

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

May 2023

Oh Bethlehem!

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

May

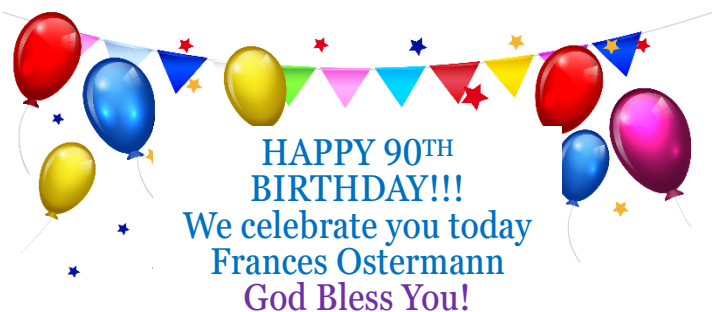
- 1-One G planning meeting @6pm-Congo Church
- 2-Bible Study with Pastor Eric @2pm
- 6-Women' Day out in Mankato
- 7-Communion/Teacher Recognition/Meal
Pastor gone 8-11th fpr Leader Care Retreat
- 12,13,14- Confirmation Retreat in Okoboji
- 14-Graduating Sr's Recognition/SS Kids Sing and
Last SS Class @9:30am
- 15-Last Elementary 1G.
- 16-Last High School 1G breakfast.
- 17-Last Middle School 1G.
- 21-Communion Worship @9:30am
- 28-Traditional Liturgy @9:30am

Project Fund Update:

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 so Blessed and Thankful.



Prayers for our Members and friends:

Harlan Melz	Jaya
Clarice Stonebreaker	Dawn Jensvold
Deloris Steffensen	Randy Melz
Brian Bashans	Marcia Aukes
Christina Coughlin	Carolyn Bartz



Ushers and Greeters

May

- 7 Brooklyn Price(c) Family & Logan Willmert Family
- 14 Rande & Mary Geisking and Mark & Kim Ostermann
- 21 Amy Walk & Mary Badje
Thomas & Amanda Blodgett
- 28 Chris Berggren Family

June

- *4 Carter Wubben(c) Family and Shirley Hagenson
- *12 Norah Blodgett(c) Family and Jeff Ostermann
Family
- 18 Billy Jensvold Family and Maryls Dotseth
- 25 Dana Greensky Family and Linda Berhow

Making ourselves available...

**Food Bank for May: Can Chicken, Tomato soup,
Can Veggies, Can fruit, Cereal and Cookie Mixes.**

**"Our numbers are increasing, so anything you donate
will be helpful. Thank You.**

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

Every week after our service we gather for Coffee Fellowship. We are so grateful for the many hands that volunteer, bake and serve us each Sunday. It is so nice to be able to sit and visit with our church family. With that said, it is also the time we offer our Sunday School kids a snack, and it is quite a few, aren't we so blessed by those numbers! The SS program has now taken over doing the snacks for their kids and that helps to lessen the amount needed to serve fellowship. So please, continue to sign up and take a Sunday to serve.

WE APPRECIATE YOU!



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 the Vanco giving page. If you have any questions, please ask Jen.

Thank you!

LIFE TOGETHER AT BETHLEHEM....



This duo of Renae Hager and Kelsey Bosma recently led us in worship. It was a nice change in our worship style. Thank You!



QUILTING GROUP.... This group met twice monthly to tie quilts. This year they did about 65 quilts to donate to those in need. They will also gift our upcoming Graduating Seniors with a quilt.



Brody Cooper
receives his Eagle Scout ranking.
We congratulate Brody
and his parents, Duane and Teresa Cooper.
This is a great honor for him
and the scouting program.
CONGRATULATIONS!



He Is Risen! He Is Risen Indeed!
Brass ensemble,
Bright eyed Miles at Sunrise Service
and lots of kiddos.
A wonderful Easter Season
was celebrated at church!



