

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

June 2023



Oh Bethlehem!

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

May

28-Worship @9:30am

29-Office closed

June

3-Grad Party for Elizabeth Olson, 11-1pm

4-New Member Sunday

6-Bible Study with Pastor @2pm

10-Music and Mingle fundraiser @6:30pm

12-Church Council meets @6pm

Ushers and Greeters

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

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.

Making ourselves available...

Food Bank for June: Cereal, Pancake Mix, Canned Fruit, Canned Veggies, Cookie Mix and Snack Pack Pudding.

"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.



Heritage Center...June 10th...6:30-8pm

**All are welcome for a night of
Music, Mingling, and More!**

Nate and Mindy Sletten will be providing a variety of music for our enjoyment.

A silent auction will begin at 6:30.

Snacks/refreshments will be available.

Hosted by BLC Property
and Stewardship boards.

Free will donation.

Prayers for our Members and friends:

Harlan Melz

Clarice Stonebreaker

Deloris Steffensen

Brian Bashans

Christina Coughlin

Kyle Winter

Jaya

Dawn Jensvold

Randy Melz

Marcia Aukes

Carolyn Bartz

Claire Hinz



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....and away!



CONFIRMATION RETREAT 2023

This year there were 8 kids that attended the retreat at Ingham-Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp. We did not have such favorable weather but we had a great time.

The camp staff did some fun things with us, and Pastor Eric led the study for the weekend. Lots of us learned a couple new boardgames and we watched a great movie.

As always, we had good, good food to eat!

Thanks for supporting us throughout the year and thanks to our leaders, Rachel Wubben, Susan Jensen, Brian Bashan, Kelsey Bosma and Jen McGrady

<<Pastor Eric>>

It is the end of an era, that is if you want to call just over a year an “era”. It was an amazing run but now things are changing and thus many are forced to find ways to adapt. It is not easy to make significant life changes, but it is during these times that the character of a person shows its true colors. And the era-ending moment in which I am referring, it is the closing of business of Two Daughters Coffee ☹️ (Somewhere my wife is rolling her eyes).

Is Pastor Eric being serious here?

Well, if you know me, you already know the answer to that question. But I am also being serious in sharing this “light-hearted” example. (“Light-hearted” is in quotes because coffee is very serious for me, but I digress, again). Anyway, things do change and thus people must adapt. Sometimes it is easy to fill the void (I have already ordered from a new coffee supplier), but at other times, it can cause significant upheaval and stress.

It is June and hence our “summer season” is upon us. Families are taking advantage of the summer weather and school summer vacation to enjoy the lake, take family vacations, etc. And there are a host of other reasons why it is easy to note the significant change happening around here. The result, therefore, is decreased worship attendance and hence a drop in offerings.

Oh great, the Pastor is talking about money again.

I only say this because that even though it is summer and activities at church have slowed down, ministry is still happening here. The church does not have a summer break, nor do we want the church to take a break. We are still worshiping and caring for souls. We are still planning activities and ministry opportunities. The building is still open, and the electric meter is still running. Granted, an “era” is not coming to an end, this is just a temporary season (I hope), but adjustments need to be made all the same. And so, I urge you to remember your church and church family this summer, but also, remember your own souls:

- (1) Care for yourself by staying connected with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Satan loves solo-flying Christians because they are easier to pick off.
- (2) Remember your financial support. Unfortunately, bills do not take a summer break.
- (3) Pray for me and this ministry (I am still preaching, writing, and teaching).
- (4) Pray, pray, and pray some more, spending quality time with God.
- (5) Read your Bible.
- (6) Worship, if not here then wherever you are vacationing.
- (7) And finally, in all that you do, do it for the glory of God.

Have a happy and great summer everyone and praise be to God.

<<confirmation corner>>

My second year of confirmation here at Bethlehem has wrapped up on a high note once again and I am excited to get started again in the Fall. After my first year I did some revamping of confirmation hence, 2022-23 was year #1 of our new three-year curriculum that I am writing. It is a program I have used before, but I am doing some tweaking for this context. The topical focus this past year was: **The Church, The Lord’s Prayer, New Testament and Confession (Catechism)**. 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.

We ended our year by taking ALL the students (not just the 9th graders) on a retreat at Okoboji Bible Camp, staying in their newly constructed Beach House. Everyone loved the accommodations and seemed to have a good time all around. I also want to give a shout out to the small group leaders from this past year: Brain Bashans, Kelsey Bosma, Susan Jensen, Rachel Wubben and Jen McGrady. They gave of their time to be here and invested in these students. Thank you all. Coming up this fall, we will be confirming four students with eight 7th graders projected to start their confirmation journey in September.

