



Oh, Bethlehem!

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

GREETERS & USHERS

JANUARY

*5 Wyatt Olson Family(c) and Josh Mathahs Family
 *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

FEBRUARY

*2 Jackson Holland (c) Family & Jamie Price Family
 *9 Tate Engelbarts(c) Family and Logan Willmert Family
 16 Aubri Wubben(c) Family & Joe Angstman Family
 23 Julian Ernster(c) Family & Brant Boekelman Family

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Please see the monthly calendar on **page 7** for all church activities this month.



Birthdays for the month of January:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1– Denny Meinders | 11– Julian Ernster |
| 2 - Christina Blodgett | 18– Amy Schaefer |
| 2 - Ray Bosma | 21 - Mitch Engelbarts |
| 4 - Kim Ostermann | 29 - Alex Olsen |
| 8 - Helen Rossmiller | 31 - Rita Ellsworth |
| 10 - Jay Angstman | |

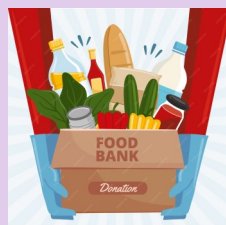
**Please let me know if I'm forgetting anyone or if any dates are incorrect. I'm planning on doing this monthly so I want to make sure I have everyone's birthday on file!

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
Joan Sunde	
Pastor Mark Neumann (BLC's deployed pastor)	

January FOOD BANK NEEDS:

Cereal, Juice, Canned Vegetables, Breakfast Bars, Canned Fruit, Packaged Cookies



Please drop off donations in the church narthex. Thank you!

Annual Meeting January 19 After Worship

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall. Coffee & treats will be provided. No SS but childcare will be provided.

General Fund Annual Giving (As of 12.27.24):

Actual: \$145,753

Budgeted: \$153,000

Year to Date Deficit:
-\$7,247



One of my biggest pet peeves is when I see people texting and driving. There are all kinds of distracted driving, but from my perspective, texting is the worst. When someone is communicating with someone else through text messaging, more attention is needed to engage that person. You are watching your phone, typing a message, and then reading what the other person is communicating. Your brain is distracted, just enough to cause a delay in your response time. You may say, “*I can multi-task with the best of them.*” My response is, “*No you can’t, at least not safely.*” When you are driving, a delay in response time, of any amount, can be dangerous, even deadly. At 60 mph you travel approximately 88 feet in one second. How long does it take you to read a text message? A lot can happen in 88 feet (or more).

My point in this public service announcement is that focusing on the wrong thing can lead to disastrous results. As I am with texting and driving, I am amazed at what constantly grabs people’s attention over and above where attention ought to be.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” [Matthew 2:1-2]

These wise men or magi (the Greek word where we get our word for “magic”) came from the east; following a star to the place where the child, Jesus, was residing. These pagans noticed a celestial event in the sky and knew something was going on, something from God. They understood the prophecies of this new king being born. And so, when they saw the star, they packed their bags and focused on God’s guiding light, a light that led them straight to Jesus. There was no texting and driving with these wise men, only laser-focused attention on the almighty God.

January 6 is the beginning of the season of Epiphany, a churchy sounding word that means, “manifestation” or “revelation”. Jesus, the King of kings and the Lord of lords has been revealed to the nations, revealed to you. But many are “texting and driving”, focused on the wrong things. Many are looking to politicians to fix their lives. Many are looking to worldly idols to give them purpose and peace. Many are looking in all the wrong directions for guidance in this messed up and dark world. All the while the light of God has been revealed. Does this describe you?

Jesus has been born for you. Jesus has died for you. Jesus has been raised for you. All of this so your sins can be forgiven and thus have hope of eternal life in paradise with God. Don’t be distracted by this world but rather focus your attention on the Lord Jesus who will be ushering in a new kingdom. Amen.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As we're approaching year end, council has been busy. The 2025 budget has been reviewed and adjusted and is ready to be shown to the congregation for approval. We've also reviewed and adjusted our strategic plan. I like to go through that at least twice per year, once at the start with the new council members and once towards the end to see how we did with our goals for the church. It's always impressive to see all the things we accomplish through the year.

We continue to discuss, thoroughly, possible candidates for the 2025 council. We are still looking to fill 2 more seats, so if you feel like this is something you could give your time towards, please reach out to any council member. Having a full council with 9 positions is crucial to avoid "burn-out" of the current council members.

Our year to date giving looks very promising and I'm hoping for the first time since I've been on council we will meet or exceed our goal. We're not there yet, however, so please continue to think of the church during this season of giving.

I hope to see everyone throughout the Christmas services and at the Annual meeting, scheduled Jan 19. It's been a great year and I'm excited to see what 2025 brings. Merry Christmas, everyone.

Advent Season at Bethlehem!



The church all decorated for Christmas



Sunday School Kids in the Christmas Program



The Sunday School Kids lending their talents to make the Christmas Program a success!

Church Council Minutes

December 9, 2024

Meeting Room

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

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

Absent: Kelsey, Lisa, Susan, Theresa

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm

Open with devotion and prayer.

Secretary's Report

September minutes approved via email. Motion to approve by Derek; seconded by Lisa.

President's report

The executive council met and discussed the budget. The proposed budget was reviewed.

Strategic plan was reviewed.

We need two council members to fill open positions.

