

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

May 2024

Oh Bethlehem!



Greeters and Ushers

May

5 Wyatt Olson(c) & Alex Olson(c) Family
12 Jeff Ostermann Family and Mark & Kim Ostermann
19 Amy Walk Family and Brandon Tilges Family
26 Derek Tilges Family and Grant Jacobs Family

June

*2 Chris Berggren Family and David & Renae Sachs
*9 Irvn & MaryAnn Olsen and Rita Ellsworth
16 Duane Cooper Family and Linda Berhow
23 Harlan Melz and Randy & Jill Melz Family
30 Laurie & Andy Sapp and Glenda Sapp

Prayers for our Members and friends:

Harlan Melz	Jaya
Deloris Steffensen	Randy Melz
Brian Bashans	Claire Hinz
Christina Coughlin	Carolyn Bartz
Dawn Jensvold	Debbie Jacobs
Clarice Stonebreaker	Lorie Bierle
Logan Sabin	Vince Johnson
Ivan Heidecker	

<<<Calendar of Events>>>

May

5-Worship @9:30am/SS @10:45
8-No Confirmation
10-12 Confirmation Retreat
12-Worship/Sr Recognition/SS kids sing
Last Sunday School class.
12-Brogyn Greensky Grad Party
13-Council meets @6pm
15-Baccalaureate @6:30pm
17-Sophia Hagen Grad Party
18-Charlie Schaefer Grad Party
19-Worship @9:30am
21-Worship meets @8:30am
23-Last day of school
26-Worship @9:30am
27-Memorial Day

(Check the Narthex bulletin board for individual graduation open houses.)

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!**



Making ourselves available...

FOOD BANK

May: Frozen or canned Fruit, Cereal, Pancake Mix, Syrup, Hamburger Helper, and canned Meats.

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

How BLC is making themselves available...

Community Ladies Bible Study
Boy Scout Program
Moms 2 Moms
4-H
Giving Tree
1G
Summer School lunches

Project Fund Update:

We continue to be so blessed by your tithing and contributions.

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 Thankful.



"All good things must come to an end." We have all heard and/or uttered this quote at one time or another, but the truth of this statement does not make it any less easy to accept. A good life lived, a fun vacation, a loving embrace, nightly cuddles with your child, the perfect cup of coffee. We want these things to last, but we all know the reality of the situation. We want to cling to these holy moments, but in the end, all we are left with are the memories. It just goes to remind us to cherish *"all good things"* while we can and give thanks to God that we had those *"good things"* to begin with.

A few weeks ago, I had to, reluctantly, accept Jennifer McGrady's resignation. I have had the joy of serving with her in this ministry for nearly three years, not nearly long enough. And serving with her was indeed a *"good thing"*, a memory to which I will cling tightly. Many of you were blessed by her warm and loving smile in the office, around this church building and in this community. Her love for this church and for Jesus was evident in all she did. And though we are not losing Jen, as she is just accepting a new position within this community, her regular presence in this building and ministry will be missed. And so, this *"good thing"* has come to an end.

But what now? Well, we are preparing for the beginning the next *"good thing"* that God is going to do. God brought Jen to her ministry position here at Bethlehem to accomplish His purposes for His Kingdom, and now God will bring someone else to serve His purposes for His Kingdom going forward. And though I am sad that this *"good thing"* has ended, I am excited to see what new *"good thing"* God has in store for Bethlehem and His Kingdom. And whoever ends up serving in the office next to mine, I will give thanks and praise our awesome God, for His choice is always perfect for the time He decrees.

And so, I thank you, Jen, for your dedicated ministry and for being a faithful servant of the Lord. I thank you for the wonderful memories of serving together. I thank God for *"all good things"*.

God be all glory, honor, praise, worship and thanksgiving through Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen!**
Pastor Eric

<<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. 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.

<<1G update>>

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.

It's been such a great year with the elementary and middle school.

