

MARCH 2025



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Buffalo Center, IA 50424

Oh, Bethlehem!

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

GREETERS & USHERS

MARCH

*2 Aubri Wubben Family and Patty & Travis Hassebrook
*9 Julian Ernster Family & Teresa Roth Family
16 Tanner & Anne Weaver and Doug & Kim Ostermann
23 Elsa Adams Family and Mark & Kim Ostermann
30 Gabby Andersen Family and Mark & Deb Landheer

APRIL

*6 Confirmation Students
*13 Leighton Lawson Family and Josh Mathahs Family
17 5th Grade SS Students & Family-TBD
*20 Easter Sunrise Service-Confirmation Students
*9:30 service- Mike Baumann Family
27 Duane Cooper Family & Kelly Sabin Family

Upcoming Dates to Remember!

April 6 - Confirmation Kids Lead Worship
April 10 - Spring Coffee
April 13 - Palm Sunday
April 17 - Maundy Thursday, 5th graders receive
1st Communion during 7:00 pm worship
April 18 - Good Friday, 7:00 pm worship @ United
Methodist Church
April 20 - Easter!

Our 2025 Church Council

Derek Thilges - President
Kelsey Bosma - Vice President
Thomas Blodgett - Treasurer/Technology
Kim Ostermann - Secretary
Kelsey Bosma - Stewardship
Grant Jacobs - Education
Darryl Friest - Evangelism
Katie Mathahs - Fellowship
Darla Thompson - Worship
Larry Lawson - Property

CALENDAR of EVENTS

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

Prayers for our Members & Friends

Jaya Fever	Carolyn Bartz
Brian Bashans	Karen Buss
Christina Coughlin	Deloris Steffensen
Emily Schulz	Claire Rustemier-Hinz
Roger Burnside	Joy Albert
Emmagene Silber	Darlene Hofbauer
Virginia Cooper	Darlene Huston
Penny Mitchell	Harlan Melz
Jason Christensen	Curtis Vaudt
Dennis Hullstrom	
Pastor Mark Neumann (BLC's deployed pastor)	



Birthdays for the month of March:

5 - Linda Berhow	18 - Jackie Larson
10 - Joel Boekelman	21 - Hudson Hawkins
12 - Casen Thilges	23 - Brooklyn Price
14 - Max Schaefer	29 - Matt Pentico
17 - Claire Rustemier-Hinz	

****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!**



It is that time of the year again. Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday worship** with the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion on **March 5 at 7 PM**. Starting March 12, our midweek evenings together begin, and I **promise** you that it will be full of **promises**. That previous sentence is a segway into our theme for Lent this year as our midweek services will focus on the Psalms and some of the promises found therein. Creatively, the title is, "*Promises from the Psalms*". Catchy, isn't it 😊 The various message titles will be, "*The Promise of Forgiveness*" from Psalm 32; "*The Promise of Endless Keeping*" from Psalm 121; "*The Promise of Rest*" from Psalm 95; "*The Promise of Peace*" from Psalm 23; and "*The Promise of Redemption*" from Psalm 130. Each message will be accompanied by a New Testament text that will proclaim this Good News. Each week, there will be fill-in-the-blank message listening guides provided to help you engage these promises, along with some questions for you to ponder. Preceding each worship service, supper will be provided. We will start serving at 6:00 PM and worship each week will begin at 6:45 PM. These services will not be live-streamed.

So, mark your calendars and plan on sharing a meal together and then spend some time in contemplative worship on the beautiful promises of God.



During Lent, students are required to attend midweek worship at 6:45 PM each week. There is supper provided at 6 PM but that is optional for them. We will meet following worship at 7:30 and wrap up by 8:15. The primary focus will be worship planning for our youth-led service on April 6.

Council Committee Reports

STEWARDSHIP

Hello Bethlehem!

It has been a great start to the new year so far. We had another successful Valentine fundraiser, bringing in \$528 worth of chocolate-y brownie goodness! Thank you for your support and for letting me use my time on one of my favorite talents! (You see what I did there?) ☺ I am also happy to say that we should be receiving notice any day that the cookbooks are headed to our doorstep. Please keep an eye on the announcements for when that happens, and when the pick-up time will take place.

A few weeks ago we heard from Dan, one of our favorite people over at Ingham Okoboji Bible camp. This visit got the council thinking, and we have some good news: the church will be doing a scholarship for EVERY youth that wants to attend summer camp, at ANY of the Bible camps! Whether it is a two night shorter camp, or a full week program, we will be offering \$50 & \$100 dollar scholarships. This is not just for those who find camp too expensive, this is for all youth. Parents- once your kids are registered, just let the office know, and we will proceed

from there. Please check out all the camp options for enriching our students' faith in a fun and loving environment.

