

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

**October 2023**

# Oh Bethlehem!



**Making ourselves available...**

## **FOOD BANK**

**October:** Pie Filling, Pie Crust, Green Beans, Pears, Peaches, Green Beans and Peas.

***"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. Thank You.*



**Elementary: Monday @3:15pm**

**High School: Tuesday @7:30am**

**Middle School/High School: Wed @2:15pm**

**We are always in need of volunteers.**

**Please consider making yourself available to our younger neighbors.**

**Talk with Pastor Eric about it.**

**This is a Great thing!!!!**

## **Greeters and Ushers**

### **October**

- \*8 Aurora Pentico(c) Family  
Dana Greensky Family
- 15 Thomas & Amanda Blodgett  
Todd & Lori Corporon
- 22 Mark & Deb Landheer  
Logan Willmert Family

### **November**

- \*5 Beckett Jensen(c) Family and  
Chloe Wubben(c) Family
- \*12 Henry Schaffer (c) Family  
Rod & Gayle Hanson
- 19 Lorie Briele  
Joe Angstman Family
- 26 Amy Walk Family & Mary Badje

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

Brian Bashans  
Harlan Melz  
Randy Melz  
Carolyn Bartz  
Clarice Stonebreaker  
Deloris Steffensen  
Claire Hinz  
Logan Sabin  
William Jensvold, Sr.

## **BETHLEHEM QUILTERS**

Come and join in the ministry and fellowship of tying quilts. We have a great group that would love to have more hands. They meet mostly every other Tues. @1pm.  
**See you there!**

When you feel like you  
are drowning in life,  
don't worry...  
*your Lifeguard  
walks on water!*

## **Upcoming Events and Announcements:**

### **October**

- 4-No Confirmation
- 8-Worship w/communion 9:30am/SS
- 9-Council mtng @6pm
- 10-Bible Study with Pastor Eric @2pm
- 15-Worship @9:30am/SS kids sing/SS
- 17-Worship Comm mtng @8:30am
- 18-Confirmation @6:45pm
- 22-Worship @9:30am/SS  
-Drive thru Soup Supper
- 24-Quilting @1pm
- 29-Reformation and Confirmation Sunday @9:30am
- 30-Nov 2. Pastor at Leader Care Retreat  
-No One G. (no school)

### **November**

- 5-Worship w/communion @9:30/SS  
-Fall Fundraiser Meal @11-1pm
- 7-Bible Study with Pastor Eric
- 8-Confirmation @6:45
- 12-Worship w/communion/SS
- 13-Council mtng. @6pm

## **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.**

## <<Pastor Eric>>

Do you remember the hot air balloon illustration I used in my article last month? No? That's fine, here's a brief excerpt...

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*We are all entering a hot air balloon. Part of me is a little nervous, like I said, being at the will of the wind can be unsettling. But in this case, the "wind" is the Holy Spirit. That should be comforting but it is the unknown that can cause concern in some.*

*"Oh boy, what are you changing, Pastor?"*

*Don't worry, I am not doing any redecorating in the sanctuary or anywhere else in the church building. You see, recently, the "wind" started blowing, which signaled me to enter the basket, and thus I am taking you with me. I am not exactly sure where this basket is going, but I do know that we are in good hands.*

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Does that clear things up? No? Well, allow me to fill in some of the blanks: (1) With the departure of Pastor Russ to Algona, I have become the primary teacher for 1G on Mondays. I am still trying to find my groove, but I am getting there. The big thing I have noticed is that I am making stronger connections with the 1G kids, and I am loving it. I am also seeing other leaders step up with this shifting of leadership. There are still a lot of unknowns, but one thing is certain – God is continuing to do His thing here in Buffalo Center.

(2) I am teaching youth Sunday school for the first time in about 23 years. I get the privilege of teaching the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade boy's class. I began the year a little nervous and with the sense that this was just a stop gap measure until we found someone else. Now, I am feeling a connection with these boys and looking forward to continuing throughout the year. It does take me away from visiting during Fellowship time, but I am searching for a balance there.

