

# Heart Matters

Your Connection to Bethany Lutheran Church and Littlest Angels Preschool

1095 Cloud Avenue • Menlo Park • CA • 94025 • Church: 650.854.5897 • Preschool: 650.854.4973  
[www.bethany-mp.org](http://www.bethany-mp.org) • [www.LittlestAngelsPreschool.com](http://www.LittlestAngelsPreschool.com)

December 2017

## News from Pastor Jon

**"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14**



### In This Issue

- Women's Ministries
- Women's Ministries' Annual Bake Sale
- Youth Group News
- Angelic News
- Christmas Eve Services
- Advent Services Calendar
- Reverse Advent Calendar
- Gingerbread Decorating Fundraiser
- Parents' Night Out
- Breakfast Bible Studies
- Lifetree Café December Calendar
- Upcoming Events
  - Gingerbread Decorating Fundraiser (12/2)
  - Knitting Group (12/7)
  - Advent Service and Luncheon (12/6, 12/13, 12/20)
  - Breakfast Bible Studies (12/9)
  - Parents' Night Out (12/9)
  - Congregational Meeting (12/10)
  - Women's Ministries Annual Bake Sale (12/10)
  - Christmas Food Bags Assembly (12/16)
  - Reverse Advent Calendar Donation Boxes Due (12/17)
  - Christmas Eve Services (12/24)
  - Lifetree Café (Wednesdays @ 6:30 p.m.)
- .. and much more!

Christmas is a time for joyful celebration. Jesus, comes to earth to fulfill the will of God the Father. Jesus is here to take away the sins of the world, to redeem the creation broken by sin, to give life and immortality to all who believe in His name. All of this points us to a passage in The Revelation to St. John 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Jesus came to end all of our pain and suffering.

Think about a time when you experienced pain. Then think about how wonderful it felt when that pain was finally gone. There is almost a feeling we can identify as "no more pain." It is that exhilarating, calming, and peaceful feeling when the pain – which was constant for a period of time – is now gone. We like this thought and we appreciate the message to John which describes heaven as a place with no pain.

However, we probably do not think about the fact that when Jesus came to earth and took on human flesh, God's one and only Son also took on pain. He was willing to suffer, not only on the cross, but He was willing to suffer each and every day with the common and not so common pains of life. Jesus, who knew no pain, came into a world of pain and suffering. There were physical pains of work and hardship. There were emotional pains of loss and seeing the struggles of others. Jesus was

willing to do all of this for us and at times, this concept seems to get lost in all of the “holly, jolly Christmas” that surrounds us.

Before I sound too much like Ebenezer Scrooge, let’s take a look at how God responds to the birth of Jesus. God sends angels to announce the birth of Jesus in a dramatic and celebratory display of majesty in the sky. Then God encourages the shepherds to “go and see” the gift of Jesus. The shepherds are overwhelmed with joy and cannot help but share the news. All of the struggles of the recent days, weeks and months seems to melt away as the joy of Jesus takes over and they are compelled to share the Good News.

For many of us Christmas is not only a time of joy, but it brings along pain as well. For those who have loved ones who have gone to heaven, there is an intensified sense of loss, even in the midst of celebration. These two opposite feelings can be difficult to handle at the same time. For others who have experienced painful things near the time of Christmas in a previous year, the similar sights and sounds of the season may bring back painful memories. How do you celebrate when you also remember and feel pain?

Into all of these struggles, Jesus comes. Jesus comes never complaining of the pain He will feel. Jesus comes wanting to take our hurts and our pain away. Jesus comes with angels sharing the message, “I bring you good tidings of great joy...” Jesus comes as the Prince of Peace to settle the debt of our sin, to calm the anxieties, fears and hurts of our hearts, and to offer real joy...a joy that cannot be purchased...but is freely given. Jesus comes to give you Christmas. So travel with the shepherds to see the gift of Jesus, celebrate with the joy He brings and cling to Him in your times of darkness. Because Jesus, the light of the world, came to scatter the darkness AND came to bring you joy.

God’s Peace,  
Pastor Jon

---

## **Women’s Ministries**

### **The mission donation for December will go to Lutheran World Relief.**

Every day in 32 countries, Lutheran World Relief (LWR) works to combat the causes of poverty and the dignity it robs from people’s lives. LWR advocates for Fair Trade that helps farming families and artisans earn a better income.



