

# Bethlehem's Legacy of Faith: The Final Edition

## April 2024

The corporation of Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Renton, Washington, established on October 15, 1942, has been officially dissolved. The dissolution documents were successfully filed and accepted with the Washington Office of the Secretary of State on March 5, 2024. Our last worship service was held on Sunday April 30, 2023.

Your Closing Team worked faithfully during the last year to sell the building and property, help members relocate to other churches, support those in care facilities, assist with member funerals at other locations, find good homes for our sacred objects, distribute the money to other churches and charitable organizations according to the will of the congregation, ship archive papers to St Louis for safekeeping, and keep members informed throughout each milestone. Their work has ended.

This newsletter features highlights of the closing process and celebrates that while Bethlehem is no longer, our legacy continues, and God's Word and His love for us are forever.

-Dielda Kuhlmann, newsletter editor

### **After Eighty Years, Bethlehem Lutheran Church Continues to Serve God's Kingdom**

By Joel Jackman

The term "Legacy" is most often understood to be money or property designated in a Will. Bethlehem recently donated more than \$2 million to 24 charities and churches. But our Legacy is much more profound than a number, even as significant as that number is. Bethlehem's "Legacy" represents the growth of God's gifts to the congregation for more than 80 years. He has blessed us with pastors, lay leaders, workers, income, property, and opportunities to serve our members and His people in our community and around the world. Many of you are already serving in new roles at the churches you are attending.

God's gifts are being spread like seeds to grow in new locations. When we contacted the various charities to let them know they would receive a gift from our congregation, they expressed concern for our members during this difficult transition and told us how much the donations meant to them. It gives us a profound feeling of joy and hope to realize that Bethlehem's 80-year Legacy still lives to serve God's Kingdom in more ways than we will ever know.

In this newsletter you will find

- ♦ Highlights of the closing team's experience
- ♦ Messages of thanks from recipients of our donations
- ♦ Updates about our members & other news

*All are welcomed to attend worship services at Jesus the Saviour Of Moldovan Baptist Church. Their 10AM Sunday sermons and worship songs are translated into English!*

## **MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM THE MOLDOVAN CONGREGATION**

It's humbling to realize how God has been working in this place for so many decades. We pray He blesses us moving forward to help guide as many souls as possible to His kingdom.

Our vision is to build a Christian school & to help train up children to follow Christ. Please pray for this.

Our congregation is just over 150 members but since we moved to this building, more families have started to attend, and we pray for spiritual growth in Renton. We translate our 10AM Sunday sermons and sing some worship songs in English.

We are extremely grateful to serve God in this building, and we pray He rewards and blesses all of you!

Sincerely,  
**Denis Costin on behalf of  
Jesus The Saviour Of  
Moldovan Baptist Church**



Recent women's conference held in the old Bethlehem social hall. The men enjoyed cooking on the gas stove.



One of the first events held in the sanctuary was a weekend youth gathering. The photo is reminiscent of one Bethlehem took in 1965 of the pews packed with children for our Vacation Bible School.



The 2023 altar set up with their traditional fall display!



## MESSAGES FROM CLOSING TEAM MEMBERS



Dick Taylor, last person in the sanctuary at our last service, April 30, 2023. Photo by Teresa Feltmann

I have personally been blessed to receive God's gift of being the last member/person to officially leave the sanctuary before Pastor Flath officially blessed the closure of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. It is sad to see BLC close but a blessing that I was able to do this and be a part of the closure journey.

Bethlehem is like the Phoenix. Our gifts of money and our members' talents are rising from the ashes of our dissolution.

Blessings,  
**Dick Taylor**  
Elder, Property Team

I think the hardest part of the whole closing process was choosing the congregation we were going to sell to. The individuals on the property team plus others all had their personal preference, however through prayer we know who made the final choice!

Gathering all of the legal, financial, historical and property documentation was a daunting prospect to think about. We have some wonderful diligent people who completed that task.

The whole "Purchase and Sale Agreement" document production was something way out of my experience. Any little change in wording or circumstance needed a revision. Then it was a flurry of activity then wait, flurry of activity then wait. Then when all the I's were dotted and T's crossed, money was deposited and it came down to Head Trustee, Curtis Holcomb, signing or initialing two stacks of documents and sweating the whole time.



Curtis Holcomb, 4th from the left, at the official signing of documents to Jesus The Saviour Of Moldovan Baptist Church.

I prayed throughout the process, probably not enough, and was able to get through it all. I pray that I don't have to do it again.

Bethlehem was my church home. I was baptized there, confirmed there and spent the majority of my 64 years there. Joy Lutheran church in Bellevue is now my church home and my mom and I enjoy being there. We are part of the choir and attend social time and Christian education after Sunday services. I will ease into other activities slowly. I just want to enjoy sitting in a pew and only thinking about the hymns, liturgy and Pastor Mau's message.

**CURTIS HOLCOMB**  
Trustee, Property Team

*Life may not be the party we hoped for,  
but while we are here, we might as well dance.  
Every day, every minute, every breath truly is a gift from God.*

**"Don't cry because it's ending, smile because it happened!" – Dr. Seuss**



James started playing the organ at a young age.

Reflect on the mustard seed that started Bethlehem Lutheran Church, October 15th 1942. That mustard seed serves as a profound reminder of the transformative power of faith. It teaches us that with unwavering belief, we can conquer the seemingly impossible and inspire those around us.

So for all the mustard seeds that were sown, that grew and are now scattered. Rise further, grow and sprout more in your faith journey and God's love. Walk by faith into new church families, talk by faith & explore new connections with others, and as you do 'Tikkun Olam', heal & repair the world! Peace to all!

**James Hing, Music Director**

I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to serve on the closing teams. They all had challenges, but it was so rewarding to be able to offer items to those in need of our stuff and to deliver donations to help support those who serve others on a daily basis. It makes me smile when I see our old orange chairs filled with little ones, and the book holder being used in the preschool room at Sunbeams School at Lutheran Church of the Cross, my new church.

Lutheran World Relief was so surprised and wondered why we chose them. I always enjoyed preparing kits for them, because it was such an easy way to involve the whole congregation. There is always a need worldwide.

Valley Camp is one of my favorite places, and where my kids spent many weeks & weekends camping. The caretakers have devoted many years keeping it up, but there are many items that need to be done - the list is very long!

Lutheran Community Services NW was shocked when they received the donation. There are so many services that they provide for so many people, and the need is constantly growing.

I wasn't at BLC for as many years as most, but it was so rewarding being able to share BLC's blessings with those in need and help them continue to do good works.

One of my favorite songs is Pass It On. *"It only takes a spark, to get a fire going."*

If everyone donated that penny to mites, a bar of soap or a toothbrush for care kits...

My wish is that we continue to look for ways to help and keep the fire burning.

**~ Marjie Boydston**  
**Bethlehem Secretary, Financial Team, Legacy Team, Property Team**



Marjie with carload of boxes for the archives in St Louis. Photo taken by Teresa Feltmann.



This has been a time of exploration for us, visiting churches north and south...but only as a visitor. I feel like a plant that needs to be replanted, not shaking off the old 'soil' from my roots, i.e. friends, traditions, etc., but I must find a new vessel, pot, vase to grow in. I miss Bethlehem sooooo much, but at least I no longer cry because it's over ...I smile because of the many fond memories I hold dear.

**Ellen Taylor**  
**Membership Team**



***Members of closing team seated in chairs among some of the students at Renton Prep Christian School, a Christ-centered technology-enabled place of learning.***

◇ ***Curtis Holcomb***  
◇ ***Pat Eskam***  
◇ ***Don Kuhlmann***  
◇ ***Dielda Kuhlmann***  
◇ ***Ellen Taylor***  
◇ ***Dick Taylor***

***Bethlehem members were easy to spot in the crowd, as several students commented on how they all had gray hair but were cute!***

After we presented a check to Renton Prep Christian School, I gave God the glory as an all-knowing God and Lord who continues His church for everyone.

Eighty years ago when Bethlehem was started, He gave us a congregation, a building, and property for us to raise families and teach the word in our area. Now eighty years later a Christian church of a different language is thriving with young people. And some of the money we received is being used by Renton Prep Christian School to guide children to our living God and teach them to be responsible citizens.

Yes, we miss our old ways and the way we were but God, in His mercy, has allowed the old to be new in reaching people we never could have reached. We have a wise all-knowing God who knows how to love our world way better than we do.

**Pat Eskam**  
**Legacy Team**



Teresa Feltmann & Marjie Boydston at the UPS store shipping 88 pounds of documents to CHI.

