



December 13, 2024

THIS WEEK'S SERVICE

This Sunday we continue the season of Advent with our sermon series, *God Comes Close*, reflecting on this week's theme of joy. The Christmas story includes surprising witnesses! Normal, everyday people are included in the coming of Jesus so that they can share God's joy with the world. One group God involves are shepherds who received a glorious announcement of Jesus' birth from a heavenly host of angels. Their lives would never be the same, just like our lives are transformed by hearing the "good news that will cause great joy for all people" (Luke 2:10).

The message this Sunday will focus on Luke 2:1-20, "Shouts of Joy."

For resources for the advent season at Bethel, visit discoverbethel.com/advent

OUR OFFERINGS

- 1) **BETHEL MINISTRIES & MISSION:** The ministries and programs of Bethel.
- 2) **WORLD RENEW** joins communities around the world to renew hope, reconcile lives, and restore creation. Working in more than 30 countries, World Renew embraces a family-centered approach to ending global poverty, hunger and illness and providing disaster response services. For more information check worldrenew.ca

NEXT WEEK – INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION CANADA: is at work in 18 communities around the world protecting women and children in poverty from violence, trafficking, slavery, and police abuse of power. For more information visit www.ijm.ca

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Please continue to remember **CALVIN BRUINSMA, CURTIS COENEN, JENNY PENFOLD, ELEANOR PROKUDA,** and **JEAN SAATHOF** as you pray for our church community.

STAFF UPDATE: We have a few updates we want to share

PASTOR MELANIE WRIGHT: As you know, Pastor Melanie has been away on maternity leave this year. We received notice that she will not return following her leave. We are so grateful for the ways Melanie has served youth during her time at Bethel and bless her as she explores new ways to serve God's church.

This fall, we began reviewing our youth ministry and the staff role for it. Members of the most recent search team (youth director) will be meeting to determine what our next steps will look like for rebuilding the youth ministry. If you are a current parent of youth and have not filled out the survey form yet, please do so [here](#). You can also reach out directly to Pastor Cris. Please continue to pray for this process and all ministry with youth at Bethel.

NEW ADMIN ASSISTANT: We are excited to share that **NICOLE WILDEBOER** will be our new Admin Assistant to work alongside Tara Kilkenny. Nicole will begin working in the new year on January 2. Make sure to congratulate her if you see her!

BETHEL YOUTH

PAUL & PANCAKES: There will be no Paul & Pancakes this Sunday. It will resume on January 19.

THE EDMONTON OIL KINGS: The 4th annual Faith and Fun Night return this season! This year we are having two different Faith and Fun Nights. The dates are:

- Friday, January 10 vs. Prince Albert at 7:00 PM
- Friday, March 7 vs. Kelowna at 7:00 PM

Faith groups will be invited to attend our post-game activities which include games, prizes, and a chance to meet with other faith-based groups. If you are interested in attending, please send an email to info@discoverbethel.com. If there is enough interest we will see if we can co-ordinate as a group. Families can also choose to attend the event together.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COFFEE VOLUNTEERS: Have you considered joining Bethel's coffee volunteer list? There are lots of us, and we would love to have some more people! Your commitment is to help once every 3-4 months, and it takes about an hour of your time. The job is very simple. As a bonus, you get to serve with others and get to know some new Bethel people! Call or text Christina at 780-263-3636 if you have questions or would like to volunteer. The new schedule starts in January.

EDMONTON'S FOOD BANK wishes to extend a thank you to all our volunteers. With your help the Bethel volunteers have handed out 37,438 kgs of food which was distributed to over 4,114 clients just this year! As co-ordinator I, Marci, would like to thank all of you volunteers for your willingness to help and connect with our neighbors! Thank You!

CHRISTMAS IS COMING: and so is your opportunity to bless the Bannerman community. The annual Christmas hampers & gift program needs Bethel's support. Last year, we blessed many families and children with gift cards for groceries and gifts. This year, we are providing gift cards for hampers and physical gifts for families -- and you, your family, or your small group can play a special role in a few different ways:

1. Make a financial donation to "Christmas Hampers and Gifts" through all the usual Bethel giving methods.
2. If you have taken a gift tag from the Christmas Tree, please bring your wrapped gift with the attached gift tag back to the church on or before Sunday, December 15th.

Christmas Eve Service: We are getting excited as we work hard to prepare a meaningful and impactful Christmas Eve Service - a service which is so important to our community! To make this service special we need your help! It really takes about 60 volunteers to make these services happen. There are 2 services (4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.) so when responding please mention the service you are attending.

Here are some ways that you can get involved:

- 1) Candle lighting (5 required for each service)
- 2) Scripture Readers
- 3) Candle lighting help - Walk down the aisle lighting all candles at the end of the pew (4 for each service).
- 4) Outside luminary lantern cleanup after 6:00 service - (2-3 people). Bring lanterns in, shut off the lights and put them in boxes. There is one volunteer already, so you will not need to do this alone!