(1) Pray, pray and pray some more (but you are probably already doing that, so please keep it up)

(2) We are in need of people to BE WITH KIDS. We are not asking you to plan a lesson or a craft, we need adults who love kids to love on kids. Plain and simple. We need you to be present and show them Jesus. Will you answer the call? Just show up and we will get you started. It's that easy and that important. God is doing a thing here. ***Praise be to God!***

Bethlehem,

Months ago we applied for a grant through Worth County Development to help us cover costs of the electrical upgrade we needed to be reinsured. We had high hopes of receiving the grant, but knew we had to come up with 25% of the \$23k project. We raised \$6k quickly. Last week, we received notice that we were not granted any money to go towards our electrical upgrade. It's going to be tough to swallow this bill when it comes, but as quickly as we raised the original 25%, I have faith we will come up with the remaining 75% through the generosity of our congregation and community. We have fundraisers planned, like the BLC Cookbook sales and Music and Mingle. I'd like everyone to think hard about what they can give, financially, physically, or spiritually, to help us with this endeavor. Please reach out to any council member with ideas on how to help.

Jen McGrady is stepping away from her position after 7 years. I'd like to thank her for her years of service and wish her the best of luck in her next chapter in life.

On that note, we have been accepting applications through the first of May and have been conducting interviews. We will make a decision on Jen's replacement in early May. Kim Ostermann has generously volunteered to fill in as needed until the new hire can start. Her hours in the office will be subject to change and relatively inconsistent as she has other irons in the fire but we are very thankful for her help during the transition.

Derek Thilges

Council President

Fellowship is an important part of our church. Coffee, goodies and spending time with other members, getting to know more about one another, being inviting in our conversations, building up our church family...creating strong fellowship.

This duty has fallen for the most part on the ladies with advanced knowledge of the kitchen.

These wonderful ladies would like to teach the newer members or not so new (ladies and gentlemen) the workings of the kitchen including the Joy and Fun that you can have serving after church.

It is possible a few new minds together can solve a problem or two!

In the back of the church is a sign-up sheet for serving Sunday fellowship after church.

Please consider signing up for a Sunday, even if it's just once a year.

1 Corinthians 1:9: **"God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."** Ephesians 4:3: **"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."** Galatians 6:2: **"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ."**

Sloppy Joes

- Cheesy Hashbrown Potatoes
- Baked Beans
- Dessert

FREE WILL DONATION

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

DRIVE-THRU FUNDRAISER MEAL

Wednesday May 8th
5-6:30 PM
Alley West of the Church




HELP US FUND OUR ELECTRICAL PROJECT



From the treasurer

Current offering since the beginning of 2024:

We are 34.6% of the way through the year and we are at 35.5% of our budget.

Budgeted weekly giving for 2024:
\$2,943.00

CHURCH SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Spring is in the air and high school seniors are preparing for graduation! The senior members of Bethlehem will be honored on May 12th one week before the graduation ceremony at NIHS. It's been over 20 years since the first church scholarship was given by Norma Quame Bosma in memory of her sons Greg and Brad. The Sullivan Family Scholarship began in 2006, and the Bierle Family Scholarship in 2010. We have since consolidated the Quame Scholarship and the Sullivan Scholarship into the "Bethlehem Lutheran Church Scholarship." This was decided because the Quame and Sullivan families are no longer able to support the previous scholarships. **It is the hope of the scholarship committee that other members of the congregation will value the importance of supporting the youth of our church family and consider giving to this ongoing fund.** You can do this in honor of someone, in memory of loved ones, or simply by making a donation. Just put your gift in an envelope marked "Bethlehem Lutheran Scholarship Fund."



Hello and Happy May Bethlehem!

This is such a busy time of year with so much fun going on. Spring brings with it new adventures, new challenges, fun activities, hopefully nicer weather, but also some of the same challenges and issues that we face each year. As the Sunday school year winds down, we tend to see a decline in attendance in church. We all understand that spring and summer can get to be very busy, and sometimes it is easy to dismiss Sunday morning services. I too have made that choice at times, but I just want to remind everybody that the habits and examples that we show and teach our youth make a big impact on them. We certainly don't want the kids of Bethlehem thinking that church is only "open" during the school year, and parents- we want to see you just as much! Let's all keep in mind the potential for growth, learning, and fun during summer services and activities!

I am looking forward to our POTLUCK on Sunday, May 5th! That will be the day we get to try many different recipes from our new Bethlehem Cookbook, and the pre-sale for the book begins that day as well. If you have submitted any recipes please make one up and join us! Our good old-fashioned church potluck will begin after Sunday School, around 11:30.

Just in case that isn't enough food, we have another church meal coming up on May 8th! Wednesday evening, from 5-6:30, we will have a spring drive-thru meal. The menu is Sloppy Joes, cheesy potatoes,

baked beans, bars, and a water. A free will donation will go towards the electrical project fund. So come grab a meal for your farmers, your family, your friends, or yourself!

