



Fields of Grace Newsletter

<http://www.fields-of-grace.org>

Vol. 7, Issue 5

Bernadotte, First & Swan Lake Lutheran

December 2017

Holiday Schedule

- First Lutheran Sunday School Christmas program, Sunday, December 10, 4:00 p.m.; family BBQ meal follows
- Community Christmas Sing-a-Long, Sunday, December 10, 7:00 p.m., First Lutheran
- Joint Service—Sunday, December 24, 9:30 a.m., First Lutheran
- Christmas Worship Services—7:00 p.m., Christmas Eve at Swan Lake; 9:00 p.m., Christmas Eve at First; and 8:00 a.m. Christmas morning at Bernadotte
- Joint Service—Sunday, December 31, First Lutheran

No Sunday School program at Bernadotte this year



Confirmation services held

Ben Radke, son of Steve Radke and Judy Radke, was confirmed at Bernadotte on Sunday, October 29.

Kaylyn Broste, daughter of Jeremy and Carmen Broste, was confirmed at First Lutheran Sunday, November 26.

Wednesday & Sunday School

- Wednesday School will meet Wednesdays, December 6, 13 and 20 at First Lutheran. (Will move to BLC in January.)
- Bernadotte's Sunday School will gather Sundays, December 3, 10 & 17.

Community Bible Study at Big Dogs

Everyone is invited to Community Bible Study Monday mornings, December 11 & 18 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., at Big Dog's in Lafayette. (No Bible study on December 4.)

Sibley County Choral Society to present concert at Bernadotte

The Sibley County Choral Society will present a concert at Bernadotte Saturday, December 9 at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments and coffee will be served after the concert.

Meeting Dates

- First Lutheran Council—Mon., Dec. 4, 5:30 p.m. at First
- Bernadotte Council—Mon., Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m., BLC

Heidi will have time off

Heidi will be gone December 28 through January 12. Her supervisor, Pastor Andrew Hermodson-Olsen, will be available to provide pastoral care should there be a need. Contact him at 320-328-5533 (church) or 320-296-1337 (cell) or by email at gracebrownton@embarqmail.com.

To contact Heidi, call 507-766-2729 or email heidijohagstrom@gmail.com

FIELDS OF GRACE WORSHIP SERVICES

Swan Lake Lutheran—8:00 a.m.—Communion the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month

First Lutheran—9:30 a.m.—Communion the 1st and 4th Sundays of the month

Bernadotte Lutheran—11:00 a.m.—Communion the 2nd Sunday of the month

Heidi's Intern Minister Message

Preparation for Christmas is an important theme for Advent, but more is involved. Advent gives us a vision of our lives as Christians and shows us the possibilities of life.

The vision of life that Advent gives us is twofold; it looks back to the first coming of Jesus at Bethlehem, and it looks to the future when Christ will come again. In the interval between these two events we find meaning for our life as a Christian.

First we celebrate Christ-become-human. We view Jesus' life and experience Jesus' presence as a human being

in our history. Jesus came to show us what life can and should be. But Jesus knew that the human heart could not live in isolation. Jesus formed the Church around the concept of a people held together by love. In the community of the church we discover unlimited possibilities and meaning. It is together we find real meaning.

When Christ left this earth, he did not abandon us. He remains with us in his Spirit, the Church, the sacraments, the Scriptures and in each other. Jesus lives in community with us and keeps his vision of life before us.



Swan Lake fall supper



The Swan Lake ladies served up a delicious fall supper Thursday November 16. The menu included turkey commercials, stuffing, coleslaw, and apple crisp. Yummy! A good crowd of FOG members, friends, and neighbors turned out for the annual event.



DECEMBER 2017 WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

First Lutheran Church

Ushers: 3-Jim L. & Jacob B; 10-Jim L. & Connor H.; 17-Corey L. & Bailey L.; 24-Jon Hartley & Todd N.
Greeter: Dawn S.
Liturgist: 3, 10 & 17-Jorja L.; 24-Charlie H.
Readers: Sandy H.
Visiting: Sandy B. & Wendy G.
Communion Bread: Joyce Reese
Altar: Jo P. & Lindsay P.
Coffee Servers: 3-Linda I. & Laura I; 10-Jo P. & Dean P.; 17-Carrie N. & Sue H.; 24-?

Bernadotte Lutheran

Greeters: Ruth Klossner & Jill Bartels
Readers: 3-Shaun Anderson; 10-Steve Sjostrom; 17-Tim Schulz; 24 & 31-Joint Service at First Lutheran
Acolyte: Ben Radke
Ushers: Brent Johnson, Sarah Johnson, Ruth Klossner, Jill Bartels, Abby Bartels
Communion (Dec. 10 & 25): S-Brent Johnson; C-Trish Gieseke; U-Lori Fenske, Shaun Anderson
Coffee Servers: 3-Advent Dinner; 10-Karen Wingen; 17-Donna Webster; 24 & 31-Joint Services at First

Heaven gained a new angel

Swan Lake member Heather Giefer, 16, of rural New Ulm, died peacefully Saturday, November 18 at Mayo Clinic Health System-St. Mary's in Rochester after a courageous battle.



Funeral service was Monday, November 27 at Bernadotte. Pastors Heidi Hagstrom and Scott Richards officiated. A private family committal service will take place at a later date.

Heather is survived by her parents Tim and Lorie Giefer, sister Clarissa Giefer, grandparents Ron and Donna Giefer of Nicollet; and many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.

Bernadotte notes

- Annual Advent Potluck Dinner, Sun., Dec. 3, after morning worship. Coordinators: Renee Rasmussen, Judy Ross, and Sally Webster. M through Y serve.
- BLC annual meeting, Sunday, January 21, during the morning service. Alternate date Sunday, January 28.

