



Volume 14 Number 1
January-February 2024
Editors: Chylene Daub/Shirley Giebel
Graphics Editor: Ginger Doherty

Heard through...

WILDWOOD CHURCH
Come Home to Bethel - Since 1858



The OPEN DOOR

17500 Manchester Road, Wildwood, Missouri 63038
www.bethelwildwood.org Phone: (636) 458-2255



HANGING OF THE GREENS: BETHEL'S TRADITIONAL PREPARATION FOR THE BIRTH OF THE CHRIST CHILD

Our congregation gathered after church service to join together for the annual decorating of our Sanctuary for Christmas. Thanks to everyone. It was beautiful as always!



COOKIES WITH A SMILE

Sadie, granddaughter of Lori Julius, greeted every shopper with a smile and a checkered bag as they came into the roomful of delicious Christmas cookies and candy for Bethel's Annual Cookie Sale. Barb Jacobs was chairman for the event which also included the Bethel Crafter's Christmas Boutique.



Shoppers loaded their bags with the variety of cookies and other baked goods. What do you get when you turn a traditional Gingerbread Man upside down, and decorate him just right? Why you have a perfect reindeer of course.

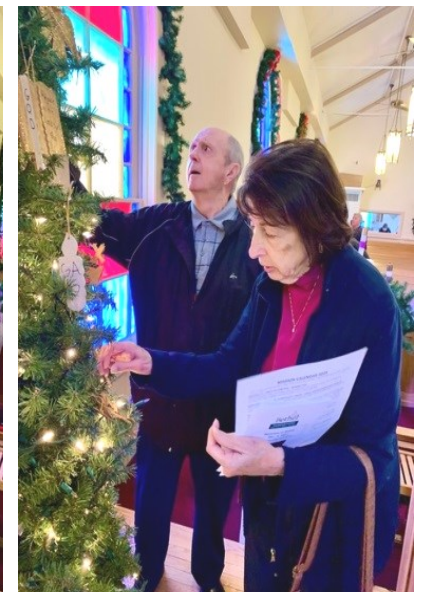
These special treats are made each year for the sale by Nancy Cross, daughter of Elaine Hellweg.

The Bethel Crafters opened their Craft Cottage to shoppers, providing room after room of beautiful Christmas decor. The Cookie Sale and Craft Boutique were a huge success as always.

THE CHRISMON TREE

Decorating the Chrismon tree is an annual tradition for Bethel Church. Each ornament depicts a Christian symbol, such as the star, the dove and the cross.

The congregation was invited to help decorate the tree in the sanctuary at the end of service on Dec. 3. Bonnie Swanstrom hangs an ornament on with her son Grant. Dennis and Sharon Coogan added more finishing touches. Many of these ornaments were made by Bethel Sunday School children years ago.



BETHEL VISITS BETHLEHEM TO HEAR THE STORY OF THE "INNKEEPER'S DAUGHTER"

Bethel traveled back in time to visit Bethlehem on Sunday, Dec. 10, to hear the story of the first Christmas. It was told by an eye witness to the holy night. Her name was Sarah, the daughter of the Innkeeper who had no more rooms in the inn.

The play was designed to be an audience participation, and characters were chosen from the congregation. After all, all we needed were angels, shepherds and three kings!

When church goers came into the sanctuary they saw that the Bethlehem Inn was center stage. Palm trees added to the scene. The story was narrated by Sarah, who was writing in her journal in her bedroom. She saw that two strangers were at the front door of the inn, and her father, the innkeeper, had to tell them that there was no more room for them. But Sarah had an idea, why couldn't they stay in the stable?



Mary was riding a little donkey and both she and Joseph were glad to have a warm place to stay. The facade off the Inn was rolled aside to reveal the manger, complete with animals. Everyone settled down for the night. Suddenly, Sarah was awakened by a bright star in the sky. Then she heard angels singing and sheep baying in the night. She also witnessed the Three Kings who came to worship the newborn Baby Jesus. The entire congregation joined in with the singing of Christmas carols as the story unfolded.

