



Bethesda Lutheran Church
"Welcome One Another"

The Visitor

December 2011

305 Saint Ronan Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511 • (203) 787-2346

Find this newsletter also on the web at bethesdanewhaven.org

Amahl and the Night Visitors Visits Again!



The Bethesda Music Series is thrilled to once again present Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* on Sunday, Dec. 11 at 7:00. The performance is free and open to the public. A freewill offering will benefit Life Haven, a

temporary shelter for homeless pregnant women in New Haven. Contributions are matched, in part, by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans,

Amahl and the Night Visitors is a story of a poor shepherd boy's encounter with three kings and the miraculous healing of his crippled leg when he offers his crutch as a gift to the holy child. This short opera has captivated audiences around the world ever since its premiere. Its charming mix of tuneful melody, dancing rhythms, delightful choruses, humor and poignancy, make this work immediately accessible to audiences of all ages and musical tastes.

At Western Connecticut State University, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, directed by Bethesda member, Margaret Astrup, has become an annual tradition for the Opera Ensemble, reaching out to hundreds of school children as well as family audiences annually. A very special part of this tradition has been taking the opera "on the road" to various churches and communities throughout Connecticut.

The cast for this year's production features Lucas Hernandez, from Hamden, as Amahl with Danbury native, Lauren Brown, as his mother. In the roles of the kings will be Erick Sanchez of Stamford, Brendan Stone of Wolcott and Jean Carlos Rodriguez of Waterbury. Wesley Marchena of New Milford will appear as the page and Carly Phipers, Tyler Campbell, Caroline Strange and Ryan Reynolds are featured as dancers. Alexis Zingale of West Haven will be the pianist.

A reception will follow the performance.

Advent and Christmas at Bethesda

1st Sunday of Advent

Next Sunday, November 27 will be the **Advent Intergenerational event** following worship. There will be Advent and Christmas decorations for kids and adults from 11:00 - 12:00 followed by our traditional pot luck. Look for the sign-up sheet in the Campanius Room today and bring your favorite dish!!

... **Then at 4 pm** we will have our **Advent Lessons and Carols service**. Bethesda's choir, instrumentalists, youth soloists, and readers will lead a beautiful service of Advent and Christmas music, texts, and prayers. The music will include traditional hymns for the season, as well as old and new choral works and arrangements, and an orchestral prelude with our new harpsichord. Readers of all ages will tie the service together with traditional lessons that take us through salvation story. Please invite friends and family to this event!

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Christmas schedule on p. 6

Throughout the Season of Advent ...



*You have filled
the hungry with good things*

Advent Evening Prayer with World Hunger Vignettes

Wednesday Evenings at 6:30 pm in the Chapel
November 30, December 7, December 14, December 21

Mary's song from Luke's Gospel, the Magnificat, pours out God's vision to turn the world upside down. It speaks of toppling the mighty from their thrones, and filling the hungry with good things.

For centuries this song has been the centerpiece of the church's Evening Prayer.

This Advent at Bethesda, join me in praying Evening Prayer each week at 6:30 in the Chapel. During Evening Prayer, we will sing a different version of the Magnificat each of the four Wednesdays in Advent.

Within Evening Prayer, I will show vignettes describing the work of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. The Hunger Appeal has four focuses: **Relief, Development, Advocacy, and Education**. The vignettes feature examples of how World Hunger dollars affect lives internationally and in America.

Last month, I attended a regional consultation on Global Mission and World Hunger. I continue to be impressed at our church's work throughout the globe. One in six people throughout the world suffers from hunger-related causes, and hunger affects one in four children in the United States.

The ELCA World Hunger Appeal is an effective ministry that makes a real difference on behalf of our church, so that we can say with our gifts: **God's Work. Our Hands.**

You can designate an offering to ELCA World Hunger through your gifts to Bethesda. For more on this arm of our church, see elca.org/hunger.

Pastor Keyl

Second Sunday of Advent, Dec 4

Pastor Renee LiaBraaten will be here to present her report from her weekend of **Resource Assessment** interviews and focus groups at the beginning of November. Please plan to attend this special Adult Forum in the Campanius Room following worship.

