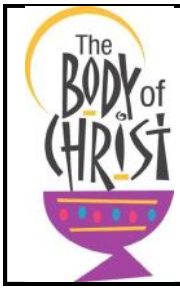
The Bethel Newsletter

January 2020

Porter, Minnesota



Holy Communion:

Bethel– January 5, & 12

Hemnes—January 5, & 12

New Email Address!!

Bethel's new email address is bethel@bethelofporter.com. We have closed the frontier.com address.

Bethel Annual Meeting

January 26, 2020

Approximately

12:00 noon

This is the time for all members to reflect on the past year and plan for the coming year at Bethel.

Thank You!!!

Bethel meet the December special budget offering match.

We raised $4, 972.35 which meets our goal and trigger the $2000 matching gift!

Share Sunday morning worship, followed by congregational potluck and annual meeting.

If you have topics for discussion, talk to Mike Knutson, congregational president.

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Bethel Lutheran Church is affiliated with the South-west Synod of Minnesota of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

God's Work. Our Hands.

Bethel Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 126
2429 County Hwy 16
Porter, MN 56280

Telephone: (507) 296-4658

Office Hours at the Church:
1st, 2nd & 4th Tues—9:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.
3rd Wed—9:30a.m.-12:00 p.m.

E-mail address: bethel@bethelofporter.com
Website: bethelofporter.com

Pastor Rev. Ellen Munter 296-4558 (home)
507-828-1000 (cell)
Email: pastormunter@gmail.com

Your Church Officers

President	Mike Knutson	507-829-2767
Vice President	Randy Kamrath	507 530-4417
Treasurer	Deana Moeller	296-4634
Financial Sec.	Josh Sumption	296-4497
Secretary	Sue Alley	507-530-1628

Deacons

Anna Kamrath, Chair	507-530-5558
Martha Melrose	296-4515
Craig Petersen	296-4483
Terry Dybsetter	296-4401
Sara Wollum	223-5844

Trustees

Jerome Bruns, Chair	296-4645
Tom Gawerecki	224-2267
Roger Longhenry	296-4422
Bob Merritt Jr	296-4436
Curt Blumeyer	223-7339

Board of Education

Tracy Wente, Chair	296-4623
Anna Noyes	296-4477
Nikki Petersen	507-829-0555
Rachel Wollum	223-5844
Megan Syltie	507-829-9931

Custodian

Lou Knutson	296-4489

January Birthdays

3rd Brandon Moeller, Janet Hulzebos, Brady Carstens
4th Mervyn Anderson
5th Thomas Gawerecki, Jeff Wilke, Amber Moeller
6th Pearl Knutson, Rose Anderson, Heather Hurt
9th Todd Blumeyer
10th Daniel Anderson
11th McKenzie Evjen, Hailey Evjen,
12th Jerome Bruns, Jim Moeller
15th Rich Syltie
16th Mark Anderson
21st Cora Meier
22nd Spencer Moeller, Tulane Alexander
24th Ellie Dybsetter
25th John Appelen, Robyn Hulzebos, Amy Drietz
27th Nicole Kamrath, Chance Negen
29th Ella Dybsetter

If you have any corrections or additions, please contact the church office at 296-4658, or email: bethellutheran@frontier.com. If your name does not appear in the month of your birthday, it means we don't have your birth date. Thanks!

Epiphany is all about light. The light of the star leads people far and near to worship the newborn ruler of the world. We are to reflect the light so that all people may be drawn to its revealing illumination. Jesus enlightens us about our true condition and promises the Holy Spirit to illumine our lives. St. Paul saw his purpose and ours as bringing "to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God" (Eph. 3:8-9).

The festival of the Baptism of our Lord strengthens the Epiphany emphasis. In Jesus' own baptism, His public ministry begins. God's own word authenticates Jesus' mission and the power of the Holy Spirit propels Him in his ministry. Isaiah's promise of "a light to the nations" is fulfilled in Jesus (Isa. 42:6).

