

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



Oh Bethlehem

<<<Events>>>

Dec 31-Jan 6	Jen on Vacation
Jan 2	Communion Sunday, Pulpit Supply – Darla Thompson
Jan 4	Ladies Bible Study with Pastor Eric @ 2pm (Psalm 23)
Jan 5	Confirmation resumes
Jan 9	Communion Sunday/Sunday School resumes
Jan 11	Quilting@ 9am
Jan 16	Annual Meeting@ 10:45am

Giving

Giving can be done easily online, right from your phone or computer. We have had great success this last year with weekly offering coming right into our General Fund at the bank. This is an easy and convenient option, check it out today! www.bethlehemlutheranbc.com/giving
 If you would like more information or guidance on setting this up, please see Brian Blodgett or Jen McGrady.

Making ourselves available...

Food Bank Needs for January

pancake mix, syrup, canned soup, canned fruit, frosting, cake mix, cookie mix

All donations can be dropped off in the Narthex of the church. The Food Bank will be closed on January 3rd. Thank you for donating in 2021!



<<<Bethlehem Ladies>>>

We will gather on Tues. Jan 4th @ 2pm for Bible study, meeting and fellowship. Hope to see you there!

Rides are available if you call the church office.

Work groups are being updated and the lists will be out early 2022. The Fall Luncheon was organized and was a success. Bible study with Pastor Eric was started in December. The study will meet the first Tuesday of the month at 2:00. Pastor Eric selects the topic and the bible reading for those attending to prepare for the study.

Cheryl Baumann, Fellowship

<<<Pastor Eric>>>

I have a more complete year-in-review report that I have written for the annual meeting on Sunday, January 16, 2022. For now, I leave this poem with you as a fun little teaser. To God be the glory ☺

*On April the thirteenth my year began,
As God prepared me for my new clan.
With interview one and interview two,
We would soon move in and need a canoe.
But God's sovereign will would not be denied,
With us to B.C., He was our great guide.
And then it began on a big weekend,
So many years, to God I commend.
We worshipped as one and dwelt in God's Word,
With Jesus as Lord, the Gospel was heard.
And the children, wow, we do have a lot.
And our teachers, wow, lacking they are not.
Our town is small but always big in heart.
What a great place to get a brand-new start.
And there's more to say, but now it is time,
To end this silly poem and quit the rhyme.
And so, I thank my God for everyone.
God's amazing love cannot be outdone.*

Cradle Roll

Are you expecting a new addition to your family? Do you know someone who is? Enroll them in our new Cradle Roll program! The Cradle Roll is a ministry for expectant families and children 0 to 3 years old in our church and community. To enroll someone in the Cradle Roll, sponsor a child, or join the ministry team, contact Cassie Willmert at cassandra.willmert@gmail.com.

2021 Cradle Roll Roster

Emma Thilges, Drew Angstman,
and Kenton Kemnitz

Welcome to the Bethlehem Family!!



Commemorative Items:

Bethlehem has a variety of items for sale. We have ornaments, postcards, coffee tumblers and mugs, and NEW "Oh Bethlehem" t-shirts. A table will remain set up in the fellowship hall. This is a fundraiser for Bethlehem. All funds will go to the General fund to support future fellowship and evangelism opportunities and outreach.

