



December 17, 2023

## THIS WEEK'S SERVICE

**THIS SUNDAY:** We will be worshipping together through one service in person and over live stream at 10:00 a.m. To join us online, go to Bethel's home page and click on the button that says: [Worship Online with Us](#).

This Sunday our advent sermon series, *Behold and Become: Unto us a Child is Born*, continues by reflecting on what it looks like to wait in silence for joy. Centuries pass where the people of God fail to see what must change in order for them to live at peace with God and with one another, resulting in pain, exile and hardship. Fast forward to the New Testament, Israel is governed by foreign powers. The worship of the people is stale, ritualistic and faithlessness. Few encounters capture this more than when an Angel of the Lord comes to Zechariah, a priest in the temple. The angel tells Zechariah that, after many years, his wife, Elizabeth, will have a son. Zechariah questions God and is silenced. Through this silence the Lord works to re-align Zechariah's heart. Unto us a child was born; the Lord works within the silence of advent so that we might prepare room for him in our own lives. When it came time to name the child "John," Zechariah's silence breaks with joy and praise. This should also be our response when Christ shall come.

The message this Sunday will focus on Luke 1:5-25, 57-66, "From Silence to Song."

**ADVENT AT BETHEL** - Walk with us through the journey of advent (Daily readings, question of the day, candle lighting guides and more). For details and resources, visit [www.discoverbethel.com/advent](http://www.discoverbethel.com/advent)

## OUR OFFERINGS ON SUNDAY

- 1) **BETHEL MINISTRIES & MISSION:** The ministries and programs of Bethel.
- 2) **ADEARA:** Adeara's long-term programming is built to end the cycle of addiction, not just for one woman, but for her children and future children. By providing faith-based accredited programming in a community setting, Adeara provides women the opportunity to step out of rhythms of drug abuse, crime, and trauma.

**NEXT WEEK:** December 24 - No offering

December 25 - **WORLD RENEW:** Compelled by God's deep passion for justice & mercy, World Renew joins communities around the world to renew hope, reconcile lives, and restore creation. Working in more than 30 countries, World Renew embraces a family-centered approach to ending global poverty and providing disaster response services.

## CHURCH FAMILY NEWS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Please remember **CALVIN BRUINSMA, CURTIS COENEN, MIKE JACKSON, PAULINE LENDEIN, JENNY PENFOLD, DON & ELEANOR PROKUDA, JANE SHULTZ, CELINE SIGVALDASON,** and **JILL SNEEP** as you pray for our church community.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be **NO COMMUNION** the last Sunday of the Year.

**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES:** On December 24th, we are gathering for Candlelight Christmas Eve services at 4:00 p.m. (will be live streamed) and 6:00 p.m. (in person only). This will be in place of our Sunday morning worship service. We invite you to come and bring friends and family as we tell the story of Jesus Christ and His love for our world.

**CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE:** Join us for our Christmas Day service in person and over live stream on Monday, December 25, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

**OFFICE CLOSED:** The Church office will be closed December 26 till January 1, 2024. Normal office hours will resume January 2, 2024.

**OFFICE HOURS:** Our official office hours have changed. New office hours will be Tuesday to Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. On regular weekdays the building will continue be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**PAUL AND PANCAKES:** We invite youth in Grades 7 to 12 to join us downstairs during the Sunday service on **December 17<sup>th</sup>** for an opportunity to gather for fellowship and Bible study while making and eating pancakes together.

**CHRISTMAS EVE CHOIR IS BACK!** Join us at our next practice on December 21 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and December 24 from 2:00-3:30 as we prepare for our Christmas Eve Service.

**SENIOR'S OPEN HOUSE:** Bethel seniors, you are invited to an Open house this Sunday, December 17 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. hosted by John and Grace Vleeming at 325 Estate Drive, Sherwood Park. All are welcome. Please bring a dish to share and a beverage of your choice. Coffee and punch will be provided. Parking is limited on the driveway so carpool or park farther away to leave the driveway for those who need it. There are 9 stairs in the house to navigate to get to where the fun, games, and an opportunity to win one of two gift baskets awaits.

**BETHEL KIDS FOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S EVE:** We will not have Bethel Kids classes on December 24, 25 or 31. The nursery will be open but unsupervised, and the Wiggle Room will be available as well. There will be activity bags by the check-in desk for the children to use during the service. Regular Bethel Kids will resume January 7.

**DAYS FOR GIRLS EVENT:** On New Year's Eve, December 31, 2023, Bethel's second offering is for Days for Girls. We will be hosting a small Days for Girls event in the Fireside room directly after the service. Join us for a chat and to view our products. You can also visit their website at [daysforgirls.org](https://daysforgirls.org) for more information on their organization.