Jesus' own baptism and mission, and ours, are closely tied together. As this season lifts up Jesus as the light of the world, we remember the charge given to the newly baptized: "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Early Christians saw this relationship of light and baptism when they spoke of baptism as their illumination. If there is light within us, it is hard to hide it or to cover it up. Scriptural light images invite us to celebrate both the gift of Christ's light to us and our task of pointing to the one who is the Light of the world.

At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus immediately gathers disciples. They start to go and tell so that people will come and see what God is doing in Jesus. God's enriching grace and empowering strength inspire everyone to make their witness, to point to the Epiphany star, and to invite others to come and see the one Who has revealed the plan of God for us and the world. God blesses each of us in distinct ways so we can all walk humbly with our God through this world doing justice and loving kindness.

On the last Sunday after the Epiphany we celebrate the Transfiguration of our Lord. This season turns on all kinds of lights that give clues to what God is up to in this one Whom we call Jesus, the Messiah, Wonderful Counselor, and Prince of Peace. It is truly a "mountain-top experience." But as the disciples learned, one cannot stay on the mountaintop. We have to go down and live in the valleys far below. Enlightened by this insight into who Jesus is and what God's plan is, we can journey with Jesus to contemplate the meaning of His suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension. Along with all the other things we know about Jesus, we will also know Him as the suffering servant. On that Friday of the crucifixion, darkness seemed to cover the earth and all the lights appeared to go out. Even Jesus cried out "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Praise and lament, light and darkness, life and death are all places where we walk humbly with God. Epiphany promises that even in the most intense darkness, the light will shine because God is with us in all circumstances.

Epiphany propels the intensity of the light, the message of Jesus, into the darkest depths of our lives. The star of Epiphany will lead us to the cross of Christ. But even then, the light of the resurrection will draw us even further into God's brilliant future.

In Christ,

Pastor Munter

This article is an edited version of one found in Sundays and Seasons, 2004. I couldn't really say it better!

CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council and Board reports for December 2019

Trustees:

The following discussion/decisions were made:

The Board moved and second to pay all bills.

The Board prepared the 2020 budget.

The heating pump will be paid in December.

On January 1, 2020 we will switch over from electric heat to LP.

Members Present: Bob Merritt, Curt Blumeyer, Tom Gawerecki, Roger Longhenry and Jerome Bruns

Deacons

- Deacon of the Month: Martha Melrose
- Food Shelf: Canby
- Communion Dates for Bethel and Hemnes will be January 5 (*Epiphany of our Lord*) and January 12 (*Baptism of our Lord*).

Members Present: Anna, Sara & Martha

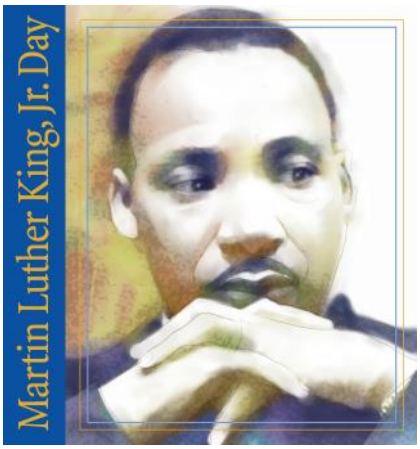
Board of Education:

The Board of Education reviewed the past year and put away Christmas program items. They talked about Christmas Program offering and options to where the money can be used.

Members Present: Tracy, Rachel & Megan

Annual Meeting, January 26 at noon! Please get your reports into the office by Friday, January 17th.

Love in Action



Martin Luther King Jr., whose life and legacy we honor this month, spoke often about the power of love. In fact, he equated the practice of nonviolence with "absolute commitment to the way of love."

Love, declared the minister and activist, "is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend." And, he said, anyone who's "devoid of the power to love" is "devoid of the power to forgive."

King distinguished between true love and "empty sentimentalism," however. He taught — and showed — that love is "the active outpouring of one's whole being into the being of another."

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the ultimate "active outpouring" of love, and we can choose to follow his example daily.

