

December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10am Worship – Guest Speaker: Scott Koop, SOWM (Luke 2:21-35 – <i>I Have Seen Your Salvation</i>) 11am Faith Formation (all ages) 12pm BBYOL	2	3 7am Men’s Prayer Meeting	4 6:30pm Bible Study Topic: Christmas Carols! 7:15pm Prayer Meeting 7:15pm Youth	5	6	7 1-4pm Baking Club
8 10am Worship – Pastor Yuri (Luke 1:39-56 – <i>Love’s Rejoicing</i>) 11am Faith Formation (all ages) 12pm BBYOL 6pm Carolling Outreach	9 6pm Carolling Outreach	10 7am Men’s Prayer Meeting 6pm Carolling Outreach	11 6:30pm Bible Study Topic: Christmas Carols! 7:15pm Prayer Meeting	12	13 7pm Bethesda Fun Night 7pm Youth (Christmas party)	14
15 10am Worship – Pastor Yuri (Luke 1:57-80 – <i>Love’s Redemption</i>) Communion 11am Faith Formation (all ages) 12pm BBYOL 6pm Carol Celebration!	16	17 7am Men’s Prayer Meeting 8am Elders meeting	18 6:30pm English Conversation 6:30pm Bible Study Topic: Christmas Carols! 7:15pm Prayer Meeting 7:15pm Youth	19 4-6pm UGM Songs of Hope: Christmas Carols in the North End (320 Princess) 6pm Young adults Christmas party	20	21
22 10am Worship – Children’s Christmas Presentation; Pastor Yuri (Luke 2:1-8 – <i>Love Divine All Loves Excelling</i>); 11am Faith Formation (all ages) 12pm BBYOL	23	24 7am Men’s Prayer Meeting 6pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY Wednesday activities paused	26	27	28
29 10am Worship – Pastor Yuri, New Year’s Message: <i>Be It Resolved: Devotion</i> 11am Faith Formation (all ages – TBC) 12pm BBYOL	30	31 7am Men’s Prayer Meeting	1 NEW YEAR’S DAY Wednesday activities paused	2	3	4 1-4pm Baking Club



Bethesda Church

Newsletter

Congregational letter

December 2024

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” – which means, “God with us.”
Matthew 1:22-23

God is with us. This is the promise of Christmas. Of course, this is what everyone these days assumes anyways. So...

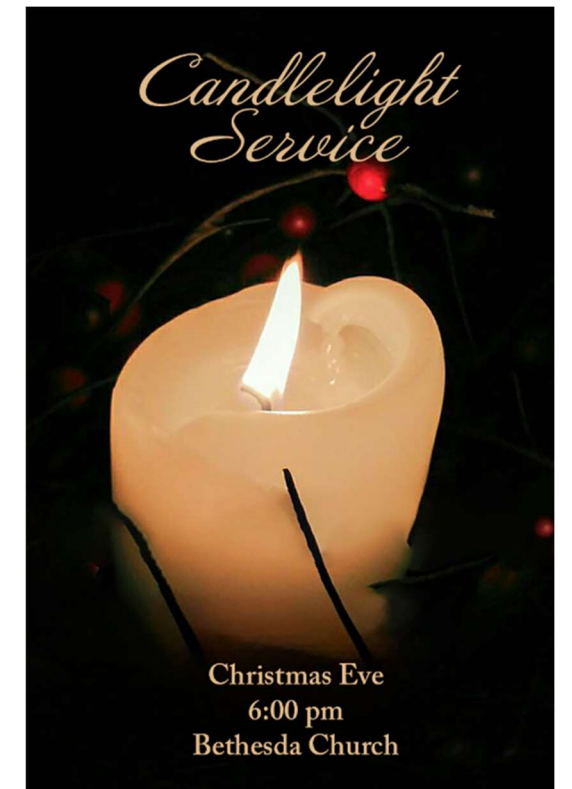
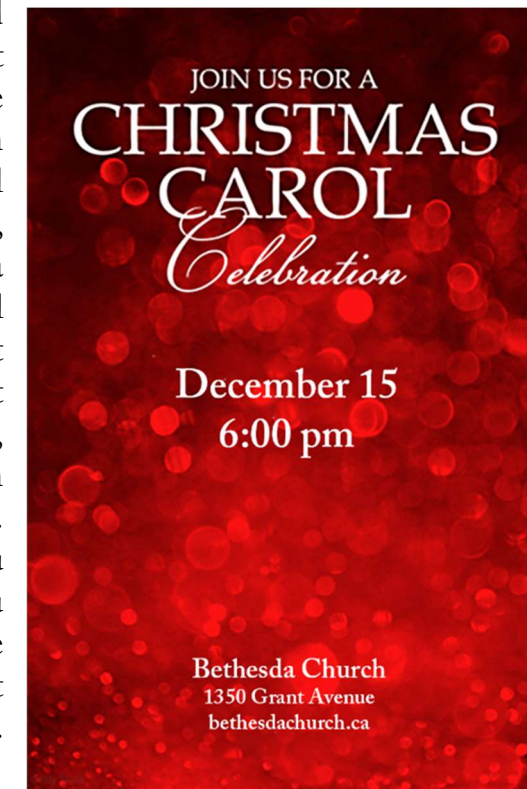
SO WHAT?

