

The Bethlehem Star

The newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church
www.bethlehembayridge.org

October 2017

In this month's Beth Star...

- Message from Pastor Paul
- Calendar, activities, schedule, including Reformation 500 Service & Luncheon, and more
- Church Council highlights
- Reports from The Healing Center, The Bay Ridge Center and the Lutheran Counseling Center



Sunday Oct 1
10:30 AM
First Communion
Sunday



Every Sunday
9:15 AM
Adult Bible Study



Sunday Oct 22
10:30 AM
LES 60th Birthday
Service and party at
the school



Sunday Oct 29
10:30 AM
Reformation Sunday
Worship Service
followed by
Reformation 500
Luncheon

500

Reformation Sunday & Luncheon Sunday Oct 29

Join us for all of our services and events



Our Mission

To serve God and God's people. To live our faith daily through worship, and providing education, support, nourishment, compassion, good counsel, love, and service to the larger community welcoming all who join us in this mission.



Our Welcome

Bethlehem Lutheran Church is a **Reconciling in Christ** congregation. People of all sexual orientations and gender identities are welcome within the membership of this congregation and are encouraged to share in the sacramental and general life of this Christian family.

Pastor Paul's Monthly Message for October

Dear Members and Friends,

Since the beginning of the school year, I have centered my lessons on what is not fair. It might come as a surprise to you, but our conclusion so far is that “not fair” is better. We have determined that:

- Forgiveness is not fair
- God is not fair
- Love is not fair

Peter asked Jesus, “How many times do we need to forgive our brother or sister, seven times?” Jesus replied, “Not seven, but seventy seven times.” Anything fair about that? You can read the bible from beginning to end and nowhere will you find a verse that describes God as fair. Jesus told the parable about the landowner who hired workers for a daily wage. Some started at the beginning of the day, others at 9:00, 12:00, 3:00 and 5:00. They all got paid the same. Anything fair about that? Two people exchange their vows in a marriage ceremony. They promise, “...to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.” In 33 years of ministry I have never heard anyone’s vows include the word fair. Anything fair about love?

In the spirit of the Reformation, as we celebrate 500 years, I wish to add another “not fair” to the list. I believe Martin Luther would agree that grace is not fair. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he writes, “But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

I ask my confirmation kids, “When you die, why will you go to heaven?” Is it because there is a checklist of your good actions vs. bad actions and the good list is longer? No. Is it because you attended church on more Sundays than you missed? No. Is it because you tried to be nice more often than being mean? No. Is it because you helped a few people along the way? No.

All of us fall short of God’s expectations, but God will open his arms to us and take us home. Why? Because, God is not fair. God forgives. God loves. And, God has shown us, “the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Anything fair about that? Nope, thank God!

In God’s Service,

Rev. Paul H. Knudsen

Pastor

October at a Glance

- 10/1 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Regular Sunday morning schedule w/ First Communion Sunday
- 10/5 @ 7:15 p.m. -- SW Brooklyn Lutheran Council @ Good Shepherd
- 10/8 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Regular Sunday morning schedule
- 10/10 @ 7:00 p.m. -- LES School Board meeting
- 10/11 @ 6:30 p.m. -- Healing Center Board of Directors meeting
- 10/15 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Regular Sunday morning schedule
- 10/17 @ 7:00 p.m. -- Church Council meeting
- 10/22 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Regular Sunday morning schedule w/ LES 60th Birthday Worship
- 10/22 @ 12:00 p.m. -- LES 60th Birthday Party in the school
- 10/29 @ 10:30 a.m. -- Regular Sunday morning schedule w/ Reformation Sunday
- 10/29 @ 12:00 p.m. -- Reformation 500 Luncheon

Coffee hours are held in the Fellowship Room.