"Because of Calvary I'm free to choose," writes Max Lucado in *When God Whispers Your Name.* "No occasion justifies hatred; no injustice warrants bitterness. I choose love. Today I will love God and what God

Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him

The Wise Men

Oh, we have learnt to peer and pore
On tortured puzzles from our youth,
We know all labyrinthine lore,
We are the three wise men of yore,
And we know all things but the truth. ...

Go humbly, humble are the skies,
And low and large and fierce the star;
So very near the manger lies
That we may travel far.

Hark! Laughter like a lion wakes
To roar to the resounding plain.
And the whole heaven shouts and shakes,
For God himself is born again. ...

—G.K. Chesterton

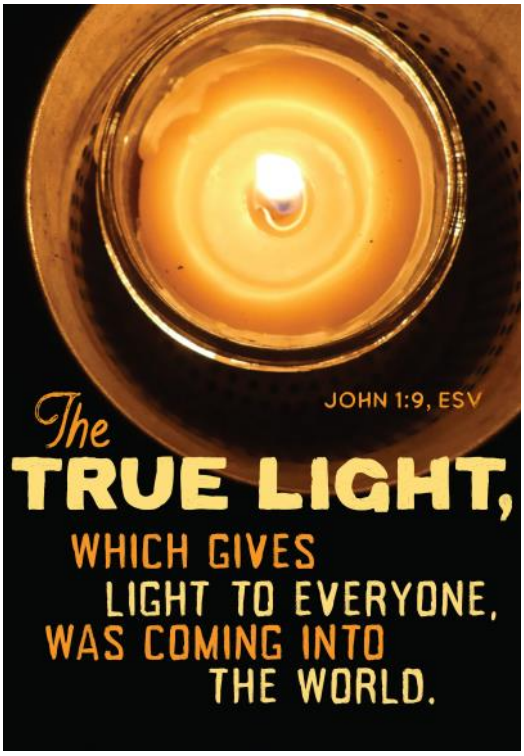
"Are Forever Stamps OK?"

A prayer for the journey

The following prayer, almost 1,000 years old, was written for pilgrims walking the Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James) — 500 miles across northern Spain. Use this adaption as you journey into the new year:

God, you called your servant Abraham from Ur in Chaldea, watching over him in all his wanderings, and guided the Hebrew people as they crossed the desert. Guard your children, who seek to grow in you this year. Be their companion on the way, their guide at the crossroads, their strength in weariness, their defense in dangers, their shelter on the path, their shade in the heat, their light in the darkness, their comfort in discouragement, and the firmness of their intentions. Through your guidance, may they be enriched with grace and virtue, and be filled with salutary and lasting joy.

—from the 12th-century *Codex Calixtinus*



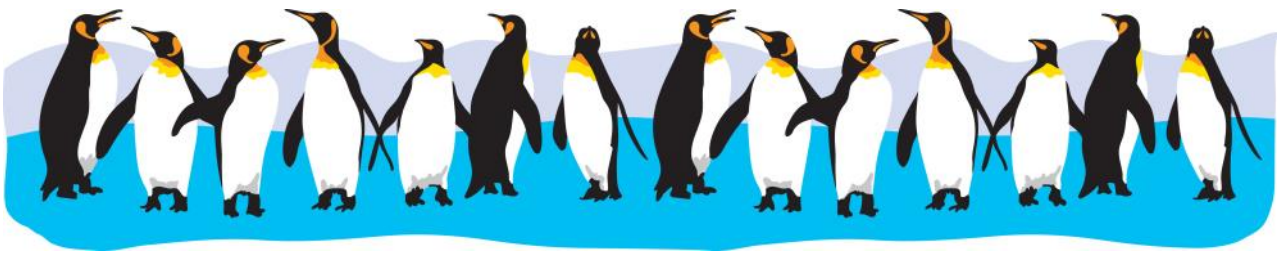
This little light

Worldwide, more than 1 billion people lack access to electricity; another 1.5 billion have irregular access. One new tool that's literally brightening lives is an inflatable, waterproof, solar-powered lantern. With 10 tiny LED lights, "Luci" can shine about 15 square feet of light for up to 24 hours on a full charge. Yet the lantern weighs just 4 ounces, so it's easy to transport.

