

# *Oh Bethlehem!*



## **<<<Calendar of Events>>>**

### **April**

2-Bible Study with Pastor Eric @2pm  
3-No Confirmation  
7-Worship @9:30 SS @10:45  
-Pinewood Derby @4pm  
8-1G @3:30pm  
-Council meets @6pm  
9-Quilting @1pm  
10-Community Bible Study @10am  
-Confirmation @6:45pm  
14-Worship @9:30/SS @10:45  
15-Last 1G for the school year  
18-SPRING COFFEE, 9-10:30am, here.  
21-Worship @9:30/SS @10:45  
23-Quilting @1pm  
28-Youth led worship @9:30/SS kids sing  
-SS @10:45

## ***Making ourselves available...***

### **FOOD BANK**

***April: Green Beans, Baked Beans, Corn, Cream Corn, Packaged Cookies and Graham Crackers.***

*All donations can be dropped off in the Narthex of the church.  
Thank You.*

## **Prayers for our Members and friends:**

Harlan Melz	Jaya
Deloris Steffensen	Randy Melz
Brian Bashans	Claire Hinz
Christina Coughlin	Carolyn Bartz
Dawn Jensvold	Debbie Jacobs
Clarice Stonebreaker	Lorie Bierle
Logan Sabin	Vince Johnson

## **April-Greeters and Ushers**

7 Norah Blodgett(c) Family and Thomas & Amanda Blodgett  
14 Tate Engelbarts(c) Family & Brandon Tilges Family  
21 Leighton Lawson(c) Family and Tanner & Anne Weaver  
28 Confirmation Students

### **May**

5 Wyatt Olson(c) & Alex Olson(c) Family  
12 Jeff Ostermann Family and Mark & Kim Ostermann  
19 Derek Tilges Family and Josh Mathas Family  
26 Amy Walk Family and Grant Jacobs Family

## **Project Fund Update:**

**We continue to be so blessed by your tithing and contributions.**

Our goal is to keep the project fund ongoing so that we will be able to address and take care of the unexpected and ongoing care of our church building and parsonage.

This way we are not dipping into the general fund budget.

God is always at work within our church.

When giving to this please designate.

**We are Thankful.**

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. If you have any questions, please ask Jen.

**Thank you!**





*That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened, (Luke 24:13-14)*

I have been thinking about these verses and even wrote a devotional about them recently. These verses come from the “Road to Emmaus” narrative in Luke 24. This is the account of two disciples heading to Emmaus after that first Easter Sunday. They had just learned that Jesus’ tomb was empty and that some angels told the women that Jesus was alive. Of course this did not make sense. And so off they go, discussing the events of the day without any understanding of what this all meant. In a sense, they were heading in the wrong direction when all the action was happening in Jerusalem.

What I like about this text is that even though they are heading in the wrong direction, Jesus does not just show up, reveal himself, and then command them to return. Rather, Jesus shows up and walks with them as they head in the wrong direction. Jesus meets them where they are at and gives us an example.

We encounter people every day who are heading in the wrong direction. You probably know people at work, in your neighborhood, in your family, or in your social circles who are heading to their Emmaus. They say they are “spiritual” but really, there is no connection with the Savior. They are “good” people, but the Spirit is not working in them to bring God glory. They may even attend a church periodically, but there is no relationship with the Father.

Therefore, when people are heading to “Emmaus”, trying to drag them to “Jerusalem” is not effective. We need to employ Jesus’ method, meeting people where they are at. Consider the four E’s:

- (1) **Engage** people in relationships. Earn the right to be heard. This step could take months or years, but it is vitally important to be patient here.
- (2) **Enlighten** people with the Gospel. Do this through words and actions. Tangibly show them the love of Christ. If you have earned the right to be heard, then they will take notice, and may even say something.
- (3) **Enable** people to grow in their faith. You do this through honoring their questions and encouraging them to seek Jesus. Help them pray, read the Bible, etc. Show them what it means to be a follower of Jesus.
- (4) **Empower** them to create disciples. Help them get involved in ministry. Walk with them. Do not simply turn them loose without guidance.

