

JUNE 2026

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Buffalo Center, IA 50424



Oh, Bethlehem!

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

GREETERS & USHERS

JUNE

*7 Mary & Rande Giesking and Dave & Kate Kakacek
*14 **Volunteers needed - if you're available, please contact Susan**
21 Brian Blodgett Family and Thomas Blodgett Family
28 Harley & Lynn Hassebroek and Duane Cooper Family

JULY

*5 Mark & Kim Ostermann and Logan Willmert Family
*12 Mike Baumann Family and Cheryl Baumann
19 Denny & Dawn Meinders & Kyle Winter Family
26 Bison Days-Community worship in Post Office Park

Prayers for our Members & Friends

Jaya Fever	Carolyn Bartz
Brian Bashans	Karen Buss
Christina Coughlin	Deloris Steffensen
Curtis Vaudt	Claire Rustemier-Hinz
Roger Burnside	Emmagene Silber
Nicky Shackleton	Joy Albert
Dawn Jensvold	Harlan Melz
Virginia Cooper	Leroy Weaver
Penny Mitchell	Frances Ostermann
Monica Tyler	Delores Griffin
Marge Becker	Jason Christensen
Jen McGrady	Doug Hofbauer
Dean Swenson	Randy Holstad
Linda Abels	
Pastor Mark Neumann (BLC's deployed pastor)	

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Please see the monthly calendar on **page 9** for all church activities this month.



Birthdays for the month of June:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 4 - Elsa Adams | 24 - Jill Melz |
| 6 - Amy Hagen | 25 - Cody Adams |
| 10 - Sandi Friest | 25 - Kelsey Bosma |
| 11 - Evan Angstman | 25 - Asher Kemnitz |
| 11 - Kevin Ullmann | 26 - Rhett Hartman |
| 13 - Dee Murra | 26 - Henry Lappe |
| 17 - Miles Thilges | 27 - Brendan Price |
| 19 - Colin Weaver | 28 - Thomas Blodgett |
| 23 - Drew Angstman | 28 - Derek Thilges |
| 23 - Norah Ernster | 29 - Easton Paul |
| 23 - Dave Kakacek | 30 - Laurie Sapp |
| 23 - Robin Ullmann | |

MUSIC & MINGLE



LIONS PARK
SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2026

5:00-7:00PM

SPONSORED BY:
BETHEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
KIDS ACTIVITIES IN THE PARK!

MUSIC BY
NATE & MINDY SLETTEN



PULLED PORK MEAL
(freewill donation)
BAKED FOOD SALE

JOIN THE FUN!
INVITE YOUR FRIENDS!



What are your summer plans? Do they include time at the lake with family and friends? How about time at the new and improved swimming pool? I think Malachi will probably set up a tent outside the fence. Maybe you will be running your children from activity to activity (that is definitely part of our summer plans). As for me personally, I plan to do some more reading and enjoying my back patio (mosquito/gnat permitting). I also hope to find an online class of some sort and get ahead on some confirmation lesson plan writing. Of course, all of this is subject to change, as I am sure you can also attest. We make plans but sometimes the best made plans fall short and so we just go with the flow.

But what are your other plans? Does it include worship and time spent with our awesome God? Does it include bathing in the Word of God and listening to His voice? Does it include fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ? You see, summer has a way of radically changing routines, and sometimes they change routines that should not be changed. For example, if you are a diabetic, you do not take the summer off from insulin. If you are on heart medication, you do not take the summer off from that. If you are working a 9 to 5 job, you do not take the summer off from a paycheck. And in like manner, if you are a Christian, you should not take the summer off from God. If God were to take even a moment off from sustaining us, we would certainly be in trouble, for Satan would swoop in and harass His sheep, or worse yet, destroy them.

But as it is, God never leaves nor forsakes you, not even for a moment. His eye is always on you. His hand is always holding you. His grace is always for you. His mercy never forgets you. God never considers a vacation. The psalmist in Psalm 121 says that He never slumbers nor sleeps. Our God is a full-time God and therefore we ought to be full-time Christians. And this is not so that God maintains His love for you, but rather because He is worthy. So please do not put God and/or the church on your back burner. Keep Him in your full-time plans and ever before you.

Summer is an exciting time, but our God is even more so. And so come, and taste and see that the Lord is good, all the time, 24/7, 365/366 days a year.