<<Pastor Eric>>

Growing up in a small town I learned, at a young age, the joy of the connectiveness of the small town. For example, the impact of farming on everyone in the community. My dad worked at and eventually owned a Chrysler/Plymouth/Dodge/Jeep dealership in which he was the only salesperson. If the farmers did well, my dad sold trucks, if they did not, well, sales generally reflected that. But not just with car dealers, but the whole economy of the town is affected as well: schools, churches, retail, etc. As a small town, we are all family and thus when one part is affected, other parts feel it. I missed this aspect of community when we lived in the Pacific Northwest for five years. That part of the country definitely has its advantages, and we enjoyed living out west, but growing up in a small farming community is something and always will be something that is in my blood. It is the connectiveness that is a strength as Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "A threefold cord is not quickly broken."

The same can be said about the church as well. I grew up in a smallish-type church in a small town. I also worked in a mega-church in a northern suburb of Minneapolis/St. Paul. In that large church, I missed the smallness of my hometown roots as church-wide connectiveness is difficult, if not impossible, in a 3,000-member congregation. I did have my small group there, but it was still not the same.

It is easy to look at other churches and compare, saying they must be more successful because they have more people, or they have this and that program. It is also easy to compare Buffalo Center with other communities. Sometimes I drive through other towns and wonder what it would be like to have this or that resource locally, or this or that look of a park, etc. But then I remind myself that a community is not about infrastructure and stuff. It is the people, and I would never trade the people here for a piece of infrastructure. And the church, well, the church is not a building but rather the people. We are a small group in a small town. We are connected and thus we are family.

Yes, there are things that other churches do that we do not do and that is fine. They are them and we are us. And you know something, we "do us" better than anyone else and we do it well. And they "do them" better than anyone else and they do it well. That is the joy and strength of the small church and community. But "us" and "them"? Collectively we are ALL "us" in the name of Jesus, and thus collectively, even though we are small, yet we are very strong. For that I give God praise and glory, and for that I am at peace. I hope you are too.

Pastor Eric

<<confirmation corner>>

We are wrapping up our confirmation year this month. Wednesday, May 3 will be our last class session and then we have our retreat at Okoboji Bible Camp, May 12-14, in their new Beach House. It has been a great year getting to know these students better and walking with them in their faith journey. I also want to give a shout out to our confirmation small group leaders: Jen McGrady, Susan Jensen, Rachel Wubben, Kelsey Bosma and Brian Bashans. They have given of their time to be with these kids and serve as faith role models. I cannot thank them enough for their commitment and ministry. Continue to pray for these students in their faith journey. We have four 9th graders getting confirmed and it looks like eight 7th graders starting confirmation in the fall. To God be the glory, now and always, Amen.

<<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. We are looking for volunteers to help with this ministry. If you are interested, please contact Cassie Willmert. If you would like to help with Cradle Roll or sponsor a child please contact Cassie Willmert. A \$100 donation sponsors a child in the program for 3 years.



<<1G update and request>>

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. God has brought the increase. IG has gone strong this year and we are so blessed by the kids and volunteers. We ask as summer comes and the kids are on break, that you will continue to keep this ministry in your prayers. Also that you would prayerfully consider giving a small parcel of your time by stopping by and volunteering. As with any program, it also takes donations. If you feel you can donate financially and or by providing snacks or meal ingredients, please talk with Jen or Pastor. Thank you for your loving kindness!

<<council president>>

Hello Bethlehem Family! It has been a few months since I've shared which only means things have been going well. I would like to thank everyone that gave whatever you could when we asked/needed. Bethlehem is blessed and God continues to work thru us. I would also like to thank the council for stepping up to do much for me. Since August I have been devoting most of my weekends to out of town family and will probably be continuing until July. Again, thanks to all for stepping up. Please feel free to contact me with anything you feel the need to. I also have a challenge for all. At work and in things I do and say I try to ask **What Would JESUS Do ?** It has helped keep my thoughts and words much happier!! I also will say to people who start complaining and stop them, so they think before they speak. Try it!!! It is amazing how something so simple can change your mind set.

God Bless Bethlehem Family! God is great!

Amy Walk

For questions, concerns, ideas, and praises, please feel free to contact me.

email: billwalkbc@gmail.com

cell#: 641-590-5845

<<treasurer>>

We are 32.33 % through the year and we are at 36.15% of our budget. We are doing great!

Let's keep it up so we can continue to do the great things that we do at Bethlehem Lutheran Church!

