

The Beacon Messenger

February 2016

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

Following Jesus from Baptism

My trip to the land called “holy” was truly amazing. Being in the places where Jesus was born, grew up, was baptized, taught, healed, performed miracles, died, rose and ascended to heaven gave me new insights into his message and our mission today. Baptism is where those things all come together. The place of Jesus’ baptism is on the Jordan side of the Jordan River. Just like Jesus we rise from the water and enter the world that God loves so dearly. We are baptized into Jesus’ death and resurrection giving us forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Jesus went directly from his baptism into 40 days of testing by the devil. The devil tested him with his need for daily bread, his need for safety and the need for power. Jesus passed every test.



We are confronted by the same temptations. Following his example we can withstand temptation when it comes our way. Jesus was asked to turn stones into bread. Believe me, there is a lot of stone there, and the land is barren. But Jesus knew that he could trust God to supply what he would need each day. He did not accumulate wealth or belongings. We live in a different world than Jesus did, yet it is the same in many ways. We use the abilities that God has given us to earn money so that we can acquire food, clothing and shelter and we set some aside for unforeseen needs.



The key here is having a healthy relationship with money so that it is never a primary goal. Christians understand that all that we have and all that we are comes from God and belongs to God. We trust God to provide for our needs and we share what we have with others; this keeps our relationship with money healthy. When we depend on ourselves instead of God it interferes with our relationship with God. When accumulating money becomes our most important objective it can hurt all of our relationships.

Jesus was brought to the highest point of the temple (which is no longer standing) and asked to throw himself down trusting God to protect him. He dismissed putting his safety in jeopardy knowing that our health and safety are of primary importance to God. God knows our bodies intimately, even how many hairs we have on our heads. Here too we have a partnership, we do what we can to maintain good health. We eat a healthy diet, exercise, rest, balance our work with our recreation, develop our minds and feed our spirits. We maintain healthy relationships with God and others. If illness or injury comes our way we do what we can to recover and we pray for healing. We live in peace knowing that whether we live or die, we belong to God.



Jesus was taken to the top of this mountain and offered all the kingdoms of the world if he worshipped the devil. He refused. Most of us are not on a quest to become king of the world, neither was Jesus. He used his power to heal the sick, to welcome everyone, to forgive people, and to feed the hungry. We are called to this same work in our baptism. We use whatever we have for the sake of others. We act for those without a voice, for those whose rights are denied, for those mistreated by others, and for the oppressed.



Jesus completed the time of his testing and began his public ministry announcing I have come to bring good news to the poor, to heal the sick and free the oppressed. I was deeply moved at the place of Jesus' baptism reflecting on Jesus' immersion into our humanity, our sin, our broken world. Beside us were soldiers from Jordan; across the river were soldiers from Israel. There were barriers in the river to prevent movement between countries. My heart broke that at this place of reconciliation between God and humankind we were reminded of the brokenness in this world.



I thought of my own baptism, God's greatest gift, grace now and into eternity. The pastor at the Lutheran church there asked my name and with water from the Jordan he made the sign of the cross on my head and reminded me that I am God's beloved child forever. I was reminded that in baptism we promise to work for peace and justice. I could hardly breathe flooded with so many thoughts and feelings. I felt the same way at my ordination. My call in baptism was reawakened for me as was my call in ordination. My call became fully clear to me as I listened to the daily life of Palestinian Christians and Muslims. I have to do whatever I can to help our Palestinian sisters and brothers. I was overwhelmed with the responsibility entrusted to me. And, I felt fully covered by the Holy Spirit who will help me answer my call.

In the coming months I will share more about the plight of our sisters and brothers in Palestine and we can support them in prayer and through advocacy efforts. As we prepare to enter this Lenten season we will follow Jesus from baptism into the world he came to save, the world God loves so dearly.

Blessings, *Pastor Lauren*

Addendum to 2015 Poinsettia Garden Bethesda Lutheran and East Church

Given by:

Clara Mathisen

In loving memory of:

Norman Mathisen

Thank you

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

Thank You!!!!

- Duncan Hunter for doing the funeral for Marion Williams while Pr. Lauren was away.
- Karen Davies for preaching while pastor was away. She did an excellent job.
- Mary Hunter for setting up before and cleaning up after worship while pastor was away.
- Everyone who baked cookies for the homeless!
- Dave Jenny and Jay Cleaveland for taking the Christmas tree down.
- Mike Lewison, Mary Hunter and Larry Green for caring for the finances of our congregations during the past year and preparing the budget for the coming year.

Midweek Bible study during Lent – The Marks of the Christian

In Romans 12 the apostle Paul calls us to new life in Christ and identifies marks of the Christian life. The deep reflections and insightful questions in this book will help you explore how your life is "marked" by Christ and consider how you live the marked life for the sake of the world. Take this journey on your own or invite a friend to join you. We will meet on Wednesdays at 11:30 for Soup, 12 for Study, and 12:30 for worship.

