



BETHESDA BANNER

December 2023/January 2024

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 4

Christmas Concert

At the conclusion of our concert in the summer, there were several requests for another concert. The audience was so appreciative of the concert that they asked for one to be held in the fall. Planning and organizing a concert require lots of work and time. While we could not have held a concert in the fall, one is planned for December 3 at 6.00pm. Pieces include Christmas songs, classical pieces, and popular music.

There is an exciting line-up of performers for the evening. Performing will be a string quartet from the Chinese Artists Society of Toronto - Youth Orchestra (CAST-YO). The CAST-YO group rents our church hall for their band practice on Friday evenings. The string quartet comprises Ashley Lo – violin, Glenn Huang – violin, Evanka Liu- viola, Kate

Zhang - cello. They will be the featured performers. The group will do several pieces, including some sing-along Christmas songs.

Another group which will be performing is the Lin Na Music School. Lin Na is from the St. Paul Congregation. Organists Ashley Thompson and Anindyo Das, along with Kailyn Ding, a trainee organist and Brian Kang make up the contribution from Bethesda. Brian will do a piece with the guitar and Kailyn will perform on the piano.

The emcees for the event will be Eric Smith, Caroline Nowaskey and Katarina Matthiessen.

Members are encouraged to attend the concert. It promises to be another great evening of entertainment and socializing. Admission, as with all our concerts, is free. A time of fellowship in the hall is planned to precede the concert. ■

Annual Christmas Social

Bethesda will host its Annual Christmas **social on December 10 at 5.30** pm. The social will commence with a potluck dinner. Members are kindly asked to bring along a main course and a dessert or salad. Last year we ran out of food, not because members did not bring much but because there was a good attendance at the social. Bearing this experience in mind, members are asked to bring a little bit more than they did last year. Liquid refreshment will be provided by the church.

After the meal the evening proceedings will continue in the sanctuary. There we will gather to sing carols, decorate the Christmas tree with chrismons. Marilyn Huehn will put on the traditional decorations on the tree during the week preceding the social. During the carol singing time we will have the usual special time for the children. Come out and let us have a great time together as we celebrate the season. ■

Christmas Services

Members are kindly asked to take note concerning our Christmas services. Coming as they do this year, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day fall on Sunday 24 and Monday 25 of December respectively. We usually have a special service of nine readings and carols on the evening of Christmas Eve. Since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year it means that we should have two services, one in the morning and the evening carol service. Instead of having two services on Christmas Eve we will have only the carol service in the evening at 7.00 pm. We will, of course, have our traditional Christmas Day service of Word and Sacrament at 10.30 am.

The above matters were discussed by the Worship and Music Committee and recommendations to those effects were made to the Council. The Council accepted the recommendations. ■

From Chairman

Don Capotosto

Hello everyone and Happy Holidays,

I would like to take this time to update the Bethesda Lutheran Family with current events and completions of property projects. Since I last spoke to you we have completed the parsonage boiler replacement and have renewed the parsonage roof shingles. This would not have been possible without the help of all of you with our fund raisers from the summer BBQ and our church yard sale.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in our special Congregational meeting on October the 29th 'Charting a Path Forward'. This is just the beginning to secure Bethesda's future for us and those who follow.

The Sharecropper's dinner on October 26th was a great success and I would like to thank again Lorne & Carol Smith for hosting the event at the Church with guest speaker Dr. Karin Achtelstetter Executive Director of the CLWR. With the hard work

from Auther Schickedanz we were able to raise \$30,000.00 this year bringing Bethesda's total contributions to \$583,000.00 over a 24 year period.

I would like to remind everyone with our upcoming Christmas Concert Sunday December the 3rd and our Christmas Social Sunday December the 10th which includes a pot luck dinner, Christmas Carols and trimming of the Christmas tree.

To all members of Bethesda Lutheran Church I would like to take this time to wish everyone a Merry Christmas & Prosperous 2024 from me and my family.

God's Blessings to all. ■

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From Pastor Roy Hope- The Message of The Season

I use the word season in its technical liturgical sense and not as a euphemism to avoid using the "C" word, Christmas, as has become popular with many people. We are in the Advent, and soon, Christmas season. This time of the year is special
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to people for various reasons. For the business world it is all about profit which results in crass commercialism and unbridled consumerism. Many people look forward to the season because of the festivities that come with it. They relish the many family reunions, parties, dinners, and generally just having an extra indulgent time with food and drinks. Then there are those who immerse themselves in nostalgia. Memories of the past; the music, food, smells, sounds, sights, experiences, and atmosphere transport them to “gentler, kinder, better and happier” times. I am not making a judgement on any of these. A couple weeks ago a colleague asked me if I am ready for Christmas. I replied, “I am a Christmas person. I am always ready for Christmas.” So yes, I indulge in all the above. But as a Christian this season means much more than all these things.

