

ISSUE

December

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*MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND HAVE A
HAPPY NEW YEAR!*



Oh Bethlehem

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



<<< events >>>

December:

- 7th Morning Bible Study with Pastor Eric @ 9:30. Study, short meeting and fellowship
- 12th NIB Night of Lights/Live Nativity here
- 13th Council Meeting @ 6pm
- 14th Ladies Quilting @ 9 am
- Worship Comm Meeting @ 9:30 am
- 18th Wedding for Tiarra and Caleb
- 19th SS Christmas Program with meal @ 5pm
- 22nd Confirmation Kids Caroling and Pizza @ 5:30.
- 24th Candlelight Christmas Eve Service @ 5pm
Caroling, food and fellowship to follow.
- 28th Ladies Quilting @ 9am

January:

- 16th Annual Meeting

We are open and going forth with gathering in the house of our Lord. We have updated the Pandemic plan as listed below. We really look forward to seeing everyone again face to face. Services will continue to stream on our YouTube channel.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church has moved to Tier 0 for our pandemic plan.

While there are no special conditions at Tier 0, as always BLC will:

- Respect others by allowing them the dignity to protect themselves, as well as others to have the dignity of risk.
- Follow the guidance, as directed, by IDPH when appropriate.
- Clean areas with reasonable care
- As any, if they are sick, please take care and stay home.

**Tis the season to be jolly....
fa la la la la la la la!**

Making ourselves available to our community

Food Bank Needs for Dec:

Can Fruit, Tomato Basil Soup, Cereal, Chicken Noodle Soup, Juice, Tuna, Tuna Helper, Frosting and Cocoa Mix.

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

Commemorative items:

Make great Christmas Gifts! Bethlehem has a variety of items for sale. We have ornaments, postcards, coffee tumblers and mugs, and NEW "Oh Bethlehem" t-shirts. A table will remain set up in the fellowship hall. This is a fundraiser for Bethlehem. All funds will go to the General fund to support future fellowship and evangelism opportunities and outreach.

<<<Pastor Eric>>>

Our first Christmas living in Washington is one we will not soon forget. Traveling home for Christmas meant flying out on Christmas Day into Minneapolis and then catching a connecting “puddle jumper” flight (45 minutes) to Sioux Falls. And let me tell you, flying with two young children with baggage for two weeks and presents, is no picnic. On this particular Christmas, we arrived at the Seattle airport on time, got checked in and proceeded to our gate. And there we sat and sat and walked around and sat some more. You see, as our flight time got closer, they kept delaying our flight. And the more they delayed the flight the more stressed I got that we would miss our connecting flight to Sioux Falls. And then it happened, the flight was delayed again, and we would miss our connecting flight. The next flight out of Minneapolis would not be until the morning. In total, our flight out of Seattle was delayed 4 hours. We got to Minneapolis and had to stay with Connie’s brother; arriving around 11:30 PM and with no baggage as that had to stay at the airport. The next morning, we got to the airport on time, but our flight to Sioux Falls ended up being delayed about 3 hours. In total, we spent an extra 7+ hours at two airports with two children preschool age and younger. Not how we imagined spending Christmas.

But we did arrive safely in Sioux Falls. We did celebrate Christmas with family. And, we did have a great time. Though not how we would have scripted things, but God had us in His mighty hands the whole time; fulfilling His purposes (though I still do not understand those purposes). But God is sovereign, and I am not, and I praise God for that. For Mary and Joseph, they could not have imagined how their first “Christmas” – the birth of their son – would unfold. They did not plan to travel so close to Mary’s due date. They could not have imagined how housing arrangements would manifest themselves in Bethlehem. They had no clue how this birth would change those lowly shepherds and eventually the world. All in all, they had no idea, but God did, and God was glorified.