Though this versatile lantern has many uses, inventor Jason Alan Snyder is especially excited about its potential to help people living in darkness. For each $10 donation at mpowerd.com, one Luci lantern is sent for disaster relief and humanitarian aid.

Little lights — whether solar-powered or Jesus-powered — make a big impact in our dark world.

—adapted from *HomeTouch*



Epiphany In Eastern and Western Christianity

By Rev. George Dion. Dragas Ph.D., D.D.

On the 6th of January Eastern Orthodox and Western Christians celebrate the great Feast of Epiphany (Western) or Theophany (Eastern). This Feast [is] a celebration that goes right back to Christian beginnings and opens up the meaning of the Christian faith and tradition.

Epiphany (from the Greek *epiphaneia*) means "manifestation from above," that is, "divine revelation." The Christian feast of the Epiphany primarily entails the manifestation of God in Christ, Christ being manifested as the Son of God and God as the Trinity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Eastern Epiphany celebrates the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan by John the Baptist or "Forerunner" (in Greek *Prodromos*) as the event of the manifestation of Christ as the Son of God and its corollary, the manifestation of God in Trinity, and also as the event that marks the beginning of Christ's saving mission. This is particularly revealed in the service of the Great Sanctification of the Waters (*Megas Agiasmos*), which is reminiscent of Christ's Baptism and constitutes a conspicuous feature of the Eastern celebration.

In the Christian East, Epiphany is the oldest Feast of the Lord next to Pascha (Easter), and was always celebrated on the 6th of January. The first reference to Epiphany is found in Clement of Alexandria at the end of the second century AD. If Pascha marked the climax of the saving work of Christ, Epiphany marked the disclosure of the divine person of Christ who opened up the mystery of God and initiated the process of [our] salvation. Baptism joins human beings to Christ, granting them remission of sins and eternal life through the sanctifying grace of God. The Holy Water blessed at Epiphany is a great blessing that is much treasured by the Orthodox who use it to renew (re-consecrate) themselves and their physical environment.

The Western Epiphany celebrates the veneration of the newborn Christ by the wise Oriental Magi as the event that marks the manifestation of the divinity of Christ to the "nations." Especially since medieval times, Western Christianity developed an elaborate tradition around these Oriental figures – fixing their number to three and identifying them with three kings, called Melchior, Gaspar (ed. or Caspar) and Balthasar.

The origins of the Feast of the Epiphany in the West are rather obscure. There is a consensus that Epiphany was first introduced in the Western Church from the East in the fourth century about the same time as the new Feast of Christmas took root in the Roman Liturgy, commemorating at first the Birth and the Baptism of Christ. It came to be primarily associated with the visit of the wise Magi to Bethlehem, especially after the establishment of the Feast of Christmas on the 25th of December.

What is the meaning of Epiphany for the Western Church? It is primarily the manifestation of the divine Savior Christ to the gentiles; but it is also the acknowledgment of Christ by the gentiles. This double meaning is expressed by the way the Western Church interpreted the offering of gold, frankincense and myrrh, by the wise Magi. On the one hand it saw these gifts as symbols of the three aspects of Christ's life, his being king, priest and prophet. On the other hand it re-enacted the offering in various ways by instituting appropriate acts of offering, to the poor, to the church and to the sick.

There is no doubt that both Eastern and Western traditions of Epiphany share a common message: the manifestation of the divine identity and saving work of Christ. The difference lies in ethos and emphasis. The Eastern tradition seems to be more attuned to the dramatic and theophanic aspect of Christ's ministry, whereas the Western tradition seems to be seeking to follow the historical Jesus as he unfolds his message through his deeds and words. The one is more vertical and the other more horizontal. Combining the two could only be a source of enrichment.