The actual day of Easter is in our rearview mirror, but the Good News of Easter is now and always.

Go out on the road and meet people where they are at, bringing glory to God.

**Amen!**



# Confirmation Class News

Classes resume on **April 10**. The focus this month will be getting ready for our **youth-led worship service** which will take place on **Sunday, April 28** during our regular morning worship. The confirmation class will plan and lead the entire service.

Our other big event will be our **annual year-end retreat** at Okoboji Bible Camp, **May 10-12** (Mother's Day weekend and Graduate recognition Sunday). After the retreat, we will then adjourn until the fall. Continue to pray for these students in their faith journey.

## <<communion>>

Communion is now served on the first and second Sunday of the month. If you know of anyone that is homebound and would like a communion visit, please call the church office. 641-562-2552

## <<cradle roll>>

Cradle Roll was blessed with a few new names to add to our roster. Cradle Roll now has seven children enrolled in monthly newsletters. If you would like to help with Cradle Roll or sponsor a child please contact Amy Walk. A \$100 donation sponsors a child in the program for 3 years.

## <<1G update>>

God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good. Amen? God has been and is on the move here in Buffalo Center.

We have just a few times to meet with our wonderful group of 1G kids. It's been such a great year with the elementary and middle school.

**(1) Pray, pray and pray some more (but you are probably already doing that, so please keep it up), and**

**(2) You. We are in need of people to BE WITH KIDS.** We are not asking you to plan a lesson or a craft, we need adults who love kids to love on kids. Plain and simple. We need you to be present and show them Jesus. Will you answer the call? Just show up and we will get you started. It's that easy and that important. God is doing a thing here.

**Praise be to God!**

## <<treasurer>>

Current offering since the beginning of 2024 is **\$32,322.00**

Vanco YTD: **\$6440.00.00**

Average weekly giving: **\$2982.00**

Budgeted weekly giving for 2023: **\$2,943.00**

As always there are great things coming for Bethlehem church.

## <<technology>>

We are always looking for volunteers for tech on Sundays and other events. Training is available.

Thomas Blodgett

### <<worship>>

*Your Worship Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday morning of each month at 8:30 a.m. Let me know if there are any questions/concerns you may want us to address. As you can imagine the last couple of meetings have centered around the Easter services preparations. Bethlehem is blessed to have many who are willing to step up to fulfill what needs to be done behind the scenes that most of us just take for granted, I know I have.*

*We are talking about surfacing those who may want to use their musical talents for special music in the coming months. Some are blessed with piano abilities, especially our youth taking lessons and we hope to encourage them to share with us. Many others have beautiful voices as I have heard during worship so don't be surprised if you get a call and let's see if we can have a duet, trio or group sing from time to time with no long term commitment expected – just a sharing of what God has blessed you with.*

*Ushers/greeters now have the duty of passing the offering plate, which is getting back to what it always was. Plus we now have passing the peace to each other at the beginning of each service. Just do a fist or elbow bump if that is more comfortable for you. This is a perfect time to acknowledge the youth who are at a service to make them feel they are noticed and appreciated whether it be for their reading of the lessons or just for being there. Our youth need to know that we care about them and their future with us as a church family. The youth will totally lead the April 28th service and we are looking forward to what they will offer to us – let us be glad and rejoice in it as we listen to them with smiles on our faces.*

*We also want to take the time to appreciate our accompanists who are faithful to play for us when we need them. They are truly sharing their God given talents, thank you!!*

**Darla Thompson**

### <<education>>

Hello Everyone! The first few months of the New Year have gone well with our education program, and I wanted to highlight what a few of our Sunday School classrooms have been learning about!

Megan Ostermann and I have spent the last seven weeks covering the Lenten season and the special events that took place during those 40 days with our 1st/2nd graders. Two weeks ago, we discussed Maundy Thursday, and had our own version of the last supper with sparking juice, bread and grapes. The following week we talked about Good Friday and the kids took home some treats that represented the lesson. The Sunday we discussed Easter, the kids enjoyed eating fresh donuts and creating empty tombs out of them! Along with all the different activities we had the children do each Sunday, they also had a specific page to fill out that correlated with those special Lent events. We have a fun group of kids and we've enjoyed watching them learn more about Lent.