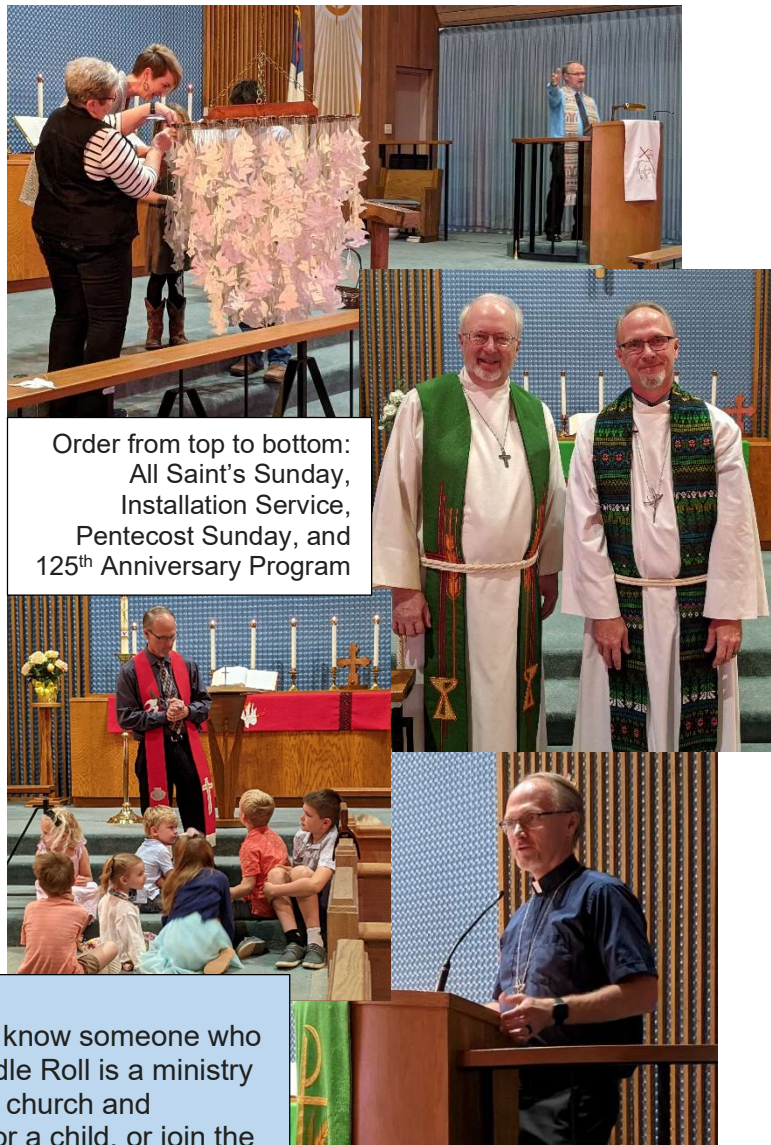


2021 Celebrations

- * Worshiping together indoors
- * 125 years of worship and fellowship
- * Baptisms, Confirmations, Graduations, Weddings
- * Pastor Mark's 30th Ordination Anniversary

Praise be to our Lord!

- * Resuming regular meetings and gatherings
- * Welcoming Pastor Eric and his family
- * Reaching fundraising goals
- * Many youth events and a growing Sunday School



Order from top to bottom:
All Saint's Sunday,
Installation Service,
Pentecost Sunday, and
125th Anniversary Program

<<<Annual Meeting Date Set >>>

Bethlehem's Annual Meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, January 16th, 2022**, following the church service. We have one 3-year position and two 1-year positions to be filled. If this is something you would consider doing, please talk with a council member. We ask that all of you prayerfully consider how you can continue to serve your church family, as we have many roles and jobs to do.

<<<President>>>

Oh Bethlehem, it is hard to believe that 2021 has come to an end, and we are getting ready for our next annual meeting. Reflecting on the past year as a church brings back so many memories and milestones for our church. The year started with us filling out forms for what we were looking for in a pastor. The Call Committee was just getting started, and we were all anxious and hopeful for the Call Process. Soon, we were saying goodbye to Pastor Mark Neumann and extending a Call. Pastor Mark was exactly who we needed for our transition period. He gave focus and direction to our leadership. He prepared our leadership and our church for our next Call. The summer brought excitement as we prepared for Pastor Eric Hullstrom and his family, and finalized our 125th Anniversary Celebration. Bethlehem truly is "Passing the Spirit from Age to Age." Our church family came home from far and wide to celebrate this milestone with us. It was a wonderful day, full of fellowship, memories of years gone by, and hope for the future. This fall and winter brought new growth, new committees, and new routines. While it has been another busy year for Bethlehem, one thing remains true, "God is doing a thing at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. It is amazing to see the changes in our church from even a few years ago. We gave our church over to God and made ourselves available to others and to new opportunities. And God has done amazing things and continues to do amazing things. Here are a few things to celebrate from the past year. 1. We have a new pastor. 2. We have a new heating and cooling system. 3. Our Sunday School and Church Roster are growing. 4. We have celebrations (Baptism, Graduations, Confirmations, showers, and weddings) 5. We have people stepping up every day to try something new and building new teams. (Please consider joining the Church Council! We have a few open seats.) 6. We almost met our budget. I could list many more things to celebrate, but none of this would be possible without God guiding us in the right direction and each one of us giving of our time and talents. Bethlehem, I am excited for this next year and all the possibilities for our little church.

Thank you for your trust and grace during my first year as Council President. I look forward to serving Bethlehem as part of the Church Council Team in 2022!

God Bless,
Cassie Willmert

<<<Highlights from 2021>>>

Senior Recognition, Pastor Mark's 30th
Ordination Anniversary/Farewell, 4th of July
Parade, 125th Anniversary Celebration,
Drive-Thru Harvest Soup Supper



<<<Education>>>

Hello Bethlehem!

