



Oh, Bethlehem!

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

GREETERS & USHERS

DECEMBER

- 1 Aubri Wubben Family(c) and Beckett Jensen Family(c)
- *8 Elsa Adams Family(c) and Derek Thilges Family
- 15 Grant Jacobs Family and Josh Mathahs Family
- 22 Julian Ernster Family(c) & Rita Ellsworth
- *24 Jesse Bosma Family & Jen McGrady
- 29 Billy Jensvold Family and Randy & Jill Melz

JANUARY

- *5 Wyatt Olson Family(c) and Denny & Dawn Meinders
- *12 Aurora Pentico Family(c) and Mike Baumann Family
- 19 Riley Price Family(c) and Mark & Kim Ostermann
- 26 Khloe Wubben Family(c) and Ted & Darla Thompson

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Please see the monthly calendar on **page 9** for all church activities this month.



Birthdays for the month of December:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1– Chris Berggren | 8 - Tracy Adams |
| 1 - Darla Thompson | 9 - Iva Ernst |
| 2 - Jackson Holland | 15 - Henry Schaefer |
| 3 - Denny Murra | 19 - Logan Willmert |
| 4 - Marge Becker | 23 - Brandon Thilges |
| 6 - Owyn Ostermann | 25 - Jesus |
| | 29 - Caleb Willmert |

**Please let me know if I'm forgetting anyone or if any dates are incorrect. I'm planning on doing this monthly so I want to make sure I have everyone's birthday on file!

Prayers for our Members & Friends

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Jaya Fever | Carolyn Bartz |
| Brian Bashans | Karen Buss |
| Christina Coughlin | Deloris Steffensen |
| Ashley Cox | Claire Rustemier-Hinz |
| Roger Burnside | Joy Albert |
| Emmagene Silber | Darlene Hofbauer |
| Virginia Cooper | Darlene Huston |
| Penny Mitchell | Harlan Melz |
| Pastor Mark Neumann (BLC's deployed pastor) | |

Dates to Remember

- Dec 1—Hanging of the Greens Service, 9:30 am
- Dec 8—Buffalo Center Tour of Lights, 5:00 - 6:30 pm
- Dec 15—Sunday School Christmas Program, 9:30 am
- Dec 24 - Christmas Eve Services with Communion, 4:30 pm (traditional) and 9:00 pm (acoustic)

General Fund Annual Giving (As of 11.24.24):

Actual: \$125,346

Budgeted: \$138,274

Year to Date Deficit: **-\$12,928**



It is that time of the year again, and it feels more and more like it now. The temperatures are dipping, and the snow flurries are flying as I write this. The wind is howling and...wait for it...Christmas lights are going up (not mine yet, but just you wait). Even Malachi is getting more and more adventurous by daring to play Christmas music before Thanksgiving. And, I must admit, I do not protest all that loudly when he plays that holly jolly music. But first things first, we have Advent, which began on Dec 1 with our annual Hanging of the Greens worship service.

The word Advent has its roots from the Latin word which means “coming” or “arriving”. It is believed that Christians first began recognizing Advent in the late 4th century with a four-week period of fasting preceding the Nativity of our Lord (Christmas). Sermons focused on the wonder of the incarnation, God becoming man in the person of Jesus. And so, the season was one of anxious anticipation as the Church prepared to celebrate the birth of Jesus. But this is only a precursor to the second and bigger Advent to come, Jesus returning to bring his bride, the Church, home.

During this season we focus on themes such as: Peace, Joy, Hope and Love. We make preparations for Christmas gatherings, programs, parties and the like. It is a season of wonder, a season of giving, a season of waiting, but isn't it interesting we only say “season”? Yes, Christmas is exciting for many, but the bigger reason for this season is so much more than a season. Jesus was born and it is indeed awesome and humbling that God would condescend himself to live among sinners. But He not only lived among sinners, but Jesus also died at the hands of sinners that you could live forever. That is not a seasonal reality. That is your eternal Hope because of the awesome Love of God through Jesus Christ, a Joy that resides in the heart of the redeemed which gives a Peace that surpasses all understanding.

And so, may this season be so much more than a season for you. May it kickstart a complacent heart or bring to life one that is dead. May this season remind you of the hope that you have or enflame the love that's in you because of our Savior. Whatever the case, merry Advent and a most joyous Christmas, now and forever, Amen.



Confirmation Class News

By the time you read this, confirmation for 2024 will be wrapping up and we will be preparing to go on Christmas break. We have spent this year, so far, studying the Ten Commandments, and what a great journey it has been. I want to give a big SHOUT OUT to the small group leaders: **Matt Pentico, Jennifer McGrady, Susan Jensen and Rachel Wubben** for their leadership in confirmation. I also want to recognize and thank the **confirmation parents** for helping provide snacks and filling in when we needed a substitute small group leader. And lastly, I want to thank all of you for your prayers for these students and leaders. Confirmation is more than just one person. It takes a village to raise a child in the faith. So, thank you for being part of this village. To God be all glory!



We're taking donations for hats, mittens, and scarves for The Giving Tree. Please leave items in the tote in the narthex. The deadline is December 16.



November 17: Sunday School Kids singing in church. They sang "Deep and Wide" and "Father Abraham". Both songs had a lot of actions plus words so the kids really had to think about what they were doing and singing. Thank you. It was very fun to watch!

This year our Christmas Eve Services will be held at 4:30 pm and 9:00 pm. Please join us and bring your friends and family!



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!



- December FOOD BANK NEEDS:**
- Box Potatoes
 - Saltine Crackers
 - Canned Chicken
 - Muffin Mix
 - Cookie Mix
 - Cans of Soup
 - Canned Corn
 - Snack Crackers



Council Committees

EDUCATION

The Sunday School year continues to go well; the kids have sung in church twice now and have done a wonderful job! We are starting to practice for our Christmas Program that will take place on December 15th. The Church council is going

to serve and provide fellowship following the Christmas program this year. We will be having a bake sale again this year after the program, in which we will be asking each Sunday School family to provide 1-2 dozen treats, of their choice, package up for the sale.

Sunday school break will begin December 15th and we will resume class on January 5th!

Lisa

WORSHIP

The Hanging of the Greens service will take place December 1st and all participants are in place. Advent readers are nearly in place for the month. The SS Christmas Program is on the 15th. Detailed discussion focused

mainly on the Christmas Eve services which will be at 4:30 and 9:00 with communion at both. The 4:30 service will include a variety of special music. Both piano and organ will be used. The 9:00 candlelight service will have special music by

Connie on guitar - thank you. Please feel free to contact anyone on the Worship Committee at any time with suggestions.

Darla



TECHNOLOGY

Two speakers, one on each side of the sanctuary, were installed on November 14. We've had two services since then and you can notice the difference. The sound is great! Thank you to Thomas and Larry for taking the time to get these hung up and to the family who donated the money for this project.

Church Council Agenda

November 11, 2024

Meeting Room

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

Members present: Derek, Larry, Pastor Eric, Darla, Thomas, Darryl, and Courtney

Absent: Lisa, Theresa, Kelsey, and Susan

The meeting was called to order at 6:11 p.m.

Open with devotion and prayer.

Secretary's Report

September minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Derek; seconded by Darla
Christmas in a bag fundraiser. Not successful as I had hoped, only 7 people signed up.

President's report

The executive council will be setting up a meeting to review budget and discuss upcoming council members.

Treasurer's Report –

- a. Savings Account: \$55
- b. Checking Account: \$5,891.53
- c. Youth: \$2,483.28
- d. Line of Credit: 0
- e. Special Projects Account: \$20,044.52

Motion to approve made by Darla, seconded by Darryl.

Committee Reports

Technology

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

Sound system: Goal was to have speakers installed before Thanksgiving. Larry and Thomas will be installing
Thursday 11/14.

Property

Larry looked into the circuit for the outside lights, and they are fixed. The lights will need to be replaced at some
point.

We still haven't gotten an invoice for the electrical panel project.

Remodeling of the bathrooms in the parsonage have been put on hold due to water leaking into the parsonage
from the door. Plan is to pick a weekend to work on this and let council members know so
we can help. Many hands make light work!

Worship

The Hanging of the Greens Service will be December 1st, the first Sunday of Advent. No communion this day. Details will be discussed at November 19th meeting.

Stewardship

Cookbook fundraiser is pending.

Soup Supper was on October 20. Project: \$2,625

Education

Sunday School kids sing in church and 3rd graders receive their bibles 11/17.

Connie has picked out our Sunday School Christmas Program called The Joy of Christmas.

Christmas program is at 9:30 am on 12/15.

Council members will be providing snacks and serving during fellowship after the Christmas program on 12/15.

Fellowship/Evangelism

Fellowship time in the social hall will continue. We're always looking for volunteers to provide refreshments for adults.

We decided to go ahead with the new fellowship rotation to help cover every Sunday.

Free movie at Lake Mills theatre November 17th playing The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!

Men's turkey dinner will be November 24th 11 am—1 pm.

Initiating a Men's bible study is still in the works for Saturday morning breakfast.

Pastor's Report

Education

- IG: We are continuing our study of the Ten Commandments. Still maintaining a steady number of about 20-23 kids. Everything continues to go well. We have five more class days left this calendar year. After the first of the year, we begin our unit on prayer and the Lord's Prayer.
- Confirmation: We are continuing our study of the Ten Commandments. After the first of the year, we will get into some Old Testament and New Testament Bible studies, and then spend a couple weeks on Holy Communion. In February we are having a movie night, watching the Luther movie, followed by a discussion the following week.
- Women's Bible study: We just finished our study of Galatians. Next month will be a Christmas/Advent themed study. Starting in January we will be studying the book of Titus per request.
- 5th and 6th grade boys Sunday School: We continue to have a great time together. We have spent time in the Old Testament so far. Christmas program practice will be starting soon. After the first of the year, we will be studying various stories of Jesus.

Community

- Continuing my work with Giving Tree. Everything has been put into motion.
- Have been getting more requests through the ministerial for assistance. I am working on a document that has various local/county resources that churches can tap into to help meet the needs of various request that come in.

Worship

- Reformation/Confirmation Sunday: All went well. Five students were confirmed, plus Brian Bashans. He was totally surprised.
- All Saints Sunday: Once again, all went well. Thank you to the Worship Team for all their work and thank you to Lily Winter and Jackson Holland helping with the candles.

- Thanksgiving Eve: Wednesday, November 27, 7 pm at First Reformed Church. I will be involved helping lead the service.
- Christmas Eve: Worship Team is working on details. Also, still working on times. Christmas Eve is on a Tuesday this year. Planning on doing a second service (acoustic).

LCMC/Iowa District

- Iowa District Gathering is Saturday, November 16th at Faith Lutheran, Spencer Iowa. This will be my first District Gathering at which I get to preside.
- Leadership Event: Council approved to host again in February.
- LCMC Service Coordinator, Mike Bradley, has announced his retirement effective 2025 sometime.

Office Report

- All is well in the church office. The busyness is picking up as we get closer to Christmas.
- The end of October was a little crazy with prepping and organizing for Reformation/Confirmation Sunday as well as All Saints' Sunday and then getting the November newsletter out at the same time, but we made it.
- There are a lot of upcoming events and/or reminders for the congregation during November and December. Hopefully I don't miss anything – so please let me know if you need something in the bulletin, PowerPoint, newsletter, etc that I haven't addressed.
- Donations: Hats & Mittens for Giving Tree, Turkey Dinner Sign-up, Poinsettia Fund, Giving Tree ornaments will be out area businesses on Nov 19.
- November 17 – SS sings, 3rd. Graders receive Bibles
- November 24 – Turkey Dinner
- November 27 – Thanksgiving Eve Service at First Reformed, 7:00 pm
- December 1 – Hanging of the Greens service
- December 8 – Buffalo Center Tour of Lights
- December 15 – Sunday School Christmas Program during worship
- December 24 – Worship Service(s), times TBD

New Business

November Mission – global– (The regular rotation is LCMC, global, local) Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (lcmc.net).

November mission will be Samaritans Purse. Motion made by Courtney, Thomas seconded.

Next meeting: Monday, December 9 at 6:00 pm.

Newsletter deadline: November 21. Continuing rotation for committees to include information in the Newsletter. The rotation this month is Education, Worship, and Technology to provide pictures of the newly installed speakers!

Motion to Adjourn made by Thomas, seconded by Larry.

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- Luke 2:15-20

Coloring Page



Bethlehem Lutheran - DECEMBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Hanging of the Greens Service, 9:30 am SS, 10:45 am Worship w/Pastor @TMNH, 1:30 pm	2	3 Bible Study with Pastor, 2:00 pm Scouts—Tiger Den Meeting 5:00 pm	4 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation 6:45 pm treats, 7:15 class starts	5	6	7
8 Worship with Communion, 9:30 am SS, 10:45 am Tour of Lights - Live Nativity, 5:00-6:30 pm	9 MOMS2MOMS, 3:30 - 5:00 pm Church Council Meeting, 6:00 pm	10 Worship Committee Meeting @ 8:30 am Quilting, 1:00 pm	11 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation 6:45 pm treats, 7:15 class starts	12	13	14
15 Sunday School Christmas Program during Worship, 9:30 am	16	17	18 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation 6:45 pm treats, 7:15 class starts	19	20	21
22 Worship, 9:30 am	23	24 Christmas Eve Christmas Eve Candlelight Service w/Communion, 4:30 pm & 9:00 pm	25 Christmas Day Happy Birthday, Jesus!	26	27	28
29 Worship, 9:30 am	30	31 New Years Eve				

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We're on the web!

<https://bethlehemplutheranbc.com>



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

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.

