



THE BETHLEHEM STAR

February 2022

Update on Strategic Planning Process

Thank you for your input! In the listening sessions, as well as in the Day of Remembering, we have heard your vision of where God is calling Bethlehem in our future. The Task Force has taken your input and formulated preliminary goals. The list of goals will grow in the next few months, until the council and task force meet to consider which goals to prioritize and pursue over the next four years. The goals will be presented to the congregation for final approval.

The list of goals so far:

Strengths to build on

1. Integrate children, youth, and family program into the life of the congregation.
2. Continue to encourage people to be generous in time, talents, and treasures.
3. Develop a plan to make personal connections to encourage members to complete the annual Time & Talent survey, and to better utilize the collected information.

Dysfunction in our congregational life that needs to be fixed

1. Create opportunities for meaningful and respectful conversations.
2. More effectively use and enhance the Bethlehem Lutheran Church conflict resolution policy and process and promote its use by members and staff.

Mission to our community (outreach)

1. Conduct a yearly assessment of community needs in conjunction with community partners.
2. Partner with community agencies to meet the needs of our community.
3. Identify, prioritize, and implement a strategy of community and global engagement.

Aspirations for the next four years

1. Call, empower, and support the new Associate Pastor.
2. Intentionally identify, empower, and support lay leadership and provide mentors when appropriate.
3. Eliminate the mortgage.
4. Become a more diverse congregation.

In March, the task force will interview key leaders in greater Mankato, asking what are the most important needs in our community, and how a church like Bethlehem can help meet those needs.

But before that, you are invited to a Day of Norms. Norms are the unwritten rules that every congregation lives by. Come and help us identify the unspoken as we get one step closer to a strategic vision for our church. **The Day of Norms is Sunday, February 6, at 4 p.m.** Come and join us! ~ Pr. Jay



Free meals are served from 5-6 p.m. on Wednesdays.

February 2:

Ham, scalloped potatoes, peas, side salad, dessert

February 9:

Baked chicken, wild rice blend, glazed carrots, salad, dessert

February 16:

Roast beef, mashed potatoes & gravy, corn, salad, dessert

February 23:

Spaghetti hotdish, garlic bread, green beans, salad, dessert



Thank you for the great retirement party! I appreciate your kind words and the sentiments shared with me. I am humbled by the ways you have shown your appreciation to me for my years of service at Bethlehem. I'm looking forward to sitting and singing alongside you in church.

~ Laurie Rossow



ADULT FORUM SCHEDULE 10:15AM, SUNDAYS

Jan. 30: Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Sunday: Celebration and Next Steps

Feb. 6: "Embracing Diversity: Faith, Vocation and the Promise of America"

Feb. 13: Partners for Housing

Feb. 20: Call Committee Call Process Update

Feb. 27: Greater Mankato United Way

Monthly Mission

NOTES FROM COMMUNITY & GLOBAL MISSIONS BOARD

Our February 2022 mission is **Partners for Housing**. P4H believes it is essential that affordable housing and temporary shelter be available to those in need. The public interest is best served when all citizens have the opportunity to properly house themselves and their families in comfort and safety, and the cost of housing should not disproportionately deplete the already stretched finances of the poor and homeless. Deep-rooted in the community for over 30 years, Partners for Housing is seasoned in serving the housing needs for vulnerable populations. The organization owns and operates a number of site housing facilities that provide different housing options. In addition to their emergency shelters – Theresa House, Union Street Place, and Welcome Inn – they provide transitional and permanent affordable housing options to homeless and/or at-risk individuals and families in the Mankato area.

GET INVOLVED! Pedal Past Poverty is the signature fundraiser for P4H and will take place on Saturday February 26, 2022. There's time to get involved through volunteering or forming a team. Visit their website at partnersforhousing.org.

Call Committee

From the Call Committee:

Currently in Self Study Process. We are compiling notes from Listening Sessions and the Day of Remembering, thanks to the Strategic Planning Committee. Preparations in process to begin identifying our congregational identity, mission, and skills needed in our next pastor.