Sarah was played by Grace; the Innkeeper by Don Walsh. Joseph and Mary were Grant and Samantha Swanstrom. Gary Hayes, Greg Allerdissen and Sam Browning played the part of the shepherds. The Three Kings were Matt Swanstrom, Frederick Desalme and Karl Schoenefeld. Angels were Barb Jacobs, Diane Schoenefeld, Bonnie Swanstrom and Patti Bader and the "Littlest Angel" was Lily Browning.

BETHEL VISITS BETHLEHEM (continued)

The play was written by Chylene Daub who thanks everyone who participated to make it an enjoyable and meaningful day. Thanks also to Pastor Jeff for his encouragement, to Ron Guentz and Gary Hayes for their help with scenery, and to Shirley Martka and Linda Himmelmann for the Christmas Carols. Special thanks to our star of the play Grace who also played her violin, accompanied by Linda Himmelmann on piano to present a beautiful musical opening for the play, “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”.



THE SILENT NIGHT ON CHRISTMAS EVE

“Silent Night” is always the traditional closing hymn on Christmas Eve, as each member of the congregation holds a lighted candle. The beauty of Bethel and the serenity of the song is always a favorite moment of the Christmas Season.

(thanks to Nina Hayes for the photo)



NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE OTHERS

The new year is the best time to set goals, and Bethel plans to start the year with a list of goals for serving others. This is our Mission Calendar 2024.



As an independent church, Bethel has the freedom to choose the Mission projects we want to support.

Each month we will focus on a specific charity or organization. Some of them are organizations that we have worked with in the past. Some are new groups that Bethel members have suggested.

On the first Sunday of each month, aligning with Communion Sunday, we will announce our Mission for the Month, and encourage members to participate. All who want to contribute can bring recommended items, or make a donation.

For the month of January, 2024, Bethel has committed to assembling birthday cake kits for the Circle of Concern. Each kit will have one box of cake mix (any flavor), one can of Sprite soda, a can of icing and a package of birthday candles, along with a 9 x 13 inch baking pan. You can make as many kits as you would like, or you can donate \$5 for a child's gift bag.

For the month of February, we will ask for clothing and/or household items that can be donated to the New Life Evangelistic Center. They are always in need of winter coats and warm winter wear, and they accept used clothing.

Also in February, we will be honoring the Boy Scouts who are sponsored by Bethel Wildwood Church. The Open Door will publicize the Scout activities in our "Scout Corner" story.

As the year progresses, Bethel will be reaching out to help many other organizations: Newborns in Need, the Ronald McDonald House, the Girl Scouts April Showers drive, Equine Assisted Therapy, our local Fire Fighters and Police, the Gateway Alliance Against Child Trafficking, our Military and Soldiers, the Five Acres Animal Shelter, and more. We will continue our support for Circle of Concern with Thanksgiving baskets in November, and the holiday adoption program, and also the Mission Gate Christmas Angel Tree.

Bethel is also committed to the Highway 100 clean-up, which we do each quarter of the year. Mark and Alison Verbeck chair the project and will let us know the dates. We are also looking for someone to chair a Red Cross blood drive at our church. A date has not been set, but we will need volunteers and donors.

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES HAVE A FRIEND IN BARB JACOBS WHO RELEASED A RECORD

Monarch butterflies that happen to find their way into Barb Jacob's yard are lucky indeed. For the past nine years, Barb has been assisting these beautiful creatures to survive. She reached a milestone in 2023, by releasing a record 76 Monarch butterflies.

Barb recalls that in 2014, while tending her flower garden, she discovered the first chrysalis. She did some research and learned how people can assist butterflies during their first stages of life. Through the years, she has learned to search for the tiny yellowish-green eggs that are placed on the underside leaves of milkweed plants by the female Monarch. The mother chooses a milkweed plant because that is the main food source for Monarchs. Barb moves the eggs into a protected enclosure and makes sure that there is an ample supply of milkweed plants there for the next cycle. The brightly colored Monarch caterpillar emerges from the egg and eats exclusively on milkweed. As it grows, it molts several times, and reaches a length of almost two inches.