<<technology>>

We continue to update and tweak our streaming and sound equipment to provide the best experience for people at church and at home. If you haven't noticed yet, the cameras are much clearer on our weekly stream. If anyone is interested in helping with implementing the power point and sound on Sundays. Please reach out to Thomas at 641-251-1427. Thank you!

As always, we are truly blessed here at Bethlehem.

Thomas Blodgett

<<worship>>

May 7 - SS teacher appreciation

May 14 - Mother's Day - SS kids sing

May 21 - Senior Sunday

<<fellowship & evangelism>>

We had an awesome month in April! The Community Spring Coffee was held Thursday, April 20. About 40 people attended. It's not a large group, but the laughter, sharing, and fellowship was great! We brought in \$305 through freewill donations which were added to the Project Fund.



Bethlehem Lutheran Church hosted a Pampered Chef Party from April 16-23. THANK YOU to everyone for the wonderful support! We had amazing sales of over \$2,000 which earned us over \$600 in FREE product credit! We also had some donations given so we can purchase more items, and because we "hosted" we can choose five items all at a 50% discount. We feel so fortunate to be able to update many of our kitchen supplies. THANK YOU!!

Fellowship & Evangelism Committee
Daryl Friest & Kim Ostermann

<<property>>

The roof repair is on schedule and will be coming up soon. If you can direct any offering towards the projects fund it is greatly appreciated. This is where we will have to draw funds from to pay for it.

<<education>>

Hello everyone, as we near the end of the year for education we have a lot of things happening! We are excited to have the kids involved in so many ways!

May 7th we will be recognizing our Sunday School teachers and music leader during the worship service, and the kids will be involved in this as well! After church, during SS time, we will join together in fellowship and have a meal together!

We want this to be a very special day and would like all kids and families to be there!

On May 14th we will be celebrating all the moms in church, and the kids will be singing some special songs for this. After church we will be having our last day of Sunday school for this year. It will also be senior recognition on this day!

Dates to remember-

SS Appreciation Day and Meal- April 7.
Mothers Day- singing, last day of class.
Confirmation Retreat, May 12-14
Graduating Seniors recognition- May 21

Thanks to everyone for their continued support of our programs and ministry,
Lisa Berggren & Kelsey Bosma

<<stewardship>>

We are excited to announce that we have an awesome fundraiser coming up in June! We will have a night of music and mingling on Saturday, June 10, from 6:30-8pm, at the Heritage Town Center. There will be live music from Nate and Mindy Sletten, refreshments, and a silent auction! This will be a free will donation event, and open to the public. We will have more details to come, but want everyone to save the date for a fun night!

Also.... We just want to remind everyone that it is very important to complete the time and talent survey. We will use information generated from that survey to assess what we can do in and around our church. With the committee members that we have, we would love to expand and make better what we already do, while still having people involved in things that they are comfortable doing. Thank you for your time, and please let us know if you have any more stewardship ideas!

“God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.” ~1 Peter 4:10

Options to fill out Time and Talents Surveys.