October 2017

Services | Activities | Special Events | Meetings

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:15 am—Adult Bible Class in the Parish Room 9:15 am—SS & Confirmation 10:30 am—Worship w/1st Communion followed by Coffee Hour	2 7:00 pm—AA	3	4	5 7:15 pm SW Bklyn Lutheran Council @ Good Shepherd 7:15 pm—AA	6 7:00 pm—Scouts	7 6:15 pm—AA 7:30 pm—AA
8 9:15 am—Adult Bible Class in the Parish Room 9:15 am—SS & Confirmation 10:30 am—Worship followed by Coffee Hour	9 7:00 pm—AA	10 7:00 pm LES School Board	11 6:30 pm Healing Center Board of Directors	12	13 7:00 pm—Scouts	14 6:15 pm—AA 7:30 pm—AA
15 9:15 am—Adult Bible Class in the Parish Room 9:15 am—SS & Confirmation 10:30 am—Worship followed by Coffee Hour	16 7:00 pm—AA	17 7:00 pm Church Council	18	19	20 6:30 pm Bethlehem Women's Group Meeting in the Parsonage 7:00 pm—Scouts	21 6:15 pm—AA 7:30 pm—AA
22 9:15 am—Adult Bible Class in the Parish Room 9:15 am—SS & Confirmation 10:30 am—Worship w/LES 60th Birthday Worship 12 pm—LES 60th Birthday Party in the School	23 7:00 pm—AA	24	25	26	27 7:00 pm—Scouts	28 6:15 pm—AA 7:30 pm—AA
29 9:15 am—Adult Bible Class in the Parish Room 9:15 am—SS & Confirmation 10:30 am—Worship w/ Reformation Sunday 12 pm—Reformation Luncheon	30 7:00 pm—AA	31				

SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

9/3 – 35
9/10 – 270
9/17 – 103
9/24 – 133

Bethlehem: The Growing Church!

MONTHLY OFFERING

July \$7,961.00
August \$4,824.00
September \$9,482.00

God's great work at Bethlehem needs your financial support!

FELLOWSHIP

10/1 – First Communion Sunday Coffee Hour
10/8 – Coffee Hour
10/15 – Coffee Hour
10/22 – Coffee Hour
10/29 – Reformation Sunday Luncheon

ADULT BIBLE CLASS

Every Sunday morning In the Parish Room
9:15 – 10:15 a.m. led by Carl Jacobsen



VOLUNTEER?

Anyone interested in partaking in the Worship Service, as Communion Preparers, Communion Assistants or Lectors, please speak to Dennis Monsen!

Coffee Hour Volunteers ~ so we can enjoy food/fellowship every week!
Please sign up!

BIRTHDAYS

10/2 – Justin Knudsen
10/3 – Dillon Stephansen
10/4 – Cynthia Gallo / Emilia Pirozzi
10/5 – Al Koehler / Dennis Monsen
10/8 – Pastor Paul Knudsen / Joel Puelle
10/9 – Ryan Solberg
10/13 – Danielle Costadura / Gina Marie Sletholt
10/15 – Lorraine Tuccillo / Antonia Clemente
10/17 – Justin Roszko / Terri Chen
10/19 – Ed Creen
10/28 – Liz Bohrer

ANNIVERSARIES

10/6 – Danielle & Brian Costadura
10/24 – Janet & Dennis Cerutti

Nursing Home

Christine Scanlon, Reymundo Lariosa

Healing & Strength

Robert Serrano, Hermicenda & Hery Vallecillo, Billy Whelan,
Doris Whelan, Donna & Indal Balkissoon, Bob Muselli,
Lon Dayhoff, John Maceda, Caroline Hildreth,
Shirley Tuccillo, Peter Fistanic, Marcus Caban,
Ann DeMarco, Lenny Thompson,
Anna Aboltins, Karen Kozoriz, Dawn Valentine,
Helen Wires, Ed Shipwright, Carl and Mindy Jacobsen,
Anne Okun, Anna Marie Zarr, Anna Atilas, Laura Woltman,
Rose Barron, Marietta Blanchette,
Helge Henriksen, Edna Weber, Ken Weber,
Mia Frangoulis, Hope Cevalis, Joseph Musco, Sheri Wilborn,
Beverly Malmbeck, Kevin Flannery, Sr.,
Mike Riquier, John Fowler, Kristine Larsen, Adam Torres,
Ruth Kennedy, Robert Hofmo, Mike Roszko, David Stayer,
Julie Dawson, Cathy Keogh, Maureen Whalen, Marie Lane,
Maryann Clark, Sal Turturici, Christine Landi,
Twins – Cody and Owen, Kent Norvin, Eileen Tierno

Best Wishes

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers* 

In Sympathy

September 10th
Herbert Steike

Love and condolences to
Barbara, Carl and their
families.

