



# **The Bethesda Beacon**

Monthly Newsletter of Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church, Carlton MN  
December 2023



## **This Month's Beacon**

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## **Sunday Worship**

**8:30am**

***In House and Online***

You can also view the Beacon on our website at [bethesdacarlton.org](http://bethesdacarlton.org)

If you would like to have a copy emailed to you, please contact the office at [office@bethesdacarlton.org](mailto:office@bethesdacarlton.org)

## From Pastor Seth

*(If this article looks familiar, that's because a version of it appeared in a November issue of the Pine Knot!)*

Why do bad things happen to good people?

A couple of years ago, Andrea and I started a vegetable garden. Since then, we've learned at least one thing: we're pretty lousy gardeners. Or, at least, I am.

I can tell I am a lousy gardener because, when I talk to serious gardeners, I usually have no clue what they're talking about. This is especially true when it comes to weeding. No matter what we plant, by the time things start growing I can't tell a bean or tomato plant from any other plant that might show up, so I let them all grow together and hope for the best.

This was especially true this summer. Last year our garden bed had more cherry tomatoes than we could keep up with, so some were left hiding until they were ready for the compost. When it was all said and done, this year there were little tomato sprouts basically everywhere – where we planted them, and where they planted themselves.

This didn't actually make for a great year for tomatoes, but it did make us extra cautious in pulling anything out of the ground. Could this little unidentified sprout be a rogue plant that might offer something tasty if we let it go? Often, the answer turned out to be no, but sometimes that little sprout offered an addition to supper or a flower to appreciate.

I sometimes get the feeling that the world we live in, in some respects, is a bit like our garden bed: chaotic, tangled, and more than a bit messy. There's plenty of good things, and plenty of unhelpful things, but it's not always clear which is which.

(Credit where it's due: Jesus was telling stories about farming, gardening, and weeds way back 2000 years ago. Check Matthew 13 if you want to see what I'm talking about.)

Back to our original question: Why do bad things happen to good people? Why does evil exist in a world that should be good? Why do some kids get cancer while others get a bike? Why do some people's homes get destroyed while others stay safe and warm?

We will surely never stop wondering, but perhaps Jesus's story from 2000 years ago might shed some light on the subject: there's no way we can get rid of all the weeds in our world without pulling out the good stuff along with it.

So, what can we do?

The good news is that we're not helpless. Our world may seem tangled, chaotic, and confusing, but we can plant some good.

Christmas, I know you'll find a way to plant some good – whether it's at the food shelf, with your siblings in Christ, at your dinner table, or wherever else you find yourself. We plant seeds, but God gives the growth. Who knows what might grow out of it?

I pray, this Advent and this Christmas, that God might use you to grow some good, and that God might grow some good in your life too.

*-Pastor Seth Wynands*

## Updates

The office is in the process of updating its email address. The old account will be open still while we make the change, please use [office@bethesdacarlton.org](mailto:office@bethesdacarlton.org) as you move forward with church communications.

### **Service Reminder**

- Bethesda holds a service at Interfaith Care Center the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month in the IFCC Community Room at 3:00 p.m. *All are welcome to join!*

\*Please consider volunteering to assist at one of the Christmas Eve services on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>. The services will be at 3p & 7p. Ushers, lectors, greeters, communion assistants, counters, & communion setup/cleanup are all needed.\*

**Bethesda Staff**

Seth Wynands, Pastor  
Phone: 424-337-0350

Email: pastor@bethesdacarlton.org

Stephanie Erickson-Russell, Admin.  
Phone: 218-384-4501

Email: office@bethesdacarlton.org

Nita Davis, Accountant/Bookkeeper  
Phone: 515-890-1235

Email: nita@davisbooksandtax.com

Ronay Frank, Custodian

Anna Bong, Custodian

Cathy Dale, Accompanist

**2023 Members of Bethesda  
Church Council**

Jason Goad..... President

Deb Davis..... Vice President

Jen Goad..... Secretary

Jeannette Korpela..... Treasurer

JoAnn Gustafson

Debby Johnson

Renee Kesty

If you have items that you wish to be addressed by council, contact a member of the Executive Committee at:  
bethesdalutherancouncil@gmail.com

November Council Meeting will be held  
December 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30p