Lastly, some more fun! Nathan and Mindy Sletten will be returning this summer for another awesome Music and Mingle event! It will be held June 22nd, at Lions Club Park. Keep this date open, as we will have more information and details forthcoming.

That's all for now- blessings to you as we transition into the busyness of spring!

Thanks, Kelsey Bosma

EVANGELISM

Calling all men!

We are beginning a Men's Bible Study. The plan is to meet on the third Saturday of each

month from 7 to 8 AM in the fellowship hall. The first study will be on Saturday, March 15. Pastor Eric will provide some rolls and coffee along with a devotional. We will discuss what we want to study moving

forward. Spread the word and invite your friends. The strength of the church is being firmly planted on the Word of God. Hope to see you then.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
- Romans 15:13

FOOD BANK NEEDS for March:

- **Breakfast Bars (Box)**
- **Baked Beans**
- **Refried Beans**
- **Taco Kit**
- **Canned Fruit (29 oz)**
- **Ranch Dressing**



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

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!



Church Council Minutes

February 10, 2025

Meeting Room

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

Members present: Thomas Blodgett, Kelsey Bosma, Larry Lawson, Katie Mathahs, Grant Jacobs, Darryl Friest, Kim Ostermann, Pastor Eric, Susan Jensen

Absent: Darla Thompson, Derek Thilges

The meeting was called to order by Vice President, Kelsey Bosma at 6:31pm.

We opened with devotion and prayer led by Pastor Eric.

Secretary's Report

- No January minutes to approve – no meeting.
- Approval of organizational council meeting minutes. Motion to approve by Thomas; seconded by Larry; approved.

President's report

Looking into the year, we need to keep our ears open for possible grants. I know the Worth County Development Authority grant can be applied for in March or April. This grant specifically, and I assume others like it, doesn't give to projects that are already started. So, we need to plan, come up with ideas that could really benefit our church (and community). Ideas might include east entrance windows, flooring in fellowship hall, kitchen remodel/updating. Before thinking these ideas don't necessarily benefit our community, think about all the community events that happen within our walls.

Treasurer's Report –

- Savings Account: \$59.01
- Checking Account: \$16,547.42
- Youth: \$2,483.28
- Line of Credit: 0
- Special Projects Account: \$5,113.49

Motion to approve made by Darryl; seconded by Katie; approved.

Committee Reports

Technology

- Anyone interested in helping with service technology can contact Thomas Blodgett.
- Still working a little with filtering on the sound system.
- Pastor's microphone sometimes cuts out when he turns his head. We're checking into it.

Property

- The electrical panel project is DONE.
- We're checking into replacing the blinds in Pastor's office.
- The Narthex bathroom needs some cosmetic repair following the changes to the electrical panels. Larry will be working on this.
- Remodeling 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 Worship Committee met on January 22nd and began with a big thank you to everyone for all the extra commitment for our December services. Pastor Eric passed out a debriefing sheet for all to review. We added some thoughts and have it on file as reference for 2025.
- Getting communion to those who serve from the balcony was discussed and it was decided that the elements would be put on a tray for them. We will revisit the issue at our next meeting.
- Dates for the upcoming Easter season were listed for all to have on their calendar. We will use the debriefing sheet from last year and review it in our February meeting.
- We discussed the Decorating Committee duties, wondering if there needs to be better communication. We will invite a member to our November meeting in order to convey needs for the Christmas services.
- Lorie Bierle filled us in on the Altar Guild duties.
- We talked about storage areas in the church for those of us who did not know.
- Sign-up for upcoming communion servers.

March 2 – Kim Ostermann

March 5 (Ash Wednesday) – Darryl Friest

March 9 – Thomas Blodgett, Grant Jacobs

Stewardship

- The cookbook has been sent in for production. Extras will hopefully be available in some Buffalo Center locations.
- Valentine update – 62 orders have been placed
- Nate and Mindy Sletten have been secured for Music & Mingle on June 22. Looking at possibly having it in the park.

Education

- Sunday School sings in church on February 16.
- Sunday School was down to provide fellowship coffee on February 9. Megan Holland organized the 5th & 6th graders to serve. Thank you!

Fellowship

- Fellowship time in the social hall will continue.
- The new fellowship rotation helps to cover every Sunday. The church council is scheduled to serve on February 16. Darla & Kim will provide snacks.

