

The Beacon Messenger

February 2018

A publication of Bethesda Lutheran Church and East Church Congregational
From the Pastor

Spiritually Supported

The responses to one of the questions in our congregational survey has us wondering what it means and what we can do about it. The question is, "Being part of this church community has given new meaning to my life." 16% strongly agree, 49% agree but 36% are on the fence, and 9% disagree. We were troubled that so many people are not experiencing new meaning in their lives because of their involvement in our faith community. We want to hear more from you about this.

Please talk with members of the Forward Leadership team: Pastor Lauren, Karen Davies, Mary Hunter, Marybeth Lewison, and Sue Mariotti. We want to know what this means for you individually. If you are in the group who has found meaning, please tell us what helped you. If you are on the fence, please tell us what would help you, and if you have not found meaning, please tell us what you are looking for. This question is the top one on our list of questions to probe further and address so that those who worship with us will have a better experience.

In fact, this is a critical factor related to our having a positive and engaging atmosphere which will help us grow. Compared to other churches who have taken this survey we scored well below other churches. Please talk with us and share your thoughts on what it means and what we can do about it.

This year Lent begins on February 14th and on the 21st we will begin our mid-week soup/study/worship. This year we will look at two writers on spirituality who have been very influential. One, Julian of Norwich, a celebrated English mystic from the fourteenth century whose writings were the first works in English known to be written by a woman. Her work helps illustrate God's love and compassion for all. Julian was seen as a precursor to Martin Luther and other Reformation writers. Much of what she wrote speaks of the most profound mysteries of the Christian faith, and her Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love (circa 1393) is considered to be one of the most remarkable documents of medieval religious experience. In it she speaks of the great love of God for God's people and how sin stands in the way. *"The greatest honor we can give Almighty God is to live gladly because of the knowledge of his love."* *"God loved us before he made us; and his love has never diminished and never shall."* Julian of Norwich

Few Protestant writers today can match the influence of Parker Palmer on American spirituality, contemplative practice, and Quaker values. Palmer's spiritual journey invites readers to explore their own spirituality under the guidance of this noted author, educator, and activist. When the 40-day journey is over, it will no longer be the guide's description of the journey that stirs the reader's longing for God, but rather the reader's experience of the journey that grounds her or his faith and life. *"Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic self-hood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks--we will also find our path of authentic service in the world."* *"In my own life, as winters turn into spring, I find it not only hard to cope with mud but also hard to credit the small harbingers of larger life to come, hard to hope until the outcome is secure. Spring teaches me to look more carefully for the green stems of possibility; for the intuitive hunch that may turn into a larger insight, for the glance or touch that may thaw a frozen relationship, for the stranger's act of kindness that makes the world seem hospitable again."* Parker Palmer

God's Spirit, given to you is baptism, will transform your life as we journey together in Lent. Pastor Lauren is willing to provide opportunity for spiritual growth in addition to Sunday morning and Wednesday midday. We can meet at church, in someone's home or a public space such as a restaurant/coffee shop/bar. We can meet in the morning, midday or in the evening. Please let pastor know what would work for you. Your partner in ministry, *Pastor Lauren*

Thank you

Dear Members of Bethesda and East Church, thank you for the monetary gift you gave me for Christmas. I cannot begin to thank you for your generosity. I am deeply touched and very grateful. Thank you very, very much. Pastor Lauren

Thank You!!!!

- Everyone who baked cookies for the homeless!
- Sue Mariotti for decorating the tree with our hands.
- Mike Dufault for taking the Christmas trees down.
- Mike Lewison, Mary Hunter Joan Craven, Eleanor Sacheli and Larry Green for caring for the finances of our congregations during the past year.

Attention Members Annual Meeting and Elections

On January 28, 2018 Bethesda Church will hold its annual meeting and in that meeting we will review our finances, approve a budget and elect members to serve in a number of positions. If you have any agenda items please give them to Sue Mariotti.

