



Christ Is Risen

Without Easter there is no church. Paul said if Christ is not raised from the dead, we are people most to be pitied. Because of the gift of faith, we gather each week to proclaim that God has conquered sin and death in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We gather each week to receive him in bread and wine, for us and for our salvation. Christ is risen!

To worship on Easter Sunday alone is like reading only the last chapter of a book, or viewing only the final thirty minutes of a movie. There is a tenderness towards his disciples that Jesus displays on what we now celebrate as Maundy Thursday. There is violence and tragedy and suffering love on the day of Good Friday, with a hint of how God redeems all of these. **We will worship at 6:15 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, and 9:30 a.m. on Easter Sunday.** Come and worship the God who has done great things for us.

Flags

I am thankful for your prayers, passion, and engagement as we have discussed how we would display flags in the church. After much consideration, the council reached a consensus to give the American flag a more prominent, visible location at the entrance to the sanctuary, and to add a Diversity and Inclusion flag as well. There will be short narratives displayed with each flag, describing our shared values and commitments. We have posted a copy of the new display on the website and will set a day of dedication in the coming weeks.

Capital Campaign

The Council is excited to present to the semi-annual meeting a proposal to vote to hire GSB to lead us in a capital campaign this fall. We believe that under GSB's leadership, we will be able to eliminate the mortgage over the next three years, freeing resources for new and innovative ways to serve Christ, and the world he loves and has saved. A more detailed proposal summarizing GSB and our capital campaign proposal is available on the website.

New Missionary Sponsor

The Council voted to begin a new sponsorship relationship with Pastor Kristin Engstrom. Pastor Engstrom is an ELCA Global Missionary with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia, serving as Facilitator of Leadership Development and Capacity Building. Pastor Kristin served and supported Bethlehem as interim during my sabbatical, and along with her parents Tom and Linda, she continues to have her membership at Bethlehem. Sponsorship means we will pray for Pastor Kristin, build up our relationship with her and the people she serves, and support her work financially. The Endowment has offered \$2000 to support Pastor Kristin's work.

Strategic Plan

The council and strategic planning team meets in April to finalize a list of strategic planning goals to be presented to you. We invite your prayers as we discern together the Spirit's movement in and through Bethlehem.

~ Pr. Jay



Free meals are served from 5-6:15 p.m. on Wednesdays.

April 6:

Roast beef, mashed potatoes & gravy, corn

April 13:

No meal (Holy Week)

April 20:

Sloppy joes, potato salad, chips

April 27:

Pork roast, scalloped potatoes, mixed veggies

Menus subject to change.



ADULT FORUM SCHEDULE 10:45AM, SUNDAYS



Mar. 27: Global Health Ministries with Community & Global Missions Board

Apr. 3: Semi-Annual Meeting Preview/Q&A with Council

Apr. 10: Semi-Annual Meeting in Dining Room w/ coffee

Apr. 17: Easter (NO FORUM)

Apr. 24: Green Gustavus-Green Bethlehem: Promoting Sustainability



Due to the uncertainty of the coronavirus, we will not be taking Easter flower orders this year, but we still want to make the sanctuary beautiful for Easter. If you would like to contribute money towards the Easter flower garden "in memory of" or "in honor of" someone, we would appreciate it! **The deadline for that information is Tuesday, April 12; forms will be on the kiosk, or you can e-mail Christine at cschulz@blcmankato.org.** After the Easter service, one flower will be available on a first-come basis to those who contributed. The money left over will go towards landscaping. **Thank you – Music & Worship Board**

Bethlehem's April mission is **Global Health Ministries**. GHM focuses on strengthening health systems on a global scale with donations of newborn kits, hospice kits, medical equipment, quilts, and monetary donations. Bethlehem has been a great supporter of this mission for years, and many opportunities for involvement exist. Visit www.ghm.org for more information on how to assemble kits and how to get involved. In 2021, we raised \$5,459, so we set our goal for 2022 at \$6,000.



Scholarships Available!

