

# 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)

November 2017

## News from Pastor Jon

**"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."**

**Ephesians 2:8-9**



Writing as we celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, I cannot escape these words from St. Paul which are the true and living Word of God and which changed the life of Martin Luther. Grace is an incredibly difficult concept:

- It is much easier to convince people of their guilt and sin, only to tell them they need to work harder to avoid their moral corruption, than to explain how God loved us so much, that in Christ we have a free and perfect gift of forgiveness. As human beings, we are both the perfect creation of God (recreated by Christ after our sin) and yet we are also still caught in sin and feel the weight of our sin and the brokenness sin creates in our lives.

- It is much easier to believe that we are responsible for our faith and we must do something, anything to get to God than to believe we are "dead to our trespasses and sins." helpless to do anything, yet God provides Jesus who gives us life and empowers us to share the message of faith with others.

- It is much easier to feel guilt and shame when we hurt others, make mistakes, or cruelly intend to disobey God's rules which are meant to help us, than to remember and feel the incredible joy and peace that comes from knowing God immediately and continuously forgives, renews, and embraces us in the love that saves us.

In other words, grace is an incredibly difficult concept. We hear the words and concept best from someone other than

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  - Breakfast Bible Studies (11/11)
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  - Lifetree Café (Wednesdays @ 6:30 PM)
  - NT Course (Wednesdays @ 6:30 PM)
  - Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Wednesdays @ 7:45 PM)
  - The Coffee Shop & Music Lounge (Sundays 3-8 PM)

... and much more!

ourselves. We may miss the point when we listen to one person, but really tune in and understand when we listen to another person. For example, Pastor Tom shares grace in a way which is incredibly helpful to me. The mere fact that his way is special for me implies that other preachers are not as special in their declaration of grace...but that is how I hear it. Others will listen and understand the mysteries in different ways. Therefore, God's grace is amazing, not only because it exists, but because God uses us, His redeemed saints, to share with others in unique ways that God's grace is alive and working as God works through us.

Grace is an incredibly difficult concept and you will find yourself wrestling with the concept for your entire life. Rather than rambling on, I leave you with these words from St. Paul. Please read them all and consider the meaning in your life.

"As for you, you were dead in transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us who lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2: 1-10

Five hundred years later, we continue to preach, teach and wrestle with the reality of God's grace.

God's Peace,  
Pastor Jon

**Reverse Advent Calendars** – Last year I found this idea on Facebook and thought it would be a wonderful way for all of us to have an opportunity to help people who are less fortunate and think about the blessings we have during the season of Advent. The idea comes from Advent Calendars. When I was growing up, we always had an Advent Calendar. They were usually made of paper, but in my later years of childhood were cardstock covering a plastic tray which held small chocolate treats. Each day from the first Sunday in Advent until Christmas, we would open the day of the Advent Calendar and find the picture or the small chocolate treat. It was a visual reminder of our focus on the season of Christmas. Since then I have seen very elaborate boxes where the treats and gifts are far more than a picture or a simple piece of chocolate.

The idea of the Reverse Advent Calendar is to turn around the receiving of a gift each day to the giving of a small gift each day. We have purchased small boxes which will be distributed in church during the month of November. We are encouraging people to spend three weeks from Sunday, November 26<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> placing one small item into the box each day. We will then bring the boxes to a homeless shelter in East Palo Alto and the boxes will be given to people at their annual Christmas dinner.

We have purchased 100 boxes and hope to fill all of them as Reverse Advent Calendars. We know about 70 people are at the dinner each year. Any extra boxes will be distributed to other homeless people and people in need. Some of the items you might consider putting into the box on a given day are: comb, brush, deodorant, soap, socks, toothbrush, toothpaste, scarf, hat, hand sanitizer, gloves, lip balm, wash cloth, small towel, shampoo, bar soap, lotion, band aids, etc. I am sure you will be able to think of creative items which would benefit people who are in the shelter.

Littlest Angels Preschool will be working on a project to help children in the community. If you would like to help with that project, you are welcome to contribute. However, the main focus for the church this year will be these Reverse Advent Calendars and our standard food basket distribution.

While we will be distributing boxes for these Reverse Advent Calendars at the 9:30 Bethany service and the 5:00 Lighthouse service, we would also love to provide boxes to other people who would like to participate. If you read this and want to fill a box, please come to the church office and we will give you one.