Sunday morning Bible Study – We Make the Road by Walking

We will look at scripture from a very different perspective using “We Make the Road by Walking” by Brian McLaren. Join us Sunday’s at 9am behind the organ. Bring your coffee and perhaps a friend.

Save the date Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Ash Wednesday worship

On Shrove Tuesday, February 9th, we will gather at 6pm for a pancake supper and burn palms. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 10th. Worship will be at 12noon and 7pm.

Gift of Warmth

\$81.31 was contributed to the *Gift of Warmth* emergency fuel assistance fund. Thank you for your warm response.

Hats/mittens/gloves/scarves

39 pr of mitten/gloves, 12 hats, 2 scarves! We are blessed and thankful for the warm, loving response to help those in need. The items were given to Friends of the Homeless.

“Souper Bowl of Caring”



During the month of January we will remember the ongoing critical needs of the hungry. The confirmation class will be collecting nonperishable food items, especially soups, as well as monetary donations (cash/checks). On Super Bowl Sunday, February 7, 2016, we will be joining churches across the country that are also part of the *Souper Bowl of Caring*. Our donations will be brought to the Open Pantry.



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.

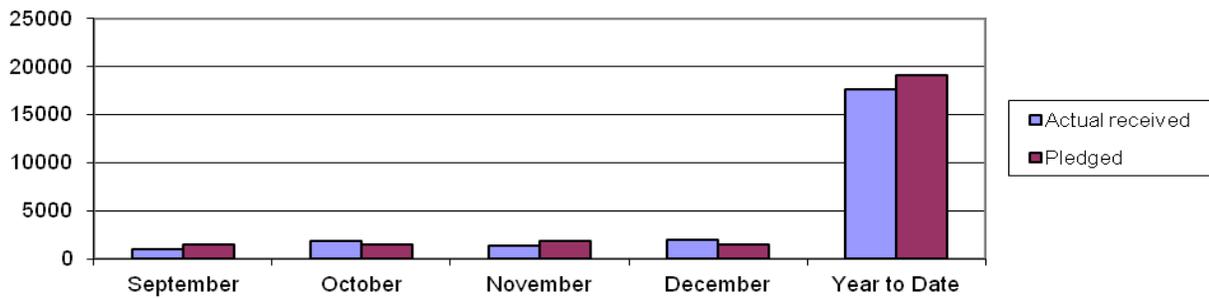
Please use your own judgment when there is snow or ice. Stay inside your home, read the Bible and have conversation with God.

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.

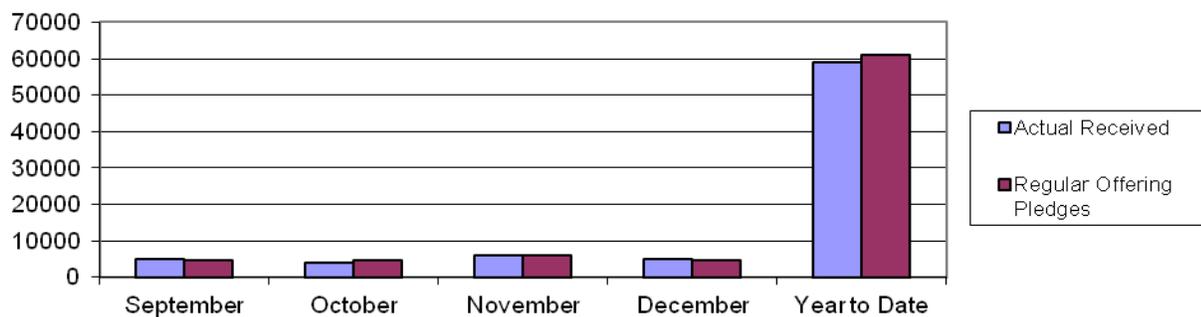


**East Church Stewardship Report
September - December 2015**



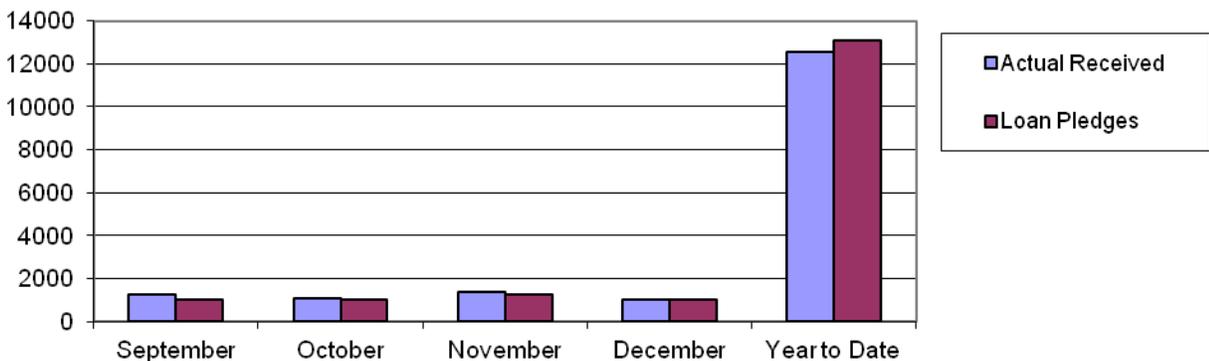
	September	October	November	December	Year to Date
Actual received	1006	1810	1347	1913	17587
Pledged	1469	1469	1837	1469	19100
%	68%	123%	73%	130%	92%