Courtney Boekelman does a wonderful job leading our 3rd/4th grade students. One of the Sundays in March, the students discussed 'Living By Faith'. In John 20: 24-31, they read about a man named Thomas, who had a hard time knowing what was true and false. As believers, we have to live by faith, not by sight. This was demonstrated with a science experiment and by making paper airplanes. Some people struggle to believe that God is real simply because they can't see him. When we sent out airplanes flying, we couldn't see the air, but it was the air that kept the planes soaring. Last Sunday, they made resurrection eggs, to tell the story of Easter.

Megan Holland is another asset to our education program and heads our 5th/6th Girls group. They are an impressive group that are full of questions and stories! Her focus this year has been to get them into the Bible, feel more comfortable with looking up and finding scripture. Then, how can we apply/use it in every day, life moments. Most months they have had a focus word, where they look up scripture, and listen to contemporary Christian songs that go with that word. October was 'words' – how powerful they are! November was 'thankful' – having an attitude of gratitude and showing thankfulness. March has been a review on the timeline of Holy week. The girls created Easter story stones to help them remember.

The 5th grade boys and girls have spent time with Pastor Eric in March as they prepare for the First Communion. We have many church members that make our education program as successful as it is, along with the kids that keep our program going!

Lisa Berggren, Education



Coffee Fellowship is an important part of our church. Coffee, goodies and spending time with other members, getting to know more about one another, being inviting in our conversations, building up our church family...creating strong fellowship.

This duty has fallen for the most part on the ladies with advance knowledge of the kitchen. These wonderful ladies would like to teach the newer members or not so new (ladies and gentlemen) the workings of the kitchen including the Joy and Fun that you can have serving after church. It is possible a few new minds together can solve a problem or two!

In the back of the church is a sign-up sheet for serving Sunday fellowship after church. Please consider signing up for a Sunday, even if it's just once a year.

1 Corinthians 1:9: **"God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."**  
Ephesians 4:3: **"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."**  
Galatians 6:2: **"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ."**

#### **CHURCH SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

Spring is in the air and high school seniors are preparing for graduation!

The senior members of Bethlehem will be honored on May 15<sup>th</sup>

one week before the graduation ceremony at NIHS.

It's been over 20 years since the first church scholarship was given by Norma Quame Bosma in memory of her sons Greg and Brad. The Sullivan Family Scholarship began in 2006, and the Bierle Family Scholarship in 2010.

We are now consolidating the Quame Scholarship and the Sullivan Scholarship into the "Bethlehem Lutheran Church Scholarship." This was decided because the Quame and Sullivan families are no longer able to support the previous scholarships. **It is the hope of the scholarship committee that other members of the congregation will value the importance of supporting the youth of our church family and consider giving to this ongoing fund.** You can do this in honor of someone, in memory of loved ones, or simply by making a donation. Just put your gift in an envelope marked "Bethlehem Lutheran Scholarship Fund."





**BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Thursday, April 18**  
**9:00--10:30am**  
**EVERYONE WELCOME - Freewill Donation**



**PRAY  
A  
LATTE**

Ladies you are invited to Café Latte.  
A morning of fellowship  
while enjoying a cup of latte.

Guest Speaker: Audra Shaneman  
When: Sat, April 20 at 9:30 am  
Where: Bethany E&R Church, Ledyard.

Please join us and bring a friend!

Church Council Meeting March 11, 2024

\*\*\*Meeting Room\*\*\*

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

Members present: Derek Thilges, Courtney Boekelman, Pastor Eric, Larry Lawson, Kelsey Bosma, Daryl Friest, and Darla Thompson.

Absent: Lisa Berggren, Thomas Blodgett, Jen McGrady, and Teresa Cooper

The meeting was called to order at 1802 by Derek.