(3) I am planning on doing a sermon series through a book of the Bible. I was thinking we were going to start in October, but I am putting that on hold for now as I reassess. I will have more details in the coming months.

(4) Confirmation is going to have a different feel, and not just because we have eight new 7<sup>th</sup> graders. I am trying a couple new things this year and looking forward to seeing the Spirit's fruit.

And there you have it. Our hot air balloon ride. For some, this may seem a little unsettling as some do not like change or a lot of it. But keeping to the status quo does not accomplish anything. A hot air balloon may look impressive on the ground, but it was meant to fly, and so we are. Are you ready? Let us see where the Spirit blows us.



## <<confirmation corner>>

We are off and running. We have had a great start to the new confirmation year.

We got the 7th graders oriented, had a fun bonfire with the whole class and had our first regular class inside. Wednesday, Oct 4, there will be no confirmation class due to me traveling home from the LCMC Annual Gathering. We will resume on Oct 11 as we begin our unit on the Apostles' Creed. Please remember the students and the leaders in your prayers.

If you are interested and feel so moved to help financially, I would welcome your donations to help pay for the year-end retreat. I feel this is such an important part of the confirmation process. The curriculum cost is negligible so that is not an issue. Most of all, I value your prayers. Remember our students and leaders and pray that the Holy Spirit guides them deeper into the truth. To God be all glory, 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 Lisa Berggren. 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 that you 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!

Happy Fall! Thank you to those that have started in on the most recent cleaning list. We appreciate you.

The list is in the kitchen, please look and see what works for you.

PLEASE be thinking of a time you and your family could help to keep our church beautiful.

Also, if you know of things that are overlooked, please let me know.

We certainly get busy and we are aware of uncompleted projects, we are so thankful for the time and funds donated.

The plans for those projects will be completed, as discussed at previous council meetings.

Also, just a reminder that all council meetings are open to our members. We invite you to be with us.

To all our farm families I am praying that you have a safe and plentiful harvest.

My prayer for the whole congregation is that every day we choose love, hope, kindness and compassion!

*Bethlehem Lutheran... that is one small way to take some of the hate out of our world !*

**God Bless!**

Amy Walk

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

email: [billwalkbc@gmail.com](mailto:billwalkbc@gmail.com) cell#: 641-590-5845

### <<treasurer>>

As of 10/03/2023

YTD Offering: **\$ 98,873.98** (Includes online giving)

YTD Weekly giving average: **\$ 2,535.00** (Includes online giving)

Goal to meet each week till year end: **\$ 3,651.00**

Budgeted 2023: **\$150,000.00**

Thomas Blodgett



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!**

### <<technology>>

We are always trying to improve the technical experience of the congregation. For both in church and at home viewers. Our current goal is to improve our sound system. While we have a functioning system, it has some quirks and training issues. We currently have generous donors to help upgrade our upstairs tech area, including speakers, to give superior sound along with a TV to help the pastor follow along with the PowerPoint. This will make it easier to train and direct people to use the equipment. Plans are in place to increase the sound inside the church to make hearing the service effortless. Additional donations would be gratefully accepted to enhance our technical experiences.

If you are interested in helping with tech in any way, please reach out to Thomas Blodgett at 641-251-1427.

### <<education>>

Hello, and Happy Fall! We have had an amazing kick-off to the new year in education. We had a fun rally Sunday and enjoyed having parents join us for a morning of games and ice cream sundaes. After reorganizing sections and classrooms, we were ready to welcome 46 kids that are registered for SS this year! It is an exciting time with much to-do, and we are lucky to have an awesome team. This year we have the following people helping us out:

3-year-old fellowship & Music- Connie Hanson Hullstrom

Preschool/Kindergarten- Cassie Willmert

1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grades- Lisa Berggren & Megan Ostermann

3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grades- Courtney Boekelman & Amanda Blodgett

5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade girls- Megan Holland

5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade boys- Pastor Eric

SS superintendent & Music- Kelsey Bosma

It will surely be another exciting year, and we also are excited to be singing to everyone in church again each month! We would like to thank those of you who contributed to our school supply collection, we really appreciate being able to supply our classrooms with all they need!

