



As I sit down to write this I am preparing to go visit my parents up in the Cities for our annual ritual of dyeing Easter eggs (although this year we may have to do a few less than past years). It is another reminder to me that Easter and spring are indeed coming. Especially this year with all of the snow, it is a needed reminder to have hope that warmer weather is on its way eventually.

That is one of the things that I like about the Easter season. It is a season of hope. It is a season that reminds us of hope and encourages us to seek hope. Whether that is hope for warmer weather on the horizon, or hope for change in the world, or hope for a specific circumstance you are experiencing, Easter is all about hope. We reflect on the resurrection and new life brought into the world by Jesus, and it reminds us to look for new life in our midst. Where do we see God bringing new life to us?

So I invite you to look around and see where you see hope and new life forming around you. Where do you see Easter in the world? What brings you hope that God is at work bringing God's kingdom to us all?

I see it not just in the changing seasons, but in many other places. I see hope when I see people offering care for one another in their community or in this congregation. I see hope every week in this place as the congregation and community come together to share a meal on Wednesday nights. I see hope in all the ways that care and compassion have been offered to me since I have been here. That is where I see hope and know that God's love is strong enough to take on anything!

I pray that you can find hope and see ways that God brings new life into the world. May this Easter season fill you with hope in your life and for the world! ~ **Pr. Jacie**



**Palm Sunday ~ led by the Bethlehem children**

April 2 at 9:30 a.m.

**Maundy Thursday ~ with foot washing and holy communion**

April 6 at 6:15 p.m.

**Good Friday ~ Seven Last Words of Christ**

*with Bethlehem's called and member pastors*

April 7 at noon

**Good Friday ~ worship with special music**

April 7 at 6:15 p.m.

**Festival Service celebrating the Resurrection of Our Lord**

April 9 at 9:30 a.m.



**Join Us For  
Wednesday Night Suppers!**

JD Truffles Catering will prepare a variety of delicious weekly meals, and Bethlehem volunteers will greet and serve you. **All are welcome! Join us between 5:00 and 6:15 p.m.**

**April 5**

**NO SUPPER ~ HOLY WEEK**

**April 12**

Hot beef with bun, chips,  
& potato salad

**April 19**

Taco buffet, rice, & beans

**April 26**

Sloppy joe with chips  
& cold pasta salad

**Free will donations are welcomed  
to cover supper expenses.**

**We need radio broadcast  
sponsors for 2023!  
Please call, e-mail, or stop by  
the office to sign up.**





## Monthly Mission



Notes from the Community & Global Missions Board

Sometimes God's blessings come tumbling through the front door at 3 a.m., and at other times they arrive in the smallest of packages, expressed in a kiss from a sweet two year old. So it is with the Ariac and Andrea Cruz family. Over the next week, you will have the chance to meet this remarkable family, a family whose journey here required the attributes of bravery, strength, and resiliency.

Sponsored by the newly formed WELCOME Team, a partnership of five Lutheran churches here in Mankato, this Nicaraguan family arrived in the early morning hours just one week before Christmas. Much has happened in the last three months. Randy, age seven, has started school and cannot wait to jump out of the car every morning! He has a strong circle of friends and is easily picking up the English language. Both Ariac and Andrea are also attending school, striving to learn the English language. There has been a flurry of applications completed for supportive services such as ECHO food, medical assistance, and more. Most importantly, the Cruz family has secured an apartment of their own, moving in just one week ago. These are exciting times, and God's bountiful blessings cannot be ignored.

On Sunday, March 26, you will have the opportunity to meet Ariac and Andria Cruz and their two boys, Kamil and Randy. You will also learn how you can support them in their dreams of becoming American citizens.

### ALS Walk—Spring is here!

**Come and join the Bethlehem Gait Keepers to honor Pastor Don and in memory of Jon Nelson.**

**Save the day: Saturday, April 29**

**Place: Spring Lake Park, 650 Webster Avenue, North Mankato**

**Check-in time: 8:30 a.m.**

**Walk: 10:00 a.m. (the distance is approximately 1.5 miles)**



Can't join us that day? Please donate online at [als.org](http://als.org), or forms are available in the narthex by the poster.



### 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](http://blcmankato.org/scholarship). If you prefer a paper copy, they will be on the counter outside of the church office. 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!** If you have questions, please call Chuck Piehl at (507) 351-5926.



Dear members of BLC ~ I can't thank you enough for the cards, texts, e-mails, phone calls, and prayers to support me with my recent diagnosis. Your kind words and actions truly show what a caring community this church is and continues to be. I am truly blessed.

Many thanks. ~ **Carol Peterson**



## Council Corner



Highlights from the Monthly Council Meeting

Here are the "highlights" of the Bethlehem Council meeting held on **March 21**. Meeting minutes with more details are posted at [www.blcmankato.org](http://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 giving was \$24,832 compared to budgeted giving of \$40,400. Ouch! Year-to-date giving now at 86% of budget. Major gift of \$20,000 received to meet BLC needs. Thank you! Heating & snow removal costs up in our cold and snowy winter. Mortgage balance now at **\$844,347** with another significant advance payment on the principal planned for end of March.

**Synod Assembly Delegates:** Mary Bliesmer & Amy Haigh will represent Bethlehem at the SE MN Synod Assembly scheduled for Saturday, May 6 at Mayo Clinic Event Center in Mankato.

**Connections Shelter Meals:** \$400 approved to cover costs of March Bethlehem meals for shelter.

**WELCOME:** Sponsored Cruz family from Nicaragua to worship with us on March 26. April monthly mission designated toward fundraising to cover family living costs.

