

Come, Let Us Adore Him!

Join us for Christmas Services

Christmas Eve Candle Light 10:00 pm

Christmas Day 10:00 am



Bethany Free Lutheran Church
451 34th St.
Astoria, OR 97103

Worship With Us

8:45 A.M. Glad Tidings Radio 1370 A.M.
Sunday School 9:30 A.M.
11:00 A.M. Worship Services

Live Stream

We live stream our 11:00 A.M. Sunday worship services on Subsplash. If you prefer Facebook we are still there. Sunday sermons are also posted the same day on our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@bethanyfreelutheranastoria3012/featured>. You can find links to all of these on our website at www.bethanyfree.com



SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:30am-10:30am

Kindergarten- Adults

Learning God's Word



Men's Prayer Breakfast

Will be December 6th, 8:00 A.M. Cooking starts around 7:30am if you would like to help. We would love to have more men join us.

Deacons & Trustees Meeting

Deacons & Trustees will meet here at church, Thursday, December 11th, 5:30pm.

Bethany Sewing Ministry



The ladies of Bethany will be meeting December 4 & 18 at 10am, downstairs at Bethany. All sewing skills are welcome or if you want to bring you other hand work and just fellowship. A lunch is provided.

They are always more than glad for any donations of fabric. Just drop by on one of the sewing days or contact the church and arrangements can be made.

Brown Bag Ministry

Every Wednesday at 11:00 am, we have our weekly Brown Bag Ministry which prepares brown bag lunches that are distributed in the community, we are always grateful for volunteers.



WMF Meeting

Women's Missionary Federation will meet, Thursday, December 11th, 11am at the church. All Ladies are Welcome, bring a lunch, dessert is provided.

Thank You

A big thank you to all who came and all who brought gifts for our kitchen shower, for our kitchen in the new building. Thanks to Mickey for his fun "shower games".

Women's Evening Bible Study

WEBS will meet this month, for a Christmas party Tuesday, December 30th, at 7pm, at the parsonage.



Old Photos

We are requesting any old photos from church events or church building photos of past years to add to the collection for the "historical photos" page we are creating on the church website. Talk to Kelly Grothe or email them to bethanyaflc@gmail.com attention Kelly Grothe. If you have photos, we can scan them and return them to you when done.

Youth

We will be having a youth led worship service Sunday, December 14th, at the regular 11am service time.



Advent Services

Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm, December 3, 10 & 17.

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve Candle Light service at 10:00 pm

Christmas Day service at 10:00 am



Church Decorating

We will be decorating the church for the Christmas Season, Saturday, December 6th at 10am. Come and enjoy a festive morning of decorating.

Christmas Caroling

Sunday December 21st at 4 P.M. Join us for Christmas caroling and share in singing the good news of Christ's coming. We will meet at Eric Paulson's home (195 W. Kensington, Astoria) Following caroling, we will be going back to Eric's home for pizza and swimming. You're welcome to bring veggies or treats to share.



What does the incarnation of Christ mean for us today?

About this time of year many things begin to transform. In the often drab and dreary colors and weather connected with late fall we see something different. Bright lights, green garland, red and white candy canes, as well as many other festive decorations replace the browns, greys, and if you live away from the coast white (connected with snow). People seem to not mind the weather but embrace it (at least for a short while). Coffee shops peddle their peppermint infused drinks, and stores can't seem to keep things in stock with people often buying up chocolate, rich cuts of meat, and other delightful treats. Why does a trip to Freddy's or Costco now take twice as long? Why does the smell of pine boughs hanging in our homes seem magical now, when only a few months prior most would complain about smelling a pine tree inside our homes is just weird?

While some people celebrate Christmas simply because it is a fun tradition, behind that tradition is a five-dollar church word called "the incarnation." Charles Shultz the creator behind the Charlie Brown comics, helped make this difficult concept reach millions of people when he had Linus (the blanket carrying cartoon character from the Charlie Brown comics), quote Luke chapter two, which explains how the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ, had finally come and was born in Bethlehem, which is also known as the city of David. Specifically, incarnation means assuming, or putting on flesh. More fully explained, the incarnation is God keeping His promise of sending the Messiah. And that Messiah was and is not just a man, but a man, who is also God. The Messiah or Savior who is God, put on flesh and fully became a human to live a perfect life, fulfill the law of God, only to be killed, but then 3 days later rise from the grave demonstrating how He conquered death. And the best part is that as Jesus conquered death, so also will we conquer death if we have faith in Jesus.

The incarnation is even deeper than God coming and being born as a baby to fulfill the promise of God. It is God coming down to be with us, to share in an authentic relationship with you and I. We live in a world that is connected

with blindingly fast internet connections, coupled with social media apps that tell us everything we want to know about others (as well as telling us many things that we don't want to know). Yet despite the ease of connectivity, our culture seems to struggle more with authentic connectivity now more than at any other time in recent history. But the good news, the Gospel is that God has come in the flesh to be in relationship with us.

Many find holidays hard because the people they once loved are missing. Divorce, sickness, physical distance, or death cause many to find holidays hard to cope with. The good news is that Christmas is a reminder that God has searched us out, so that we might have a relationship with Him. God is the one pursuing us. God is the one that did all the traveling to come down and be with us. And when Jesus left to return back to heaven, He said that it was a good thing, because God in the person of the Holy Spirit was going to come now and actually live with and in all the believers. This means that in a real and tangible way God would put on flesh as Jesus, but then also put on flesh and dwell within all believers. While the incarnation of Christ is different than the Holy Spirit's indwelling within us, they share many similarities. Namely that God has chosen to do this in order to be with us. So this holiday season if you are saddened at the loss of loved ones, I want to encourage you to think and meditate on the concept of the incarnation, and how God has come to dwell with us in the person of Jesus Christ, but has also come to dwell in us primarily through the person of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Rich Carr