Happy Fall everyone- Kelsey Bosma and Lisa Berggren

**PS- stay tuned for more details on our annual Drive-Thru Soup Supper!**

### <<stewardship>>

We recently received a few more time and talent surveys, which is exciting! So please, if you have forgotten to fill yours out, we would love for you to do so! From the February 2019 issue of Table talk magazine: ***How are we investing our time to profit our church? How we spend our time, both reveals and trains our hearts. Where our time goes, there our hearts will be also.*** Our talents are a sort of clue, to the Spiritual gifts that we may possess! How can you make yourself available? Feel free to reach out if you have any questions, thank you- Kelsey Bosma & Teresa Cooper

### <<fellowship and evangelism>>

#### DRIVE -THRU SOUP SUPPER

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Buffalo Center, Iowa  
Sunday, October 22, 2023, 4:30-6:30 pm.

Meal includes choice of soup, roll, apple dessert, & water.

Soup options: Chili, Chicken Noodle, Potato Corn Chowder.

#### THANKS MEAL

*Faith, hope, and love...make us available  
for our neighbors near and far.  
And we appreciate all of our church family.*

*Be our guest to a meal "in your honor"  
Join us on Sunday Dec. 3rd @ 11:30 am*

*Hot Beef Sandwich  
Scalloped Corn  
Green Beans  
Buttermilk Brownies  
Coffee, Milk and Water*



*"Kids, look for a special menu for just for you"*

In November...

Mark your calendars  
for the annual  
Fall Fundraiser  
To be held on

Sunday, November 5th  
Serving from 11-1pm



More details to come!



## Church Council Minutes

September 11, 2023

\*\*\*Held in the Meeting Room\*\*\*

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

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

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Derek Thilges @ 6:09pm; Amy Walk entered the meeting about 6:25pm

1. Pastor Eric opened with devotion and prayer.
2. Secretary's Report
  - a. August minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Lisa; seconded by Derek.
3. Treasurer's Report –
  - a. Savings Account: \$100.03
  - b. Checking Account: \$3168.90
  - c. Youth: \$1,826.74
  - d. Line of Credit: -- \$2,000
  - e. Special Projects Account: \$1,769.15
  - f. Motion to approve made by Kelsey; seconded by Lisa; approved
  - g. Voucher System in place hopefully by Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>. It would provide for better accountability in purchasing and a cleaner approach to documenting expenditures.
4. Committee Reports
  - a. Technology
    - i. Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett. It would be nice to have a rotating schedule with those interested.
    - ii. We have a potential donor willing to donate \$5,000 for some new sound equipment. We are looking at upgrading the main central speaker, getting a better microphone for Pastor Eric, and upgrading the lectern microphone. We will be getting a more solid quote from Thomas for upgrading the equipment as well as a quote from Craig Schwartz with Omega Organ.
  - b. Property
    - i. Removing the block around the flagpole and planting grass will be completed by Derek as soon as time permits. We felt this was the best option because of the available funds in our projects account.
    - ii. Duane Maass and Travis Hassebroek did some bush trimming. Thank you!
    - iii. A list of projects has been started for the general up-keep of our church building. Hopefully, members might be willing to help work on these items one by one to get them crossed off the list. The list is located in the kitchen.
    - iv. We are planning to check with Alliant to see if they will do an energy audit. Also checking if there are grants available for switching to LED lighting.
  - c. Worship
    - i. Confirmation students are back to reading scriptures during the school year.
    - ii. Sunday School students will be singing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month beginning in October.
    - iii. Confirmation is planned for Sunday, October 29.
    - iv. Communion Servers for October
      - 1 Sunday, October 1 – Lisa – Served at the rail
      - 2 Sunday, October 8 – Jen, Kim – continuous serving line
    - v. Next worship committee meeting will be Monday, September 18 at 8:30am.