This Christmas, expect the unexpected and trust that God is up to something. Jesus was born for you, died for you and rose from the grave for you. Jesus blows apart expectations and fulfills the Father’s glorious plans for your salvation. Our Christmas plans are just that “our plans”, but God’s plan for that first Christmas and for everyone after that is all about Jesus and your everlasting life. May we not lose sight of Jesus and may we not become so wrapped up in our expectations. Expect God to be faithful, expect God’s love to be steadfast and expect God’s plans to be perfect. ***Merry Christmas and Amen.***

And Mary Said, ***“Behold, I am the servant of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word”***

Luke 1:38

“FAITH IS NOT BEING SURE WHERE YOU ARE GOING BUT GOING ANYWAY”

Read Luke 1: 26-38

We who read and ponder this story and the literature and songs about Mary, have a chance, though we “not sure where we’re going,” to join her in “going anyway.” We get our chance to be surprised and awed—and directed.

Pray: ***Lord, surprise us with good news and meaningful tasks, and be with us. Amen***

<<< worship >>>

Hello Bethlehem Family!

Please mark your calendars with the following dates. We look forward to worshipping with you!

“Serve the Lord with gladness! Come before His presence with singing!” Psalm 100:2

Family Greeter/Usher Schedule

(The remaining of the 2022 schedule will be completed soon!)

December 2021

- 12 Nich Holland Family and Shirley Hagenson
- 19 Jason Wubben Family and Joan Sunde
- 24 Schaeffer Family and Jen McGrady
- 26 Tim Weaver Family and Logan Willmert Family

January 2022

- 1 Mike Baumann Family & Cheryl Baumann
- 9 Jeff Ostermann Family & Frances Ostermann
- 16 Phil Hager Family and Patti & Travis Hassebroek
- 23 Kyle Winter Family and Sabin Family
- 30 Ted & Darla Thompson and Denny & Dee Murra

Thank you for being available and donating your time by serving at Bethlehem!

If unavailable on your assigned date, please switch dates with another family/find a replacement. Or please contact the church office @ 561-562-2552 or Megan Holland @ 641-562-2024

2+ families per are needed each Sunday

Confirmation: Reader

SS Helpers

Acolyte

	Confirmation: Reader		SS Helpers	Acolyte
December 5 (Second Sunday of Advent)	Kevin Hagen	Malachi 3: 1-7b Psalm 66:1-12 Philippians 1:2-11	BrendanPrice Kevin Hagen	Brendan Price (and family) *advent wreath*
December 12 (Third Sunday of Advent)	Alyssa Olson	Zephaniah 3:14-20 Psalm 85 Philippians 4:4-7	Alyssa Olson Alex Olson	Alex Olson (and family) *advent wreath*
December 19 (Fourth Sunday of Advent)	Ashlyn Bechler	Micah 5:2-5a Psalm 80:1-7 Hebrews 10:5-10	Ashlynn Bechler Carter Wubben	Cater Wubben (and family) *advent wreath*
December 24 (Christmas Eve)	Brendan Price	Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	Neely Jensen (and family) *advent wreath*
December 26	Genna Baumann	Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15 Psalm 111 Colossians 3:12-17	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	Maci Eisele

<<<property and management>>>

We are looking for someone that would like to move snow off the sidewalks here at church. A lawn mower with snowblower works best, but a walk behind works too. If nothing else, people who are willing to shovel always helps too. Contact with me with any questions.

Thank You. Brandon

<<<Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Minutes>>>

Monday, November 8

@ 6:00

held in the fellowship hall & meeting room

Members present: Pastor Eric Hullstrom, Brian Blodgett, Brandon Thilges, Cassie Willmert, Kelsey Bosma, Amy Walk, Vonnie Bosma, Cheryl Baumann & Jen McGrady

Members arrived later: Susan Jensen, Megan Holland

Meeting called to order @ 6:09

Old Business

-Secretary minutes for October approved via email. Motion to approve by Cheryl.

Seconded by Brian. Will be published in November newsletter.

-No new Covid procedures.

