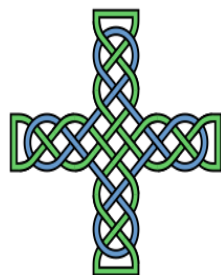


Oh Bethlehem!



**HE IS RISEN,
HE IS RISEN INDEED!
HAPPY EASTER!**

<<<Calendar of Events>>>

Feb:

28-Lent Meal @6pm
Service @6:45/Confirmation follows.

March:

3-Worship/Comm @9:30am/SS @10:45am
Communion Class for 5th Grade @10:45
Scouts Pinewood Derby @4pm
4-H meets @6:30pm
4-Lily orders due to Jen in office today.
5-12th Jen out of office.
6-Lent Meal @6pm/Service @6:45
Confirmation to follows.
10-Worship/Comm @9:45am/SS @10:45am
Communion Class-5th grade @10:45am
11-BLC serves 1G
Council @6pm
13-Lent Meal @6pm/Service @6:45
Confirmation to follows.
17-Worship @9:30am/SS @10:45am
19-Worship Committee meets @8:30am
20- Lent Meal @6pm/Service @6:45
Confirmation to follows.
24-Palm Sunday @9:30am/SS Kids sing
-SS@10:45am /5th Graders make bread
27-No Confirmation
28-Maundy Thursday Service @7pm
-5th Grade First Communion
29-Good Friday Service @First Baptist 7pm
31-Sunrise Service @7am
-Easter Breakfast 8-9am
-Easter Festival Brass Service @9:30am

<<Greeters and Ushers>>

March:

*3 Beckett Jensen(c)Family/Patti & Travis Hassebroek
*10 Lily Winter(c) Family & Teresa Roth Family
*17 Braden Ullman(c) Family /Doug & Kim Ostermann
*24 Traci Adams Family, Cody Adams, Jackie Larson
*28 Gabby Anderson(c) Family
*31 Sunrise Service: Confirmation Students
*31 Easter Festival Service: Billy Jensvold Family
Ashley Cox Family

2024 Church Council

Derek Thilges ~ President
Lisa Berggren ~ Vice-president
Thomas Blodgett ~Treasurer/Technology
Courtney Boekelman ~ Secretary
Kelsey Bosma ~ Stewardship
Lisa Berggren ~ Education
Darryl Friest and Teresa Cooper ~
Evangelism & Fellowship
Darla Thompson ~ Worship
Larry Lawson~Property

*THANK YOU
FOR
SUPPORTING
THE
VALENTINE
CAKES!
THIS
FUNDRAISER
RAISED
\$800.00 FOR
THE
GENERAL
FUND.*

The Confirmation Class

**Had a very successful Potato Bar Fundraiser.
THANK YOU FOR COMING OUT AND SUPPORTING US!
This will pay our retreat costs at
Ingham Okobojo Lutheran Bible Camp in May.**

Making ourselves available...

FOOD BANK

March: Large cans of fruit,
Fresh Veggies, Shredded
Cheese, Boxed Dinners or
Frozen Dinners, Pudding
Cups, Small Bags of Chips.

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

Prayers for our Members and Friends:

Harlan Melz	Steve Bakken	Jaya
Clarice Stonebreaker		Lorie Bierle
Deloris Steffensen		Randy Melz
Brian Bashans		Claire Hinz
Christina Coughlin		Carolyn Bartz
Logan Sabin		Caleb Cooper



Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Bethlehem Lutheran SS
Website: bethlehemlutheranbc.com **Email:** pastor@blciowa.org/office@blciowa.org
Phone: Jen- office (641) 562-2552 **Pastor Eric** (641) 562-2553
Jen's office hours: 9-12pm/1-5pm---Tues. Wed. Fri.
Pastor Eric office hours: 8:30-11:30am/12:30-4pm---Mon-Thurs.

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. We do budget for Property, but this does not cover bigger expenses that may come about. God is always at work within our church. When giving to this please designate.
We are so Blessed and Thankful.

JOIN US FOR THE NEXT 4 WEEKS
AS WE GATHER FOR LENT.
A FREE WILL OFFERING MEAL IS SERVED @6PM,
WITH THE SERVICE AT 6:45PM.

VANCO Giving

Today, weekly, or monthly. Check this out. Download the app or just scan here for giving. Many of us have found this to be an easy and useful way to give. For more info or questions contact Thomas B or Jen. Thanks.