**WINTER CLOTHING COLLECTION:** As the weather begins to get colder, there is a need in the local community for winter clothing. Please bring in gently used winter coats, snowpants, boots, and other warm gear. Items should be in wearable condition, clean and without holes. There is a Rubbermaid container under the mailboxes in the Sanctuary where you can place these items.

**BANDCAMP ADULT SESSIONS:** Do you have a desire to dig deeper into questions like: Why do we worship? Why is God worthy of my worship? How does what I believe about God impact the way I play with my band members? BandCAMP is a 4-session program run by Melanie Salte exploring questions like these and more. Every session will include time to connect, explore worship in Scripture, and worship through making music together. The heart of BandCAMP is to create a space for you to grow a heart and skill for worship. The dates we will be running are Tuesdays January 16, January 30, February 13, and February 27 from 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. To sign up please message [lisa@discoverbethel.com](mailto:lisa@discoverbethel.com).

**BETHEL YOUTH MISSIONS BOTTLE DRIVE:** Throughout the month of January, Bethel Youth Missions team will be collecting empty bottles, cans, and drink containers to raise money in support of our partner church in Hermosillo, Mexico. Save your empties over the next few weeks then, starting in January, bring in those bags of bottles & cans and leave them outside of Pastor Melanie's office. Last date for collection will be Sunday, January 28th.

**YOUTH MINISTRY DIRECTOR** Bethel Community Christian Reformed Church seeks a part-time (30 hours/week) **Youth Ministry Director**. The objective of this role within the Bethel church community is to curate and promote an environment where teenagers (ages 12-18) are disciplined in their faith and grow in community, as well as partnering with and supporting families as they nurture their youth's spiritual walk. For more about this position, please visit Bethel's Employment page: <https://www.discoverbethel.com/jobs>

**To Apply:** Send resume and cover letter to [hr@discoverbethel.com](mailto:hr@discoverbethel.com) **Closing Date:** January 15, 2024.

**PASTORAL POSITION STATEMENT AND RESOURCES:** We received a letter from our denomination reflecting on ministry among the LGBTQ+ community. Our council reviewed this on Monday and would like to share this as a resource for you. In the spirit of love and truth, we have significant work to do in how we show love to all our neighbours, but we also want to offer clarity about our position as a church, and how we feel led to advocate for God’s goodness in the world. We pray that our church will continue to be shaped by God’s love so that we can offer belonging and hope to all. If you would like further conversation about this with a pastor or council member, please let us know by emailing the Governing Elders ([governingelders@discoverbethel.com](mailto:governingelders@discoverbethel.com)) or Pastor Cris ([cris@discoverbethel.com](mailto:cris@discoverbethel.com)). To view the statement and pastoral letter, please go [here](#).

**COLLECTIONS IN DECEMBER:**

- December 3 Ministry Shares
- December 10 Bethel World Mission Vision – Seeds of New Creation
- December 17 Adeara
- December 25 World Renew
- December 31 Days for Girls

Please visit our website at [discoverbethel.com/give](https://discoverbethel.com/give) to see the ways that you can donate and support our different collections. If you have any questions about our giving options, please contact Sara at [accounting@discoverbethel.com](mailto:accounting@discoverbethel.com)

 **COMMUNITY NEWS**

**EMMANUEL HOME:** Emmanuel Home’s Year End Appeal is underway. This is your chance to assist our residents by helping to fund services that are not covered by the health system, such as Spiritual Care and Crisis Support. With your help aging residents can continue to live in Emmanuel Home, despite their increased challenges. Please consider a Year End gift that will put a smile on the faces of our residents! Donations can be made online at [www.emmanuelhome.ca/donate](http://www.emmanuelhome.ca/donate) or you can call us at 780-478-2051. Thank you for your generosity!

**BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE:** While there is good reason for the ‘celebrative’ atmosphere of Christmas, it can also be a challenging, even painful, time for those who live with the reality of brokenness or loss in their lives. A “Blue Christmas Service” is a service that allows that reality to be acknowledged and brought before the Lord, while at the same time recognizing the one who is bigger than a season. You are invited to participate in such a service (with communion) held at West End CRC on Sunday, Dec 17 at 7:00 p.m. If you are unable to attend in-person but would like to participate, please join us via livestream using the link on the West End CRC website, [westendcrc.ca](http://westendcrc.ca)

**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 17**

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

**MONDAY, December 18**

7:00 p.m. Prayer (Zoom)

**TUESDAY, December 19**

7:00 p.m. Worship Practice

**WEDNESDAY, December 20**

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

8:00 p.m. AA

**THURSDAY, December 21**

12:30 p.m. Food Bank

7:00 p.m. Choir & Worship Practice

**FRIDAY, December 22**

**SATURDAY, December 23**

**SUNDAY, December 24**

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

**MONDAY – FRIDAY, December 25-29**

Church office will be closed

**SUNDAY, December 31**

10:00 a.m. Worship – in person and live stream