Have a great summer and I am looking forward to seeing you soon. 😊

A NOTE FROM CHURCH COUNCIL:

We have two events coming up in June that we need some help with. Many of you have noticed that we have a Line of Credit with the bank for \$13,000. Hopefully, these two events will help erase some of that loan.

June 7th is "**Music & Mingle**" at Lions Club Park Shelter House. Nate and Mindy Sletten will be performing. We're having a pulled pork meal for freewill donation along with a bake sale. Please consider joining us that night and maybe bringing some baked goods for us to sell. There will also be activities in the park for the kids, so we hope **ALL** ages will come to enjoy the **FUN!**

On June 21st, we will again be serving Father's Day Brunch for the community following our Sunday Worship Service. This went very well last year, so we're hoping for the same response! We have a Google Doc sign up that can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2026BethlehemBrunch> . You should be able to edit this online, but we will also have a paper sign up in the church kitchen. Here's what we're looking for:

- ◆ 7 egg bakes
- ◆ Pastries such as cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, muffins, turnovers. . .
- ◆ Fresh Fruit or Fruit Salads
- ◆ Monetary donations for Ham, Milk, Juice, Paper Products
- ◆ We're also planning to have Biscuits & Gravy (already donated)

Thank you in advance for any help you can provide. We truly appreciate our church family and their support for our mission. Contact Amy Walk, Kim Ostermann, or Katie Mathahs with questions regarding either of these events.

**** PLEASE NOTE—THERE WILL BE NO NEWSLETTER FOR JULY. WE WILL RESUME THE NEWSLETTER IN AUGUST. ****



Father's Day BRUNCH
Sunday, June 21, 2026 11:00am - 1:00pm
Bethlehem Lutheran Church Buffalo Center
**BRUNCH ITEMS INCLUDE BISCUITS & GRAVY,
EGGS, HAM, FRESH FRUIT, PASTRIES,
BEVERAGES & MORE!**

Happy Father's Day!

**FREWILL
DONATION
EVERYONE
WELCOME!**



Confirmation Retreat Fun!



Senior Spotlight



Congratulations to our high school graduates Genna Baumann, Brody Cooper, Neely Jensen, and Walker Johnson.

We were pleased to award three scholarships this year. Our church scholarships were first established twenty-five years ago. We used to have three separate scholarships – the Quame Family, the Sullivan Family, and the Bierle Family. Those funds have been merged into the “Bethlehem Lutheran Church Scholarships” because the funding from the families is no longer being supported by them. Our hope is that members of the congregation will continue to support our youth by donating to this fund in the future. You may contact any committee member if you have questions regarding the scholarship fund. This year’s Scholarship Committee consisted of Lorie Bierle, Dawn Meinders, Kelly Ruth Winter, Cassie Willmert, and Kim Ostermann.



Council Committee Reports

FELLOWSHIP

As we approach the warmer months, there is typically less traffic in the fellowship hall, but doing your part and staying involved is still just as important!

We also have our Annual Father's Day Brunch approaching on June 21. We encourage members to

sign up to contribute food items or volunteer their time to help make this event a success. This is always a nice event, and bonus for moms when they don't have to cook!

Katie

PROPERTY

Greetings everyone, I sure hope the bad weather is behind us! I feel like things are going pretty well this year. The council decided to replace the water heater for the kitchen recently as it was installed in 1991 and was looking

pretty tough. We are also looking at what it would cost to put new windows in the church and parsonage. This is, so far, to get a ballpark of what it will cost. The windows in most of the church are very old and not in very good shape.

We have a contractor lined up to replace the bad parts of the sidewalk on the South East corner of the church. This work should take place in June. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions. Thank you!
Larry



Join us at the First Reformed Church for VBS this summer!

August 3-7, 2026
9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Make a Difference Campaign

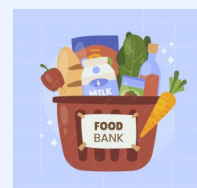
Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council has come up with a wish list of items (below) that would be beneficial to our church. If you are interested in giving to any of these projects, please reach out to anyone on the church council. You can also let us know if there is a project or item of repair that you think we should include on this list. We very much appreciate your continued regular offering. The items on this list could potentially go over and above to make a difference in our church life. Maybe something is near and dear to your heart, and you would like to give a little extra at one point or another during the year. Thank you for considering any of these items.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. - Romans 1:16

FOOD BANK NEEDS for June:

tuna fish
canned chicken
vegetable oil
syrup
mayo

Please drop off donations in the church narthex or the BC Library. Thanks!



We have a few options for 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 to the Vanco giving page. Thank you!



