

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Buffalo Center, IA 50424

Oh, Bethlehem!

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

GREETERS & USHERS

SEPTEMBER

- * 1 Duane Cooper Family & Kelly Sabin Family
- * 8 Ted & Darla Thompson & Patty & Travis Hassebroek
- 15 Todd & Laurie Corporon and Chris Jensen Family
- 22 Norah Blodgett Family and Doug & Kim Ostermann
- 29 Lily Winter Family and Brad Kemnitz Family

OCTOBER

- *6 Jackson Holland Family & Lorie Bierle
- *13 Tate Engelbarts Family & Chris Berggren Family
- 20 Teresa Roth Family and Gabby Anderson Family
- *27 Henry Schaefer Family & Jeff Ostermann Family

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Please see the monthly calendar on **page 7** for all church activities this month.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I hope everyone is recovering from the busy summer we're wrapping up! We're looking forward to school starting back up and getting back in the groove of things in BC. We are happy to announce the electrical panel project is completed as of August. This will be great for our church moving forward, and we are so thankful for everyone that contributed. We were also blessed to have received the Anonymous Fund grant that helped make this possible for our church. Another item on the list of summer updates was the parsonage air conditioner and furnace. We've had quite the troubles with these units over the last couple of years and have skated by, but it was time for a full replacement. The next (and hopefully the last this year) on our to-do list will be the parsonage bathroom remodel. We're very thankful for pastor Eric and his family and want to make them as comfortable as possible in their home. I can't thank them enough for toughing it out for a week without air conditioning during one of the hottest stretches of the summer!

As most of you probably notice in our weekly bulletin, our YTD offering is behind our budgeted offering for this point in the year. The difference between the two isn't all that daunting yet, however it doesn't reflect perfectly. We budget an annual \$16k for property repairs and maintenance. Unfortunately, we have soared past this number again this year, with electrical panels coming in at \$23k, AC and furnace at just over \$6k, and bathroom remodel at \$3k. With all that added to the property budget, it is clear we are well behind on giving.

Continued on Page 2

"LEAP OF FAITH"
HOW FAITH SUPPORTS A SUCCESSFUL CAREER

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH GUEST NIGHT
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2024
7:00 PM
EVERYONE WELCOME
WITH REFRESHMENTS TO FOLLOW

MEGAN HOLLAND
TYANN BEENKEN
JONATHAN POTTER

Prayers for our Members & Friends

Deloris Steffensen
Brian Bashans
Christina Coughlin
Claire Rustemier - Hinz
Clarice Stonebreaker
Vince Johnson
Jaya Fever
Joy Albert

Carolyn Bartz
Emmagene Silber
Roger Burnside



September
FOOD BANK
NEEDS...



- Canned fruit
- Canned vegetables
- Cereal
- Popcorn
- Large canned fruit
- Breakfast bars
- Muffin mix
- Cookie Mix

All donations can be dropped off in the church Narthex.
THANK YOU!

General Fund Annual Giving (As of 08.26.24):

Actual: \$82,618

Budgeted: \$100,028

Year to Date
Deficit: **\$17,410**

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 to the Vanco giving page. Thank you!



SCAN ME!

Council Committees

PRESIDENT’S REPORT (Continued from Page 1)

With the doom and gloom of being so far behind on giving, it makes me think we need to sit down and take another look at the budget. As I reflect on last time we reviewed the budget, I realize all that we trimmed from last year. We were able to maintain a similar budget to 2023, even with inflation. I am proud

that we were able to make the cuts we were but am afraid if we start cutting more we will be cutting into what makes our church so great.

Ideas for fundraising and offering are flowing through council when we meet, but we would love to hear more from the congregation. Please reach out to any

of the council members with thoughts, questions or ideas. We look forward to the remainder of the year and hope for no more surprise costs.