I hope this finds you all healthy and happy after the holidays, and hopeful for the year to come. As our kids get back into the swing of school we are busy getting a new routine set for the rest of the SS year! As we anticipate the fun and excitement that is coming in this season I reflect on how much better it feels than it did a year ago.

In January of 2021 we were still in the middle of our “hybrid” Sunday School experience. We utilized the digital platform Super Book and spent the class time together in a big group most of the time. Although it made it possible to continue our education program at the time, it wasn’t without its own challenges, and we did see a decline in attendance and involvement from the kids and parents. We also had a fun after school program in the Spring and welcomed kids from the area to join us.

As the school year ended, we all had time to rejuvenate and regroup for the coming year. I spent time over the summer finding a new SS curriculum that fit our needs, as well as get us back into the classrooms. Oh, what a joy this has been! We had a wonderful group of adults step up and answer our call for SS teachers and helpers, with each classroom having a teaching team. I also saw the importance of having an actual education committee, and was able to secure an awesome team who has worked tirelessly to make many of this year’s blessings happen.

The SS registration ball game and picnic was an absolute blast. Our sign-up and attendance thus far has been phenomenal and we have welcomed some new families with open arms. Along with our music leader and teachers, we also utilize the confirmands help in service and the classrooms each week. This fall we were also able to bring back noisy offering, which the kids love! The end of the year brought us to preparing for the SS Christmas program. The kids all did such a good job with singing, speaking, and acting parts. It was a joy to see them performing a full program for everyone again. While we moved the program to the evening, we also added a family mealtime and it was great to be able to have this fellowship with everyone.

Our confirmation program was also reorganized last year, and we welcomed several new young people into the adult membership of the church. The program is still going strong, and with change of leadership the program is still thriving with tweaks here and there to the content, and expectations, from the kids. I look forward to seeing these young people grow and thrive.

*That about wraps up the education year in review. As I’m sitting here writing I’m thinking about the excitement in the next couple weeks. I am preparing for the next phase of curriculum, as well as our plan for the kids to sing once every month! In addition, we have had such great attendance in SS that we have the need to divide one of the age groups into their own class! We are blessed to have another teacher joining the team to make this happen. I speak for the education committee, teachers, helpers, and the council when I say thank you for all the support and encouragement, and parents, thank you for your commitment and flexibility while making your kids’ church education a priority. Oh Bethlehem... With sincere gratitude and hope,
Kelsey Bosma, Education Superintendent*

Education Highlights!

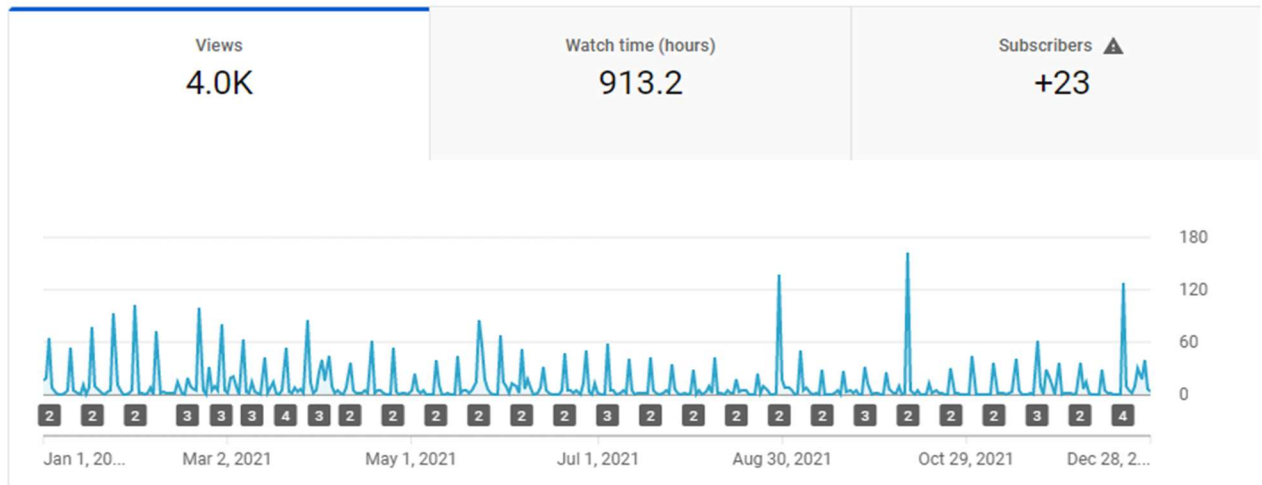




<<<Treasurer and Technology>>>

As we closed out 2021, it is fun to reflect on what we have done at Bethlehem. Throughout this newsletter you will see pictures and hear stories of how Bethlehem Lutheran has made itself available. Thank you for the generous giving in 2021.

