

The Bethlehem Star

A PUBLICATION OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH AND CHILDREN'S CENTER

Special Visitor's Guide Edition
Volume 55, Special Issue of Programs and Activities
Visitors Guide 2005-06



Bethlehem Lutheran Church
and Children's Center
1300 St. Francis Road
Santa Rosa, California 95409

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*Gathered to worship,
Equipped by the Holy
Spirit,*

*Strengthened through
community,*

*Sent in peace to serve the
Lord.*

Pastors

Brian J. Claasen

Chris Sanderson

Office Administrator

Carolyn Shada

Children's Center Director

Kathy Curtis

Congregational President

Kathleen Ziegler

Organist

Barbara Laferriere

Directors of Choirs

Janet Bertoli

Barbara Laferriere



Welcome

Pastor Brian J. Claasen

Welcome to Bethlehem Lutheran Church! We seek to be a place where all will feel, and all we be, welcomed as well as included in our community of faith.

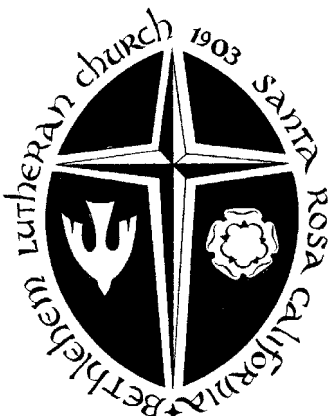
Bethlehem Lutheran Church is a vibrant, growing, intergenerationally oriented congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The core of our life together is Sunday morning worship where we gather around Word and Sacrament, which both defines our community and directs our ministry. We are gathered and edified, strengthened and nurtured, and then sent out to live our Christian faith and calling in home, school, workplace, and community.

At Bethlehem Lutheran you will find a rich community of growing Christians; young and old, single, married, divorced, seekers and doubters, introverts and extroverts. We strive to be a community that finds strength in diversity, joy in variety, and wisdom in dialog.

As we extend a welcome and an invitation to others, it is an invitation into life set within the context of community, where each one is a contributing member, where we are responsible to and for one another, where the good news of God's love for us in Jesus Christ is given expression within a community of mutual care and interdependence.

If you are already a member of Bethlehem, let this be an invitation to celebration of, and perhaps deeper participation in, our community of faith. If you are a guest or visitor, let this be a welcome to the possibilities of what life in a Christian faith community might mean for you.

[Pastor Brian has served Bethlehem Lutheran since 1997. He is the father of three grown children. His wife, Laurie, is a Christian Day School teacher. Pastor Brian avocations include cycling, camping, and guitar.]



Visitors

Pastor Chris Sanderson

You a visitor too? So was I for a couple years when I was not serving in a congregation. I remember the feeling of walking into the doors of a church for the first time and wondering: Are they going to attack me?

As a young 30-something, I often felt like I was the only guy my age visiting churches filled with older people and a few young families. People were very interested in me because I was a young, single guy in their church – an oddity of sorts. I had invitations from across the board: You have a great voice, want to join the choir? Want to join us for coffee? Want to do lunch following the service? I was overwhelmed. All I wanted to do was go to worship that Sunday!

I have learned is that it is hard to slip in an out of a church without being approached by someone. You may have had that same experience here at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. We are glad that you have visited us today, and we want you to feel like you belong here without feeling overwhelmed.

Nonetheless, Bethlehem is a congregation that encourages opportunities for spiritual growth, education, mission and service. It is easy to be involved here. Bethlehem invites you to ask questions about what kinds of ministry we do here. Perhaps you can help us pick our brains for other neat ministry opportunities that we could be doing. Or, you can just simply check out this visitor's guide for ways you can be involved.

Jesus tells us, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt 4:16). It is our hope that your involvement here at Bethlehem can make the Santa Rosa community a brighter place.

(Chris Sanderson is the Associate Pastor at Bethlehem. He recently transplanted to California from the Midwest. His passions include long-distance hiking, running, and music. Pastor Chris' focus at Bethlehem is youth and family ministry.)