Church Council Highlights — September 17, 2017 Meeting

Bay Ridge Center (presented by Pastor Paul)

- Negotiations progressing with the owner of the property next to the parsonage. Potentially a new senior center would be constructed with the initial agreement being a rental with the option to buy. Since the Bay Ridge Center is a separate not-for-profit entity, this is not a church negotiation.

Worship & Music (presented by Dennis Monsen)

- Maria Rayzvasser, our new Music Director, is doing a great job. The choir is back singing and growing again.
- The Worship/Music Commission will meet on Tuesday, September 26th.

Lutheran Elementary School (presented by Al Koehler)

- The current enrollment is 181.
- We had 270 people at our opening worship.
- There were some faculty changes this year. Very pleased with our new additions.
- A "Visiting Author" program has been added, as we have local authors willing to share with our students.
- There will be a 60th anniversary worship service on Sunday, October 22nd.
- National Unity Day will be observed on Wednesday, October 25th. "Love thy Neighbor" tee-shirts will be distributed in the neighborhood by our middle school students.

Property (presented by Steve Solby)

- Recently completed work:
 - Repaired and waterproofed the retaining wall between the schoolyard and the parsonage driveway.
 - Extensive repairs made to the church bell tower. Re-pointed and waterproofed brick walls, roofing replaced, floors reinforced. Balcony storage room under the bell tower repaired and painted.
 - Getting estimates on sidewalk work in front of the 415 Ovington Ave. apartment building.

Sunday School (presented by Kathy Finkelstein)

- Sunday School is beginning with approximately 20 children.
- 5 children are enrolled in our cradle roll program.
- Rally Sunday, September 17th, was a success. Great to have our High School assistants back (Aaron, Hannah & Valentina).
- 6 children will be receiving new bibles on Bible Sunday, September 24th.
- The Sunday School will be raising money to donate to a church affected by the recent hurricanes.

Healing Center (presented by Laura Caruso)

- The Healing Center Board of Directors met in August.
- Funding looks positive from the city for this fiscal year, which began on July 1st.
- Grant reimbursements were received, so the Healing Center paid back its \$35k loan from the Johnson Memorial Fund.
- Hoping to get TD Bank to agree to host our annual fundraiser.
- Antonia & Laura will meet with Laura's friend, who is a professional fundraiser, to gain ideas and insight.
- A part time bookkeeper is needed.
- The annual client/children Christmas party is scheduled for December 14th.

Evangelism (presented by Deacon Tony)

- Tony spent most of the summer caring for family and friends facing illness and loss.

Fellowship (presented by Kathy Finkelstein)

- The Bethlehem Women's Group met on the parsonage patio on Friday, September 15th. They have a Circle Line trip to Bear Mountain on September 30th.
- Two of our women attended the Koinonia Women's weekend on September 8th thru 10th.
- It would be great to enlist more people to help Kim with the weekly coffee hours. She should not have to do this alone each week.

Church Council Highlights — September 17, 2017 Meeting (continued)

Public Relations (presented by Ray Palermo)

- The Lutheran Rose flag in honor of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation is on the flag pole in front of the church.
- New Banners for the front of the church have been designed and will be ordered shortly.
- Ten \$500 benevolence gifts will be decided in October in honor of the Reformation anniversary.

Finance Report (presented by Pastor Paul)

- The August 2017 financial report was reviewed and accepted as presented. Envelope giving is down a little, but the overall financial health is very good.