Source: http://holycrossoca.org/newslet/1401.html

Monthly Financial Update

Miscellaneous Revenues

The Revenues taken into account are all weekly and holiday offerings as well as special offerings designated to the general account such as Fuel, Missions, and Food Shelf Offerings. This comparison is only for Revenues and Expenses associated with Bethel's responsibility for our parish budget, meaning checks from Hemnes Lutheran Church are not included in the Year to Date Revenue and their 25% share of our parish budget is not included in the Year to Date Budgeted Expenses. This comparison also does not take into account Refunds and Reimbursements or Savings Reimbursements. These sources of revenue are normally received to pay expenses that are not a part of Bethel's operating budget, so are not used to make comparison to our budgeted expenses.

The Year to Date difference will show on a monthly basis if we are receiving sufficient offerings to cover our budget, or if we are behind. The running total for each month will be in a Year to Date total, not a monthly total.

If it is necessary to borrow money from Savings Reserves to fund the operations of Bethel, the amount will be denoted in the Cash Reserves Expended column. If funds are repaid to the Savings Reserves during a surplus, the repayment will be denoted in the Cash Reserves Repaid column. Reserves Expended and Reserves Repaid are not represented in the Revenues and Expenses columns of this report.

		Year:	2019			
	Total Budgeted Expenses:	$	103,597.50			
	Monthly giving required to meet budget:	$	8,633.13			
Year to Date Actual Revenue and Budgeted Expenses Comparison This report is based on budgeted expenses only, divided evenly for each month of the calendar year. The actual expenses each month may be more or less than was budgeted. This analysis is to be used as a guideline only and not a full representation of the full financial health of Bethel Lutheran Church. This report does not include revenues or expenses regarding the Hemnes Lutheran Church portion of the joint parish budget.						
	Year to Date Revenue	**Year to Date Budgeted Expense**	**Year to Date Difference: shortfalls shown as negative numbers**	**Cash Reserves Expended**	**Cash Reserves Repaid**	**Reserves Repaid Notes**
January	$6,379.79	$8,633.13	-$2,253.34			
February	$10,340.19	$17,266.25	-$6,926.06			
March	$20,569.52	$25,899.38	-$5,329.86			
April	$31,065.19	$34,532.50	-$3,467.31			
May	$39,411.07	$43,165.63	-$3,754.56			
June	$43,920.85	$51,798.75	-$7,877.90			
July	$49,397.77	$60,431.88	-$11,034.11			
August	$56,081.87	$69,065.00	-$12,983.13		$3,115.00	Harvest Festival Raffle Profits
September	$65,436.53	$77,698.13	-$12,261.60			
October	$71,614.42	$86,331.25	-$14,716.83			
November	$80,003.23	$94,964.38	-$14,961.15	-$2,000.00	$843.50	Ice Cream Social Profits
December	$97,445.88	$103,597.50	-$6,151.62			
	Formula for Year to Date Revenue must be adjusted to only include the defined revenues for each month.					

*$2,000.00 as advance from savings to cover Year-End Budget Challenge Matching funds that have not yet arrived. Savings will be reimbursed in 2020 when matching funds arrive.

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Don't forget that you can donate to Bethel just by shopping at Amazon. Go to **smile.amazon.com** and choose "Bethel" as your charity. There are many, so go to about the fourth page and you will find a "Bethel" in Porter, MN. That's us! You can to change your bookmark for Amazon to be smile.amazon.com so it comes up automatically. Then when you shop just look for the "eligible for AmazonSmile" in the product details page and you're good to go!

