

OCTOBER 2025



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Buffalo Center, IA 50424

Oh, Bethlehem!

Faith, hope, and love make us available for our neighbors near and far

GREETERS & USHERS

OCTOBER

*5 Jackson Holland Family & Jen McGrady
*12 Patty & Travis Hassebrook & Henry Schaefer Family
19 Mariah Roth Family and Wyatt Bosma Family
26 Riley Price Family and Owyn Ostermann Family

NOVEMBER

*2 Wyatt Olson Family and Dana & Katy Greensky
*9 Khloe & Colson Wubben Family and Beckett Jensen Family
16 Leighton Lawson Family and Mayah Hullstrom Family
23 Aurora & Lily Pentico Family
30 Brant Boekelman Family and Kyle Frerichs Family

Prayers for our Members & Friends

Jaya Fever	Carolyn Bartz
Brian Bashans	Karen Buss
Christina Coughlin	Deloris Steffensen
Emily Schulz	Claire Rustemier-Hinz
Roger Burnside	Joy Albert
Emmagine Silber	Harlan Melz
Virginia Cooper	Leroy Weaver
Penny Mitchell	Marge Becker
Curtis Vaudt	Charlie Schaefer
Dawn Jensvold	Jason Christensen
Joan Sunde	Shirley Hagenson
Pastor Larry Gruis	
Pastor Mark Neumann (BLC's deployed pastor)	



Birthdays for the month of October:

6 - Zoey Ostermann	17 - Deloris Steffensen
9 - Lily Pentico	23 - Levi Berggren
9 - Rachel Wubben	23 - Joan Sunde
10 - Elsa Jacobs	24 - Ted Thompson
10 - Allison Paul	27 - Malachi Hullstrom
14 - Deagyn Pilot	28 - Walker Johnson
15 - Ashley Cox	29 - Brayden Berggren
15 - Tierra Hagedorn	30 - Todd Corporon
15 - Kate Kakacek	30 - Ivey Ostermann

**Please let me know if I'm forgetting anyone or if any dates are incorrect. I'm planning on doing this monthly so I want to make sure I have everyone's birthday on file!

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Please see the monthly calendar on [page 7](#) for all church activities this month.

Drive-thru Harvest Soup Supper

Sunday, October 12, 2025, 4:30-6:30pm.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Buffalo Center.

**Meal includes choice of soup, roll,
apple dessert, and water.**

**Soup options include chili, chicken noodle,
and potato corn chowder.**

*If my people who are called by my name humble
themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn
from their wicked ways, then I will hear from
heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their
land.*

- 2 Chronicles 7:14



And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

And Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. [Acts 7:59-8:3]

How would you respond if this were our reality? Truth be told, you probably struggle to imagine what this would be like because we live in a free country where we can freely practice our religion. We get up on Sunday mornings, put on our Sunday finest and go to a dedicated building with a big cross on top, signifying to everyone that this is a place of worship. We sit in comfortable pews without worrying about the secret police storming our building to haul us off to prison. We sing praises to our awesome God and can freely talk about Jesus in public. And many have no idea how good they have it. But this scene in Acts is not just a picture of the first century church, but also reality for many Christians around the world. You see, there are secret churches that exist today, many in communist and Muslim controlled countries. They meet in fear and trembling, wondering if they will be found out. But they meet and worship boldly because of the God who has saved them through Jesus Christ.

But why am I writing about this? I write this partly because our confirmation students had some classes about the church as we talked about the persecuted versus the free church, and thus this is all fresh on my mind. But I am also writing about this because I wonder if we have become too comfortable in our faith. If push came to shove, what would you do? What if the government all of a sudden outlawed Christianity and, say, Islam became the law of the land, would you push back and risk your life to worship our God through Jesus Christ? We will probably never know, but yet, I cannot help but wonder.