The last event I want to mention is our 2nd annual Music and Mingle! The date and details are still being finalized, but I just wanted to get it on your minds. We are welcoming back Nate and Mindy and hope to add some more activity to the event too. Keep your eyes and ears open for more details in the very near future!

Thank you, Bethlehem, for your continued support and dedication to our ministry, to our youth, and to our community.

Kelsey Bosma, Stewardship

*FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU, DECLARES THE LORD,
PLANS FOR WELFARE, AND NOT FOR EVIL, TO GIVE YOU A FUTURE AND A HOPE.
JEREMIAH 29:11*

CONFIRMATION YOUTH LEAD WORSHIP!



The 23-24 Confirmation Class led worship on April 28th. Pastor Eric and the leadership team guided these kids as they chose the scriptures, music, prayers, and then implemented it all, including the Children's Message and the Sermon. Pastor opened the service and then they took over. We are so proud of them and it was very well done!



**First row: Aurora, Lily, Khloe, Beckett, Tate, Gabrielle and Mayah
Second row: Norah, Brooklyn, Kevin, Henry, Jackson, Carter, Wyatt, Leighton and Aubri**

Church Council Minutes

April 8, 2024

Meeting Room

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

Members present: Derek Thilges, Lisa Berggren, Courtney Boekelman, Pastor Eric, Larry Lawson, Kelsey Bosma, Daryl Friest, Jen McGrady, and Darla Thompson. Absent: Thomas Blodgett and Teresa Cooper The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm by Derek.

1. Open with devotion and prayer.
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. March minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Derek; seconded by Lisa.
3. President's Report
 - a. New member Harley Hassebroek. Motion to approve made by Derek; seconded by Larry.
 - b. Derek and Pastor Eric discussed the process of new members and the need to amend the constitution accordingly. We need to define membership within our church. A plan was made to research and discuss at the next council meeting.
4. Treasurer's Report-
 - a. Savings Account: \$100.80
 - b. Checking Account: \$5,274.10
 - c. Youth: \$3,237.54
 - d. Line of Credit: 0 (Lisa will investigate our line of credit being renewed)
 - e. Special Projects Account: \$12,803.99
 - f. Motion to approve made by Kelsey, seconded by Daryl
 - g. Thomas created a google form for vouchers and will discuss at next council meeting.
5. Committee Reports
 - a. Technology
 - i. Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.
 - ii. Sound system update. Still working on installing new speakers. Good feedback so far on what has been installed.
 - b. Property
 - i. Larry is working on the circuit for the outside lights.
 - ii. Richard Larson has offered to help Larry with the Emergency shut off for boiler.
 - iii. No updates on remodeling the bathrooms in the parsonage. Derek gave the go ahead to fix the bathtub in the upstairs bathroom during the March council meeting. Larry is still implementing a plan for the downstairs bathroom including paint and putting a shower in.
 - iv. Grant application was submitted by Derek We are still waiting to hear if the grant was approved. We were able to raise the 25% needed for electrical panel replacement.
 - v. Larry has been busy fixing various things around the church including the vacuum, replacing light bulbs, and Daryl assisted with a broken window in the nursery room.
 - vi. Pastor Eric and Larry report problems with the furnace not working in the parsonage. Larry will continue to investigate and contact Ehrich's plumbing and heating if needed.
 - c. Worship
 - i. Communion Server sign-up sheet was completed for the month of May.
 - ii. The committee discussed possible people to play special music or prelude music during services.
 - iii. The next worship committee meeting is April 16 at 8:30am.
 - iv. The worship committee expressed interest in interacting more with children during passing of the peace and expressed gratitude to those who read and/or take part in the church service.
 - v. If anyone has pictures that can be shared in the newsletter and/or website, please share with the church secretary.
 - vi. May 12th Mother's Day and Senior Recognition. Graduation is on May 19th.
 - vii. Susan will continue contacting ushers/greeters via email to remind them of scheduled Sundays.
 - viii. Jen will put the change in taking offering in the bulletin and on the PowerPoint. Megan Holland is updating the responsibility sheet in the Narthex.
 - d. Stewardship
 - i. The deadline for cookbook entries was April 1. Kelsey reports more recipes are needed. The deadline is being extended to May 1. Please email recipes to kelseybosma25@gmail.com or drop them off at the church.
 - ii. Working on setting a date and silent auction items for "Music and Mingle" with Nate and Mindy Sletten again this year.