LWR teaches people to better care for themselves, their communities and the environment. They teach people how to be less vulnerable to natural disasters. They advocate with and for them for policy change that more fairly represents them. LWR counsels them after manmade and natural disasters, and help them recover with material aid. LWR does all of this exclusively with partners from the communities they serve. Their partners help them remain incredibly efficient and effective. Their partners let LWR help people help themselves, for a day when they won’t need LWR at all.

In 2016, LWR donations helped reach: 3,467,823 people, 32 countries, 118 projects! Praise God! To learn more about LWR, go to [www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org).



## **The Women's Ministries Annual Bake Sale**

**Sunday, December 10**

Join us during coffee hour on December 10 for our Annual Bake Sale fundraiser. There will be an assortment of delicious homemade desserts, baked goods, and other mouthwatering snacks, as well as gift certificates for homemade goodies you can redeem and enjoy during the year. Buy scrumptious goodies for yourself or to give to someone special.

This is a great opportunity to help fund local and worldwide missions and support our Women's Ministries events.



***Mark your calendar today!***



---

## **Youth Group News**

Merry Christmas 🎄

This year's Bethany Youth Group's annual Gingerbread House Decorating Fundraiser was held on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was our ninth year of sharing this wonderful, interactive experience with our community and Bethany family members. There were delicious treats to eat, Christmas music, and a whole lot fun! It is always so special to see our repeat families along with those who decided to start a new holiday tradition this year.

I want to give a huge THANK YOU to our youth and all of you who helped with the preparations that were needed to put this event together. This certainly would not have been as successful without all of your help, love, and support. You are all greatly appreciated.

After Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, you can check out our Gingerbread House scrapbook at [www.bethany-mp.org/gingerbread](http://www.bethany-mp.org/gingerbread).

I hope all of your Christmas wishes are fulfilled and that you have a safe and peaceful New Year!

I'm looking forward to new and exciting events in 2018.

Blessings,  
Pilar

## Angelic News

### A Bunch of Gifts

I wonder... if God had a Christmas tree, what gifts would we find under it? God is in the gift giving business! He has wonderful gifts waiting for us to be unwrapped and applied to our lives.

Most of us spend a great deal of time and thought in choosing just the right gift for the special people in our lives. We think about their needs, their wants, and what might make them happy. We make the purchase, gift wrap it and anxiously wait for the moment when our loved one opens their gift. We anticipate that the gift will be received with joy and delight. But, what if that doesn't happen? We'll be disappointed and dejected. You see, in receiving our gift they are receiving us. If they reject the gift they are rejecting us. Or it sure feels that way.

You know, I think God tolerantly sits and waits to see what we'll do with His Christmas gifts too. If we accept His gifts, then we receive Him and He is delighted! Think of what that means! God was not only giving us the gift of a baby at Christmas...that baby brought **LOVE, FORGIVENESS, SALVATION, HELP, HOPE, JOY and PEACE**. These are gifts that no amount of money can buy.

Perhaps if we take our eyes off the PRESENTS under the tree and instead put our eyes on God's PRESENCE in our lives we will experience a Christmas like no other! John H. Rice said, **"You can never truly enjoy Christmas until you can look up into the Father's face and tell Him you have received His Christmas gift."** The life-changing gifts that God tenderly gives can only belong to those who are in a relationship with Him; a **LOVE** that lasts forever, **HOPE** for the future, **JOY** that is bubbling over, and a **PEACE** of mind, heart and soul that the world cannot give.

Think for a moment about the gifts under your Christmas tree; will they change your life? Will they last forever? When you receive the gifts wrapped up in the Baby Jesus your life will never be the same again. This Christmas thank God by sharing His gifts with those who haven't received them yet.

**"Let me not wrap, stack, box, bag, tie, tag, bundle, seal or keep Christmas. CHRISTmas kept is liable to mold. Let me give CHRISTmas away, unwrapped by exuberant armfuls. Let me share, dance, live CHRISTmas unpretentiously, merrily, responsibly with overflowing hands, tireless steps and sparkling eyes. CHRISTmas given away will stay fresh-even until it comes again."**

**Linda Felver**

This Christmas open your heart and share your LOVE, HOPE, JOY, and PEACE and do take time to look up into the Father's face and tell Him you just love His gifts!

Christmas joy from my heart to yours!  
Kathy Stinson

---

### Annual Congregational Meeting :: Sunday, December 10

The only business is to elect members to the Board of Directors. For the election process, nominations from the floor will be accepted from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. in the Family Center. Voting for the election of Board members will take place in the Family Center immediately following the 9:30 a.m. service by paper ballot.



