

AUGUST 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

AUGUST

*2 Travis & Patty Hassebroek and Rita Ellsworth
*9 Marty Schaefer Family and Josh Mathahs Family
16 Doug & Kim Ostermann and Amy Walk
23 Derek Thilges Family and Joe Angstman Family
30 Brad Kemnitz Family & Kim Thompson

SEPTEMBER

*6 Caleb Hagedorn Family and Bill Jensvold Family
*13 Chris Jensen Family and Ted & Darla Thompson
20 Lorie Bierle and Deb & Mark Landheer
27 Mayah Hullstrom Family & Brynlee Engelbarts Family

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	Janell Heidecker
Jason Christensen	Doug Hofbauer
Dean Swenson	Randy Holstad
Linda Abels	Ruth Noren
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 August:

1 - Amanda Pentico	17 - Marty Schaefer
1 - Cassandra Willmert	18 - Alyssa Kemnitz
2 - Mike Baumann	18 - Josh Mathahs
5 - Jeff Ostermann	21 - Marlys Dotseth
6 - Alyssa Olson	22 - Jensen Mathahs
13 - Brynlee Engelbarts	23 - Meggon Jacobs
13 - Kaiden McGrady	25 - Elizabeth Olson
14 - Madison Blodgett	26 - Beckett Jensen
14 - Tracy Jutting	28 - Tate Corporon
16 - Rebekah Jensvold	30 - Leah Willmert
16 - Lauren Thilges	



Join us for
Blessing of the Backpacks!
Sunday, August 23, 9:30 am



SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, Sept. 13
Rally Sunday
Third Grade
Receives Bibles

Bethlehem Lutheran Guest Night
Wednesday, Sept 9
More Details to Come



Many of you may not know this, but a couple years ago, I created a document called “Schedule of Youth Activities”. It is a document to help me get a handle on all the things our youth do throughout the year. Before this list, events would sometimes sneak up on me, but no more. The other day I was working on updating the 2026-27 document and got lost in all that happens throughout the year: Blessing of the Backpacks, 10th grade confirmation preparation, 7th grade confirmation orientation, Confirmation (about 25 students), 1G, Bibles for our 3rd graders, Confirmation students helping with Tour of Lights, Christmas program, First Communion, Confirmation baked potato fundraiser, Confirmation students helping with Easter Sunrise, youth-led worship service, Confirmation retreat, and pizza for all North Iowa middle school students after the homecoming football game, but there is more. The point being, God is doing a thing here at Bethlehem and in Buffalo Center, and the fact is, **none of it happens without you, and without you, none of it will happen.**

You see, when you give your Sunday tithes and offerings, participate in a church fundraiser, volunteer time to teach, or serve on a leadership team, you are helping further the mission of this congregation. And not just with the youth but furthering the Gospel to all people near and far, for, **none of it happens without you, and without you, none of it will happen.**

When I see this Schedule of Youth Activities, I get excited. Ideas begin to run wild, but I am just one person, but you are many, and together, the body of Christ, we can do amazing things. **Do you want to be part of something amazingly God-glorifying?** I think I know your answer, therefore I look forward to your partnership as we head into another school year, but not just in-person, but financially as well. We need your help to fulfill the above document and all that God as called us to do here. **Let’s make it happen, together, and to Him be all glory, Amen.**



Here we go, the first installment of "Confirmation Class News". So, here are some dates to get you started. Mark your calendars and more information will be coming your way:

Wed, Sept 2, 7 PM ~ Confirmation orientation for 7th grade students and parents

Wed, Sept 9, 6:30 PM ~ 10th grade students and parent meeting

Wed, Sept 16, 7 PM ~ Confirmation bonfire at the parsonage – full class

Wed, Sept 23, 6:45 – 8:30 PM ~ Regular confirmation classes begin

Sun, Feb 7, 2027 ~ Youth-led worship service and baked potato fundraiser for retreat

April 30 – May 2, 2027 ~ Confirmation retreat at Okoboji Bible Camp

I am looking forward to another fun-filled year growing in faith with your students.

God bless,

Pastor Eric

Make a Difference Campaign

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council has come up with a wish list of items 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.

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 windows update-clear windows only	\$52,000
Labor for window installation	\$50,000?
Parsonage windows update	\$8,000--\$9,000
Labor for window installation	??

Council Committee Reports

STEWARDSHIP

Hello, my church family! As many of you know the church has fallen behind in our budget. I am not going to lecture or guilt anyone into giving more. What I am going to ask is that everyone pray for guidance with your giving. What you give to the church is between you and God. Unfortunately, our church is also getting older so repairs are needed more & more. We did Music & Mingle and

raised \$3800.00. Thanks to everyone who helped and came to the event to make it a success. We also had the brunch and raised \$1725. Thanks to those that planned, donated and worked the brunch. We are so blessed to have so many willing to step up for our church.