**Thanksgiving and Christmas Food Baskets** – Each year we collect donations, purchase food, and distribute the food baskets with our friends at the Tongan AOG church. Pastor Pesa's passion for helping the homeless and people with financial needs, helps us deliver these blessings to people in need who live in our community. Please give generously to our food basket program.

**Helping St. Nicholas** – For many years Littlest Angels families have been spreading Christmas joy to families and children in our community who are financially less privileged. This annual program was an idea from preschool families and has been executed in cooperation with our Lay Ministry team. In previous years we have provided Christmas gifts for families, school supplies for students, and this year we are sharing the tradition of St. Nicholas by giving out books, fruit, candy and other small goodies to children who normally do not receive Christmas gifts.

During this project the preschool children will have an opportunity through art projects to learn about St. Nicholas. Here is a brief description of his work as written on the website [www.stnicholascenter.org](http://www.stnicholascenter.org). The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara. At the time the area was Greek and is now on the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships.

We look forward to sharing the tradition of St. Nicholas and Santa Claus in one of the earliest traditions of Christmas.

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## **Bible Basics by Pastor Tom Norris**

### **Remember**

A few weeks ago, I was at a big box hardware store picking up some items for a repair job at my mom's house. As I entered the store there was a very large—about 100 feet long and 30 or 40 feet wide—"holiday" display.

There was, of course, a selection of Halloween items. That didn't really surprise me given that Halloween was upcoming. What surprised me is that ***all*** of the other holiday décor for sale was for... Christmas.

What happened to Thanksgiving? It used to be that Christmas items weren't out for sale until after Thanksgiving. Now? Not only are they out before Thanksgiving, but... there were no Thanksgiving decorations at all. No cornucopia, no fall leaves, not a single turkey in sight.

As I've thought about it, I think this Thanksgiving oversight is part of the reason for Deuteronomy 8. Ok. Not this big box hardware store's oversight in particular, but our very real human tendency to forget God's provision for our lives and the concomitant failure to live thankful lives.

The words of Deuteronomy 8 were first directed to the people of Israel as they were about to enter the land God had promised to give to Abraham and his descendants (this promise to Abraham had been given hundreds of years before, and Deuteronomy 8 is directed to his ancestors after the Exodus from Egypt and the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness).

Deuteronomy 8 is replete with words like, "remember," "observe," "do not forget." One might surmise from God's repetition in this chapter that he knows us, our tendency to forget and to think that all that we have is from our own human efforts.

For a variety of reasons, our culture is moving away from its Christian roots. This makes it easier for even us who are baptized into Christ and called by his name to forget, to not remember, to fail to observe, and to forget that God is the Maker of all that is who still provides for us, that God is our Redeemer who rescues us from sin, and that God is our Advocate and Guide through this life and forever.

Even more, this God has promised never to forget His people.

I invite you this Thanksgiving especially, but really every day, to remember, to observe, not to forget... and to give thanks for all that God has done, is doing, and will do for you and for all His people.

In Christ,  
Pastor Tom

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## **Women's Ministries**

### **The donation for November will go to Lutheran Social Services of Northern California.**

Lutheran Social Services (LSS) responds when people are vulnerable because of homelessness, mental illness, drug addiction, or disaster. Providing support services and compassionate guidance, LSS helps individuals and families to stabilize their lives and become self-sufficient.



LSS currently serves nearly 3,000 clients in Sacramento, San Francisco, Contra Costa, and San Joaquin Counties. Its programs include money management services, case management in transitional and permanent supportive housing sites, case management and housing services for emancipated former foster care youth, disaster preparedness training, and long-term disaster response services in the event of a local disaster.

As a public benefit corporation and a 501(c)3, LSS is funded by individual and corporate donations, government contracts, grants, and by the support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, and their member congregations. LSS also works as the lead affiliate for Northern California for Lutheran Disaster Response.

**For more information about LSS, please go to [www.lssnorcal.org](http://www.lssnorcal.org).**

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## The Women's Ministries Annual Bake Sale Is Coming!

The Annual Bake Sale will be on Sunday, December 10. Please consider donating your favorite homemade desserts, baked goods, or other mouthwatering snacks to this important fundraiser. Or...if you can't donate items now, consider offering a gift certificate for homemade goodies that can be redeemed by the recipient during the year. We will gladly create the gift certificate for you! Please let Linda Bradley know what you'd like to donate (854-5897, ext. 210 or [lindab@bethany-mp.org](mailto:lindab@bethany-mp.org)).

Mark your calendar now so you don't miss the opportunity to support missions and buy scrumptious goodies for yourself or to give to someone special. All proceeds help fund missions and the Women's Ministries events. Your support is appreciated!

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## Youth Group News

Greetings,

Our youth groups enjoyed a fun pizza and game night on Sunday, October 22, 2017. Lots of Minute to Win It games were played and the competition was fierce. It was definitely a good time by all.

We will host another Game Night on Sunday, November 4, 2017 at 6:00 PM in the Family Center directly after the 5:00 PM, Light House Worship Service.

November is a busy month as we are getting ready for our annual Gingerbread House Decorating Fundraiser on the first Saturday in December. (can you put the link to feature here).

### SAVE THE DATE:

Gingerbread House Decoration Fundraiser - Saturday, December 2, 2017, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Bethany in the Family Center. Visit [www.bethany-mp.org/gingerbread](http://www.bethany-mp.org/gingerbread) for info.

All proceeds go towards youth group projects and activities.

As always, friends are welcome to attend and participate. Please feel free to contact me at [pilar@bethany-mp.org](mailto:pilar@bethany-mp.org) or 650.854.5897.

Safe travels to all those traveling for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Blessings,  
Pilar



## A Note of Thanks

Martha Renner wishes to thank her entire Bethany family for their friendship, thoughtful support, cards and prayers over the last seven years. You have all helped to make these sad journeys easier to bear and my faith stronger. Sincere thanks.

# Angelic News

## It's Not Fair!

Our "Cookie" virtue this month at preschool is FAIR. "It's not fair!" is a holler most parents hear quite often. Somehow, it seems kids have a built in fairness sensor. I can remember our children used fairness to argue for their rights to countless things; who gets the biggest cookie, who gets to shower first, whose turn to empty the dishwasher, who gets to be in charge of the TV remote, who gets to sit in the front seat of the car, who gets to go to the movie alone with their friends and no grown-up...and on and on and on it went. Everything had to be fair. Every time I thought I had the "fairness" thing worked amicably someone would end up crying or shouting, "M O M, that's just not fair!" Then I began to realize that perhaps I wasn't helping the situation much by trying so hard to keep things perfectly fair—it's just not possible! And there is yet another lesson to learn. The world just isn't fair. And sometimes good things happen to you and sometimes they happen to others.

How does one determine what is fair? Fairness is often presumed to go hand-in-hand with keeping things equal. Here's a quote I like that helps answer the question. "FAIRNESS DOES NOT MEAN EVERYONE GETS THE SAME. FAIRNESS MEANS EVERYONE GETS WHAT THEY NEED." -Rick Riordan. There you have it. Fairness is about making sure all are treated with the kindness and respect they deserve in their own specific circumstances.

Here are some ways we can help children understand fairness...

- ❖ Play games that involve fairness. Model good choices and sportsmanship.
- ❖ Chat about "house" rules and "school" rules. Are they the same for everyone? Should they be?
- ❖ Read children's books and detect fair and unfair behavior and find some solutions together.
- ❖ Be consistent in making decisions in a fair way.
- ❖ "Live so that when your children think of fairness and integrity, they think of you." -Jackson Brown. I can never seem to say this enough. Our actions are the only way we truly teach honorable character traits to our children. Grown-ups have to practice what they preach!

And always remember... you have a Friend and Helper who is always thinking about you! "God is always fair. He will remember how you helped the people in the past and how you are still helping them. You belong to God, and He won't forget the love you have shown His people." Hebrews 6:10 (CEV)

During this "thanks giving" season, the entire Littlest Angels Preschool Staff and I would like to wish you all a blessed Thanksgiving. We consider your children to be very special blessings in our lives...thanks for sharing them with us.

Kathy Stinson,  
Director





Now Showing in  
**November 2017**



(for FAQ's)



Your Facebook Address | [LifetreeCafe.com](http://LifetreeCafe.com)

<p>November 8</p>  <p>One woman's struggle with anorexia</p> <p><b>Triumph Over Trauma</b></p>	<p>November 15</p>  <p><i>Smile...</i></p> <p>Even when you think you can't</p>
<p>November 22</p>  <p>LONELY</p> <p>Secrets learned in solitary confinement</p> <p><b>CANCELLED</b></p>	<p>November 29</p>  <p>Religious FREEDOM</p> <p>Standing up for what you believe</p>

**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



# **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, small towel, lotion, shampoo, bar soap, hand sanitizer, band aids, razor.**

**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**



# Women's Breakfast *Bible Study*

**Saturday, November 11**

**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.

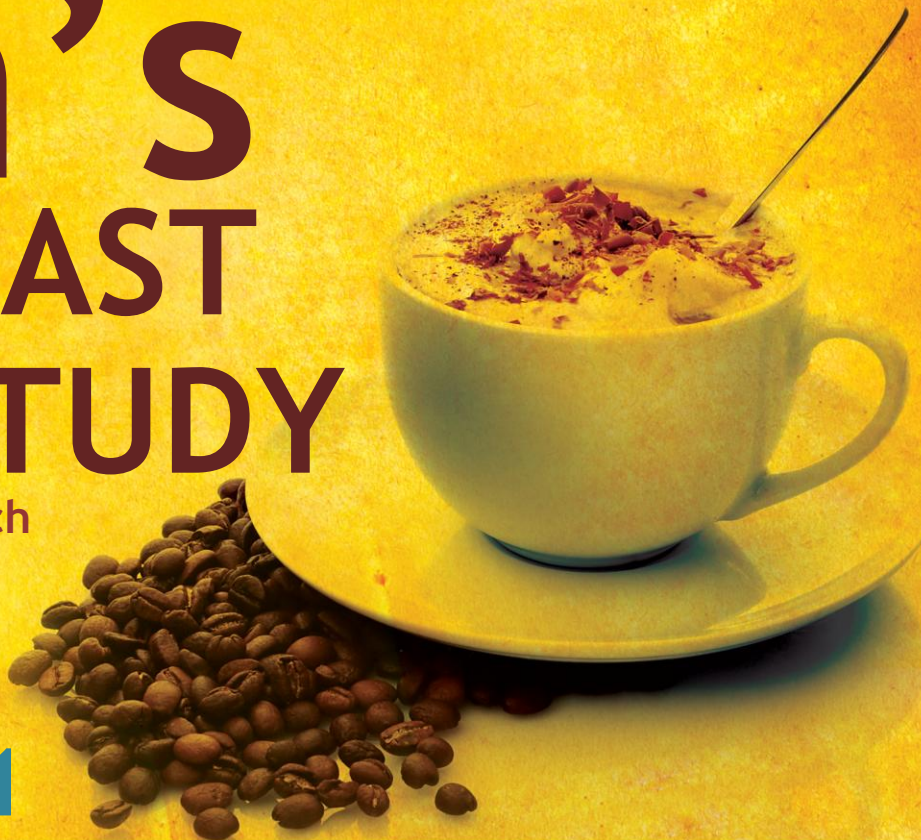
Free childcare is available. Arrangements must be made in advance.  
Please contact Linda in the Church Office at 650-854-5897 ~ [lindab@bethany-mp.org](mailto:lindab@bethany-mp.org).



# Men's BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY

Bethany Lutheran Church

Saturday,  
November 11



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).

# 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.**



# NOVEMBER 2017

Sunday			Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
<b>29</b> <b>Reformation Sunday</b> 9:30 AM Worship & Children's Worship 10:45 AM Congregational Meeting 11:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Mohk Yang Korean Church Service 3:00 PM The Coffee Shop 4:00 PM "Avy & Cloud" Rehearsal 5:00 PM Lighthouse - A Contemporary Praise Service 6:00 PM The Coffee Shop & Music Lounge Presents: Open Mic Halloween Party	<b>30</b>		<b>31</b> <b>Reformation Day</b> 9:20 AM Preschool Halloween Parade 9:30 AM Walking Group 7:00 PM Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting	<b>1</b> 3:00 PM Concordia Irvine - Set-up 3:30 PM Concordia Irvine Meeting 6:30 PM Mysteries of Mental Illness: One Woman's Struggle to Regain Her Life (Lifetree Café Menlo Park) 6:30 PM NT Course 7:45 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>2</b> 9:30 AM Walking Group 11:30 AM Knitting Group	<b>3</b> 7:30 PM Stanford Int'l Folk Dancers	<b>4</b>							
<b>5</b> <b>Daylight-Saving Time Ends</b> 9:30 AM Worship & Children's Worship 11:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Mohk Yang Korean Church Service 3:00 PM The Coffee Shop 4:00 PM "Avy & Cloud" Rehearsal 5:00 PM Lighthouse - A Contemporary Praise Service 6:00 PM The Coffee Shop & Music Lounge Presents: Youth Game Night	<b>6</b> 7:00 PM First Responder Meeting		<b>7</b> * Preschool Picture Day 9:30 AM Walking Group 7:00 PM Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting	<b>8</b> * Preschool Picture Day 6:30 PM NT Course 6:30 PM Triumph Over Trauma (Lifetree Café Menlo Park) 7:45 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>9</b> 9:30 AM Walking Group 12:15 PM Women's All Church Prayer Group	<b>10</b> Church offices, Preschool office & Preschool closed	<b>11</b> <b>Veterans Day</b> 9:00 AM Men's Breakfast Bible Study 9:00 AM Women's Breakfast Bible Study							
<b>12</b> * Happy Mail Sunday * 9:30 AM Worship & Children's Worship 11:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Mohk Yang Korean Church Service 3:00 PM The Coffee Shop 4:00 PM "Avy & Cloud" Rehearsal 5:00 PM Lighthouse - A Contemporary Praise Service 6:00 PM The Coffee Shop & Music Lounge Presents: Tony Ramey & Johnny Gates Live	<b>13</b> 9:00 AM Littlest Angels "Helping St. Nicholas" Donation Drive Begins		<b>14</b> 9:30 AM Walking Group 7:00 PM Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting	<b>15</b> 6:30 PM NT Course 6:30 PM Smile - Even When You Think You Can't (Lifetree Café Menlo Park) 7:45 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>16</b> 9:30 AM Walking Group	<b>17</b> 7:30 PM Stanford Int'l Folk Dancers	<b>18</b> 10:00 AM Thansgiving Food Baskets Assembly 1:00 PM Beckstrom Family - Private Baptisms							
<b>19</b> 9:30 AM Worship & Children's Worship 11:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Mohk Yang Korean Church Service 3:00 PM The Coffee Shop 4:00 PM "Avy & Cloud" Rehearsal 5:00 PM Lighthouse - A Contemporary Praise Service 6:00 PM The Coffee Shop & Music Lounge Presents: Cook and Rose Live	<b>20</b> 7:00 PM First Responder Meeting		<b>21</b> Last day before Preschool holiday: no after care 9:30 AM Walking Group 7:00 PM Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting	<b>22</b> Church offices, Preschool office & Preschool closed 5:00 PM Submission deadline for newsletter articles 6:30 PM CANCELLED - Lifetree Café Menlo Park 6:30 PM NT Course 7:00 PM Thanksgiving Eve Service	<b>23</b> Church offices, Preschool office & Preschool closed <b>Thanksgiving Day</b>	<b>24</b> Church offices, Preschool office & Preschool closed	<b>25</b>							
<b>26</b> * <b>"Reverse Advent Calendar" Program Begins Today</b> 9:30 AM Worship & Children's Worship 11:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Mohk Yang Korean Church Service 3:00 PM The Coffee Shop 4:00 PM "Avy & Cloud" Rehearsal 5:00 PM Lighthouse - A Contemporary Praise Service 6:00 PM The Coffee Shop and Music Lounge Presents: Open Mic Night	<b>27</b>		<b>28</b> 9:30 AM Walking Group 7:00 PM Menlo Park Toastmasters Meeting	<b>29</b> 6:30 PM NT Course 6:30 PM Religious Freedom (Lifetree Café Menlo Park) 7:45 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>30</b> 9:30 AM Walking Group 3:00 PM Youth Groups Gingerbread House prep time	<b>1</b> 3:00 PM Youth Groups Gingerbread House prep time 5:00 PM Last Day to Sign- up for Parents' Night Out (12/9)	<b>2</b> 9:00 AM Gingerbread House Decorating 5:00 PM Private Event - Krystal Finau							

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