**Bethesda Church Stewardship Report
September - December 2015**



	September	October	November	December	Year to Date
Actual Received	4809	3999	6074	5011	59020
Regular Offering Pledges	4707	4706	5884	4707	61190
%	102%	85%	103%	106%	96%

**Bethesda Capital Improvement Loan Report
September - December 2015**



	September	October	November	December	Year to Date
Actual Received	1276	1056	1348	1025	12578
Loan Pledges	1006	1006	1257	1006	13076
%	127%	105%	107%	102%	96%

FEBRUARY 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 4pm Champion Youth (comm) 5pm Bball (Gym) 7pm Latino Worship	2 4pm ACTS (Comm) 5pm Bball (Gym) 6:30 Confirmation class 7:30pm NA Mtg (Comm)	3 6pm Youth Medieval (gym) 6:30pm Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm.) 7pm Medieval (gym) 7pm Latino worship	4 5pm Bball (Gym) 7pm AA Mtg (Comm Rm) 7pm Nar-anon Mtg (Pearson Rm)	5 5pm Bball (Gym) 6pm Clutters-Anon (South)	6 9am Quilting (South Rm.) 9am Bball (Gym) 7pm Latino worship
7 Transfiguration Sunday 10am Bethesda & East Worship 10am Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm.) 12pm Divine Faith (nave) 1pm Living Word (Comm Rm.) 1pm Bball (Gym) 7pm Latino worship (nave)	8 4pm Champion Youth (comm) 5pm Bball (Gym) 6pm East Church Board Mtg (Pearson) 7pm Latino Worship	9 4pm ACTS (Comm) 5pm Shrove Tuesday (Gym) 7:30pm NA Mtg (Comm)	10 Ash Wednesday 12noon Worship 6pm Youth Medieval (gym) 6:30pm Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm.) 7pm worship 7pm Medieval (gym) 7pm Latino worship	11 5pm Bball (Gym) 7pm AA Mtg (Comm Rm) 7pm Nar-anon Mtg (Pearson Rm)	12 11:30am FOH lunch 5pm Bball (Gym) 6pm Clutters-Anon (South)	13 9am Bball (Gym) 7pm Latino worship
14 1st Sunday of Lent 10am Bethesda & East Worship 10am Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm.) 12pm Divine Faith 1pm Living Word (Comm Rm.) 1pm Bball (Gym) 7pm Latino worship (nave)	15 5pm Bball (Gym) 7pm Latino Worship	16 5pm Bball (Gym) 7:30pm NA Mtg (Comm)	17 11:30am Lenten soup and study 6pm Youth Medieval (gym) 6:30pm Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm.) 7pm Bethesda Council Mtg. 7pm Medieval (gym) (Pearson) 7pm Latino worship	18 5pm Bball (Gym) 7pm AA Mtg (Comm Rm) 7pm Nar-anon Mtg (Pearson Rm)	19 5pm Bball (Gym) 6pm Clutters-Anon (South)	20 Newsletter info due 9am Scapbooking 9am Bball (Gym) 7pm Latino worship
21 2nd Sunday of Lent 10am Bethesda & East Worship 10am Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm.) 12pm Divine Faith (nave) 1pm Living Word (Comm Rm.) 1pm Bball (Gym) 7pm Latino worship (nave)	22 4pm FOH dinner 4pm Champion Youth (comm) 5pm Bball (Gym) 6pm NA Mtg (Pearson) 7pm Latino Worship	23 4pm ACTS (Comm) 5pm Bball (Gym) 6:30 Confirmation class 7:30pm NA Mtg (Comm)	24 11:30am Lenten soup and study 6pm Youth Medieval (gym) 6:30pm Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm.) 7pm Medieval (gym) 7pm Latino worship	25 5pm Bball (Gym) 7pm AA Mtg (Comm Rm) 7pm Nar-anon Mtg (Pearson Rm)	26 5pm Bball (Gym) 6pm Clutters-Anon (South)	27 9am Bball (Gym) 1pm Pastor finnell (Community) 7pm Latino worship
28 3rd Sunday of Lent 10am Bethesda & East Worship 10am Church of Jesus Christ (Comm Rm.) 12pm Divine Faith (nave) 1pm Living Word (Comm Rm.) 1pm Bball (Gym) 7pm Latino worship (nave)	29 4pm Champion Youth (comm) 5pm Bball (Gym) 7pm Latino Worship					