

Monthly Meditation



Picture the busy people rushing around the modern day delivery room. Monitors beep. The doctors and nurses assisting the mother in her very uncomfortable time; and the fathers' waiting room filled with the

sounds of hospital noise, magazine pages turning, and expectant fathers nervously talking to one another. Quite a bit of chaos and noise accompanies a baby's birth. How different the scene from the birth of our Lord.

In the words of the Christmas Midnight Introit, the Church proclaims, "When all was still and it was midnight, your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne," wrote Solomon in Wisdom 18:14-15. The Word made flesh descends from heaven, and is "tabernacled" in the womb of his earthly mother, the Virgin Mary, and he is born to you in the city of David!

But we are not always keepers of this sacred stillness. We daily contribute to its chaos. We find ourselves serving our own wants, needs, and desires. How often we hear the treasure of the Christmas story and treat it as a mere history lesson. We come to Christmas not as humble shepherds in awe, but as people who have gotten wrapped up in the food, gifts, and loved ones at Christmas.

This Christmas listen for the quiet of the first Christmas and the muted baaing of the gentle sheep. But, most importantly listen for "A still small voice to cry one day for me" (LSB #369) – the voice of this Babe of Bethlehem born to die on Calvary's Cross for you and the sins of the world.

May this Christmas truly be a blessed "Silent Night" as you rejoice in God's love for you!

Because God first loved us and showered His love upon us, Christmas is a time that BLC loves to demonstrate our love to others in a joyous response. As we gift others, we remember Jesus's words in John 15:5, "Apart from me you can do nothing."



Third Quarter Charitable Gift

As with last year, Glen Lakes Schools will be about \$2500 to use toward the purchase of Christmas gifts for needy students in the district. In addition, BLC is now committed to this action every third quarter. Further, Pastor Dan has been meeting with local business people to see if they will join with us in this campaign.

Operation Christmas Child



Fifty-three boxes were packed and delivered for needy children to be distributed through the auspices of the Samaritan's Purse. This organization is headed by Billy Graham's son, Franklin. May they bring great joy to the children and their families. Thanks to Chris Griffith for heading up this project and all who helped fill the children's hearts with joy!

The Mitten Tree for the Empire Food Pantry Guests

Please help us fill the Mitten Tree with mittens, hats, gloves, and scarves to keep children and adults warm. We will be collecting through December 31st. You can also make checks payable to BLC with "Mitten Tree" in the memo line. Thanks to Lois Dockery and Diane Elmer for heading up this project.



Leelanau Community Singers



The Leelanau Community Singers will present their annual Christmas Concert at BLC on Sunday, December 3rd, beginning at 7:00 PM.



Please don't forget to bring in your Christmas cookies for the reception which follows the concert. Per the Singers, they always look forward to our cookies. "Thank You," in advance for your love and sweet treats.

Fellowship Hosts

We are looking for hosts to sponsor Sunday morning fellowship. The treats don't need to be fancy and there is nothing that says that you can't share the responsibility with someone



Please join us for the majesty of this simple night when the Light of World came to "dwell among us for a little while" wrapped in human flesh. May the quiet reverence of this most Holy of Nights fill your hearts with his peace and joy!



"Come to Bethlehem and See"

Bethlehem will hold the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve beginning at 7:00 PM. Be like the shepherds on that First Christmas. Remember the words of Luke 2:17-18, "When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them."

Please invite friends and family to church on this "Holy Night." Research tells us people are more open to attending church on Christmas and Easter than any other time of the year.



Even though Christmas Eve falls on Sunday this year, the Council decided that with the Morning Advent Service and the Evening Christmas Eve Service, no Christmas Day Service will be held.

Special Thanks

What a special event it was for those who attended the First Advent by Candlelight! Mary Martha Guild worked so hard in making this social and spiritual event such a success and delight.



Advent Devotionals



To assist you in your Advent devotions during this season of repentance, hope, joy, and expectation; devotional materials are available for you to take home.