Photo taken by a kind customer!

Concordia Historical Institute tells the story of our Lord's gracious dealings with His people in the Lutheran Church. We were excited to know that the important documents from Bethlehem Lutheran Church will be added to their archives to be preserved for all time. In talking with one of the reference and researcher supervisors, I learned the care they take with the documents to preserve them.

Our baptism, confirmations, and marriages recorded from 1942 to our current ones in 2023 will be available for research. The records of the beginning of our church as well as the closing documents, the information about our officers, boards, and committees are also preserved. We may be closed but our legacy will live on forever.

God's blessings to each of you,  
**Teresa Feltmann, Legacy Team**

The most meaningful thing for me about our closing is to see how the Holy Spirit continues to carry out God's plans for Bethlehem.

When we made the decision to close, we started the process of finding new homes for our possessions like the organ, the Christus Rex, the bells, banners, hymnals, bibles, etc. At first it felt sad to let these things go, but that sadness turned to Joy to see how much the churches and charities valued and appreciated these gifts from Bethlehem. And it gives solace to know that our church and property are being used by the thriving Moldovan congregation to continue God's work.

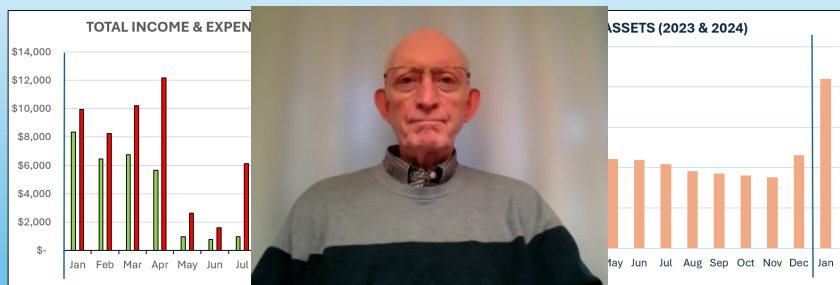
The blessings that God bestowed on Bethlehem over the years are now being used to expand God's Kingdom in ways that we never expected. Here's just one example:

Our contact at Lutheran World Relief told us that their workers in Uganda were teaching farmers new techniques in organic coffee farming, including "stumping," where the farmer cuts the plant back to the stump. This prevents the plant from growing fruit (coffee) for a couple of seasons, but when it grows back it does so tenfold and yields much more coffee for the farmer.

He shared with me, *"The decision to close Bethlehem Lutheran Church, was painful I'm sure, but like the coffee plant, will produce much more fruit for our global neighbors and hopefully for you all too".*

#### Financial Management Team Report

Expenses & Assets – 2023 & 2024



God has always given us guidance from the Holy Spirit and the resources we needed at the time, to fulfill **His** Plan for Bethlehem. It gives profound joy to know that our legacy continues to grow His Kingdom.

**Joel Jackman**  
**Bethlehem Vice-President,**  
**Financial Management Team**

Joel Jackman shares financial information during a Zoom meeting.

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*Smiles on their faces, some sadness in their hearts. Gary Jordanger & Teresa Feltmann sorted through all our 80 years of paper documents.*

This photo was a sad moment in our church's history. Thinking about the information we were going to need to send back east, I decided the best way was to have a file folder for each of the 80 years of the church and started to pull papers for each year to put it in the proper folder. It was fairly easy to start with since I had been, for several years, storing the papers downstairs by years. Then it started to get interesting as things when on, as mainly Teresa and I started to go through the yearly files and found papers that contained old info about the past things that had happened. It got to a point we needed help and Pat, Karen, Dielda and Marjie helped with sorting.

There is a lot of history that a church goes though that is forgotten, but I feel the information we gathered and sent back east will not be forgotten. It was a joy to fulfill the project that we had been asked to do, and the hours spent doing it were memorable.

**Gary Jordanger, Custodian, Legacy Team**

I have fond memories of my time on the legacy and financial management closing teams. Yes, there were a lot of meetings and days spent sifting through decades of receipts and shredding employee records, and a lot of Excel spreadsheets were created and analyzed. But this dedicated group of people sorted and categorized every item in the building, found good homes for all our sacred items, hand-delivered donation checks to local organizations, and did it all respectfully, accurately and without complaining.



*Last time we were all together: Jon & Dielda Kuhlmann, Teresa Feltmann, Pat Eskam, Joel & Karen Jackman, Marjie Boydston, Ellen & Dick Taylor, Curtis Holcomb*

It was all important and necessary work but I think my favorite part was realizing how much fun it is to hand out millions of dollars to people. There's a lot of joy in a room when that happens!

The photo shows the dinner we shared after our final All Team meeting in December. Not pictured are Gary Jordanger, Don Kuhlmann, Kathy Logan, Pete Maas, and Ruth Ann Shimoi.

**Dielda Kuhlmann  
Council Secretary, Newsletter  
Editor, Legacy Team, Financial  
Management Team**

I continue to be honored that you asked me to lead the work of closing Bethlehem. I won't say it was particularly easy or unemotional. I will say that I believe that God had His hand in it from the beginning until the very last.

I think He led us to where he wanted our things to go.

Think of the surprise and delight of Pastor Russert's son and his congregation in receiving the Christus Rex. His father had dedicated it to the Glory of God at Bethlehem in Renton, and now it glorifies God in his church, Risen Savior, in Manteno, Illinois.

Another example would be the organ at Peace in Covington. Our great-granddaughter church needed a new organ and the Moldovan church did not want ours. The organ sounds WONDERFUL at Peace.

The list goes on and on of items that Bethlehem had acquired being just the need at another congregation.

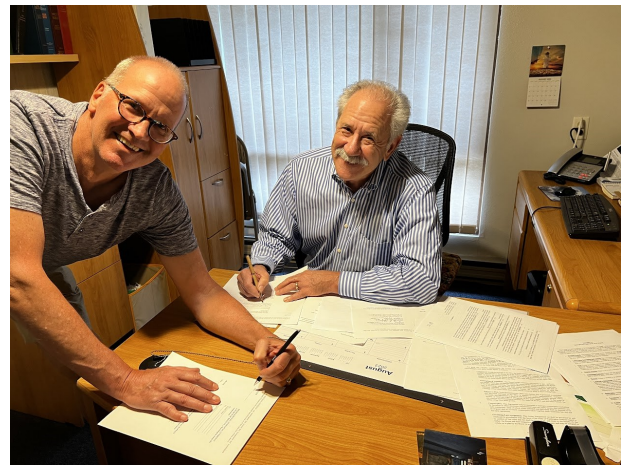
I, with some others from Bethlehem, had the privilege of presenting part of our money to the Renton Prep Christian School. To physically hand the check to the oldest and youngest students brought tears to my eyes. The members of Bethlehem had a tour of the school and learned of plans to focus on even more technology as they move into the future.

The team members worked diligently in all phases of the closing. I appreciate them very much. THANK YOU for this wonderful opportunity.

President Linnemann spoke about turning a page in our lives. This journey has been about writing a story on many pages for the Glory of God. I am delighted with the new spiritual page that people have turned and are writing their personal stories on.

God bless each of you,

**Don Kuhlmann, Bethlehem President, Closing Team Leader**

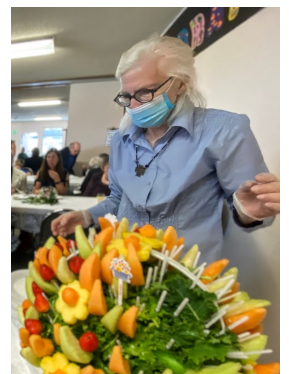


*Curtis Holcomb & Don Kuhlmann sign some legal documents to begin the process of selling the building. Photo by Denis Costin.*



*Ruth Ann Shimoi on one of her many deliveries, helping Legacy Team*

We were blessed to have Ruth Ann serve in multiple closing roles. She & the Membership Team helped develop the Saturday April 29 Remembrance Service and hosted the reception afterwards. As Deaconess, she took responsibility for offering Communion to our homebound members after we closed and arranged for them to join other churches. And Ruth Ann was a valuable assistant to the Legacy Team. Her knowledge of church's needs and her LWML connections helped find new homes for many items. She made many many deliveries far and wide. And when necessary, stored items in her garage while they waited to be picked up. Thank you, **Ruth Ann Shimoi, Deaconess, Membership Team, Legacy Team assistant**



*Ruth Ann Shimoi serving at our Saturday reception*



*Continued from previous page—Closing Team Messages*

Brothers and sisters in Christ:

As I put these thoughts together, it has almost been one year since the congregation once operating as Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Renton, Washington held its last worship service at the end of April 2023.