Pastor's Report (presented by Pastor Paul)

- Visitations (17), Funerals (10), Baptisms (2), Weddings (2) -- for last 3 months
- Youth activities will begin with a Joy Room planning event on September 24th.
- Property sale:
 - Litigation against us by the buyer stating a delay in the selling process. Our lawyer is actively defending us against these unfounded claims.
- 456 Ovington Avenue: Possible new site for the Bay Ridge Center. Negotiations progressing.
- 2017 Benevolences will be decided at the October council meeting. Benevolence spreadsheet distributed.
- Fundraiser for the Scandinavian East Coast Museum approved for Saturday, November 4th.



Dear Members and Friends,

It is October again. Many of you know that I am not a fan of the month of October. Who likes a month whose main holiday is celebrated with bats, spiders, witches, and skeletons??!! Ugh!

Many of you know that I have just come back from a vacation (of sorts). I have started a list of my “bucket list” trips. This was the first of them. I went rafting down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. It was 277 miles and took 8 days. It was a dream come true to sleep under the stars and wake to the sun rising on the cliffs of the Grand Canyon. Despite all the hardships (camping out, no bathrooms, no showers, temperatures in the 90s every day, water temperatures in the 50s and big hairy spiders!) it was a wonderful experience.

It put me in mind of the many privileges I have been blessed with. Helped me to realize how much I have to be grateful for. We do have so much here in Brooklyn to be grateful for. Often we overlook the simplest of benefits of our great city. When I wake in the mornings, I have a toilet, a hot shower, a Keurig (for my coffee) and a soft chair to sit upon to ease into my day. When I get dressed and step out the door, I can take a bus or a train or (if I am very lazy) call a car service to take me to work. I am extremely lucky because I own a car and can drive to work too. On Tuesday mornings all I have to do is put my trash on the sidewalk and someone comes by to pick it up and make it disappear. If I fall and can't get up, there is an ambulance nearby to come pick me up and take me to a hospital where I will be cared for. And most of the bill will be paid by my medical insurance. When I come home at night there are street lamps along the sidewalks to light my way. There are restaurants if I am too tired to cook and delivery services for anything I want to buy. So much is done for me every single day of my life. And most of the time, I don't notice it nor appreciate it. It took a trip on the wild side for me to realize how much I depend on all these services every day of my life.

As many of you know, October is hard for me because many people that I love died during this month. But it can become a glorious month if I can stop dwelling on all those losses and focus on the many great gifts that are all around me. If I do that, it allows me to be happy and appreciative rather than sad and bitter. I hope that you will all take the time this month to think more about what you have, than what you've lost. We all have the power to bring joy to each day we awake to.

So as the colors of the leaves turn this year, let's all try hard not to mourn the loss of the green – but to celebrate the vibrancy of the yellow, orange and red leaves that fly through the air and cover the ground every day.

Happy Fall. Happy October!

Marianne Nicolosi
Executive Director



Dear Friends,

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Statistics are staggering. On average 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States. More than 12 million women and men over the course of a year, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men ages 18 and older have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Intimate Partner violence affects more than 12 million people each year. (National Domestic Violence Hotline) More than 3 million children are exposed to domestic violence in the home. One in four teens will experience teen dating violence. Elder abuse also known as Elder Justice is on the rise.

People experiencing abuse often feel alone, isolated, and that no one is there for them. Many ask, "Where is God in the midst of suffering?" There is not a straightforward response to this question and I am reminded of a poem "Words of Wisdom: Malachi 3:3 - Refiner and Purifier of Silver" by an unknown author, that ponders this concern and gives hope to the reader. In the poem, the author asks, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy - when I see my image in it." For victims and survivors of domestic violence, it is about healing and seeing themselves moving forward with their lives. Knowing that they are not alone and that God is present each step of the way. Malachi 3:3 says: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God.

One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot then she thought again about the verse that says: "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver."

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.



continued

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy - when I see my image in it."

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has His eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.