And so, I am going to be praying for the persecuted church around the world. Would you please join me in doing so? Will you also join me in praying that God would deepen our faith and the faith of the Church in the free world so that God can be more brightly glorified. Though we may "have it good" now, let us remember, that is not the point of our lives. The point is proclaiming the hope that God's children will "have it good" with Him forever through Jesus Christ. May the church become uncomfortable with our comfort. Amen.



Confirmation Class News

Our confirmation year is off and running. We had a great kick-off event with our bonfire on Sept 17. Regular classes began on Sept 24 with a lesson on the early church and that followed up on Oct 1 with a lesson on the church of today. Beginning on Oct 8 we will be studying the Lord's Prayer which will take us to the end of the calendar year. Again, please be in prayer for these twenty-five students and six adult leaders. May God open hearts to see His glory.

Council Committee Reports

FELLOWSHIP

There were a few upcoming things that were brought to my attention when I joined council in January. And one of the events, was Guest Night in September. Of course, in January, I didn't give it much thought right away, but as the months went on and I had a good idea of what Guest Night's goal and purpose was, I only had one person in mind that I thought would be a great Guest Speaker.

Kathy Mathahs, owner of Corner Pumpkin Patch. When I asked Kathy to speak, she noted she was not the best public speaker, but she also

knew that if this can reflect the glory to God, she was happy to do her best! Kathy and Jeff Mathahs – Josh's aunt and uncle, started the Pumpkin Patch in 2023. It was a great location for them, as the farming operation spans from Ventura to Thompson, the machine shed had great storage, a living space, office and even a kitchen. Jeff and Kathy had a vision for their Pumpkin Patch, and that was to raise funds to build a well in Uganda – by selling their pumpkins. One pumpkin at a time! This mission is known as Hope 4 Kids International, and it brings clean and sustainable water to a village where its desperately needed. They knew they might not raise enough money right away, but as

they wrapped up the second year, they were able to meet their goal and the well was provided.

We had a great turn out with our Guest Night on September 3 with 55 in attendance, and we were able to raise \$392 which we donated to Hope 4 Kids. In addition to Kathy speaking, those in attendance were able to make a craft on a wooden pumpkin design and everyone was encouraged to get creative as they listened to Kathy's message about faith, fellowship and purpose!

- Katie Mathahs

TECHNOLOGY

If you have been in the sanctuary recently, you might have noticed a piano sitting on the altar. Thanks to the memorial committee and a few other donors, we were able to purchase a new electric piano. A few years ago, we had to get rid of ours as it was determined to be unrepairable. The new piano can be tied directly into the church's sound system. This allows for high quality sound throughout

the entire church. The piano also has many sound modes. It is able to sound like many different styles of pianos, organs, and even choirs. It is a great addition to our musical and technological arrangements in the sanctuary.

If you would like to help with tech on Sundays please reach out to Thomas Blodgett.

Thank you,
Thomas

Our 2025 Church Council

Derek Thilges - President
Kelsey Bosma - Vice President/Stewardship
Thomas Blodgett - Treasurer/Technology
Kim Ostermann - Secretary/Education
Darryl Friest - Evangelism
Katie Mathahs - Fellowship
Darla Thompson - Worship
Larry Lawson - Property

PROJECT FUND UPDATE

Our project fund is now mostly depleted due to necessary projects that needed to be completed. Next time God is calling you to give a little extra offering, we'd appreciate it going to this fund. Thank you!

Church Council Minutes

September 8, 2025

Meeting Room

Faith, hope, and love make us available for our neighbors near and far.

Members present: Derek Thilges, Kelsey Bosma, Katie Mathahs, Larry Lawson, Darryl Friest,
Kim Ostermann, Darla Thompson, Thomas Blodgett, Susan Jensen, Pastor Eric

Absent: Grant Jacobs

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm

Pastor Eric -- council devotions based on 2 Peter 3:14-18 Pastor challenged us with the following questions:

- What places in scripture are hard to understand?
- Have you ever heard someone twist scripture to mean something it doesn't?
- What do you do when you encounter a hard-to-understand verse(s)? What should we do?

