



The Tidings

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
607 N. Maguire, Warrensburg, MO 64093

PASTOR'S PAGE

Living Our Numbered Days with Wisdom

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Solomon began his book of Proverbs with this intention: "To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity..." (1:2-3). In the same vein of striving for wisdom in the unfolding experiences of life, the psalmist prayed this distilled plea: "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (90:12). We know that this new year has 12 months and 365 days (but remember, this is a leap year!) like all the ones that preceded it, but "numbering" our days means knowing that not all of us are promised the full amount ... while also valuing each day by spending it toward the highest and fullest purpose.

All of which got me thinking of a little book from 28 years ago to which I refer from time to time—Kent Nerburn's *Simple Truths: Clear & Gentle Guidance on the Big Issues of Life*. Nerburn, who holds a Ph.D. in Religion and Art, spent several years helping collect the memories of Ojibwe tribal elders—an exercise in distilled wisdom, to say the least! Below are twelve gems for you to consider—one a month—and I'll let you choose which one goes with which.

- 1) *We should remember the caution of the Chinese sage, Confucius, who told his followers, "Study without thinking and you are blind; think without studying and you are in danger."*
- 2) *You should think of work as **vocation** ... which comes from the word for **voice**.... It touches on what work really should be—something that calls to you, that gives voice to who you are.*

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PASTOR'S PAGE

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- 3) *Money can tyrannize the wealthy as easily as the poor.... It is as important to know how to be poor as it is to know how to be rich.*
- 4) *We must remember that most possessions are really butterflies that turn into cate pillars.*
- 5) *Giving is a miracle that can transform the heaviest of hearts.... You will start to feel what is common among us, not what separates and differentiates us.*
- 6) *Time spent alone returns to you a hundredfold, because it is the proving ground of the spirit. You quickly find out if you are at peace with yourself, or if the meaning of your life is found only in the superficial affairs of the day.*
- 7) *True strength is not about force, but about conviction. It lives at the center of belief where fear and uncertainty cannot gain a foothold.... True strength does not magnify others' weaknesses. It makes others stronger.*
- 8) *Tragedy and suffering will come to you. You cannot insulate yourself from them.... Like love, they make you more a part of the human family.... They are the fire that burns you pure.*
- 9) *Spiritual understanding never becomes deep unless you subject yourself to the spiritual discipline of practicing your belief.*
- 10) *Love the elders. Honor them. Go to them with a pure heart, unblinded by notions of false reverence or obligation.... Listen to them. Observe them like a far-off country that you will someday visit, and learn the lessons that they have to teach.*
- 11) *Along with the gift of purity of heart, a child gives you the gift of understanding.... A child, whether of your own blood or someone else's, whether healthy or ill, whether beautiful or misshapen, is one of life's greatest miracles.*
- 12) *Travel, no matter how humble, will etch new elements in your character. You will know the cutting moments of life where fear meets adventure and loneliness meets exhilaration. You will know what it means to push forward when you want to turn back.*

“Christ Jesus, who became to us **wisdom** from God” (I Corinthians 1:30) taught his disciples long ago to combat their anxiety by learning from the birds of the air and the lilies of the field ... by seeing the abundance of troubles for each day, but more, by seeing the necessity of seeking God's kingdom first and trusting all needs to be met (see Matthew 6:25-34). So may it be for us—every day we live—by grace!

Your Companion in Christ
+Pr. Joel

CHURCH COUNCIL

By: Jeremy VanWey

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ! As we close out 2023 and look to 2024, I am excited for a great year ahead as we welcome several new Church Council members to serve here at Bethlehem. I am also very thankful to be a small part of this wonderful congregation. As I look back at 2023, I am grateful for all that has been accomplished and all of the great work that you all performed. We are so fortunate to have the wonderful mix of members that we do and have the best shepherd in Pastor Joel. As we work together within our church, community, country, and world, we can accomplish so much working together and following the perfect guidance from our Lord, Jesus Christ.

As we hear from Matthew 25:35-40-"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." We really pack a punch and I am continually amazed at all of the great work that so many of you do. I look forward to seeing what unfolds in 2024 as we continue to live out our mission-Grow in Christ, Live in Love, Share the Faith.

If I can be of service or assistance, please let me know.