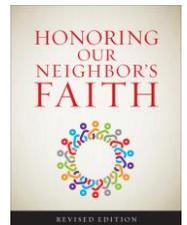


Save the date Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Ash Wednesday worship

On Shrove Tuesday, February 13th, we will gather at 6pm for a pancake supper and burn palms. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. Worship will be at 12noon and 7pm.

Bible Study – Honoring Our Neighbor’s Faith

We have returned to “Honoring our Neighbor’s Faith” a comparison of world and other Christian religions to Lutheranism. **Join us Sunday’s at 9am behind the organ. Bring your coffee and perhaps a friend.**



Midweek Bible study during Lent – Spirituality

Take this journey on your own or invite a friend to join you. We will meet on Wednesdays (February 21st 28th, March 7th 14th 21st at 11:30 for Soup, 12 for Study, and 12:30 for worship.

Social Ministry

What we just completed

Countless gloves, mittens, scarves & hats given to the homeless

What we are doing now

Souper Bowl of Caring

What is coming next

Heifer Fund

Hats/mittens/gloves/scarves

We are blessed and thankful for the warm, loving response to help those in need. There were too many to count. The items were given to our guests from Friends of the Homeless on Christmas Eve.

Snow Closings

Unless a storm is very severe and the roads are not passable, Sunday morning worship services will be held each week. In the unlikely event of a cancellation notices are posted on channel 22 & 3. However, no one should put themselves at risk by driving, walking or shoveling to attend worship. Your physical health and safety is as important as your spiritual wellbeing. Please use your own judgment when there is snow or ice. Stay inside your home, read the Bible and have conversation with God.





“Souper Bowl of Caring”

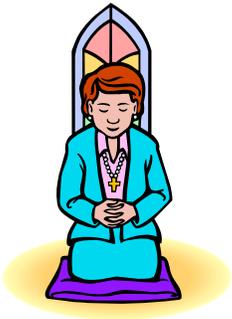
During the month of January through Super Bowl Sunday, February 4, 2018 we are joining churches across the country that are also part of the *Souper Bowl of Caring*. We will be collecting nonperishable food items, especially soups, as well as monetary donations (cash/checks) for the Open Pantry.

A word from our Worship and Music Team

Many months ago we were approached by a few folks who asked if we could sit for the creed and prayers of intercession. We discussed it and agreed to make that change. Recently we were approached by folks who want to stand for the creed and prayers. They pointed out that we always say, “Please stand as you are able” so that those who cannot stand for whatever reason are not expected to stand and those who are able and wish to stand can stand. Apparently some folks felt guilty when they were able to stand and did not. We can’t please everyone, either way someone feels bad! So we decided the best option was to return to standing and continue to announce, “Please stand as you are able.” We really mean that. If you are weak, tired, in pain, dizzy, dealing with hip, knee or foot problems or recovering from treatment of a joint please sit without feeling guilty.

Remembering in Prayer

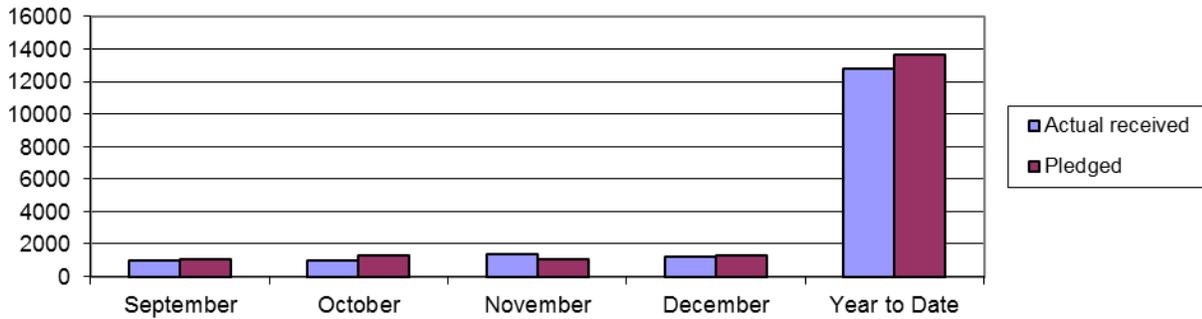
We all share in the ministry of intercessory prayer. We are called individually to pray each day and as a gathered community of faith in worship. If you have someone we need to include in our prayers please notify our church office. May God be with them and bless them with wholeness and health.



