OCTOBER 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

**OCTOBER**

*4 Jace Lawson Family & Aubri Wubben Family
*11 Joel Boekelman Family Bailey Newton Family
18 Wyatt Bosma Family and Jen McGrady
*25 Riley Price Family and Owyn Ostermann Family

**NOVEMBER**

*1 Julie Weaver, Colin Weaver, and Tanner Weaver Family
*8 Lily Pentico Family and Elsa Jacobs Family
15 Mary & Rande Giesking and Colson Wubben Family
22 Amelia Price Family and Derek Olson Family
29 Kyle Frerichs Family and Dana & Katy Greensky

Communion indicated with (*)

## CALENDAR of EVENTS

Please see the monthly calendar on **page 9** for all church activities this month.




## Birthdays for the month of October:

6 - Zoey Ostermann
9 - Lily Pentico
9 - Rachel Wubben
10 - Elsa Jacobs
10 - Allison Paul
14 - Deagyn Pilot
15 - Ashley Cox
15 - Tiarra Hagedorn
15 - Kate Kakacek
17 - Deloris Steffensen
23 - Levi Berggren
23 - Joan Sunde
24 - Ted Thompson
27 - Malachi Hullstrom
28 - Walker Johnson
29 - Brayden Berggren
30 - Todd Corporon
30 - Ivey Ostermann

## Prayers for our Members & Friends

Curtis Vaudt
Brian Bashans
Linda Abels
Dean Swenson
Roger Burnside
Nicky Shackleton
Dawn Jensvold
Virginia Cooper
Penny Mitchell
Monica Tyler
Ruth Noren
Susan Jensen
Doug Hofbauer
Randy Holstad
Dave Kakacek
Mark Beenken
Carolyn Bartz
Karen Buss
Deloris Steffensen
Claire Rustemier-Hinz
Emmagene Silber
Joy Albert
Harlan Melz
Leroy Weaver
Frances Ostermann
Delores Griffin
Marge Becker
Jason Christensen
Harvey Rossmiller
Berneice Maass
Tony & Nancy Scalisi
Pastor Mark Neumann (BLC's deployed pastor)

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!

**Save the Date!**
**All Saints' Sunday**
**November 1, 2026**

**FOOD BANK NEEDS for October:**

**Chili or kidney beans, cream of chicken or mushroom soup, creamed corn, hot chocolate mix packets.**

**Please drop off donations in the church narthex or the BC Library. Thanks!**






**The Apostles' Creed, Article One**

*I believe in God, the Father almighty, CREATOR of heaven and earth.*

What is this? Answer:

*I believe that God has **created** me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties*.

*In addition, God daily and abundantly **provides** shoes and clothing, food and drink, house and farm, spouse and children, fields, livestock, and all property—along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life. God protects me against all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil.*

*And all this is done out of pure, **fatherly,** and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all! For all of this I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.* [Martin Luther's Small Catechism]

The first article of the Apostle' Creed, the confession of faith we profess nearly every week (we recite the Nicene Creed on the first Sunday of the month), talks about what we believe about God. First, He is our creator. He created with a word out of nothing as only our sovereign God can do. But not only does He create He sustains all of life and all our functions. Each beat of your heart and each breath you take is a gift from God.

Next, we confess that God provides us all that we need. In the Lord's Prayer we pray, *"Give us this day our daily bread".* We are not literally praying for bread, but everything needed for life, and God is gracious to give it. Though what we need varies from person to person, God is faithful to provide exactly what YOU need.

And finally, we confess and give thanks that God does all of this out of *fatherly and divine goodness and mercy.* As a father joyfully provides for their child, so does your heavenly Father give to you. It is His joy to care for you. It is His joy to provide and sustain you. And all of this is true, not because Martin Luther says so, but because God says so and He is always true.



# Confirmation Class News

Orientation is done. The class bonfire was a lot of fun. Now, regular classes have begun (which will be fun as well). We are spending the first six weeks of class studying the Apostles' Creed. During the week one lesson, I challenged the students with this scenario: Someone at school who knows you are a Christian approaches you and says, "Prove to me that God exists". What do you say? We explored and discussed some common responses. And this is just the beginning. Teaching the students information is good in one sense, but they need to know how to process said information in order to be ready to defend their faith. I am looking forward to the conversations we are going to have this year.

Dear Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

**I am calling a special congregational meeting** to discuss and consider matters related to Pastor Eric accepting a part-time pastoral role serving a nearby startup congregation while continuing to serve our church.

