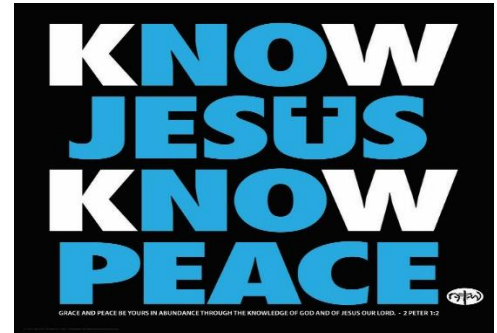


*Faith, hope, and love...  
make us available  
for our neighbors near and far.*

*August 2023*



# Oh Bethlehem!

## *Making ourselves available...*

**Food Bank for August:** Kleenex, Paper towel, Toilet paper, Dish Soap, Shampoo, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste and Deodorant.

***"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.*



**Starting soon!!!**

**Elementary: September 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Middle School: September 13<sup>th</sup>**

**High School: September 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Please share this and registration forms are in the Narthex.**

**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**

### **August**

- \*13 Alex Olson Family(c)  
and Denny & Dawn Meinders
- 20 Derek & Shelby Thilges family  
and Ray & Vonnie Pilgrim
- 27 Brandon Thilges Family  
and Doug & Kim Ostermann

### **September**

- \*3 Braden Ullman(c) Family  
and Jim & Karen Meyering
- \*10 Tate Engelbarts(c) Family  
and Jamie Price Family
- 17 Dewayne & Bernice Mass  
and Chris Berggren Family
- 24 Brant Boekleman Family  
and Rita Ellsworth

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

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

**"In Gods perfect timing,  
*everything* will turn  
out alright."**

## **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.**



## **Upcoming Events and Announcements:**

### **August:**

- 13-Worship w/Communion @9:30am
- 15-Worship Committee meets @8:30am
- 20-Outdoor Worship @9:30am
- 27-Worship @9:30am with Blessing of Backpacks

### **September:**

- 2-Mackenzey Jensvold and Jacob Lindblom Wedding
- 3-Traditional Worship w/Communion @9:30am
- 5-Bible Study with Pastor Eric @2pm
- 10-Worship w/Communion, Rally Sunday!
- 11-1G elementary begins
- 12-1G high school begins
- 13-1G middle school begins
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade only Confirmation begins @7pm
- 17-Worship @9:30am
- 19-Worship Committee meets @8:30am
- 20-All Confirmation students begin @7:15pm
- 24-Worship @9:30am
- 25-Bethlehem serves 1G supper

## <<Pastor Eric>>

As I write this, I am preparing for a skit that Kelsey and I will be doing for the opening program on the opening day of VBS. She starts by introducing the title and theme of VBS, Keepers of the Kingdom. She tells the kids that they are about to, "...enter a world of castles and kings and queens and dragons and epic battles." I then enter the stage with my 5lb weights as I want to be strong and fit for battle. But Kelsey goes on to say that we are talking about being strong in the Lord and that it has nothing to do with lifting weights. I finally come to the realization that, *"This sounds like big stuff."* Which it is.

As the Church, if we are going to be defenders of the Truth, we must be strong in the Lord. We must be versed in the Word. We must be bathed in scripture. I have been reading a book by the 19<sup>th</sup> century English preacher, Charles Spurgeon, titled, The Power of Scripture. In chapter four he talks about Christ's indwelling Word. He says the Word must "*enter you*", meaning, you must get into the Word. Read your Bible, not as a duty to get through a reading plan, but to study the Word, so that the Word "*remains in you*". And as the Word remains in you, let it "*occupy your whole being*", taking up residence in your life. And, as you dwell with the Word, let it become "*your most familiar friend*". Spurgeon goes on to say, "*I can truly say that there is hardly anybody in the world that I know so well as I know David.*" That is dwelling in the Word and the Word dwelling in you.

But maybe you will never get to the point of where Spurgeon reached but that does not mean you do not try. I will never be a world-class weightlifter, but I will continue doing strength training in order for my body to be stronger and more fit, and better able to combat the effects of arthritis in my back. In the same way, you must dwell in the Word, getting to know it better and better, that you may be ready to do battle, standing for the Word of God. This world is constantly attacking and twisting the Truth, but we must stand firm. Therefore...

***10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, (Ephesians 6:10-17)***

Get ready to do battle, knowing that you do not battle alone.

## <<confirmation corner>>

The projected topical focus for the fall (2023-24) will be: **Old Testament, Apostles' Creed, Baptism and Worship**. Year #3 we are projected to cover: **New/Old Testament, The 10 Commandments, Holy Communion and Martin Luther**. So, as you can see, we will be covering a lot of ground.