1. Open with devotion and prayer.
2. Secretary's Report
  - a. February minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Kelsey; seconded by Darla
3. Treasurer's Report –
  - a. Savings Account: \$100.07
  - b. Checking Account: \$7,847.24
  - c. Youth: \$3,164.74
  - d. Line of Credit: 0
  - e. Special Projects Account: \$11,288.00
  - f. Motion to approve made by Darla, seconded by Daryl
4. Committee Reports
  - a. Technology
    - i. Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.
    - ii. Sound system update. Still working on installing new equipment. Derek reported difficulty installing a speaker.
  - b. Property
    - i. Larry discussed the circuit for the outside lights.
    - ii. Larry is waiting on a quote for Emergency shut off for boiler.
    - iii. Larry gave an update on remodeling the bathrooms in the parsonage. Derek gave the go ahead to fix the bathtub in the upstairs bathroom. Larry is still implementing a plan for the downstairs bathroom including paint and putting in a shower.
    - iv. Grant application was submitted by Derek. We will find out if the grant was approved by April 1. We were able to raise the 25% needed for electrical panel replacement.

- v. Derek discussed insurance. The executive committee voted yes to changing the insurance policy that will save almost \$2,000 per year. The rest of the council committee was also in favor of switching.

c. Worship

- i. Communion Server sign-up sheet was completed for the month of April.
- ii. The worship committee and pastor heard good feedback regarding passing of the plate and greeting neighbors.
- iii. The next worship committee meeting is March 19 at 0830.
- iv. Lorie Bierle will be in charge of making communion wafers March 24<sup>th</sup>.
- v. Maundy Thursday and First Communion March 28 – community service at Bethlehem. Jen and Daryl for communion servers. Service begins at 7.
- vi. Darla shared information on Easter services. Easter Sunday communion servers: Larry & Jen 0700 and Kelsey & Derek 0900.
- vii. March accompanist schedule is set
- viii. Youngs kids are going to be encouraged to play music during offering for church service. Suggested was made that SS kids learn common songs such as Do Lor and Jesus Loves Me.

d. Stewardship

- i. Deadline for cookbook entries is April 1.
- ii. Love Offering was successful with a profit of \$4,288.
- iii. Motion was made to start a Kitchen savings fund. Half of the cookbook profit will go toward this fund. Fellowship offering will go toward the Kitchen fund motioned by Kelsey and seconded by Larry.

e. Education

- i. Kelsey discussed kids passing out flowers to Moms during Mother's Day church service.
- ii. Sunday School students sing in church on March 24.
- iii. Confirmation students hosted a Baked Potato Bar on Feb. 18 that was successful.

f. Fellowship/Evangelism

- i. 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.
- ii. Daryl and council members discussed Fellowship and Evangelism ideas including initiating a Men's supper.

5. Pastor's Report

a. Lent

- i. Ash Wednesday. Worship was well attended. Pastor was available over the noon hour for ashes, but no one showed up. Pastor will continue to offer this each year for anyone who would like that.
  - ii. Lenten services. Focusing on the “I Am” statements of Jesus from the Gospel of John. These services have been well attended. Seeing new and different faces each week.
  - iii. Holy Week/Easter Planning. The worship team will be meeting next week to work on final details for Holy Week and Easter.
- b. Confirmation
  - i. Baked potato fundraiser was a success. May retreat is paid for except for food. All the families contribute to the food. Jen will handle this.
  - ii. Classes have continued during Lent. We have class this Wednesday, March 13 and then off for three weeks. Destination DC is the 20<sup>th</sup>, then it is Holy Week and the week after Easter. Classes will resume on April 10. Preparation for youth-led service will begin which is scheduled for April 28.
- c. IG
  - i. Four more Mondays left. Last day will be April 15.
  - ii. Proposed 4-day school week: We are waiting until the school makes the decision. We plan to have our plan in place before our 1G season ends so we can communicate with families at our year end picnic.
- d. First Communion
  - i. Seven students
  - ii. Finished the series of two classes on Sunday. They are making bread for their First Communion on Palm Sunday with Lorie. First communion will be on Maundy Thursday.
- e. LCMC
  - i. LeaderCare Retreat (May 6-9)
  - ii. Riverside Bible Camp
  - iii. This will be a continuing education expense for Pastor. Not sure about the cost yet.
  - iv. As District president, pastor is on the planning team.
  - v. Iowa District interviewed a District Coordinator candidate, but she backed out a day later. Next district meeting is April 9.
- f. Chaplaincy
  - i. Pastor is officially licensed as a chaplain with the International Fellowship of Chaplains.
- g. Coming up
  - i. Confirmation youth service (April)
  - ii. Year-end confirmation retreat (May)
  - iii. Baccalaureate (May 15)
  - iv. 1G wrap-up and fall planning

