – 10:00am

Christmas Eve – December 24th
10:00am, 7:00pm, 10:00pm

December 31st
One Service – 10:00am

Livestream
bethanyenglish.org

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BELIEVE! ENGAGE! LEARN! CARE!

PASTOR'S PAGE

Peace on Earth?

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all. Luke 2:14

On that first Christmas night the angels sang a message of peace and goodwill. Every year we hear that message repeated in word and song as we celebrate the season.

And yet when we look around our world, both peace and goodwill appear to be in short supply. Where is the promised peace? Where can we find goodwill among people? The world seems more about division and disagreement than peace and goodwill. Did the angels deceive us? Did they sing about a pious dream, but ignored the hard-nosed realities of life?

The term used in music to describe the condition of peace and goodwill is harmony: different notes being played together to create a beautiful sound. Harmony can only exist when the notes played are in balance with one another. If, for example, the strings of a violin are out of tune, then no matter how much the player may desire to create harmony, his or her efforts will fail. The strings must be tuned to a standard for the violinist to make beautiful music.

So it is with human peace and goodwill. Peace is the result of relationships being in harmony or balance. When relationships are out of balance, the result is not peace, but discord. Just as violin strings must be tuned to be brought into harmony with other instruments, our human relationships need to be “tuned” to result in peace and goodwill. We don’t see peace and goodwill on earth because so many relationships are out of balance, out of tune.

But how do we “tune” human relationships, so that we may know peace. The answer comes in the first part of the angels’ message, “Glory to God in the highest.” Just as violin strings must be tuned to a higher standard beyond any one string, so humans need to be in vital relationship with God to bring them into harmony with one another. Peace and goodwill on earth are only possible when we give glory to God in the highest.

The angels’ song calls us to a higher standard, to live our lives glorifying God. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, and whose birth was heralded by the angels said that the key to glorifying God is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We will not realize the second part of the message, peace and goodwill on earth, if we do not love God and others.

Our world lacks peace and goodwill because it lacks love for God and others. If we don’t treat other people with respect, dignity, kindness, and fairness, then peace and goodwill will always be elusive.

May all of us this Christmas season rededicate our lives to giving glory to God by living in love, and only then will we indeed experience the peace and goodwill of which the angels sang.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
Pastor Ferro

WORSHIP**Sunday -- December 17th****One Service – 10:00am**

Join us on Sunday December 17th for worship featuring special music from the choir, carol communion, and participation from the Sunday School children.

Christmas Eve – Sunday, December 24th**10:00am, 7:00pm, and 10:00pm**

We will hold three worship services on Christmas Eve at 10:00am, 7:00pm, and 10:00pm. The morning service will have Communion and the evening services will have Candle lighting. There will be special music at all the services. The Live Stream and the recording of the 10:00am and 7:00pm services will be posted on the Bethany English Web site www.bethanyenglish.org. Join us either in-person or virtually to celebrate our Savior's birth on Christmas Eve

New Year's Eve – Sunday December 31st**One Service – 10:00am**

We will have one service with communion.

Nursery and Sunday School Schedules

Be mindful of these dates in December and January. The nursery will be open but NOT attended on Sunday, December 24th. There will be no Sunday School on Sunday, December 17, December 24, or December 31st.

ANNOUNCEMENTS**Wednesday Morning Bible Study****Paul's Letters to the Corinthians**

The Wednesday Morning Bible Study will continue its study of Paul's Letters to the Corinthians. These letters were written to one of the most beloved and difficult of Paul's congregations. All are invited to join us from 10:00am to 11:30am on Wednesday mornings in the Assembly Hall. The class **will not** be meeting on December 27 and January 3 for the Christmas holiday. Come and find out how much fun it can be to study the Bible.

Altar Guild**Church Decorating – Saturday, December 9 -- 9:30am**

Come help us get the church ready for Christmas! Sign up on the bulletin board. What goes up, must come down. We will put the decorations away on **Saturday, January 13, 2024 at 9:30am.**

Poinsettia Delivery – Saturday, December 23 – 11:00am

Come help us set up the Christmas Poinsettias on Saturday, December 23rd at 11:00am. Many hands make light work. The Altar Guild will meet at 10:30 to change the paraments for Christmas Eve.

Winter Meeting—Saturday, December 9 – 10:00am

We will discuss purchasing new paraments.

Time to Sign Up

The 2024 Sign ups for Altar Flowers (\$20 a vase), the Eternal Flame (\$10), and Bulletins (\$30) are out now. Sign up soon, popular dates fill up quickly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bethany's Community Engagement Team

This Holiday Season, Bethany's Community Engagement Team is once again hosting a Giving Tree to help a local West Park family in need. The Tree is up! Please take a tag or two, purchase the item on the tag, wrap them, and tape the tag to your gift. Gifts will be collected in bins under the Giving Tree in the Welcoming Room. Gifts need to be returned to the church by Sunday, December 17th

Gather Together**Christmas Party, December 17th 4:00pm.**

Gather Together, our 20s and 30s young adult group, will be hosting a Christmas party December 17th from 4-7PM at the Washburn home. Please drop in for holiday music, hot chocolate, and treats! Parents are welcome to bring kids along. We invite you to bring an appetizer, snack or dessert to share. With winter upon us, we will also use this as an opportunity to collect items for the Northeast Ohio's Coalition for the Homeless, including hoodies, hats, gloves, sleeping bags and warm blankets. In lieu of a gift exchange, please consider bringing an item to donate if you are able. Contact Mary Washburn (210-241-8455 or mary.washburn@outlook.com) for address and more details.