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 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! I hope you are all doing well and loving God! It has been a crazy six months for me. Isaiah graduated from college and last month moved to Montana. We had our son, Bret, get married in Montana the first part of June. Janie and her family moved to North Carolina last month so I spent much of my time with them before they left. I don't have anything to say about Church business because I have been so busy. I would like to thank everyone that stepped up and helped me out. It is so great to be a part of such a great Church Family! My life is settling down so you will have to put up with seeing my around more! I hope everyone is enjoying their summer. Have a great month. Love and talk to each other the way Jesus would and all our lives will be fuller. God Bless!

Your President,  
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>>

We are 58% of the way through 2023, and we are at 62.14% of our budget. We are having a great year! Let's keep it up as we have a lot of great things in the works! As you know, the general maintenance items take a bulk of our budget. Even though we are on budget, it doesn't give us a lot of wiggle room for non-essentials, such as landscaping the flagpole area. We will hold off on the parsonage AC unit to be budgeted next year.

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.



<<property>> This summer has been pretty slow with property updates, which is always good. Updating the landscaping around the pole on the east side is on the agenda for the summer, to match the new landscaping from last summer. There is also more odds and ends that I know need attention. **I will be trying to recruit a handful of people that would like to help clean up and fix a few things around the church this summer, so if anyone would like to volunteer some time, please get ahold of me. Thank you.**  
- Derek Thilges

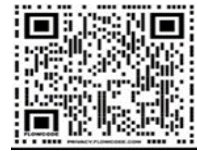
<<stewardship>>

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.***  
Teresa Cooper and Kelsey Bosma



## **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2023~~~~~KEEPER'S OF THE KINGDOM!**

**VBS was well attended by about 65 children from all over our North Iowa Community.**

**They had a meals and snacks served by volunteers from area churches.**

**We had approximately 25 volunteers that worked hard all week to share the word of God through Class time, Physical activities, Singing, Service projects and doing Arts and Crafts.**







<<fellowship & evangelism>> It's hard to believe we're already into August! Summer is flying by! The ecumenical service on July 30<sup>th</sup> to culminate BISON DAYS was a GREAT way to bring our community together. Pastor Eric presented the sermon, and some of our Bethlehem kids sang with other 1G students during the offering time. Undesignated offering went to 1G (**ONE GOD** Network) as we can all come together in His name.



 <p><b>The 3 CDs</b></p> <p>(All have been choir directors)</p>	<p><b>GUEST NIGHT</b>  <b>at Bethlehem</b>  <b>Lutheran Church</b>  <b>Wed., Sept. 6, 2023</b>  <b>7:00 pm</b></p> <p>Refreshments served following program</p> <p><b>Everyone Invited</b></p>
---	--

### **Guest Night**

This year will be on Wed, September 6<sup>th</sup>. We are excited to have the "3 CDs" performing. Linda Hill, Audrey Kiihn, and Julie Quamme have all been Choir Directors. They have been singing together for 15 years and love sharing their music during their retirement years. They have a mixture of songs interspersed with inspirational messages. Be sure to invite family, friends, and neighbors – everyone will be uplifted by their performance. **The program starts at 7:00pm** with refreshments served following the performance.

## Church Council Minutes

July 10, 2023

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

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

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

Absent: Susan Jensen, Kelsey Bosma

The meeting was called to order @ 6:03

1. Pastor Eric opened with devotion and prayer.
2. Secretary's Report
  - a. May minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Derek; seconded by Lisa
  - b. No June Meeting.
3. Treasurer's Report –
  - a. Savings Account: \$4,300.03
  - b. Checking Account: \$3,854.46
  - c. Youth: \$2,530.67
  - d. Line of Credit: -- 0
  - e. Special Projects Account: \$2931.75
  - f. Motion to approve made by Derek; seconded by Lisa; approved.
  - g. Thomas plans to have a "voucher" system in place by August 1<sup>st</sup>. This 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. Thomas is putting a rack above the desk in the balcony to put sound equipment in. This could make a bigger difference in the sound as well. There will also be a TV mounted on the balcony so pastor can see the PowerPoint.
  - b. Property
    - i. We are planning to take the block away around the flagpole but not replacing it at the current time. Grass will be planted. We felt this was the best option because of the available funds in our projects account.
    - ii. Air conditioner bill from Ehrich's Plumbing and Heating was \$1332.96. This included maintenance, mileage...
    - iii. The parsonage a/c unit might need some repairs. This is being investigated.
    - iv. Odds and ends of property items have been brought to Derek and Amy's attention. These will be addressed. We will need more hands on deck to assist with these projects. Contact Derek if interested in helping.
    - v. The handicapped access on the door has been fixed.
    - vi. Pastor would like a "Gaga Ball Pit" outside the kitchen door of the parsonage. He and Connie would donate it. The octagon is 8 feet.  
Thomas made a motion to approve; Derek seconded; approved.
  - c. Worship
    - i. Communion Servers for August
      - 1 Sunday, August 6 – Amy Walk.
      - 2 Sunday, August 13 – Lisa Berggren
    - ii. Everything is completed for the organ speaker and paid for with money from the BLCW account. (Omega Organ and Audio -- Craig Schwartz) The old speakers were taken care of.