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AND UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS:

The Endowment Board looks forward to presenting scholarships from the Endowment Fund to Bethlehem's college students. The application form is available online at blcmankato.org/scholarship. Call the office if you prefer a paper copy. Be sure to read and follow all directions to avoid follow-up phone calls and e-mails. Applicants must be Bethlehem members. Scholarships are awarded for a maximum of five years during undergraduate studies.

Completed applications must be received by May 1. This is a firm date ~ no exceptions!



The Call Committee met on March 6 after church for a writing session with edits and rewrites galore. Our Ministry Site Profile (MSP) is shaping up well. We continue to digest feedback from the strategic planning sessions and the recent survey to incorporate into the MSP.

We met on Sunday, March 20, after church for another writing session. We will be close to having our MSP complete and will be prepared to present at the Town Hall Meeting on May 15. A final review will be held by the council at the May 17 council meeting.

The financial situation at Bethlehem is in a very good place. January ended with a small deficit of \$440. February ended with a small surplus of \$601. Member giving has been strong. Expenses are within budget. A full recap for 2021 will be available in the annual report. If you need a giving report for 2021 or giving envelopes for 2022, please contact Elizabeth in the church office or by e-mail at elizruiz@blcmankato.org.

Commit to Growing Your Marriage!

Are you looking for an opportunity to strengthen the role of Christ in your marriage? Are you looking for tools and resources to help nourish your relationship? Are you looking to connect with other couples who are determined to always make their marriage the priority? Join us for a monthly couple's gathering, at which we'll enjoy conversation revolving around marriage along with great fellowship with peers. If you're interested, please e-mail nataliejcasper@gmail.com or call the church at 507-388-2925.

Here are the "highlights" of the Bethlehem Council meeting held on **March 15**. 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: February 28 general fund balance finished at **+\$601.16**. Multiple large annual gifts totaling \$20,000 received and will be spread out as income over next 10 months. Mortgage principal balance is **\$1,121,310.13** with scheduled monthly payments of \$8,187. **Capital Campaign:** Recommends the GBS company to coordinate planned capital campaign this year for mortgage elimination. To be approved at April 10 semi-annual meeting. **Flags in the Church:** By unanimous vote, approved placement of U.S. flag & Diversity & Inclusion flag outside main door of sanctuary with posted explanatory information. **BLC COVID Plan Update:** Mask wearing now optional based on latest CDC guidelines using current area medical data. Plans for reinstatement of communion & offering being developed. **Synod Assembly:** Jason Bruns, Bob Ihrig & Marian Mallory approved as BLC delegates to May 7 assembly in Mankato. Synod still needs local volunteers to facilitate assembly activities. Contact Emily Heinis in office for details. We need YOU to serve the synod! **Call Committee:** Ministry Site Profile being finalized for use in identifying BLC priorities for new associate pastor. Plan on attending **May 15 Town Hall** after worship service to hear more. **Strategic Planning:** Outcomes of community leader interviews discussed with goals developed. Committee will meet with Council on April 4 to review all drafted goals and decide on top priorities to constitute next 5-year plan. **Missionary Sponsorship:** Approved BLC sponsorship of Pr. Kristin Engstrom as missionary in Zambia. Endowment Board approved \$2,000 this year as financial support. Prayers for her are encouraged as she coordinates God's work with young church workers & local populations. **Family Faith Formation Director Sabbatical Leave:** Anna Wencl finalizing plans for April 11-May 23 sabbatical leave for rest & renewal. Sending ceremony planned for April 10 worship service with welcoming activities planned for May 29. **Building Safety Meeting:** Mankato public safety representatives will present information & recommendations for enhanced building safety procedures. Meeting scheduled for **Wednesday, March 30** from 3-4:30 p.m. BLC staff, ushers, Council members & interested members invited. **Finance & Personnel Committee Members:** Mark Woelfel & Bob Ihrig approved for new 3-year terms on Finance & Personnel committees respectively. **Nominations:** Nominations process for Council, board & committee members is progressing. Still need to fill 12 positions. Contact Bob Ihrig if interested in serving the church. **BLC Semi-Annual Meeting:** Agenda approved for April 10 semi-annual meeting at 10:45 a.m. Quorum of 75 members required to conduct official business. Come one, come all! **Next Council Meeting:** Tuesday, April 19.