Your videos got 4,025 views in 2021



Our online ministry has also made us available online. In 2021, we had over 4,000 views for a total of 913 hours of watching the content that we put out to the world.

2021 was an amazing year, a year where God showed us what happens when you put your faith in him. 2022 is going to be even better.

<<<Worship>>>

Ohhh Bethlehem! It's been another exciting year! It felt wonderful to bring back our usual service traditions. While also implementing newness and change!

Our most exciting change: Pastor Eric! So happy to have him here and welcome him into the Bethlehem family. With his arrival, the worship committee was soon formed and continues to meet monthly. It's great to have a committee that comes together, with all the moving parts, to prepare and produce each Sunday service and special services. This wouldn't be possible without some very important parts. A huge THANK YOU to Kyle, MaryAnn, Cheryl and all the confirmands. I would also like to extend a thank you to all those who helped fill the Sundays during our "pastor-less" time.

You have probably also noticed that the greeter and usher schedule looks a bit different than years passed. My hope for this new change, is that it'll give our families and children a welcomed opportunity to take part in the service. Now, each Sunday will consist of two(or more) families performing the duties of the greeters and the users.

Keeping tradition, communion is back and in full swing. Pre-packaged communion packets will remain available. As well as gluten free wafers. Beginning in the new year, communion will now be served on the first and second Sunday of each month. This will allow us to be more available. The worship committee will also work to keep at least one(or more) contemporary services each month.

As my term comes to an end, I would like to say THANK YOU! Although the last three years brought many difficult challenges(and took me well out of my "comfort zone"), it was amazing to see God's hand at work: stretching us-growing us, creating an awesome leadership team, bringing the Bethlehem family together and guiding us through every step! Thank you, Bethlehem Family, for entrusting me with this position. But more importantly, for being available and showing your continued support and love, not only to me, but to the church family.

It's been a very exciting year of growth and God's blessings! I'm excited to see where God takes us in 2022!

Much love,

Megan

"Serve the LORD with gladness and delight! Come into his presence with joyful singing!" Psalm 100:2



<<<property>>>

What a year we have had, Bethlehem. So many big investments and milestones to be proud of as a congregation. The last set of boilers that lasted close to 30 years, were replaced, and paid for in such a short period of time— with any luck the new one will last just as long. If something were to happen to the heating system, we are not completely out of options as the new split units in the sanctuary do a very nice job as well. It is a very fun and progressive council we have but it wouldn't be anything without the generous donations from Bethlehem as a church. It is very much a team effort and so very clear that we're here to stay. I think the yard cleaned up really well after the removal of the south shed- we have a great looking building that is available, and easy for everybody to use.

I look forward to a more quiet and less expensive 2022, but I can't say enough how proud I am to be a part of this congregation and TEAM.

Brandon Thilges

HVAC - PHASE 2

\$15,000

GOAL

Goal
Reached!!
Thank you
BLC!!



<<<Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Minutes>>>

Monday, December 13, 2021 @ 6:00

held in the meeting room

Members present: Pastor Eric Hullstrom, Brian Blodgett, Brandon Thilges, Cassie Willmert, Kelsey Bosma, Vonnice Bosma, Cheryl Baumann

Absent: Amy Walk and Jen McGrady

Meeting called to order @ 6:06

Old Business

- Secretary minutes for November approved via email. Motion to approve by Amy; seconded by Cheryl.
- Nominating Committee is formed: Vonnice Bosma, Shelby Thilges, DeWayne Mass, and Kyle Winter
- Brian has finalized the change in by-laws. Steps are in place to present changes to the congregation, starting December 19, 2021 until Annual Meeting

Treasurers Report

Checking - \$7,504.07

Savings - \$3,580.86

- Changes have been made to Quickbooks to become more streamlined and efficient
- Motion made by Kelsey; seconded by Megan to approve Treasurer's report; all in favor

Committee Reports

A. Property

- working a small issue at the parsonage.
- Snow removal has been taken care of

B. Worship

- Hanging of the Greens was wonderful. Great to be able to do the full service this year! Thank you for all the family volunteers!
- Christmas Eve service is set for 5:00. All the details will be planned at the worship committee meeting on 12/14.
- Communion is in full swing and back at the altar. The worship committee will work on fixing some minor details. Communion will be held on the 1st and 2nd Sunday starting in January.
- Pulpit supply for December 26 and January 2