All of us have now scattered to the 4 winds as it were. Some of us may see each other on a weekly basis as you are worshipping the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ together. Others of us may still be looking around for a new church home. Sandy and I don't get to our home congregation (Saint Timothy Lutheran Church—Edmonds, Washington) very often because I am still able to assist other congregations when their pastor takes time off or when the congregation is vacant (as I am doing now at Lamb of God Lutheran Church in Seattle). God may have transferred some of our brothers and sisters in Christ to heaven through death since we worshipped together as a congregation.

It was good for me to review what I wrote for the last newsletter of the congregation. I pray that these thoughts from that newsletter are useful for you on your faith journey to eternal life in heaven with Jesus. I began with this question:

"What are we to do as disciples of Jesus Christ after April 30, 2023?"

That question was then answered beginning with this paragraph:

"A number of the Bible verses have been going through my mind as Bethlehem Lutheran Church approaches its last service and then the selling of its property. One set of verses that stood out is 1 Thessalonians 5, verses 16-18. **Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 ESV)"

After a couple of pages of my thoughts on these verses and how they applied to the situation after Bethlehem Lutheran Church – Renton, Washington is closed, I concluded with the following words that still are relevant for us today:

"So especially now and in the days ahead, **we thank** our great God and heavenly Father, **with joy** in our heart, that He has brought us His dear children to faith in His Son Jesus Christ. At this time, we **especially** thank God for all the lives that have been touched by the Gospel of Jesus Christ over the past 80 plus years through the efforts of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in this part of the world.

"May the peace and love and words of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, continue to keep us faithful to Jesus, comfort us now, and continue to guide us on our journey down the narrow path to heaven.

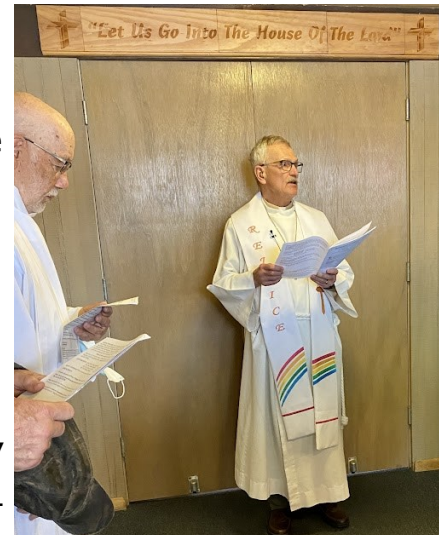
"After April 30, 2023, wherever we might be worshipping our living Lord and Savior, may the Holy Spirit help us disciples of Jesus Christ to continue to **rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; because this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**"

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed -- hallelujah!

May the love of the Lord Jesus always be in your heart!

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.** (2 Corinthians 13:14 ESV)

**Rev. Richard E. Flath** -- email: ( [pastor\\_r\\_flath@msn.com](mailto:pastor_r_flath@msn.com) ), cell: 425-210-1795



**Pastor Flath** at our last service Sunday April 30, 2023

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**Kathy Logan** continued as our **treasurer**, and was active on the **Membership and Financial Planning teams**. The photograph shows her in her 'office', the Bethlehem workroom.

Kathy writes, "The closing has been a bittersweet experience. It was sad but we were able to help a lot of people with the result. It was good to find a new church home and glad to hear that most everyone has found a new place to worship."



Bethlehem's Christus Rex, hand carved in Italy, is now at the Risen Savior Lutheran Church. Karen Jackman, John, Paul, & Luther Russert, Joel Jackman.

Ellen's and my father, William (Bill) Weigelt, charter member of Bethlehem, passed away May 31, 1962. Shortly thereafter, Pastor Russert presented a scale model of a Christus Rex to the Weigelt family for approval to use Bill's memorial money. We were thrilled with the idea and the congregation approved. In October of the same year, the Christus Rex was dedicated. It adorned Bethlehem's altar for 61 years. Beautiful!

In finding new homes for Bethlehem's valued possessions, it appeared there were no local churches wanting/needing this cross. I've kept in touch with the Russert family in Illinois and called Paul Russert, the second son of Pastor Russert, to inform him of the current situation at Bethlehem and whether his congregation would be interested in the Christus Rex Cross. He was thrilled! As a child, he remembers when it arrived at Bethlehem and he touched Jesus' face. Without hesitation, he assured us that his congregation would approve.

The Moldovans removed the cross from the wall and carefully laid it on the floor by the altar, ready for the movers to ship. When Craters & Freighters arrived to pack the cross for shipping, a mover seemed to notice the anxiety on our faces and stopped what he was doing to state, *"I am a Christian, and I will take care of this cross."*

It arrived at the Risen Savior Lutheran Church in Manteno, IL in good condition and was rededicated on July 30, 2023. What an appropriate name for a church to have a beautiful cross, the Christus Rex, truly displaying the risen Savior.

It is a joy to know that it has gone full circle, so to speak, from Luther Russert at Bethlehem, WA in 1962 to his son, Paul Russert, at Risen Savior, Manteno, IL in 2023.

**Karen Jackman, Legacy Team**

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Dear Friends in Christ,

As I consider Bethlehem's closing almost a year after the fact, the words "memories" and "mission" come to mind. Speaking personally, I have fond memories of visiting Bethlehem to fill in on numerous occasions. I found the people of Bethlehem to be gracious, welcoming, and *flexible*. I think Bethlehem's "flexibility" was on display most keenly the day that a bird decided to join the worship service – landing on the altar and fluttering around the sanctuary. The experience that morning reminded me of a passage from Psalm 84:3. I shared that passage in the announcements that morning when it became evident that the bird wouldn't take the hint and fly through the side doors that were left open for just that reason. Psalm 84:3 reads, **"Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young – a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God"** (NIV). Because God's people **"had their eyes fixed on Jesus"** (Heb. 12:2), the bird and its antics were only a mild amusement vs. a distraction from what was really important that morning.



Bird on our altar

When Bethlehem closed, many shared their memories with me and how Bethlehem had been their spiritual home. Bethlehem is where they, to borrow the image from Psalm 84:3, **"found a place near the altar"** and received God's Word and sacraments in that place for many, many decades. Memories of being at Bethlehem are treasured memories. Baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and even funerals were all part of the life of the congregation. I continue to give thanks to God for those memories as I'm sure you do, as well.

Over the last year, I have been reminded of another passage in the Bible that references sparrows. In Matthew 10:29, Jesus says, **"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father"** (ESV). I have watched how God has cared for the people of Bethlehem as the congregation closed and Bethlehem's members have become part of the mission of other churches. I have provided pastoral care and support to the families of Betty Cowan, Carolyn Hough, and Bob Pankow who have gone to be with the Lord. As I write this, I hope and pray that the members of Bethlehem stay in communication with each other to encourage one another in the Lord - especially for those who may not have found a new church to call home. Because of my work with LMSN and my ability to do pulpit supply, I have seen how Bethlehem members have become active in the mission and ministry of area congregations. God continues to do good things in the lives of the people of Bethlehem and through their faithful service. Your presence, faithfulness, and giftedness is a blessing to the churches you have joined. Finally, I have seen how the generosity that Bethlehem was able to provide after the sale of their property has blessed many area ministries - including Lutheran Ministry Services Northwest. Thank you! God's people continue to be blessed through you.



I'll close with the words of Hebrews 12:1-2, **"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God"** (ESV).

The peace of Christ be with you. Amen.  
**Chaplain Arthur Werzner**

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Pete Maas has the claim to fame of being the second person baptized at Bethlehem on May 31, 1942 by Rev. Weert Janssen, our church planter. He was baptized at Bethlehem before it became an officially recognized church in October of that year. Symbolically, he carried the baptismal candle out of the sanctuary at the end of our last service.

Photo on left shows Pete at the round planter he built on our back patio. He and his wife, Hannelore, led the landscape team.

**Pete Maas, Landscape Team, Trustee, Property team**

We also consider Pete our **Poet Laureate**. Below is a poem he wrote for this final edition.