# Christmas Eve Services

Bethany Lutheran Church | Sunday, December 24

*Sunday Worship – 9:30 a.m.*

*Family Christmas – 5:00 p.m.*

A costume for every child!

All children are invited to participate in a retelling of the Christmas story.  
There will be all of your favorite Christmas Carols and a gift for every child.

*Join us between services for  
wonderful food & Christmas cheer!*

*Classical Music Christmas – 7:00 p.m.*

Join us for a night of excellent music, singing, and proclamation. We will honor and remember the birth of Jesus in a celebratory and contemplative worship setting.

*Candlelight Christmas – 10:00 p.m.*

In the stillness of the late night hours,  
we hear the Christmas story and consider the gift of Jesus, the light of the world.  
Candles glow and familiar carols ring at the end of the service  
as we near the birthday of Jesus.





# **Weekday Advent Services**

**Wednesday, December 6**

**Wednesday, December 13**

**Wednesday, December 20**

**12:00 noon**

**Enjoy Advent lunch immediately  
following the service at 12:30 p.m.**






# **REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR**

**Nov. 26 - Dec. 17** 

**Help us bless our local homeless neighbors with the gift of basic items.**

## **Suggested Items:**

**toothbrush, toothpaste, comb or brush, deodorant, socks, gloves, scarf/beanie, lip balm, wash cloth, hand towel, lotion, shampoo, bar soap, hand sanitizer, band aids, razor, a blank card with a stamp on envelope for recipient to send to someone, a Christmas card from you.**

- 1. Take a Reverse Advent Box home.**
  - 2. Each day add an item to the box.**
  - 3. On or before Dec. 17 return the filled box to Bethany.**
  - 4. We will deliver the boxes to Project WeHOPE Homeless Shelter, to the McDonald's Church, and to other local homeless people.**
- 



# **Gingerbread House Decorating**

**Enjoy the holiday spirit at our  
9th Annual Fundraising Event!**

**The Gingerbread Houses are pre-assembled.  
We will provide all the candy, sweets, and tools you will need  
to decorate your holiday centerpiece.**

**Bring the kids, your imagination, and your holiday spirit  
and create a holiday memory the entire family will treasure!  
Each house is only \$60.**

**Saturday, December 2  
9:00 am – 12 noon**

**Refreshments will be served.**

**Space is limited!**

**Reserve your Gingerbread House today!**

**Book your reservation online at  
[www.bethany-mp.org/gingerbread](http://www.bethany-mp.org/gingerbread)  
or call us at 650-854-5897**

**All proceeds go towards Bethany Youth Group projects & activities.  
Thank you for your support.**

**Bethany Lutheran Church  
1095 Cloud Avenue, Menlo Park**



# Parents' Night Out



**Bethany Lutheran Church**  
**Saturday, December 9, 2017 • 5:30 - 8:30 pm**

Need a break from the kids?  
Bethany Lutheran Church is sponsoring  
Parents' Night Out!

We offer childcare for children 1 - 10 years old  
so you can enjoy a few hours of adult time!

***The kids love this event...and the parents do too!***

★ pizza dinner    ★ craft    ★ play time  
★ entertainment: A live monkey show by  
**Monkey Business Production**

Cost is only \$20 per child.  
Family discount available: first child \$20 and siblings \$15 each.

**Advance registration is required. Registration deadline: Friday, Dec. 1.**  
**Space is limited and is available on a first-come, first-served basis.**  
**No refunds after Dec. 1.**

**Go to [www.bethany-mp.org/nightout](http://www.bethany-mp.org/nightout)**  
**to register and pay online.**



# Women's Breakfast *Bible Study*

**Saturday, December 9**

**9:00 – 10:30 AM**

## **“Psalm 23: Everything that We Need”**

This study is a walk with the Shepherd through the beloved Psalm that has been too long relegated to funeral services when it is so full of guidance for living with confidence, compassion and courage.

Join us on the **second Saturday** of each month September 2017 – May 2018 for a delicious breakfast, an inspirational Bible study, prayer time, and a great opportunity for friendships.

A freewill donation of \$5 is encouraged to help offset the cost of the program and to support a child sponsored through World Vision International.

