



Bethesda Lutheran Church
"Welcome One Another"

The Visitor

November 2011

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

Find this newsletter also on the web at bethesdanewhaven.org

Resource Assessment For Our Capital Campaign Begins This Month

At the special congregational meeting on Oct. 2nd, the congregation voted to engage the services of Pastor Renee LiaBraaten of Kairos and Associates to guide us through a capital campaign process to raise money for proposed repairs and improvements to our church. The first stage of this process is a Resource Assessment to determine if the congregation is ready to move forward with the campaign.

Pastor Renee will be at Bethesda on Nov. 4-6 to begin this assessment. During this time she will conduct 25-30 confidential interviews with a cross-section of members of the congregation. These interviews will last about 30 minutes. In addition, she will conduct two focus groups on Sunday morning, Nov. 6th. In these conversations, you will have an opportunity to share your feelings about the proposed repairs and improvements, as well as your ideas, concerns and hopes for Bethesda's ministries and future. She will then consolidate the information in summary form and present a report with recommendations to the congregation on Sunday, Dec. 4th.

Members of the Resource Assessment Team will be scheduling individuals representing various demographic groups within the congregation for interviews or a focus group. If you are interested in participating in this important process, please contact any of the following members of the team: Donna Slater, Kathy Wimmer, Dianne Witte, Don Youngberg, Richard Ford or Maureen Anderson.



HOLIDAY FAIR

November 12

Come one, come all! This year's Holiday Fair will be on Saturday, Nov. 12 from 10 to 3 in the Campanius Room. We've been busy making all kinds of things to be sold and raffled. There will be a raffle of another wonderful quilt, all kinds of edible hostess gifts, gift bags and tags, some handmade jewelry, knitted goods and fleece items to get us through the cold winter ahead, and of course our famous Trash and Treasures and our baked goods. There will be more wonderful, award winning bread and butter pickles again this year, so make sure to get yours early in the day! There will also be an American Girl Doll that will be raffled.

Coffee and nibbles will be available from 10:00 on and a light lunch will also be served.

Bring your friends and family for some early holiday shopping and spend some time renewing old acquaintances, too! Remember, the proceeds from the fair support the mission of Bethesda.

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Meet the Bethesda Staff:

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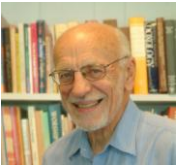
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Pictures unavailable at publication:

Megan Carnaroli, Youth Ministry Director

Oscar Lied, Parish Assistant

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Sheets Please

The Fair Work Group has begun to amass the Trash and Treasures for this year's fair on November 12. Recently they found that the sheets that have graced the tables of T 'n T have disappeared. (Fortunately the sheets that cover the tables in the Campanius Room are still here.) If anybody has flat, white sheets that they would be willing to donate or lend to the fair, they will be most appreciated. Please see Janis Underwood or Maureen Anderson.

From the Pastor



Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Our current *Book of Faith* series of study is on *Miracles*. We are reading about the depth of Jesus' actions and love, and how Jesus teaches us about faith, love and hope in action for daily life. Dates for the next sessions are November 9 and 23.

Everyone is invited to join us from 8:00 to 9:00 am as we gather for early morning greetings, a light breakfast, Bible readings, and lively discussions. Let God's Word grow in every heart to live daily in His service.



Advent Lessons and Carols

Mark your calendars!
Sunday, November 27 at 4pm, Bethesda's choir, instrumentalists, youth soloists, and readers will lead a beautiful service of Advent and Christmas music, texts, and prayers. Please invite friends and family to this event. I hope to see all of you there!

--- Lars



The Story of Pilgrimage

*I want Jesus to walk with me.
I want Jesus to walk with me.
All along my pilgrim journey, Lord,
I want Jesus, to walk with me.*

I'm taking my fifth trip to the Holy Land in six years. As the bishop's liaison for our companion relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, one of the most important connections we can make is **face to face**.

You can read all you want about life in Palestine/Israel. You can see videos, like this interactive series from the New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/09/05/world/middleeast/challenges-in-defining-an-israeli-palestinian-border.html>.

You can even hear my stories, like about hospitality. When Kari and I visited with my Palestinian pastor friend's mother, Jihan, on our sabbatical in 2006, we were fed the best fresh fruit you can imagine eating. She would ask us if we wanted German coffee, or Arabic. We chose Arabic, which comes in a demi-tasse and is combined with cardamom and sweetened. Out came the most lovely coffee settings, on a tray with the ancient mosaic of the loaves and fishes. As we admired the tray, Jihan said, "here, you take it." We were overwhelmed by this act of generosity, and learned that this is a very common exchange in the culture of the Middle East.