Annual Report

Committee and Group Leaders, January is the time to submit your reports for the Annual Report. Individual reports are due Sunday, January 28th. You may email a word document or submit a hard copy to Melissa. The Annual Meeting will take place in February.

Lights For Lions

Every year the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo collects broken, non-working, and old light strings and extension cords as part of a recycling fundraising campaign. In partnership with Lion Landscapes, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is working to mitigate human-carnivore conflicts and develop effective, long-term conservation strategies for large carnivores in Tanzania. This organization helps reduce the negative impacts of carnivore presence by providing important conservation-related benefits to local communities. Bethany member and Zoo volunteer Jackie Krieger is making it one step easier for you. There is a donation box in the Welcoming Room. If you can't make it to the zoo, bring your old lights to church and she will take them to the zoo for you!

Fellowship Movie Night**January 13th – 5:00pm**

This year we are having a Double Feature! We will have a G rated kids friendly movie at 5:30, followed by a PG - 13 rated movie. We will have a pot luck dinner so bring a dish to share and join us for a fun movie night. Contact Renae Delvitto with questions.

Thank you!

There are no words to express my gratitude for the children of Newton D Baker. The winter coats and gloves are keeping several children warm and the socks are covering many children's feet. So many gifts I can't count them all. They you Bethany, for your wonderful generosity.

Tish Evans and Newton D Baker.

Welcome to the World!**Layla Rose Krause**

Layla Rose Krause was born on November 9, 2023 to Katie and Kent Krause. She joins her two older brothers. Proud Bethany Grandma is Jackie Krieger.

ANNOUNCEMENTS**Financially Speaking**

Like your own household, Bethany has been negatively impacted by rising costs and economic uncertainty, yet giving was very strong in October and we were able to cut the deficit by over \$10,000. However, we still face a Current Fund deficit of \$20,784 going into the holiday season. As we come to the end of the year, Council asks everyone to give a bit more so that we can finish the year on a positive financial note. ***Thank you for your support in the past, thank you for your support now, and thank you for your continued support in the future.***

January to October

Receipts - Benevolent and Current Ministries

Envelope offerings	\$ 203,783	
Holiday offerings	3,864	
Endowment Fund	20,000	
Rental and Building Use	14,800	
Miscellaneous	<u>5,459</u>	
Total Receipts		\$ 247,906

Disbursements – Benevolent and Current Ministries

Benevolence	\$ 11,692	
Current Expenses	<u>256,998</u>	
Total Disbursements		<u>268,690</u>

Deficit \$ (20,784)

2024 Pledge Cards

If you have not completed your 2024 pledge, please do so. You may mail in your pledge card or drop it in the offering box at church. Thank you for your generosity, and your continued commitment to Bethany.

Check Writing Reminders

We are writing fewer and fewer checks these days. With that in mind, here are a few check writing reminders for when you fill out your offering.

1. Make sure the date and year are correct.
2. Make sure the amount you write out, matches the number amount. The bank will go by the amount written out.
3. Make sure you sign your checks.
4. If you do need to make corrections, please initial them.

The bank will not deposit any check that is not filled out correctly. Think writing checks is a pain? Talk to Sarah Todd about Simply Giving, the program Bethany uses to automatically withdraw your offering from your bank account each month.

In Our Prayers

May God's loving and healing hand continue to bless and keep all who call upon Him, especially: Sue Burdick, Phyllis Stewart, Margaret Menecke, Bob and Kay Hamed, Skip Kovacs, Bob Miller, Bob Cook

Our Sympathy and prayers are with:

- † Charlette Downer – November 29, 2023
- † Kim Kocel – mother-in-law of Randy Hockey
- † Rena De'Angelo— aunt of Jim Morano

December Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School Choir 11:00am Worship 1:30pm Tea	4 7:00pm Bethel	5	6 10:00am Bible Study	7 1:00pm Quilters	8 7:30pm Joseph @ Beck Center	9 9:30am Church Decoration Endowment Committee 7:00pm Council and Staff Xmas Party @ Sadlons
10 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School Choir, 11:00am Worship	11 7:00pm Bethel	12 7:00pm Committee Meetings	13 10:00am Bible Study	14 1:00pm Quilters	15	16
17 10:00am Worship 4:00pm Gather Together Christmas Party @ Washburns	18 7:00pm Bethel	19	20 10:00am Bible Study	21 1:00pm Quilters	22	23 10:00am Poinsettia Delivery
24 Christmas Eve 10:00am Worship 7:00pm Candlelight Worship 10:00pm Candlelight Worship	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26	27	28	29 Office Closed	30
31 10:00am Worship	1 New Year's Day Office Closed					

January Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2	3	4	5	6
7 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School Choir, Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	8 7:00pm Bethel	9 7:00pm Committee Meetings	10 10:00am Bible Study	11 1:00pm Quilters	12	13 9:30am Church Un- Decorating 5:00pm Movie Night
14 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School Choir, Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	15 7:00pm Bethel	16 7:00pm Council Meeting	17 10:00am Bible Study	18 1:00pm Quilters	19	20
21 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School Choir, Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	22 7:00pm Bethel	23	24 10:00am Bible Study	25 1:00pm Quilters	26	27
28 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School Choir, Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	29 7:00pm Bethel	30	31 10:00am Bible Study			