First Lutheran choir practice

- Choir practice Sunday, December 3 & December 10, 8:50 a.m.

Open house at Ruth's collection

Everyone is invited to stop by the open house at Ruth Klossner's Cow Collector's Mooseum in Bernadotte Sunday, December 3 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Bernadotte and area youth will be tour guides. Cookies and milk will be served.

Youth looking for drivers

- FOG Youth needs volunteer drivers to the Live Nativity at Springfield, Saturday, December 9, 5:30-8:30 p.m. If you can help, contact Mark Haler at 766-6327 or mark.haler3@gmail.com.

Check out these area events

- **27th Cookie Walk** at St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church in Lafayette, Saturday, December 2, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.; lunch available.
- Trinity Lutheran of Sibley Twp. will hold **Christmas Eve Services in the Barn** Dec. 24 at 11:00 am, 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. at the David Kahle farm, 21074 431st Ave, (north of the church).

Bloodmobile at Nicollet

The Red Cross Bloodmobile will be at the Nicollet American Legion Monday December 11 from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. To make an appointment, call 1-800-733-2767.

Bernadotte WELCA annual brunch January 6

All ladies from the Fields of Grace churches are invited to a brunch, hosted by the Bernadotte women, Saturday, January 6 at Hahn's. RSVPs should go to Deb Sjostrom at 507-276-0452 or debrsjostrom@gmail.com.

Operation Christmas Child surpassed its goal

A big Thank You to all who participated, and to the Wednesday School kids and teachers for purchasing items and assembling Operation Christmas Child boxes.

First Lutheran was able to deliver 30 boxes. In addition to the boxes, \$270 was donated to pay shipping costs for the boxes.

First United Church of New Ulm was the collection location. They are grateful to First Lutheran for supporting the very worthy project. First Church's goal was 120 boxes this year—and they exceeded the goal with 140 boxes from their church alone.

Hopefully our churches can continue and increase Operation Christmas Child support next year, with even more boxes to be delivered to children in need across the world. Many have never received a gift or have heard the Christmas story. The joy the children receive from these gifts can only be imagined. Thank you!!

From Bernadotte to Bethlehem

by Linda (Hayes) Ramsden

On September 10, I sat with my sisters, Jennifer and Pat, during the service at the Bernadotte Lutheran Church. I was overcome with cherished memories of my life in Bernadotte, especially the joy of being the church organist. While growing up, I never imagined life anywhere else.

However, in 1973, I married an Englishman. At the time, I thought we'd be away for just a couple of years before returning to the States, but it wasn't to be.

On November 12, I attended the service at the Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. It was conducted in a mixture of Arabic and English because this church always attracts internationals visiting the birthplace of Christ.

Several of my friends attend the church, among them the Nasser family. Over the years I've taken internationals to meet them at Tent of Nations, their small family-owned farm, a few miles south of Bethlehem.

The family is dedicated to building bridges of understanding and its motto is "we refuse to be enemies"—even though it is surrounded by five Israeli settlements that are illegal under international law. The settlers covet their land and—since 1991—the Nassers have had an ongoing court case with the Israeli authorities that seek to confiscate their farm and demolish their structures.

The first time I met a Palestinian was in 1988. Our local church had sponsored Rev. Bilal Habibi to attend the Anglican Lambeth Conference. What a shock to discover that Palestinian Christians still existed and that not all are terrorists!

Then, in 1998, my husband and I participated in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We found ourselves based at a hotel in Bethlehem. Through encounters with the local people, my understanding of the conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestine Territory was challenged. Within months, I returned to learn more. In England, I immersed myself in the issue and then set up Experience Travel Tours because I felt an urgency to take people from the West to meet Palestinian Christians who feel forgotten, misunderstood and neglected.

I was in Bethlehem in September 2000 with a pilgrimage

group when the second intifada (uprising) broke out. The dynamic changed immediately as participants sought answers for the violence we saw. The pilgrimages planned for 2001 were cancelled. However, I felt a burning desire to return so I organized a fact-finding tour for people who wanted to witness the situation and stand in solidarity with the Palestinians who suffer under the brutal military occupation and the Israelis who work for peace with justice for all peoples.

My involvement in Palestine/Israel has developed on several levels and has been far beyond anything that I could have imagined. Time and again my faith has been challenged. Often it has been the ongoing faith of the Christians in Bethlehem that has kept my hope alive.

It would be an honor to have others from Bernadotte join me on a journey to Bethlehem. The next tour is March 12-22, 2018. For more information, go to www.experiencetravel-tours.com.



Linda Ramsden with her granddaughter Bethany at a museum in Bethlehem.

Good News Items from the FOG churches

Bernadotte members Bruce White and Jim Bartels were recognized at the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Awards Banquet Friday, November 17, during MFBF's 99th annual meeting in Bloomington. Bruce received the Post-Secondary Educator of the Year award while Jim received the Ag Communicator of the Year award. They're pictured with Seena Glessing of Howard Lake, FFA Advisor of the Year.



Jason Ross of Bernadotte was played the prince, the lead in GFW High School's production of Cinderella November 17-20. Mia Ross was on the crew and Robbie Gleason was the set builder.



First Lutheran's Fall Festival

First Lutheran in Lafayette held its Fall Festival Saturday, November 18 with a lot of activities—a bake sale, napkins and cards, a quilt raffle and silent auction, coffee and cookies, and dinner. First Lutheran member Dorothy Martens of New Ulm won the quilt in the raffle.



Unfortunately, I couldn't stay for the dinner but I caught a few of the kitchen crew, waiting to help with the ham dinner.