ASSISTING SCHEDULE February 2018

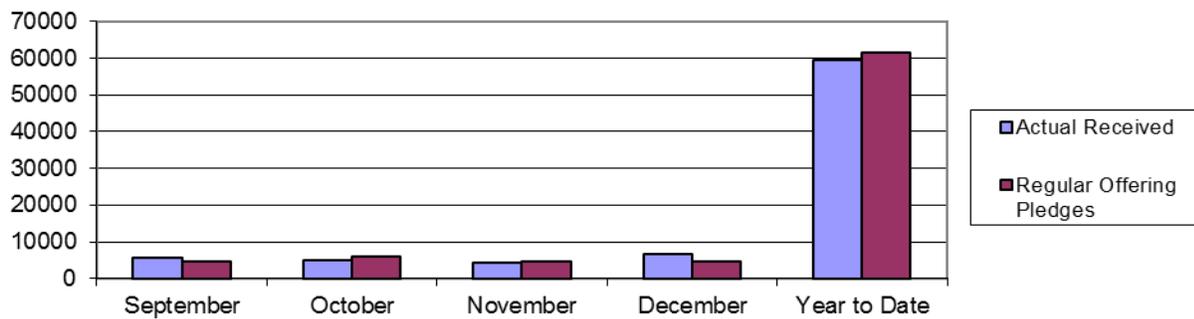
	Feb 4	Feb 11	Feb 18	Feb 25
Assisting Minister	Eleanor Sacheli	Mary Hunter	Karen Davies	Tom Davis
Reader	Eleanor Sacheli	Jay Cleaveland	Michael Dufault	Karen Davies
Communion Assistant	Diane Housman	Karen Davies	Shirley Flanders	Mary Hunter
	Shirley Flanders	Tom Davis	Diane Housman	Carmen Melecio
Nursery	Mary Holmquist	Sandy Carnevale	Linda Ewell	Pauline Duffney
Coffee Hour	Eileen Tucker	Pauline Duffney	Jay Cleaveland	Marybeth Lewison

East Church Stewardship Report September - December 2017



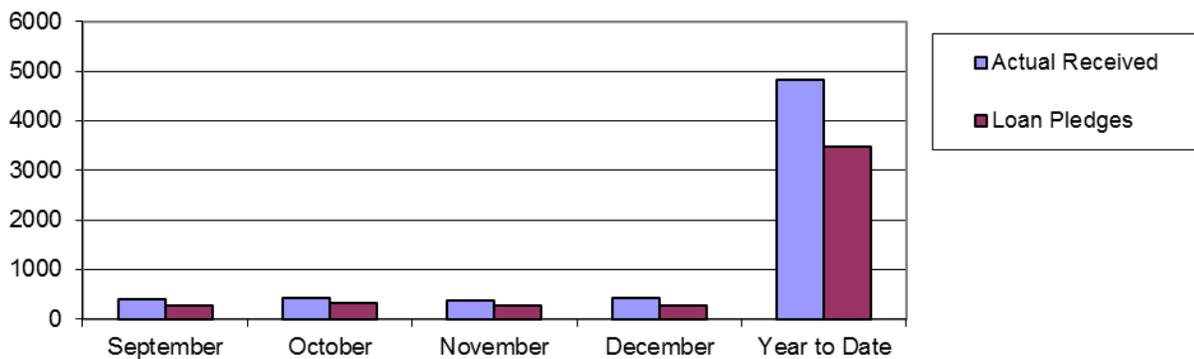
	September	October	November	December	Year to Date
Actual received	990	984	1371	1240	12751
Pledged	1027	1284	1027	1284	13613
%	96%	77%	133%	97%	94%