PROJECT or EXPENSE ITEM	Projected Cost
Bible Camp Scholarships	\$50--\$100
Bibles for 3rd Graders	\$30/student
Confirmation Retreat Sponsorship	variable
Contemporary Music	\$20 average
Cradle Roll	\$100 per child
Landscape upkeep around church	variable
Scholarships for Bethlehem HS Graduates	\$200 per student
Sponsor a church member Movie Event	\$100 theater rent
Sponsor Youth Fellowship Event	variable
Sunday School Curriculum	\$120/year
Sunday School Supplies	variable
Technology needs	variable
Baseboard heater in kitchen bathroom	\$800

Church Council Minutes

May 11, 2026

Meeting Room

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

Members present: Darla Thompson, Megan Thompson, Amy Walk, Jen McGrady, Larry Lawson, Kim Ostermann, Pastor Eric

Absent: Derek Thilges, Katie Mathahs, Thomas Blodgett, Susan Jensen

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm.

Pastor Eric prepared our hearts with opening devotions.

President's Report

- Winnebago County Tribune plans to start charging churches \$20 per week to advertise in the area of the newspaper that has always been free of charge. That equals \$1,040/year. We are planning to reach out as Bethlehem as well as individuals to respectfully express our thoughts and concerns regarding this decision. At this time, we will not participate in the advertising for a cost.

Secretary's Report

- The April 2026 minutes were approved via email. Motion to approve by Darla; seconded by Derek.
- A change to the "Make a Difference Campaign" will include adding baseboard heat to the kitchen bathroom.

Treasurer's Report

- Savings Account: \$0
- Checking Account: \$5,077.50
- Youth: \$4,579.04
- Line of Credit: \$10,000
- Special Projects Account: \$12,601.71

Motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Megan, seconded by Jen; approved

Committee Reports

Technology

- Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.
- We are checking into a different hosting possibility for the church website.

Property

- Thank you to the Scouts for cleaning up around the outside of the church.
- We are checking on replacement window cost for the church and the parsonage.
- Installation of an electric 220 baseboard heater for the kitchen bathroom will be added to the "Make a Difference" list. We are currently using a portable heater during winter months to keep pipes from freezing. That is NOT our safest option. Baseboard heat would be a much safer alternative.
- We are anticipating a sale of the LP tank that is no longer needed.
- Sidewalk repair is moving forward with Mike Hofmann. Date hopefully June or July.

Worship

- The worship committee met April 21st and reviewed the Lent/Easter debriefing document Pastor Eric provided. No one commented on not having the Lenten meal and all the Easter services were well attend-

ed. We discussed making sure first communion families know they are all welcome to commune together.

- With a guest speaker on May 3rd, communion was moved to the 2nd and 3rd Sundays.
- May 10th will be Mother's Day, Senior Recognition, and kids sing, and all arrangements are in place.
- There was discussion around having young people lead music on contemporary music Sundays, and some have shown interest. Also, there is an opportunity for offering piano lessons at Bethlehem on Mondays this fall if there are enough people who sign up. We then talked about checking on the ability to record music for future use and maybe hiring someone.
- A guest worship opportunity is being explored.
- Activity bags will be checked, and coloring sheets will be put in each rather than a current bulletin.
- Communion helpers needed:
May 17: (at the rail) – Amy
June 7: (at the rail) – Amy
June 14: (continuous) – Darla, Kim

Stewardship

- Music & Mingle Fundraiser is June 7, 2026, from 5:00-7:00. We are asking people to bring items for a bake sale instead of the silent auction items as we didn't receive much interest in item donations.

Education

- And that's a wrap! Confirmation & Sunday School are done for the year.
- Teacher appreciation gifts were purchased for all teachers & subs (16 people) = \$223.31
- Sunday School kids passed out 6 dozen flowers to moms on Sunday, May 10.
- Recap with Sunday School teachers in May & start planning/brainstorming ideas for the fall.
- Buffalo Center Vacation Bible School is scheduled Monday-Thursday, August 3-7. The theme is "Rome Holy Land Adventure." The Reformed Church is hosting this year. Kelsey is working with Dallas Murra.

Fellowship

- Fellowship time continues in the social hall – Church council serves May 17.
- Upcoming event: Father's Day Brunch – June 21. Consider doing another signup sheet in May.
- If anyone has any feedback on the work groups or has had communication with anyone who would like to be added, please let Katie know or any of the work group co-chairs.

Evangelism

- Jen reported no updates.

