

Bethany Free Lutheran Church Newsletter

DECEMBER 2019

God's Wild Plan

It is about 100 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem. If you're driving it takes about two hours, depending on traffic. It would take close to a week to hike it. There are some hills and valleys between the two places, so it wouldn't be the easiest hike. It would take even longer to walk it with a pregnant wife who was about to give birth.

It was maybe an interesting conversation Joseph and Mary had when they realized they had to travel that 100 miles from Nazareth to their ancestral home of Bethlehem. The government mandate that was forcing them to make the trip seemed to come at the worst time possible. This poor father-to-be had to wonder how he was going to take care of Mary on this long journey. Mary maybe wondered what God was up to. His angel promised the baby in her womb was from the Lord. Why didn't He intervene so that she and the baby didn't have to make this dangerous journey?

Mary and Joseph's trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem didn't happen because some government official got a crazy idea on some way to increase tax revenue. It was part of God's plan. Hundreds of years earlier He had promised the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem because it was the hometown of King David. As He always does, God kept His Word.

God's plans sometimes don't make sense to us. Why send this pregnant young lady on a 100 miles hike over hills and valleys? In a similar way, God may send us on journeys that cause us to question and wonder. When

the angel told her she was going to give birth to the Christ Child, Mary's response was, "I am the Lord's servant. ... May it be to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38). She was willing to trust the Lord and follow Him on the journey, even though it was bound to involve some surprising twists and turns.

God's plan for the salvation of all people was placed in the womb of a teenage girl from an ordinary family. Success of the plan depended on the girl and her betrothed safely completing a 100 miles hike; then giving birth to the baby while in a barn, separated from their family. It sounds like a wild and risky plan.

God continues to work in similar fashion today. He entrusts ordinary sinners like us with the priceless treasure of His good news for the world. His plan to transform lives all over the world involves using flawed human beings like us. He calls us to tasks for which we aren't at all qualified, apart from Him. He sends us down paths that appear, to our limited human reason, to be mistakes.

The Lord knows what He is doing. He has a plan that is often beyond our understanding. It may seem risky, but the safest place is always to be trusting in the Lord's care. He watched over Mary and Joseph on their journey, and He watches over us. We don't fear the journey, no matter how scary and uncertain it may seem. We rest in the promise of Immanuel, God with us.

—Pastor Craig

Advent Services

Wednesdays Dec. 4 & 11 at 7:00 p.m.

These are times to worship, sing Christmas carols, pray together and think about Jesus' coming and His promise to come again.



Women's Missionary Federation (WMF)

Christmas Celebration

Thursday Dec. 12 11:30 a.m.

WMF gathers at Amy Boyovich's home at 90302 Logan Road. They'll have a potluck lunch, a time of sharing, singing Christmas carols and a Bible study led by Linda Takalo. All ladies are welcome.



Decorating Day

We'll be decorating the church for Christmas on Friday Dec. 13 starting at 10:00 a.m. Everybody is welcome to come and take part.

Sunday School Christmas Program

Dec. 15 5:00 p.m.

The Sunday School students will be sharing the good news of Jesus' coming in word and song. A dinner will be served afterwards. Everyone is invited.

Everybody is invited to the parsonage – 575

34th Street – on Wed. Dec. 18 at 7:00 p.m. for a time of fellowship.

Live Nativity Scene

Saturday Dec. 21 5:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m.

Join us in the overflow parking lot for people in costumes, animals and a sharing of the Christmas story. If you'd like to be in the scene or help out in some way contact the church office or talk with Nancy Magathan or Angie Cereghino.



Christmas Caroling Dec. 22 4:00 p.m.

Join us for Christmas caroling and share in song the good news of Christ's coming. We'll meet at the church then go from there to carol at local area care centers. We then return to the church for food and fellowship. Pizza will be provided. You're welcome to bring veggies or treats to share.



Sunday School Christmas Celebration

Sunday Dec. 22 9:30 a.m.

Special Scandinavian food will be served and we'll sing carols. Everyone is invited.

Christmas Celebrations

Join us for our special Christmas services as we worship the Lord and celebrate His coming.

Bring along a friend.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 10 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship Service 10 a.m.



The reason for the season!



Come, Let Us Adore Him!

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| Dec. 4 & 11 | Advent Services |
| Dec. 12 | WMF Christmas Celebration |
| Dec. 13 | Decorating Day |
| Dec. 15 | Sunday School Christmas Program |
| Dec. 18 | Christmas Gathering at Parsonage |
| Dec. 21 | Live Nativity |
| Dec. 22 | Caroling and Sunday School Christmas Celebration |
| Dec. 24 | Christmas Eve Service |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day Service |