## 6. Office Report:

- a. There is a list of kitchen expectations posted for anyone using the facility.
- b. Jen's office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 0800-1200 & 1300-1700.
- c. Pastor's hours are Monday through Thursday beginning about 8:30am-4:00pm.

## 7. New Business

- a. March Mission – local – (The regular rotation is LCMC, global, local) Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (lcmc.net). Riding Light is the mission for this month.

Motion by Kelsey; seconded by Darla

## 8. Next meeting: April 8

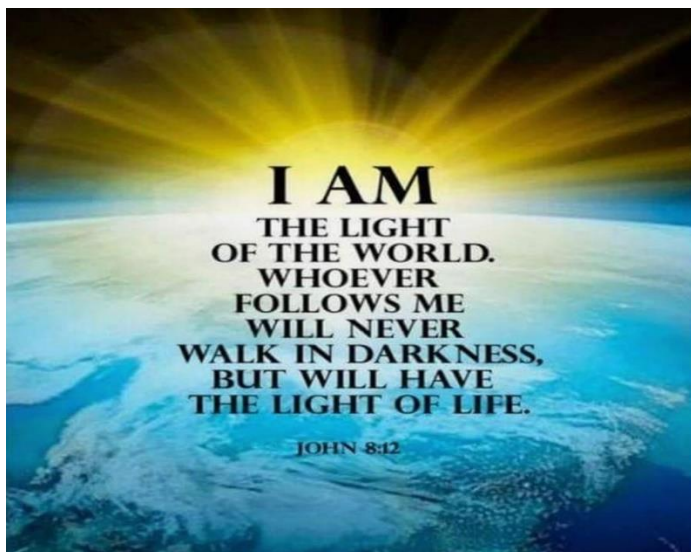
- 9. Newsletter deadline: Tuesday March 26. Continuing rotation for committees to include information in the Newsletter. The rotation this month is Worship and Education.

## 10. Motion to Adjourn made by Daryl, seconded by Larry.

## 11. The meeting adjourned at 1859.

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

Courtney Boekleman, Secretary



### 2024 Church Council

Derek Thilges ~ President  
 Lisa Berggren ~ Vice-president  
 Thomas Blodgett ~Treasurer/Technology  
 Courtney Boekelman ~ Secretary  
 Kelsey Bosma ~ Stewardship  
 Lisa Berggren ~ Education  
 Darryl Friest and Teresa Cooper ~  
 Evangelism & Fellowship  
 Darla Thompson ~ Worship

#### Council President

Derek Thilges can be reached at:  
 641-430-3903

#### CONTACT US:

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641-562-2553-Pastor Eric

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#### Facebook:

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
 Bethlehem Lutheran Sunday School

## EASTER AT BETHLEHEM 2024



The fifth-grade class learned how to make communion bread into wafers. They celebrated their First Communion during the Easter Season.



Sunrise Service, the entrance of the tomb was opened to reveal the Glory of our Risen Lord!



The Brass ensemble played triumphantly as we gathered to Celebrate the Risen Lord. It consisted of Aubri, Connie, Paul, Kelsey and Carter. What a glorious sound!

**"HE IS RISEN"  
"HE IS RISEN INDEED"  
"HE IS RISEN"  
"ALLELUIA"**

Pastor Eric gathers with the children at the Easter Service. He shared the Easter message with them. We Love our faithful kiddos!