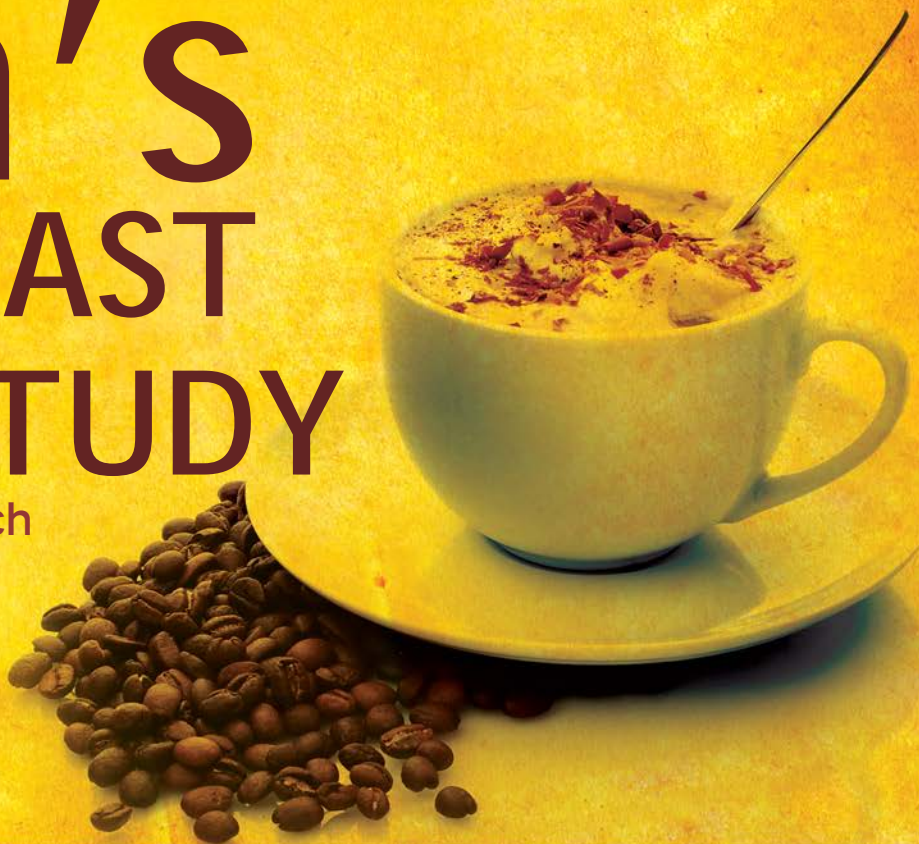
Free childcare is available. Arrangements must be made in advance.  
Please contact Linda in the Church Office at 650-854-5897 ~ [lindab@bethany-mp.org](mailto:lindab@bethany-mp.org).



# Men's BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY

Bethany Lutheran Church

Saturday,  
December 9



Join us on the second Saturday of each month September 2017 - May 2018 from 9:00 - 10:30 AM in the family center for a delicious breakfast, an inspirational Bible study, prayer time, and a great opportunity for friendship.

Pastor Jon Coyne will lead the men in a study entitled, "God in the Real World." The study is tied to the Holy Land and includes a video.

A freewill donation of \$5 is encouraged to help offset the cost of the program and to support a child sponsored through World Vision International.

Free childcare is available. Arrangements must be made in advance. Please contact Linda in the Church Office at 650-854-5897 ~ [lindab@bethany-mp.org](mailto:lindab@bethany-mp.org).





Now Showing in  
**December 2017**



(for FAQ's)



[facebook.com/LTCMenloPark](https://facebook.com/LTCMenloPark) | [LifetreeCafe.com](http://LifetreeCafe.com)