But to go there, to see life lived in an extremely divided country, where most people simply want dignity and a share in the land, where traveling a short distance is often fraught with scrutiny about who you are and where you belong, where land grabs are easily seen and injustices are an everyday occurrence, and where Lutherans are known for their educational and social ministries, well, **you just have to be there**.

Six of us will be there, including Bethesda's Richard Ford and Dianne Witte. When we come back, we will have stories to share, including the great work of the Lutheran World Federation (lwfjerusalem.org) which runs Augusta Victoria Hospital, the health care center where most Palestinians get treated and which USAID funds recently provided \$1 million dollars for a cancer treatment facility. We will tell you about the olive harvest, in which we are participating. We will tell you about the warm reception those at our guest houses gave to us. We will tell you about lovely children, challenging checkpoints, and deep division over borders.

And because we will have been there, our weekly prayers at Bethesda will be more fervent, our advocacy more passionate, our connection to olive oil and God's vision for shalom, salaam, peace more heartfelt.

Look for our stories from the ground and photo sharing on Bethesda's website November 1-15. Pray for us. And consider the vision of the prophet Micah, which is guiding our pilgrimage:

³God shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; ⁴but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. (Micah 4:3-4)

Pastor Tim Keyl



I know it is a cliché to say: “Oh Lord, wow, October is over!!” But yes, October has left us with wonderful memories of special activities that our children celebrated together. The month began with the blessing of animals—dogs, cats, mice--surrounded by their families. It is wonderful that our children see

Bethesda welcoming not only neighbors at the Ice Cream Social, or guests at the Music Series, or actors at the *Amahl and the Night Visitors* performance on December 11, but even welcoming our own pets.

In the last weeks the children sang during worship under the direction of our music teacher Nora Lee. I am always delighted to participate myself in Nora’s music class, since she can always get the most out of our group of children. Our gratitude also to Chris Lee who, when not following Greta around, plays the piano.

Our two classes—4-6 year-olds with Gail Labadia and 7-8 year olds with Oscar Lied—are up and running, with approximately 5 children in each class. Oscar’s students are also diligently assisting as acolytes (Ruth, Sara, and David), with the backing of the confirmation kids Zach and Brendan.

When you have an opportunity, please come to the music room around 11:30 AM and see our toddler/baby class. The **members of the class** are 3 toddlers—Dalia, Greta Mary, and Henry—and two babies—Luisa and Greta Marie. It is incredible to see these children together, and their moms and dads sitting on the floor having a conversation while playing with the children. I was told that baby Henry is in charge of finding all the spots that are not child proof.... We truly have a bright future!!!

On Sunday, October 16, a group of around 18 of us enjoyed a hayride at Schreiber Farms in Oxford, CT. Besides our hands being licked by cows, the real problem we encountered was that our calorie-consumption went overboard: donuts and ice cream in an afternoon!! Thanks to Natalie Judd for organizing the event for us - it was wonderful spending time together.

And last but not least, the children began working on assembling the school kits, which is a unique way to expose them and us to the need to help others and pray for their well-being.

BNS celebrates the first 50 years!

On Sunday, October 2nd, the extended family of Bethesda Nursery School gathered at (where else?) the playground to celebrate their first 50 years of nurturing our community’s young children. Food was provided by the amazing Big Green Truck people and included gourmet pizzas made from scratch and fired right there in their trucks in our parking lot! There was lovely instrumental entertainment, a silent auction, and fun retrospective photo displays. There were also generations of Bethesda Kids who came to reminisce and celebrate the ongoing excellence that is BNS. Members of the community with no ties to either BNS or BLC came by too, because of the festive atmosphere and their sense of pride (and maybe a little curiosity?) in their neighborhood nursery school. In addition to the party, a new book loft was installed in the main classroom as a lasting reminder of this important milestone – go check it out and get lost in a book!



Stewardship Report: The Gift of Generosity



Members of Bethesda celebrated Commitment Sunday on October 23, by presenting pledges for gifts of time, talents, and money over the next year. Thanks are due to the members of the Stewardship Committee, the people who spoke during the weeks leading up to the date, and to the youth, who prepared a special lunch for after

worship.

The preliminary tally shows pledges of \$123,549 for the general fund, \$1,625 for Pangani Children's Centre, \$1,200 for World Hunger, and \$850 for other projects, such as the Music Series. This is lower than last year, but not all the pledges are in yet. If you have not yet pledged and would like to, please contact the church office.