**A POEM FOR BLC**  
***By Pete Maas***

**We knew it would happen,  
and we all knew why.  
There would be time for laughing,  
and a time to cry.**

**All the memories we share,  
and the friends we adore.  
The building's still there,  
but it's not ours anymore.**

**Though it's been quite a while,  
when we drive by the place  
I'm trying to smile,  
but there's tears on my face.**

**We miss you all,  
and think of you often.  
We'll see you all again,  
when we're all in Plum Delicious!  
(What, you expected me to say "coffin"?)**



## DONATIONS OF ITEMS

The legacy team was tasked with relocating all items in the building. That's 80 years of stuff that we had accumulated; 65 years of which were in this building on Monroe.

We walked through the building with the new owners, and they had only 1 request. We could remove anything or everything but if there were any leftover English language Bibles, they would love having them available for their youth. We said yes to the Bibles, and they willingly accepted the other items that we left them. It was big things like the pews, two pianos, kitchen appliances, lawn mowers & tools, photo copier, big screen TV & cabinet, file cabinets, tables and chairs. They appreciated getting the USA and Christian flags, and janitorial and office supplies.

The new church congregation had their own sacred items and did not need our Christus Rex statue, altar, baptism font, organ, communion ware, banners or hymnals.

There were so many "coincidences" along the way that the team felt God leading the distribution of items from Bethlehem to their new homes.

- A local church was looking into purchasing hand bells; we had hand bells and music.
- Another local church was in need of a new organ; we had an organ.
- A Christian halfway house wanted to conduct baptisms; we had a baptismal font.
- Another Bethlehem Lutheran Church had always wanted a different outdoor sign; we had an outdoor sign that said Bethlehem Lutheran Church on it.
- The divine intervention of our Christus Rex statue is mentioned on page 10.

And so it went. We were also touched by the people in the organizations who received our items. Without exception, they stated they were saddened by our closure, and many offered to pray for our members in finding new church homes.

We want to give a shout out to Pastor Richard Flath, Deaconess Ruth Ann Shimoi, and James Hing. With their many connections throughout the area, they were instrumental in helping find churches who needed our things. They also did a lot of deliveries for us!

There isn't room to list EVERY item. We've included some of the highlights.

The rugged cross that we used during Lent and adorned with flowers on Easter was given to Hope Lutheran in Woodburn, OR, a church familiar to Pastor Flath.

The red lamp and eternity candles were given to Lutheran Chapel on the Hill in Granite Falls, WA.

Choir music was given to Messiah Lutheran in Seattle & Peace Lutheran in Covington.

Preschool items were given to Beautiful Savior in Milton WA—the church that Ruth Ann's brother attends, Lutheran Church of the Cross's preschool in Covington, King of Kings Lutheran Church in Renton, Renton Highland's preschool, and Vision House in Renton.

The silver & stone communionware sets were given to Messiah Lutheran in Marysville, WA.



The Sudanese Choir at King of Kings Lutheran was **THRILLED** to receive our choir robes. They were amazed that someone would give them something so special as golden robes to wear as they praise God.

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Our organ was delivered to Peace Lutheran in Covington by members of the Moldovan congregation. Organist Gwen was delighted with its high quality and great sound. The first song played on it was Joy to the World. It was officially dedicated on July 9, 2023 at the installation of Pastor Steve Heinsen. Many Bethlehem members attended the service.



A surprising item Teresa Feltmann found in a filing cabinet was a 2-volume German language prelude book published by Concordia Publishing House in 1910.

We donated it to the Concordia Historical Institute to add to their Lutheran collection. One of their archivists said they did not have this set of books in their collection. In fact, according to their search, only 6 libraries in the world had a copy. They were delighted to add it to their holdings. The books are titled *Anthologie von charakteristischen Vorspielen zu den gebräuchlichsten Chorälen der lutherischen Kirche*.

To the saints at Bethlehem Lutheran,

Thank you so much for the gift of hand bells! We were so excited when we learned that the full set of bells, along with tables, skirts, music, gloves, mallets, and a storage cabinet would be coming to Immanuel. We are eager to "[play] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in [our] hearts to God" (Col 3:16).

Blessings,

Kay Thomsen, Secretary, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Everett WA

*It took a group of 10 members of Immanuel, ages 8 to 70, to carry in all the bell equipment!*



Immanuel's hand bell choir practicing. They played "A Mighty Fortress" on Reformation Sunday 2023.

Another unexpected treasure was finding a cassette tape of Pastor Luttman's last sermon. A copy of it was made and mailed to his son, Charles, who had attended our Celebration Service on Saturday, April 29. He responded it will be cherished by his family.



## LSB HYMNALS



Pastor Hartley and members of St. John's in Spokane WA appreciated our Lutheran Service Books.

*A Pony Express method of delivery with 3 different drivers each doing a leg of the journey from Renton to Spokane was used to successfully deliver 56 hymnals.*

Their message to us:

We received the hymnals – they are in beautiful condition and already in our pews! We are all forever grateful to your community for the gifting of your **Hymnals** to St. John's. Please be assured that we will take reverential care of them for a very long time to come.

Thank you so much for your generosity, the books will be used with prayerful thankfulness from all our members.

Blessings, and all the best to your and your community.

Christine Miller, Administration  
St. John's Lutheran Church, Spokane WA

Other LSB hymnals were given to All Saints in Bellevue, Beautiful Savior Sea Tac, St Lukes in Federal Way, and St. John in Long Beach. Long-time Bethlehem member, Janet Lee, now attends the church in Long Beach and shared that the congregation wanted to upgrade from their 1941 Lutheran Hymnal. We also gave them the organ & pastor books. Most of St John's members signed the thank you note!

Our beautiful handmade banners were gifted to several churches, all with ties to Bethlehem.

- **All Saints Bellevue.** Betty Rich was on our banner committee and is now a member of All Saints.
- **Redeemer Mercer Island.** Joyce Baade was on our banner committee, and her husband is pastor of Redeemer.
- **Risen Savior, Manteno Illinois.** Bethlehem's Pastor Russert's son, Paul, is the president of Risen Savior.
- **Mt Olive Shelton WA.** Andrea Mangold helped make the wedding banner, & it is now at her church, Mount Olive.
- **Christian pre-school** that Pastor Flath's daughter, Sarah, is associated with.
- **St John, Long Beach WA.** Bethlehem member Janet Lee attends St John.
- **Elysio Chapel Tacoma.** Linda Sheets was on our banner committee and is now a resident of Elysio.
- **Our Savior, Okanogan WA.** Pastor Brian Bowes is related to Bethlehem member Tracy Brown.



The silver tea set, donated in memory of member Marilyn Mortrud, found its new home. When we learned that Sarah Flath, Pastor & Sandra Flath's daughter, was Marilyn's god-daughter, we gave the set to her. Here are Sarah's words:

*Wow!! What an unexpected gift. The silver tea set with my Godmother's name, Marilyn Mortrud and Bethlehem Lutheran Church, is very special. I was so surprised! It is a wonderful keepsake that I will cherish and treasure. I also look forward to using it for special occasions. I was just amazed to receive such a lovely gift. I appreciate you thinking of me when you sorted the church items. I love this gift. God bless you and your families as you continue to serve the Lord and His people.*

## DONATIONS OF MONEY

After much research and discussion, the Bethlehem congregation established a financial legacy plan which we called The Will. In The Will, we identified 24 organizations that we wanted to bequeath our money to, after we sold the building. AbleLight purchased the land in our backyard that has their home for people with disabilities. Jesus The Saviour Of Moldovan Baptist Church, the congregation that rented from us for many years, purchased the building, parsonage and back field. Once the money was in our account, we quickly started writing checks! We were able to hand deliver checks to these organizations.

### Lutheran Community Services NW



Teresa Feltmann and Marjie Boydston amazed Najib Nazhat, District Director of Puget Sound at LCSNW, with the donation check. He expressed his gratitude and gave them a tour of their SeaTac building.

Dear Friends at Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

We have received the extraordinarily generous gift from your congregation and you can't know how many lives that benevolence will touch.

To create some context, around the Puget Sound area in 2023:  
Over 12,000 families needing diapers, bus vouchers, school supplies, clothing, and nutritious food were served by our three Community Resource Centers

At least 8,000 isolated seniors found connection and joy through our Aging and Independent Living programs across 12 counties

3,000+ immigrants and refugees received critical support building new lives, connecting to resources, and finding legal pathways to citizenship

Thank you for collectively transforming lives through your generous gift supporting health, justice, and hope for LCS Northwest clients.

Your congregation is making 2024 brighter for so many.