Church Council Directs Ministry

Volunteers Serve Church & Community

The Church Council consists of the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, financial secretary, and chair-persons of the following commissions: Worship, Education, Witness and Service, Youth, Property, Stewardship, Bethlehem Lutheran Church Women, and the Bethlehem Children's Center school Board. The pastor(s) are advisory members.

At its monthly meetings the Church Council, elected by the congregation, oversees the financial affairs of the congregation and evaluates the spiritual programs for the church.

The executive committee of the council meets monthly to set the agenda for the council meetings, and the Commissioners submit reports of their commission meetings to the council to inform and /or seek council action.

All business of the church goes through the Council and on to the congregation when deemed necessary according to the Constitution and By-laws of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. The Council submits an annual report to the congregation at it's annual meeting in January.

2005 Council

President Kathleen Ziegler

Vice Pres. Judy Flowers

Secretary Peter Wall

Treasurer Karl Smith

Financial Sec. Beverly Schaap

Commissioners of:

Education Joy Petty

Property Paul Konanz

Stewardship Rick Knapp

Witness & Service Linda Smith

Worship Janet Bergman

Youth Gale Muehlbauer

BCC Pres./Rep. Linda Knapp

BLCW Pres./Rep. Phyllis Hoover

Worship Assistants and Readers

Worship assistants and readers are scheduled ahead of time. Pastor periodically provides training sessions for these positions. These people also assist with communion. Most members who help with the service find it to be a very rewarding experience. The worship commissioner is in charge of this scheduling.

Altar Guild

People are always needed to set up the altar before the Sunday services. This involves putting out communion, filling the candles and placing the flowers on the altar. Most of the work is done on Saturday, at a time convenient to the Altar Guild member of the month. Contact Janet Bergman if you would like to know more about this important ministry.

Flowers

"Where do they come from and how can I provide flowers in honor of someone?"

A flower chart is posted in the narthex. Remember a birthday, anniversary or someone special by signing up to provide the flowers on a certain date. You can order one vase or two. The cost is \$20.00 each vase. Usually we get a florist to deliver the bouquets, but during the summer we have been asking people to provide flowers themselves.



WORSHIP COMMISSION

Reminders...

There are many opportunities to be involved in the worship services at Bethlehem Lutheran. Services are at 8:15 and 10:30.

Music – Janet Bertoli and Barbara Laferriere are our adult choir directors. Janet leads the children's choirs. Choirs perform from September thru June, practicing on Thursday.

Usher – If you want to be an usher, Cal Eriksen schedules and trains usher teams.

Altar Guild - People are always needed to set up the altar before the Sunday services. This involves putting out communion and filling the candles. Contact Janet Bergman if you are interested in this.

Flowers – A flower chart is posted in the narthex. Remember a birthday, anniversary or someone special by signing up to provide the flowers on a certain date. You can order one vase or two. The cost is \$20.00 each vase. Usually we get a florist to deliver the bouquets, but during the summer we have been asking people to provide flowers themselves.


Worship Assistants and readers – Worship assistants and readers are scheduled ahead of time. Pastor periodically provides training sessions for these positions. These people also assist with communion. The worship commissioner is in charge of this scheduling.

Nursery Staff

We have a nursery available for all children under 6 from 9:30-12 each Sunday in the Children's Center.

Bethlehem Choirs Lead & Enhance Worship

Singing Groups For All Ages

 Music is an integral part of worship at Bethlehem. We have five choirs in rotation throughout the September through June season and special solos and small groups during the summer months. Most of the worship services are led, instrumentally, by our fine pipe organ and our exceptional organist, Barbara Laferriere. We also have a worship team (piano, guitars, drums, synthesizer, flute) that leads the service instrumentally once a month to provide an alternate musical style.