The purpose of this meeting is to present the proposed arrangement and provide an opportunity for questions and discussions. I encourage all voting members to attend as this is an important matter affecting the ministry.

**Meeting to be held October 18 following worship.**

Sincerely,

Derek Thilges, Council President

## 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

## FELLOWSHIP

Fall is in the air, which means harvest time is here! As our farmers head into one of the busiest times of the year, let us pray for a safe and successful harvest. Pray for our farmers, farmhands, wives, and children as they navigate long days, changing weather, and all that comes with this busy season. May God keep them safe, give them strength, and watch over their families.

Guest Night was held on September 9th with Brian, Christina, and Norah Blodgett. Their presentation, "Beyond the Visible – Science, Faith and the Evidence We Cannot See," was a fun and fascinating exploration of the connection between science and faith. They shared facts about physics and used them to open a conversation about the things we cannot always see, but can still have faith in. We had 60 people in attendance. Guest Night is always such a great opportunity to gather, hear from different people about their passions and experiences, and find ways to connect those things back to God's Word. Thank you Blodgetts!

One thing I also wanted to touch on is BLC offering the fellowship hall to Jess Robinson so she can instruct exercise classes. Jess approached the church with the hope of using the space to encourage members of our community to move their bodies, gather in a safe and welcoming environment, and jumpstart their fitness journey.

I have personally attended one of her classes, and I really enjoyed it. Sometimes the hardest part is simply finding the time, figuring out what workout to do, or getting motivated to start. I appreciated having someone else take away that pressure and simply provide an opportunity to show up and move.

I also think this is a wonderful example of how the church can support people in our community — and how, in turn, that supports our church. As someone who works full time and cares for three young children, I am especially appreciative of someone who is willing to take a passion of theirs and use it to help others.

Scripture reminds us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that we are to honor God with our bodies. Caring for our physical health is not separate from our faith; it can be one way we care for what God has entrusted to us. When our mind, body, and spirit are cared for, we are better equipped to serve God, our families, and our communities.

I love that BLC is willing to open its doors and provide a space where people can gather, build relationships, take care of themselves, and hopefully feel connected to something bigger than themselves.

Thank you,
Katie Mathahs

## TECHNOLOGY

It has been a relatively quiet period for the Technology Department, which in our case is a good thing! Our technology systems continue to operate well, and we have been addressing the normal maintenance and support needs that come up along the way.

One area we are currently working on is our website. We are in the process of moving our website hosting to WordPress. This will give us access to many tools and features that we do not currently have, while also making the website much easier to update and manage. We hope to have this transition completed before the end of the year.

We are always looking for people who are interested in helping with sound and PowerPoint during services. A special thank you to Kyle Winter for all the work he does and for the many services he helps run.

If you are interested in helping with the Technology Department, or if you have a technology issue or suggestion to report, please reach out to Thomas Blodgett.

Thank you,
Thomas Blodgett

**Church Council Minutes**
September 14, 2026
***Meeting Room***
Faith, hope, and love make us available for our neighbors near and far.

Members present: Derek Thilges, Darla Thompson, Amy Walk, Megan Holland, Katie Mathahs, Kim Ostermann, Jen McGrady, Larry Lawson, Thomas Blodgett, Pastor Eric
Absent: Susan Jensen

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Pastor Eric led devotions based on Matthew 8:10-14 (The Parable of the Lost Sheep)
Pastor challenged us with the following questions:
Who are "these little ones?" (verses 1-6)
Read vs. 12 again. What causes sheep to go astray when they are with the shepherd? How could this describe a church?
How do verses 13-14 describe what the mission of the church should be?
Where are our "lost sheep?" How do we find them?

**President's Report**

- All council members should have received a copy of the space rental agreement with Jessica Robinson via email. The church will get 25% of the revenue. Class times are projected for Mondays and Thursdays at 7:00pm.
- We discussed creating a list of men to help with property/landscaping upkeep. Ex. Weeds, dirty downspouts, etc. We will add this to the strategic plan to create a work group for assisting with upkeep of the church property.

**Secretary's Report**

- The August 2026 minutes were approved via email. Motion to approve by Derek; seconded by Amy.
- No changes or additions to the "Make a Difference Campaign."

**Treasurer's Report**

- Savings Account: $100.00
- Checking Account: $2,810.06
- Youth: $2,714.04
- Line of Credit: $6,900.00
- Special Projects Account: $13,593.16
- Motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Amy, seconded by Megan; motion carried.
- We plan to continue showing a QR Code for online giving on the worship PowerPoint.