Then at 4 pm the **University Glee Club**, under the direction of Lars Gjerde, will present their Christmas concert here at Bethesda.

Third Sunday of Advent, Dec. 11

Sunday, December 11 at 7:00 p.m. will be this year's presentation of **Amahl and the Night Visitors**. See p. 1 for details

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Dec. 18

Sunday, December 18 the children will present the **Christmas story** during worship. **Scandinavian Potluck Luncheon Dec. 18**

To celebrate our Swedish heritage and the light and warmth of the advent season, Doreen Larson-Oboyski has offered to organize a Scandinavian potluck luncheon on Sunday, Dec. 18th after learning hour. There will be Swedish-style goodies and glögg, along with some Scandinavian music under the auspices of Lars. Start thinking about which Scandinavian delicacy you can bring and look for Doreen and a sign-up sheet in the Campanius Room on Sunday mornings. Let's continue our Scandinavian Coffee tradition!

From the Pastor:



Shukran. Afwan. *Thank you. You're Welcome*

Throughout my recent companion synod trip to Palestine/Israel, we expressed our thankfulness to those whose lives are now connected to ours.

For those whose native language is Arabic, they appreciated hearing our attempts to show our appreciation. So we said again and again *shukran* (“thank you”), which often brought a smile and the response *afwan* (“you’re welcome”).

We met Khaled and Mays for ice cream in Ramallah. Khaled is in his final year of study at Birzeit University. Mays is in her first year in an MBA program at Birzeit. Both are from the Lutheran congregation in Jerusalem, and recipients of scholarships through the New England Synod. They cordially greeted the six of us who made their way from Connecticut and Massachusetts to make a face-to-face connection. They shared their gummy, gelato-like ice cream. And they put a face on the future leaders of Palestine, and the future leaders of the church. For that meeting, we said *shukran*.

We met three students from Dar Al Kalima college in Bethlehem, a program of the Christmas Lutheran Church. There, they spoke about their choice to enroll in the school’s rigorous tour guide program and showed us their brand spanking new facilities. The college focuses on the arts—music, theater, and fine arts. The programs take as their mission Jesus’ words from John *that they may have life and have it abundantly*. The hope is that students will contribute to the societal good in Bethlehem. For that hope we said *shukran*.

We met five young adults from the states who are a part of the ELCA’s Young Adults in Global Mission program. For one year, these YAGM’s, as they are called, volunteer in the schools and social ministry programs in the West Bank. They are hosted by families who care for them, and share their experiences through blogs and when they return home, they offer presentations. One young woman spoke of her love of working with kindergarteners. A few laughed as they reported learning Arabic for cabbage (*malfouf*). Another spoke kindly about Pastor Imad at the Lutheran Church in Beit Sahour for his welcome to her. For these ELCA young adults, we said *shukran*.

My role in the New England Synod is to help congregations know more about our brothers and sisters in our companion synod the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. Making a trip there is the most effective way to deepen that connection. Dianne Witte Richard Ford from Bethesda, Ron and Karen Danielson from Holy Trinity North Easton Massachusetts, and Meaghan Byrne from Christ Middletown Connecticut now have a felt connection to the wonderful and challenged way of life in Palestine.

Now back ready to share Advent, I will wait in hope with as we hear about the promises of God that bring new life to the world. I am glad to be back and say, *shukran*.

Pastor Tim Keyl



On behalf of the Bethesda family, we offer a heaping scoop of thanks to Maureen and Sue, who diligently work on the Holiday Fair all year round. The quilt was gorgeous, the handmade goods of the highest quality, and the spirit of the whole event was warm and joyful. Thank you for your continued work on this valuable ministry.

Music Series Update

Thank you to all who contributed time, talent, funding support and audience to our Reformation Concert in October. Thanks to the combined efforts of many, we were able to raise over \$1000, partly matched by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, to benefit the efforts of Lutherans in Mission and the ministry of Resurrection Lutheran Church.