The choirs at Bethlehem break down as follows:

Wee Praise (Pre-K to 2nd grades), Thursday, 4-5

First Light (3rd to 6th grades), Thursday, 5-6

Cornerstone (7th to 12th grades+), Thursday, 6-7

Adult Choir (adults?), Thursday, 7:15-8:30

Bell Choir (teens and adults), Monday, 7-8 (Oct.-April)

In addition to providing musical leadership in worship, the choirs have several special events throughout the year. In the fall, the youth choirs present 'Bethlehem to Broadway', a variety show and ice cream social. Cornerstone stages a dinner theater production in the winter. And in the spring, our Pre-K through 6th graders present a musical worship offering. The adult choir provides special festival service music, as well as choral meditation during Holy Week.

There are no auditions or requirements to complete to be part of one of the groups listed here. We seek to bond together as a Christian group of musicians, using our voices and instruments to lead worship and glorify God.

If you have any questions regarding the music programs offered at Bethlehem, please contact Janet Bertoli (571-8280, Janetkabert@aol.com) or Barbara Laferriere (544-0232 or blafferriere@msn.com).

Acolytes

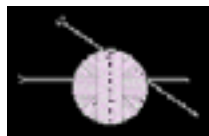
All confirmation students in 7th and 8th grade serve as acolytes, as well as mature 5th and 6th graders. Training classes are offered once or twice a year by one of our pastors for those interested in serving.

Greeters

We try to have greeters in the narthex before every worship service to welcome new visitors and old friends. The Witness and Service Commission schedule the volunteer greeters.

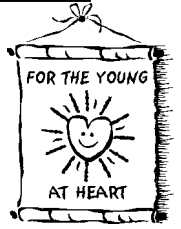
Needle Workers

The needle workers include both experts and novices in hand work. Meetings are in the choir room (where it is cool even in the summer) on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 1:00 PM. Bring a project or learn how to do handwork from the masters! Free advice and fellowship!



Young @ Heart

The Young at Heart seniors meet the third Monday of each month to enjoy a potluck luncheon at noon with a program following. They bring their own table service and a dish to share. A variety of programs are presented; ranging from informative to entertaining.



During the summer months, the group takes a break from cooking and meets at a restaurant.

Throughout the year, our Young at Heart meetings are a perfect time to get better acquainted with other seniors in our congregation.

Book Club Selections

The Book Club meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM. It is a small group, but welcoming.



Books we have read include: The Girl with the Pearl Earring, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, Walking Across Egypt, Consider This Senora, Thousand Pieces of Gold, East of the Mountains, Guns, Germs, and Steel, Nickel and Dimed, Grand Avenue, Remains of the Day, Crossing to Safety, The Samurai's Garden, Life of Pi, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Fast Food Nation, Da Vinci Code, The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse, Savage Inequalities, Under the Banner of Heaven, Into Thin Air, Year of Wonder, Screwtape Letters, A Good Forest for Dying, In His Steps, Skeletons on the Zahara, My Mother's Hip, Perfectly Legal, The Known World, Blessings, Don't Think Like an Elephant, Stradivari's Genius, The Little Girls, and American Dream.

Witness & Service

Hospitality, Evangelism and Social Activism

The Witness & Service Commission of Bethlehem Lutheran guides and directs the congregation's ministry in two critical and exciting areas:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ~Matthew 28:19

The Witness part of the Witness & Service Commission's mandate is the task of bringing the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ to those who have not heard, of empowering discipleship, and of engaging Bethlehem congregation in the Santa Rosa community for the purpose of expressing a positive Christian witness.

The Witness & Service Commission is charged with the task of leading Bethlehem congregation in reaching out to the unchurched, those searching for meaning and purpose in life, and those trapped by society's revolving door of consumerism and stress.

The Commission's ministry includes insuring that Bethlehem is a welcoming and hospitable environment for guests and visitors, that the staff and programs of the congregation are accessible to the community, and that Bethlehem members are equipped and encouraged for Christian witness in the neighborhoods in which they live.

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. ~Matthew 25:35-36

The Service part of Witness & Service is that of reaching out to those in need; to the poor, the hungry, the disenfranchised, the sick, the imprisoned.

