

Parish Newsletter **December 2023**



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

This has been a strange fall. Early cold and then not. Heavy wet snow and then gone after some time. There's still green grass and it makes me smile when I go by a ditch and see a pocket of snow after all these beautiful late autumn days. What was a mountain of snow in the parking lot across from Mayville UCC has become a dirty hill. And the wind! It certainly has been mighty, but we know that here in our part of God's creation. The cold is back this week, when will the snow come? Mid November, I actually finished raking my lawn in Mayville after the surprise snow melted and the wind slowed long enough for me to make a few trips to haul away that second blanket of leaves that had covered the front yard after that fierce blast of wind deposited the rest of the neighbors' tree beautiful orange and brown leaves on my front lawn. They helped me with their leaf blower and it went fast and I was so grateful as it was only me – my raking partner didn't come up that weekend. Helps to have others with chores!

Did Mary and Joseph know that their lives would be forever altered with the birth of Jesus? Being first time parents, they might have suspected. Always something. Both parents traveling for the census to be counted to do their duty. Traveling, awaiting the child that Mary pondered about when the angel spoke to her. (Luke 1:26-38) Joseph given a dream to stand by his woman and even given a name for this child to be born - Emmanuel. (Matthew 1:18-25) Jesus, the babe born in a lowly setting. Mary, did you know that your Son would grow and leave this earth before you? Jesus growing, rolling over, crawling, running, working.

"They" grow up fast! Here we are at Advent and as the world turns, Jesus the babe will grow up so fast. It's a strange Advent season this year. It happened in 2006 and then not until 2017 where Advent 4 is on December 24th. So, December 24th not the 25th, the date when many churches celebrate the birth of this little bitty baby, a story most of us have heard many times. We'll light all four candles of Advent and the Christ candle as well. That 11 year gap from 2006 to 2017 when the Advent 4 and Christmas Eve happened because of leap years - one of those ALWAYS SOMETHING things that change a usual of things as clockwork - things that might catch us off guard. The baby born to celebrate - Emmanuel with us to fill in the gaps for those times.



Even though there's always something. Always something... sometimes unexpected, sometimes miraculous, sometimes challenging and sometimes routine and sometimes plain old chores. We can expect always something things to happen like the leaves falling and the snow coming. Can't always be certain despite forecasts and routines that the present moment will be as predicted. BUT here's the shining light. Every day our God EMMANUEL has promises for us. That family story of hope, love, joy and peace comes to us as we light the Advent candles so we are made new like a little bitty babe claimed and named.

Thanks for letting your light shine, thanks for traveling on the road together. Thanks for opening the door for others to join in the story of EMMANUEL, God with us. In the lengthened darkness of this non daylight savings time season, in surprise strangeness of any day or night. God has light. Need a little light? Neighbors and family might appear at unexpected times just like the angels for Mary and Joseph help sometimes heaven sent as an angel. We might be that angel for an unexpected turn of events for our neighbor. In the waiting and the doing, God's present is here. You, neighbors, even strangers on the road. Present you are for others, others for you. We can call for that light. And God says Please do. God's presence for all - the reason for the season to use an old rhyme. 2024 is coming fast!

In the light of the season, in the light of Christ's birth, God Bless you all, Pastor Deb Stave

P.S. If you would like a pastoral visit whether in the hospital or at home please let me know. My cell phone is currently 701/550-9830, please leave a voicemail or text if you don't get an answer.

NEWSLETTER

Newsletter items can be sent to Tracy Foss at Tracy.L.Foss@gmail.com Newsletter deadline is usually the Tuesday before the last Sunday of the month. January newsletter deadline is 12-28-2023.

Parish News

SUNDAY READINGS FOR WORSHIP – DECEMBER 2023

- December 3rd - **1st Sunday of Advent**
 - Is. 64:1-9; Ps. 80:1-7,17-19; 1 Cor. 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37
- December 10th - **2nd Sunday of Advent**
 - Is. 40:1-11; Ps. 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8
- December 17th - **3rd Sunday of Advent**
 - Is. 61: 1:4, 8-11; Ps. 126; 1 Thess. 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28
- December 24th – bulletins will have the readings
- December 31st – no worship service

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

- Bethany 4:00 pm
- Mayville UCC 5:30 pm

Mayville Congregational-UCC News

DECEMBER READERS

TBA

SPECIAL DATES

- Dec. 3rd - Hanging of the Greens Worship Service
- Dec. 10th - Communion Worship
- Dec. 17th - Cranberry Cake Sunday
- Dec. 24th - Christmas Eve Service 5:30 pm

Bethany News

DECEMBER READERS

December 3 – Loretta Larson

December 10 – Betty Reinhart

December 17 – Sunday School Program

December 24 – Linda Stromstad

December 31 – No Worship Service

DECEMBER USHERS

Justin and Tracy Foss

TREE DECORATING

Tree decorating will be following church on Sunday, December 3. Everyone is invited to help.

BETHANY COUNCIL

There will be no council meeting in December.

BETHANY CIRCLE/WELCA

There will be no circle in December.

We are still in need of the following items for LWR kits:

girls jackets - size 6-24 months (with hoods if possible)

boys sleepers - 6-24 months

receiving blankets

cloth diapers

diaper pins/large safety pins

spools of neutral colored, general purpose thread (250-300 yards each)

CVIC BASKET

Loretta will be placing a basket to collect items for the Community Violence Intervention Center in Grand Forks. She will be delivering it on December 20.

Below is a list of items that are needed. Thank you for thinking of CVIC!

CVIC Wish List

Chapstick, Lotion, Conditioner, Body Wash, Toothpaste, Deodorant

BETHANY ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE

The annual Bethany Food Drive was a huge success. The goal given to us by Thrivent was to collect 500 items to be given to the Hatton Helping Hands Food Pantry. If the goal was reached, Thrivent would also give the food pantry \$500. We far outreached the goal and collected 845 items! Thank you to the Bethany congregation for your immense generosity!

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED AT LUTHER MEMORIAL HOME

The Luther Memorial Home no longer has an auxiliary. There will be times they need volunteers to assist with activities. If you are interested in doing this, contact Karen Osland or Sue Rice for more information.

JANITOR/USHER SIGNUP

Please check the Janitor/Usher signup on the bulletin board in the entry way.

COFFEE AFTER CHURCH

If you have a certain Sunday sometime this year you would like to bring something to have with coffee after Church - please put your name on the list on the bulletin board in the entry.

YARN DONATIONS

If anyone has yarn, any type, that you want to get rid of, bring it to church, we will send it to the EaNSWO convention in September, and from there it goes to prisons of ND, where they knit things to give or send away.

WEB PAGE

BethanyRuralHatton.com If you have anything you would like to put on the website contact Mark.

BULLETIN

Bulletin announcements can be sent to Lorrie Aamold Loaamold@hotmail.com or by leaving a message at 543-3806. Deadline for the bulletin is Thursdays.

BETHANY NEWS

News items can be sent to Charlotte Lee at Charlottelee7@icloud.com or Tracy Foss at Tracy.L.Foss@gmail.com Newsletter deadline is usually the Tuesday before the last Sunday of the month. January newsletter deadline is 12-28-2023.