Bethel Workgroup Schedule

Altar Workers for Sundays in January

Linda and Jerome Bruns

Ken and Carol Jeremiason

Altar Workers for Sundays in February

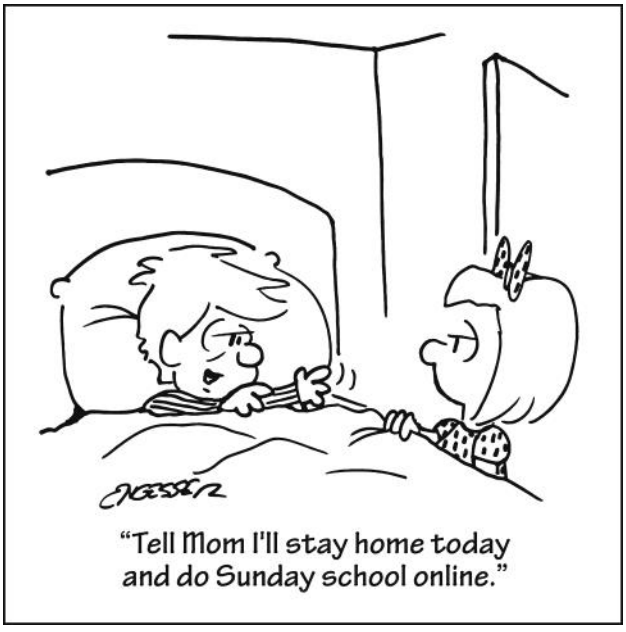
Terry and Dan Dybsetter

Ray and Beryl Kuester

GROUP #1

Brenda and Mike Knutson 507-829-2767
Paul and Darcy Bruns 507-530-0327 and 507-530-5036
Rose and Dick Anderson 296-4440
Marilyn and Waldo Petersen 223-5829
Sue Alley 507-530-1628
Marty and Meghan Syltie 507 829-9931, 507 829-9924
Beryl and Ray Kuester 223-7935
Linda and Jerome Bruns 296-4645
Bill Ningen 296-4693
Josh Sumption 296-4497
Tiffany Keating 223-5542
Brian and Kassidy Emery 605-880-3569
Matt & Victoria Bliss 605-941-4062 and 320-287-1050

**Please note: The first person or couple on the list are chair for the next funeral*.



Epiphany, which comes from the Greek word *epiphaneia,* means "an appearance" or "a revealing." Centuries ago, the church set aside January 6, the 12th day after Christmas, to mark the revealing of Jesus as Christ to the magi, who were Gentiles. Jesus' first followers were Jewish, so the revelation of the divine Christ to the non-Jewish magi reminds us that Jesus came to earth to save the whole world.

Symbols of Epiphany include light, a star, a crown (or three crowns) and a globe or stylized portrayal of the world. The color of Epiphany is green to symbolize life, growth, hope and eternity.

On the church calendar, the time after Epiphany lasts until Ash Wednesday, which is determined by the date of Easter.

Worship Schedule

Hemnes:

8:30 am Sunday Worship

Bethel:

9:00 am Sunday School

10:00 am Sunday Worship

11:00 am Coffee Fellowship

Communion Worship:

Bethel– January 5, 12

Hemnes – January 5, 12

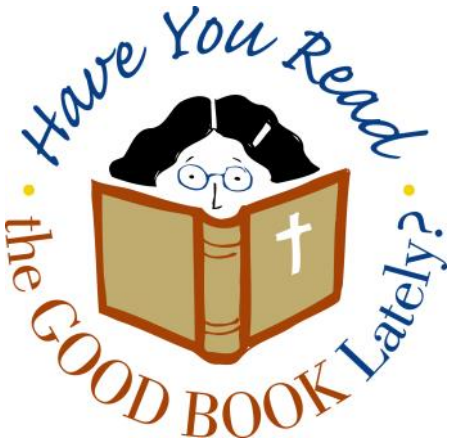
Pastor's Office Hours:

9:30 am—12:00 pm Wednesday

Confirmation 6:15 pm Wednesday

Coming Events

January 9	2:00 pm	Hendricks Worship
January 20	10:15 am	Spiritual Reflections
January 20	7:30 pm	Council/Boards
January 23	2:30 pm	Minneota Manor
January 26	12:00 pm	Annual Meeting



January 5 **Epiphany of our Lord**	January 12 **Baptism of our Lord**	January 19 **Epiphany 2**	January 26 **Epiphany 3**
Isaiah 60:1-6	Isaiah 42:1-9	Isaiah 49:1-7	Isaiah 9:1-4
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14	Psalm 29	Psalm 40:1-11	Psalm 27:1, 4-9
Ephesians 3:1-12	Acts 10:34-43	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18
Matthew 2:1-12	Matthew 3:13-17	John 1:29-42	Matthew 4:12-23

"STEP" INTO THE NEW YEAR

Make this craft to remember God's many blessings.

