

BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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PITTSBURGH LUTHERAN
UNITED MINISTRIES

Pastors: Rev. Brenda Henry, Rev. Sue Devine,
Rev. Alexander Sumo and Rev. John Gropp



DECEMBER/JANUARY NEWSLETTER 2023/2024

CHRISTMAS IS THE SEASON OF GIVING – WHAT GIFT WILL YOU SHARE?

“Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we’re in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ. God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin.” Romans 3:24-25 (The Message)

The greatest gift you’ve ever been given wasn’t bought in a store. No cash exchanged hands. It wasn’t even wrapped. Yet it cost the Giver everything.

The Bible says God sent his Son to Earth to give you the greatest gift ever. He came to Earth to die—so that you could be made right with God. Romans 3:24-25 says, *“Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we’re in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ. God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin.”* (The Message)

So why did Jesus have to die? Let’s go back to the basics of peoples’ problem and God’s solution.

- **Nobody’s perfect.** I’ve never met a single person who has claimed to be perfect. I don’t measure up to my own expectations, much less God’s perfect standard. Neither do you or anyone else. We’ve all blown it. The Bible says, *“All of us have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory”* (Romans 3:23 CEV).
- **God is just.** God wants to be fair. When somebody breaks a law, there must be a penalty for it. When you break humanity’s laws, you pay humanity’s penalty. When you break God’s laws, you pay God’s penalty. The Bible says, *“The wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23 NIV).
- **Jesus paid the price for our sin.** The Bible says, *“God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins. Then, in exchange, he poured God’s goodness into us!”* (2 Corinthians 5:21 TLB). Jesus took on my sin and your sin and all the sin that has ever been committed. That’s the Good News, the Gospel. Jesus paid the price we could never pay for ourselves.
- **You must decide whether to accept God’s free gift.** God gave you a free gift of salvation when Jesus took your sin upon himself. But it’s a gift you must receive. The Bible says, *“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”* (John 1:12 NIV).

Will you accept God’s gift of salvation? Have you accepted God’s free gift yet? Have you been baptized yet? It’s one thing to understand the basics of how to have a relationship with Jesus. It’s another to accept the gift. God’s free gift – Jesus Christ, is the greatest gift to humanity. He is our redemption and salvation. As THE GREATEST to us, we are also given the privilege to share Christ with our families, friends, neighbors and strangers. Will you share Christ with your family and friends this Christmas? Will

you give your family and friends God's redemptive gift this Christmas? Here's the promise of this marvelous gift:

"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29 (ESV))

Redemption is when somebody pays for your sins so that you can be forgiven and walk away justified. They do your time. They pay your penalty. All the things you've done wrong are paid for by somebody else. That's what God did for humanity in His gift given to us in Christ Jesus on Christmas day. Jesus didn't just come to Earth at Christmas. He also lived a perfect life so that his sacrifice was enough to satisfy God's judgment. All of our sins were paid for on the cross. And that is the reason for this season! Christmas comes with the best news ever—and a choice: What are you going to do with Jesus this Christmas?

My challenge for all PLUM families this Christmas is for us to share Christ with our families and friends. Pass on this GOOD NEWS of God's redemption and salvation to the world. Be the giver of the greatest gift and change lives forever.

Pastor Alexander Y. Sumo on behalf of the PLUM Pastoral Team

BETHANY NEWS

BETHANY COUNCIL MEETING

Bethany's **December Council Meeting** will be on **Monday, December 18th at 7:00pm via ZOOM**. The **January meeting** will be on **Monday, January 15th at 7:00pm**, once again on the **ZOOM format**. All Council members are encouraged to attend.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Bethany's **Annual Congregational Meeting** is tentatively scheduled for **Sunday, January 21, 2024**, immediately following worship. There will be a potluck brunch following the meeting. **Please submit all annual reports to the Church office by Wednesday, January 17th**. This meeting will be important, as the 2024 Church Budget will need to be voted on. Look for more information on the meeting to be shared after the New Year. Thank you

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/10: JEANNE BOGGS
12/14: KATHY LINDNER
12/17: DEBBIE BAKER
12/23: CAROL FRETZ
12/24: ERIC ARTH
12/30: DORIS BECK
12/30: ARATREYA HURT

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1/4: JEAN MINICK
1/10: MARY MCGREEVY
1/10: ANTHONY WILLIAMS
1/15: LOUISE PHELPS
1/25: PATRICIA WATTERS
1/27: JOHN WILLIAMS
1/30: JEAN BRANNAN



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12/3/60: MR & MRS DAVID MOLTER
12/30/62: MR & MRS ALAN SINNING

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!