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Learning Hour

My December calendar always looks crazy and packed--I suspect yours does too-- but it is truly a special month of the year, and as we all say, "there is a reason for the season!!!" We celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Please add the following wonderful activities to your calendar:

Nov. 27: Intergenerational Sunday:

On Sunday, Nov. 27--our first day of the Advent season--Bethesda will celebrate its traditional Intergenerational Event from 11:00-12:00 followed by a potluck. For an hour, adults and children will have a lot of fun preparing seasonal crafts as reminders of the feast to come: Jesus' birth!! For the luncheon, we are asking the congregation to bring your favorite dish to share with your Bethesda friends. Please let Priscilla know if you are bringing a main dish, a side dish/salad or dessert.

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Dec. 11: Amahl and the Night Visitors 7 PM

Dec. 18: Children's Christmas program during worship

Reminder

There will be no Sunday School on **December 25** and **January 1st**.



Christmas Eve, 4:00 PM, in the Sanctuary

A Worship Service including the singing of many Christmas hymns, a meditation with younger worshippers in mind, celebration of Holy Communion.

Christmas Eve, 10:00 PM In the Sanctuary

A festive Candlelight Communion Service featuring special music.

Christmas Day, 9:30 AM, in the Chapel

Christmas hymns, listening to the Word of God, celebration of Holy Communion and a Christmas Day meditation are all part of worship on this special day.

"Oh come, let us adore Him!"

Orders for poinsettia plants which will decorate the church for Christmas are being accepted. Please see the order form enclosed in this issue of *The Visitor*.



Time, Talent, Treasure:

Thanks to the Resource Assessment Team

The Resource Assessment Team, under the guidance of Donna Slater, chair, and working closely with Pastor Renee LiaBraaten of Kairos and Associates organized a series of interviews with many members of the congregation, and invited many others to participate in Focus Groups on Sunday morning after worship. This all happened on the first weekend in November. On **Sunday, December 4**, Pastor Renee will be with us again to give us the results of her intense encounters with Bethesda members. Are we ready for a capital campaign? Come to church on December 4 and find out what she thinks, based on all of the information she received from us. And thanks go out to all who participated in the weekend interviews and focus groups, all who have talked with Renee on the phone or via email to give their input, and to the Resource Assessment Team who did such a great job in a very short time frame – Maureen Anderson, Richard Ford, Donna Slater, Kathy Wimmer, and Don Youngberg.

and the Holiday Fair Work Group

And then there was all the hard work – and great fun – sponsored by the Holiday Fair Work Group. Congratulations on another successful year at this year's event on Saturday, November 12. This year's proceeds outpaced last year's by more than \$1,000. This year's profits, as of Sunday, November 13, came to \$5,986.45. Ten percent of that amount will go to Christian Community Action – and that amount will be matched by \$400 by Thrivent. So, CCA will receive almost \$1,000 – at a time of the year when hardships increase so much in New Haven. And the funds to help back the kitchen renovation have increased as well! Thanks to all who baked, knitted, crafted, helped the day of the fair, all who came to buy and all who invited their friends to join them. Special thanks to Laura Wright and her students who enjoyed performing for us! It is a wonderful time to gather neighbors and friends outside of our worship community, and welcome old friends back.

And Treasure

We have lost a little ground and are currently 2% below our stretch budget goal of 11% increase in giving. Please keep your pledges up to date and try to finish at least 11% above our pledge amount.

T Time
Talent
Treasure *An update on offerings to
Bethesda...*

2010		2011		Ahead/ (Behind)
<i>As of 11/21</i>	\$132,551.68	<i>As of 11/20</i>	\$142,518.22	8%
Year end	\$158,237.00	Budget	\$176,000.00	

Bethesda Nursery School

BNS was buzzing with activity even more than usual in November. Our annual fundraiser was under way and there was lots and lots of butter to melt. A long tradition, BNS parents and teachers make and sell Boereks each November to the delight of our community. Boereks are scrumptious Turkish hors d'oeuvres whereby a savory filling of several cheeses and herbs is rolled in generously buttered phyllo dough. When baked to a golden brown you wish you had bought more boxes! Parents volunteer to roll Boereks in the mornings and late into the evenings in the Campanius Room. The children track their progress by learning the last night's tally every morning and then coloring the appropriate amount on the giant Boerek-o-meter in the classroom. Just one of many reasons why our nursery school is a special place for families.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study