- iii. Motion was made during March council meeting to start a Kitchen savings fund. Half of the cookbook profit will go toward this fund. Fellowship offering will go toward the Kitchen fund motioned by Kelsey and seconded by Larry.

e. Education

- i. The kids plan to pass out flowers to Moms during Mother's Day (May 12) church service.
- ii. Sunday School students sing in church on Sunday, April 28th since the confirmands are putting the church service on.
- iii. The confirmands and their parents served 88 people on Easter Sunday for breakfast and brought in \$422.00.
- iv. The last day of Sunday School is Mother's Day (May 12) and the kids also sing in church.
- v. Vacation Bible School will be hosted by the Methodist Church July 29th-August 2nd. The next planning meeting is Sunday, April 14.

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. Teresa is working on the "sign up" sheet.
- ii. Daryl discussed initiating a monthly Men's Bible Study.

6. Pastor's Report

a. Lent

- i. We had good attendance at the Wednesday mid-week services. A big THANK YOU to the women's work groups for providing excellent meals.
- ii. Many more thank yous to all the people who worked behind the scenes.
- iii. The worship team will meet next week to work on our debriefing document.

b. Ministerial

- i. Our Lenten ecumenical service went well. Four congregations were represented in worship leadership at Maundy Thursday here at Bethlehem and Good Friday at First Baptist. Good attendance from the multiple congregations at both services.
- ii. The combined offering for the two services that went to the ministerial fund was over \$800.
- iii. Next up is Baccalaureate. Pastor Kent Hillesland is preaching. I will be leading something.

c. Confirmation

- i. We took about half the class to Algona for the Todd Becker Foundation Event. The kids heard the Gospel preached on Matthew 7, "The Narrow Gate." They heard how choices in our life matter. Are your choices leading you on the path through the wide gate that leads to destruction, or the difficult, narrow gate that leads to life?
- ii. Youth service, Sunday April 28. We will be talking about worship this month, and then they will plan and lead the service on the 28th.
- iii. Retreat, May 10-12 (Mother's Day/Graduate recognition). Pastor Sue Shike and Pastor Eric will be planning the curriculum. It looks like they will be focusing on prayer.
- iv. This has been a great group of kids to work with this year, and the small group leaders continue to be amazing.

d. 1G Wrapping up next week, April 15

- i. Indoor family picnic
- ii. Pastors Kent, Larry, and Eric will meet to work on curriculum for next year. We are working on a 3 - 4 year curriculum rotation.
- iii. Elementary 1G is moving to Wednesdays this fall. We are condensing and streamlining the schedule to keep supper at 5:30pm. Middle school and high school schedules have not been determined yet.
- iv. Pastor Eric has seen a lot of growth in the kids throughout the year. Great discussion and questions during the large group time. All the leaders have done a fantastic job. Please consider being part of this ministry in the fall.

e. LCMC

- i. LeaderCare Retreat (May 6-9) Unclear if Pastor Eric is attending due to possible family schedule conflict.
- ii. District meeting April 9th at 4:00pm in Ellsworth. Continued emphasis is finding a new District Coordinator.
- iii. The annual Gathering is September 29-October 2 in Marion, Iowa. Mark your calendar and consider attending.

7. Office Report

- a. There is a list of kitchen expectations posted for anyone using the facility.
- b. Jen's office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 8:00-12:00 & 1:00-5:00.
- c. Pastor's hours are Monday-Thursday beginning about 8:30am—4:00pm
- d. Phones were updated with WCTA. The kitchen also has a phone. No long-distance outgoing phone calls will be made from the kitchen.
- e. There have been updates to our website. Our web design company increased their price. We plan to stay with this company for one year.

8. New Business

- a. April Mission – LCMC (\$200 to Iowa and \$200 to National)

(The regular rotation is LCMC, global, local) Derek asked everyone to think of donation ideas for “global” which will be for our May mission.

9. Next meeting: May 13

10. Newsletter deadline: Monday, April 29 We are continuing rotation for committees to include information in the Newsletter. The rotation this month is Stewardship, Evangelism, and President.

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

12. The meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

Closed with the Lord’s Prayer

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