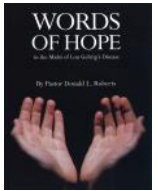
The Adult Forum speaker on **May 1** will be Jacy Fry, Director of the Kearney International Center (KIC) at MSU-Mankato. Currently, MSU has over 1,280 international students from 96 countries. The KIC has 11 full-time staff and over 30 student employees working hard to recruit more students and support the ones currently enrolled. Due to the global pandemic, the KIC resorted to all virtual/online recruitment activities since March of 2020. Applications have increased by over 100%, showing that international students are still very interested in coming to the U.S. for their studies. "Africa Night" will be one of KIC's first in-person events at 6 p.m. on April 9.





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.



He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ~ I Peter 2:24

We often feel guilty. We often feel we are not good enough to be accepted by God. Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross. He loved us very much to do this. We are free from guilt, and we are accepted by God. Whatever we may suffer in this life, Jesus bore it on the cross. Our suffering is his suffering. We are free to look for Jesus in the life to come. Whatever we may suffer in this life, Jesus promises us a better future together in heaven with him. **Thanks be to God!**

Righteousness means a lot to us. Righteousness does not mean working hard enough to be accepted by God. Micah 6:8 says, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Righteousness means behaving toward others with justice and mercy, and living in right relationship with God. We do righteousness because Jesus bore our sins on the cross. **Thanks be to God!**

YOUTH DATES *Spring is almost here!*

- March 2-April 6: 7th- & 8th-grade youth meet with mentors during Confirmation; 9th grade attend worship
- April 20 & 27: Torchlight & Confirmation return on Wednesdays
- May 1: Confirmation Sunday for 9th graders
- May 4: Finale for NightLIGHT, Torchlight, and Confirmation



Let's Get Ready for Palm Sunday!

Learn Stories & Practice Leading Worship During Lent

LIGHT (Sundays at 10:45 am)

March 20th & 27th | Rehearsal: April 3rd



NightLIGHT & Torchlight (Weds. at 7 pm)

March 16th, 23rd, & 30th | Rehearsal: April 7th



Worship led by Children & Youth
Palm Sunday, April 10th

Kids & Youth Arrive at 9 am | Worship at 9:30 am

LIGHT & NIGHTLIGHT



Spring Dates

- April 17: No LIGHT for Easter
- April 20 & 27: NightLIGHT
- April 24: LIGHT
- May 1: Outdoor LIGHT Finale
- May 4: Outdoor worship & NightLIGHT Finale

VBS

Registration opens in April!

Two Options:

- 12-4pm: Off-Site Adventure Camp (Current 3rd-6th Grade Only) and/or
- 6:30-7:30 pm: On-Site VBS (Current 3yo - 6th Grade)



JUNE 20-23

JOIN US FOR HOLY WEEK

April 10-17, 2022

Maunder Thursday

6:15p Worship

Good Friday

6:15p Worship

Easter Sunday

9:30a Worship

Palm Sunday

9:30a Worship

All worship services in sanctuary & online.

No noon services this year.

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



@bethlehem.mankato

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Church Calendar-Spring 2022				
WORSHIP TIMES Sunday, 9:30am Wednesday, 6:15pm <i>Sanctuary & Online</i> ONLINE SERVICE WILL BE STREAMED LIVE ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE & PLAYED ON KTQE 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	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.

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
newsletter articles is the 15th
of each month.**

New Member Class
HAVE YOU BEEN VISITING AND THINK YOU ARE
READY TO BECOME A MEMBER? THIS CLASS IS
FOR YOU!

**CONTACT PR.
JAY OR THE
OFFICE IF YOU
WANT TO
ATTEND**

Sunday, March 27
10:45- Orientation w/Pr. Jay in the Heritage Rm

Sunday, April 3
10:45- Tour of the building with Welcome &
Inclusion Board (meet in Narthex)

Sunday, April 10
Welcome in Worship! Join us at 9:30.



**a lot can happen in
3 days**