-November Mission: Giving tree

Committee Reports

A. Property

-we have the information for the work done in the basement. There are now two sump pumps and tile in the basement to prevent flooding. Pastor Eric paid for the repairs to the parsonage basement. Council agreed to reimburse Pastor Eric next year by adding "basement project" for an item to the 2022 budget

-Brandon is looking for snow removal for the winter

-Church doors are getting locked daily now. Office staff is locking them most days. On Sundays, the last person at the church is responsible for turning off lights and locking the doors.

B. Worship

-Bethlehem will be going back to more of a traditional communion. Pastor Eric would like to increase communion to twice month starting in December. Communion will be brought to the pews for those who are unable to get to the altar. The individual communion packets will still be available to those who wish to remain in the pew. Gluten free wafers are also available.

-Hanging of the Greens on November 28.

-Thanksgiving Eve Ecumenical Service (November will be hosted by Bethlehem @ 7:00 pm. Pastor Jeffery Griffith from the First Congregational Church will be preaching.

C. Education

-Sunday school will sing monthly, starting in January.

-Christmas program practice will begin November 14, with full hour practice starting on November 28. The Christmas program will be held on the evening of December 19, with a light meal to follow.

- The conference room will now be the 5/6th grade classroom during regular SS hour. A white board has been ordered for the classroom. The 1st-4th grade class will be split into 2 classes due to class size; Megan Holland will be an additional teacher, starting in January.

D. Stewardship

-Pastor Eric will continue his Stewardship sermon series

E. Technology

-no new updates

F. Fellowship

-Fall luncheon on Saturday, November 13

-Fellowship team is working on a morning Women's Bible Study and starting a circle in December

-A salad luncheon will be held at TMNH in November

Continued on next page.

G. Evangelism

-NIB Christmas Light up BC, will be held on December 12. Bethlehem will be the drop location for the food pantry. Council and Bethlehem members just need to think about a "theme" for our stop.

-Women's Bible Study, "Breathe" continues and is going well.

-TMNH is looking for carolers; confirmation students will do it and have a Christmas party to follow.

-Christmas Eve caroling is also being discussed

Treasurers Report

Checking - \$10,048

Savings - \$580

LOC - \$0

Pastor Report:

1. 17 people attended the Community Strategy Meeting held on October 18 @ the Methodist Church. Two ecumenical teams have been started. One focusing on the community and the other on emergency response. Andrew from the BC Tribune will be interviewing Pastor about the meeting.

2. Pastor Eric will be the next Ministerial President, pending a vote

3. Adult forum following church is going well; working through the Lord's Prayer

4. Bethlehem gave out 12 of the 13 Bibles to 3rd/4th graders during Reformation Sunday on October 31. Following the service, Pastor Eric held a mini class on how to use their new Bible.

5. Upcoming baptism(date to be announced) and Jensvold wedding on December 18

6. Nursing homes are starting to open up and Pastor will work on setting up a visitation team.

Office Report

1. New members: Ted and Darla Thompson

2. Jen has sent out 40+ membership forms to people who had not previously filled them out. She is getting a great response. She will continue to update membership information on the Servant Keeper.

New Business

1. Council approved the use of the fellowship hall for Giving Tree distribution

2. By-law changes:

1. Annual Meeting will be held in January instead of October.

2. The creation of a Pastoral Care Committee

3. Changes made for voting member requirements. New designation for non-voting members, potential members and visitors.

4. Formally adding the 1year Council term to the Bethlehem bylaws.

Motion to approve the bylaw changes made by Kelsey, seconded by Amy, all in favor.

The next step is a congregational meeting for a reading of the changes.

Comments/Questions

1. How do we follow up with guests and/or visitors? Eric will get examples of forms and we can discuss the topic at next meeting.

2. Nominating committee needs to be formed. The committee needs four people plus Pastor Eric. Vonnie volunteered to be on the nominating committee. Cassie will start contacting others for the committee. We need to fill one 3-year position and two 1-year positions.