**December 6**

## Secrets of Finding Contentment

Live a satisfying life



**December 13**

## CHILDREN WITH NO PLACE TO CALL HOME

Helping kids in crisis



**December 20**

## Mental Illness

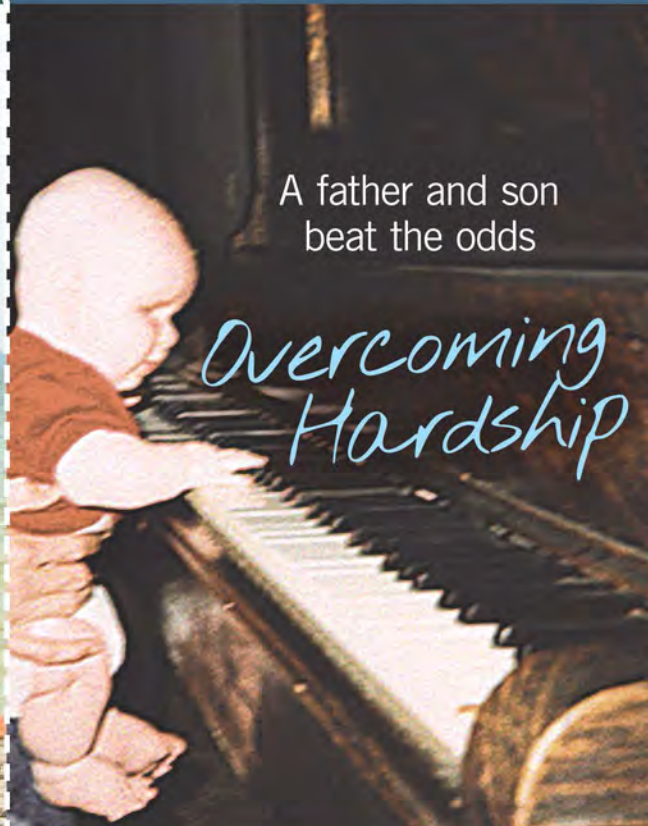
Breaking the silence, overcoming the shame



**December 27**

A father and son beat the odds

## Overcoming Hardship



**January 3**

## INSIDE THE GUN DEBATE

To hunt?  
To defend?  
To assault?