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>>

For questions, concerns, ideas, and praises, please feel free to contact me.
email: billwalkbc@gmail.com cell#: 641-590-5845

<<treasurer>>

As of June 1st, our offering given is **\$48,367.52** The online giving through the Vanco App is at **\$9,852.00**. Total offering thus far is **\$58,219.52**. The budgeted giving for 2023 is **\$150,000.00**
The SS/Noisy offering brought in **\$552.05**.
We continue to see many blessings and good things happening at Bethlehem.
Thank you for your commitment to your church family.

<<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

<<property>>

We are glad to have the leaky roof repairs taken care of. Thank you for going above and beyond to help support this project. While we live in an aging building, things will continue to show up and will need to be addressed. The project fund will always be an ongoing thing and we will be finding ways to keep it financed. The upcoming Fundraiser on June 10th is one example of this. Many thanks to the Stewardship committee for heading this up.

Derek Thilges

<<fellowship & evangelism>>

JUNE – school is OUT and we're in the thick of our summer activities with vacations, ball games, swimming, golfing, camping, gardening, mowing lawn. . . . just enjoying the outdoors! We watch some of the most inspiring growth from our fields and forests while witnessing the wonders of creation painted in each sunrise and sunset.

John 1:3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Take time to appreciate all God has given us in His creation. Smell the flowers and freshly mown grass. Listen to the crickets and birds singing their songs. Praise God who has given us abundant LIFE!

As you look around to appreciate all you have, ask God to put someone or something in your path that you can help. Maybe it's someone struggling physically or financially. Maybe you could schedule a visit to a shelter or humane society. Maybe it's just sharing a smile with every person you meet. Each sunrise brings more opportunities, so anything could happen. Reach out in FELLOWSHIP with your community and others who cross your path.

A big THANK YOU to everyone who supported our Pampered Chef Party. Because of you, we were able to get all the items in the photo with NO cost to the church. It was nice to be able to refresh some of the kitchen supplies. Everything is washed and ready for use!

Fellowship & Evangelism Committee
Daryl Friest & Kim Ostermann



<<education>>

We celebrated the end of the Sunday School year on Sunday, May 14th with the kids singing during the service and the games afterwards. We've been blessed with such a great group of kids in our Sunday School Program.

Vacation Bible School is scheduled for July 31-August 4th from 5:30-8:15 pm. The theme this year is Keepers of the Kingdom and online registration is now open! We're working on finalizing plans for this weeklong event - if anyone is interested in helping with VBS, please reach out to Lisa or Kelsey.

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

<<stewardship>>

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

Church Council Minutes

May 7, 2023

held in the Meeting Room

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

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

Absent: Amy Walk

The meeting was called to order @ 11:44am by Vice President Derek Thilges

1. Open with devotion and prayer.
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. April minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Lisa; seconded by Derek.

1. Treasurer's Report –
 - a. Savings Account: \$299.00
 - b. Checking Account: \$1,408.86
 - c. Youth: \$2469.42
 - d. Line of Credit: -- 0
 - e. Special Projects Account: \$9080.24Motion to approve made by Lisa; seconded by Kelsey; approved.
 - f. Looking at a "voucher" system for better accountability with purchases. Thomas is working on this.

2. 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. The PowerPoint laptop used for services has been updated.
 - iii. The acoustics have been addressed to improve the sound system. We are checking into speakers to enhance our overall sound system.
- b. Property
 - i. Roof repair started the week of May 1st. It was a three-day job and was reported as worse than they were anticipating. The project was completed.
 - ii. On the agenda for summer is landscaping around the flagpole – maybe late summer. This won't be a huge cost but not small either.
 - iii. The bill came in for snow removal.
 - iv. Hopefully, the fundraiser for "Special Projects" will help us recover some more funds.
- c. Worship
 - i. Communion Servers for June
 - 1 Sunday, June 4 – Derek, Jen (continuous)
 - 2 Sunday, June 11 - 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. New member recognition Sunday June 4th. Light refreshments after church – Kim will organize.
 - iv. Cheryl Baumann contacted Omega Organ and Audio (Craig Schwartz) to look at improving the sound for the organ. He addressed some other items with the organ as well. The speaker within the organ is about shot, and we are looking into replacing it.

