

January 2024

BETHEL MESSENGER



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them, and they were filled with fear.” (Luke 2-9)
God’s glory pierced the darkness.

In the night when the sky is free of clouds the moon shines on the snow glittering like thousands of diamonds. Animals’ eyes shine in the light of the night. And stars, so many stars can be seen on a clear night away from the city lights. Looking up you can see the Big Dipper, perhaps Venus or Mars glowing with the reflection of the sun’s light. Familiar sites piercing the darkness. “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.” (Matthew 2:1-2)

Indeed, a light has shined in the darkness. We have gathered to sing Christmas songs, heard the Bell Choir, shared laughter, feasted with family, and once again celebrated the coming of the Light of the World, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace. “Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12) And just as the Wise Men returned to their homes, we have returned to our everyday lives.

As we move from Christmas towards spring, we gain a few more minutes of light each day. The strength of the sunshine melts the snow and warms the earth. When we leave school or work there is light for our drive home. As the time of light increases there is even light to work or play outside. All around us we are reminded of the power of light. Jesus calls us to share our light with others. “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all

From the Pastor

“I am the light of the world! You people come and follow me! If you follow and love you’ll learn the mystery of what you were meant to do and be. When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, When the sages and the shepherds have found their way home, the work of Christmas is begun:” (I Am the Light of the World by Jim Strathdee found in the NCH)

In the midst of the darkest time of the year, a light shined in the darkness. As you travel the streets, roads, and highways you see lights strung on homes, and trees, and bushes. There are candles in the windows. We seek to bring some light to the darkness, some bright shining light reminding us of God’s gift to the world. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made, In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:1-5)

Darkness is so much darker in “the country.” Away from the city streetlights, the neighbors yard lights, the business signs it is truly dark. Leaving work or school in the middle of winter means driving home in the dark. In fall the lights of the tractors pierced the darkness and farmers worked into the night gathering in their crops. But in the winter even those lights have disappeared. Darkness. “And in the region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the Glory of the Lord shone around

in the house. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:14-16)

May we shine the Light of Christ into the world in the New Year. Amen.

Consistory Minutes

December 5th, 2023

Members Present: Kim Rietbrock, Randy Henschel, Dan Huber, Faye Spindler, Jamie Weidemann & Pastor Diane Cayemberg.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Audit Committee Report:

The Audit Committee found no problems but offered a few suggestions for clarity. They suggested using some of the smaller Memorial Fund accounts for current needs, such as using Audrey Ertel's memorial fund for VBS expenses in 2023. They suggested a clearer summary of income and expenses, so that members can determine at Annual Meeting if the church made money this year.

Basement Project:

Jim Raquet reported that old wall coverings and flooring were removed. Mold-resistant drywall and new flooring installed and painting completed. Moldings going on flooring now,, and outlet covers going in. Electrical completed.

Next steps: mount TV, add furniture, tracking under budget so far. Should be fully completed by end of the year.

Dumpster is ready to be picked up. Youth room committee will be completed by Annual Meeting. The Committee will provide an update at the Annual Meeting and seek discussion and recommendations from members about future usage of the basement and whether to do anything more.

Basement kitchen is minimally used and has no water heater. Cupboards are already being used for general storage.

Dennis Roethel has offered to donate an upright freezer from his parents' house to help with storing apple pies.

Consistory toured the basement and determined there are enough chairs available for the Sunday School students. The youth room is looking great!

Pastoral Relations Committee Report:

Mary Johnson submitted a report on behalf of the Pastoral Relations Committee, which indicated no complaints or concerns about the pastor. Pastor Diane requested no increase in salary or vacation days, but she asked for contribution to her supplemental health insurance.

Motion made to reimburse Pastor for health insurance expense this year (Randy/Dan). Motion carried unanimously. Pastor will give Jamie a copy of the invoice for reimbursement because Pastor has already paid the expense.

Regular Meeting:

The secretary minutes from November were reviewed. There was a motion (Dan/Randy) to approve the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

The treasurer reports were reviewed for November. There was a motion (Dan/Randy) to approve all the treasurer reports. The motion carried unanimously.

Dan /Randy move to approve financial reports as presented; approved unanimously

Pastor's Report:

Pastor plans to be here all Sundays until April, thinking about maybe some time in Jan or Feb, but no plans at this time. She will ask lay leader directly if available, should Pastor decided to miss a Sunday. Consistory

recommended she take some time in January (since she is not full-time) and since Lent begins February 14.

Upcoming Schedule:

Feb 6th for tentative Consistory Meeting. Faye and Dan both prefer the first Tuesday every month due to other commitments. Jamie and Randy have no preference. Kim will work with Chuck on what works best for his schedule.

Jim has reached out to Julie Mueller about Secretary opening on consistory.

Cindy requested review and input for address list/church directory. Please provide updates as needed. Financial reports will be provided to Cindy after the 31st due to timing.

The group discussed review of Annual Meeting materials. Faye offered to help; Kim will send to a few consistory members to review after Cindy puts it together.

Lent discussion – ask worship committee about Soup Suppers before Lent services – not very heavily attended. Do members enjoy it and should we continue with it? The Consistory will ask members at Annual Meeting.

Budget – Jamie will finalize updates made last week and email out the budget for review and approval to consistory members prior to next meeting/end of year.

Compensation: Crystal usually cleans weekly for \$180 per month. Faye moved to increase to \$200/month. Dan Second, and motion carried. Lay Pastors were previously increased to \$200/service.

Dan motion to adjourn, Faye Second, all in favor.

Ended with the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jamie Weidemann

Puzzle!

After solving the equations, write the words on the correct numbered lines below. Complete Ephesians 1:3 (NIV) to discover how God shows his great love for us.

14 - 7 = ___ Father	10 + 15 = ___ in
10 + 9 = ___ heavenly	10 - 5 = ___ God
9 + 9 = ___ the	6 - 3 = ___ to
12 + 12 = ___ blessing	12 - 6 = ___ and
2 - 1 = ___ Praise	6 + 6 = ___ Christ
7 + 7 = ___ has	18 - 9 = ___ our
11 + 11 = ___ every	22 - 11 = ___ Jesus
13 + 13 = ___ Christ	1 + 1 = ___ be
8 + 8 = ___ us	7 + 6 = ___ who
10 + 10 = ___ realms	2 + 2 = ___ the
8 + 9 = ___ in	10 + 5 = ___ blessed
5 + 5 = ___ Lord	4 + 4 = ___ of
10 + 11 = ___ with	10 + 13 = ___ spiritual

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22		
23	24	25	26		

Ephesians 1:3, NIV

Answer: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1:3, NIV