

AUGUST 2024



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Buffalo Center, IA 50424

**Oh, Bethlehem!**  
**Faith, hope, and love make us available**  
**for our neighbors near and far**

## CALENDAR of EVENTS

### August

- 4 - Worship @ 9:30 am
- 6 - Bible Study with Pastor @ 2:00 pm
- 11 - Worship @ 9:30 am
- 12 - Church Council Meeting @ 6:00 pm
- 18 - Worship @ 9:30 am
- 20 - Worship Committee @ 8:30 am
- 20 - Gridshock documentary, 7:00 pm, Heritage Town Center
- 25 - Outdoor Worship @ 9:30 am with the Blessing of the Backpacks

Community Bible Study meets on Wednesdays @ 10:00 am in the Meeting Room

Community Coffee Hour every Monday at Timely Mission Nursing Home, 9:30 - 10:30 am

General Fund  
Annual Giving  
(As of 07.30.24):

- Actual: \$73,307
- Budgeted: \$88,267
- Year to Date  
Deficit: **\$14,960**

Treasurer's Report as of  
07.30.24

- Savings Account: \$0
- Checking Account: \$304.74
- Youth: \$3,121.83
- Line of Credit: \$4,000
- Special Projects Account: \$29,791.09\*\*

\*\*Our bill for the electrical panels will be due in the next month.

## Prayers for our Members and friends

Deloris Steffensen  
Brian Bashans  
Christina Coughlin  
Claire Rustemier - Hinz  
Clarice Stonebreaker  
Vince Johnson

Jaya Fever  
Joy Albert  
Carolyn Bartz  
Emmagene Silber  
Roger Burnside  
Jason Hagedorn



## GREETERS & USHERS

### AUGUST

- \*4 - Joe Angstman Family and Brant Boekelman Family
- \*11 - Rod & Gayle Hansen and Dana Greensky Family
- 18 - Amy Walk, Mary Badje, & Jamie Price Family
- 25 - Logan Willmert Family and Ray & Vonnie Pilgrim-Bosma

### SEPTEMBER

- \* 1 Duane Cooper Family & Kelly Sabin Family
- \* 8 Chris Jensen Family and Patty & Travis Hassebroek
- 15 Todd & Laurie Corporon and Ted & Darla Thompson
- 22 Norah Blodgett Family and Doug & Kim Ostermann
- 29 Lily Winter Family and Brad Kemnitz Family



Join us for our last Outdoor  
Worship service of the Summer!

Sunday, August 25 @ 9:30 am

Please bring your golf cart or a lawn chair. We will also reserve a few parking spots in front for those who would like to stay in their vehicle.

### Mark your calendar!

Sunday, August 25, we will be Blessing the Backpacks to start of the school year covered in prayer.

Please bring your backpack to our outdoor worship that morning. This includes staff, students and teachers!





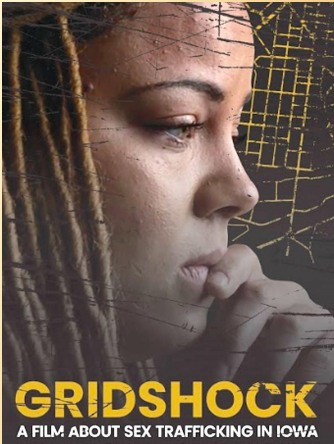
What is your prayer life like? You get to be honest here because there is no one to hear your words or see your reaction. But do be honest because who are you fooling? God? Certainly not. But also, this is not an article to make you feel guilty but rather to call to your attention that which is essential to the life of a Christian. Martin Luther is quoted as saying, "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." I think that says it all. So really the question is: Are you alive?

I admit it, I struggle with a regular, vibrant prayer life. I go through my ups and downs. Sure, I pray during worship and at meetings. I pray at mealtimes and with my kids before they go to sleep. But as a regular activity, such as breathing? Well, that can be more sporadic than regular. I once heard a quote that said that when you do not feel like praying, that is the precise moment when you need to pray all the more, because it is an indication that Satan is at work on you. And the last thing I want is for Satan to work on me.

And so, I have been working on my prayer life and trying to develop some routines and healthy habits. Some are new and some are beginning to become habits. And so, I want to share with you a couple ways to jump start your prayer life and hopefully begin a new, godly habit to rejuvenate your relationship with God.

- (1) Wake up in the morning and thank God first thing (even before you have your coffee).
- (2) Instead of your normal, memorized meal prayer, mix things up and pray a prayer from the heart.
- (3) Keep a prayer journal and note how and when God addresses your prayers. I like to use my phone because I know I always have that with me.
- (4) Instead of saying to someone, "I will pray for you", actually pray for them or at the very least, take the time to write it down so you will not forget later (watching you write it down shows that you are serious about them).
- (5) Send a message to 3 people each week, asking how you can pray for them. You might be surprised at how responsive people are. And then follow up with them later.
- (6) Pick a handful of people from the congregation and send them a message to let them know that you are praying for them.
- (7) If you have to drive for a while, turn off the radio and cell phone and pray out loud. No one will hear you except God.