**Committee Reports**

**Technology**

- Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.
- We are planning to move forward with an update to the church website.
- The TV in the Social Hall is working as expected again. We will continue to monitor.

**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."

A second quote for the windows was received from Garner Lumber & Supply Company. Their quote was $59,080,57.

- We are also looking for a third quote through an actual window expert that would include labor. We plan to apply for a Grant with Worth County Development Authority which opens again January 1st. Please contact anyone on the council if you are aware of other grant opportunities.
- We are looking to replace a window or two at the parsonage before winter.
- The parsonage basement repairs are being planned for this fall.
- The water heater for the cleaning closet and 2 bathrooms quit working. It was installed 11-05-1986 and definitely end of life. This has been replaced at a cost of $450.

**Worship**

- The worship committee met and confirmed all was in place for Rally Sunday and the presentation of the third-grade Bibles.
- The Music Library has begun with the first download of public hymns from the LBW. There are 150 organ selections to choose from which can be used as needed. This is simply a backup if needed. We also discussed the possibility of trying one of the hymns during a service before it is actually needed.
- The next worship committee meeting will be Tuesday, September 15th at 8:30. Discussion will include Reformation Sunday with confirmation on October 25th and All Saints Sunday November 1st as well as upcoming baptisms.
- Communion helpers needed for October:
  October 4th (at the rail): Megan
  October 11th (continuous): Larry, Kim
  October 25th – Confirmation Sunday (need three): Amy, Katie, Jen (two stations of both bread & wine)

**Stewardship**

- The next community meal is September 27th at the Heritage Town Center from 4:00-6:00pm. The plan is to continue these on October 18, November 15, and December 20.
- North Iowa Food for Families is going well and receiving donations. Guest Night collected a few food items and about $77 in monetary donations.
- The Drive-thru Soup Supper is October 11 from 4:30-6:30. Kelsey, Cassie, Megan and Amy are planning. We will check on getting Thrivent money to help with expenses.
- Discussion regarding apple pie / crisp fundraiser in October.
  We plan to make the apple pies and apple crisps on October 30 & 31 for pickup on Sunday, November 1.

**Education**

- All things education are off and running!
- Great attendance during worship for Blessing of the Backpacks on August 23.
- Rally Sunday was a success! Time, hard work & lots of creativity was put in by the teachers! We were thankful that Stompin' Grounds Coffee Truck was able to come & the rain held off! The theme for Sunday School this year is "Building Blocks of Faith."
- Four 3rd graders received Bibles on Rally Sunday.
- Confirmation will kick off Wednesday, September 16th with a bonfire. A meeting was held for the seven 7th graders. Eight students are getting confirmed on October 25.
- Bethlehem will host a 5th quarter bonfire after the Homecoming football game on September 25th.
- Pastor & Megan have been working on finalizing dates for all things "education" for 26/27 year

**Fellowship**

- Fellowship time continues in the social hall – Sunday School serves Oct. 4, Council serves Oct. 11
  The Mathahs family will provide cake for Teddie's baptism on September 20, but work group #2 will also provide because Sunday School is in session and draws more people to fellowship time now.
- Guest Night went well. About 60 people were in attendance. Special thanks to the Blodgetts – Brian, Chris and Norah for presenting "Beyond the Visible – Science, Faith, and the Evidence We Cannot See." Thanks also to Thomas for running technology for the livestream.

- 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**

- Looking at possibly starting another Bible Study during winter months.

## Pastor's Report

♦ **Education**
1 G has started with about 30 kids in attendance. Bethlehem is scheduled to serve the meal on October 14, January 13, and March 17. Jen is going to coordinate again this year.
Confirmation kicks off with the annual confirmation bonfire at the parsonage. The leaders will be providing supper, treats and s'mores. There will be activities for the students and some class time.
Sunday school is off and running.
Men's Fellowship continues to meet on the third Saturday of the month at 7:00am.
Women's Bible study meets on October 13. The is a week later than usual due to the LCMC Annual Gathering the week before.

♦ **Worship**
Pastor Eric has done some pulpit supply at Bread of Life Lutheran Church in Blue Earth.
Teddie Mathahs will be baptized on September 20.
Briar Blodgett's baptism is scheduled for November 1.

♦ **Ministerial Association**
The ministerial association welcomed Pastor Judy Clark (United Methodist Church) to the monthly meeting. She is one quarter time in Buffalo Center.
Pastor Eric met with North Iowa Superintendent, Darwin Lehmann. They both expressed appreciation of the ministerial/school relationship.