The congregation is invited to join us when we host the **Adult Forum on February 20**. Stay tuned for an upcoming survey to contribute your input. We welcome your prayers throughout the call process.



Come to the Day of Norms! (No, not that Norm!)

How does Bethlehem do what we do? What are the unwritten and unspoken rules, or norms, that we live by? **On Sunday, February 6, from 4-6 p.m.**, we will gather in the lower level dining room to discuss Bethlehem's norms in our life together as part of our strategic planning process. It will be fun, informational, and helpful in guiding our goals and aspirations for the next

four years. There will be treats and child care provided. Come and join us in shaping Bethlehem's future!



LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS to provide and serve food to our students at Minnesota State University-Mankato through Campus Ministries **Lunch for a Buck** program. We are committed to providing a meal and serving on the first Tuesday of every month from February through May. If you are interested in providing a hot meal, side dish, and dessert, please contact Sandra Abild at 507-382-6867.

Council Corner

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING

Here are the “highlights” of the Bethlehem Council meeting held on **January 18**. Meeting minutes with details are posted at www.blcmankato.org and are also available in the church office notebook. Visit with Council members with questions and concerns! We welcome your conversation & feedback!

Financial Report: December 31 general fund balance to end the fiscal year was a **positive** \$2,000+ pending final adjustments. Healthy generosity resulted in a major improvement over the 11/30 **deficit** of **-\$12,256**.

Flags in the Sanctuary Conversation: Join us on **Sunday, January 23 at 10:15 a.m.** for a congregational conversation on the appropriate role of placement of flags in our sanctuary. Rachel Maccabee, Gustavus Adolphus Counseling Center staff member with expertise in mediation and facilitation, will guide the conversation. Come, listen and be heard!

Day of Norms: The strategic planning process continues with this event on **February 6** at 4-6 p.m. Join other members to help identify what norms and values underlie decision making and activities at Bethlehem. Appetizers and socializing will be offered prior to the conversation. Help to shape the goals of the new 5-year strategic plan with your reflections.

Call Committee: The draft of the Ministry Site Profile will be shared with the congregation at a 10:45 forum on **February 20**. This is an essential step in the call process in identifying who we are as a church for the synod and candidates for our associate pastor position. You can also contribute your pastoral priorities by completing a survey during this forum.

Family Faith Formation Director Sabbatical Leave: The first-ever sabbatical leave for our FFF director was approved on the recommendation of the Personnel Committee. Anna Wencil plans to rest, travel, and recharge during the 6 weeks from April 11-May 23. A plan is being developed with the pastors, Children's & Youth Boards, and other BLC staff to cover her responsibilities during this time.

Lay Staff Compensation Framework: The BLC Personnel Committee will initiate a lengthy study of compensation resources to develop a framework for salaries & benefits for our lay staff.

LSS Meals on Wheels: LSS has contacted Bethlehem about serving as a future site for meal preparation and packaging. The Council expressed interest in this new partnership and will pursue further discussions to identify operating details before a final commitment is made.

Building Safety Protocols: Mankato public safety representatives will be invited to meet with BLC leadership to review and update our facility safety protocols.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, February 15.

Financial Report

NOTES FROM ELIZABETH RUIZ, FINANCIAL SECRETARY

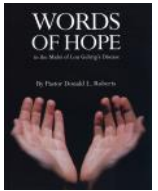
Contribution Reports

Year-end contribution reports were sent out by e-mail mid-January. There have been some technical difficulties, so if you think there may be an error on your report, please report it. If you need a printed copy of your report, please request one. Any questions can be addressed to Elizabeth in the church office at 388-2925 or by e-mail at elizruiz@blcmankato.org.



Pastor Don's Devotion

Pastor Don Roberts served as pastor from 1989-1996. He was diagnosed with ALS in 1995, and continues to be an inspiration of life & faith to our congregation.



...you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. ~ Colossians 3:3,4

We have died in Christ. This happens in baptism. As we grow in faith, we realize this. We still sin, but we are dead in Christ. We all have talents. Author Bob Goff tells us to not only believe, but to participate with our talents. Let's use our talents to show the love of Christ and his grace. As we die with Christ, we are alive with him.