We are hoping to have an apple pie sale in September. You will be able to buy a pie either baked or

unbaked. So, any of you that love fellowship and pie making, sign up to help us. Further details will come out soon.

Please pray and sit with God to determine how you can be the best stewards for our church. Thank you.

God Bless You All!
Amy Walk

TREASURER

Bethlehem,
We are approximately 55.34% of the way through the year and have used 46.53% of our annual budget. We have been able to get through the year but have been relying on and off the Line of Credit. Financial circumstances can change quickly, especially during the summer months when giving often slows. Bethlehem Lutheran continues to do great things, and your faithful

giving helps make those ministries and opportunities possible. If we want our church to continue thriving, growing, and serving others, we must continue supporting its mission.

Summer is a busy time, and it is easy for regular giving and attendance to be overlooked amid vacations and other activities. It is a wonderful thing, something to enjoy and celebrate, summers full of

family activities and vacations. I simply ask that you keep the church in mind throughout the season.

I am proud of everything we are accomplishing together as a church, and none of it would be possible without your generosity and support. I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer!

Thomas Blodgett

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!



BCVBS MMXXVI

Experience this fun, hands-on Bible-times empire at:
First Reformed Church
401 1st Street SW Buffalo Center, Iowa 50424
MONDAY, AUGUST 3rd through FRIDAY, AUGUST 7th 2026
BCVBS will run from 9:00AM - 12:00PM
followed with a meal for all at 12:00-12:30 each day.
REGISTRATION: myvbs.org/bcvbs

The poster features a white horse with a red mane and tail, wearing a red and gold Roman-style saddle and bridle. In the background, there are silhouettes of Roman buildings. At the bottom, there are two circular emblems: one with a QR code and another with the word "ROME" and "PAUL the UNDERGROUND CHURCH".

Church Council Minutes

July 13, 2026

Meeting Room

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

Members present: Derek Thilges, Darla Thompson, Katie Mathahs, Larry Lawson, Thomas Blodgett, Amy Walk, Kim Ostermann, Pastor Eric

Absent: Megan Holland, Jen McGrady, Susan Jensen

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm.

Pastor Eric led devotions based on a quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22.

Pastor challenged us with the following questions:

- What are the “little things” in which we can be thankful as a church?
- “Then we lament lacking the deep certainty, strong faith, and rich experience God has given others...” Is this true of us?
- How can you live 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22?

President's Report

- There is someone interested in using the fellowship hall for an exercise class called “The Daily Ritual.” We checked into insurance liability and found no issues with that. We will be in contact regarding the usage fee and details.

Secretary's Report

- The June 2026 minutes were approved via email. Motion to approve by Darla; seconded by Derek.
- We will be adding window replacement to the “Make a Difference Campaign.” More information under Property.

Treasurer's Report

- Savings Account: \$100
- Checking Account: \$7,234.43
- Youth: \$2,714.04
- Line of Credit: \$7,000
- Special Projects Account: \$13,090.90
- Motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Darla, seconded by Amy; approved
- We are planning to start showing a QR Code for online giving on the worship PowerPoint during the offering. This might be a good way to show online viewers an easy way to give.

Committee Reports

Technology

- Website update to WordPress would be \$25/month. We are planning to move forward with this.
- The TV in the Social Hall needs to be addressed. The video stream is showing static.
- Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.

Property

- We received a cost estimate for window replacement in the church and the parsonage. \$52,000 for the windows at church. This does NOT include installation and is for the clear windows only. Parsonage (\$8,000-\$9,000) The windows are in poor condition, but we are struggling with starting a window campaign and being financially responsible as we are already working to erase our line of credit at the bank. This will be added to the “Make a Difference Campaign.”

- We are anticipating the sale of the LP tank that is no longer needed.
- Sidewalk repair is complete.
- The parsonage basement needs repair. There was water damage from the past. Larry is going to work on making some repairs to clean up the area and make it safer around the shower area.

Worship

- The worship committee met on June 16th and talked about the Music Library. They decided to move forward with downloading directly to the church computer the original Lutheran Book of Worship.
- All plans were in place for an outdoor service on June 21st, but the weather did not allow it to happen, and it was moved indoors.
- Bison Days are July 24-26, 2026, and Pastor Eric will be giving the message at the ecumenical service at the Post Office Park on that Sunday, July 26.
- Communion helpers needed:
August 2: (at the rail) – Derek
August 9: (continuous) – Kim, Katie
- The next worship committee meeting is July 21 at 8:30am.