**Financial Update**

Year to date as of 10/31/2023

|                             | Actual           | Budget           | Over/(Under)<br>Budget |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Envelope giving             | 83504.42         | 91700.00         | (8195.58)              |
| Non-pledged income          | 12926.98         | 7749.99          | 5176.99                |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>         | <b>118409.38</b> | <b>124266.60</b> | <b>(5857.22)</b>       |
| Salaries/Compensation       | 89458.18         | 93134.86         | (3676.68)              |
| General Office Expenses     | 4983.72          | 6990.10          | (2006.38)              |
| Utilities                   | 11729.01         | 9554.20          | 2174.81                |
| Other Expenses              | 3252.29          | 2166.60          | (1085.69)              |
| Benevolence Expenses        | 811.34           | 908.30           | (96.96)                |
| Evangelism Expenses         | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00                   |
| Property Expenses           | 7003.59          | 2108.40          | 4895.19                |
| Social Ministry             | 270.00           | 270.80           | (0.80)                 |
| Worship Expenses            | 1274.27          | 2266.70          | (992.43)               |
| CYFM Expenses               | 2607.42          | 4431.70          | (1824.28)              |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>       | <b>121389.82</b> | <b>121831.66</b> | <b>(441.84)</b>        |
| <b>Net operating income</b> | <b>(2980.44)</b> | 2434.94          | (5415.38)              |

Non-pledged income includes Loose offering, Special Services, Meatball supper, Sunday School, Interest Income, etc.  
Memorial money is not included in any of the figures above.

**Memorials & Donations**

Did you know, when you give money to Memorial you have the option of designating *how* the money is used for the church?

The Memorial Committee has a new fund designation set up titled "Front Steps & Basement" The front steps of the church are in need of repair and the basement is in need of waterproofing.

If you'd like to designate your donation to this fund, please make a note on your contribution for "Front Steps & Basement"

*Thank you*



Our deepest condolences and prayers of healing to the family, friends, and all who knew and loved Roy Jerde, Paul Carpenter, and Al Holm. May you find comfort in the Lord and in your community during this difficult season.

"God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

## **Collecting for a Cause**

Pop tops off aluminum cans: given to The Ronald McDonald House.

Brown paper grocery bags: given to a non-profit thrift store.

New greeting cards: given to Interfaith Care Center, Carlton Place, and Pineview Apartments for Residents to use.

2024 Calendars: given to residents at Interfaith Care Center.

## **Ditty Bags**

Bar soap in original wrapping (no ivory), wash cloths, toothbrushes, medium or large toothpaste, small or medium-sized notebooks, razors, sturdy combs, travel-sized shampoo/conditioner/lotions, sewing kits...

## **\*Sewers Needed\***

Consider hemming precut diaper squares, and onesies. Flannel sheets/material is also needed to make diapers out of.

Boxes for above items located in Narthex area.

## **Hygiene products for the Damiano Center**

Shampoo, toothpaste, and personal care products as well as larger backpacks and suitcases with wheels. Please bring gently used items.

## **Winter Clothing Donations**

Winter clothing is now being collected for those in need – Items needed are: winter jackets, snowpants, scarves, socks, hats, and mittens.

Boxes for above items located in Fellowship Hall.

## **Cloquet Salvation Army Food Shelf Items**

December/January Items: Peanut butter, jelly/jam, & crackers

Collection box located near basement stairs.

## **Salvation Army Drive-Thru Food Shelf Hours:**

Monday 4:30p-6:00p | Tuesday 8:30a-12:30p  
316 Carlton Ave. Cloquet | 218-879-1693

## **Making Mats for the Homeless:**

Clean plastic shopping bags. Mat Makers use them to create 6' x 3' sleeping mats for those in need.

Drop plastic bags off in small coat closet in the Narthex.

**\*\*\*There will be no mat making for the month of December\*\*\***

## **Christmas Donations:**

From now until December 10<sup>th</sup>, WELCA will be collecting monetary donations for Christmas baskets. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at the church – there are also envelopes available in the pews.

*Please make checks payable to WELCA.*

## **Christmas Poinsettias**

Please consider bringing a Poinsettia “In Memory of” or “In Honor of” a loved one to help adorn our Sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

Plants will need to be at the Church by 10a on Saturday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> and please let the office know by December 18<sup>th</sup> if you plan on bringing a plant so your loved one can be acknowledged in



the Christmas Eve Bulletin.