The *Book of Faith* series on *Miracles* ends on 23 November. The next series of

sessions will focus on the Holy Spirit. Titled "Blowing in the Wind" the individual sessions will lead our studies into topics like, the new birth, the promise of the Spirit, the coming of the Spirit, Sanctification, gifts of the Spirit, and the Spirit speaks. We are called to go and witness to the Good News as Jesus teaches us about faith, love and hope in action for daily life. This series begins on December 7, 2011 and will continue bi-weekly through January 2012.

You are invited to join us in the Parish House Living Room from 8:00 to 9:00 am as we gather for early morning greetings, a light breakfast, Bible readings, and lively discussions.

News from Our Social Ministry Committee

Abraham's Tent

The Social Ministry Committee recently met with the student intern from Columbus House, Cacey Cep. Casey shared with us about Abraham's Tent---a ministry for homeless people of New Haven that involves congregations around New Haven opening their doors during the coldest months of the year when Columbus House is at maximum capacity. The churches provide dinner and a warm, safe place for twelve people to sleep (like a fellowship hall), as well as volunteers to provide companionship. Columbus House provides transportation for the people needing shelter to the church, cots, and bedding. The church hosts the same people each night for a week, and they are picked up each morning. Churches typically have anywhere from 5-15 volunteers.

While all of the winter weeks are currently filled by other congregations in New Haven this year, we have the opportunity to be on the 'ad-hoc' list. This could be anything from helping to prepare a meal to visiting with one of the guests at the church. If you would like to be on this list and receive a call when a church could use an extra volunteer, please contact me at caretaker@bethesdanewhaven.com, and I can pass your name along to Casey. Participating in an ad-hoc manner this year could inform our decision whether to become a host church next year. Please let me know if you are interested in serving New Haven through Abraham's Tent!

--- Chloe Groth



With Joan Gibney settled in her new community, we here at Bethesda find ourselves missing her articulate and passionate pleas to buy goats for our loved ones. So in the spirit of both Joan Gibney, and the season, may I suggest that

- your nephew would like a duck,
- your cousins need water jugs,
- Aunt Ida needs textbooks and school fees for girls,
- Uncle Homer would like some mosquito nets and malaria medicine,
- your kids' teachers would appreciate fruit-tree seedlings,
- your siblings could use blankets and warm meals.

Go to elca.org/good-gifts to finish your shopping!

Prayers for Members and Friends:

For Healing and strength: Len DeNardis; Margaret Stark, mother of Barbara; Charles Dupré; Helen Blade; Nils Svensén; Ruth Mattson; Oscar Roos; Verna Carlson; Adele Larson, mother of Doreen Larson Oboyski; Ed Abeling; Ray Anderson; Linda Salisbury; Betty Neal; Betty Henrickson; George Lindbeck; Robert Evenson; Aina Smith; Sylvia Dunn; Ruth Mood; Jeanette Tykson; and Rita Wissink. *(Prayers continued in right column)*

(Prayers continued)

For those serving in the military: including members of Bethesda and their families **and the chaplains of our churches who serve them.**

For our partners in the Gospel: the congregations and schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Jordan & The Holy Land (ELCJHL); Luther House; our mission partners, Resurrection Lutheran Church in New Haven, and the Pangani Children's Centre, Nairobi, Kenya, in its ministry to those living with the impact of AIDS and hunger in Africa.

For Bethesda: that God continues to guide us into the future with ministries of witness and service while building up our community in all of its diversity.

For those preparing for ministry: Oscar Lied, Tracy Swan Tuite, Abby Ferjak, and Ben Groth.

For Comfort in Grief: We remember the families and friends of Dick Benson, brother of Lisa Kinsella, who died in the Lord on October 2; Russell Hentz, son of Doris Hentz, who died in the Lord on Sunday, November 13 and of Michael Stark, nephew of Barbara Stark, who died in the Lord on Monday, November 14. *Rest eternal grant them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.*