- Derek

EDUCATION

Greetings from the Education department. Summer has flown by, and we are already gearing up to start our 2024-2025 Sunday School year! We will kick off the year with Rally Sunday being held on September 15th at Lions Park starting at 10:45. We will be playing games and having a hot dog meal for the kids and their families. Parents will also be able to register their children during Rally Sunday if they haven’t already completed the online registration. On September 22nd, Sunday School will begin with music at 10:45, followed by snack/lesson from 11-11:45. We already have a few dates scheduled that the children will be singing in church

and those include October 20th and November 17th. Also, mark your calendars for December 15th for the children’s Christmas program!! We are so fortunate again this year to have the members of our church that are willing to step up and teach our children!! Here are the teachers and what grades they will be teaching:

3 year olds/Music –
Connie
Hanson-Hullstrom

Preschool/Kindergarten –
Cassie Willmert

1st/2nd Graders –
Megan Ostermann/Lisa
Berggren

3rd/4th Graders –
Courtney Boekelman

5th/6th Grade Girls –
Megan Holland

5th/6th Grade Boys –
Pastor Eric Hullstrom

Lastly, we are so grateful for the support that our congregation continues to show our education department and helping our children continue their faith-filled journey. If you are feeling called to help in any way, we would appreciate a few donated items for our classrooms:

- Construction Paper
- Lysol Wipes
- Napkins/Paper Towels
- Tape
- Prepackaged snacks and drink boxes

Thank you,

Lisa



I had a visit with someone awhile back who was struggling with a particular person. This person was saying things to them that were untrue and mean. She was saddened because she felt she was a kind person and could not understand why someone would say things like this. It was clear that that person was fueled by her responses and in a way, was controlling her, maybe even borderline bullying her. As she spoke with me, tears started forming, and she needed to pause to compose herself. That was my opportunity to remind her who she is in Christ; that it is Him who defines her, not this mean-speaking person. She was letting those negative comments and untrue accusations consume her thoughts when her thoughts ought to be on our awesome God. What/Who you choose to dwell upon and consume your thinking becomes your god and thus stakes it territory in your heart.

Later, I began to think about that visit. I started thinking about myself and what/who I choose to consume my thoughts. Have you ever thought about that (no, not mine but yours)? For example, when you are bored, what do you do? Who do you think about? Do you naturally turn to social media to peruse what others are doing or thinking? Do you go to YouTube to watch some videos? Do you surf the web for nothing in particular? Do you read your favorite news source? How do you pass the time when you are bored? None of those activities that I named are necessarily bad, and in no way am I calling you to boycott them, but what consumes you is your god.

And I am far from perfect. I enjoy perusing social media and watching YouTube clips. I waste time like everyone else, and my confession here does not mean that I found a way to combat my wasteful tendencies. It has, though, got me thinking. When I experience a lull in my day, instead of going to Facebook, I pray (sometimes). Instead of looking at a YouTube clip, I have opened my Bible app (sometimes). Like I said, I am not perfect, but I am trying to reorient my thinking. And so, I challenge you to think about your thinking. What consumes you? Who consumes you? And how could you begin to reorient your thinking to be more and more on God? For you see, the depths of God's glory and majesty and beauty can never be reached, therefore you will never get bored thinking about our awesome God, because let me tell you, He loves thinking about you.

Pastor Eric

Church Council Minutes
August 12, 2024
Meeting Room

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

Members present: Lisa, Derek, Darla, Kelsey, Larry, Thomas, Darryl, Pastor Eric

Absent: Teresa and Susan

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm

Open with devotion and prayer.

Secretary's Report

- July minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Darla; seconded by Larry.

President's report

- Pastor Eric and Derek have been discussing the process of new members. The by-laws would be amended, not the constitution. It would require a congregation meeting. Can be proposed at the annual meeting. We would like to add the By-laws to the church website.
- WCDA grant update: deadline is the end of August. This grant is offered twice a year: August and March.
- Mailing the newsletter was approved last meeting. Susan made a good suggestion sending the newsletter out August-June. The June newsletter was full because of Sunday school, seniors, and the Confirmation retreat.

Treasurer's Report –

Savings Account: \$100

Checking Account: \$4,066.90

Youth: \$3,121.83

Line of Credit: \$6,312.00

Special Projects Account: \$28,381.66

Motion to approve made by Darla, seconded by Darryl.