LET US REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS:

OUR MILITARY: Matt, Josh, Lee, Chase, Cameron, Michael and Bryan.

THOSE THAT PROTECT & SERVE: Craig and Jaco, Sean, Michael, Zach, Tom and John

OUR SHUT INS: Roberta, Mary, Linda, Carol, Jeanne, Jan, and Jean.

THOSE WHO ARE ILL: John, Carol, Jeanne, Roberta, Karen, Arion, Sharon, Tom, Carol, Ann, Colleen, Alan, Rose, Ryan, Mary, Bud, Joanne, Patty, David, Liz, Vince, Linda, Jim, Ed, Bill, Eric, Paul, Naziario, Ardith, Debbie, Gerri, Joe, Heather, Logan, Jessica, Harvey, Ashley, Beth, Charlie & Kelsey.

THE CHURCHES OF PLUM

THE DORMONT COMMUNITY

2024 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2024 Church offering envelopes will be available in the narthex of the church beginning Sunday, December 17th. Envelopes will be available to active members of Bethany who regularly attend worship. Those who don't regularly attend, but who still donate, will receive an identifying number for their donations. We thank you all for your continued support of Bethany and its mission.

CHURCH OFFICE HOLIDAY HOURS

The Church Office will be closed for the holidays from Friday, December 22nd through Monday, January 1st. Karen will be checking emails from home. If you need to get in touch with her, feel free to email at bethany-dormont@verizon.net or call 412-600-3901. The Church Office will return to normal hours on Tuesday, January 2nd. Have a blessed Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Bethany's Christmas Eve service will take place on Sunday, December 24th at 4:00pm. There will be no 9:15am worship on Christmas Eve. There will also be Christmas Eve services available on ZOOM at 9:15am and 4pm Christmas Eve. Please join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. There will be no on-site worship on Christmas Day (12/25/2023).

2024 FLOWER CHART

The 2024 Flower Chart will be available on Sunday, December 10th. You will find it on the bell table. If you would like to reserve the flowers for a date as a memorial or honorarium, please fill in the space by the date you prefer. Flower dates can be shared as well. Cost of weekly flowers is \$40.00. Make checks payable to: Bethany Ev. Lutheran Church

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS 2023

By purchasing poinsettias "in memory of" or "in honor of" loved ones you help decorate our sanctuary for our celebration of the Nativity of our Lord. Poinsettias are \$10.50 each. Deadline for orders is Sunday, December 10th.

YOUR NAME _____

"IN MEMORY OF" _____

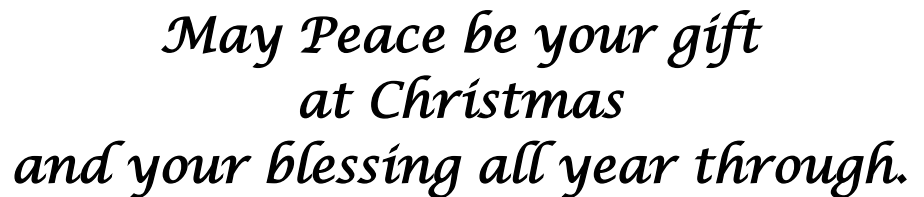
"IN HONOR OF" _____

QUAN. _____ x \$10.50 = \$_____ Make checks payable to: Bethany Ev. Lutheran Church

Bethany celebrated its 41st year of annually feeding the community on Thanksgiving Day by changing how we feed those in need. This year, we provided families with a turkey basket filled with everything one would need to make their Thanksgiving dinner at home. Donations of turkeys, turkey breasts, boxed potatoes and stuffing, veggies, cranberry sauce and desserts were gathered in November and then handed out to families on Sunday, November 19th. With over 90 baskets made, Bethany was able to feed 534 people this year. That is almost as many meals as we served by takeout and deliveries last year! A huge thank you goes out to all who participated in this endeavor. It takes many hands to carry out this event, and your hard work and dedication to this event is greatly appreciated. As always, God's blessings overflowed! The Thanksgiving Committee would like to especially thank the following for their kindness and generosity:

- Mt Lebanon United Methodist Church will now oversee the eat in, takeout and deliveries on Thanksgiving Day and have renamed their event The Thanksgiving Community Event. They will continue to share the history of the event with all those who participate. We look forward to continuing our support of their endeavors.