*Thank you, Pat Durkee*



## **December Baptismal Birthdays**

Audrina Schwartz, Giselle Martini, Nancy Crider, Kaitlyn Kelley, Emma DeVriendt, Crosby Moench, Alanna Soukkala, Emily Marciniak, Amelia McCarthy, Alan Moench, Kristen Wakefield, Stephanie Erickson-Russell, Alex Grover, Courtney Grover, Jolene Johnson, Bethany Mckeon, Haven Rockenstein, Renee Kesty, Bobbie Selin, Abby Mickle, Brynn Mickle, Jackson Mickle, Peyton Schmitz, Aliza Vernon, Brody Vernon, Jack Vernon, Chris Rousseau, Patricia Schmitz, Sofie Herman, Kristianna Konietzko, Jazmyn Martini, Carol Hongisto, & Bethany Leseman.

**Children, Youth, Family, & Ed.**

|                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>December 2023 J.A.M//Message</b> |                                    |
| December 3 <sup>rd</sup>            | Jesus and Me [J.A.M]               |
| December 10 <sup>th</sup>           | Message with Pastor Seth           |
| December 17 <sup>th</sup>           | No J.A.M – Service at River’s Edge |
| December 24 <sup>th</sup>           | No Message – Christmas Eve Service |
| December 31 <sup>st</sup>           | No J.A.M – New Year’s Eve          |

**CYFED will meet on December 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:30p in the library.**

All are welcome to join us. We are always looking for ideas to get our youth involved. If you have questions, concerns, or ideas, please feel free to contact a committee member.

*~Thank you from the CYFED Committee: Pastor Seth, Wendy Mitchell, Linda Newlon, Diana Davis, and JoAnn Gustafson.*

***Faith Partners Needed***

If you are asked, please prayerfully consider participating as this is a wonderful way to get to know our younger members and walk with them on their faith journey.

**Confirmation Classes – 10<sup>th</sup> Grade**

10<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Class will begin on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Christmas Vigil**

Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> – 6:00p-8:00p

All youth are welcome to join us for an evening of trivia, cookie decorating, and assembling Christmas bags for IFCC.

**Save the Date: 2024 Youth Gathering**

July 14<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> | New Orleans, LA

Registration closed October 8<sup>th</sup> and there are three youth signed up! If you have any questions about planning or fundraising assistance please reach out to the office.

**Upcoming Event - Christian Music Family Skate at World of Wheels!**

World of Wheels in Superior is hosting a Christian Music Family Skate night on Monday December 4<sup>th</sup> from 5:00p-7:30p. Event details are listed below and can also be found at [www.wowskatecenter.com](http://www.wowskatecenter.com)

Admission: \$8.49 (Max \$33/family) + Skate Rental  
\*Skate Rentals range from \$4.00-\$5.00



**Coffee Service**



|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b><u>December Coffee Serving Schedule</u></b> |                                    |
| 12/3 .....                                     | Linda’s Group                      |
| 12/10 .....                                    | Deb’s Group                        |
| 12/17 .....                                    | Renae’s Group                      |
| 12/24 ...                                      | Christmas Eve – Service at 3p & 7p |
| 12/31 .....                                    | Lori’s Group                       |

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <b><u>January Coffee Serving Schedule</u></b> |                  |
| 1/7 .....                                     | Jeanette’s Group |
| 1/14 .....                                    | Ginny’s Group    |
| 1/21 .....                                    | Pat’s Group      |
| 1/28 .....                                    | Cary’s Group     |

## December Worship Assistants

If you are unable to be here for the date that you are scheduled, please try to find a replacement.  
Thank you!

### Greeters

12/3 ..... Sharon Bragge & Debby Johnson  
12/10 ..... JoAnn Gustafson & Ailie  
12/17 Joint Service/Potluck @ River's Edge  
12/24 ... Christmas Eve – Service at 3p & 7p  
12/31 ..... Rod & Deb Davis

### Ushers

12/3 ..... Lynn Beatty & Mary Saarela  
12/10 ..... Craig & Roxane Schmitz  
12/17 Joint Service/Potluck @ River's Edge  
12/24 ... Christmas Eve – Service at 3p & 7p  
12/31 ..... Bob & Myrna Postal

### Lector

12/3 ..... Linda Newlon  
12/10 ..... Roxane Schmitz  
12/17 Joint Service/Potluck @ River's Edge  
12/24 ... Christmas Eve – Service at 3p & 7p  
12/31 ..... Diana Davis