Committee Reports

Technology

- Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.
- Sound system update. Thomas plans to install the speakers next weekend.

Property

- Circuit for the outside lights is in process.
- Landscaping around flagpole. This project has been cancelled at this time.
- Landscaping at parsonage: bushes on north side look great! Thank you, Darryl, and everyone that helped!
- Update on remodeling of the bathrooms in the parsonage. Project was approved last meeting. Upstairs bathroom project is still in the works. Motion was made to continue with upstairs bathroom remodel that was approved. Shower panel was installed in the downstairs bathroom.
- Electrical still isn't finished but should be finished next week.
- The AC and furnace were replaced in parsonage: \$6,300.

Worship

- Communion Server sign-up sheet was passed around.
- Outdoor service on August 25th which will also be blessing of the backpacks. Each child will receive a bookbag tag.
- The August accompanist schedule is different because one is gone part of the month.
- Pastor Eric gave the committee upcoming dates on the calendar to keep in mind.
- Children will be part of the worship service. Kids are not only the future, but they are the "right now".

Stewardship

- The cookbook is still in the works. The deadline for the cookbook was May 1st to submit recipes.
- Soup supper will be in October.

- How can we reach out to members that don't attend often? Sending the Newsletter in the mail is one way to reach all members.
- How can we bring attendance up? Slim crowds in the summer months. We will continue to brainstorm ideas.
- How can we better prepare for next year? Book entertainment for Music and Mingle now. Sunday June 8, 2025 will be Music and Mingle.

Education

- The Sunday School teachers met on August 8th to discuss the upcoming year! It was a great meeting, and a lot of items were discussed.
- First day of Sunday School is September 15th! Rally Sunday at Lions Club Park with a kickball game, hot dogs, chips, bars. Kids can also register for Sunday School at that time.
- Sunday School will start at 10:45 with music and the lesson will follow around 11:00.
- Christmas program practice will start earlier this year.
- After Christmas and the New Year, Sunday School will start back up on 01/05/25.
- No SS on April 20th (Easter).
- Last day of Sunday School on May 11th.
- The kids will sign in church every 3rd Sunday of each month. First Sunday to sign is October 20th followed by November 17th.

Fellowship/Evangelism

- Fellowship time in the social hall will continue. We're always looking for volunteers to provide refreshments for adults. Please consider signing up to serve. Teresa is working on the "sign up" sheet.
- The sign-up sheet is checked weekly to make sure someone is signed up for Fellowship.
- Updates on initiating a Men's bible study? Discussing Saturday morning men's breakfast and Bible study.

Pastor's Report

Worship

- Timely Mission: Pastor led worship on July 14 and August 4th. Susan has the Pastor's schedule so she will put this information in the bulletin.
- Pastor is working on new confession and absolution liturgies.
- Sunday School kids and teachers will not be dismissed early from worship. Teachers want to stay for the church service.
- Pastor is working on a new stream-lined Communion Sunday service for both weeks.

Education

- Confirmation orientation is September 11, and the full class meets September 18 with a bonfire at the parsonage. New curriculum (10 Commandments and Communion)- Luther House of Study TOPICS: 10 Commandments; New and Old Testament studies; Holy Communion; Luther; Worship
- Youth service is being planned for Sunday, April 6
- 1G begins Wednesday, September 11. Planning meeting on Mon, August 19 at 6:30 pm. TOPICS- 10 Commandments the first half of the year and then the Lord's Prayer the second half of the year. Pastor Eric nearly has lesson plan outlines complete for the 10 Commandments. Schedule- 3:45-5:30; Supper at 5:30.
- Middle school 1G will meet on Mondays. There is a new senior 1G plan in the works for Wednesday nights.

Other

- The Pastor gave the council a handout of all the Youth Activities.
- VBS July 28-August 1. Pastor Eric taught the 3rd grade class. All went well except for the no AC in the Methodist Church. Next year First Congregational hosts. Debriefing meeting on Sunday August 18.
- Continue with the Women's Bible study
- Considering doing a monthly Men's breakfast on Saturdays.