In gratitude,

Kelly McDonald, Senior Regional Advancement Manager  
**Lutheran Community Services NW**

### Lutheran Ministry Services



Karen & Joel Jackman handed our donation to Executive Director Don Sundene. Also in the photo are Chaplain Tim Johnson-Prison & Jail Ministry, Deaconess Ruth Ann Shimoi-Nursing Homes & Shut-ins, and Chaplain Arthur Werzner-Hospital Ministry.

Dear Friends in Christ, Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for sharing Bethlehem Lutheran's legacy with Lutheran Ministry Services NW. It is truly an awesome opportunity and responsibility we have in managing the received funds. The Legacy dollars so generously presented to LMSN are joyously received and offer an opportunity for long term growth in serving Christ our Lord and Savior.

His Disciples directed in Matthew 25:35-36 reaching out to those in Hospitals, Nursing Homes (Care Centers), Prisons and Jails. Our heritage began in 1938 when three ladies in Seattle saw the need for outreach ministry in the Puget Sound Region. The first Chaplain was called in 1942. Our outreach ministry continues to grow today as we serve as a Bridge into the communities.

God Bless, Don Sundene  
**Lutheran Ministry Services NW**  
[www.lmsnw.org/](http://www.lmsnw.org/)

Continued on next page



### Renton Prep Christian School



Don Kuhlmann hands donation to youngest & most senior student at Renton Preparatory Christian School's assembly. See page 5 for more information about that day.

Dear Members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

We are overjoyed and humbled by your generous donation to our LCMS Renton Preparatory Christian School. We sincerely appreciate your support and partnership in our Lutheran Christian School ministry. These past 68 years of educating students has demonstrated us God's faithfulness.

Your donation will have a tremendous impact on our school and our students. It will enable us to upgrade our technology and offer more scholarships to deserving students. It will also help us maintain our high standards of academic excellence and Lutheran values.

Our core values are **C**reativity, **H**umility, **R**esolve, **I**nterdependence, **S**implicity, and **T**ransformation (CHRIST). We strive to instill these values in our students through our curriculum, activities, and community.

Your donation demonstrates your commitment to our Christ-centered mission and values. You are investing in our school and the future of God's Kingdom. You are making a difference in the lives of many young people who will grow up to be faithful servants of God and agents of positive change in the world.

We are grateful for your partnership in advancing the Kingdom of God through Lutheran-Christian education. We pray that God will bless you abundantly for your kindness and generosity. We also invite you to visit our school and see the fruits of your donation firsthand.

Thank you again for your donation and your dedication to our mission.

Sincerely,  
Rev Dr David-Paul Zimmerman  
**Renton Preparatory Christian School**

### Valley Camp



Marjie Boydston hands Thom & Teena Proehl our donation at the camp's chapel. We walked around the camp enjoying the sounds of the babbling brook and tapping woodpecker. Photo by Dielda Kuhlmann

Friends at Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

This wonderful donation will assure Valley Camp can continue to serve and be a blessing to the community for many years. We will be prioritizing our long delayed maintenance list and begin this spring by making needed repairs and upgrades to all our facilities. Once we get this underway we will seek input from the users of camp as to what new facilities we should add.

We look forward to seeing and serving all of our Bethlehem friends and families in the future. Once again we wish to express our deep appreciation for considering Valley Camp for a portion of your legacy funds.

In Christ,  
Thom Proehl, President  
**Valley Camp Ministries**

Continued on next page

Three non-Lutheran organizations were selected by the congregation to receive donation money. They are in Renton; Bethlehem & Mary Martha have supported them for years.



Marjie Boydston, Director of Donor Engagement Venetia Vango, Kathy Logan, Development Admin Coordinator Grace Crawford, Joel & Karen Jackman, Diella Kuhlmann, Teresa Feltman. If you look very closely, you can see photographer Ewa Wroblewska's reflection in the mirror!

**Vision House** is a Christ-centered organization that provides housing and other supports for families in crisis. They also operate a Thrift Store at 410 Olympia Ave NE, Renton. You can donate items or buy things. Proceeds help the Vision House families as they come out of homelessness.

The entire Financial Team presented a check to them. The director got tears in her eyes when she saw the amount. They had just learned of an unexpected expense, and this check was an answer to prayer and will give many families in need safe housing.

In a touching moment, Venetia led us in a prayer of thankfulness and blessings on the diaspora of the Bethlehem congregation to other churches.

Dear Friends,

You are incredibly generous. Thank you for your gift. You're someone who cares about moms, dads, and kids who are experiencing homelessness – and is willing to do something about it.

Your gift will provide safety and care for a family. Your generosity is going to make a meaningful difference. But you need to know your gift will do so much more.

You are doing a world of good by providing:

- Time for a family to stabilize and build life skills
- Counseling Services with onsite Licensed Mental Health Care
- Resources for housing and employment
- Activities to build and repair bonds between children and their parents
- Follow-up care and community support to Alumni Families
- Jesus. None of our programming around Christ is mandatory but many of our families have expressed a desire to learn more about the Bible & for a space to ask hard questions.

What a powerful gift you've given. I am humbled by your generosity and honored you chose to give to Vision House.

Gratefully, Derek Sciba, Executive Director, **Vision House**

We are so touched by your gift and wish your whole church family blessings as you disperse in the community to shine as lights amidst other congregations.

Blessings,

Grace Crawford, Development Admin Coordinator, **Vision House**

Visit their website [visionhouse.org](https://visionhouse.org) for info on May 21 Lunch Fundraiser!

Continued on  
next page





**Renton Ecumenical Association of Churches**

*Bethlehem was 1 of the original 17 founding churches of **REACH** in 1970. For many years, we cooked and served our popular fried chicken and scalloped potato meal, complete with gigantic cookies donated by our church members.*

*The entire Financial Management Team was present to give them our final donation. We gathered outside their office for the photo.*

*They were very grateful for the gift!*

*Pictured left to right are Program Supervisor Raja Amos, Marjie Boydston, Community Outreach & Volunteer Coordinator Kinza Shafir, Kathy Logan, Interim Executive Director Fenice Fregoso, Dilda Kuhlmann, Teresa Feltmann, Joel Jackman. Photo by Karen Jackman.*

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the incredible donation from Bethlehem Lutheran Church. It's truly humbling to know that despite the closure of your church, its legacy will live on through the support extended to organizations like ours.

I feel immensely blessed that REACH Renton received this generous gift, which will undoubtedly enable us to continue our mission of serving our community with love and compassion. Your kindness reaffirms our belief in the power of collective action and reminds us of the importance of coming together to support those in need.

Fenice Fregoso  
Interim Executive Director at **REACH Renton**

### **Salvation Army Renton Rotary Food Bank**



**Food Bank Warehouse Manager Jason,  
Teresa Feltmann, Marjie Boydston**

The Renton Food Bank was very thankful for our donation. The need today is much more than it was even during the pandemic. Teresa and Marjie were surprised to learn that they have only 4 paid employees. The rest are all volunteers.

For decades, Bruce & Teresa Feltmann regularly delivered our food donations to them. The church and Mary Martha also contributed money to this worthwhile organization.

Below is their thank you letter to us.

Dear Mr. Jackman,

On behalf of The Salvation Army and our Renton Rotary Foodbank, I am writing to express our deepest gratitude for the incredibly generous donation from Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Your act of kindness during this critical time is truly awe-inspiring and deeply appreciated. We are profoundly touched by Bethlehem Lutheran Church's decision to share these funds with us, especially considering the legacy of service and dedication your congregation has upheld over the past 80 years. Your trust in The Salvation Army and belief in our mission to serve those in need speaks volumes about the enduring spirit of compassion and solidarity within your community.

Your donation arrives at a moment of great need for our foodbank. The challenges over the past years have only heightened the demand for our services, and your contribution will make a significant difference in our ability to meet these challenges. Your gift helps to provide us with the means to continue the important work of feeding the hungry and providing needed support to families in our community who are struggling to make ends meet.

By guidance of the Holy Spirit and fervent prayer we will be utilizing these resources to further God's work is both humbling and inspiring. It is indeed an answer to our prayers. At this time, there are many pressing needs, everything from the need of a reliable refrigerated truck to our day to day operations. With your generous donation, we now have the opportunity to address these needs and ensure that we are able to serve even more individuals and families in our community.

Once again, thank you, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, for your extraordinary generosity and support. Your legacy of care and service will continue to inspire us as we strive to build God's kingdom here on earth.

May God bless you abundantly for your kindness and may your congregation's legacy live on in the countless lives you have touched.