Next meeting: December 13 @ 6:00

Motion to adjourn made by Amy; seconded by Brian

Meeting adjourned @ 7:26

The Strategic Plan meeting followed the regular Council meeting in the conference room.

Council closed the Strategic Plan meeting, with the Lord's Prayer @ 8:48

Secretary,

Megan Holland

<<<treasurer>>>

Our general offering year to date is \$115,573. We are 92% through the year and our giving so far is at 89% of our budget for 2021.

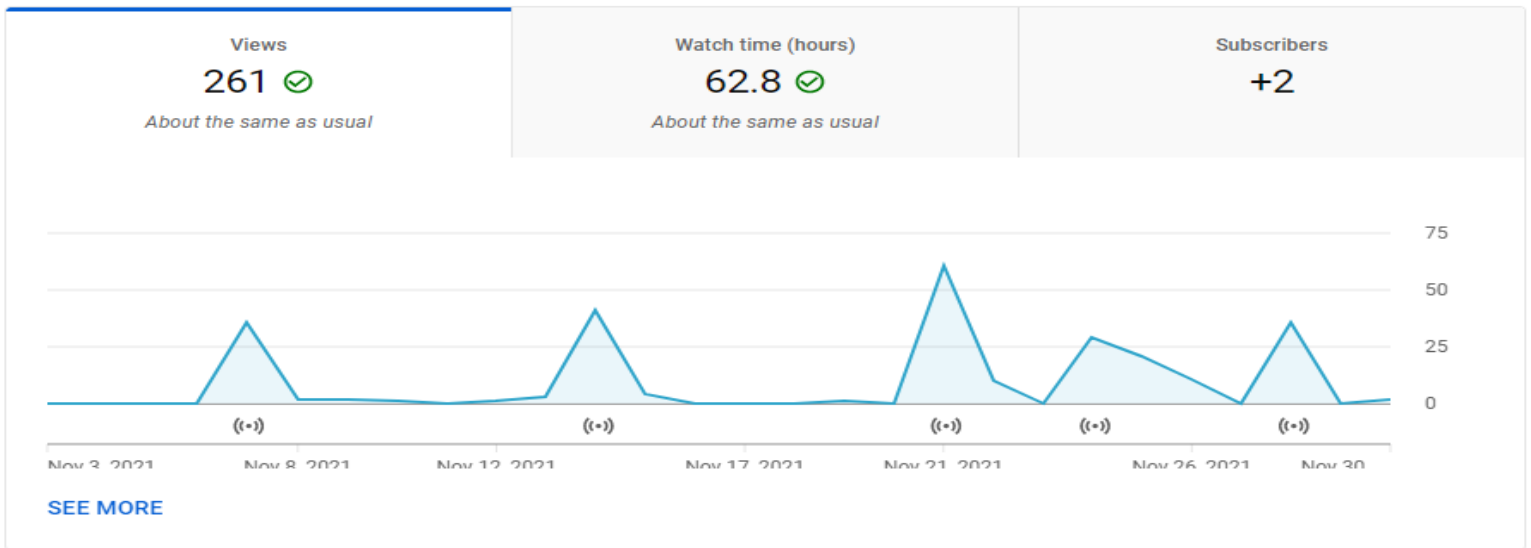
We are catching up, and as you can see, our gifts are being multiplied. Attendance in church is up and Bethlehem is making ourselves available to our neighbors near and far. Let's push to meet our budget the last month of 2021. What a wonderful year it has been!

We are in progress of creating a 2022 budget now and will present for approval at our annual meeting. If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Brian Blodgett
brian@ngtnet.net

<<<technology>>>

Our digital ministry continues to be strong. Current statistics show we have seen 261 views on our live stream and/or recordings throughout October. We also have 82 subscribers to our YouTube Channel.