Community

- Pastor Eric lead and planned the Bison Days worship. Pastor Larry Gruis preached, and Pastor Sue Shike helped. Great turnout. Beautiful weather.
- Gridshock documentary. Reminder that it's coming to the Heritage Center next week.

LCMC

- Annual Gathering next month, September 29-October 2. Pastor Eric is registered and ready to go.
- Iowa District has a new District Coordinator, Joyce Schmidt.

Personal

- Thank you for the quick response in replacing the parsonage AC and furnace. Pastor Eric and family appreciated it.
- Pastor Eric's family schedule for August is pretty crazy, but it will slow down for September and after. Thank you for your flexibility.

Office Report

- Susan has been updating QuickBooks weekly, sometimes daily, to make sure we have the most accurate information. It also makes reconciliation quick at month end.
- Our bulletins and monthly newsletters are now created in Publisher instead of Word. Publisher is easier to navigate and to design within the software.
- Susan is working on updating Servant Keeper. This will be an ongoing process, but she wanted to get it ready for mailing newsletters. As of now, we have 213 families within Servant Keeper and of those, 120 families are on the list for mailing the newsletter. Susan had a couple requests by members to continue receiving the Newsletter by e-mail. There is a way to do that within the Servant Keeper database so it should be relatively easy. Susan plans to mail the September newsletter. Mailing out the newsletters will be a little more time consuming and will need to be mailed out 3-4 days before the end of the month so newsletter deadlines may have to be moved up.
- Susan can't believe it's been almost 3 months since she's started. The time has flown by and summer has flown by with it! Susan has been enjoying her time at the church. Pastor Eric and the council have been easy to work with. Everyone, including the congregation, has been very kind.

New Business

August Mission – Global– (The regular rotation is LCMC, global, local) Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (lcmc.net). July mission was LCMC. Ideas? August mission is to Hand of Hope from Joyce Meyer Ministries world missions.

Next meeting: September 9th

Newsletter deadline: Thursday August 22.

Continuing rotation for committees to include information in the Newsletter. This month is President and Education.

Motion to Adjourn made by Thomas, seconded by Darryl.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

*May the God of hope fill you
with all joy and peace in
believing, so that by the
power of the Holy Spirit
you may abound in hope.
-Romans 15:13*

**Sunday School kicks off on
Sunday, September 15,
at Lions Park,
after worship!**

We can't wait to see you!



SEPTEMBER 2024 - BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Worship with Communion, 9:30 am	2 Labor Day	3 Bible Study w/ Pastor, 2:00 pm Scouts - Tiger Den Meeting 7:30 pm	4 Community Bible Study 10 - 11:30 am 10th grade Confirmation Meeting, 6:30 pm Guest Night, 7:00 pm "Leap of Faith"	5	6	7
8 Worship with Communion, 9:30 am Open House Bridal Shower for Allison Almeliën, 2 - 4 pm In Fellowship Hall	9 MOMS2MOMS, 3:30 - 5:00 pm Church Council Meeting, 6:00 pm	10 Quilting, 1:00 pm	11 Community Bible Study 10 - 11:30 am Ministerial Mtg, 12:00 pm Confirmation student/parent meeting for 7th graders, 7:00 pm Scouts - Webelo 7:00 pm	12	13	14
15 Worship, 9:30 am Sunday School's Rally Sunday, 10:45 am	16	17 Worship Committee Meeting, 8:30 am Scouts - Tiger Den Meeting 7:30 pm	18 Community Bible Study 10 - 11:30 am Confirmation, 6:45 pm, Bonfire at parsonage	19 Scouts - Pack Meeting, 7:00 pm	20	21 Almeliën/Paul wedding
22 Worship, 9:30 am SS, 10:45 am Worship @ TMNH w/ Pastor, 1:30 pm	23 MOMS2MOMS, 3:30 - 5:00 pm	24 Quilting, 1:00 pm	25 Community Bible Study 10 - 11:30 am Confirmation, 6:45 pm Scouts - Webelo 7:00 pm	26	27	28
29 Worship, 9:30 am SS, 10:45 am	30 Pastor gone for LCMC Gathering					

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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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.