Pastor's Report

◆ Education

1G, Confirmation, and Sunday School have wrapped up for the year. Many thanks to the many volunteers that help make these ministries happen.

Confirmation concluded the year with another fantastic retreat at Okoboji. Many thanks to the small group leaders – Susan Jensen, Rachel Wubben, Jen McGrady, Ashley Valvick, and Matt Pentico. Thank you also to the parents who helped with the retreat – Kelsey Bosma, Derek Olson, and Pastor Sue Shike. We had a total of 27 students and 9 adults for 36 people total.

Men's Fellowship and Women's Bible Study continue to be a blessing.

◆ Worship

Carter Nath filled in for Pulpit Supply on Sunday, May 3 while Pastor Eric was at the retreat.

St. Paul Lutheran Church at Lakota is going through a pastoral vacancy soon. We will continue to think and pray on how we can support their ministry.

♦ **Ministerial Association**

The Ministerial Association meets May 13 before taking the summer off and resuming in August.

Baccalaureate is on May 13. Pastor Kent Hillesland will be preaching.

North Iowa Food for Families continues to do well.

Pastor Eric will continue with articles in the "Clergy Corner." Pastor Janelle's spot will now be covered by Kent Madison from the Lakota Presbyterian Church.

Pastor will be serving as the pastor for the Buffalo Center Memorial Day Service this year.

♦ **LCMC**

Pastor Eric attended a LeaderCare Retreat at Riverside Bible Camp from May 3-6.

Registration information for the LCMC Annual Gathering is available. The gathering is scheduled October 4-7, 2026, at Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines. There is a July 31st early bird deadline for registration. Anyone may attend the gathering for one day or the entire session.

Information is available here: <https://lcmc.net/annual-gathering>

Office Report:

Deadline for the June newsletter is May 21. Council reports for June will include property and fellowship.

New Business:

We intend to be forthcoming in where our monthly mission dollars go and will announce this to the congregation. The intent is to allow others to give to the same mission if their heart leads them to do so. **Our regular rotation will be LCMC, global, local. May mission is Global** - Water Missions International. **June mission is Local** – Riding Light Ministries. Motion made by Jen, seconded by Megan; approved.

The next council meeting is Sunday, June 7, following worship.

Motion to adjourn made by Amy, seconded by Megan; approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:42pm

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Fellowship Serving Rotation:

June 7 - Work Group #3

June 14 - Sunday School

June 21 - Church Council

June 28 - Work Group #1

North Iowa Food for Families is open on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month, at the United Methodist Church in Buffalo Center, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. They are looking for volunteers. If you would like to help, please contact Amy Walk at 641-590-5845. They need help on Monday mornings to bring food in and on Monday afternoons to help distribute food. Thanks!

Our 2026 Church Council

- Derek Thilges - President
- Darla Thompson - Vice President
- Thomas Blodgett - Treasurer/Technology
- Kim Ostermann - Secretary
- Amy Walk - Stewardship
- Megan Holland - Education
- Jen McGrady - Evangelism
- Katie Mathahs - Fellowship
- Darla Thompson - Worship
- Larry Lawson - Property

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Derek at 641-430-3903.

General Fund Giving (NOT including fundraisers) As of 05.26.26

Actual YTD:
\$47,870

Budgeted YTD:
64,218

YTD Deficit:
-\$16,348

General Checking Balance: \$1,265

Project Savings Balance: \$12,601

General Savings Balance: \$0

Amount Borrowed on Bank Loan: \$10,000

Bethlehem Lutheran - JUNE 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 Bible Study with Pastor, 2:00 pm	3	4	5	6
7 Worship with Communion at 9:30 am Church Council following worship Worship at TMNH, 1:30 pm Music & Mingle, 5:00 - 7:00 pm, Lions Park	8	9	10 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am	11	12	13
14 Worship with Communion at 9:30 am	15	16 Worship Committee Meeting, 8:30 am	17 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am	18	19	20
21 Worship at 9:30 am Father's Day Brunch, after worship	22	23	24 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am	25	26	27
28 Worship at 9:30 am	29	30		**Due to Pastor Eric's schedule, Men's Bible Study for June has been cancelled. They will meet again on Saturday, July 18, at 7:00 am.		

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
201 4th St. NE
P.O. Box 385
Buffalo Center, IA 50424

Phone
641-562-2552 — office
641-562-2553 — Pastor Eric



We're on the web!

<https://bethlehemplutheranbc.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.