With heartfelt gratitude,  
James Parks - Captain, Corps Officer  
**The Salvation Army Renton**



## DONATIONS TO CHURCHES IN OUR CIRCUIT

*Joel Jackman handed our donation to Financial Secretary Shawna Mercredi of All Saints Lutheran Church in Bellevue.*

We give thanks and praise to Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Renton, WA for your generous contribution to All Saints Lutheran Church of Bellevue, WA. The Bethlehem Lutheran Church has had an amazing legacy of 80 years of service for our Lord in the Renton area. I know it must be difficult for members to see it coming to an end; however, it is our prayer that All Saints will faithfully use your contribution to continue ministry in the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ on behalf of **All Saints Lutheran Church**  
Jani Kuivalainen, President  
Adam Mihalcin, Vice President

*Follow up message from All Saints:* We discussed how best to use the funds at our Board of Directors' meeting. We did not decide on a specific purpose for the money, but plan to use the money to help with some of the higher priority items on our wish list. Two examples are improving the signage on the road in front of the church, and lighting the cross that is on top of the sanctuary so it is visible at night for passers-by.

*Curtis Holcomb handed our donation to President Rob Wick at Joy Lutheran.*

On behalf of Joy Lutheran Church, I want to thank Bethlehem Lutheran Church for the donation and generosity. The Lord continues to work amongst His LCMS congregations in the greater Puget Sound area. While His plans for us may not always be what we expect or envision in our district, we take comfort knowing that His plans will be fulfilled. Joy will use the donation to further spread the good news of Jesus Christ throughout the greater Bellevue community. At Joy, we are pursuing a mission of joyfully spreading the love of Christ in our community by providing early childhood through youth faith-based programs while strengthening our Lutheran church families in living out God's plan for us.

Blessings, Rob Wick  
President, **Joy Lutheran Church**



Ruth Ann Shimoi  
giving donation to  
Pastor Paul Birner at  
King of Kings.  
Photo taken by Greta.

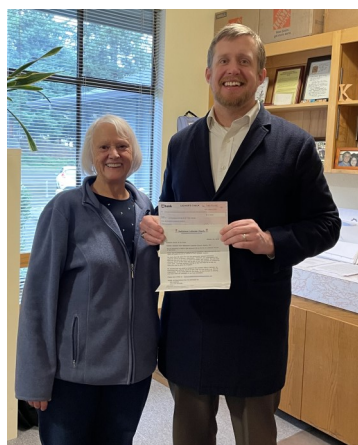
Dear Joel,

We wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Bethlehem Lutheran Church for the generous gift to King of Kings Lutheran Church. We feel blessed to receive your donation but we are saddened that Bethlehem Lutheran has had to shut its doors after 80 years of faithful service. Pastor Birner and our church leadership group will be discussing how best to use your legacy donation for our continued commitment to the Lord's work here at King of Kings.

Thank you and God Bless.

Barbara Bruce  
Finance Secretary, **King of Kings Lutheran Church**

Continued on next page



Teresa Feltmann with  
Pastor Kirk Hulvey at  
Lutheran Church of the  
Cross

Dear Mr. Jackman and the People of God at Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

Peace and blessing be yours in Christ Jesus our Lord! It is with gratitude and praise to God that we accept your generous. Thank you for your generosity and for your legacy of the Gospel in Renton and beyond. This gift will help us share the good news of Jesus Christ and His salvation as we continue in the work that God began among you.

In that vein, we are honored to be the "granddaughter" congregation of Bethlehem, Renton, and in that sense, without you we would not exist. Thus, your legacy of following Christ and His Word lives on through us and through your church family as they have been "redistributed" to congregations in our area. What a blessing through the power of the Holy Spirit!

We do not have specific plans for these funds, but they may be applied to a possible remodel of the north end of our building, which would include the rearrangement of office space to allow for an additional classroom at Sunbeams Lutheran School.

Again, we are grateful for you and for our partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now. And may He who has begun a good work in you bring it to completion in the day of Jesus Christ! (See Phil 1:3-6.)

*With thanksgiving in Christ Jesus,*

Rev. Kirk S. Hulvey, Pastor **Lutheran Church of the Cross** and Sunbeams Lutheran School



Dielda Kuhlmann hands  
donation to Pastor Steve  
Heinsen at Peace Lutheran

On behalf of everyone at Peace, I wanted to extend a very grateful THANK YOU for blessing Peace Lutheran Church with the generous donation. We look forward to seeing where the Lord leads us in using these monies to grow His Kingdom.

In Christ,  
John Hearing  
Congregational President, **Peace Lutheran Church**



Teresa Feltmann and  
Marjie Boydston present  
donation to Pastor Gene  
Baade of Redeemer

This is a letter of confirmation that we did receive your generous donation from the sale of the property which previously was Bethlehem Lutheran Church. We are very thankful that we were included within the group of organizations to which your committee members chose to donate. And we understand that you spread that generosity to so many. We thank God for that.

Sincerely in Christ,  
Gayne Phillips  
Church Administrator for the members of the **Redeemer Church**  
Council



## MORE THANK YOU NOTES WE RECEIVED

*Some organizations were too far away to visit in person. After talking to them and making the arrangements, we wire-transferred our donations to them. You'll see that many places sent us more than one thank you letter!*



*The following letter from President Harrison is for the \$587,520 we gifted the following 4 LCMS organizations:*

- *Seminary Student Aid Fund*
- *LCMS Disaster Relief & Response*
- *Concordia University System*
- *LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

**Thank you** for lifting up the bright light of Jesus for others to see. I am so deeply thankful to God that He chose you, the members of Bethlehem, to supply what the work of the LCMS requires. Although giving may seem a simple act, it speaks so forcefully about the kind of Christ-following disciples God has made each of you to be. "Love one another," was Jesus' commandment to his disciples. You are doing just that through this gift, and all other acts of selfless sacrifice you make for the sake of the Gospel message. Even in financially challenging times like these, you are confessing your trust and faith in Christ *alone*. And I appreciate you. Thank you.

Sub cruce (under the cross),  
**Pastor Matthew C. Harrison**  
**President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**

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**NORTHWEST DISTRICT**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD

*Marilyn from NW District in Portland explains where our funds will be designated.*

Dear members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church:

Thank you for your generous closing gift. Your congregation has blessed God's people in many ways during your time of ministry. While it is bittersweet, we know that you were thoughtful and intentional in how you ended that time.

Funds from closing congregations are put into a section of our general fund reserve that we call the Kingdom Fund. These funds are designated by the Board of Directors to be used for special ministry in the district. Currently we use these to fund various grant opportunities for ministries such as our Catalyst, Faith Community, and COVID Community Care grants. More information about these grants can be found on our website. These funds are also used to support the workers and ministries of the district with some funding for participation in MAP, the NOW Start Network, and PLI.

We thank God for you and your ministry as a congregation and your continued ministries as individuals serving God where He has placed each one of you.

In the name of Jesus,  
**Marilyn Allen, Business Manager Northwest District – LCMS**

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Continued on next page

Continued from previous page—Thank you letter excerpts



*This is where all our important and treasured documents are now housed. We gifted them money to help cover the expense of scanning and storing our items.*

Greetings from Concordia Historical Institute!

We truly appreciate the support! It is the mission of Concordia Historical Institute to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to serve the members of His church by promoting an interest in, appreciation for, and understanding of the history of Lutheranism in America, particularly of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as the story of our Lord's gracious dealing with His people, by collecting and preserving articles of historical value, stimulating historical research, and publishing its results. Your donation will definitely help us to do just that!

Blessings!

**Kristen V. Muehler**

**Reception/Donor & Member Associate/Volunteer Coordinator**

**Concordia Historical Institute**

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Dear Teresa Feltmann, Joel Jackman, Don Kuhlmann, Dielma Kuhlmann, and Kathy Logan:

**"Let it be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord."**

Psalm 102:18

We are pleased to acknowledge the wire transfer today. Thank you for your support of the important mission of Concordia Historical Institute to trumpet the redeeming word of Christ through the life of the Lutheran Church. You are making it possible for more and more people to grow in their understanding of and appreciation for God's saving promises which were revealed in Holy Scriptures and rediscovered by Luther and the Reformers. The legacy of Luther and the Reformers continues through the Lord's faithful people in North America and beyond.

As the Department of Archives and History of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, CHI takes very seriously its mandate to advance the collection and preservation of documents, publications and historical artifacts, giving a compelling witness to the saving grace of God in Christ and the Church's joyful response as it shares the Gospel with a lost world.