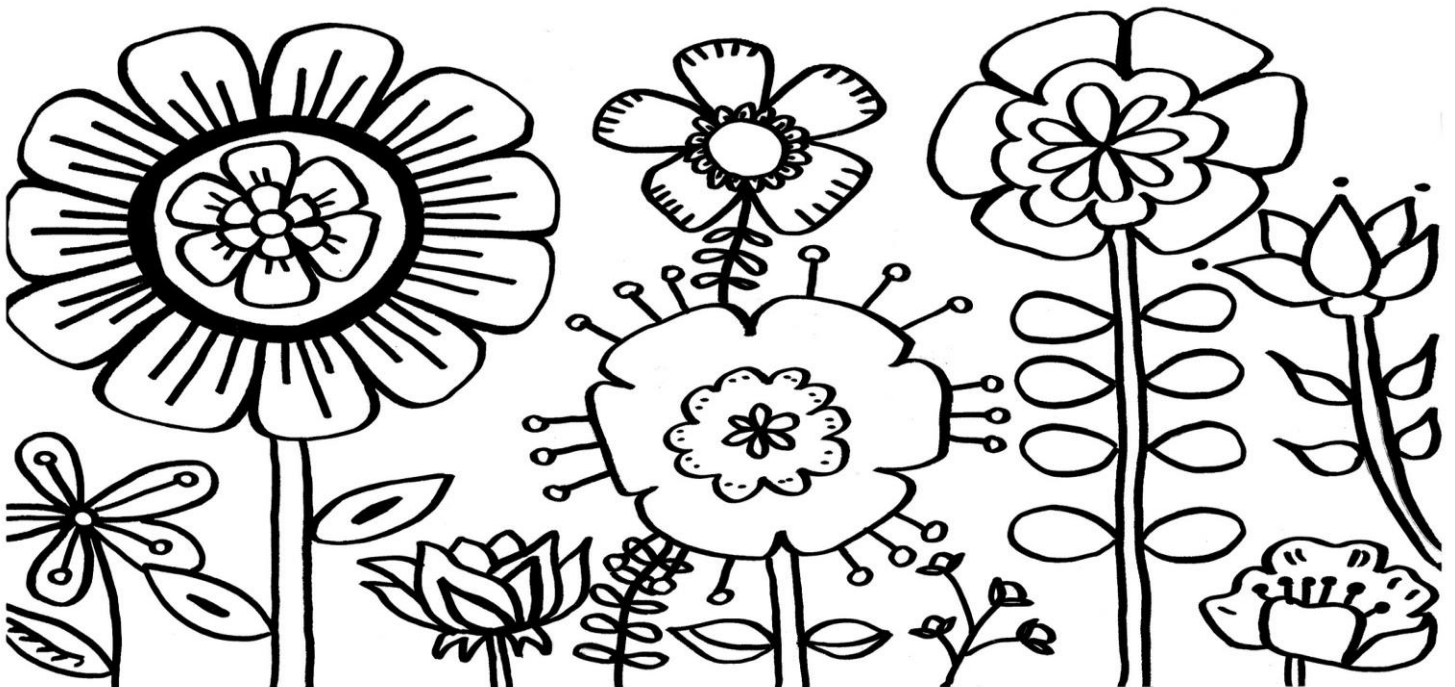
If you need one mailed out to you, please call the office.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfKY9q5leNsMPvr8B7yxSY7-HqqbG1Hv5v7yrvrETHvcSuuwQ/viewform?usp=sf_link



Teresa Cooper and Kelsey Bosma

Color Me!



Church Council Meeting Minutes

April 10, 2023

held in the Meeting Room

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

Members present: Pastor Eric, Amy Walk, Derek Thilges, Kelsey Bosma, Teresa Cooper, Lisa Berggren, Thomas Blodgett, Susan Jensen, Daryl Friest, Jen McGrady, Kim Ostermann

Absent: none

The meeting was called to order @ 6:03pm

1. Pastor Eric opened with devotion and prayer.
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. March minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Lisa; seconded by Thomas.
3. Treasurer's Report –
 - a. Savings Account: \$305.00
 - b. Checking Account: \$328.45
 - c. Youth: \$2,639.53
 - d. Line of Credit: -- 0
 - e. Special Projects Account: \$7022.67Motion to approve made by Kelsey; seconded by Derek; approved.
4. Committee Reports
 - a. Technology
 - i. Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.
 - ii. Thomas updated the cameras. This helped make the picture clearer. He also updated the firmware on the splitter for the two TV screens.
 - b. Property
 - i. Updates from roofer: Roof repair hopefully the week of April 10th -- assuming good weather. Due to time restraints, he might only fix the worst of it right away, then keep going with other leaking projects, then come back to do the rest this summer. The roof repair bill will be coming so will need money.
 - ii. On the agenda for summer is landscaping around the flagpole. Not a huge cost but not small either.
 - iii. Planning to set up a timeline for items that should be addressed each year during a certain time. HVAC, fire extinguishers. . .
Suggestion to add this to SharePoint so it is available when we have new council members.
 - iv. Derek spoke to the congregation during a Sunday service regarding the "projects fund" and the need to keep that fund going to cover upcoming / unexpected costs.
 - v. Looking at a fundraiser for "Special Projects" as an emergency fund.