From our Parish Assistant

Last Sunday, I joined several families from Bethesda on a hayride together. It was a lot of fun, and I enjoyed hanging out with kids full of energy and adults full of reflection and conversation. This hayride is a ministry of hospitality to the members of the church, perhaps particularly those with families. It is a service providing company and fun to those who come – hence it is hospitality – while also being fun for everyone involved. This win-win situation is really what hospitality is all about. Too often we look upon the ministries of being welcoming and hospitable as something necessary but draining and difficult. Although that can certainly be true if we don't also get enough personal space, it is very far from what God intended hospitality to be: something enjoyable, energizing, fun and meaningful all at the same time. When done with self-care, those who give a lot are always the happiest, and there is a reason for that.

Hospitality is a big word, perhaps talked about too much and practiced too little in our context. Theologically, it is inherently rooted in the great commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are bad at it not because it's such a draining challenge (being hospitable is actually good for us), but because we are sinners in a fallen world. According to St. Augustine, pride is the root sin and the cause of all other sins. Augustine thinks that everyone seeks happiness, but that the prideful are unable to find it because of their pride. Only those who give up their selfishness and follow God will find happiness, which can happen because God's grace overcomes our pride. This is somewhat ironic, since it means that the most selfish will never find what they are looking for, while the service-minded will. What can this teach us about how we live our lives and what our ambitions are/should be about? As I am restricted by a word limit I will end my reflection here, but I think this question is worth pondering over and bringing up before God in prayer.

-- Oscar Lied



A Return Engagement for Amahl and the Night Visitors – Dec. 11!

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. (continued on p. 7)

(Amahl continued from p. 6...)

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 Phypers, 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.



Bethesda At the Bowl

Exciting News – this year's installment of Bethesda at the Bowl will take place on Saturday, November 19th as a part of "The Game" – yes that is right, the 2011 Yale vs Harvard football game.

This year's Bethesda gathering will be a bit different due to the huge number of people (50,000+?) expected for the game. Instead of trying to gather in the crowded (and now expensive) parking lot, we will gather at the nearby home of Don and Clarissa Youngberg (87 Marvel Road, New Haven (Westville) 06515) where we will tailgate on the front lawn/porch and then walk over to the Bowl for the game. Parking on Marvel road is permitted and free!

"The Game" starts at noon. We will start "The Walk" over to the Yale Bowl at 11:00am (about a 15-20 minute walk). We will start "The Tailgate" at 9:30am and continue until we leave at 11:00am.

Since we are starting early again this year, "The Tailgate" will have a bit of a brunch flare to it, but there will also be traditional tailgate food (hot dogs, hamburgers, etc.) available. Feel free to think of this as a bit of a "pot luck" and bring something to share if you would like.

Admission to "The Game" is free for all Yale Students with IDs and Yale Employees with IDs can also attend for free and bring in a free guest. General Admission Tickets are \$8/each and kids 12 & under are free. Do not worry about buying tickets in advance. We rarely have to buy tickets as we have a number of Yale affiliated people attending and often tickets tend to be floating around. If we need to do so, we can buy some the day of "The Game."

Any and all are welcome (bring friends and family!). There is always a lot of excitement around this game, which is steeped in tradition. It is a fun experience for football enthusiasts and newcomers alike. Just

being in the historic Yale Bowl with this great group of people is worth the experience itself!

Rumors have it that Reverend Leon Linqvist, Bethesda's Pastor for Outreach, is planning on talking to all 50,000 people at the game – about visiting us at Bethesda. This should be interesting.

If you are thinking of attending or have any questions, please contact Don Youngberg at (203) 397-2983 or at dyoungberg@comcast.net.

Restaurant Depot

Those folks who shop for the shelter meal now have another shopping option. Bethesda is now a member of Restaurant Depot at 181 Marsh Hill Road in Milford. Restaurant Depot is a warehouse operation and has a huge refrigerated section with a wide assortment of meats, produce, dairy and fish. Most items come in large sizes, and like BJ's, they don't always have everything.

The store is open from 6 am until 6 pm Monday through Friday, 7:30 – 4:00 on Saturday, and 9:00 – 2:00 on Sunday. We have two cards and they will be in the church office. When you go in, you go first to the customer service area and swipe the card. Then shop and present the card again at checkout. You can pay by credit card or cash. You can check out their website at restaurantdepot.com.