In His service,
Jeremy VanWey
Bethlehem Council President

2024 CHURCH COUNCIL

President:

Jeremy VanWey

Elders:

Willie Crespo
Sean Estanek
Seth Florida
Alan Miller
Jimmy Smithers
Rich Vanderburgh

Education:

Rebecca Holland

Evangelism:

Becca Estanek

Fellowship:

Felisa Brown

Missions:

Darlene Laubenstein

Stewardship:

James Schumaker

Treasurer:

Jeff Florida

Trustees:

Ron Rode
Ben Smith
Jeremiah Murrell

Recording Secretary:

Colin Hart

Long Range Planning:

Ellen Pederson
Cody Clemons
Bonnie Rich

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE FACILITATOR

By: Rebecca Holland-VanWey

American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Are Coming to Warrensburg!

Many of you know that Jeremy and the kids and I are involved in American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA. The Pederson and Murrell families are too! American Heritage Girls is a Christ-centered character development program for girls ages 5-18 whose mission is to build women of integrity through badge programs, service, leadership, and outdoor experiences. Trail Life USA is a similarly Christ-centered mentoring and discipleship program for boys ages 5-18 that focuses on character development, service, and leadership through outdoor adventure. Yes, these programs are similar to Girl Scouts and Scouts. The key difference is that they are always chartered by Christian churches, and they are Biblically based. Girls and boys learn about the Bible and how to apply its teaching in their lives in every aspect of their involvement in each program.

We have been involved as leaders in the troops chartered at Faith Lutheran Church in Knob Noster. The Trail Life USA troop has been there since 2019 and I helped to start the American Heritage Girls troop there in 2022. I am thrilled to tell you that in the short time of our involvement, both troops have **TRIPLED** in size! We have outgrown the church! Our community is so hungry for these programs that Jeremy and I, along with our friends the Becraft family, felt called to start a troop here in Warrensburg to accommodate continued growth. So that's what we're doing! Starting in January, AHG and TLUSA troops MO0226 will be launching at Northside Christian Church. There were some men at Northside with a Scouting history who have been eager to welcome Trail Life to the church for some time, so we capitalized on that interest and Northside's expansive space, including numerous classrooms, to ensure the room for the growth that we know will happen.

Please join us in prayerful excitement about the opportunities to welcome more families into these excellent faith-based programs. Pass the word along to any families you know with school-aged children! If you are interested in assisting us materially or financially with this endeavor, we are in need of items such as flags and stands, fileboxes, and a port-

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WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Each year in December many people and groups get together at the Veteran's Cemeteries and place Christmas wreaths on all of the graves to remember the fallen and honor those who served. This year the Trail Life Group and Heritage Girl's Troops placed wreaths in Higginsville.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE FACILITATOR

By: Rebecca Holland-VanWey

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able sign-in table. Funds to use for badges, patches, and new leader registration fees are also needed. We would love to do a service-for-donation arrangement for yard cleanup, housecleaning, or other chores young backs can do! *Americanheritagegirls.org* and *Trail-lifeusa.com*. We also need adult leaders. If you are interested please let Rebecca or Jeremy know.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM-PEACE CAME TO EARTH



CREATION SCHOOL



MARY MARTHA GUILD

A Society of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League
Darlene Laubenstein, President

Mary Martha Guild will start the new year off by undecorating the church on **Sunday, January 7**, immediately after service. We need as many people to help so please try to stay for a bit.

The Guild will have their first meeting of the new year on **Monday, January 8, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.** If you are interested in helping out with any of the committees please talk to Darlene.

Thank you to everyone that helped with the "Hanging of the Green" and who purchased poinsettias this year.



POINSETTIAS



SueAnn Carter

In Memory of: Mike Carter (her husband)

Roy and Judy Schache

In Memory of: Schache and Loth Families

Cody Droege

In Memory of: Andy Droege (her husband)

Schumaker Family

In memory of: Ann Schumaker (James' mother)

Peggy Hoyer

In Memory of: Ruth and James Peterson
(Peggy's mom and dad)

Sue Cottrill

In Memory of:

John (her husband), Laurence & Marie
McMullin (parents)

Pete and Virginia Cottrill (in-laws), Irvin Lee
Cottrill (brother-in-law)

Scott and Penny Humphrey

In memory of: Joanne and Stan Humphrey

Jerry and Karon Harding

In memory of:

Robert (Bob) and Florence Schnackenberg
(Karon's parents)

Duane and Rebecca Limback

In Memory of:

John and Esther Limback (Duane's par-
ents)

Henry and Martha Ernstmeyer (Becky's
parents)

Peggy Forstad

To the Glory of God for all His precious
blessings.

Larry and Karen Haase

To the Glory of God for His blessings.

Dorothy Anderson

In Memory of: Loved Ones

Carol Kurz

In Honor of: Pastor Joel

Darlene Laubenstein

To the Glory of God

FAITH OPPORTUNITIES

WORSHIP SERVICES

Saturday services start at 5:30 p.m. Sunday Services are at 10:30 a.m. You can also watch Sunday's service live on Facebook, YouTube or on the webpage at ***blchurch.com***.

