



A Welcoming Church

“We will emphasize evangelism that reaches out to the community, invites participation in the mission of Bethlehem, and creates a welcoming atmosphere.” — *Bethlehem 2016-2020 Strategic Plan Goal 5*

In September, our Evangelism Committee began working through a book called Becoming a Welcoming Church. The author, Thom Rainer, points out that churches are not very good at objectively observing how welcoming we are, and that each church has an opportunity to grow in their hospitality. These are the reasons, Rainer writes, guests said they had a “happy” experience with the churches they visit:

- 1) Someone invited the guest to sit with her.
- 2) People introduced themselves to the guests.
- 3) There was clear signage.
- 4) There was a clearly marked welcome center.
- 5) The kids loved the children’s area.
- 6) The children’s area was safe and sanitary.
- 7) Guests could find parking.
- 8) The church did not have a stand and greet time.
- 9) The members were not pushy.
- 10) The guest card was simple to complete.

You may have noticed the most visible way in which the Evangelism Committee is working on becoming a more welcoming church. The Welcome Center signs were installed in January, and we will soon be staffing the kiosk. Also, in January, we held two training sessions to better equip our greeters. The Reconciling in Christ Task Force has begun their work, so that we might offer welcome to a broader and more inclusive part of our community.

When asked why people join a church, they may or may not list friendliness or welcome as one of the factors, but no one joins a church when they feel unwelcome! I thank God that all of you are Bethlehem’s welcome!

~ *Pr. Jay*



Affectionately Yours

St. Valentine, a Roman priest, was martyred in 270 A.D. for loving Jesus. Some sources say he performed weddings after the emperor banned them; others say he rescued Christians from Roman prisons. Two centuries later, the pope declared February 14 St. Valentine’s Day.

According to legend, the priest signed his letters “Your Valentine.” Later, Christians followed suit to honor him. By the mid-1700s, friends and sweethearts exchanged heart-shaped trinkets or sent handwritten notes of affection on February 14.



“The heart-shaped communion wafers were a nice touch for Valentine’s Day.”

Wednesday Night MENU

Wednesday Night Suppers are served from 4:45-6 p.m.

We welcome anyone who wishes to dine with us. There is no charge for the meals, but a free-will offering will be accepted.

Upcoming Menus

- February 6** — hamburger and French fries
- February 13** — chicken stir fry
- February 20** — potato soup & sandwich
- February 27** — pork/rice chow mein

Fellowship News

Council Corner

Here are the “highlights” of the Bethlehem Council meeting held on **January 15**. Meeting minutes with details are posted on the BLC website (www.blcmankato.org) and are also available in a church office notebook. Visit with Council members with your questions and concerns! We welcome conversation & feedback! We represent you in the decision-making process for Bethlehem!

Treasurer’s Report: 2018 finished with a positive **December 30** balance of **+\$1,857** compared to November 30 deficit of **-\$12,862.81**. Thanks to members for fulfilling their 2018 pledges!

Mortgage Picture: Council approved hosting comprehensive conversation about our mortgage picture at the **April 7** semi-annual meeting. Background information will be presented along with possible options for addressing future mortgage payments. Stay tuned for more details!

2017 BLC Financial Review: Finance Committee addressed recommendations from 2017 financial review. Positive progress reported on several with more study to come on others.

2019 Facilities Projects: Plans for specific 2019 building improvement projects approved.

Undesignated Memorials: \$7,500 of current \$18,250 undesignated memorials approved to be put in existing Capital Set-Aside fund to cover unanticipated major maintenance/repair projects. This fund will now have a balance of \$15,000. All such projects require Council approval.

January 6 Special Congregational Meeting: Positive feedback from Council & members regarding information, leadership, conversation and outcome of Connections Ministry meeting.

Connections Goals: 6 goals approved by Connections Board for 2019.

Family Faith Formation: Planning for 2 listening sessions in February & March to address questions/concerns about future programming & staffing. All BLC members invited to attend!