<<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>>

This is designed to provide our smallest members and parents resources to raise them up until they can enter Sunday School. If you would like to help with Cradle Roll or sponsor a child please contact Amy Walk. A \$100 donation sponsors a child in the program for 3 years.

~FUN FACTS~



A shamrock symbolizes hope, love, and life.

St. Patrick reportedly used shamrocks to explain the Holy Trinity, but later interpretations also said the three leaves are meant to symbolize hope, love, and faith. If there's a fourth leaf, it symbolizes luck, which is why we consider four-leaf clovers to be lucky. **Happy St. Patrick's Day!**

The jelly bean did not become associated with Easter until 1930, it is only because of their egg-like shape.

National Jelly Bean Day is April 22nd.

It takes up to 6 days and can be up to 21 days to make a single jelly bean.

How many words can you make from the phrase: **HAPPY EASTER!**



- | | | | |
|----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. | 6. | 11. | 18. |
| 2. | 7. | 12. | 19. |
| 3. | 8. | 13. | 20. |
| 4. | 9. | 15. | 21. |
| 5. | 10. | 17. | 22. |

<<Pastor Eric>>

Recently, I was working on a devotion, for our Facebook devotion group, on Mark 15:40 where it says, “There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.” These women were looking on from a distance as Jesus was crucified and eventually died. The next verse describes these women as ones who followed Jesus while he was in Galilee, and they ministered to him. Now, I do not want to read too much into the reasons they were watching from a distance as opposed to being close to the action, but it did get me thinking about this “distance” thing.

As a follower of Jesus, do you see yourself as a close follower or one who follows at a distance? Maybe there are seasons in your life when you are close because it is convenient, and then back off when life gets busy. Maybe you want to be a close follower but just do not know how. Maybe you are distant because of a life event or some sin in your life that has dictated to you to stay back. Maybe the distance is to protect something in your life that you do not want to give up. You want your cake and eat it too.

And much can be said about this, with guilt trips being laid out to make people feel bad. But in the end, coercion, guilt, or force will not entice a person to bridge the distance gap between them and Jesus. Actually, there is no need, because though you may feel distant, Jesus is NEVER distant from you. Whatever you do to hold Jesus at arm’s length or whatever sin tells you that you must do, Jesus is forever close. The women watched from a distance as Jesus died, but Jesus was dying for them. He loved those women with an unconditional love that knows no distance. Though they were physically distant, Jesus had them in his heart. And though you are distant, the same holds true for you.

This Lenten season, I urge you to do whatever it takes to remove those barriers that tell you to keep your distance and know that Jesus is closer to you than you are to yourself. If you are holding Jesus at a distance because of convenience or the busyness of your life, stop it. Let down your defenses and know the closeness of you Savior. If you are struggling to know how to draw close, again, Jesus is already there, just receive his love.

The distance gap has been bridged and it is called the cross. So come and enjoy closeness with Jesus.

<<council president>>

Hello Bethlehem, I hope everyone is off to a great year.

We’ve had a great first month as council settling into some new roles.

Unfortunately, we had to start the year off with the news of having to upgrade our electrical panels.

What a welcome that is for new council members... haha.

On the bright side, however, through the generosity of our congregation and some great volunteer work from our stewardship committee, we have met our goal of \$5750 (25% of the \$23k estimate).

We still wait for approval of a grant to cover the remaining 75%.

God will provide a way and prayers are welcomed.

As always, please reach out with questions or concerns.

-Derek Thilges
Council President
641-430-3903

<<treasurer>>

Current offering Year to Date: **24,058.25**
Average weekly giving: **3,172.90**
Budgeted weekly giving for 2023: **2,943.00**

Thank You for your continued support, as always there are great things coming for Bethlehem church.
Thomas Blodgett

<<technology>>

We are very thankful for the generous donation given to technology, which has given us the opportunity to update and replace some of our technology needs. This only improves and enhances our sound and live streaming each week. It makes for better listening when we have programs, singing and speakers.
We are always looking for volunteers for tech on Sundays and other events. Training is available.
Your Technology committee.