### Acolyte

12/3..... Anna  
12/10 ..... Ailie  
12/17 Joint Service/Potluck @ River's Edge  
12/24 ... Christmas Eve – Service at 3p & 7p  
[Anna @ 3p & Mason @ 5p]  
12/31 ..... Ailie

### Communion Assistants

12/3 ..... Sharon Bragge & Mary Saarela  
12/10 ..... JoAnn Gustafson & Ailie  
12/17 Joint Service/Potluck @ River's Edge  
12/24 ... Christmas Eve – Service at 3p & 7p  
12/31 ..... JoAnn Gustafson & Ailie

### Counters

12/3 ..... Lynn Beatty & Mary Saarela  
12/10 ..... Linda Newlon & Gladys Sievert  
12/17 Joint Service/Potluck @ River's Edge  
12/24 ... Christmas Eve – Service at 3p & 7p  
12/31 ..... Chris Mitchell & Diana Davis

## January Worship Assistants

If you are unable to be here for the date that you are scheduled, please try to find a replacement.  
Thank you!

### Greeters

1/7 ..... Sharon Bragge & Debby Johnson  
1/14 ..... Lori Bunge & Jason Goad  
1/21 ..... JoAnn Gustafson & Ailie  
1/28 ..... Mary Saarela & Sharon Bragge

### Ushers

1/7 ..... Sharon Bragge & Debby Johnson  
1/14 ..... Terry & Sue Coady  
1/21 ... Cheryl Ankrum & JoAnn Gustafson  
1/28 ..... Mary Saarela & Ryan Swanson

### Lector

1/7 ..... Wendy Mitchell  
1/14 ..... Ginny Korte-Castle  
1/21 ..... Cheryl Ankrum  
1/28 ..... Pat Durkee

### Acolyte

1/7..... Anna  
1/14 ..... Mason  
1/21 ..... Ailie  
1/28 ..... Anna

### Communion Assistants

1/7 ..... Chris and Wendy Mitchell  
1/14 ..... Jason & Jen Goad  
1/21 ..... JoAnn Gustafson & Ailie  
1/28 ..... Linda Newlon & Pat Durkee

### Counters

1/7 ..... Chris Mitchell & Lori Bunge  
1/14 ..... Lynn Beatty & Mary Saarela  
1/21 ..... Gladys Sievert & Gene Bryant  
1/28 ..... Lynn Beatty & Linda Newlon



**Bethesda Women's Retreat 2024**  
**Wednesday, January 17 – Sunday, January 21**  
**One Camp Heartland, Willow River, MN**

*Open to all women of Bethesda, River's Edge, and their friends!*

Crafting area with tables | Fireplace with hearth for lounging | Snowshoe & ski trails  
(bring your own gear) | 9:30a Brunch & 5:30p Dinner

You will have your own bed (all bottom bunks depending on our numbers) with a bathroom in each bedroom. Bring your own linens, toiletries, snacks, beverages, games, extension cords, ott lights, iron/board (if sewing), etc.

Pre-registration is due by December 1<sup>st</sup> and includes a \$50 non-refundable deposit. Full balance is due by January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Note: Wednesday night is an *additional* option, not instead of the regular nights offered as we still need to meet the camp's quota for lodging.

Please print your information clearly to ensure you receive updates about the event.

Name:

Cell Phone:

Email:

**Please let me know if you will be staying overnight (\$40) or just for the day (\$25) Meals are included!**

|  | <b>DAY</b> | <b>OVERNIGHT</b> |
|--|------------|------------------|
| <b>Additional Wednesday Overnight Option</b> |            | _____            |
| <b>Thursday</b>                              | _____      | _____            |
| <b>Friday</b>                                | _____      | _____            |
| <b>Saturday</b>                              | _____      | _____            |
| <b>Total Owed _____</b>                      |            |                  |
| <b>Total Paying Today _____</b>              |            |                  |

*Thank you to WELCA and Thrivent Financial for helping support this retreat. Make checks payable to WELCA and return this for to Ginny Korte-Castle, 2175 Gillogly Rd. Carlton, MN 55718 | [vircastle@gmail.com](mailto:vircastle@gmail.com) / 218-384-3896*

## Looking Back

Thank You to everyone who helped make this year's Thrivent Challenge such a success! The Thrivent Challenge goal was to collect 500 food shelf items and we collected 663 {430.4lbs}! In addition to these donations, the Cloquet Salvation Army Food Shelf will receive \$500 from Thrivent!



On Sunday November 5, both young and old came together to assembly **103** baby kits.