Welcome Center: New Welcome Center being created at narthex kiosk by Evangelism Board. Check out the new “Welcome” sign. More to come this year to welcome visitors to Bethlehem.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, February 19, 2019.

Give Plus Electronic Giving Card
If you have arranged to give electronically at Bethlehem, you will find, in each pew rack or on the narthex kiosk, a white giving card with the photo of a blue stained glass window. Please place the card in the offering basket during the worship service so that your giving may be blessed.



Combined Women’s Circles Bible Study

9:30 a.m. in Grounds for Joy
February 20 and March 20



Salvation Army Dinner on January 13

Bethlehem shared a meal with our neighbors at the Salvation Army a few blocks from our church on January 13. We served lasagna to 110 guests, plus our volunteers. We appreciate the fresh fruits and vegetables, bread, meat sticks, and desserts shared by the ECHO Food Shelf.

Thank you to these Team 1 members who generously donated money and time to this local mission and for living out their faith in community service: Chuck/Kathy Piehl; Wayne/Gail Date; Gert DeRemer; Audrey Gatchell; Rod/Bonnie Torgerson; Steve/Lynette Freyberg; Roger/Deb Pipes; Sandra Abild; Newt Moen; Alice Kollo; Mary Hall; Jay Backstrom; Amy Haigh; Roger/Joyce Kamrath; Randy/Rachel Wood; Brad/Ann Widness; Tom/Susan Weinberger; and Bob/Susan Brown (Team 1 leaders).

Contact Bethlehem coordinator Marsha Qualset (388-4970) if you would like to be a team leader or a team member.

What do you call a very small valentine?
A valentiny.



Give a Fair Trade Valentine!
Fair Trade chocolate can be purchased from the cart in the narthex on Sunday, February 10, Wednesday, February 13, or anytime the church office is open. Your purchases are part of what makes small cocoa farmers successful!



Through partnership with co-ops, cocoa small-scale farmers gain crucial market access they wouldn’t have otherwise. The co-ops are democratically run by the farmers so that together they decide how to invest in their communities. When they work together as a co-op, they become owners of a business. They have economic and political control over their lives, access to quality training and processing equipment, and they can positively influence their communities by investing in school supplies, women’s programs, clean drinking wells, or other social development projects.

Family Faith Formation Ministry

Anna Wencil, Family Faith Formation Ministry Director ~ annawencil@hickorytech.net



We celebrated the light of Jesus like the Wise Ones at our Epiphany Festival.

Families in Prayer Adult Forum: Sunday, February 3 (9:30-10:30 a.m.)
Parents and congregation members are invited to talk about prayer this month during Adult Forum. This is for parents of kids of all ages. We especially welcome our LIGHT families while their kids are in Sunday School. We'll talk about the research and science on prayer and hear from a variety of families on how and why prayer is important to them.

Green Lake Camp Day: Sunday, February 10 & Wednesday, February 13
Our friends from Green Lake Lutheran Ministries will be coming to worship and all of the children's and youth groups to get us pumped for camp! Wear your favorite camping outfit to get in the spirit. Green Lake has wonderful options for a variety of summer faith-building experiences. They will also be here June 23-27 to lead VBS! For more info, grab their camp brochure from the kiosk near the main office, or visit gllm.org.

Cupcake Wars: Wednesday, February 13 (6:45-7:45 p.m.)

Our Catechism Club, Confirmation, & HS youth will compete to become Bethlehem's first Cupcake Wars Champion! Professionals from Bluebird Cakery will be on hand to give us tips and judge our final creations. Join us for a fun evening of fellowship with all our youth!

FLIGHT Event: Bowling & Pizza at WowZone! Friday, February 22 (6-7:00 p.m.)

By popular vote, bowling was chosen for our winter FLIGHT event. Look for a sign-up on Facebook in early February. FLIGHTS are a free event to develop community among our families. **Please let us know how many in your family will be attending by Sunday, February 17, so we have enough space for everyone.**

Fat Tuesday Dinner & Silent Auction: Tuesday, March 5 (5-7 p.m.)