The seasons of Advent and Christmas are about Hope. This hope comes in the form of a baby born in Bethlehem in a stable two thousand years ago. His life, ministry, death, and resurrection reveal God loving act for the

salvation of the world. In this Christ child, God identified with humans and His creation. God came in this sinful, broken world with all its suffering, misery, and pain to share our experiences as one of us. He is Emmanuel indeed- God with us. In the Incarnation, God becoming Human, God signals that God is on our side. We are not abandoned nor forsaken. This is good news for a world that seems to be on a path of destruction. When despair or hopelessness threatens to overtake us because of the state of the world, or in our personal lives, let us remember that God is in the world and in the midst of its travails and troubles.

Like Christmas, Advent is also all about hope. In Advent we look forward to the Parousia or second coming of Christ Jesus. He will come, as we confess in our creeds and as scriptures testify, to establish his kingdom of peace, justice, and righteousness in its fullness. The Advent season reminds us that God is moving history toward God’s goal. History is therefore not randomness and purposeless. Despite all that seems contrary to God’s assurance that God is in control,
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our faith allows us to live confidently with the hope in the assurance that God is still, and will always be in in control. Therefore, do not fear. ■

**Blessed and Joyous
Christmas to all.**

Worship & Music Update

Dave Smith, Chairman

Advent and Christmas Worship

A new church year starts on Sunday, December 3 with the First Sunday in Advent. The Advent season continues for four Sunday's. Since the fourth Sunday of Advent falls on the same day as Christmas Eve, the Church Council approved the committee's recommendation to not have a morning service that day. During Advent the blue paraments adorn the pulpit and altar. The candles on the Advent wreath are lit during the Advent liturgy at the beginning of worship. Verses from Hymn 240, "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" will be sung by the Assisting Minister and

accompanied by Pastor Roy on guitar, while the candles are being lit. During Advent we use the Setting 8 worship liturgy and we continue to use it until Ash Wednesday. We thank Marilyn and Tom Huehn for preparing the Advent Wreath.

Christmas Eve falls on Sunday, December 24. Bethesda will have its traditional Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols at 7:00 PM. Please note, there will be no worship on that Sunday morning. The fourth Advent candle will be lit at the Christmas Eve service.

Christmas Day is Monday, December 25. A service of Word and Sacrament will be at 10:30 Christmas morning. Please note this service will not be recorded.

Sunday, December 31 is the First Sunday after Christmas. This will be a Service of the Word only. No sacrament will be served. We will continue to sing Christmas Carols for the hymns.

The day of Epiphany is Saturday, January 6 and this year there is no Sunday worship service designated to celebrate the Day of Epiphany. We do, however, celebrate the season of Epiphany *(continues on page 6)*

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until Ash Wednesday on February 14th.

On Sunday, January 7th we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord by affirming our own baptism at worship. Do you know when you were baptized?

Christmas Concert

We are excited that Bethesda will host a Christmas Concert on Sunday evening, December 2 at 6:30. You are welcome to gather in the hall at 6:00 pm for a time of fellowship and treats before the concert. A full program of performances by members and friends of Bethesda and St. Paul is planned, including a special guest, a string quintet from the CAST Youth Orchestra which is now rehearsing in our church on Friday evenings. All are welcome to enjoy an evening of music. There is no cost to attend.

Christmas Social

Our traditional Christmas Social will be held at the church on Sunday evening, December 10 beginning at 5:30 PM. We gather in the downstairs hall to enjoy a pot luck meal. Please bring either a main course or a salad and a dessert to share. After the meal

we gather in the sanctuary to sing Christmas carols and decorate the Christmas tree with the chrismons.

Musical accompaniment by guitar will be provided by Chris Yansen and Pastor Roy. Christmas gifts will be given to the children. We thank Bonnie and John Hendrickson for providing the gifts. All are welcome. Please contact Pastor Roy if you plan to attend the dinner so the hall can be prepared.

The next Worship and Music Committee meeting is Tuesday, December 12 at 7:30 PM. ■

Sharecropper Report

Lorne Smith

Congratulations members of Bethesda. Our 2023 Sharecropper Project for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank has reached a total of \$30,000. This involves over \$23,000 from the Profits of our growing project and the donations from Members and Friends of Bethesda. I want to give a big "shout out" to Arthur Schickedanz and Galten Farms for again hosting our growing *(continues on page 7)*

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some statistics on the growing project. It was a total of 51 acres of the best yield ever for a corn crop: 201.9 bushels per acre or 5.12 tonnes per acre. But this does not come cheaply. Arthur reports \$700 per acre for growing costs: land lease, ground preparation, seed corn, fertilizer, harvesting and labour. It took less than a day to harvest this high yield 51 acres with a powerful combine that probably cost in the order of \$500,000. I hope you will thank Arthur and Galten Farms for his support of our Growing Project over the last 24 years. Our total contribution from this project over the past 24 years is at least \$583,000.