Evangelism

- Initiating a Men's bible study is still in the works for Saturday morning breakfast. They are considering a 7:30am meeting time once a month.

Pastor's Report

Education

- The confirmation class will be hosting a baked potato bar fundraiser to help pay for their confirmation retreat. First Reformed Church and St. Paul Lutheran will also be involved. They are currently studying Holy Communion and then will start watching a movie about Martin Luther.
- 1G continues to move along. The numbers are smaller, but the quality of the program continues to bless.
- Women's Bible study is studying the book of Titus.
- 5th & 6th grade Sunday School is studying various stories about who Jesus is.
- First Communion classes are being planned for March. There are five students this year. Bread making will take place on Palm Sunday and First Communion will be on Maundy Thursday, April 17.

Worship

- Three baptisms are being planned for March 9.
- Lent is coming up soon. Pastor Eric is working on a theme for the Wednesday services.
- Dan Antoine, Director of Programs at Ingham-Okoboji Ministries was here on Sunday, February 9. He spoke during worship and led music with the Sunday School kids.

LCMC

- The district leadership event is Saturday, February 15 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Story City. The topic is raising up leaders from within your congregation. This is open to anyone and runs from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

Office Report:

- Last year different committees were assigned to contribute to the monthly newsletter – two per month. Susan will put together a rotation.
- Insurance for the church premiums went up. The deductible for wind/hail damage also changed.

New Business:

- Plan to review our strategic plan at the March meeting.
- We had some discussion about providing scholarships for students interested in attending Bible Camp. We are looking for people interested in sponsoring these scholarships. It was suggested to give Bethlehem kids \$50 for a 2-night camp and \$100 for a full week. Motion made by Thomas; seconded by Grant; approved.
- February Mission – global – (The regular rotation is LCMC, global, local). LCMC Mission Partners: Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ
- January was LCMC
February: Water Missions International motion by Thomas; seconded by Larry; approved.

Next meeting: March 10 at 6:30pm

Newsletter deadline: February 20

Motion to Adjourn made by Thomas; seconded by Katie; approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The Confirmation Retreat Group would like to thank everyone who attended our Baked Potato Fundraiser. We had a wonderful turnout and raised over \$2,500. We are so grateful!

General Fund Giving (As of 02.24.25):

Actual YTD: \$20,108

**Budgeted YTD:
\$24,504**

**Year to Date Deficit:
-\$4,396**

Special Offering : California Wildfires

Thank you to all who donated to the during the special offering for the California Wildfires. We raised \$857! LCMC provided a list of organizations that would benefit from our offering. We chose to give half to the **California Fire Foundation: Wild-fire & Disaster Relief Fund** and half to the **Westside Food Bank** located in Santa Monica. We wanted to be able to help both the fire victims and the emergency responders/fire firefighters.

Fellowship Serving Rotation:

Mar 2—Work Group #2

Mar 9 - Work Group #3

Mar 16 - Sunday School

Mar 23 - Church Council

Mar 30 —Work Group #1

Bethlehem Lutheran - MARCH 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2 Worship with Com- munion, 9:30 am SS, 10:45 am TMNH Service @ 1:30 pm with Pastor	3	4 Bible Study with Pastor, 2:00 pm Scouts—Tiger Den Meeting 5:00 pm	5 Ash Wednesday Service, 7:00 pm	6	7	8 IA District LCMC Leaders' Event, Story City, 9 am - 3 pm Don't forget to set clocks ahead before going to bed!
9 Worship with Com- munion & Baptism, 9:30 am SS, 10:45 am Daylight Savings Time Begins	10 MOMS2MOMS, 3:30 - 5:00 pm Church Council Meeting, 6:30 pm	11 Quilting, 1:00 pm	12 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Lenten Supper 6:00 Lenten Service 6:45 Confirmation 7:30	13	14	15 Men's Bible Study with Pastor @ 7:00 am, Fellowship Hall
16 Worship, 9:30 am SS Kids Sing SS, 10:45 am	17	18 Worship Committee Meeting @ 8:30 am Scouts—Tiger Den Meeting 5:00 pm	19 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Lenten Supper 6:00 Lenten Service 6:45 Confirmation 7:30	20	21	22
23 Worship, 9:30 am SS, 10:45 am	24 MOMS2MOMS, 3:30 - 5:00 pm	25 Quilting, 1:00 pm	26 Community Bible Study, 10:00 am Lenten Supper 6:00 Lenten Service 6:45 Confirmation 7:30	27	28	29
30 Worship w/Baptism @ 9:30 am SS @ 10:45 am	31					

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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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.