We hope you'll plan to join us for another wonderful dinner and silent auction to support our youth and celebrate with a feast to end the Epiphany season. We will be serving jambalaya or mac & cheese along with king's cake and sparkling wine. Confirmation youth will be selling tickets February 6-27. Silent auction items are requested from our tables and anyone who would like to donate. Contact Angela Bruns (angeladbruns@yahoo.com) with questions.

Text Communication Update: Remind, the texting app we've used to communicate with families this year, will no longer work for Verizon customers to receive texts as of January 28. A work-around for this is to download the Remind app or sign up for emails instead of texts. We're still deciding how we'll adapt moving forward, so stay tuned for further details!

Have any thoughts or questions? Connect with Anna Wencil (annawencil@hickorytech.net)

Visit our website: blcmankato.org/children & blcmankato.org/youth.



Do you have extra bottles of wine left over from the holidays? Not sure what to do with them? You could donate them to a good cause for our youth's annual Fat Tuesday celebration fundraiser on **March 5!** We are now accepting any donations in terms of baskets for the silent auction and wine wall. Donations can be brought to Anna's office. **Thank you!**

REVEREND FUN WWW.REVERENDFUN.COM



WILL YOU BE MY VALENTINE?

From Pastor Collette Broady Grund, Associate Pastor



Family Faith Formation Ministry Listening Sessions

In their book *Leadership on the Line*, leadership and management experts Ronald Heifitz and Marty Linsky talk about the necessity of ‘balcony time’ for healthy, sustainable leadership. They compare the everyday workings of an organization to being on the dance floor of an auditorium, where everyone is doing the steps they’ve learned, dancing their part, and trying to stay in sync with the others around them. This is where we spend most of our time in any organization, dancing on the floor with everybody else. But the leader’s job is to be able to see all the parts of the organization at once, seeing how they work together, and where the dancers might be out of sync. That can only be done from the balcony, where the leader takes time out of the regular dance, stepping back to see where things need to be ironed out or energized.

Family Faith Formation Ministry at Bethlehem is a sometimes frantic dance with a lot of choreography and dancers, and when it’s working well, it’s a beautiful thing to behold. And let me be clear, our dance right now is beautiful and powerful and life-giving. But the staff and boards (Children’s and Youth) have started to hear from parents and congregation members that some dancers are growing weary, that they wish there were more or less steps for a particular age group, that they don’t know what their part is supposed to be.

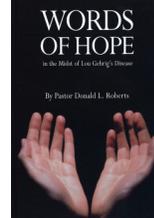
So, we are stepping up to the balcony this winter and spring, and we want you to join us. This month, on **Wednesday, February 13**, we’ll take an hour after worship to look at the big picture, past and present. We’ll give you a detailed overview of all the parts of the dance and talk about the various roles for staff and volunteers. We’ll answer your questions big and small. We are hopeful that after an hour on the balcony together, we’ll all have a clearer understanding of what the whole dance looks like, how to best use our choreographers (staff), and which parts need more or less focus going forward.

In the week before that listening session, we’ll send out two short documents, via Facebook and e-mail, to help direct the conversation. The first will be an overview of the history of FFFM in the last five years. The second will be a draft of the comprehensive plan describing the ministry we do and what we hope families and children are getting out of it at each age level. These two pieces will be the main topics of conversation, but all questions are welcome. If you have something specific you want to know or ask, it would be helpful for Anna and I to know that ahead of time. Call or e-mail us anytime!

I look forward to spending some balcony time with you, and trust that God will use it to make our FFFM dance even more engaging and life-giving. ~ **Peace, Pr. Collette**

Pastor Don’s Devotion

Pastor Don Roberts served as pastor at Bethlehem from 1989-1996. He was diagnosed with ALS/Lou Gehrig's disease in 1995 and continues to be an inspiration of life and faith to our congregation.



He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? ~ Micah 6:8

This is what the Lord asks of you:
only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.
- Micah 6:8

God’s people, in Micah’s day, were extremely materialistic; avarice and greed were not uncommon among them. They were selfish. God, through the prophet Micah, was telling the people to “get their act together.” God, through Micah, told his people to act with justice, to be kind to each other, and to walk humbly with God.