What a **huge** success, thanks to you!

The kits will be distributed thru Lutheran World Relief.



On November 8<sup>th</sup> Bethesda hosted a Mental Health Night for youth and their families with Synod Minister for Mental Health, Joy Hensel. A wonderful way to come together and praise God while discussing the importance of caring for our mental health.



## Looking Ahead

### Book/Article Study

Book/Article Study is still held on the last Tuesday of the month at 5:30p. *All are welcome to join!*

### A Touch of Scandinavia – Annual Christmas Bazaar

Saturday, December 2 – 9:00a-1:00p

Craft Table | Next to New Items | Silent Auction Raffle | Lunch | Baked Goods (including Lefse!)

### Christmas Eve Services

10:30a at River's Edge

3:00p at Bethesda

7:00p at Bethesda

Note: Pastor Seth will be out of office from December 25<sup>th</sup> – January 1<sup>st</sup>

### Church Involvement

Please prayerfully consider volunteering as a Worship Assistant {see Stephanie Erickson-Russell}, to assist with coffee serving {see Mary Saarela}, or to serve on the Property Committee {see Lynn Beatty}. Your time and talent would be so appreciated!

## Community News

### Christmas Bazaar

Zion Lutheran Church, Cloquet  
Saturday, December 2 | 9:00a-1:00p

Quilt Sale | Bake Sale | Candy Table | Brunch & Lunch | Plants | Holiday Items | and More

### Farmer's Market December Vendor & Craft Fair

Moose Lake Evangelical Covenant Church,  
Moose Lake  
Saturday, December 9 | 9:00a-2:00p

Over 30 vendors and crafters + a chance to get your picture taken with Santa!



# December 2023

| SUN   | MON  | TUE  | WED | THU  | FRI   | SAT   |
|---|--|--|-----|--|---|---|
|   |  |  |     |  | 1<br><b>11a Bible</b>   | 2<br><br><b>Bazaar<br/>9a-1p</b>  |
| 3<br><b>8:30a</b> Worship<br><b>9:45a</b> Coffee/<br>Fellowship<br><b>10:30a</b> Worship @<br>River's Edge  | 4  | 5<br><b>9a</b> Making Mats<br>for the Homeless<br><b>5:30p</b> CYFED<br>Meeting<br><b>6p</b> Serenity<br>Seekers   | 6   | 7<br><b>1p</b> Jam Group   | 8<br><b>11a</b> Bible Study   | 9<br><br>Youth<br>Christmas Vigil<br>6p-8p  |
| 10<br><b>8:30a</b> Worship<br><b>9:45a</b> Coffee/<br>Fellowship<br><b>10:30a</b> Worship @<br>River's Edge<br><b>3p</b> Interfaith Service                                 | 11   | 12<br><b>9a</b> Making Mats<br>for the Homeless<br><b>6p</b> Serenity<br>Seekers   | 13  | 14   | 15<br><b>11a</b> Bible Study<br><br><i><u>Beacon<br/>Deadline</u></i> | 16  |
| 17<br><b>10:30a</b> Worship @<br>River's Edge w/<br>Potluck   | 18   | 19<br><b>9a</b> Making Mats<br>for the Homeless<br><b>4:30p</b> Worship<br>Committee Mtg.<br><b>5:30p</b> Council<br>Mtg.<br><b>6p</b> Serenity<br>Seekers | 20  | 21<br><b>1p</b> Jam Group<br><b>5:30p</b> Ladies of<br>Kaleva Mtg. | 22<br><b>11a</b> Bible Study  | 23  |
| 24<br><i>Christmas Eve</i><br><br><b>10:30a</b> Worship @<br>River's Edge<br><b>3p</b> Christmas Eve<br>Service @ Bethesda<br><b>7p</b> Christmas Eve<br>Service @ Bethesda | 25<br><br><i>Merry<br/>Christmas!</i><br><br> | 26<br><b>9a</b> Making Mats<br>for the Homeless<br><b>6p</b> Serenity<br>Seekers   | 27  | 28   | 29<br><b>8:30a</b> Healing<br>Service<br><b>11a</b> Bible Study       | 30 {Sat.}<br><hr/> 31 {Sun.}<br><b>8:30a</b> Worship<br><b>9:45a</b> Coffee/<br>Fellowship<br><b>10:30a</b> Worship @<br>River's Edge<br><br><i>New Years Eve</i> |