

## in this issue >>>

Pastor's Report  
Committee Reports  
Pandemic Status  
Fall Happenings

Issue  
**September**



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

# Oh Bethlehem



## events >>>

- Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>** Confirmation meeting.  
Students and Parents @ 7pm.  
**12<sup>th</sup>** Rally Sunday, Meal and Dessert  
Auction.  
**13<sup>th</sup>** Council Meeting @ 6pm.  
**21<sup>st</sup>** Worship Comm. Meeting  
@ 9:30am.  
**26<sup>th</sup>** Pastor Eric's Installation/Meal  
**Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>** Hymn Sing Sunday  
**Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>** Communion Sunday  
Harvest Soup Supper 4:30-6:30pm.

### **Food Bank Needs for September:**

Cereal, Juice, Can Vegetables, Box pie crust,  
Pie filling, Packaged cookies and Can Soup.

We are open and going forth with gathering in the house of our Lord. We have updated the Pandemic plan as listed below. We really look forward to seeing everyone again face to face. Services will continue to stream on our YouTube channel.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church has moved to Tier 0 for our pandemic plan. While there are no special conditions at Tier 0, as always BLC will:

- Respect others by allowing them the dignity to protect themselves, as well as others to have the dignity of risk.
- Follow the guidance, as directed, by IDPH when appropriate.
- Clean areas with reasonable care
- As any, if they are sick, please take care and stay home.

**Commemorative items:** Bethlehem has a variety of items for sale. We have ornaments, postcards, coffee tumblers and mugs, and NEW "Oh Bethlehem" t-shirts. A table will remain set up in the fellowship hall. This is a fundraiser for Bethlehem. All funds will go to the General fund to support future fellowship and evangelism opportunities and outreach.

## A note from Council >>>

Welcome Pastor Eric and family!

Pastor Eric, Connie, Mayah, and Malachi have officially joined our community! They arrived on a stormy day that added challenges to the stress of moving. As we finally received the rain that we have so desperately needed, it came at a horrible time for the parsonage. Further repairs will need to be made to the parsonage, but luckily, nothing was badly damaged. Thank you to all who helped with the move and the flooding. It was a weekend to remember! Pastor Eric has already jumped into work. He provided a wonderful sermon for our 125th anniversary, and has worked on a variety of tasks even prior to moving to Iowa. He will be available in the office or by phone Monday through Thursday. We look forward to getting to know him and his family more in the coming months and years. May God bless Eric and his family through this major transition. During our leadership transition, please give Pastor Eric, his family, and our leadership team grace as we all adjust and find a new routine.

Cassie Willmert  
Council President



### **125th Thank you >>>**

Thank you to all who attended Bethlehem's 125th Anniversary celebration. It was a wonderful day celebrating with old and new friends. Bethlehem would like to thank the musicians who provided special music, and all who shared their memories with us. The music, memories, and fellowship made it a day that we will not soon forget. Bethlehem would also like to sincerely thank all who made this event happen. It has been a busy year for the planning committee, and you all created a wonderful event. Thank you also to all the willing hands that stepped up to help leading up to the event and the day of the event. you are all appreciated. On August 29th, 2021, Bethlehem remembered its past, while passing the spirit onto its future. Bethlehem has entered a new age, and we look forward to celebrating all of the big and little milestones as we continue our ministry. Thank you again and God Bless!





*<<< from the heart of the pastor >>>*

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

We are finally here - safe and sound in Buffalo Center. Who knew then, that after I accepted the call to be the pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, on June 13, that so much would change in mine and my family's lives, along with many challenges: me falling and breaking my face, my subsequent back issues, surgery and recovery, packing and moving logistics while laid up. On top of all of that, Connie was working fulltime, running our home, and now caring for three (me included) children. There were many times that I wanted to throw up my hands and give up. I cannot speak for Connie, but I imagine her feeling the same way.

But our steadfast and unchanging God remained faithful. He upheld us and guided us through all the ups and downs. He led us through the dark valleys, fought our battles with the Evil One, and gave strength and healing to our weary bodies. He gave us what was necessary to accomplish what was needed to be accomplished. In the end, to God be the glory because believe me, we did not traverse this summer under our own power or ingenuity. We did not arrive here safely because we are strong. The unchanging love of God sustained us and continues to give us hope.

During the children's message at our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary worship service I spoke about our unchanging God. I showed the kids various Bibles. The first one I showed them dated back to 1885. Next, I showed them my dad's confirmation Bible from 1964 followed by my 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Bible from 1979. I finished by showing them my preaching Bible. But as we looked at all those different Bibles, I highlighted the common thread: **God's Word**. It is a Word that has not changed. God's love is a love that has not changed. His grace is a grace that has not changed. Jesus, the Son of God, is still and always will be Lord and Savior. God's faithfulness from when He said, "**Let there be light**", has continued unhindered ever since and will continue for all eternity. It is this unchanging God to whom we can cling.