How do we seek justice and show kindness today? Help the poor. Pray for one another. As you know, we live in a broken and imperfect world. Because of this, many things happen that are not the will of God. Disease, accidents, and death happen. There are hungry people around the world. Please pray for one another and visit the sick and bereaved. As you have generously given to ELCA World Hunger — keep it up!

How do we “walk humbly with God”? Think of what God has done for us. God sent Jesus to die a horrific death on the cross — and on the third day, to rise again. Jesus did this to forgive us our sins, and to guarantee us eternal life together with God and one another. Think of what God has done for us throughout our lives. God has given us peace in difficult circumstances. We may work hard, but God is ultimately the giver. Walk humbly with God.



February Serving Group



Chair: Darlene Nelson (388-6903)

Co-Chair: Donna Quick (388-2216)

Michael & Janet Backlund
Karsten Backlund
Darin & Brooke Bock
Brad & Shannon Butler
Doris Cotton
Larry & Carol Evans
Curtis & Jackie Halvorson

Roger & Jean Hoppe
Paul & Lorie Huebert
Elaine Kunz
Tim & Nancy Lidstrom
Diane Mann
Barb Manske
Jim & Marcia Nagel

Lance & Donna Quick
Craig Skorr
Dan & Jody Skorr
Jean Thompson
Cathleen Young



February Monthly Mission Project: Crossroads Lutheran Campus Ministry



CROSSROADS Campus Ministry has a mission: welcoming all people of good will, no exceptions. Welcoming friends and strangers with grace fresh from God might seem like a no-brainer. In fact, grace is not always the case with the campus ministries serving the MSU-Mankato community. Your support conveys God's grace to young adults who may have experienced shame and condemnation in their previous experiences with religious organizations.

Students enter at a rare moment in life: they have a fresh canvas for designing their life path, choosing their adult values, and sorting out their relationship with God apart from the habits of parents and high school. That's where Crossroads comes in. Worship, learning, and service opportunities shape the inner life and outward behavior of young adults. That has a measurable impact. Data indicate that 89% of students active in Lutheran campus ministries become active members of local congregations once they graduate and begin their careers.

Crossroads is best known for its hunger ministries. Sociology students conducted research about food insecurity on campus. A shocking 40% of students report going hungry or fearing they will not have enough to eat. Every Tuesday, Crossroads partners with area congregations to serve

Lunch-For-A-Buck, a wholesome meal for hungry students. Campus Cupboard (organized by Bethlehem member Kathy Yale!) supplies hungry students an opportunity to select nourishing foods from the shelves. Crossroads also partners with the University on Campus Kitchen, providing ready access to donated foodstuffs M-F.

Over the summer, Crossroads called a new pastor after a vacancy of nearly two years. Pastor Heather Hammond (a Bethlehem member!) served on the Crossroads Board before being invited to become campus pastor. She says, "I'm honored to be able to build on the foundation made by my friend, Tammy Dahlvang. She positioned Crossroads to be a uniquely progressive ministry on this campus. We remain rooted and grounded in Word and Sacrament. We're explicit about being followers of Jesus, yet people can be part of this community wherever they are on their journey."

Heather comes with extensive experience in stewardship, vocational discernment, organizational development, and Biblical studies. She has a BA from St. Olaf College, an M.Div. from Luther Seminary, and a D.Min. from Princeton Theological Seminary. She has been a mission re-developer, a senior pastor, and a Bishop's Associate. "The one other thing I've always wanted to do," she said, "is to be a campus pastor. I'm thrilled this call has come to me now!" ~*Your Community & Global Missions Board*

Every act of
Kindness
creates a ripple

Ripples of Kindness

"I drop kindness pebbles in still water every day, and I watch the effect they have on other people's lives. My favorite kindness pebbles are compliments. Drop a compliment and watch the ripple effect that it has in your life."



Remarkably, these cheery words come from a father who has faced many dark, difficult days. In *6 Minutes Wrestling With Life*, John Passaro tells of his daughter's heart-wrenching battle with meningitis. The struggles didn't make him bitter; rather, he frequently offers uplifting words on social media.

What if we followed Passaro's example and complimented people regularly? Philippians 4:8 (NIV) instructs us to think about things that are noble, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. By extension, turning those positive thoughts into words causes "kindness pebbles" to spread God's light in ripples throughout someone's day – and, doubtless, through ours.



Financial Report



Congratulations!!! At year-end, the general fund had a positive balance of \$1,800. December was a strong month for giving, and expenses were held in check all year. The Finance Committee will continue to monitor both income and expenses to ensure that the financial resources of Bethlehem are used to their full potential. The *Blessings and Beyond* capital campaign ended as of December 31, 2018. Of pledges made for the three-year campaign, 99.7% were received. Moving forward, contributions can be made for mortgage reduction at any time.

Thank you for your continuing support of the mission and ministry of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. ~*Elizabeth Ruiz*

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Date	Time	Reader	Usher	Communion Assistants		Greeters	Comm. Set-up	Coffee
2/3	8:15	Kathy Crosswell	2	Holly Meyer	Gordy Larson		Brad & Betty Groth	Eunice & Florence Sassenberg
2/3	10:45	Sandy Kuper	3	Brenda Boyer	Wally Boyer			
2/10	8:15	Matt Drewitz	4	Jane Sletta	Eric Forcier		Eunice & Florence Sassenberg	Gail Christensen & Chris Deike
2/10	10:45	Marcia Nagel	5	Mary Bliesmer	Karla Van Lith			
2/17	8:15	Dave Hageman	6	Sue Thul	Susan Weinberger	Kelli Woelfel	Sandy Abild & Mary Jo Hoiberg	Brad & Betty Groth
2/17	10:45	Jennifer Nord	7	Sandy Kuper	Jim Nagel	Marcia Nagel		
2/24	8:15	Emily Heinis	8	Brad Groth	Betty Groth		Carl Schoenstedt & Bob Singelstad	Tom & Betty Sanger
2/24	10:45	Marge Orness	2	Lance Quick	Donna Quick			

SOUND TECHNICIANS

- February 3** 8:15 a.m. Randy Wood
 10:45 a.m. Levi Janssen
- February 10** 8:15 a.m. Brad Butler
 10:45 a.m. Brad Butler
- February 17** 8:15 a.m. Tim Heiser
 10:45 a.m. Levi Janssen
- February 24** 8:15 a.m. Brad Butler
 10:45 a.m. Brad Butler



Walk to Defeat ALS[®]

The ALS Association

because you can

The ALS walk is coming up in April. We'll be meeting at Sibley Park again this year. It's been a pretty mild winter with very little snow so far, but we probably will have more COLD days and maybe even more SNOW. However, let's start thinking about the good things – spring and everything that goes along with it. Snow gone! Grass green! Days rainy! And, most important of all – OUR 2019 ALS WALK. Please plan on meeting us at the park with your walking shoes on and energy in high gear. We need your feet to make our voices heard. **The date to put on your calendar is Saturday, April 27.** Look for more info in the March and April newsletters.





A mosaic consists of thousands of little stones. Some are blue, some are green, some are yellow, some are gold. When we bring our faces close to the mosaic, we can admire the beauty of each stone. But as we step back from it, we can see that all these little stones reveal to us a beautiful picture, telling a story none of these stones can tell by itself.

That is what our life in the church is about. Each of us is like a little stone, but together we reveal the face of God to the world. Nobody can say: "I make God visible." But others who see us together can say: "They make God visible." A Christian community is where humility and glory touch.

— Henri J.M. Nouwen



February 2019



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 10:30 am-Comm. & Global Missions Office closes at noon	2  HAPPY GROUNDHOG DAY!
3 8:15 & 10:45-Worship 9:30 am-Education Hour; coffee in GFJ	4 6:30 pm-RIC Task Force 6:30 pm-Financial Peace University	5 7 am-Bible Study 8:30 am-Quilters 1pm-comm. at Old Main 2 pm-Stewardship 5 pm-Evangelism 6 pm-Music/Worship, Children's Board	6 10:30 am-Bk of Faith 12:30 pm-staff meeting Wed. Evening Activities (see below)	7	8 Office closes at noon	9 10 am-1 pm—Sons of Norway in the Heritage Room
10 8:15 & 10:45-Worship 9:30 am-Education Hour; coffee in GFJ	11 6:30 pm-FPU	12 7 am-Bible Study 10 am-PUSH in GFJ 10:15-Comm. at Path. 1 pm-Library Comm. 6 pm-Connections Board 7 pm-Personnel	13 10:30 am-Bk of Faith 1 pm-staff meeting 3:30-Women's Bk group 4 pm-Finance Comm. 6:45-Cupcake Wars Wed. Evening Activities	14  6:30 pm-Life in the Spirit	15 Office closes at noon	16 9 am-Deborah Circle
17 8:15 & 10:45-Worship 9:30 am-Education Hour; coffee in GFJ	18 6:30 pm-FPU	19 7 am-Bible Study 8:30 am-Quilters 7 pm-Council, Nurses' Support Panel	20 9:30 am-Women's Bible Study 1 pm-staff mtg. Wed. Evening Activities	21	22 Office closes at noon 6 pm-FLIGHT at the WOW Zone	23
24 8:15 & 10:45-Worship 9:30 am-Education Hour; coffee in GFJ	25 6:30 pm-FPU Connections Shelter Week	26 7 am-Bible Study 1 pm-Library Comm.	27 10:30 am-Bk of Faith 1 pm-staff meeting 3:30-Women's Bk group Wed. Evening Activities	28		

Final 2018 Disbursements from the Bethlehem Lutheran Endowment Fund:

- \$500 - American Red Cross serving Southwest Minnesota
- \$500 - Lutheran Disaster Response
- \$1000 - Habitat for Humanity of South Central Minnesota
- \$300 - Mankato Holy Grounds
- \$548.87 - Salvation Army (for commercial food processor)
- \$500 - Parenting Through the Phases curriculum (to be used by FFF during Lent)

Endowment Board members are Susan Brown, Jim Erdman, Bob Qualset, Audrey Gatchell, Barbara Girtz, Dave Hageman (Council liaison), and Pastor Jay Dahlvang.

Wednesday Evening Schedule

- 4:45-6:00** Supper served in the dining room
- 5:00-7:45** Child care available in the nursery
- 5:15-6:00** Junior Gospbells rehearsal
- 5:30-6:30** Voices in Praise (VIP) Choir rehearsal
- 6:00-6:45** **Worship service in the sanctuary**
- 6:30-7:30** Bethlehem Gospbells rehearsal
- 6:45-7:45** Confirmation; NightLIGHT; Catechism Club; High School Youth Group



Adult Education

Adult Forums — 9:30-10:30 a.m. in the Heritage Room

February 3 – Family Faith Formation Parenting, with Pastor Collette, Anna Wencl, and Sarah Morgan

February 10 – Summer Mission Trip, with Maria Soroka

February 17 – Inter-Religious Relationships: Initiatives and Perspectives of the ELCA, with Darrell Jodock, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus at GAC

February 24 – Crossroads Campus Ministry, with Pastor Heather Hammond

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Pastor Collette Broady Grund 507-380-3049
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Bethlehem Lutheran Church

www.BLCMankato.org

**Sunday Worship: 8:15 & 10:45 a.m.
Wednesday evening worship: 6:00 p.m.**

***The 8:15 a.m. Sunday service is broadcast at 11:00 a.m.
on KTOE 1420 AM / KTOE 102.7 FM.***

**Visit our website or Facebook page and listen to
Sunday services online!**

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

***Bethlehem is an inviting community that is growing in Christ,
loving our neighbors, and serving God's world.***

The deadline for submitting articles for the newsletter is the 15th of each month.