On Friday, October 20, 2017 from 4-6 P.M., we will host an intergenerational conversation with our teen program Daughters of the Lotus titled: Gender Based Violence; Then and Now Bridging the Gap. There is space available if you are interested in joining us, for more information please keep victims and survivors of domestic violence in your prayers.

Antonia Clemente
Executive Director

The Ambiguities of ‘Being Special’

By: Mr. Craig Canfield, MA, LP, LCC Psychotherapist

“The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.”
Proverbs 13:4

“For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “the one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.”
2 Thessalonians 3:10

We have heard...“We are all special in the eyes of God.” What exactly does this mean? If we are, are we any more or less special depending on the amount we try to help ourselves? But we are told that God helps those who cannot help themselves. If so, how much does God help those who are able to help themselves but choose not to do so? “Help thyself, and God will help thee” the poet George Herbert tells us.

So maybe our degree of specialty in God’s eyes depends on the kind of effort we make, considering that we are able to make that effort. We then will be judged on the specialty ladder, gauged by how we use the talents and abilities that God gives us. Or are we all special to God no matter what we do or don’t do?

Riding my bike around the circle in Prospect Park one morning last month, I noticed a sign at the beginning of an incline. It read “Specialty route...last exit before a steep hill.” Avoiding the exit and continuing up the hill, I noticed an elderly man on the side of the road attending to his bike. He yelled something to me and I rode over to him thinking he needed help. Then I recognized what he was yelling, “Pump harder, pump harder”, encouraging me going up the hill, and giving me a large smile. He didn’t want me to help him at all. I laughed to myself at my false assumption and continued up the hill, indeed at a faster pace, leaving me panting at the top.

It was the second time around the park that morning, passing the specialty sign again, that I started making connections. The specialty route might just be for people who are not capable of going up the steep hill. However, serving my metaphor, it made me think of people who think they are special and therefore, can exit without exerting the energy to go up the steep hill. But too many exits away from confronting challenging “steep hills” in life, putting all faith in God’s help instead, may establish an inertia of inactivity that might be difficult to break. A “specialty route” may supply a direct route from “being special” to simply being “out of action”.

Often the same assertion can be made concerning mental health therapy. It is as if some see therapy as a sort of ‘god’: simply put yourselves in its hands and miraculous changes will automatically occur. Without putting in the work it takes to change, without any effort or change of behavior, not much gets accomplished. Such an attitude can invalidate the valuable assistance that therapy, complete with its suggestions of how to keep going up the “steep hill” can offer. There are many ambiguities concerning the idea of “being special” and of “specialty routes”. Unexamined decisions, an unexamined life, or taking the wrong exit on life’s road, might prove to be fatal.

Mr. Canfield is a licensed psychoanalyst who counsels teens, adults and couples at LCC’s Bay Ridge, Brooklyn site. Visit our website at www.LCCNY.org to read his bio or bios of our other staff therapists. For more information or to set an appointment at any site, Contact Lutheran Counseling Center at 1-800-317-1173 or 516-741-0994 or e-mail us at Center@lccny.org

We celebrate on
Sunday, October 1st
with

Emmett Farrell
Alexander Nurhan
Johanna Okun
Ben Puelle
Caspian Scura
Ethan Wolman

as they partake in their
First Communion
“Do this in remembrance of me.”

Join them and their families on Sunday
for a Coffee Hour in their honor!

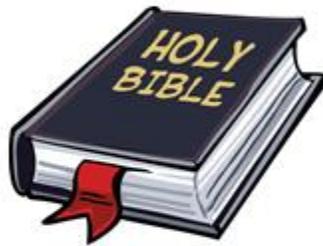
Come join us for
Reformation
Sunday Worship

October 29th
10:30 AM



Luncheon to follow
the Worship service

Adult **Bible**
Class



Sunday Mornings
9:15 – 10:15 a.m.
In the Parish Room

led by Carl Jacobsen

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

4th & Ovington Avenues

Brooklyn NY 11209

718-748-9502

www.bethlehembayridge.org

Sunday Worship Service at 10:30 AM

All are welcome here



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