The technology group includes Kyle Winter, Logan Willmert, Thomas Blodgett, and Brock Jensen. If anyone is called to help and/or donate, please contact Brian Blodgett.

If you would like to support the technology mission at Bethlehem please note on your giving – “Technology” on any extra donations.

Thank you
Brian Blodgett brian@ngtnet.net

<<<evangelism>>>

Once again this year, Bethlehem will be participating in the Night of Lights sponsored by NIB of Buffalo Center. We will have a live Nativity set up at this destination on the route. The drop off for canned goods will be at the Post office park this year.

Are you alone on Christmas Eve? Would you like to do an event with your family on this night? After the Candlelight service on Friday, Dec. 24th, Members and guests will be getting together to go Caroling. We will then gather for homemade soups, bread and goodies. If you would like to participate or help with keeping the soup warm, please let Lorie Bierle or Jen McGrady know.

Come and Join us!!!

Amy Walk, Evangelism

<<<education>>>

Merry December everyone!

Advent is such an exciting time in the year, and many fun things going on. We are excited to be working on the Christmas Program with all ages of Sunday school kids and will have the confirmation kids helping us too! This year is a little different, as we will have the program in the evening followed by a meal for everyone! **The program is Sunday, December 19, at 5pm.**

There are some exciting changes coming in the new year, as we prepare to divide our 1st-4th classroom into two classes and rearrange where the classes are meeting. Our retention rate of students has been amazing!

In the new year, we will also continue to have kids singing once every month, as well as fellowship opportunities for all ages.

Our confirmation program continues to be strong. It is such a joy to see the kids back in church now and then and helping out with events and fundraisers whenever we ask them to!

I hope the end of the year finds you in good health, joyful spirit and faithful for the promise of the new year. Kelsey Bosma, Education superintendent

<<<Bethlehem Ladies>>>

A big "THANK YOU" to all those who worked, donated and attended the Fall Luncheon.

"Morning study with Pastor Eric"

FINALLY!!!

We will gather on Tues Dec. 7th @ 9:30 am for Bible study, meeting and fellowship. Hope to see you there! Rides are available if you call the church office.
Cheryl Baumann, Fellowship

<<<Annual Meeting Date Set >>>

Bethlehem's Annual Meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, January 16th, 2022**, following the church service. We will have one 3-year position and two 1-year positions to be filled. If this is something you would consider doing, please talk with a council member. We ask that all of you prayerfully consider how you can continue to serve your church family, as we have many roles and jobs to do.

Giving Giving can be done easily online, right from your phone or computer. We have had great success this last year with weekly offering coming right into our General Fund at the bank. This is an easy and convenient option, check it out today! www.bethlehemlutheranbc.com/giving

Cradle Roll If you would like more information or guidance on setting this up, please see Brian Blodgett or Jen McGrady.

Are you expecting a new addition to your family? Do you know someone who is? Enroll them in our new Cradle Roll program! The Cradle Roll is a ministry for expectant families and children 0 to 3 years old in our church and community. To enroll someone in the Cradle Roll, sponsor a child, or join the ministry team, contact Cassie Willmert at cassandra.willmert@gmail.com.



Bethlehem Lutheran Church
201 4th St. NW
Buffalo Center, IA 50424

"FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE make us available
for our neighbors near and far."

President: Cassie Willmert
Vice President/Evangelism: Amy Walk
Secretary/Worship: Megan Holland
Treasurer/Technology: Brian Blodgett
Stewardship: Susan Jensen
125th Anniversary: Vonnie Pilgrim-Bosma
Education: Kelsey Bosma
Property: Brandon Thilges
Fellowship: Cheryl Baumann

FIND US ON FACEBOOK
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Bethlehem Lutheran Sunday School

www.bethlehemplutheranbc.com

641-562-25(Office)
641-562-25(Pastor)
pastor@blciowa.org
office@blciowa.org
jen.mcgrady@blciowa.org