Bethesda Church Stewardship Report September - December 2017



	September	October	November	December	Year to Date
Actual Received	5642	4866	4265	6468	59583
Regular Offering Pledges	4730	5913	4730	4730	61492
%	119%	82%	90%	137%	97%

Bethesda Capital Improvement Loan Report September - December 2017



	September	October	November	December	Year to Date
Actual Received	387	435	369	437	4816
Loan Pledges	267	333	266	267	3465
%	145%	131%	139%	164%	139%

February 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>4 10am Bethesda & East Worship 10am Church of Jesus Christ (Comm) 10:30pm Divine Faith (Pearson) 12pm Divine Faith (nave) 1pm Basketball</p>	<p>5 5pm Basketball</p>	<p>6 4pm Acts (Comm) 5pm Basketball 6pm Divine Faith 7:30pm NA Mtg (Comm Rm)</p>	<p>7 5pm Basketball 6:30pm Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm) 7pm Medieval (gym) 7pm Power Tabernacle</p>	<p>1 5pm Basketball 7pm AA Mtg (Comm) 7pm Nar-anon Mtg (Pearson Rm)</p>	<p>2 5pm Basketball 6pm Clutterers Anon (South) 6pm Zumba (Comm)</p>	<p>3 9am Quilting 10am Basketball</p>
<p>11 10am Bethesda & East Worship 10am Church of Jesus Christ (Comm) 10:30pm Divine Faith (Pearson) 12pm Divine Faith (nave) 1pm Basketball</p>	<p>12 5pm Basketball</p>	<p>13 4pm Acts (Comm) 6pm Shrove Tuesday 6pm Divine Faith (nave) 7:30pm NA Mtg (Comm Rm)</p>	<p>14 ASH WEDNESDAY 12noon Worship 5pm Basketball 6pm NA convention 6:30pm Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm) 7pm Worship 7pm Medieval (gym) 7pm Power Tabernacle</p>	<p>15 5pm Basketball 7pm AA Mtg (Comm) 7pm Nar-anon Mtg (Pearson Rm)</p>	<p>16 5pm Basketball 6pm Clutterers Anon (South) 6pm Zumba (Comm)</p>	<p>17 9am Scrapbooking 10am Basketball</p>
<p>18 10am Bethesda & East Worship 10am Church of Jesus Christ (Comm) 10:30pm Divine Faith (Pearson) 12pm Divine Faith (nave) 1pm Basketball</p>	<p>19 5pm Basketball</p>	<p>20 Newsletters due 5pm Basketball 6pm Divine Faith (nave) 7:30pm NA Mtg (Comm Rm)</p>	<p>21 11:30 Soup/study/worship 5pm Basketball 6pm Bethesda Council (Pearson) 6:30pm Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm) 7pm Medieval (gym) 7pm Power Tabernacle</p>	<p>22 5pm Basketball 7pm AA Mtg (Comm) 7pm Nar-anon Mtg (Pearson Rm)</p>	<p>23 5pm Basketball 6pm Clutterers Anon (South) 6pm Zumba (Comm)</p>	<p>24 10am Basketball 6pm Divine Faith</p>
<p>25 10am Bethesda & East Worship 10am Church of Jesus Christ (Comm) 10:30pm Divine Faith (Pearson) 12pm Divine Faith (nave) 1pm Basketball</p>	<p>26 5pm Basketball</p>	<p>27 4pm Acts (Comm) 5pm Basketball 6pm Divine Faith (Nave) 7:30pm NA Mtg (Comm Rm)</p>	<p>28 11:30 Soup/study/worship 4pm Campaign Non-violence 5pm Basketball 6:30pm Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm) 7pm Medieval (gym) 7pm Power Tabernacle</p>			