Stewardship

- July 14 and August 18 community meals will be available at Farmer's Market.
- North Iowa Food for Families is going well and receiving donations

Education

- Buffalo Center Vacation Bible School is scheduled Monday-Thursday, August 3-7 from 9:00am—12:30pm. The theme is "Rome Holy Land Adventure." The Reformed Church is hosting this year. Kelsey is working with Dallas Murra. They are looking for volunteers.
- We are starting to prepare for Sunday School year. Rally Sunday is planned for September 13

Fellowship

- Fellowship time continues in the social hall – Church council serves August 2nd.
- The Father's Day Brunch was hosted on June 21, 2026. We served about 65 people – attendance was down from 90 the previous year. We brought in about \$2,000 from freewill donations.
- We are planning for Guest Night on Wednesday, September 9, 2026.
- 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

Men's Fellowship meets July 18 with a study of Philippians.

Women's Bible Study will begin Roman 8 in August.

Third graders will receive their bibles on Rally Sunday – September 13, 2026.

♦ Worship

We are anticipating some upcoming baptisms. Dory Weaver will be on August 9, 2026.

Pastor continues to lead worship at Timely Mission. Darla Thompson led worship there on July 5 while pastor was on vacation. Pastor will be there again on July 26.

♦ **Ministerial Association**

Bison Days outdoor worship service is July 26th at the Post Office Park.

United Methodist Church has a new pastor – Judy Clark. We look forward to meeting her.

♦ **LCMC**

The Iowa District meeting was on June 11 via Zoom. We are preparing for our district gathering in November at Badger Lutheran Church on Thursday, August 27 at 10:30am.

Pastor Eric is registered for the LCMC Annual Gathering in October.

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 August newsletter is July 20. Council reports for August will include Treasurer and Stewardship.

Susan is out of the office July 27-31.

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. July mission was LCMC - \$200 to District & \$200 to national August mission is global – Lutheran World Relief.** Motion made by Derek, seconded by Katie; approved.

The next council meeting is Monday, August 10, at 6:00 pm.

Motion to adjourn made by Derek, seconded by Darla; approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 pm

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

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.

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!

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Thank You!

Thank you to EVERYONE who supported our June fundraisers!
We made a dent in our line of credit – we still have a ways to go!

Music & Mingle brought in about \$3,800
Father's Day Brunch brought in about \$2,000

We truly appreciate your support!



THE LUNCHBOX LIFT L.I.F.T.

Learning - Inspiring - Feeding - Thriving

During our August 2 and August 9 worship, we will be collecting a special offering for Lunchbox LIFT. This is a local organization that was set up to provide lunch money to students at North Iowa who are in need of assistance. We will also be collecting money in the church office, or by mail, through August 13. Please send your check to PO Box 385, Buffalo Center, IA and include "LIFT" in the memo line.



General Fund Giving
(NOT including fundraisers)
As of 07.23.26

Actual YTD:
\$72,138

Budgeted YTD:
\$88,682

YTD Deficit:
-\$16,544

General Checking
Balance: \$3,545

Project Savings
Balance: \$13,091

General Savings
Balance: \$100

Amount Borrowed on
Bank Loan: \$7,000



Fellowship Serving Rotation:

Aug 2 - Church Council

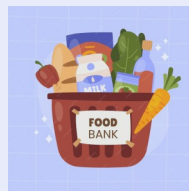
Aug 9 - Work Group #1

Aug 16 - Work Group #2

Aug 23 - Work Group #3

FOOD BANK NEEDS for August:

**Alfredo boxed pasta, canned
fruits, 16 to 24 oz cooking oil**



**Please drop off donations in the church nar-
thex or the BC Library. Thanks!**

Bethlehem Lutheran,

Thank you to the scholarship committee for selecting me to receive a scholarship. It will be helpful for college expenses. Thank you to the quilting committee for the beautiful quilt that you made for me. It will be perfect for my dorm. I'd also like to thank everyone in the congregation who has supported me over the years. I appreciate your prayers and thoughtfulness.

Neely Jensen

Bethlehem Lutheran - AUGUST 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2 Worship with Com- munion at 9:30 am	3	4 Bible Study with Pastor, 2:00 pm	5	6	7	8
9 Worship with Baptism and Communion at 9:30 am	10 Church Council Meeting, 6:00 pm	11	12 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am	13	14 Susan in the Office	15 Men's Bible Study, Fellowship Hall, 7:00 am
16 Worship at 9:30 am	17	18 Worship Committee Meeting, 8:30 am	19 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am	20	21	22
23 Worship at 9:30 am, Blessing of the Back- packs	24	25	26 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am	27	28	29
30 Worship at 9:30 am Worship at TMNH, 1:30 pm	31					

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://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.