♦ **LCMC**
Pastor Eric is registered for the LCMC Annual Gathering in October.
The gathering is scheduled October 4-7, 2026, at Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines. Anyone may attend the gathering for one day or the entire session. Information is available here: https://lcmc.net/annual-gathering
The district will have a leadership event in February.

♦ **Other items to note:**
Bethlehem will host a "5th Quarter" event for middle school students following the homecoming football game on September 25.
Bethlehem is planning to participate with North Iowa Betterment "Treats on the Streets."

**Office Report:**
Newsletter deadline is Sept 24. Technology and Fellowship will report.

**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.** September Mission is **local – Hunter & Owen Blocker Fund.** October Mission is **LCMC - Iowa & National.** Motion made by Thomas, seconded by Amy; approved

The next council meeting is Monday, October 12, at 6:00 pm.

Motion to adjourn made by Thomas, seconded by Katie; motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55pm. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Friends of Bethlehem,
We are working to put together an **"Apple Harvest Fundraiser."** We plan to take orders for either baked or frozen apple pies as well as either baked or frozen apple crisp.

When: Baking Days – October 30 & 31
Pickup Day – November 1

Where: Bethlehem

Deadline for ordering: Sunday, October 25




**These are some things we are looking for assistance with:**

- Apples – do you have an apple tree with good apples to share?
- Rolling pie crusts (do you have a fail-proof recipe to share? Could you help roll?)
- Cutting apples (peeler, corer, slicer)
- Monetary donations for baking supplies
- Large bowls for mixing and holding cut apples
- Rolling pins

**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!**

**Fellowship Serving Rotation:**

**Oct 4 - Sunday School**

**Oct 11 - Church Council**

**Oct 18 - Work Group #1**

**Oct 25 - Work Group #2**






**Children's Message on Rally Sunday!**

**General Fund Giving (NOT including fundraisers) As of 09.28.26**

**Actual YTD:** $92,466

**Budgeted YTD:** $117,733

**YTD Deficit:** -$25,267

**General Checking Balance:** $5,807

**Project Savings Balance:** $14,903

**General Savings Balance:** $100

**Amount Borrowed on Bank Loan:** $11,900



# Bethlehem Lutheran - OCTOBER 2026

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1<br>Jumpstart with Jess, 7:00 pm | 2 | 3 |
| 4<br>Worship with Communion at 9:30 am<br><br>SS at 10:45 am | 5<br>Jumpstart with Jess, 7:00 pm<br><br>Pastor Eric at LCMC | 6<br>Scouts Meeting, 6:00 pm<br><br>Annual Gathering | 7<br>Confirmation - 6:45 pm snacks, 7:15 class | 8<br>Jumpstart with Jess, 7:00 pm | 9 | 10 |
| 11<br>Worship with Communion at 9:30 am<br><br>SS at 10:45 am<br><br>Harvest Soup Supper 4:30-6:30 pm | 12<br>MOMS2MOMS, 3:30-5:00 pm<br><br>Church Council Meeting, 6:00 pm<br><br>Jumpstart with Jess, 7:00 pm | 13<br>Bible Study with Pastor, 2:00 pm | 14<br>Community Bible Study, 10:00 am<br><br>Confirmation - 6:45 pm snacks, 7:15 class | 15<br>Jumpstart with Jess, 7:00 pm | 16 | 17<br>Men's Bible Study, Fellowship Hall, 7:00 am |
| 18<br>Worship at 9:30 am<br><br>Congregational Meeting following worship<br><br>SS at 10:45 am | 19<br>Jumpstart with Jess, 7:00 pm | 20<br>Worship Committee Meeting, 8:30 am<br><br>Scouts, 6:00 pm | 21<br>Community Bible Study, 10:00 am<br><br>Confirmation - 6:45 pm snacks, 7:15 class | 22<br>Jumpstart with Jess, 7:00 pm | 23 | 24 |
| 25<br>Reformation Sunday<br><br>Worship with Confirmation & Communion at 9:30 am<br><br>SS at 10:45 am | 26<br>MOMS2MOMS, 3:30-5:00 pm<br><br>Jumpstart with Jess, 7:00 pm | 27<br>Quilting, 1:00 pm | 28<br>Community Bible Study, 10:00 am<br><br>Confirmation - 6:45 pm snacks, 7:15 class | 29<br>Jumpstart with Jess, 7:00 pm | 30 | 31<br>Treats on the Street, 3:00 - 4:30 pm |

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

**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.

**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.*