- vi. We had discussion regarding a request that someone remind those who are scheduled to greet. Since the greeters are also considered the ushers, we also need better communication about taking the offering forward, recording attendance, and ushering for communion.
- d. Stewardship
  - i. Drive-thru Soup Supper is planned for October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Kelsey, Cassie Willmert, and Megan Holland will lead the event.
- e. Education
  - i. Sunday School update. We have about 54 students that could be attending.
  - ii. "Wish list" responses were great and very much appreciated.
  - iii. 1G update. Pastor Eric will be primarily teaching the large group elementary session, Janell Jacobson will do the primary teaching of Senior High. Pastor Sue and Janell will do middle school sessions.
  - iv. Confirmation orientation for 7<sup>th</sup> graders is September 13, 2023. There will be eight 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, five 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, and four 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.
  - v. Cassie Willmert would like to step down from the lead position with Cradle Roll. We are looking for someone to take over this position.
- vi. 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.
  - ii. Guest Night was attended by about 40 people on Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>. We enjoyed listening to the talents of the 3CDs which was followed by refreshments featuring apple desserts.
  - iii. The usual Fall Luncheon date would have fallen on Veteran's Day this year which we felt would be a definite conflict. We are instead planning a Turkey Dinner following the church service on November 5<sup>th</sup> from 11:00-1:00. We are inviting the community to join us. Some of the men in our congregation are organizing this event. Contact Daryl Friest if interested in helping with this.

## 5. Pastor's Report

- a. Pastor Eric will be starting a sermon series through Romans beginning October 8.
- b. Congratulations to MacKenzy and Jacob Lindblom on their marriage. Jacob's grandfather presided, and Pastor Eric ran the sound system and signed the marriage license.
- c. 1G is in full swing. Elementary gathers on Mondays after school. High Schoolers meet Tuesday mornings with a second offering on Wednesdays after school. Middle School students participate on Wednesday after school.
- d. Pastor is working on some tweaks to the confirmation requirements to make them more worthwhile for the students. 7<sup>th</sup> Grade orientation is September 13 with the full class on September 20. Pastor is hosting a bonfire at the parsonage for the kickoff. The confirmation retreat has been scheduled for the Beach House at Okoboji May 10-12.
- e. The 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday School class is being divided with Megan Holland taking the girls and Pastor Eric leading the boys. They will join forces periodically to do some pre-confirmation lessons with the whole group.
- f. Pastor Eric is gone October 1-4 as he is attending the National LCMC Gathering in St. Charles, Missouri. Darla Thompson will provide pulpit supply on October 1.
- g. The Iowa District LCMC Annual Gathering is scheduled for November 11 from 9:00am—3:00pm at Badger Lutheran Church in Badger, Iowa.

## 6. Office Report:

- a. Jen and Amy have been working on a Funeral Guide and a Wedding Guide so people understand expectations and what we have available.
- b. We had some discussion about our church liability when others use our facility. We are checking with insurance about this issue.
- c. We're making a list of kitchen expectations for anyone using the kitchen.
- d. Jen's office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday.

e. Pastor's hours are Monday through Thursday beginning about 8:30am-4:00pm.

7. New Business

- i. August Mission – local – Last month was global, and we decided on Maui Relief (the regular rotation is LCMC, global, local)  
T-shirts for 1G - \$200  
Motion by Lisa; seconded by Derek; approved.

8. Next meeting: Monday, October 9 @ 6:00pm

9. October Newsletter deadline: Tuesday, September 26

10. Motion to Adjourn made by Lisa, seconded by Derek

11. Meeting adjourned at 7:41

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kim L. Ostermann