- iii. Plans for an outdoor service on July 16<sup>th</sup>, and an ecumenical service on July 30<sup>th</sup> at the Post Office Park for Bison Days. One more outdoor service is planned for August. There will be a blessing of the backpacks on August 27.
  - iv. We'll try to remind greeters about which Sunday they are assigned to greet.
  - v. The lectern is back for scriptures readers to read from.
- d. Stewardship
  - i. The "Music and Mingle" Fundraiser brought in just over \$2,400. We hope to have Nate and Mindy back again sometime soon. Please let us know if you have other suggestions.
  - ii. Bison Days -- popcorn and Root Beer Floats at Lions Club Park Friday and at the Post Office Park on Saturday. This is a Confirmation Fundraiser.
- 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. A VBS meeting is scheduled for July 11, 2023. We currently need two teachers, leaders for craft and games, and several helpers. We are diligently working on this as we speak. Kitchen help is also needed. That is being organized by Jen.
  - ii. 1G picnic on July 10<sup>th</sup> in the park had a good turnout. Riding Light students spoke and offered horse rides.
  - iii. Sunday School starts September 10, 2023.
  - iv. 1G starts September 11, 2023. 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.
  - v. 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.
- 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. We will soon be planning for Guest Night on Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>.
  - iii. Our usual date for the Fall Luncheon would fall on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> which is Veteran's Day. We feel this would be a large conflict and will work to find an alternative date.
  - iv. Summer School meals went well. Thank you to all those who donated and served! We provided food on these dates:
    - a. Monday, June 12 – Work Group 2
    - b. Tuesday, June 13 – Work Group 3
    - c. Wednesday, June 14 – Pastor Eric and Connie
    - d. Thursday, June 15 – Work Group 1
    - e. Wednesday, June 28 – Thilges Family

## 5. Pastor's Report

- a. Pastor Eric met to discuss 1G leadership transition. Russ Jacobson is now serving in Algona and his wife Janelle is serving his former congregations. Pastor Eric will be the primary lead on Monday night. Janelle will lead middle school with Sue, and Janelle will take the lead with high school -- Jen McGrady and Joe Kidder will be involved as usual. Russ shared the resources he used, but it is still undecided if/what we will use this year. 1G starts up again the week of September 11 and concludes April 22.
- b. Great comments about the "Music and Mingle" on June 10. Thank you goes out to Kelsey and Teresa for organizing the event.
- c. Pastor Eric and Jen headed up the task of finding volunteers to provide lunches for the summer school kids at school. Everything went well and the school was very appreciative. Thank you to all from Bethlehem who stepped up when called upon. Pastor Eric is planning to take the lead on this again next year if needed.
- d. The Okoboji Bible Conference is August 5-11. Pastor Eric will be spending time there off and on.



- e. The LCMC Annual Gathering is October 1 – October 4 in St. Charles, Missouri. Pastor will be registering and will need pulpit supply this year as it is about a 7-hour drive.
- f. Upcoming items moving forward include: Bison Days Ecumenical Service, VBS at Bethlehem, 1G planning, Confirmation planning with 7<sup>th</sup> grade orientation scheduled for September 13. Full group Confirmation begins September 20.
- g. The Hullstrom Family is hoping to have a few “Fire & S’mores” evenings this summer with the public invited to stop on over. This will typically be on Sundays from 7:00-9:00pm.

6. Office Report:

- a. Please contact the church if you’re interested in any of the memorabilia – we are trying to lessen our supply.
- b. Plans are to still work on a Funeral Guide and a Wedding Guide so people understand expectations and what we have available.
- c. Jen’s office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday.
- d. Pastor’s hours are Monday through Thursday beginning about 8:30am-4:00pm

7. New Business

- i. June Mission: Lutheran Disaster Assistance Fund  
[Lutheran Disaster Assistance Fund - Mission Partners \(lcmc.net\)](http://LutheranDisasterAssistanceFund-MissionPartners.lcmc.net)
- ii. July Mission – LCMC  
(the regular rotation is LCMC, local, global)  
Motion by Derek; seconded by Lisa; approved

8. Next meeting: Monday, August 14 @ 6:00pm

9. August Newsletter deadline: August 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

11. Meeting adjourned at 7:19pm

We closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

## More VBS.....Closing program!