The next cycle is fascinating to watch, Barb says. She is always mesmerized by how quickly they make their chrysalis. "It takes only a minute," she says, and it is also amazing "how strong the silk thread is that holds the chrysalis." They hang in this stage for 10 to 14 days. ***Then, the miracle happens.*** The metamorphosis occurs and that chunky caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly. When the chrysalis becomes transparent in color, you know that the butterfly is ready to emerge. "It makes you wonder how they cram their wings inside the chrysalis," Barb says. She describes the body of the butterfly as plump with fluid and for the next several minutes, the butterfly will pump the fluid into the wings. The wings are

folded at first, and slowly begin to open. A mature Monarch butterfly wingspan can be four inches wide.

Barb watches carefully and when the butterfly is ready, she gently offers her hand, and it will cling to her finger. Then she lifts it to a flower. Eventually the Monarch butterfly, after being given a special name by Barb, will fly away. At times, when butterflies emerge so late in the year that flowers are not blooming, Barb has taken some of her butterflies to the Shaw Nature Preserve in Gray Summit to find flowers for them. One year, in October, she says, she had a friend transport a butterfly all the way to Florida.

Barb had a unique experience when she discovered three chrysalides that she identified as Eastern Black Swallowtail butterflies. The swallowtail does not migrate, so she wintered them in her garage over the winter, and she was able to release them the next spring.

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES HAVE A FRIEND IN BARB JACOBS (continued)

Monarchs Migrate Each Year, All the Way to Mexico

The Monarch butterfly, with its strikingly beautiful orange and black wings, is likely the most recognizable butterfly in America. They seem so resilient as they float across our skies in summer and early fall months, and yet they face an uncertain future. With loss of habitat, the threat of pesticides and climate change, Monarchs have been listed as “vulnerable,” but not on the endangered list. They definitely could use a helping hand from people willing to plant milkweed in their gardens.

Monarchs are unique in that they migrate for long distances each fall, leaving colder temperatures to winter in a warmer climate. Monarchs who live in the eastern half of Canada and the United States (which includes Missouri) travel all the way to Mexico. This can be a distance of nearly 3,000 miles. Scientists have noted that this is an incredible journey for a tiny creature that weighs about the same as a paperclip. Monarch populations who live west of the Rocky Mountains migrate to Southern California.

Most Monarchs have a short lifespan of only a few weeks. So, amazingly they produce one generation that lives for 8 to 9 months in order to accomplish this long journey. The migrating Monarchs use the position of the sun to guide them, but they also have an internal magnetic compass that helps them find their way in cloudy weather.

Barb has neighbors who share her passion for helping Monarch butterflies. She encourages others who would like to do the same. She recommends that everyone plant milkweed on their property, especially tropical milkweed which she says they seem to prefer.

Each year, Barb has named her butterflies before setting them on their journey. She knows how to identify male and female Monarchs, so she gives them appropriate names. In 2023, she said she went through the alphabet and back again. Next year she is planning to name them for characters from television shows. “You will see a Frazier and Miles...” she said with a smile.



Two male Monarchs, named Lee & Michael, were released in October.



Newly emerged butterflies hanging among chrysalides in their protective tent. This fella arrived on a busy day. He was the first Monarch of the 2023 season. He was one of four to emerge and face the world.



Dear Friends,

Once again, thank you so much for a wonderful Open Door...you all are amazing and we are all are so blessed to receive the great news letter. Blessings to all.— **Ruth Anne**

Bethel members,

We wish to thank you for your generosity. Because of your gift, we are able to continue our mission & positively impact the lives of many family.— **Circle of Concern**

Thank you to all those who worked hard to decorate our church and help deliver two powerful services on Christmas Eve. I felt the spirit on that Sunday, and I know many of you did as well. It’s still amazing to me how many dedicated Bethelonians jump in when needed. Thanks again! — **Pastor Jeff**

Thank you for the touching gift as part of this year’s Love Offering. The generosity at Bethel is something for which we praise God each and every day! — **Pastor Jeff and Carol**

Thanks for your generous Love Offering & continued support throughout the year.— **Ginger**

Chylene,

Thank you, thank you Chylene for picking up the reins and getting the Jan/Feb issue done almost singlehandedly. Also the wonderful Christmas play shows your talent in glowing colors. It is a privilege to work with you and Ginger. — **Shirley G.**

OPEN Praise Team

Anyone with singing or instrumental musical talents interested in helping the praise team please get in contact with Shirley Martka ASAP.