Advent devotionals, booklets, and Advent Calendars are available for you by the Guest Book. The author of this year's devotional is Chad Bird. Chad is a former professor at Concordia Seminary-Fort Wayne, frequent presenter, and is a prolific writer. Please feel free to take some home for your family and neighbors.



The time has come for Bethlehem to seek God's help in designing the future that He has planned for us. Beginning now, will you start to make a list of how you would like to see BLC grow over the next five years? What programs? Physical Changes? Outreach? Dreams do you have for BLC? Watch for a letter from Chad in the future.

Beginning in January 2018, the Strategic Planning begins. Pastor and Chad will soon set a date for our first meeting. Please remember that every idea is valuable and we really do want your input and participation.

Come, Grow with Christ! Come, Grow with Us!

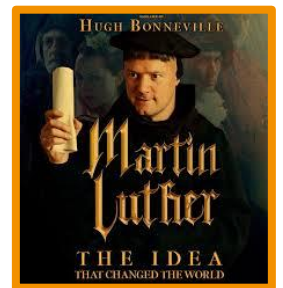
Thank You from Pastor



Pastor Appreciation Day was such a special day and I was so touched by your love and kind thoughts. For those of you not in attendance, I received Ken Scott's photo of BLC's blue spruce bedecked in winter's white and the lights symbolizing Christ. (In reality, the frame is in cherry wood.) Thank you for your love and gracious gift! - Pastor Dan

Reformation 500 DVD

If you were unable to see the Luther video, *Martin Luther: The Idea*, shown on PBS and in larger cities, BLC has four copies available for you to borrow beginning in early December.



If there is interest, we will have a Glen Arbor "Premiere" sometime in the New Year for those who would like to watch it with friends and enjoy some *Gemütlichkeit!*

Please Welcome our New Secretary



With many thanks to Melanie Griffith for her faithful service, please welcome Lois Dockery in her new position. Lois graduated from the University of Nebraska and spent most of her professional life in the oil and gas industry. Lois has asked that she not receive a salary and would like the equivalent of her hourly wages to be posted to BLC's savings account.

Synodical Statistics

In 2016, membership in the LCMS declined about 1.5% for confirmed and 2.1% for baptized. Simply put, we are experiencing a decline in younger members. 24% of Synod's membership is comprised of seniors compared with 15% of the national average. Average Sunday attendance is 137 across Synod.



Blessings for Bethlehem



Dear Friends and Family of Bethlehem,

Because of some very well-intentioned actions in the past that did not serve us, Bethlehem was forced to use approximately \$26,000 of our savings this year to correct this and bring an end to any further financial loss. This was a significant amount of money for us to expend and we are looking to restore this amount to our savings.

As part of your Christmas gift giving, will you consider a gift to Bethlehem to help defray this cost? Please do not place yourself in a burden nor reduce this amount from your regular offerings to Bethlehem. However, if the Lord has made it possible for you to contribute, please simply write "Savings" or "Blessings" on your memo line. If you are unable to make a contribution, please remember us in your prayers.

All gifts will be acknowledged for tax purposes and you will have the love of the people of Bethlehem as we continue to look to minister to you and the people and visitors of the Glen Arbor community.

May the Babe of Bethlehem keep you ever encircled in the arms of His love, peace, and joy this Christmas and always.

Blessed Christmas
Pastor Dan

2018 Church Officers – Elected and Appointed

Chairman: Chad Kahler Secretary: Lois Dockery SS Super: Laurel Peterson
Vice Chair: Greg Griffith Treasurer: Melanie Griffith Fin. Sec: Lois Dockery
Elders: Doug Slessman, Jim Kraatz, Mike Sheridan, Jim Peterson
Trustees: Ken Rosiek, Greg Griffith, Jim Elmer, Mike Sheridan

A BIG THANK YOU to our Altar Guild, volunteer landscapers, custodians, Fellowship providers, and all of those who love the Lord by their silent service to Him by serving in his Kingdom. Thank You from all of us!



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