President's Report

- Newsletter reports/communication is the easiest way to report to the congregation. Take the time to "talk" to our members and express what's on your heart.
- Grant Jacobs resignation. Darla made a motion to accept Grant's resignation; Kelsey seconded; approved. Opens a two-year spot on the council in January.

Secretary's Report

- August minutes were approved by email. Motion by Darla; seconded by Derek.
- No current updates for the Make a Difference Campaign. We will continue to share in the monthly newsletter, on the Sunday PowerPoint, and on the website.

Treasurer's Report –

Savings Account: \$0

Checking Account: \$1,464.22

Youth: \$2,253.67

Line of Credit: 0

Special Projects Account: \$5,070.18

Motion to approve made by Kelsey; seconded by Larry; approved

Committee Reports

Technology

- Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.
- We are exploring possibilities of a timer for ringing the church bell before worship. Looking at parts totaling about \$200.
- The electronic piano is connected to the sound system, but Thomas will do some tracing and investigating to figure out why some of the mic ports at the altar aren't working. This affects the lectern microphone. Will also work on adjusting sound coming from the speakers while electric piano is playing.

Property

- Larry will coordinate with Susan for ordering new blinds for Pastor's office. We approved \$1,100 for new blinds at the last meeting.
- The toilet in the Narthex is fixed.
- Planning to install a small window replacement to stop water leaking into the parsonage. This is by a window well on the northeast corner. Looking at pulling the bush out in front of it. Hope to complete this Friday, September 12.

- Quote for new ovens would total \$2,500 with some incidentals to add in to make them fit correctly and look good cosmetically. The ladies group has offered to cash in a CD valued at \$2,000 to go toward ovens. The Schwartz funeral donated \$200. We still have this listed on the Make a Difference projects to fulfill the remaining balance if anyone is interested in donating to this project.

Worship

- Hunter Thilges baptism on September 14.
- SS kids will possibly sing as part of the worship beginning in October.
- Megan Holland is getting the confirmation students lined up for reading scripture for church services.
- The next worship committee meeting is Tuesday, September 16th.
- Communion helpers needed:
 - September 14: (at the rail) - Darryl
 - October 5: (at the rail) - Kim
 - October 12: (continuous) -
 - October 26 Confirmation Sunday: (continuous) - Kim

Stewardship

- The next stewardship project will be the drive-thru soup supper on October 12 from 4:30-6:30pm. We're applying to Thrivent for a gift card to help with expenses.

Education

- Rally Sunday was September 7th with the theme Fruits of the Spirit. Sunday School teachers are in place, but we need a superintendent or someone from council to help coordinate between SS teachers and church council. Courtney Boekelman has been handling on a temporary basis.
- Volunteers are taking care of Sunday School on September 14.
- Sunday School teacher positions are filled.
- Sunday School is down to provide fellowship coffee on September 21.

Fellowship

- Fellowship time in the social hall will continue. The fellowship rotation helps to cover every Sunday. September 21 – Sunday School, September 28 – Council
- Guest Night on September 3 was a success with Kathy Mathahs, owner of The Corner Pumpkin Patch, as the speaker. Kathy shared how their vision of funding a well project in Africa came to life . . . "One Pumpkin at a Time!" We had 55 in attendance and were able to donate \$392 to Hope 4Kids with a special offering that evening! The Corner Pumpkin Patch opens on September 20, 2025!
- We plan to work on refreshing the work groups. We'll need to contact potential new people to see if they are willing to participate.

Evangelism

- Men's Bible Study meets on the third Saturday each month from 7:00-8:00am.

Pastor's Report

♦ Worship

The Genesis summer sermon series was completed. We'll return to preaching in the lectionary. Consideration about another series through/in another book of the Bible.

Hunter Thilges baptism is scheduled for Sunday, September 14.

Confirmation students will begin to acolyte and read scripture. Megan Holland put a schedule together.

Baptism for Mason Ostermann on Saturday, October 4.

♦ Ministerial Association

Regular monthly meetings started in August.

Discussion about the closing of the food shelf. We have no immediate answers but are working on some contingency plans. There is a real need for this service in our community.