BIBLE STUDIES

Sunday Proverbs Bible Study—Oh, to love wisdom and live wisely! How many times have you said and thought that? Join us for our Sunday Bible study—Living (& Loving) Wisdom—which explores the book of Proverbs through the lens of the Ten Commandments and Christ “the Wisdom of God” (I Cor. 1:24. Pr. Joel is drawing from David Coe’s Provoking Proverbs. **We start at 9:15 a.m.** (in the conference room) and still have a lot of ground to cover!

Wednesday Bible Study—Join us at **10:30 a.m.** in the conference room. We’re looking at the Apocrypha and the time between the two Testaments.

Thursday Bible Study—Pastor Bertels’ study on the book of Ezekiel meets in the conference room at **7:00 p.m.** and is open to all who have the interest and time available.

Faith Night happens on the first Wednesday of every month (**December 3rd is next**) with a simple shared potluck meal from **5:30 to 6:00** (or so), followed by a faith discussion until 6:45.

YOUTH

Sunday School is at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings downstairs for ages Preschool through 12th grade. The children will be working on songs with the goal of singing in church once per month. We invite all children of the congregation (and outside too) to come and be a part of this time growing together in Christ!

Third Sunday at 3:00 p.m. the youth will get together for some fellowship and fun time.

CREATION SCHOOL

Join us on the first Friday of each month from 10-11 am for our faith-focused version of the trendy forest.

CRAFTERNOONS

On the fourth Fridays from 3-5 pm, let’s get together to craft! A project and supplies will be waiting for you in the fellowship hall. We’ll make seasonal crafts and cards that can be shared with others and conspire to deliver them with good cheer and a visit.

FRIDAY FAMILY FUN NIGHT

Our next Family Fun Night is on January 5, at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a potluck dish to share. We will be having a Bible Escape Trivia Night.



GROUPS & MISSIONS

EXERCISE

Join us in the Fellowship Hall for this free, low impact exercise class on **Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9:30 a.m.** Contact Judy Smith with any questions.

Pictured below is the exercise group who made this delicious brunch and gifts for everyone. It was such a blessing to have everyone together for some time of fellowship.



LUNCH BUNCH

The Lunch Bunch will meet on January 18 at the church. Join us for some fellowship time and a winter craft activity. Look for further details about food and crafts. The Lunch Bunch pictured below celebrated Christmas with pizza and dessert and card making.



MOMS AND TOTS

Moms and Tots of Bethlehem Lutheran Church meet on **Mondays at 2:00p.m. in one of the local parks.** If you have any questions please contact Rebecca Holland.

GAMES AND CARDS

The Games and Card Group meets on **Thursdays at 1:00 p.m.** in the Youth Room downstairs. Everyone is welcome to come to this fellowship time.

QUILTING

The Quilting Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. (September through May). Anyone is welcome to help with this project. No special sewing skills needed. Bring your own lunch. If you have any questions, please contact Georgia Luker.

BETHLEHEM EVENTS

HOLIDAY PARADE



PROGRESSIVE DINNER



MEMBER UPDATES

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Joey Kemple	1st	Braxton Rohner	13th	Gracyn VanWey	22nd
Robert Compton	4th	Kersten Thomas	13th	Steve Goldsmith	24th
Charles Becker	5th	Ronald Rode	14th	Samantha Brown	25th
Carter Bell	5th	Tommy Fatka	15th	Lisa Gulick	25th
Beryl Lindley	7th	Conner Rich	17th	Roberta Kohler	25th
Bonnie Rich	9th	Rick Mills	18th	Samantha Fatka	27th
Donald Hillsman	13th	Caleb Thomas	22nd	Debbie Hagle	27th

ANNIVERSARIES IN JANUARY

Richard & Lana Vanderburgh 18th

BAPTISMAL MILESTONES

Baptismal Milestones are published for the first year, every fifth year and all of those baptismal dates over 70 years.

Kevin Hill	6th
Henry Hart	8th
Seth Florida	10th
Bret Hartwig	17th
Cody Droege	20th
Dorothy Anderson	26th
Lana Vanderburgh	27th

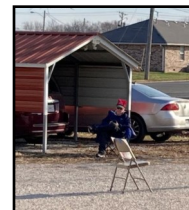
MEN'S CLUB



Men's Club will meet for a Breakfast on **Saturday, January 13 at 8:45** at the Warrensburg American Legion. Breakfast cost is \$5. We'll discuss plans for 2024. Contact Wille Crespo, Alan Miller or Ron Rode with any questions.