Bethlehem's own Health Ministry Committee serves as part of the Witness & Service Commission to meet general and specific health needs both within and outside the congregation. Collaborative ministries with Santa Rosa's FISH food bank, Redwood Gospel Mission, and other local, national, and international aid organizations allow Bethlehem Lutheran to touch the lives of thousands with God's own concern for the poor and the outcast.

Witness & Service; the hallmarks of Christian life, and the heart of our ministry at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is a faith-based organization dedicated to improving lives by building modest, affordable homes in partnership with communities and people in need. Bethlehem Lutheran is proud to be a Faith Link church which supports Habitat for Humanity in Sonoma County both financially and in providing small work crews to help at the current building site at West Avenue in southwest Santa Rosa. We are planning to offer these work opportunities about 3-4 times a year. Details will be announced in the Star and on the kiosk in the Narthex. For information, contact Linda Knapp at 539-8901.

Elisha's Pantry

Elisha's Pantry is an inter-faith outreach program serving our Bennett Valley and Rincon Valley neighbors through gifts of food and kindness. This food distribution program is staffed by volunteers from Christ Church United Methodist, Congregation Shomrei Torah and Bethlehem Lutheran Church and is expected to provide supplemental, healthy foods to 100 families weekly.

The pantry is located at CCUM at 1717 Yulupa Avenue in Santa Rosa near the corner of Hoen and is open each Thursday from 4:00-6:30 P.M. Families consisting of 1-3 individuals receive one bag of food and families of 4+ receive two bags of nutritious canned and packaged food supplemented by purchased or donated produce and breads.

Volunteer opportunities consist of shopping at the Redwood Empire Food Bank on Wednesday afternoon from 1:00-3:00 P.M. and/or bagging food/food distribution/participant registration at the Pantry on Thursday afternoon from 3:00-5:00 and/or 4:30-6:30.

To volunteer for Elisha's Pantry contact Patty Pugh at 527-9927 or patricia.pugh@sbcglobal.net.



Redwood Gospel Mission

On the fourth Tuesday of each month, Pastor Brian or Pastor Chris goes down to the Redwood Gospel Mission at 6:00 PM to present a brief worship service before the men eat dinner.

They are sometimes joined by other musicians from BLC and members showing support for this program.

BLCW

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Women (BLCW) counts, as its members, every woman of BLC. The BLCW has a voting representative on the church council as well as its own board of officers, a constitution, a treasury, and affiliation with the national body, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA). We are a working arm of the congregation.



BLCW sponsors several events during the year open to the whole congregation, along with a women's day retreat in the spring.

In addition, Bethlehem has five active women's circles. Circles meet monthly for Bible study and fellowship and are the backbone of the BLCW. Each circle supports a mission project, and meets in members' homes or at the church. The mission projects are FISH, a local food pantry, Lutheran Association of Missionary Pilots (LAMP), The Children's Village of Sonoma County, Lutheran Orient Mission, which witnesses for Christ in the Muslim world, and Lutheran World Relief.

The women of BLCW also serve lunches after memorial services, provide monthly dinners to a local women's shelter, sew quilts for the needy, and donate layettes for new mothers in need.

Being part of BLCW provides many opportunities for service as well as Bible study and fellowship with other Christian women of all ages.

F.I.S.H.

(Friends In Service Here)



FISH is a group of volunteers who operate a food cupboard where people can receive free emergency food. It is also the mission supported by the Miriam Circle

The FISH groups were started in England by Rev. Derek Eastman, an Anglican minister, and Dr. Donald Richards. The guiding principle was to "be a good neighbor". The FISH premise became reality in Santa Rosa, in 1973, when FISH first opened its doors in a local church. FISH had no money but did have about one hundred enthusiastic volunteers. We provided caring, neighborly service, such as transportation, house-sitting, baby-sitting, shopping, home help, hot meals--- just about anything a good neighbor would do,

Today, because of the numbers and the over-riding need for food, Santa Rosa FISH is a food cupboard only. We have grown to become the largest food pantry in the Redwood Empire.