What you need:

- Small stones
- Permanent markers
- Foil pan and cooking spray
- Drop cloth
- Gloves
- Quick-set concrete (and adult help)
- Bucket and paint stirrer

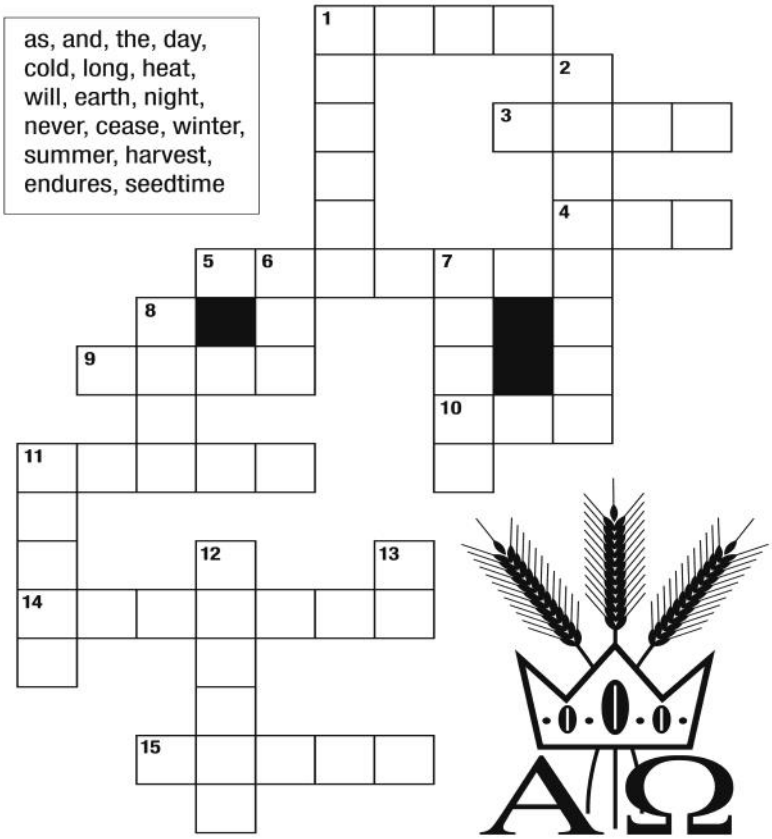
What you do:

1. After reflecting on the past year, use markers to decorate stones with memorable words, dates and drawings.
2. Spray pan with cooking spray. Set pan outside on a drop cloth.
3. Wearing gloves, mix concrete in a bucket, according to instructions.
4. Pour concrete into pan. Smooth top with paint stirrer.
5. Press in stones, handprints and other decorations.
6. Let dry completely. Remove from pan.
7. Place the stepping-stone outside as a reminder of God's continued goodness.

Puzzle!

Use the word list to complete the crossword. Then fill in the numbered blanks to read God's promise to Noah — and to us.

as, and, the, day, cold, long, heat, will, earth, night, never, cease, winter, summer, harvest, endures, seedtime



"___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___,
13 8 13 10 7 14

___ ___ ___ ___ ___
2 6 5 9 6

___ ___ ___ ___ ___
3 12 6 1 down 4

___ ___ ___ ___ ___."
6 11 across 1 across 11 down 15

GENESIS 8:22, NIV

Answer: "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." Genesis 8:22, NIV

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF
BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
P.O Box 126
2429 Co. Hwy. 16
Porter, MN 56280

Bethel Lutheran Newsletter
January 2020

Fall/Winter Sunday Worship 10:00 am

Sunday School 9:00 am