<<stewardship>>

Hello everyone-

Just wanted to say hello and highlight a few things. I am really excited to be leading the Stewardship team this year, and all the work to make an impact on our Church family. First off, some praises- I want to extend a huge thank you to those who bought valentine cakes, as well as giving for the special Love offering. We were able to raise \$5,600. to go towards the electric panel improvements! This was an amazing way to kick-off the work for a new year and new council.

Speaking of council, there is something I shared with them at our meeting in February that I want to summarize and share with you all as well.

Stewardship=discipleship. The focus of biblical stewardship is not on needs of a church or congregation, it is the fact that generous giving is a basic act of discipleship. This year's focus will NOT be all business and "raising money", rather it will be the business of raising and growing disciples who WANT to use their gifts to glorify God.

Although the year started with a bunch of fundraising, I just want you to know that raising money is not my sole purpose here. I am extremely passionate about and look forward to finding out what each of you is passionate about- and how we can help you to do those things and use your own gifts while serving Him! How we can all work together as Disciples!

There are some really fun and exciting things already in the works.

I cannot wait to share more with you here, and during church, in the coming months.

That's all for now, thank you for your blessings and walking along with us as servants in Christ.

- Kelsey Bosma

"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

Here are two 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/1FAIpQLSfKY9q5IeNsMPvr8B7yxSY7-HqqbG1Hv5v7yrvrETHvcSuuwQ/viewform?usp=sf_link



Church Council Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2024

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

Members present: Derek Thilges, Lisa Berggren, Courtney Boekelman, Thomas Blodgett, Pastor Eric, Larry Lawson, Kelsey Bosma, Teresa Cooper, Daryl Friest, Darla Thompson, and Jen McGrady.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 by Derek.

1. Open with devotion and prayer.
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. January minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Lisa; seconded by Derek
3. Strategic Plan- Derek
4. Treasurer's Report –
 - a. Savings Account: \$100.07
 - b. Checking Account: \$10,289.97
 - c. Youth: \$1,437.74
 - d. Line of Credit: 0
 - e. Special Projects Account: \$4,580.57
 - f. Motion to approve made by Kelsey, seconded by Larry;
5. Committee Reports
 - a. Technology
 - i. Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.
 - ii. Sound system update. Thomas ordered all the equipment that should arrive in 2 weeks. Looking for a lift to rent to install equipment. There is the possibility to ask the school to use their lift. This project will be complete by the end of the month.
 - b. Property
 - i. The lighting issue in the fellowship hall was addressed by Larry.
 - ii. Larry is fixing the ovens to make them safe and working.
 - iii. Grant application was submitted by Derek. We will find out if the grant was approved by April 1. We will need to raise 25% of the cost for electrical panel replacement which is underway. All small panels are complete.
 - iv. \$467 was donated for the sign outside of the church and landscaping.
 - c. Worship
 - i. Communion Servers
 1. March 3 (at the rail) - Courtney
 2. March 10 (continuous) – Derek and Darla
 - ii. The next worship committee meeting is Tuesday, February 20 at 8:30am. Susan Jensen remains on the committee and will lead initially to get Darla in the loop. There will be a sign-up sheet for communion helpers at each council meeting and that list will be shared as needed.
 - iii. Lenten services begin with Ash Wednesday February 14, 2024.
 - iv. Maundy Thursday and First Communion March 28 – community service at Bethlehem. Jen and Daryl for communion servers.
 - v. Easter Sunday communion servers: Larry & Jen 7:00 and Kelsey & Derek 9:30.
 - vi. Will start “passing the plate” on Sunday February 25.
 - vii. Darla will discuss bringing back “greeting your neighbor” at an upcoming worship meeting.
 - d. Stewardship
 - i. Stewardship emphasis. Kelsey discussed the definition of stewardship and using the gifts that God gave you.
 - ii. Valentine cakes fundraiser: 96 cakes were sold. \$146 was spent to make the cakes. Profit of \$800.