FISH always needs food and money! The need has steadily increased from 1,844 people served in 1974 to 47,700 in 2003. Non-perishable food may be brought to BLC's narthex and put in the basket labeled FISH, from there it is taken to the Benton Street distribution point by Jim and Aloha Corning.

Meals for Manna Home

Manna Home is a Christian shelter for women working on a Christ-centered "New Life" program designed to help them recover and heal from the effects of drugs, alcohol, and other forms of abuse. It is one of the ministries of the Redwood Gospel Mission.

For over ten years Bethlehem Lutheran Church has been providing one hot or oven-ready meal each month to the 12 – 14 women living at Manna Home. Bethlehem is the only church that brings them monthly, home-cooked meals; and the tasty dinners are much appreciated. Perhaps more important though, is the love, encouragement, and Christian contact the residents receive from the church at large which lends support to their growth in faith and their return to mainstream society.

BLCW prepare and deliver a meal to Manna Home on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. At least three people are needed each month to provide a main dish, salad, bread, and dessert. Fresh fruit is always appreciated as well. If you have time to include a copy of your recipe, it would be welcomed, as many of these women are learning to cook and preparing to live independent lives soon.

If you are willing to prepare, but cannot deliver, arrangements can be made for someone to pick up and deliver the food for you. The church refrigerator and freezer can also serve as a collection point. Mealtime is 5:00 p.m. The food should be delivered by 4:30 p.m. so that they can heat it or prepare as necessary.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please call Donna Jeye, BLCW Secretary of Stewardship, at 544-2226.

The Education Commission

Helping The Congregation Grow In The Love & Knowledge Of The Lord

This commission endeavors to do the Lord's work of spreading the Good News to all members of our congregation through diverse educational programs. It oversees many diverse programs utilizing a variety of media, including books, audio, video, lectures, games, music, arts and the Internet.

Teach a child how he should live, and he will remember it all his life. (Prov. 22:6)

School Aged?

All children grades Pre-K through senior high are invited to attend our weekly Sunday School program. We meet in the Parish Center at 9:30 am and finish at 10:15 am. Superintendent Joy Petty and countless dedicated volunteers have put together a wonderful program. The teachers instill knowledge, truth and values in the children, in a fun and loving atmosphere. Snacks are provided! If you have children visiting you (friends, grandchildren) they are welcome to come for a one time visit! Come celebrate God's party with us! .



Highlights of the Sunday School Years

Third graders are gifted with their first Bibles on Reformation Sunday, so that they may begin to deepen their understanding of God's love and teachings.

Seventh graders progress to a 2-year Confirmation curriculum with Pastor Brian, after which they continue their studies in our High School Bible Study class.

Ninth graders are presented with a Teen Study Bible, which details how God's Word can be used as a shield against teen difficulties such as peer pressure, stress and drugs.

First Communion: Children of all ages are welcome to the Lord's Table (Holy Communion) at Bethlehem Lutheran. Those not yet receiving the bread and wine of the sacrament participate through the laying on of hands and a special blessing.

There is no "official" age for "First Communion" at Bethlehem Lutheran. Parents and children determine together when to begin receiving the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

A "Communion Orientation for Children" class is taught by one of the Pastors annually, usually in the early spring. This class is for children and their parents to reinforce the Communion experience for those already receiving, and to help those not yet receiving come to a clearer understanding of the Sacrament and its benefits.

Vacation Bible School

A Summer Tradition

Vacation Bible School is an exciting program for children, but one that sweeps the entire congregation up with enthusiasm.

VBS 2005 was a visit to Scandinavia under the theme, "On a Nordic Track with Jesus," which had, as its lesson emphasis, how to become 'fit' Christians.

VBS 2006 will be "Orient Yourself with Christ" centering on the miracles of Jesus in an Asian setting. The children will 'visit' the Asian countries of Japan, China, Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand as they learn of Jesus' miracles. On the way they'll use chopsticks, learn to do some origami, eat fortune cookies, enjoy music, memorize Bible verses, and have the experience of great

Christian fellowship.

Adults and children alike look forward to Bethlehem's unique VBS program each year, the best week of the summer at BLC.