What does it mean to assume that God is with us? Does it mean that you feel that God is watching you? That he is hanging over your shoulder, evaluating your every decision? Well, no. Not for most of us. Not in any serious way.

Otherwise we would all act quite a bit differently than we do. Does it mean that you think he will actually show up, actually perform a miracle, that he will do something about the problems that you face? Well, no, not exactly. Not in any obvious sense. Otherwise, you might risk more. You might risk more about the things that really matter to you.

Sure, you risk. We all do to a certain extent. But not in ways that put you in any real jeopardy. You risk when the worst that could happen is that someone might feel a little disappointed in you. You risk when the future doesn't really hang in the balance. You risk, in other words, when you're pretty sure you can let God off the hook.

So what is it? In what way is God with us?



BETHESDA CHURCH

Bethesda Church Office Information
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For many, it means that he's the one who's responsible for the warm, cozy feelings that come over us – the "Christmas-y" kind of feelings we have get from time to time: when "all" you want is world peace and a happy family, when you feel in total harmony with your friends and relations and wish everyone else could, too.

What about when you don't feel that way? What about when you're worried about climate change or global warfare or you get passed over at work, or your kids don't call, or your friends take advantage of you...again. Is God with you then?

If we're honest, it doesn't feel like he is.

The promise of Christmas is that he IS, even when we don't feel like he is. He IS, even when that "Christmas feeling" feels as far as could be ... (which – for many – ironically is all too often

on Christmas Day itself!) But God IS with us, so while he IS behind the warm, cozy feelings, he is also aware of our every action, thought, and attitude. He IS there to underwrite every risk we take ... for him.

God IS with us. This is the word we need to share with our friends today. Not that he'll make them feel better all the time. But that he is God, and he knows. He is God, and he helps. He is God, and he expects something of us.

Over the coming weeks we hope you will share this word with your friends, family and neighbours by using the invitation cards we have printed (see front) inviting them to come to two special Christmas services. On Dec. 15 at 6:00pm we will host a Christmas Carol Celebration where we will sing our favourites, and on Dec. 24 (also at 6:00pm) we will host our

annual Candelight Christmas Eve service. At both services I will preach a short Gospel presentation. And on Dec, 8, 9, 10 at 6:00 we hope that you will consider joining us to reach out to our neighborhood by caroling door-to-door and passing out invitations! This is not the Gospel "hard sell" that scares most of us. It's a friendly invitation to those around us to sing their favourite songs in a beautiful space, close to some familiar, friendly faces! It's an invitation to rediscover the TRUTH behind the feeling, that IS the enchantment of Christmas.

This month we will also be studying the words of some of our most beloved carols on Wednesday nights! And of course, we will be praying. As I have been saying, I believe that prayer meetings are a must – at least they are for any congregation that wants to see God at work. (I can't imagine any congregation of believers who wouldn't!) The church is the way that God has chosen to make his presence known and keenly felt in the world at large.

If God IS with us, he will be with those who don't know him yet ... through US!

Praying you and yours have blessed Christmas season and a Happy New Year in which you know – and feel – that God IS with us!