But whatever you do, pray, pray and pray some more. It is the breath of a Christian and the lifeline to our awesome God. But always remember, no prayer is too small or insignificant for God. He is never too busy for your prayers. And on the flip side, remember how big God is so never be afraid to pray boldly. But in the end, it is thy will be done. Let God change you and put you more in line with His glorious and perfect will. Amen.



### Free Public Showing:

An important documentary, about sex trafficking in Iowa, will be playing on Tuesday, August 20, 7:00 pm at the Heritage Town Center.

Presented by Stacy Besch, Team Iowa Sheriff Hepperly & the Winnebago County Attorney's office will also be present.

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 take you to the Vanco giving page. Thank you!



SCAN ME!

## Council Committees

### FELLOWSHIP

I remember as a child, I would spend a week with my grandparents at their farm by Leland. That was always a highlight of my summers growing up. Riding in the wagon filled with grain, to the elevator in Leland, as it was being pulled by my grandpa's tractor was always a thrill. Going to Forest City with my grandparents shopping was also

a delight because my grandpa would buy an ice cream treat on our way back home. My grandparents were very religious people. They never missed church on Sunday. They attended West Prairie Lutheran Church. They each had their own Bible and right before bed, they would sit by the living room lamp and read from it. This was a daily com-

mitment to their faith. It was unwavering. Like my grandparents before me, and with the leadership from Pastor Eric, I am making an effort to start a Men's Bible study here at Bethlehem. It will begin this fall, the day and time is to be determined. Please let Pastor or me know if you have questions.

- Darryl

### TECHNOLOGY

Hello everyone! The technology committee at Bethlehem Lutheran Church has made several upgrades over the last half of the year. We have upgraded the sound board, microphones, and other crucial sound equipment. This has greatly increased the quality of sound both in church and online. We still have new speakers to install that will make the experience even better and

assist those who have trouble hearing. We expect to get them installed in the next month.

As we continue to grow as a church, we have to continue to be ahead of the curve in many areas. I can proudly say BLC is a leader in technology. We continue to use it to help grow our church in all areas, such as worship, ministry, education, and outreach.

If you have any ideas about implementing technology or would like to be a part of the committee, please contact Thomas Blodgett at 641-251-1427. We are always looking for help on Sunday mornings. Thank you to everyone who has helped and continues to help!

-Thomas Blodgett

### Making ourselves available...

#### FOOD BANK NEEDS FOR AUGUST:

Pancake mix, syrup, fruit juice, cereal, brownie mix, cookie mix

All donations can be dropped off in the church Narthex. THANK YOU!



Church Council Agenda  
July 10, 2024  
\*\*\*Meeting Room\*\*\*

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

Members present: Darryl, Pastor Eric, Larry, Derek, Courtney, Darla, Thomas  
Absent: Lisa, Kelsey, Theresa

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm

Open with devotion and prayer.

Secretary's Report

May minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Darla; seconded by Derek

### **President's report**

The process of new members was discussed. Derek and Pastor Eric will continue to discuss this month. Next month we will discuss again and amend the constitution.

Discussed mailing the newsletter. Cost would be around \$100-\$200 per month. Less people read it on e-mail and some prefer a paper copy. Ask Susan to create a newsletter list to determine how many we'd be sending in the mail. This would be a good way to reach all members. Send newsletter out September through May and in July. Motion to approve mailing newsletter made by Thomas and seconded by Darryl.

### **Treasurer's Report –**

Savings Account: \$481.82

Checking Account: \$3,890.49

Youth: \$3,121.83

Line of Credit: \$4,000

Special Projects Account: \$30,610.29

Motion to approve made by Derek, seconded by Darryl

Discussed google form for vouchers that was created by Thomas. This will be emailed to everyone.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Technology**

Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.

Sound system, Thomas is working on installing.

Thomas renewed our contract with Access systems for printing. Currently \$216 per month.

#### **Property**

Circuit for the outside lights is still in process. The outside lights around the church sign were changed.

Discussed landscaping around flagpole. Derek is planning on contacting Country Gardens to complete.

Discussed landscaping at parsonage, specifically bushes on north side. Pastor Eric will discuss with Connie about trimming the brushes vs taking the brushes out. Darryl is willing to trim the bushes with supervision from Connie and Pastor Eric.

Discussed remodeling of the bathrooms in the parsonage. We have some funds, need to address sooner than later.