**New Member:** Peggy Schultz approved as new BLC member. Welcome to Bethlehem!

**Personnel Committee:** Positive performance reviews held with weekend janitors Alexa Bolstad, Grayson Bolstad, Kellen Schaefer & nursery attendant Marci Rossow. New job description for nursery position & revised checklist of janitor duties approved. Performance review for Wednesday night supper coordinator Amy Haigh planned for April.

**Financial Review Committee:** BLC financial review policy updated & approved. Standardized report form for future annual BLC financial reviews to be presented at April meeting.

**Legacy Giving Mailing:** Stewardship legacy giving "Dream Projects" updated & approved for March mailing to BLC members. This is an opportunity to designate a future legacy gift to continue the mission & ministry of Bethlehem. Check your mailboxes this month for news.

**Councils as Leaders:** Pastors Jay & Jacie traveled with Council members Matt Drewitz & Bob Ihrig to March 19 synod gathering for Council leaders in Albert Lea. This was an opportunity to learn and share ideas & information with other church Councils and the synod office.

**BLC Council/Boards/Committees:** BLC members encouraged to volunteer to serve on Council & boards/committees effective June 1. Contact **Bob Ihrig** at [robert.ihrig1@gmail.com](mailto:robert.ihrig1@gmail.com) for details.

**April 23 Semi-Annual Meeting:** Plan on attending the semi-annual meeting on Sunday, April 23 after worship. Adult forum is planned on April 16 to preview approved agenda. Vote for new Council/board/committee members & hear of 2022-23 activities & accomplishments at Bethlehem.

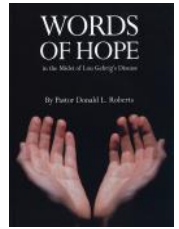
**Next Council Meeting:** Tuesday, April 18.

**The family of Robert (Bob) Kulseth** sends a big "thank you" to Bob's church family for their friendship to Bob and your well wishes, flowers, and memorials at his passing. Special thanks to Pastor Jay for his talented speaking and all the comfort he brought to all of us. ~ **The Kulseth Family**



## 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.*



***Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ~ 1 Timothy 6:12***

*"Fight the good fight of the faith."* This was important for the 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians when they were persecuted for their faith. It is also important to us. We have many challenges for our faith today. We have disease, illness, and many other problems in our lives. Also, today religion is private. That makes it difficult to share our faith. But

there is good news. When Jesus died on the cross, he was as dead as anyone in the cemetery. He suffered on the cross all that we suffer in this life. Your death, he died. On the third day, he rose again. No matter what we suffer in this life, he promises us a resurrection on the last day. Whatever we experience in this life, he promises a glorious future ahead.

*"Fight the good fight of the faith."* When someone shares a spiritual problem with you, share the hope you have in the risen Christ. When someone moves into your neighborhood, invite them to church. Also, listen to people. *Fight the good fight.*



## Family Faith Formation Updates

**Anna Wencl, Family Faith Formation Director**



Seven 4th graders and their families made communion bread and prepared to celebrate communion during Palm Sunday or Maundy Thursday worship.

**WE'RE  
READY  
FOR  
HOLY  
WEEK!**



Our Torchlight youth and NightLIGHT and LIGHT kids are preparing to lead worship on Palm Sunday! Join us for this special Sunday filled with music, storytelling, and celebration.

Join us for **VBS!** July 24-27  
Evenings with Dinner

Open to the community. All 3-year-old through 6th grade youth are invited!

*Save the Dates!* Family Faith Formation

- MAY 7** Confirmation Sunday & Cinnamon Roll Camp Fundraiser
- MAY 7 & 10** Last Sunday & Wednesday for Kids' & Youth Education
- MAY 22** Graduating Senior Recognition in Worship
- JULY 10-12** Service & Sun, 9am - 5 pm  
6th-9th Grade
- JULY 24-27** VBS, Youth & Adult Volunteers Needed
- AUGUST 9** Valleyfair Day, 6th-12th Grade



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 Jacie Richmond: (612) 581-8855  
pastorjacie@blcmankato.org



@bethlehem.mankato

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## **Church Calendar** **Spring 2023**



### **Worship**

**Sunday, 9:30 a.m.**  
*in sanctuary & online*

**Wednesday, 6:15 p.m.**

Our Sunday service is  
streamed live on  
Facebook & YouTube  
and broadcast  
on KTOE Radio  
at 11 a.m.

### **Education**

Please check Family  
Faith Formation on  
our website for details  
about children's/  
youth activities.

See the Adult Forum  
schedule on page 2.

### **Adult Bible Study**

**Tuesday, 7 a.m.**  
**Lectionary online**

**Wednesday at  
10:30 a.m. in  
Grounds for Joy**

### **Small Groups**

Music rehearsals,  
book clubs,  
social groups,  
boards/  
committees, etc.

Please check online  
calendar for times  
& places.

### **Fellowship With Food**

**Sunday, 10:30 a.m.**  
Join us for  
coffee & treats  
in Grounds for Joy  
after worship.

**Wednesday Night  
Suppers** are served  
from 5-6:15 p.m.

*All calendar details can be found on our website at [blcmankato.org/calendar](http://blcmankato.org/calendar).*



### **Adult Forum Schedule** **10:45 a.m.** **In Grounds for Joy** **(unless otherwise noted)**

**April 2:** Hymn sing In the sanctuary

**April 9:** Easter Sunday ~ **NO FORUM**

**April 16:** Semi-Annual Meeting Preview

**April 23:** Semi-Annual Meeting  
In the dining room

**April 30:** **NO FORUM**



We will be having an Easter flower garden in the sanctuary again this year! A monetary donation for the garden would be appreciated.

There are forms on the kiosk for you to fill out and indicate if your donation is "in memory of" or "in honor of" someone. Forms are also available online.

**Deadline for information is  
Tuesday, April 4.**