Yours in Christ,

**The Rev. Dr. Daniel N. Harmelink**

**Executive Director, Concordia Historical Institute**

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Hello Bethlehem Lutheran,

On behalf of Concordia Historical Institute, I want to thank you for your generosity in donating funds from your closing congregation to assist our ministry in moving Lutheran history forward. We pray that each of your next steps will continue to glorify the Lord.

We greatly appreciate your contribution to preserving and proclaiming the Gospel.

God's richest blessings in Christ,

**Mrs. Mason Seggebruch Lindell**

**Development Officer, Concordia Historical Institute**

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Continued on next page



Continued from previous page—Thank you letter excerpts



LUTHERAN  
HERITAGE  
FOUNDATION

*We received two typed letters and a hand-written note from Lutheran Heritage Foundation. Some of their upcoming books will have Bethlehem mentioned in them! See the wording at the bottom of the page.*

Dear Joel,

Thank you very much for your thoughtful and generous support of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation as we strive to share the light of Christ with the nations in their own languages, now in approximately 96 countries and over 150 languages.

May God's peace and joy fill your hearts in 2024!

In Christ,

**Rev. Dr. Matthew Heise**  
**Executive Director of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation**

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*And this hand-written note:*

*Thank you so much, Bethlehem Lutheran, for your extraordinarily generous missions gift!! It is bittersweet for us and you, especially as the church is now closing. The Lord bless you all in finding new church homes.*

*God's peace, **Rev Heise***

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Greetings Joel,

We are deeply humbled by this most thoughtful gesture. It is with mixed emotions that we gratefully receive this outpouring of generosity from Bethlehem as you conclude your 80+ years of ministry. We will be sure to keep you and the membership informed as to how this amount is used to the Glory of God and for the furthering of His Kingdom around the world through the translation and publishing of His Word in the languages of the people. We are in the conclusion of our budget process and initially I am thinking that we will divide this amount between projects in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South/Central/North America. I will provide more specific details in the coming months as to which projects were sponsored by this gift.

We would like to include the following sponsor wording in the books that are printed using this support:

**Funding for the publication of this volume has been provided by the faithful saints of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Renton, WA. Soli Deo Gloria!**

Humbly in Christ,

**Mr Jeff Rahn**  
**Assistant Executive Director, Lutheran Heritage Foundation**

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Continued on next page



*This is the organization that distributed the various personal care kits, school kits and fabric kits that we donated.*

Greetings Joel & Teresa,

Thank you so very much for your generous support and compassion and for thinking of Lutheran World Relief as your congregation seeks ways to continue ministry even when your worshipping ministry comes to an end.

In Christ,

**Jamie Lennon**

**Senior Advisor, Congregational Engagement, Lutheran World Relief**

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Dear Mr. Jackman,

Thank you for Bethlehem Lutheran Church's gift to Lutheran World Relief! When you love your neighbors with your generous gifts to LWR, you change lives in amazing ways.

For Walaa Ali al Ali, a Syrian refugee living in Lebanon, your love arrived in the form of a beehive. As the primary breadwinner for her family — including her mother, her developmentally disabled brother, a niece and a nephew — she struggled to find work amid Lebanon's economic crisis. Her family was safe from the war in Syria, but they didn't have access to adequate food or basic medical care.

Through LWR, Walaa enrolled in a livelihoods program for refugees and received all the training and supplies she needed to start a business as a beekeeper. With the money she earned, she also planted a vegetable garden to help feed her family. Now she's earning enough to keep her family afloat, and she's even training other women how to produce and sell honey.

Thank you for saving and transforming lives by loving your neighbors like Walaa!

We'd love to show you more examples of your gift in action. Please visit [www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org) and sign up to receive the latest updates.

Thank you again, and God bless you!

Warm Regards,

**Ambassador Daniel V. Speckhard (ret.) President and CEO**  
**Lutheran World Relief**

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Continued from previous page—Thank you letter excerpts



*The first The Lutheran Hour® radio program was broadcast Oct. 2, 1930 and continues on the air today, making it the world's oldest continually broadcast Christ-centered radio program.*

Dear Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous contribution in support of The Lutheran Hour and other ministry programs, at home and abroad. We could not do this work without family members like you beside us.

The Lutheran Hour® encourages Christians in their walk with the Savior. God uses the broadcast, as well as our other ministry programs, through all seasons of people's lives. You are part of what God is doing through these vital programs in the United States and beyond.

On behalf of our ministry staff around the globe, thank you for Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church. Thank you for stepping out in His love and sharing that HOPE ABOUND in Him.

In Jesus,

**Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler Speaker of The Lutheran Hour®**

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Kathy Logan,

Your gift to *Lutheran Hour Ministries* is an incredible witness to the faith of your church members and to your love of the Lord! We are blessed by your generosity!

Joy in Jesus!

**Susan K. Halm**

**Sr. Manager, Principal & Major Gifts, Lutheran Hour Ministries**

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Continued on next page



*Holden Village—a Christian retreat in the North Cascade Mountains. Their remote location means they are accessible only by a scenic passenger ferry ride up Lake Chelan, or by hiking in!*

**Mark Bach, Co-Director of Holden Village** sent us this statement about how they might use the funds.

We are raising funds for numerous projects that Holden hopes to move forward with. Representative projects are restoration of our historic lodges and chalets, upgrading our transportation fleet, building a museum, and improving our fire systems in two of our older chalets.

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Dear Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Renton,

Thank you very much for your generous gift to Holden Village! **YOU make the programs and daily operations of the Village possible.**

Your support helps Holden Village live into our mission to welcome all people into the wilderness to form and renew their relationships with God, the earth and each other. Best wishes—we are glad you are part our community!

With gratitude,  
**Jennifer Wolbrecht, Director for Advancement, Holden Village**

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*Rob Veith is our favorite ethnodoxologist. He and his wife Eshinee spoke several times at Bethlehem and shared their music with us.*



Eshinee & Rob Veith. Athens

2024 marks 20 years of service with Lutheran Bible Translators for my wife Eshinee and I. My work has manifested as short, seemingly isolated projects. Even someone who has followed us closely over these 20 years might not see the themes and connections of my part of the ministry. [It's all been] for the glory of God. Lord willing, I will continue as long as He allows.

I first encountered the Naro people of Botswana in 2006. They live on the western edge of the Kalahari desert. I recorded a CD of Christian songs in their language which was used as their fund raiser. In 2013, the translation team finished their translation of the Psalms. We worked with professional and church choirs from the Naro-speaking community to create new songs from the Psalms. These recordings were distributed for free. Soon one could attend a Naro church service where often the whole service was spent singing Psalms. They are still being sung, 11 years later.



Naro choir singing Naro Messiah

In Kosovo and Albania, the Albanian speaking majority is culturally Muslim, though largely secular in religious belief after several generations of religious suppression under the Soviet Union. It is very difficult for an Albanian to come to Christianity in Serbian Orthodoxy. Still, Albanians in Albania are coming to Christ. And some have come to Kosovo to reach others.

in Peja, Kosovo there is a single non-denominational Christian church with about 100 members. In a city of 100,000 people. They recognized the need for new original songs which would address the themes and concerns of their community. In 2018, they invited a team—which included me—from the ministry Inspiro to work with local musicians to create new songs. The song creators would mostly be Albanian musicians pulled from the worship bands from around Kosovo. Several were missionaries from Albania. At the end of the week, there were nine new songs. Later in Tirana, Albania, another 12 new Albanian worship songs were created.



Rob leading Albanian songwriters

Operators of a Christian after-school club in Albania felt the kids needed songs with solid Biblical foundations which were easy to sing that talked about how much God loved them and who Jesus was, since both the love of God and the person of Jesus were things that the kids would not otherwise hear about. I returned in 2019 with a different Inspiro team and a larger enthusiastic group of local musicians. The team agreed that if we could come up with eight songs over the course of a three-day workshop, that would be amazing. We got 25.

In 2020, of course, no one went anywhere.

Then, in 2023, they put on a concert to a packed house in Kosovo. One of the original team organizers told me, *"Many said that they always had this dream and prayer to have a local Christian concert in Kosovo. It was beautiful to see how many knew the songs and were*

*Continued from previous page—Thank you letter excerpts*

*singing them.*” She told me how powerful it was to see people from different denominational traditions in a spirit of unity.

The team continues to record new songs composed by those who they met in and through these workshops. And while they can certainly do all of this without me, I do hope to return one more time.