May God richly bless all of you this holiday season and may you know the grace and love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!



ADVENT BIBLE STUDY: Join your fellow PLUM members for an Advent Bible Study:

Using the 2023 Advent Study created by ELCA World Hunger, we will study scripture and explore how we encounter the living God today.

All sessions will be held on Zoom and begin at 7:00pm. Join us. <https://zoom.us/j/401596541>

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PLUM WORSHIP AND MEETINGS VIA ZOOM: How wonderful is it that not only can we gather for in-person worship each Sunday, we can also gather for Worship, meetings, bible studies and fellowship by connecting on the ZOOM format. Just use the information below and you can be a part of all we are currently doing.

Zoom online: <https://zoom.us/j/401596541>

Zoom by phone: **(646) 876-9923**

Meeting ID: 401 596 541

PLUM WORSHIP COMMITTEE: Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 7pm** via ZOOM. Join us then, as we discuss and plan our ZOOM worship services.

MONDAY, JANUARY 29: PLUM BOARD MEETING: The bi-monthly PLUM Board meeting will be held on **Monday, January 29th** at **7:00 p.m.** via **Zoom**.

AT HOME TAIZÉ PRAYER SERVICE, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023 AND WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2024, 7:00 PM, VIA ZOOM: Prayer is a great source of Comfort during trying times. Please join us in Taizé Prayer from the safety of your homes.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20 AT 7:00 P.M. WHAT'S NEXT? PLANNING MEETING: Each Church is asked to have a participant attend these meetings. Help us as we brainstorm ideas to enhance our PLUM churches and our participation in our communities.

3RD ANNUAL REASON FOR THE SEASON EVENT: St. Andrew Lutheran Church invites you to attend the **3rd Annual Reason for the Season, a Celebration of Christmas!** The event will take place on **Saturday, December 16, 2023 from 2pm to 4pm at the Church.** There will be activities, refreshments, and gifts for children. All are welcome and children must be accompanied by an adult. Join us as we celebrate our newborn King!





























Bethany Ev. Lutheran Church

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 	2 
3  9:15AM WORSHIP 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	4	5 	6  TAIZE WORSHIP 7PM ZOOM	7  HANUKKAH ADVENT PRAYER STUDY 7PM ZOOM	8	9 
10  9:15AM WORSHIP 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	11 	12	13 	14  ADVENT PRAYER STUDY 7PM ZOOM	15	16  SAL'S REASON FOR THE SEASON 2PM - 4PM
17  9:15 WORSHIP 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	18  BELC COUNCIL 7PM ZOOM	19 	20	21  WINTER BEGINS ADVENT PRAYER STUDY 7PM ZOOM	22 OFFICE CLOSED	23 
24  CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP 4PM	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSED	26  KWANZAA OFFICE CLOSED	27  OFFICE CLOSED	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30
31 9:15AM WORSHIP 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP NEW YEAR'S EVE 						

Bethany Ev. Lutheran Church

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 9:15AM WORSHIP 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	1  HAPPY NEW YEAR OFFICE CLOSED	2 	3  TAIZE PRAYER SERVICE 7PM ZOOM	4 	5 	6
7  9:15AM WORSHIP 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	8 	9 	10 WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING 7PM ZOOM	11	12 	13 
14  9:15AM WORSHIP 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	15  7PM ZOOM MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY	16 	17 	18	19 	20 
21  9:15AM WORSHIP ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING	22 	23 	24	25 	26 	27 
28  9:15AM WORSHIP 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	29 PLUM BOARD MEETING 7PM ZOOM 	30 	31	