Treasurer's Report –

Savings Account: \$54

Checking Account: \$12,491

Youth: \$2,483

Line of Credit: 0

Special Projects Account: \$20,046

Motion to approve made by, Darla seconded by Darryl

Committee Reports

Technology

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

Speakers are installed and sounding great!

Property

We're waiting for Alliant so we can finish the electrical panel project. Derek requested a partial invoice.

Remodeling of the bathrooms in the parsonage had been put on hold due to water leaking into the parsonage from the door. Spring 2025 the water issue will be fixed.

Worship

The format used for All Saints Sunday went well and will be used again.

Men's Turkey dinner was a success: \$2,950.

The Hanging of the Green service also went well.

The Christmas set up was discussed. Lorie explained the banner color used matches the proper Advent candle that is to

be lit.

Christmas Eve service times are set: 4:30pm and 9:00pm. Communion will take place at each service. Lorie is willing to help with communion at the later service. Special music is being set up for the early service and will be discussed at the December 10th worship meeting. Thank you to Connie for offering to do music for the later service. No PowerPoint will be used for the late service.

Stewardship

Cookbook fundraiser is pending.

Education

Christmas program called The Joy of Christmas is at 9:30 on 12/15.

Council members will be providing snacks and serving during fellowship time 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.

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

Pastor's Report

Education

IG: Finished studying the Ten Commandments. We will hear the Christmas story this week and then sing at Timely Mission on December 18. We will then go on a three-week break, returning January 15, 2025. On Wednesday, December 18, I have scheduled a debriefing/review meeting for leaders and other interested parties to talk about the first half of the year.

Confirmation: We will finish the Ten Commandments on December 18 and then take a two-week Christmas break, returning January 8, 2025. Sunday December 8 was the Tour of Lights in BC. The class put on a living nativity and handed out ornaments to people. Beautiful weather and everyone seem to have fun. Parents provided supper and snacks for the class.

Sunday School: I spend the first part of this year going through various Old Testament stories with my class. Starting in January, we will study stories of Jesus. The past couple weeks there hasn't been class as the kids are working on the Christmas program.

Women's Bible Study: In November, we finished studying Paul's letter to the Galatians. The December study was an Advent study of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Starting in January we will dive into the book of Titus, per the request of the women.

Worship

Thanksgiving Eve worship was held on November 27 at First Reformed Church. We did a Thanksgiving hymn sing, I helped lead worship.

Working on Christmas details. I will be preparing two sermons, one for each of the Christmas Eve Services like I did last year. Details are coming together for both services.

Following the New Year, we will have two months before Lent starts (3/5). Easter is late this year (4/20).

LCMC

Iowa District: The annual gathering was held at Faith Lutheran Church, Spencer IA on Saturday November 16. I was elected to my first 3-year term and will be continuing as president of the board. We have a good board who all work hard. It makes my job a lot easier. Our next project is putting the

finishing touches on our Leadership Event which will be February 15 in Story City, IA. We have speakers lined up. Just looking at nailing down a few details. More information will be coming.

LCMC The Board of Trustees have just advertised the job opening for a new Service Coordinator. The application process opens January 1 and closes January 31. We have a new board chair (Steve Turnbull) who will do an amazing job leading this group.

Other

Giving Tree: We have been collecting hats, mittens, scarves. Deadline is Monday December 16. I will oversee gift distribution for Buffalo Center families again this year.

Vacation: I will take my usual post-Christmas vacation this year. I will be gone Sunday December 29 and return for worship January 5, 2025.

Upcoming to-dos: Starting Lent planning in January.

Office Report

New Business

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

December mission will be North Iowa School for negative lunch accounts. Motion made by Thomas, Larry seconded.

Next meeting: January 19- Annual meeting after church service. No Sunday School. Plan is to have confirmation students supervise kids so parents can attend.

Newsletter deadline: soon_Continuing rotation for committees to include information in the Newsletter. Susan will let the council members know when we need to get her our end of the year review.

Motion to Adjourn made by Thomas, seconded by Larry.

The meeting adjourned at 7:51pm.

Close with the Lord’s Prayer.



Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

- 2 Corinthians 5:17

Fellowship Serving Rotation:

Dec 29—Work Group #3
Jan 5 - Sunday School
Jan 12 - Church Council
Jan 19—Work Group #1
Jan 26—Work Group #2
Feb 2—Work Group #3
Feb 9 - Sunday School

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 - JANUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 New Year's Day	2	3	4
5 Worship with Com- munion, 9:30 am SS, 10:45 am Worship w/Pastor @TMNH, 1:30 pm	6	7 Bible Study with Pastor, 2:00 pm Scouts—Tiger Den Meeting 5:00 pm	8 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation 6:45 pm treats, 7:15 class starts	9	10	11
12 Worship with Com- munion, 9:30 am SS, 10:45 am	13 MOMS2MOMS, 3:30 - 5:00 pm Church Council Meeting, 6:00 pm	14 Quilting, 1:00 pm	15 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation 6:45 pm treats, 7:15 class starts	16	17	18
19 Worship, 9:30 am Annual Meeting after worship NO Sunday School	20	21 Worship Committee Meeting @ 8:30 am Scouts—Tiger Den Meeting 5:00 pm	22 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation 6:45 pm treats, 7:15 class starts	23	24	25
26 Worship, 9:30 am SS, 10:45 am	27 MOMS2MOMS, 3:30 - 5:00 pm	28 Quilting, 1:00 pm	29 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Confirmation 6:45 pm treats, 7:15 class starts	30	31	

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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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.