Giving

In an effort to make you aware of our ongoing income and expenses Bert, our treasurer, has calculated our monthly expenses and we have provided a total of our offerings for the given month as follows:

Total estimated monthly expenses:	\$12,600
Total offerings received as of 12/31/23:	\$21,934

Circle of Concern is currently in need of the following items:

healthy snacks, cereal, oatmeal, canned beef/chicken, beef stew, canned fruit, condiments, boxed potatoes, rice, baking items, flushable wipes, body wash, vitamins, cold medicines, lotion, cotton swabs, hygiene products, cleaning products, dry pet food & litter

On The Calendar @ Bethel

- Bethel Fitness**—Mondays & Thursdays @ 9am
- Music Ministry Practice**—Tuesdays @ 3pm
- Crafters & Prayer Shawl Warriors**—Thursdays @ 9:30am
- Christian Perspectives Class**—Sunday, Jan. 21 @ 9am
- Christian Perspectives Class**—Sunday, Jan. 28 @ 9am
- Scouting Sunday**—Sunday, Feb. 4
- Communion**—Sunday, Feb. 4 @ 10am
- Board Meeting**—Tuesday, Feb. 6 @ 7pm
- Juliets' Luncheon**—Tuesday, Feb. 13 - Big Chiefs @ 11:30

Fellowship Time

Join us for coffee in fellowship hall after worship every Sunday. All are welcome.

Nursery

Childcare provided during Sunday service.

We are blessed to have a good number of gifted lay leaders willing to help make our Zoom service a success.

Our schedule for January is as follows...

Date	Devotion	Music	Lead	Prayer	ZOOM	PPT
1/14	PJeff	Shirley	Louella	PJeff	TBD	TBD
1/21	PJeff	Shirley	Don	PJeff	TBD	TBD
1/28	PJeff	Shirley	Pat E	PJeff	TBD	TBD

The ZOOM & PPT Teams arrange their own schedules.

Contribution Recordkeeping Schedule

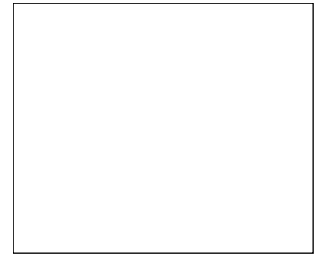
	Sheila	RuthAnne/Bert	Bert	Bert	
January	7	14	21	28	

Counters Schedule

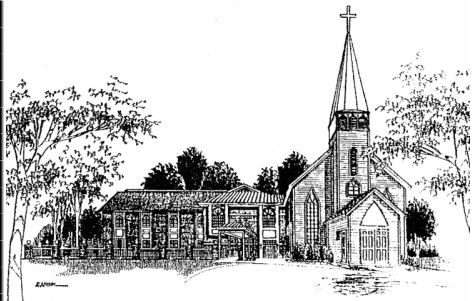
	Dale/Sheila	RuthAnne/Bert	RuthAnne/Suzi	Bert/Debbie	
Jan.	7	14	21	28	



Bethel Wildwood Church
17500 Manchester Road
Wildwood, MO 63038-1907



**January-February 2024
News!**



Bethel Wildwood Church

***Love God,
Love Others,
Serve All!***

Please Join Us Sunday For Service

Service will be **LIVE** in the sanctuary @ **10 a.m.**
or you can use one of the following:

Church webpage: www.bethelwildwood.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BethelWildwoodChurch/> **"Like Us" on Facebook**

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@BethelWildwoodChurch>

Zoom: Please contact the church office at 636-458-2255 to receive the link.