**FREE**  
TO THE  
PUBLIC!

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

6:30 - 7:30 PM

Bethany Lutheran Church

1095 Cloud Ave, Menlo Park

Free Admission

Complimentary Refreshments

650-854-5897

at the corner of Avy & Cloud



# DECEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>26 * "Reverse Advent Calendar" Program Begins Today 9:30 AM Worship &amp; Children's Worship 11:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Monk Yang Korean Church Service 3:00 PM The Coffee Shop 4:00 PM "Ave &amp; Cloud" Rehearsal 5:00 PM Lighthouse - A Contemporary Praise Service 6:00 PM The Coffee Shop and Music Lounge Presents: Open Mic Night</p>	<p>27 5:30 PM Littlest Angels "Helping St. Nicholas" Donation Drive Ends Today 7:00 PM First Responder Meeting</p>	<p>28 9:30 AM Walking Group 7:00 PM Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting</p>	<p>29 6:30 PM NT Course 6:30 PM Religious Freedom (Lifetree Café Menlo Park) 7:45 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>30 9:30 AM Walking Group 3:00 PM Youth Groups Gingerbread House prep time</p>	<p>1 3:00 PM Youth Groups Gingerbread House prep time 5:00 PM Last Day to Sign-up for Parents' Night Out (12/9)</p>	<p>2 9:00 AM Gingerbread House Decorating 5:00 PM Private Event - Krystal Finau</p>
<p>3 Advent 9:30 AM Worship &amp; Children's Worship 11:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Monk Yang Korean Church Service 3:00 PM The Coffee Shop 4:00 PM "Ave &amp; Cloud" Rehearsal 5:00 PM Lighthouse - A Contemporary Praise Service 6:00 PM The Coffee Shop &amp; Music Lounge</p>	<p>4 5:30 PM Littlest Angels "Helping St. Nicholas" Donation Drive Ends Today 7:00 PM First Responder Meeting</p>	<p>5 9:30 AM Walking Group 7:00 PM Menlo Chorus Rehearsal 7:00 PM Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting</p>	<p>6 12:00 PM Advent Service 12:30 PM Advent Lunch 6:30 PM NT Course 6:30 PM Secrets of Finding Contentment: Live A Satisfying Life (Lifetree Café Menlo Park) 7:45 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>7 9:30 AM Walking Group 11:30 AM Knitting Group</p>	<p>8 6:30 PM Staff Christmas Party</p>	<p>9 9:00 AM Men's Breakfast Bible Study 9:00 AM Women's Breakfast Bible Study 11:30 AM Mount Family - Private Event 5:30 PM Parents' Night Out</p>
<p>10 * Happy Mail Sunday * 9:30 AM Worship &amp; Children's Worship 10:30 AM Annual Congregational Meeting 10:45 AM Women's Ministries Annual Bake Sale 11:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Monk Yang Korean Church Service 3:00 PM The Coffee Shop 4:00 PM "Ave &amp; Cloud" Rehearsal 5:00 PM Lighthouse - A Contemporary Praise Service 6:00 PM The Coffee Shop &amp; Music Lounge</p>	<p>11 9:30 AM Walking Group 6:00 PM Young Child's Christmas Service 7:00 PM CANCELLED - Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting</p>	<p>12 9:30 AM Walking Group 6:00 PM Young Child's Christmas Service 7:00 PM CANCELLED - Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting</p>	<p>13 12:00 PM Advent Service 12:30 PM Advent Lunch 6:30 PM "Children with No Place to Call Home: Helping Kids in Crisis" (Lifetree Café Menlo Park) 6:30 PM NT Course 7:45 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>14 * Littlest Angels Help Assemble "Helping St. Nicholas" Bags 9:30 AM Walking Group 12:15 PM Women's All Church Prayer Group 7:00 PM Board of Directors Meeting</p>	<p>15 * Littlest Angels Help Assemble "Helping St. Nicholas" Bags 2:00 PM Christmas Food Baskets Set-up</p>	<p>16 10:00 AM Christmas Food Baskets Assembled 5:00 PM Menlo Chorus Concert Set-up 5:30 PM Menlo Chorus Concert &amp; Reception</p>
<p>17 * "Reverse Advent Calendar" Donation Boxes Due Today 9:30 AM Worship &amp; Children's Worship 11:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Monk Yang Korean Church Service 3:00 PM The Coffee Shop 4:00 PM "Ave &amp; Cloud" Rehearsal 5:00 PM Lighthouse - A Contemporary Praise Service 6:00 PM The Coffee Shop &amp; Music Lounge</p>	<p>18 7:00 PM First Responder Meeting</p>	<p>19 9:30 AM Walking Group 7:00 PM Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting</p>	<p>20 * Preschool Christmas Parties/Santa 12:00 PM Advent Service 12:30 PM Advent Lunch 6:30 PM Mental Illness: Breaking the Silence, Overcoming the Shame (Lifetree Café Menlo Park) 6:30 PM NT Course 7:45 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>21 * Preschool Christmas Parties/Santa First Day of W. inter holiday: no after care 9:30 AM Walking Group</p>	<p>22 Littlest Angels Preschool Closed Rehearsal 12:00 PM N. Isaacs - Music 5:00 PM Submission deadline for newsletter articles 7:30 PM Stanford Int'l Folk Dancers</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>24 9:30 AM Worship 12:30 PM Monk Yang Korean Church Service 5:00 PM Family Christmas Eve 6:00 PM Light Meal 7:00 PM Musical Christmas Eve 10:00 PM Candlelight Christmas Eve</p>	<p>25 Christmas Day Church offices, Preschool office &amp; Preschool closed 12:00 PM L. Bradley - Private Event</p>	<p>26 Littlest Angels Preschool Closed 9:30 AM Walking Group 7:00 PM Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting - CANCELLED</p>	<p>27 Littlest Angels Preschool Closed 6:30 PM CANCELLED - Lifetree Café Menlo Park</p>	<p>28 Littlest Angels Preschool Closed 9:30 AM Walking Group 12:15 PM Women's All Church Prayer Group</p>	<p>29 Littlest Angels Preschool Closed</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>31 9:30 AM Worship &amp; Children's Worship 12:30 PM Monk Yang Korean Church Service 3:00 PM The Coffee Shop 4:00 PM "Ave &amp; Cloud" Rehearsal 5:00 PM Lighthouse - A Contemporary Praise Service 6:00 PM The Coffee Shop &amp; Music Lounge</p>	<p>1 Church offices, Preschool office &amp; Preschool closed New Year's Day 7:00 PM First Responder Meeting</p>	<p>2 Littlest Angels Preschool Closed 9:30 AM Walking Group 7:00 PM Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting - CANCELLED</p>	<p>3 Littlest Angels Preschool Closed 6:30 PM Inside the Gun Debate: To Hunt? To Defend? To Assault? (Lifetree Café Menlo Park)</p>	<p>4 Littlest Angels Preschool Closed 9:30 AM Walking Group 11:30 AM Knitting Group</p>	<p>5 Littlest Angels Preschool Closed</p>	<p>6 Epiphany</p>

every Sunday  
Lighthouse  
5:00 p.m.  
Worship/Communion  
9:30 a.m.

**Join us for Sunday Worship**



Bethany Lutheran Church  
1095 Cloud Avenue  
Menlo Park, CA 94025