- iii. Love Offering: Sunday February 18th, profit going to electrical panels. Derek, Kelsey, Lisa, and Courtney will help with offering during service.
 - iv. Discussed ideas for upcoming fundraising events including casserole contest and Kelsey is working on publishing a cookbook.
- e. Education
- i. Cassie Willmert would like to step down from the lead position with Cradle Roll. Amy Walk got the information from Cassie for Cradle Roll and was planning on getting everything up to date last week (2/5/24). Lisa will let Amy know that Teresa's mom would like to help with Cradle Roll.
 - ii. Sunday School students sing in church on February 18.
 - iii. Confirmation students are hosting a Baked Potato Bar Feb. 18 (fundraiser). The setup is on Saturday February 17th from 11am to 1pm. Confirmation families are donating food and labor. Pastor Sue from First Reformed is helping with her two students as they are going on the retreat with them.
- f. 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. Discussed ideas to get young adults and new members involved in fellowship. Teresa is going to contact and assign members to provide refreshments during fellowship. Jen will give Teresa the members' contact information.
 - ii. The women's work groups will prepare four Lenten Meals. Confirmation students will help with serving. Kim Ostermann will coordinate with the work group chairmen.

6. Pastor's Report

- a. Chaplaincy training and application: Pastor Eric finished his course work on Friday, January 26 with a webinar. His application was submitted for licensure and credential on February 2. Feb 9, Pastor received a phone call from the International Fellowship of Chaplains. The application is being forwarded to the credential committee for final approval. We should know within the next 3 weeks but expect everything will go through fine.
- b. LCMC Iowa District: Met on January 25 and Pastor Eric presided at his first meeting as president. They participated in a brainstorming/S.W.O.T analysis session, looking at the future of our ministry as a District. They are also considering a candidate for the District Coordinator position. In the interim time, Pastor Eric will be attending a Zoom meeting for District Coordinator across the LCMC to represent the Iowa District. His next meeting is Tuesday, April 9.
- c. Lent: Ash Wednesday is this Wednesday, February 14. Pastor Eric will be preparing ashes this week in preparation. Imposition of ashes will be 12 to 2pm and worship will be 7pm. No meal after worship and no confirmation class on Wednesday. Students are expected to be at worship. The Lenten theme is the "I Am" statements of Jesus from the Gospel of John and including one from Revelation. Supper will be at 6pm and worship at 6:45. Confirmation will meet after worship and end at usual 8:30 time. Other preparation will be forthcoming from the Worship Team. Ecumenical services: Maundy Thursday is here at 7pm; Good Friday at First Baptist 7pm.
- d. Education: No **IG** tonight (February 12). Everything continues to go well. Numbers in the last two Mondays have been way down to due illness at school. Also, as a leadership group, we have met to consider how a 4-day school week would affect 1G. Another leader meeting is scheduled on Monday February 26 at 6pm. **Confirmation** is studying stories in the Old Testament and then will be preparing for youth-led worship service in April. Fundraiser coming up on February 18 to help pay for retreat in May. Also planning a youth trip to Clear Lake on March 2 to attend a Jason Gray concert at Zion Lutheran. 10 class sessions left. **Women's Bible Study** began a study in the book of Galatians. **5th & 6th grade boys Sunday School** continues to have a great time together. Currently pastor is leading the boys in a discussion about the Old Testament story. Pastor Erica will be scheduling first communion classes with 5th graders. They will make their bread on Palm Sunday and then receive First Communion on Maundy Thursday.

7. Office Report: Are printed copies of a Funeral Guide and a Wedding Guide available so people understand expectations and what we have available?

- a. There will be a list of kitchen expectations posted for anyone using the facility. Jen says this list will be posted in multiple areas. Derek asked the list to include contact information if questions arise regarding kitchen expectations.

- b. Jen's office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9-12 & 1-5pm.
- c. Pastor's hours are Monday through Thursday beginning about 8:30am-4:00pm.
- d. Jen is working on updating the website and started uploading pictures. Thomas recommended adding a drop box for people to upload pictures to the website.
- e. Our church serves supper on March 4 to IG. Kelsey and Connie have agreed to help.
- f. Jen was made aware of errors noted in the bulletin regarding council member roles.

8. New Business

- a. January Mission – global – (Last month was LCMC. The regular rotation is LCMC, global, local) Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (lcmc.net). Pastor Erica recommended Friends of Madagascar Mission supports Bible Schools.

Motion by Thomas; seconded by Kelsey

9. Next meeting: March 11 at 6pm.

10. February Newsletter deadline: Monday, February 27. Will start a rotation for committees to include information in the Newsletter. 1st rotation is Stewardship, Fellowship, and President.

11. Motion to Adjourn made by Kelsey, seconded by Darla

12. The meeting adjourned at 8:37.

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

Courtney Boekelman, Secretary