Our Sharecropper Dinner, while small in numbers, was a wonderful gathering of Bethesda members on Sunday, November 26. The last Sharecropper dinner had been in November, 2019. Mother's Deli and Bakery of Main Street Markham provided a substantial meal served by Katarina Matthiessen and Eric Smith. The best part of the event was having the Rev. Dr. Karin Achtelstetter, Executive Director of Canadian Lutheran World Relief, as our guest. Dr. Karin started our meal with a lovely

grace and then presented between the meal and desert. She shared with us the history and objectives of the Canadian Lutheran World Relief that started in 1946 to provide food and clothing to the refugees and displaced persons following the war in Europe. Most of the German immigrants who joined Bethesda after the war came with the support of CLWR. Dr. Karin shared how CLWR works and how its reach has expanded to Ukraine, West Bank and East Jerusalem, South Sudan, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Uganda, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Burundi and Pakistan. She opened up further conversation by inviting questions from those in attendance. Thank you Dr. Karin for your contribution to the evening.

We still invite donations to the 2023 Sharecropper Project. Mark any donation as "Sharecropper project" before the end of the year so we can get it to CFGB. Our donation to CFGB receives the Government of Canada contribution and then the total becomes available to the CLWR for its work around the world.

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I would like all members to feel they are a part of this project.

Thank you for your support of Bethesda's impressive outreach project. ■



Pictures of Sharecropper dinner.

Treasurer's Report

Kim McKenney

	<u>2023</u>	<u>October 2022</u>	<u>Year to Date 2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Prorated Approved Budget</u>
<u>Operating Results:</u>						
Recurring Receipts (1)	\$9,263	\$10,478	\$83,207	\$68,225	\$79,333	\$95,200
Expenses	12,359	10,294	111,753	110,094	\$112,958	135,550
Wage Subsidy	-	-	-	(360)	-	-
Operating Position before below	<u>(\$3,096)</u>	<u>\$184</u>	<u>(\$28,546)</u>	<u>(\$41,509)</u>	<u>(\$33,625)</u>	<u>(\$40,350)</u>
One-time Memorial Donations	<u>2,600</u>	<u>16,000</u>	<u>9,005</u>	<u>18,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>	<u>18,000</u>
Net Operating Position after above	<u>(\$496)</u>	<u>\$16,184</u>	<u>(\$19,541)</u>	<u>(\$23,509)</u>	<u>(\$18,625)</u>	<u>(\$22,350)</u>
<u>Net Other Receipts - Sharecroppers/Other (3)</u>	<u>\$275</u>	<u>\$70</u>	<u>\$809</u>	<u>\$420</u>		
<u>Capital Items:</u>						
Receipts (4)	\$80	\$75	\$8,123	\$15,262		
less: Capital Expenditures	<u>\$80</u>	<u>\$75</u>	<u>\$8,123</u>	<u>\$15,262</u>		
Net Capital Items						
Net Position	<u>(\$141)</u>	<u>\$16,329</u>	<u>(\$10,609)</u>	<u>(\$7,826)</u>		

* As tabled and approved at the Church

Council Meeting November 22, 2023

Receipts - Year-over-year monthly variance was impacted negatively by a large one-time memorial in October 2022 of \$16,000 ; there was a similar smaller donation of \$2,600 this year. Regular donations were down slightly for the month but continue to track positively versus 2022 due to donations for rentals (+\$5,420) and parking (+\$1,420).
Expenses - Weekly donations are up 12% (\$6,002) for the year.

Notes:

There were no unusual expenses incurred in the period as Council continued to manage discretionary spending. Year over year timing of certain expenses (for example - insurance) negatively impacted expenses as two insurance instalments were paid in the month (\$1,400). As well church maintenance costs of \$525 were incurred. Council continues to delay the Synod donations to later in the year - individual member's donations to mission work are being remitted on a bi-annual basis ... the current amount due is \$2,500.

- (1) 1. Ongoing donations continue to trend upwards as church activities get back to normal and added revenue streams are initiated by council - parking rentals and facility rentals.
- (2)
- (3) 2. Variable operating expenses continue to track slightly below budget as church activities come back to normal and due to favourable timing. The favourable trend partially offsets the donation shortfalls. Increased costs versus 2022 for utilities, caretaking, secretarial fees and the organist are occurring as church activities ramp up.
- (4) 3. Sharecroppers donation activity in the month.
4. Please note some members of the congregation are making regular **CAPITAL** committed offerings - monthly \$75. The quarterly dividend from Enbridge of \$835 was received in September.
- (5) 5. After accounting for ongoing projected commitments including annual contributions to the Synod -
Current Net Cash Available for Ongoing Operations (estimated) are \$11,718
During October and November all HST rebate applications (approximately \$11,500) were approved and paid to the church. ■

**The Management & Staff
of
“W” Upholstering**

**Happy Christmas &
A Prosperous
New Year**

The “W” Upholstering

&

Interiors Ltd

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Note: