

December 20, 2024

THIS WEEK'S SERVICE

This Sunday we continue the season of Advent with our sermon series, *God Comes Close*, reflecting on this week's theme of love. We heard the angel's announcement to Mary and to the shepherds – have you ever wondered how Joseph heard the news? God sent an angel to Joseph to reveal that Mary's pregnancy was from the Holy Spirit. This child, Jesus, and his life would bring about everything Joseph longed for – God to save us from our sins. The message this Sunday will focus on Matthew 1:18-24, "Love in the Unknown."

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES: We are excited as we work hard to prepare a meaningful and impactful Christmas Eve Service - a service which is so important to our community!

Come with us as we step into the Christmas story, at **4:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m.** Jesus Christ came to us as God's promised anointed one, the son of God who would save the world. At his birth, we remember him as our Prophet and Teacher, Priest, Shepherd, King, and Savior. What role does Jesus play for you?

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE: On this day of celebration, it is important to remember that we do not receive the victory of the cross if we do not have the manger first. Every gift of Christmas echoes God's ultimate gift to us - His forgiveness and love. Giving gifts to one another is then an overflow of God's first gift in Jesus.

BETHEL KIDS: There will be no Bethel Kids programming during the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services or on December 29. Activity bags to use during these services can be picked at the Bethel Kids desk at the back of the sanctuary. While the nursery will be open, it will be unsupervised. The Wiggle Room will be available as well. Regular Bethel Kids programming will resume January 5, 2025

OUR OFFERINGS

1) **BETHEL MINISTRIES & MISSION:** The ministries and programs of Bethel.

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

DECEMBER 25: HOPE MISSION: is a Christian, not-for-profit, social care agency that provides compassionate care and offers hope to hurting, hungry and homeless people. Hope Mission exists to serve, strengthen and uplift men, women, youth and children through the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ and by providing meals, shelter, lunch programs, summer camps and food hamper programs. For more information visit: hopemission.com

DECEMBER 29: MINISTRY SHARES: is a cooperative venture of all CRC churches in Canada to send missionaries around the world, start new churches, resource congregations, train pastors and leaders, and use media to spread the gospel. The pooled resources allow the church to do more together than an individual church could do on its own. For more information visit crcna.org/MinistryShares

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

We express our heartfelt sympathy to **PAULINE LENDEIN** and family as they grieve the loss of Pauline's sister, Fanny. Our condolences are also extended to **RICARDO ZAPATA**, whose father, Antonio, passed away. We remember in prayer the **CAZEMIER FAMILY** as Margaret's mother, Wilhelmina de Groot, went home to be with the Lord last weekend. We also lift up the **ELZINGA FAMILY** as Ann's brother, Jerry, passed away on Wednesday of this week. We ask for the Lord's comfort and care for all these families as they grieve and remember their loved ones

COBY SNYDER has been in the hospital twice over the last week because of an infection; pray for the treatment to work quickly and that Coby's health would be restored.

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

OFFICE HOURS: Please note that the office *will be closed* December 24 through January 1.

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

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

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

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

BETHEL YOUTH

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

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

Faith groups will be invited to attend our post-game activities which include games, prizes, post-game skate, and a chance to meet with other faith-based groups. Please sign up [here](#) to attend the **January 10** game.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING: It takes 21 days to build a new habit. We want to start the year working on several important ones together as a church: prayer and fasting. Visit discoverbethel.com/21daysofprayer to explore suggested resources. These include apps, books, articles, and studies as additional ways to pray and seek the Lord together at Bethel.

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

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

PERSONAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COURSE: Feeling those January bill blues? Join us for a 6- week Finance Management Course which starts on Tuesday, January 14 to February 18 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. This course will give you an easy-to-follow personalized plan for money management. You will be guided through Dave Ramsey's, "7 Baby Steps", which starts with saving for an emergency fund and ends with building wealth and giving. Learn how to handle money, budget with confidence, and set, track and reach your financial goals. Within the first 90 days of following the 7 Baby Steps, the average family pays off \$5,300 in debt and saves \$2,700. Cost: \$75/household. Register [here](#).

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

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

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

FINANCIAL UPDATE

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

COLLECTIONS IN DECEMBER

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

COMMUNITY NEWS

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

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

Shiao Chong
Editor in Chief, *The Banner*

TODAY MAGAZINES: The January/February edition was received this week. Please check your mailbox for your copy or find a large print version at the Welcome Desk.

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

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

THE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, December 22

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

MONDAY, December 23

7:00 p.m. Prayer - Zoom

TUESDAY, December 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 p.m. Candlelight Service

6:00 p.m. Candlelight Service

WEDNESDAY, December 25 CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 a.m. Worship Service

8:00 p.m. AA

THURSDAY, December 26

7:00 p.m. Worship Practice

FRIDAY, December 27

SATURDAY, December 28



April 21, 2024