I’ve recorded Audio Bibles in many languages: the Dhimba New Testament in Opuwo, Namibia, the book of Luke in Shekgalagari, several books in Bugakhwe, and Scripture selections in Shiyeyi. In 2018, I began my largest audio scripture project, the full Bible in Khoekhoegowab. This is a San language spoken by nearly 200,000 people in Namibia. I predicted that I could record a New Testament in three months and an Old Testament in six. Working solo, those months would be very intensive. I could record readers for only 4-5 hours each day. Each hour of recording (depending on the caliber of the reader) would yield one to three hours of editing. So, a day with five hours of recording could require twenty hours of work to keep up. On these recording trips, I could work 12-16 hours each day, six to seven days a week.

By the end of three months, it was clear that I shouldn’t try to take on a project of that length and intensity again. In addition, it also became clear that this was not a one-off project, but the beginning of an effort to create audio Bibles in all the languages of Namibia. As I could only get a three-month work visa each year, I would need twelve consecutive years to finish the task.

Or I could teach someone else to do it. With approval, I began training a young lady who had been one of the readers to also record and edit recordings. For part of the time, she would record while I edited. But once she became comfortable with editing recordings, she became much better at it than me—mainly because she understood the languages.

I became a technical resource, answering tech support questions sent on WhatsApp. She did the recordings and edits while I did the final mastering work from my home studio in the US. She recorded a whole children’s Bible in four languages almost completely on her own.

I find myself moving more into a recording-engineer *training* mode. I’ve done trainings in Kenya and Tanzania. On one hand, this means I don’t get to spend as much time in the field hands-on with the recording and editing of new audio Bible recordings. On the other hand, I get to see that work multiplied as I train people in their own communities to do the work faster and better than I ever could have.

I’ve had the joy to be involved in these and other projects in these 20 years. **I have valued our partnership.** Thank you and may God bless each of you in your own ministry in the years to come.

**Rob Veith, Lutheran Bible Translators**

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Hello Joel,

Thank you for Bethlehem's generous donation to the Veith ministry. We are grateful for your partnership in sharing God's Word with our brothers and sisters around the world. You are sharing the light of Scripture with those who are living in darkness and waiting for Scripture in their own language.

Bethlehem and its members have had an impact in the Washington area and beyond through their prayers and support. May God grant peace about the decision to close and provide support for Bethlehem's remaining members. Thank you, Joel, for your faithful service as the Chairman of the Financial Management Team.

Blessings to you all,

**Angela Tayloe, Director of Operations + CFO, Lutheran Bible Translators**



It's official.

**Deontae Mitchell** popped the question to **Nicki Slettevold** on October 23, 2023, and she said yes!

The engagement happened at Carbon River in Orting, where they had their first official date exactly 4 years earlier. (Oct 23, 2019)

The two met through mutual friends that played video games together. The wedding date has not yet been set but it will be a small event with family and friends.



### Bethlehem Chicken

Thanks to Ruth Ann for sharing this photo to show that the neighbor's chicken still enjoys snacking on the property.



### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

**Logan Browning** graduated a few months early from Hazen High School in Renton and will be pursuing a career as an Aerospace Engineer.

He will be attending a Junior College while working for Boeing this fall and then on to the University of Washington which has a very good Aerospace program.

Logan was baptized and confirmed at Bethlehem. He thanks his grandma Kathy Logan for taking him to church on Sundays, even on the mornings he wanted to sleep in. Logan has fond memories of the people at Bethlehem. He especially recalls that elder Dick Taylor always took time to have conversations with him and would give him puzzles to solve. Logan participated in many church activities and was often our crucifer, carrying the processional cross.

May God continue to guide his footsteps as he goes through life. May God open the right paths for him. Logan, may your future hold all that you hope as you remember to lean on Him.

### THANK YOU

We are so grateful to Bethlehem Lutheran all of these years! You all have been wonderful and have aided in helping many alcoholics find the road to recovery. Thank you very much.

-Steve & Lara from New Purpose Group



## REST IN PEACE



**ROBERT "Bob" PANKOW**

June 4, 1935

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April 3, 2024

Bob Pankow passed away Wednesday morning, April 3, 2024 at his care facility in Seattle. Bob was 88 years old and had been on hospice since February of this year.

Bob & Helga joined Bethlehem in 1980. He was one of our honored military veterans, and spoke to us about his 26 years of service in the Air Force on Armed Forces Day 2011. We were blessed to have Bob at Bethlehem, and as a friend.

Bob loved being outdoors, whether it was hunting, fishing or camping. He and Helga had wonderful memories of traveling to many countries and visiting friends. He loved keeping busy and was always ready to read another book.

He is survived by daughter Doris Baker, 2 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren. His wife, Helga, the love of his life, passed away March 3, 2016 at the age of 80. They were married for 58 years. Their son, Ralph died September 25, 2022.

Funeral services are pending.

## CHURCHES FROM COAST TO COAST



While on a trip to New York City in the summer of 2023, Dick & Ellen Taylor were able to visit St Luke's Lutheran Church in Times Square.

It was founded in 1850. The current building was built in 1922 and includes 2 bowling alleys, gymnasium, and a parsonage apartment.

Immaculate Conception Catholic Parish Church in Fairbanks, Alaska is listed on the Register of Historical Sites. It began in 1904 with financial donations from prospectors looking for gold.

Pete and Hannelore Maas visited on their summer cruise.



*Hannelore Maas in Alaska*

An interesting thing these 2 churches have in common is they both provide free hot lunches during the week to hundreds of people who are needy or homeless.

## MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY SINCE OUR CLOSING

**Betty Cowan** May 10, 2023 at the age of 97. Her funeral was at Sunset Community Church, officiated by Pastor Arthur Werzner.

**Carolyn Hough** August 18, 2023 at the age of 82. Her funeral was held at King of Kings and officiated by Pastor Arthur Werzner.

**Frank Downing** Nov 1, 2023 at the age of 90. His funeral and burial was at Mt Tahoma National Cemetery with military honors. Reception was held at Hobart Community Church.

**Bev West** Dec 15, 2023 at the age of 87. Her memorial service is pending.

**Bob Pankow** April 3, 2024 at the age of 88. His service is pending. Obituary is on the previous page.

## NW DISTRICT PRESIDENT LINNEMANN IS RETIRING



In January, President Paul Linnemann announced his retirement in 2024. Per Bylaw, the District Board shall fill the vacancy by extending a call to the First Vice President, who is Rev. Mike Von Behren. On January 20, Von Behren officially accepted the call to serve.

### What does this mean? A note from President Linnemann:

*"On Jan. 6 the District Board of Directors met via Zoom, and they received from me a request for a peaceful release from my call as your District President. After granting my request, they called your First Vice President, Rev. Mike Von Behren, to be the next District President. Pastor Von Behren has faithfully deliberated this call, and on Saturday, Jan. 20, he informed the Board of his acceptance. The entire Board, the District staff, and I are all grateful for this and look forward to his leadership of the District."*

*Pastor Von Behren would like to conclude his ministry at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Spokane, Washington following Easter this Spring. He would then use the month of April to transition to the District Office beginning on May 1. Mike and I would then have a month of overlap in May, with his installation taking place in Portland on Sunday, May 26. This plan calls for him to officially begin his service as District President on May 1, 2024."*

Pastor Linnemann speaking  
at Bethlehem April 29, 2023

Serving the Lord and His church,  
Rev. Dr. Paul Linnemann  
President of the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri  
Synod

## Share Your Retirement Well-Wishes for President Linnemann

We are so thankful for President Linnemann's impact during his nearly 15 years of leading the NOW District. Before we say farewell, we plan to present him with a special scrapbook of his ministry journey — and we'd love to have your contributions! Share your retirement well-wishes and any memories/photos by email to [Brynnh@nowlcms.org](mailto:Brynnh@nowlcms.org) or by mail to the NOW District Office (1700 NE Knott St., Portland, OR 97212).

*If possible, please keep messages to one single-sided page. We will collect these through May 1.*



## GATHERINGS

Our annual Sweetheart lunch at Plum Delicious happened on Feb 13, 2024. Thanks to Gary Jordanger for organizing it all these years.

There were about 27 attendees, and everyone really enjoyed the time together.

Photos of Bethlehem folks, including past Pastor Baade and wife Joyce, were taken by Teresa Feltmann. The photo of her & Bruce at the front door was taken by a kind stranger.



### THE NEXT GATHERING

Wilma Gardner offers to spearhead a summer BLC reunion. She's thinking in July, in a park. Expect to hear more details in coming months.

May the Lord bless you and keep you;  
May the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
May the Lord lift up His favor upon you and give you His peace.