CHRISTMAS STORE

Christmas Store—Thank you cannot fully express my appreciation for all who assisted in their help and support. Pastor prayed with us and gave us spiritual support. He also (when his time allowed) visited with clients as many had described Bethlehem as Pastor Joel's church when they were asked if they knew where Bethlehem was located. It will be a month or so before we have final numbers and donations, but voucher distribution was a great success. **Sue Cottrill.**





January 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed-New Year's Day 	2 11:30a-Braille in Concordia 	3 9:30a-Exercise 10:30a-Bible Study 5:30p-Faith Night 6:30p-Choir 	4 1:00p-Games and Card Group 3:30p-Adult Catechesis 7:00p-Bible Study 	5 9:30a-Exercise 10:00a-Creation School 6:00p-Friday Fun Night 	6 5:30p-Holy Communion 
7 9:15a-Christian Education 10:30a-Holy Communion 1:00p-Youth Catechesis 	8 9:30a-Exercise 2:00p-Moms and Tots at the Park 7:00p-Mary Martha Guild Meeting 	9 9:30a-Quilting 7:00p-Church Council Meeting 	10 9:30a-Exercise 10:30a-Bible Study 6:30p-Choir 	11 1:00p-Games and Card Group 3:30p-Adult Catechesis 7:00p-Elders Mtg 7:00p-Bible Study 	12 9:30a-Exercise 	13 8:45a-Men's Club Breakfast 5:30p-Worship 
14 9:15a-Christian Education 10:30a-Worship 2:30p-Country Club and Arbors 	15 9:30a-Exercise 2:00p-Moms and Tots at the Park 	16 3:00p-Mission Board Meeting 	17 9:30a-Exercise 10:30a-Bible Study 6:30p-Choir 	18 11:00a-Lunch Bunch 1:00p-Games and Card Group 3:30p-Adult Catechesis 5:30p-Fellowship Board Mtg 7:00p-Bible Study 	19 9:30a-Exercise 	20 11:00a-Trustees' Meeting 5:30p-Holy Communion 
21 9:15a-Christian Education 10:30a-Holy Communion 1:00p-Youth Catechesis 3:00p-Youth Get Together 	22 9:30a-Exercise 2:00p-Moms and Tots at the Park 6:30p-4-H Meeting 	23 9:30a-Quilting 5:15p-Education Board Meeting 	24 9:30a-Exercise 10:30a-Bible Study 6:30p-Choir 	25 1:00p-Games and Card Group 3:30p-Adult Catechesis 7:00p-Bible Study 	26 9:30a-Exercise 3:00p-Craftersnoons 	27 5:30p-Worship 
28 9:15a-Christian Education 10:30a-Worship 	29 9:30a-Exercise 2:00p-Moms and Tots at the Park 	30 	31 9:30a-Exercise 10:30a-Bible Study 6:30p-Choir 	New Year's Day is a good time to fix one's eyes on the only One who knows what the year is to hold. -Elisabeth Elliot		

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
607 N. Maguire Street
Warrensburg, MO 64093

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Return Service Requested



Worship Schedule:

Saturday: 5:30 p.m.

Sunday: Bible Study and
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

FOOD DRIVE FOR SHOW-ME CHRISTIAN YOUTH HOME

If you'd like to begin 2024 by helping our younger friends, consider donating a pantry good (or a few) to Show-Me Christian Youth Home in La Monte. As part of a Thrivent grant, we are collecting canned and non-perishable foods for the group that helps youth in crisis by providing them a safe and loving home. Look for the collection bin at the north entrance during the month of January. If you'd like a Thrivent T-shirt, please see the church office. Any pantry item that parents could use at home would be welcomed there, too. Call or text Kaye at 660-441-7672 for more information. Learn more about the organization at showmehelpingkids.com.

January Elders

- | | |
|------|---------------------------------|
| 1-6 | Jimmy Smithers |
| 1-7 | Alan Miller
Rich Vanderburgh |
| 1-13 | Jimmy Smithers |
| 1-14 | Willie Crespo |
| 1-20 | Jimmy Smithers |
| 1-21 | Willie Crespo
Evan Florida |
| 1-27 | Sean Estanek |
| 1-28 | Alan Miller |

Altar Committee:

Darlene Laubenstein
(Chair),
Julie Crespo
Karon Harding,
Georgia Luker

Flower Committee:

Penny Humphrey
Lori Sloan

Kitchen:

Mary Creswell

Sound:

Jerry Harding
Scott Humphrey

Video:

Abby Humphrey
Zach Brown
Gracyn VanWey