Pastor Yuri

December 2024

Bible Reading Plan

- Pr 30:1-6
- *Heb 13:1-6
- Luke 6:1-11
- Ezra 7:1-10
- Num 13
- Num 14:1-10a
- Ezra 7:11-28
- Pr 30:7-9
- Luke 6:12-27
- Heb 13:7-16
- Num 14:10b-38
- Ezra 8:1-14
- Pr 30:10-14
- Luke 6:27-36
- Heb 13:17-25
- Num 14:39-45
- Ps 11
- Ezra 8:15-36
- Pr 30:15-17
- Luke 6:37-49
- *Ezra 9
- Ps 15
- Num 15:1-21
- Pr 30:18-20
- Luke 7:1-17

- Luke 7:18-23
- Ezra 10:1-17
- Pr 30:21-23
- Num 15:22-41
- Ps 23
- Luke 7:24-35
- Ezra 10:18-44
- Pr 30:24-28
- Num 16:1-17
- Ps 4
- Nehemiah 1
- Pr 30:29-31
- Num 16:18-40
- Ps 85
- Luke 7:36-50
- Luke 8:1-15
- Pr 30:32-33
- Neh 2:1-10
- Ps 40
- Num 16:41-17:13
- Neh 2:11-3:32
- Num 18:1-7
- Luke 8:16-21

- Neh 4
- Ps 3
- Num 18:8-32
- Luke 8:22-25
- Luke 8:26-39
- Num 19
- Neh 5
- Num 20:1-13
- Pr 31:1-9
- Neh 6:1-14
- Luke 8:40-56
- Luke 9:1-9
- Neh 6:15-7:3
- Num 20:14-21:3
- Pr 31:10-31
- Luke 9:10-17
- Song of Songs 1:1-4
- Neh 7:4-38
- Num 21:4-20
- Ps 74
- *Luke 9:18-27
- SoS 1:5-6
- Num 21:21-35
- Neh 7:39-73
- Ps 73

- Num 22
 - SoS 1:7-8
 - Neh 8:1-12
 - Luke 9:28-36
 - Num 23:1-26
 - Jude 1-16
 - Luke 9:37-45
 - Neh 8:13-18
 - SoS 1:9-17
 - Luke 9:46-56
 - Num 23:27-24:25
 - SoS 2:1-7
 - Neh 9:1-3
 - Jude 17-25
 - Neh 9:4-37
 - Num 25
 - Luke 9:57-62
 - *SoS 2:8-13
- *Memory Verses:**
 Keep up the memory work on Luke 2:1-18!
 If you want more to do, there are some great verses in December's readings!

#1: Hebrews 13:5
Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you."

#2: Ezra 9:10,13
O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift my head to you [...] and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins deserved and have given us a remnant like this.

#3: Luke 9:23b-25
"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow..."

#4: Song of Songs 2:10-11
"Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me. See! The winter is past..."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CAROLLING, CAROLLING HERE WE GO...

Join us at 6:00 on Dec. 8, 9 & 10 as we carol through Bethesda's neighborhood invite our friends on the block to our Christmas Services on the 15th & 24th!

CAROLLING, CAROLLING ON WE GO...

On Dec. 19 at 4:00pm meet at Union Gospel Mission (360 Princess) to go carolling through UGM's neighborhood and share the hope of Christ with many who see very little of the hope that Jesus gives!

"FAITH MADE SIMPLE" CLASS

Sunday mornings at 11:15am in the Lower Lounge. For anyone and everyone who wants to know what it means to be a Christian! The course material is based on *Simple Truths*, a resource in simple English from *Clear & Simple Media*, which has been translated into many other languages. This class is taught by Pastor Yuri and replaces the Q&A time (for now!) Visit asimpleword.org for resources.

PRAYER & INTERCESSION

- Arlene Rempel (broken shoulder)
- Christmas Outreach
- Canada Post strike
- Newcomers to Bethesda
- "Faith Made Simple": *Faith Formation Class*
- "Faith @ Work": *presenters*
- Kids Ministry: *Teachers, too!*
- Youth Ministry: *Leaders, too!*
- Afghan Families: *language, culture, school*
- Andrea & Rick Wittebolle
- Andrew Poirier: *mental health*
- Betty Campbell: *PCH*
- Cheryl Warax: *Pastor Mark's sister*
- Chris Wilcoxson
- Don Register: *Shelby's dad*
- E's brother in prison
- Praise & Prayer! E. passed welding course, now looking for work
- Edwin & Kamala Henry: *Esther's parents*
- Gail Barnes
- George & Lori Manalang
- Joan McRae: *Misericordia Place*
- Lawrence & Selma Churchill
- Laylee, her sons, and her mother
- Marion Hill: *Susanne's Mom*
- Marye P.: *Kathy's friend – cancer*
- Mike & Sunny Cheon
- Pastor Mark
- Patti Poirier: *health & strength; travel*
- Ron De Hoff: *Patti's brother*
- Shirley Mercer
- Tania & Valentyna K.: *Kathy's friends*
- Venus Cote (kidneys)
- World conflicts: *Lebanon / Israel / Iran / Gaza; Ukraine / Russia, etc.*