In the Library

Pat Frick has taken on most of the duties of keeping our library up to date



and inviting. A new "honor system" is replacing the former check-out procedure. Now you can just take a book home that interests you, read it and return it to the library

Bethlehem Children's Center

Bethlehem Children's Center is a privately owned ministry outreach of Bethlehem Lutheran Church's Christian Education Program. The education of young children is a joint venture between home, school, and church. Our purpose at Bethlehem Children's Center is to provide a nurturing Christian atmosphere in which each child can grow physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Our hope is to develop within each child, a loving respect for each other and for the wonders of God's world.

One of the high points of the week for the children at BCC is chapel up in the sanctuary of BLC with Pastor Brian, and soon with Pastor Chris.

FFF

Faith and Friendship First provides activities for 3rd through 6th graders. Bonding with other Lutheran youth is a good thing and creates lasting friendships. Activities include swimming, bowling, scavenger hunts, movies, and service projects.

The only down side to bringing the youth activities from 7th grade (the traditional youth group) down to third grade, is all the first and second graders wondering when it is their turn!?

Camping, Camping, Camping!!!

There are many opportunities to get into the out of doors with other members of BLC.

Blue Slide Camp in Humboldt County has family camp one weekend and a week of camp for youth. There is a family camp of just BLC families at a Northern California campground each summer. And of course Lutheran Outdoor Ministries has a long list of camps available!



"The State of the ELCA"

Excerpts from Bishop Hanson August 9, 2005

I am often asked to address "the state of the ELCA." It is a question not only for me, but for all of us, including our congregations, and our partners around the world. As we begin the work of this assembly, let us reflect together on the state of this church.

The state of the ELCA is enriched through the lively and creative ministry of congregations.

As we reflect together, I trust that it becomes clear that the state of the ELCA depends on the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the vast web of interdependent relationships in the living, changing organism called Christ's Body, the Church.

Bishop Hanson went on to discuss the state of the ELCA, discerning who we are and reminding us who we can be.

We at Bethlehem Lutheran were privileged to have Bishop Mark Hanson visit us during our centennial year, 2003. He spoke to us of the strengths and challenges facing the ELCA and the individual congregations of the ELCA.

ELCA & BLC Stats

Baptized Members: 4,984,925 & 356

Communing and Contributing Members: 2,349,855 & 187

Average Worship Attendance Each Week: 30.15% & 50%

Average Giving / Confirmed Member \$550 & \$2,055

The first figure is national, the second is Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Adult Education for Lifelong Learners

Enrichment Opportunities Abound

The Adult Forum meets on Sundays in the sanctuary from 9:30-10:15 am for lively discussion and thoughtful debates of events and issues effecting Christian's daily lives.

Pastor Chris is beginning a discussion on the topic, "Raising non-violent children in a violent world." Both Pastor Brian and Pastor Chris are involved in these forums on Sunday mornings.

Bethlehem's midweek Bible study convenes on Wednesdays 10:00-11:00 a.m.. Pastor Brian leads the weekly class which welcomes regular or occasional attendees who find themselves available during the week.

Youth Meetings

Gale Muehlbauer,
BLC Youth Commissioner

We are a church youth group of middle school and high school kids, from 7th grade on up, that meets on the first and third Sundays of the month. The meetings are two hours' long. We've been meeting in the evenings from 5 to 7pm, but will change our meeting time in September to meet right after second service. We ask that one family provide a dinner each meeting.

We participate in a variety of community service projects such as working at the local Food Bank and collecting food for FISH. We've worked at several Habitat for Humanity projects in the area and raise money for local charities, such as the Salvation Army Adopt-A-Family program at Christmas time.

We also have overnight trips, such as our recent campout to view the Perseid meteor shower, and participating in outdoor ministries at various Lutheran camps. We also do other fun events such as skiing, horseback riding, boating, backpacking and hiking, movie nights, attending Christian concerts and swim parties. That is just to name a few.

Members of our youth group also participate in church-related activities, such as acolyting, reading, ushering, singing, bell choir and assisting with VBS.