♦ Education

Sunday School kicked off with rally Sunday. Pastor will again be teaching 5th & 6th grade boys while Megan Holland will have the girls.

1G starts September 10. The ministerial association will provide pizza to kick off the year. Bethlehem is serving mid-October.

Women's Bible Study continues to work their way through Romans. They'll begin Romans 3 in October.

Men's Fellowship continues the third Saturday of each month.

♦ LCMC

Pastor Eric is registered for the Annual Gathering coming up October 5-8.

The district gathering is planned for November 15 in Waukee, Iowa.

Office Report:

Deadline for the October newsletter is September 23. The rotation for reports in October includes Fellowship & Technology. November will be Worship & Evangelism.

New Business:

August mission was LCMC (District & National) Our regular rotation is: Global, LCMC, Local. September mission should be local: Suggestion to donate \$200 to Lunchbox L.I.F.T. fundraiser September 27. This is to help provide funds to cover negative lunch balances at NICS and provide nutritious classroom snacks. Motion made by Katie, seconded by Thomas; approved.

Next meeting: Monday, October 13 at 6:00 pm.

Motion to adjourn made by Katie seconded by Darryl; approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

General Fund Giving (As of 09.24.25)

Actual YTD:

\$95,228

Budgeted YTD:

\$117,924

YTD Deficit:

- \$22,696

General Checking Balance (09.24.25)

\$1,778

Project Savings Balance (09.24.25)

\$1,979

General Savings Balance (09.24.25) **\$0**

Amount Borrowed on Bank Loan: **\$5,000**

Fellowship Serving Rotation:

Oct 5 - Work Group #1

Oct 12 - Work Group #2

Oct 19 - Work Group #3

Oct 26 - Church Council

Nov 2 - Sunday School

We have a few options for your giving here at Bethlehem. If you are a Thrivent member, you can direct your dollars to the church. We also have a very easy and simple way with our online giving. This QR code will access our website and take you the Vanco giving page. Thank you!



Bethlehem Lutheran - OCTOBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Upcoming Events to Remember: Nov 2 —All Saints' Sunday Nov 30 —Hanging of the Greens Worship Dec 21 —Sunday School Christmas Program			1 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation: Snacks 6:45 pm Class Begins 7:15	2	3	4 Mason Ostermann's Baptism, 4:00 pm
5 Worship with Communion, 9:30 am ←	6 Pastor Eric at LCMC Annual Gathering	7 Scout Den Meeting 6 - 7 pm →	8 Confirmation: Snacks 6:45 pm Class Begins 7:15 →	9 Susan- Out of Office →	10	11
12 Worship with Communion, 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship at 1:30 pm, Timely Mission Drive-Thru Soup Supper, 4:30 - 6:30	13 Church Council Meeting, 6:00 pm MOMS2MOMS 3:30-5:00 pm	14 Bible Study with Pastor, 2:00 pm	15 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation: Snacks 6:45 pm Class Begins 7:15	16	17	18 Men's Bible Study with Pastor @ 7:00 am, Fellowship Hall
19 Worship at 9:30 am, SS Kids sing, 3rd Grade receives Bibles Sunday School 10:45	20	21 Worship Committee Meeting, 8:30 am Scout Den & Pack Meeting, 6 - 8 pm	22 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation: Snacks 6:45 pm Class Begins 7:15	23	24	25
26 Reformation Sunday Confirmation Worship with Communion at 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45	27 MOMS2MOMS 3:30-5:00 pm	28 Quilting, 1:00 pm	29 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation Snacks 6:45pm Class Begins 7:15	30	31	

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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Phone
641-562-2552 — office
641-562-2553 — Pastor Eric



We're on the web!

<https://bethlehemlutheranbc.com>



**BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
And
BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN SUNDAY
SCHOOL**

Please feel free to reach out to us.

If you have any questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to ask. Our church community is here to support you.

Our Mission Statement:

Faith, hope, and love make us available to our neighbors near and far.