Feel free to email me where you can help at lisa@discoverbethel.com

Thank you in advance for your support and involvement. We look forward to celebrating Christmas with you!

BETHLEHEM COMES TO BANNERMAN: A Christmas Dinner Theatre: There are still a few unclaimed tickets for tomorrow's community event. If you would like to join, claim your tickets by going [here](#).

VOLUNTEERS: Emails were sent out this week to volunteers so that everyone knows when to show up or drop off your food items. If you haven't received anything, please reach out to Christie Thomas and Jill Sneep directly.

ALPHA MARRIAGE COURSE: Alpha - The Marriage Course is a seven-session video course designed to help couples invest in their relationship. Topics include Communication, Resolving Conflict, Forgiveness, and much more! Conversations during the course are between couples and are private. The Marriage Course will run Sundays, starting on January 19, 2025, after the service at 11:30 a.m. We will begin with lunch and the session will follow at 12:00 p.m. and run until 2:00 p.m. at Bethel Community Church. All married couples are welcome! Register before December 30 by clicking [here](#). The cost is \$30/couple. If a lack of childcare or cost is stopping you from signing up, please let us know by emailing Krista at kmilford74@gmail.com

ALPHA MARRIAGE COURSE VOLUNTEERS: Do you have a heart for supporting strong marriages and families? We are looking for a few volunteers to provide a hearty stew or soup and buns, serving food and cleaning up, for each week that the marriage course will be running. Please sign up [here](#) or email Krista at kmilford74@gmail.com, if you have any questions.

MEMBER LOOKING FOR AFFORDABLE RENT: A quiet woman in our congregation is looking to rent (shared accommodations) in a Christian home on the Northeast side of the city. If you are interested in offering her a place to live, please e-mail the office at info@discoverbethel.com.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

"Thank you for the tithes and offerings we received in the first quarter of our new year (Sept 1 - Nov 30). As of the end of November, our income is approximately \$12,000 less than our expenses. We are grateful for the faithful giving of those who call Bethel their church home and trust in God's provision through the generosity of His people. May the joy and peace of Christ be yours this Christmas."

COLLECTIONS IN DECEMBER

December 1	Adeara
December 8	Refugee Fund
December 15	World Renew
December 22	International Justice Mission Canada
December 25	Hope Mission
December 29	Ministry Shares

COMMUNITY NEWS

BANNER DELIVERY: The Canada Post strike has delayed the delivery of your *Banner*. Thank you for your patience in this matter! In the meantime, you can [read the full issue in PDF form online here](#). And just for your information, from this link you can read the past issues going back to 2005. You can also check back each month, as new issues are posted to this page as well. We hope this serves as a helpful option as we wait for the strike to be resolved.

Also, please note the January and February issues will be combined. This will be similar to the way our July/August issue works, where it will come a bit later in the month. The issue to follow will be the March issue. Happy (online) reading! And for those wanting a little Advent smile, check out [this short video](#) on the postage strike from the CRCNA staff in Burlington.

Shiao Chong
Editor in Chief, *The Banner*

Blue Christmas Service: While there is good reason for the ‘celebrative’ atmosphere of Christmas, it can also be a challenging, even painful, time for those who live with the reality of brokenness or loss in their lives. A “Blue Christmas Service” is a service that allows that reality to be acknowledged and brought before the Lord, while at the same time recognizing the one who is bigger than a season. You are invited to participate in such a service (with communion) held at West End CRC Sunday, Dec 15 at 7:00 p.m. You can also join us via livestream using the link on the West End website.

CRC NEWS: Check out what’s happening in the CRC community [here](#).

CRCNA ANNOUNCEMENTS: Connecting church members with the ministries of the denomination. Find out more by visiting the website [here](#).

THE INTERIM COMMITTEE OF CLASSIS ALBERTA NORTH IS SEEKING NOMINATIONS.

Council of Delegates nomination needed - We are grateful for Amy Nydam’s service as our Classis representative on the Council of Delegates. Amy has recently resigned from that position, and we need to find a replacement.

The Council of Delegates (COD) is the governing board of the Christian Reformed Church. The COD is composed of members representing each classis in the denomination and carries on the governance of the church between meetings of Synod. To learn more about the COD and what is expected of its members click [here](https://www.crcna.org/welcome/governance/council-delegates) (<https://www.crcna.org/welcome/governance/council-delegates>).

If you know of a potential delegate or wish to put your own name forward, please contact Gary Duthler, Stated Clerk, at classisstatedclerk@gmail.com or 780-716-0845.

 **THE WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

SUNDAY, December 15

10:00 a.m. Worship - in person & live stream

MONDAY, December 16

7:00 p.m. Prayer - Zoom

TUESDAY, December 17

6:00 p.m. Worship Practice

7:00 p.m. Life Groups

WEDNESDAY, December 18

6:30 a.m. Prayer - in person and zoom

7:00 p.m. Worship Practice

8:00 p.m. AA

THURSDAY, December 19

12:30 p.m. Food Bank

7:00 p.m. Worship Practice

FRIDAY, December 20

SATURDAY, December 21