Our goal is to provide a safe place for kids to come and just be themselves while learning the power of participating in the work of Christ and living his word.

We are always looking for parental help in organizing and participating in activities when needed; i.e., drivers, food donation for special events.

Health Ministry

You Can Make a Difference!

Debbie Knudtson, R.N.



Why should a congregation be concerned with the health of its members, or the local community for that matter? Through out the gospels we read many times that Jesus not only preached but also reached out to people offering both physical and spiritual healing. We can respond to God's love today by caring not only for each other but for ourselves as well. The gift of good health enhances our ability to serve God and to enjoy our relationship with Him and those around us.

Here at Bethlehem we have a Health Ministry Committee that works with our Parish Nurse and Pastoral Staff to promote the health of body, mind and spirit for our members and the surrounding community. To date, we have offered: health education classes, CPR training, healing prayer and blood pressure screening. We are also working to coordinate volunteers to support members during times of need by providing meals, transportation, childcare and other short-term assistance. The Parish Nurse is available to provide home or hospital visits, assist with locating health care resources in the community and offer health counseling. Our Health Ministry program is relatively new and the possibility for additional programs in our congregation and our community is nearly limitless.

You may be just the person we are looking for to help us develop new ideas. You do not need to be a health care professional to participate. The committee needs people with varied backgrounds, ages and skills. Even if you are not a committee member, you are important to this ministry. As you become aware of your own health needs or those of your neighbors in general, share them with us. Your input may open the doors to new areas of health ministry. Everyone can make a difference in the health of our faith community!

KEEPING THE RAIN OFF OUR HEADS!

a.k.a. Property Commission



Yes, keeping the rain off our heads is one of the duties of BLC's Property Commission. In addition to rain, floods, pestilence and the occasional plant life rebellion also fall within the Property Commission's scope of responsibility. Keeping the church property in good repair keeps this group hopping! We currently have 9-10 volunteer members that attend the monthly commission meetings (1st Wednesday at 7pm) and a sizable number of informal members that just tend to the church on their own schedule, passion and stamina. Our commission is open to all people at whatever level of activity they desire.

God's Word takes many forms at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Participate as you like and The Good News will renew you, strengthen you, comfort you, and prepare you for each and every new day.

Stewardship

The mission of the Stewardship Commission is to encourage our members to manage their time, talent, and treasure in ways that show their response to God's generous love. We strive to grow as "Champagne Christians," effervescent believers who can hardly be contained, whose love bubbles forth with joy. We challenge our members to become active in the many programs and activities available in this building, in Santa Rosa, and beyond our "neighborhood." We encourage our members to grow in their financial giving, with the goal of tithing (returning ten percent of our income to God).

This commission also helps Bethlehem Lutheran Church to manage its resources well. We encourage our members to pledge each fall, and we use this data to help the church council plan the annual budget.

As good stewards, we want to be Christ's hands as they reach out into the world. At Bethlehem, we use about 80% of our income to pay our staff, care for our building, and fund our commissions. But more than 20% (over \$80,000) goes to missions and benevolences, including our contributions to Bethlehem Children's Center, BLC scholarships, local benevolences, the Sierra-Pacific Synod, and the ELCA. We are proud of our outreach, and pray that we will continue to grow in



The ELCA

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America resulted from a union of three North American Lutheran church bodies: The American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the Lutheran Church in America.

The three churches agreed to unite in 1982. They formed a 70-member Commission for a New Lutheran Church, which planned the merger. The plan was approved by church conventions in 1986, and the ELCA constituting convention was held April 30-May 3, 1987, with the church actually beginning operations on January 1, 1988.

Memorial Fund

This is the fund often designated by those making a contribution in memory of a loved one. The church council makes the final decision on where memorial money is spent, consulting the families of the deceased or considering the interests of the person being memorialized. Large memorials are sometimes given with specific requests.

Scholarships Available

High school seniors are eligible for two college scholarships:

The Lutheran Education scholarship is a yearly subsidy for students enrolled in religious studies.