Much has changed in our congregation over the past 125 years, but God has not. Much has changed in our world these past couple years, but God has not. Much has changed and will continue to change in your lives, but – wait for it – God will not. And thus, we can always look to the future with hope. Granted, you and I will not be here when Bethlehem Lutheran Church celebrates its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary (that is, if Jesus does not return first), but one thing will be certain. At that celebration, they will be able to praise God for His unchanging love and faithfulness still.

And so, as we continue into this new chapter of ministry together, that will indeed be filled with changes, challenges, ups and downs, cling to our unchanging and always faithful God. What a great God we have, Amen? Amen!

Your brother in Christ,  
Pastor Eric

On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to extend our most sincere and heart-felt thanks to this congregation for your help and support as we moved in and continue to get settled. The food we found in our kitchen, refrigerator and freezer was a welcomed sight. The strong backs and willing muscles were much appreciated as furniture needed to be moved and boxes hauled in. The gift cards, goodies and other treats have also been much appreciated. We have met so many wonderful people here and throughout this community and therefore this "thank you" note is so inadequate to express our thanks to you all. It has been a challenging summer and move, but you have help carry some of the burden. We will never forget the kindness you have showed. We are indeed home, sweet home here among our brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you.

Pastor Eric, Connie, Mayah and Malachi

### treasurer >>>

Our general offering year to date is \$85,278.00. We are 67% through the year and our giving so far is at 63% of our budget needs.

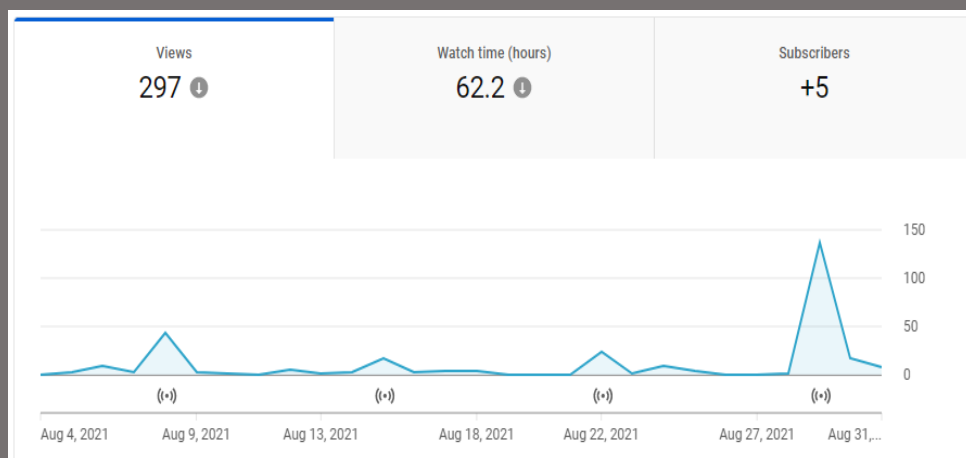
We are a bit behind but overall, still looking good going into the fall. We have accomplished so much and have some great plans to continue our mission with our new Pastor and his family.

As was said during the 125<sup>th</sup> celebration Bethlehem is truly blessed. Please continue to give! Bethlehem a welcoming place for our new family members. We are doing some great things Bethlehem, please continue to give.

If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

### technology >>>

Our digital ministry continues to be strong. Current statistic show we have seen **297 views** on our live stream and/or recordings throughout August. We also have **78 subscribers** to our YouTube Channel.



The technology group includes Kyle Winter, Logan Willmert, Thomas Blodgett, and Brock Jensen. If anyone is called to help and/or donate, please contact Brian Blodgett.

If you would like to support the technology mission at Bethlehem please note on your giving – “Technology” on any extra donations.

Thank you  
Brian Blodgett  
brian@ngtnet.net

### In the word >>>

Read: Jude, Chapter 1

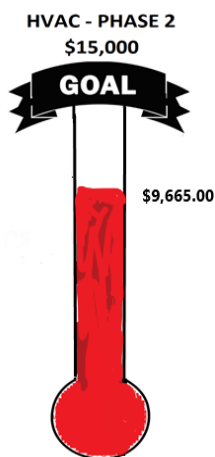
Reflections: We need to be vigilant in keeping strong in our faith. We need to stay in the word of God. If we know the word of God, by reading it regularly, we will then recognize false teachings. The word of God also helps us grow in our faith.