There are two kinds of people in the world —those who believe in the risen Christ, and those who do not. In daily life, we meet those who do not believe in the risen Christ. Treat them like Christ, who loves them. Love them like Christ. Listen to them, and love them. Show them the grace that the risen Christ has shown you. Jesus loves the unbelievers as well as believers. To prove it, he died for all humanity. On the third day, he rose again. When he comes again, he will reveal us in glory. I like to think he will reveal all humanity in glory. When we die in Christ, we will live with him in glory.



FAMILY FAITH FORMATION UPDATES

Notes from Anna Wencl, Family Faith Formation Director

Save the date



MARIO KART LIVE!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH

6:30-8 PM | BLC LOWER LEVEL

for all 3rd-5th graders

Older youth needed to add fun challenges to the course!

We will create our own karts and race each other through the courses set up in the lower level hallway



Liturgies for February



February 2—John 4:1-42
Now the Feast

February 6 — John 4:46-54
ELW #6

February 9 — John 4:46-54
Service of the Word



February 13 — John 6:35-59
BLC Praise Band

February 16 — John 6:35-59
Praise with Joe & Missy



February 20 — John 7:37-52
Gather

February 23 — John 7:37-52
Holden



February 27 — John 9:1-41
ELW #8

FAT TUESDAY

DINNER & ONLINE SILENT AUCTION

MARCH 1ST, 2022

TICKETS ON SALE AT BLCMANKATO.ORG/YOUTH FOR IN-PERSON DINNER OR MEAL PICK-UP UNTIL SUNDAY, FEB. 20TH.

AUCTION ITEMS CAN BE DROPPED OFF IN THE MAIN OFFICE BY SUNDAY, FEB. 13TH. ONLINE AUCTION OPEN FEBRUARY 20TH-27TH IN BLC FAMILY & FRIENDS FB GROUP



Bethlehem offers taxi service for members who are not able to drive themselves to and from church. Rides are available for Sunday worship services only. Please call WS one day before and tell them that it is for Bethlehem Lutheran Church. You will be asked to sign a voucher, and the church will be billed.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
720 South Second Street
Mankato, MN 56001

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

(507) 388-2925
blchurch@blcmankato.org



*A Reconciling in Christ
Congregation*

Pastor Jay Dahlvang: (507) 469-3792
pastorjay@blcmankato.org

Pastor Kristen Venne: (507) 995-2467
pastorkristen@blcmankato.org



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Church Calendar-Winter 2022				
WORSHIP TIMES Sunday, 9:30am Wednesday, 6:15pm Sanctuary & Online ONLINE SERVICE WILL BE STREAMED LIVE ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE & PLAYED ON KTOE RADIO AT 11AM.	EDUCATION Sunday, 10:45am • Adult Forum • LIGHT (preK-4th) Wednesday, 7pm • NightLIGHT (preK-4th) • TorchLIGHT (5th-6th) • Confirmation (7th-9th)	BIBLE STUDY Tuesday, 7:00am • Lectionary, online Wednesday, 10:30am • Book of Faith, guided study Facebook Devo w/ Pastors, varies • Online Group	SMALL GROUPS (BOOK CLUBS, MUSIC, SOCIAL GROUPS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES, ETC.) Check full calendar for times/places.	FELLOWSHIP WITH FOOD Sunday, 10:30am • Coffee & treats after worship Wednesday, 5pm • FREE Community Meal until 6:15pm • Give as you're able • Menu on website

All Calendar details can be found on the website at blcmankato.org/calendar.



There will be a come-and-go benefit and silent auction for **Dave Brave Heart on Saturday, February 19, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.** at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 937 Charles Avenue, Mankato. Recently diagnosed with ALS, the support of family, friends, and community are important as he navigates and manages this illness. Funds will help make the Brave Heart home handicap accessible and also purchase a handicap accessible van. Ten percent of the proceeds will be donated to the ALS Association. For more information, see "A Message from our friend Dave Brave Heart" on our website under *News & Updates*.