The L.U.T.H.E.R. Scholarship, named for Living Up To His Expected Responsibility, is a one-time gift given to graduating seniors who continue in study, worship and service after Confirmation. "Continue in the truths that you were taught and firmly believe. All scripture is inspired by God, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed." (2 Tim. 3:14-17)

The Endowment Committee

Stephen Gospe, M.D.

The Endowment Committee schedules meetings four times a year, but meets only if and when there is important business to be conducted. This is a small committee, attended in addition by Pastor Brian and by Vicki (Carolyn, you will have to spell her last time for me) the Thrivent (again please check the spelling) representative.

This committee receives and invests funds which are donated and when there is sufficient income from the various investments money is allocated either to specific areas of the church as designated by the donor or to areas of the church chosen at the discretion of the committee.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Through the Care in Congregations® program, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans provides funding for Thrivent members to conduct fund-raising activities and/or hands-on service activities to benefit a congregation or its related Lutheran institution(s), including schools. Funding comes directly from Thrivent Financial to the congregational service team's congregation.

This program has helped BLC with many of our ministries. It has helped buy more books for a Navajo mission school, supplies for homeless children, food for the hungry, and several other projects.

Stewardship is like a magnet passing over the jumbled pins and needles of our life, organizing them into a meaningful pattern.

*The Rev. H. George Anderson
in Stewardship as a Lifestyle*

Ministries at Bethlehem

Acolytes	Serve during worship services, 6th through 9th graders	Executive Board	Consists of Congregational officers and Pastor Meets the second Thursday, 6:30 AM, Carrow's Members of the council
Altar Guild	Be responsible for communion and altar preparation, one month commitment	FFF	Faith and Friendship First activities for those in 3rd-6th grades.
BCC Board	Become a liaison between the Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Bethlehem Children's Center	FISH	Food is collected at BLC and taken to FISH to distribute to those in need.
Bible Class	Study weekly, Wednesday 10:00 AM	Flower Delivery	Deliver altar flowers to ill members or shut ins after the Sunday service
BLC Council	Sit in on a meeting even if not a commissioner, third Wednesday, 7:00	Greeters	Welcome people as they arrive on Sundays
Book Club	Read and meet the first Tuesday or second Wednesday, 7:00, Fireside Room, BLC	Health Ministry Team	Supporting the health of the congregation through CPR classes, blood pressure screenings, and periodic speakers.
Choirs	Sing in one of four choirs for 4 year olds to adults, Thursday practices	Manna Meals	Prepare a dinner for Manna House, a shelter
Circles	Women meet once a month at various times, support internal and external causes	NAGS	Assemble monthly newsletter the last Thursday, 9:00 AM
Commission members	Participate in meetings of the commission of their interest. Share responsibilities for the success of a specific area of BLC's ministry	Needle workers	From knitting to hardanger, handwork is done the second and third Mondays of the month, 1:00 PM.
Commissioners	Run and get elected to a two year term. Hold commission meetings the first Wednesday, 7:00 Attend council meetings the third Wed., 7:00	New Member Class	Join BLC through periodically formed classes to welcome new members
Confirmation Classes	Receive a Lutheran education, 7th-9th graders	Redwood Gospel Mission	Pastors lead a service the 4th Tuesday of each month.
Deeper Walk	Monthly walks led by Pastor Chris, the first Saturday of the month.	Sewing Ladies	Meet at 10:00 AM, the third and fifth Tuesdays
Elisha's Pantry	A food pantry supported by BLC financially and with volunteers.	Ushers	Join a team for a three month/year commitment
Endowment Fund Committee	Help manage the fund and disperse its income	Visitation Team	Visit shut-ins, offer rides to church services
		Youth Group	Activities for those in 7th-12th grades
		Young At Heart	Meet the third Monday of the month with other 50+ members, noon, potluck and speaker

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Bethlehem Children's Center
1300 St. Francis Road
Santa Rosa, California 95409

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THE AREA OF MINISTRY I AM MOST INTERESTED IN _____

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HOME E-MAIL _____

WORK E-MAIL _____

OTHER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS: