

FEBRUARY 2026



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Buffalo Center, IA 50424

Oh, Bethlehem!

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

GREETERS & USHERS

FEBRUARY

*1 Kim & Mark Ostermann & Henry Schaefer Family
*8 Confirmation Students
15 Aubri Wubben Family & Doug and Kim Ostermann
22 Julian Ernster Family & Brad Kemnitz Family

MARCH

*1 Beckett Jensen Family & Patty & Travis Hassebroek
*8 Lily Winter Family & Mariah Roth Family
15 Mike Baumann Family & Cheryl Baumann
22 Elsa Adams Family & Tracy & Jodi Adams
29 Wyatt Bosma Family & Jen McGrady

*Indicates Communion

Prayers for our Members & Friends

Jaya Fever	Carolyn Bartz
Brian Bashans	Karen Buss
Christina Coughlin	Deloris Steffensen
Emily Schulz	Claire Rustemier-Hinz
Roger Burnside	Emmagene Silber
Curtis Vaudt	Joy Albert
Dawn Jensvold	Harlan Melz
Virginia Cooper	Leroy Weaver
Penny Mitchell	Frances Ostermann
Charlie Schaefer	Delores Griffin
Marge Becker	Jason Christensen
Jen McGrady	Cheryl Baumann
Dean Swenson	Randy Holstad
Pastor Mark Neumann (BLC's deployed pastor)	

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Please see the monthly calendar on **page 5** for all church activities this month.



Birthdays for the month of February:

1— Susan Jensen	16 – Harlan Melz
2 - Virginia Hagedorn	16 - Jessica Resutek
3 - Annette Kahler	18 - Brian Blodgett
3 - Irvn Olsen	18 - Katie Mathahs
7 - Grayson Corporon	18 - Carl Waugh
8 - Delores Griffin	22 - Kelly Ruth Winter
12 - Eric Hullstrom	24 - Beau Holland
15 - Amy Walk	26 - Kim Thompson
15 - Kimberly Ostermann	

Confirmation Baked Potato Bar Fundraiser!

Sunday, February 8, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm at
Bethlehem's Fellowship Hall

Funds raised will be used for our Confirmation
Retreat in May.

Our Confirmation Retreat group is made up of 3
churches: Bethlehem Lutheran, First Reformed, and
St. Paul Lutheran in Lakota.

Please come out and support these kids as they
strengthen their relationship with God and with
each other.





It is that time of the year again – Lent. Ash Wednesday worship is February 18 at 7 PM with the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion. The following week, February 25, we will begin our five-week Lenten series, The Church and the World. We will explore what it means to be the church in this world by getting to know the church in 1 Thessalonians. Worship will begin at 7PM this year. The following is a summary of what we will be studying:

February 18 ~ Ash Wednesday

Preaching text: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Title: *"In the world, but not of the world"*

February 25 ~ First Wednesday in Lent

Preaching text: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Title: *"In the world, but not pleasing the world"*

March 4 ~ Second Wednesday in Lent

Preaching text: 1 Thessalonians 2:17 – 3:13

Title: *"In the world, but not without each other"*

March 11 ~ Third Wednesday in Lent

Preaching text: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Title: *"In the world, but do not conform to the world"*

March 18 ~ Fourth Wednesday in Lent

Preaching text: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Title: *"In the world, but not without encouragement"*

March 25 ~ Fifth Wednesday in Lent

Preaching text: 1 Thessalonians 5

Title: *"In the world, but you will not stay in the world"*

I encourage you to read through 1 Thessalonians in preparation for our time together. Each Wednesday I will provide a study guide for you to use in preparation for the following week's message. Let us go deeper into God's Word together.



Confirmation Class News

We are off and running in 2026. Hard to believe that we are over halfway through our confirmation year. We began the New Year with a New Testament Bible study and now we are preparing for our youth-led worship service which will be Sunday, February 8. As I write this, a blizzard has cancelled school and thus class, but we will still be ready to lead you all in worship. Also on February 8, the class will be hosting our annual baked potato bar. This is a fundraiser used to pay for our year-end retreat at Ingham-Okoboji Bible Camp on the west side of West Lake Okoboji. You are all invited to come and support our youth. And as always, continue to pray for these students and leaders.



You are invited to a

90th Birthday
Open House

For

Caroline Stenzel

February 14th from 1:00-3:00 pm

Bethany Lutheran Church
2712 Washington Avenue
Iowa Falls, IA

Caroline was a member of our congregation prior to moving to Iowa Falls. If unable to attend, cards can reach her at:

Caroline Stenzel
Cedar Ridge Independent Living
1221 N. Fremont St., Apt. 12
Iowa Falls, Iowa 50126

Don't forget your Valentine! Order your cake truffles today! **\$10 for a box of 4.**

There are sign-up sheets in the Fellowship Hall and Narthex. You can also contact the church office or Kelsey Bosma to order. Deadline is Feb 10.

Pick up will be February 13, 4:00 - 6:00 pm in the church kitchen.

Fellowship Serving Rotation:

Feb 1 - Work Group #2

Feb 8 - Confirmation

Feb 15 - Work Group #3

Feb 22 - Sunday School

Mar 1 - Church Council

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Romans 8:38-39

Council Committee Reports

PRESIDENT

(Reprinted from Annual Report)

Dear Bethlehem,
It has been an honor to serve as Council President for another year. I spent some time reviewing past annual reports given by former council presidents. It is fascinating to me to read back all those years and review the issues that were at hand. Many reports talk about not knowing the future, and weathering storms. I can say there is always the looming issue that has prevailed for many years: we need more money. However, looking back at some of the storms we have weathered, I don't foresee a situation we can't manage. We've made it through so much in recent years and have come out the other side a stronger and healthier church. I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished and how far we have come in these years.

As I reflect on the year and prepare for the annual meeting, I think about

the many blessings this church has. It starts with great leadership, and Pastor Eric continues to do an exceptional job. Our congregation is what really drives this church though, and we wouldn't be able to be what we are without the generosity of time and fortune of everyone reading this.

Our Sunday School program continues to be a strong part of the ministry here at Bethlehem. We are blessed with teachers, volunteers, and young leaders who put in so much of their time. We had several special services with the kids singing, and one last one before year end paired with the pancake breakfast to make it particularly special.

We were given a little breathing room this year without any excessively major property repairs. This is not to say there weren't major repairs, but nothing to the tune of what the last few years have been.

Fundraising has become a vital part

of our annual budget. Council and sub committees were able to put together some great fundraisers, and we are striving to make a few of them an annual thing. At council meetings, we have discussed the importance of making some of them annual so the community can count on them. Some of those include the drive-through soup supper, Father's Day brunch, and Music and Mingle.

Bethlehem also continues to support so many community events and outreach programs, like North Iowa Food for Families and the Giving Tree. We do so with volunteer help, financial aid, and general use of our facilities.

Looking to the year ahead, I am excited to see what is in store for us, as I know it will be great. If we continue working together, following God, I know we will thrive.

- Derek Thilges, Council President

Our 2026 Church Council

Derek Thilges - President
Darla Thompson - Vice President
Thomas Blodgett - Treasurer/Technology
Kim Ostermann - Secretary
Amy Walk - Stewardship
Megan Holland - Education
Jen McGrady - Evangelism
Katie Mathahs - Fellowship
Darla Thompson - Worship
Larry Lawson - Property

Megan Holland, Jen McGrady, and Amy Walk were nominated and approved at our annual congregational meeting on January 18. Welcome to the church council!

Thank you to all who share their talents by serving our church through council.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Derek at 641-430-3903.

General Fund Giving (NOT including fundraisers) As of 01.28.26

Actual YTD:
\$7,517

Budgeted YTD:
\$12,232

YTD Deficit:
- \$4,715

**General Checking
Balance (01.28.26):**
\$3,641

**Project Savings
Balance (01.28.26)**
\$13,115

**General Savings
Balance (01.28.26) \$0**

**Amount Borrowed on
Bank Loan: \$3,000**

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!

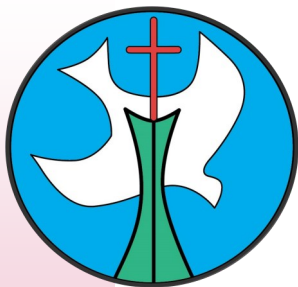


Bethlehem Lutheran - FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Worship with Communion, 9:30 am Sunday School, 10:45 am TMNH Worship at 1:30 pm with Pastor	2	3 Bible Study with Pastor, 2:00 pm Scout Den Meeting, 6:00 pm	4 Confirmation: Snacks 6:45 pm Class Begins 7:15	5	6	7
8 Confirmation led Worship with Communion & Baptism, 9:30 am Sunday School, 10:45 am Baked Potato Bar, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm	9 MOMS2MOMS 3:30-5:00 pm Church Council Meeting, 6:00 pm	10 Quilting at 1:00 pm	11 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation: Snacks 6:45 pm Class Begins 7:15	12	13	14
15 Worship at 9:30 am Sunday School kids sing Sunday School, 10:45 am	16	17 Worship Committee Meeting, 8:30 am Scout Den & Pack Meeting, 6 - 8 pm	18 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Ash Wednesday Worship, 7:00 pm	19	20	21 Men's Bible Study with Pastor @ 7:00 am, Fellowship Hall
22 Worship at 9:30 am Sunday School, 10:45 am	23 MOMS2MOMS 3:30-5:00 pm	24 Quilting at 1:00 pm	25 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Lenten Service, 7:00 pm Confirmation, 7:45 pm	26	27	28

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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Buffalo Center, IA 50424

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



We're on the web!

<https://bethlehemlutheranbc.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.