Take the large bathtub out from the upstairs. Replace with smaller bathtub. Install stainless steel shower panel for the basement shower.

Grant was approved for \$12,500 from Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa based in Cedar Falls.

The AC is working in the parsonage and in the church. Remotes must stay by the air conditioners. The temperature needs to stay at a consistent temperature in the church due to the instruments. Going to get a lock cupboard for the remote so the temperature isn't changed.

#### **Worship**

Communion Server sign-up sheet was brought around the room.

The greeter/usher schedule has been updated through the end of the year.

Next time an outdoor service is scheduled, it was suggested to have a few parking spots up front for any who want to sit in their vehicles.

July 28th will be an ecumenical service outdoors.



### **Stewardship**

No update on the cookbook fundraiser. The deadline for the cookbook was May 1st to submit recipes. \$382 was made when Derek, Lisa, and Pastor Eric served food at T-ball/Coach Pitch.

How can we reach out to members that don't attend often. What about members that used to attend?

Mailing the newsletter is one way to reach out to members.

No Music and Mingle update, planning needs to be started earlier for next year.

Ideas needed for how can we better prepare for next year?

### **Education**

VBS starting soon, end of July.

Will discuss and have updates on Sunday School teachers at next month's meeting.

### **Fellowship/Evangelism**

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. Teresa is working on the "sign up" sheet.

July 7th, no one handed out coffee and snacks. Was it open or did someone not show up? Discussed making sure the sign-up sheet is checked weekly.

Initiating a Men's Bible study is still in the works.

### **Pastor's Report**

We approved official letter of call to be sent to Pastor Mark Neumann.

### **May**

Participated in the baccalaureate service May 17.

Bill Jensvold, Sr funeral May 20.

Participated in the community Memorial Day service, May 27.

Met with a couple area pastors, May 28.

### **June**

Took some vacation time June 7-9 for Pastor Eric nephew's graduation. Darla Thompson filled in for church service.

Premarital counseling in preparation for September wedding.

Outdoor worship service on Sunday, June 16, Father's Day. Thank you to Thomas and Kyle for setting up and running technology. We gave out ice cream coupons for Main Street Market to the men.

Took some vacation time from Jun 24 through July 6. Darla covered Sunday June 30th.

### **Other things**

- Susan on vacation this week. She prepared Sunday's PowerPoint before she left.
- Iowa District meeting, Thursday, July 18th in Bode, Iowa.
- Bison Days ecumenical outdoor worship service, July 28. Pastor Larry Gruis is preaching, and Pastor Eric will pre-side. We will be preparing the bulletin.
- Continuing with women's Bible study. Working through the book of Galatians. We just finished chapter three on Tuesday (7/9).
- Pastor will be working on 1G and confirmation planning now.
- Pastoral acts
- Bill Jensvold Sr funeral, May 20
- Baptism (July 7): Grayson Cole Corporon (Tate and Skylar)
- Graveside service (July 11): Arlene Thorland/Johnson
- Isaac Paul and Allison Almelien wedding coming up (9/21/24)

### **Susan Jensen**

Pastor Eric wants to report that Susan has been doing a fantastic job. From Pastor's perspective, her learning curve has been very small. Susan is very detailed oriented and that shows in the Sunday PowerPoint and newsletters. She and Pastor are getting along great.

### **Office Report:**

New hire Susan Jensen! Inform everyone of Susan's hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursdays, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

### New Business

May Mission – Global– (The regular rotation is LCMC, global, local) Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (lcmc.net). June mission will be local. Pastor is willing to find local mission related to Spencer flooding. July mission needs to be LCMC. Larry made a motion to approve and Darla seconded.

Council members voted to approve Brian Bashans becoming a new member. Larry made a motion to approve and Darryl seconded.

Next meeting: August 12

Newsletter deadline: July 24

Continuing rotation for committees to include information in the Newsletter. The rotation this month is Darryl (fellowship) and Thomas (technology).

Motion to Adjourn made by Darla, seconded by Darryl.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

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*Because your steadfast love is  
better than life, my lips will  
praise you.  
So I will bless you as long as I  
live; in your name I will lift up my  
hands.*

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*Psalm 63: 3-4*

**SAVE THE DATE!!**  
**Sunday School kicks off on  
Sunday, September 15,  
after Worship.**

**We can't wait to see you!**



Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
201 4th St. NE  
P.O. Box  
Buffalo Center, IA 50424

Phone:  
641-562-2552 — office  
641-562-2553 — Pastor Eric

Email:  
pastor@blciowa.org  
office@blciowa.org

*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.*

*We're HERE for YOU!*

**We're on the web!**

<https://bethlehemlutheranbc.com>



**BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH  
And  
BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN SUNDAY  
SCHOOL**