- c. Worship
 - i. Communion Servers for May
 - 1 Sunday, May 7 – Kelsey & Lisa
 - 2 Sunday, May 21 – Kim
 - ii. Be mindful of people in the congregation who don't come up front for communion. Try to see if they would like us to meet them in their pew for communion service.
 - iii. The Worship Committee meets Tuesday, April 18 @ 8:30am and will recap Lenten Services, Easter services, and Easter Breakfast comments.
 - iv. New member recognition Sunday June 4th.
 - v. Renae Hager and Kelsey Bosma are leading the music during worship on April 23.
- d. Stewardship
 - i. "Time and Talents" update - we need more surveys turned in.
 - ii. Looking at fundraiser ideas to benefit the Projects Fund. This fund is available for unexpected property expenditures.
 - iii. Bethlehem will participate at Bison Days with popcorn and ice cream sundaes in the park.
- e. Education
 - i. Bethlehem hosts Vacation Bible School this year. The theme is "Keepers of the Kingdom." It will be five days from July 31 – August 4. We'll need volunteers to teach and assist in other ways. Organizers will meet on April 23rd.
 - ii. Sunday School Appreciation Day is May 7. Brunch following the service – freewill donation.
 - iii. Sunday School students will sing May 14 (Mother's Day)
 - iv. Senior Recognition Sunday is May 14
 - v. Confirmation retreat is planned for May 12-14. Could be up to 12 campers. A deposit has been made.
- g. Fellowship/Evangelism
 - i. Fellowship time in the social hall will continue. Parents of Sunday School students provide snacks for each classroom. Donations of juice boxes would be appreciated. We're always looking for volunteers to provide refreshments for adults. Please consider signing up to serve.
 - ii. The community is invited to Spring Coffee on Thursday, April 20 from 9:00-11:00am.
 - iii. We are hosting a Pampered Chef online party and book order April 16-23. We will be able to update some needed kitchen supplies with the credits we receive.

5. Pastor's Report

- a. A huge thank you to the many people who put in extra hours to make Lent and Easter happen. It was indeed a team effort.
- b. Pastor Eric will attend the LCMC Iowa District meeting on Monday, April 17. He will also attend a Leader Care retreat at Riverside Bible Camp May 7-11.
- c. 1G will be wrapping up the year soon and will have a debriefing/planning meeting. Senior High 1G has been small but steady with new kids getting involved.
- d. Confirmation classes are also winding down. There is no class on May 10th while pastor is at the Leader Care Retreat. Only three more classes left before the retreat. Confirmation students did a great job assisting with Easter Sunrise worship and with the Easter breakfast. They raised a total of \$980 from the freewill donations during Lenten Meals and the Easter Breakfast. The retreat is planned for May 12-14 at Okoboji in their new beach house that just opened last summer.

- e. Four students went through First Communion class with three in attendance for the Maundy Thursday service.
- f. Women's Bible study continues with focus on James 2.
- g. Pastor Eric briefly met with 6th grade students and got them up to speed with acolyting. They start participating during the May 16th service.

6. Office Report:

- a. We are interested in having a Funeral Guide and Wedding Guide to assist with expectations. Jen will work on this but would like some input. Amy Walk volunteered to assist with this.
- b. Updates on new members. We are making contacts. New member recognition service planned for June 4th.
- c. Plans to address the process for accepting new members into the congregation.
- d. Pew cards have been updated and include requests for pastoral contact, pastoral visit, interest in membership, and prayer requests.
- e. We are looking at purchasing some more pew Bibles.
- f. Jen is inviting people to register for the Women's Conference in Mankato on May 6th.
- g. Jen McGrady is typically in the office on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday.
- h. Pastor's hours are Monday through Thursday beginning about 8:30am-4:00pm

7. New Business

- a. April Mission: LCMC (both Iowa and national)
(Last month was global with the regular rotation as LCMC, local, global)
Motion by Derek; seconded by Kelsey; approved.

8. Next meeting: Sunday, May 7 after worship service and brunch (11:45?)

9. May Newsletter deadline: April 26

10. Motion to Adjourn made by Lisa, seconded by Derek; adjournment approved.

11. Meeting adjourned at 7:37pm

Closed with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted by,
Kim L. Ostermann
Secretary

CONTACT US:

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Bethlehem Lutheran Sunday School



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