C. Education

- Sunday school will sing the fourth Sunday of the month, starting in January.
- Christmas program will be held on the evening of December 19 @ 5:00, with a light meal to follow.
- The conference/meeting room will become be the 5/6th grade classroom during regular SS hour, starting January 9.
- No SS on December 26 or January 2; resume January 9
- Consistently seeing 45-48 children/week

D. Stewardship

E. Technology

- Little messes/fixes to clean up: wires, mics, cameras

F. Fellowship

- Still needing people for fellowship. Due to lack of volunteers, the first Sunday of the month will be "Donut Sunday"; reimbursement will come from the fellowship offering.

G. Evangelism

- Live nativity scene for the NIB Christmas Light up BC was a success!
- Women's Bible Study, "Breathe" is done. Will look into starting another Bible study in the new year.

Pastor Report

1. Thanksgiving

- All went well. It appeared to be a good attendance with people from the various congregations.
- Pastor Jeff Griffith (interim at First Congregational) was scheduled to preach but was ill. I got word at about 4 PM and so I stepped in.
- The United Methodist church sent someone over to read scripture.

2. Adult Education

- Adult forum. I have suspended this for the time being to re-evaluate. I have received comments from people about the importance of fellowship time.
- Women's Bible study started on Tuesday, Dec. 7. We met in the morning but looking to move to the afternoon in January. I lead a study on the two Christmas stories – comparing and contrasting them and showing how they are one unified story from two different writers and backgrounds. Working on a schedule for the year.
- Still planning on doing a Men's prayer breakfast. Going to put some feelers out there with some men to gauge the interest.
- Looking at doing a Lenten small group study. I do not have any details right now, but it is something about which I am thinking and praying.

3. Vacation after Christmas

- Planning vacation from right after Christmas Eve through January 3. This will include two Sundays.

4. Confirmation update

- Getting to know the kids better and they seem to be opening up a little more.
- Tweaking the class time schedule. Last week I tried something new and it seemed to go well. I got more interaction from the kids.
- Wrapped up our unit on the 10 Commandments. Review this Wednesday, Dec 15. Christmas party and caroling on Dec 22.
- Resume January 5, 2022 – Topic will be "Luther and the Catechism"
- The students helped with the Living Nativity for the Tour of Lights. We had a lot of fun together.

5. First Communion

- I will begin communicating with parents of 5th – 7th graders after the first of the year.
- Classes will take place during Sunday school in Lent. First Communion will be on Maundy Thursday.

6. Ministerial

- I will be a check signer for the ministerial, being I am the only one living in town.
- Giving Tree packing and distribution will be here on Thursday.
- In January, I will be scheduling a task force meeting to deal with emergency response.
- Ministerial will brainstorm and begin to form 'One God'

7. Property (parsonage)

- Brian dropped off a couple smoke detectors. Still need carbon monoxide detectors
- Outlet in basement for sump pump
- Water valve – outside by front walk-in garage door – slow leak
- Check water softener

Office Report

- New members: Mark Landheer

New Business

- December mission: Motion made by Vonnie; seconded by Brian; all in favor to give the authority to Pastor Eric to choose a relief group to help those affected by Kentucky tornado
- Review of the Annual Meeting Agenda; Megan will prepare it
- All committee reports for the Annual meeting need to be to Jen by January 9, 2022
- Sunday, January 23 service will include installation of new Council Members
- January Newsletter-"Year in Review"; all reports need to be to Jen by December 26.

Next meeting: January 10 @ 6:00

Motion to adjourn made by Brian; seconded by Kelsey

Meeting adjourned @ 7:34

Secretary,

Megan Holland

<<<Annual Meeting By-Law/Constitutional Amendment>>>

We have some minor changes to the by-laws/constitution at the annual meeting. The amendments can be found in the Narthex. They include changing the meeting date to January, adding a Pastoral Car Committee, and definition of membership. There will be a reading of the amendments on January 9th following the service.



Bethlehem Lutheran Church
201 4th St. NW
Buffalo Center, IA 50424

"FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE make us available
for our neighbors near and far."

President: Cassie Willmert
Vice President/Evangelism: Amy Walk
Secretary/Worship: Megan Holland
Treasurer/Technology: Brian Blodgett
Stewardship: Susan Jensen
125th Anniversary: Vonnie Pilgrim-Bosma
Education: Kelsey Bosma
Property: Brandon Thilges
Fellowship: Cheryl Baumann

FIND US ON FACEBOOK
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Bethlehem Lutheran Sunday School

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