Point to ponder: Over the last few years, have I been growing in my faith? How can I grow my faith over the rest of this year and into next year?

Prayer: May God's mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance. And may your faith also grow in abundance each and every day!

Air-conditioning in the sanctuary sure has helped us these past months, but we have not met our fundraising goal **YET**. Please continue to give to the Phase 2 Heating and Cooling System Fund. We are currently at \$9,665.00 of our \$15,000 goal. You can give to the fund by designating your donation on the memo line of a check.

**Thank You!**



### **education report >>>**

Hello everyone, and welcome back!

On behalf of myself, the Education Committee, Sunday School teachers and Confirmation leaders- thank you for allowing us another year with your children. We have Confirmation starting the 8<sup>th</sup> with Rally Sunday the 12th.

Rally Sunday is bringing something exciting to the whole congregation as well- A Dessert silent auction! This is going to be a much needed fundraiser for the education department, and we look forward to adding this fun way to kick off the year and support the kids.

There is a lot of change and upcoming happenings for the youth in our church. We hope to keep blazing ahead, and are so happy to have Pastor Eric on board with us now.

Stay tuned for more fun announcements and events!

Please continue to pray for and bless our youth.

Sincerely-

Kelsey Bosma, Education Superintendent

### **worship >>>**

**Hello Bethlehem Family,** Ohhh!!!! I'm excited to have Pastor Eric here with us! We have jumped right in to prepare and brainstorm for Sundays services.

Here's all the *NEW* happenings in the worship department:

-The worship team will now meet the **third Tuesday of every month @ 9:30**, in the meeting room. With the first meeting set for September 21. This will be a time for all the moving parts of Sunday's service, to come together, create and prepare for future services. There is always room for more- feel free to join us!

**-For now, communion will continue with individual packets. You are invited, those who feel comfortable, to come to the altar. For those coming to the altar, we ask that you wait for the usher to direct you to the front. Please leave a comfortable amount of space between you & others. Please exit down the side rows.**

(Please note: Communion will be September 5 and October 10)

-Below is the **September Family Greeter and Usher list**. Remember, if you're not available on your scheduled date, please contact Jen @ the office(562-2552) or Megan(562-2024). This insures that we have adequate people needed for Sunday service. In addition, we ask that greeters/usher bring the offering box to the front the of the church for a blessing and prayer.

### **September**

5 Randy & Jill Melz Family, Harlan & Connie Melz, and Karen Buss  
12 Duane Cooper Family and Billy Jensvold Family  
19 Brad Kemnitz Family and Kim Thompson and Matt Pentico Family  
26 Angstman Family and Derek & Shelby Thilges

Thank you to ALL for being available!!! Please don't hesitate to reach out with any ideas for worship. Or if you would like to share your talent!

***"Serve the Lord with gladness and delight;  
Come before His presence with joyful singing."*** Psalm 100:2

Megan Holland  
Worship



### **Membership Forms**

Membership Forms are available in the Narthex and on our website, [www.bethlehemlutheranbc.com](http://www.bethlehemlutheranbc.com). You may be thinking that we already have your information, but we have a new program that is a little more detailed and user friendly. It will be great to have a completed and updated list for our new incoming Pastor. Please drop them at the office or in the back of the church. Thank You.

### **Giving**

Giving can be done easily online, right from your phone or computer. We have had great success this last year with weekly offering coming right into our General Fund at the bank. This is an easy and convenient option, check it out today!

[www.bethlehemlutheranbc.com/giving](http://www.bethlehemlutheranbc.com/giving)

If you would like more information or guidance on setting this up, please see Brian Blodgett or Jen McGrady.

### **Coffee Fellowship**

Coffee Fellowship is available in the entrance prior to the service and in the Fellowship Hall after the service. With us being able to get back to some good old normal routine, we need help! Please sign up for a Sunday. Thanks!

### **Cradle Roll**

Are you expecting a new addition to your family? Do you know someone who is? Enroll them in our new Cradle Roll program! The Cradle Roll is a ministry for expectant families and children 0 to 3 years old in our church and community. To enroll someone in the Cradle Roll, sponsor a child, or join the ministry team, contact Cassie Willmert at [cassondra.willmert@gmail.com](mailto:cassondra.willmert@gmail.com).

### ***new committees >>>***

Bethlehem has new committees! In the last few weeks, we have added an Education Committee and a Worship Committee! Our Worship Committee is organizing to make all worship components run smoothly and open lines of communication. We have a good group together, but if you have an interest in worship and would like to help on the committee, come to the Worship Committee meetings. They take place the 3rd Tuesday of each month. The next Worship Committee meeting is September 21st at 9:30 am. Thank you to all who have volunteered their time and talents to be on the Education and Worship Committee! You are appreciated! We still have more committees that need to be filled! Here is a list of committees looking for volunteers and the leader to contact for more information.

Evangelism - Amy Walk  
Stewardship - Susan Jensen  
Fellowship - Cassie Willmert  
Cradle Roll - Cassie Willmert  
Property - Brandon Thilges

Bethlehem is blessed with lots going on, but we need teams to make things happen. Thank you for considering joining a committee. Many hands make for light work and more ministry opportunities.

### ***evangelism report >>>***

Another month has flown by! I would like to thank everyone that helped with the 125th celebration! It was a great day!

The Breathe bible study will be starting on Tuesday Sept. 12th at 6:30. We do have more books so all are welcome.

Remember to sign up to serve for coffee fellowship if interested.

January will be here before we know it so please continue to pray for our Council and the needs coming up to fill vacant seats. Thank you.

Remember to LOVE GOD and others well!!

God Bless  
Amy Walk

### ***property >>>***

Work went into high gear as we got together to get the parsonage ready for Pastor Eric and family. Lots of cleaning took place with repairs done in the bathroom, basement and the sidewalk. The kitchen floor was also replaced. The gutters will need some immediate attention as there is improper drainage. I'd like to thank everyone that came out and volunteered their time and talents.

Thank you.  
Brandon Thilges, Property

## ***Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Minutes***

08-01-21

Present: Brian, Vonnie, Susan, Kelsey, Amy, Cassie. Absent: Megan, Cheryl, Brandon. Call to Order: 11:07 a.m. Prayer.

### **Old Business**

- Council minutes approved Aug newsletter
- SS & Confirmation materials of \$870 approved via text
- Update on Conference tables: we will table it as Cheryl is not present
- Pastor Eric will arrive in BC by Aug 20
- Special events - need to look at having a rental agreement in place
- August mission will go to Pastor Tim Knappe for "Reaching the Unreached".

### **Treasurer's Report**

- Some large expenses with HVAC and parsonage

\$12,626 for HVAC

\$5,000 electrical for HVAC

\$3,425 parsonage flooring

\$2,000 moving expenses

Budget Review - we're keeping an eye on the budget as we're about 4%, or \$6,000, behind on offering

### **Property Report**

Parsonage - flooring will be completed on Monday

Church - doors will be locked for now until Pastor is here

Clean up week is August 3-6 and Aug 8

### **Worship**

Pulpit supply is covered for August

Family greeter/usher schedule has been mailed out

Working on installation service (Sept) and new member service (Oct)

### **Stewardship**

Fundraising ideas - harvest meal, pie social/auction are being looked at

### **Education**

VBS planning is going

Curriculum has been ordered

Confirmation meeting for parents and kids will be Sept 8

Rally Sunday is Sept 12

Amanda Jamison has agreed to co-chair education

Plans are underway to have a Wed after school event at our church once per month

Christmas program has been selected

### **Technology**

Question came up about the TV in the nursery - table this until we get to new business

### **Fellowship**

Cradle Roll - 2 enrolled

### **Evangelism**

Bible Study is ready to go, will start in the fall

### **125th Celebration**

Planning has been going very well

The menu has been decided - turkey sandwiches, salads, cake

Program order has been decided

Meeting this week with Molly at MJ Embroidery for t-shirt design

### **New Business**

We're taking school supply donations

Office floor will be replaced with new carpet, volunteers will tear out the old

Discussed Covid Protocol - the decision was made to go ahead and hook up the nursery tv again

With summer winding down, we're going to switch to Monday night council meetings

The next meeting is Monday, Sept 13, at 6:00 p.m.

Amy made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Kelsey seconded. Adjourned at 12:34 p.m. Ended with Lord's Prayer





Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
201 4<sup>th</sup> St NW  
Buffalo Center, IA 50424

"FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE make us available  
for our neighbors near and far."

President: Cassie Willmert  
Vice President/Evangelism: Amy Walk  
Secretary/Worship: Megan Holland  
Treasurer/Technology: Brian Blodgett  
Stewardship: Susan Jensen  
125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Vonnie Pilgrim-Bosma  
Education: Kelsey Bosma  
Property: Brandon Thilges  
Fellowship: Cheryl Baumann

FIND US ON FACEBOOK  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
Bethlehem Lutheran Sunday School

[www.bethlehemlutheranbc.com](http://www.bethlehemlutheranbc.com)

641-562-2552 (Office)  
641-562-2553 (Pastor)  
[pastor@blciowa.org](mailto:pastor@blciowa.org)  
[office@blciowa.org](mailto:office@blciowa.org)  
[jen.mcgrady@blciowa.org](mailto:jen.mcgrady@blciowa.org)