- d. Stewardship
 - i. "Time and Talents" update - we need more surveys turned in.
 - ii. The fundraiser for our Projects Fund is scheduled for Saturday, June 10 from 6:30-8:00pm at the Heritage Town Center. Live music from Nate and Mindy Sletten with refreshments and a silent auction. Freewill donation for the concert. We are looking for donations for the silent auction. If you have any ideas please contact Kelsey Bosma or Teresa Cooper.
 - iii. Bethlehem will participate at Bison Days with popcorn and ice cream sundaes in the park.
- e. Education
 - i. Sunday School recognition day went well on May 7th. Brunch was well received with many people staying after the worship service to partake.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. 1G will have a picnic on July 10th in the park. They will coordinate with Vacation Bible School. Families are welcome.
 - iv. Sunday School students will sing May 14 (Mother's Day)
 - v. Senior Recognition Sunday is May 14
 - vi. Confirmation retreat is planned for May 12-14. Nine Bethlehem members are currently planning to attend.
 - vii. The Education Committee is planning a follow-up meeting/recap following the past Sunday School year.
- g. 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. The Community Spring Coffee went well with about 40 people attending. \$305 was brought in via freewill donations and deposited in the Projects Fund.
 - iii. We hosted a Pampered Chef party in April. Over \$600 in Pampered Chef credit was earned that we used to purchase new kitchen items. Money was also donated which we used to purchase five items at 50% off. We were truly blessed with the opportunity to update kitchen supplies. Thank you to all those who made this possible.
 - iv. We have three members of Bethlehem who are graduating this year and eligible for scholarships. Luke Baumann, Caleb Cooper, and Elizabeth Olson have all turned in applications and will be awarded scholarships on May 14.

3. Pastor's Report

- a. Pastor Eric was honored to be a part of Brody Cooper's Eagle Scout Ceremony.
- b. Pastor is meeting with two couples who are preparing for marriage. Tanner Weaver & Anne Doran (June 3) and MacKenzie Jensvold & Jacob Lindblom (Sept. 2).
- c. The LCMC Iowa District Leader Care Retreat starts May 8th. Pastor Eric is attending Monday-Thursday.
- d. Bethlehem Lutheran's Confirmation Retreat is May 12-14. Confirmation classes have ended for the school year.
- e. 1G wraps up on May 15th. There will be a family picnic on July 10 which includes Riding Light Ministries and coordinates with Vacation Bible School to help with registration kick-off. The 1G program will run from September 11—April 15 during the next school year.
- f. Baccalaureate is May 17th. Pastor Eric is participating with Pastor Russ Jacobsen preaching this year.
- g. Pastor Eric continues his service with the Buffalo Center Fire Department as chaplain.
- h. Women's Bible Study continues. They will be finishing James 2 in June and continue meeting throughout the summer on the first Tuesday of the month at 2:00pm.

4. Office Report:

- a. We would like to MOVE the church memorabilia. Items will be discounted to 50% off. We also plan to share items with our new members.
- b. Updates regarding a Funeral Guide and Wedding Guide. Jen and Amy will review ideas appropriate for our church.

- c. A new member recognition service is planned for June 4th.
- d. Josh Mathahs & Katie Evans, Lauren Thilges, Anne Doran have been approved into membership.
Thomas made the motion to approve all four into membership; Kelsey seconded; approved.
- e. New bibles have been purchased and will be added to pews.
- f. Jen McGrady has some new office hours. Her plans are to work on Tuesday & Wednesday from 1:30-5:30pm with Thursday & Friday from 9:00-5:00.
- g. Pastor's hours are Monday through Thursday beginning about 8:30am-4:00pm

5. New Business

- a. Pastor Eric shared a message sent to the Ministerial Association about assistance with summer school lunches. The school no longer qualifies for the summer lunch program that had previously fed all children 2-18 each summer. Bethlehem is providing meals on some of the dates in June.
 - i Monday, June 12 – Work Group 2
 - ii Tuesday, June 13 – Work Group 3
 - iii Wednesday, June 14 – Pastor Eric and Connie
 - iv Thursday, June 15 – Work Group 1
 - v Wednesday, June 28 – Thilges Family
- b. May Mission: School lunches – mission money will be used for dinnerware, and general necessities while providing Summer School meals in June. Anything left will go toward unpaid school lunch balances.
(Last month was LCMC - the regular rotation is LCMC, local, global)
Motion by Kelsey; seconded by Lisa.

- 6. Next meeting: Monday, June 12 @ 6:00pm
- 7. June Newsletter deadline: Friday, May 26
- 8. Motion to Adjourn made by Lisa, seconded by Kelsey; approved.
- 9. Meeting adjourned at 1:00pm

We Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

CONTACT US:

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