



Bethlehem—A Compassionate Community

Bethlehem has joined the **NicBlueCares Compassionate Community**. NicBlueCares is part of a worldwide movement called Compassionate Communities. Nicollet and Blue Earth County residents are committing to building a safety net of community support and strengthening our compassion and capacity to care for one another in crisis or loss. (You can learn more at nicbluecares.com.) We have joined with other churches and organizations like Mankato Public Safety and MSU Mankato and shared how we serve as part of the compassionate charter. Below is our compassionate charter:

Bethlehem Lutheran is intentional and committed to living out a compassionate presence for our members and for the community.

Support for those who are grieving:

- Pastors and the Care Ministry Team visit before, during, and after the death.
- A prayer shawl is given to the dying and/or grieving.
- The pastors and staff offer assistance in planning a funeral or memorial service.
- Pastors offer referrals to grief support groups and resources.
- Church members who have died are remembered and honored at worship on All Saints Sunday.
- Gifts of food are informally presented or coordinated by congregation members.

Support for those who are lonely:

- Pastors and Care Ministry Team visit, phone, and send written notes.
- Transportation to worship is provided at no cost.
- Wednesday night suppers are free & open to congregation members & the community.
- We offer a variety of small groups at different times.

Support for those seeking community:

- We are a Reconciling in Christ Congregation, offering an intentional welcome to identities and communities that have not always been welcomed in the church.
- Greeters welcome members and visitors.
- We intentionally look for ways to integrate members into small groups for service, fellowship, learning, and fun.
- We join in the Kato Bells of Belonging, showing our support for and solidarity with those who have experienced loss.



We need radio broadcast sponsors for several Sundays in **August through December**. If you would like to sponsor a broadcast in honor of or in memory of someone, please contact the office. **Thank you!**



Thanks to Emily and Pastor Kristen!



Emily Heinis has been our Congregational Coordinator since 2019 and has brought our communication into the 21st century. Her leadership became even more critical and valued after the pandemic began. She has taken a new job at Open Door, and her family will continue to be part of the church. **Thank you, Emily!**

Pastor Kristen Venne is concluding her transitional ministry here on **July 17**. Pastor Kristen has helped especially in her work with the call committee and the strategic planning team, as well as providing worship leadership. We bless her as she continues as Pastor at Community Lutheran in Geneva, and to whatever new transitional leadership opportunity arises for her. **Thank you, Pastor Kristen!**





July's monthly mission supports the **YWCA Mankato**. This mission is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. This resonates with our church as the YWCA mission aligns with our core values of integrity, respect, trust, compassion, and inclusion. Your monetary donation will support many youth programs, family programs for our immigrant families to eliminate barriers that can negatively impact health and well-being, workshops that focus on racial justice and ways to get involved, and so much more. "Give a little today to make a big impact tomorrow." Our goal is to raise \$800 during the month of July.

This month's report contains information from both April and May. The general fund deficit at the end of April was \$3,657, and at the end of May it was \$4,703. Neither of these deficit numbers are out of range for this time of the year. Expenses are within budget. In early July, mid-year contribution reports will be sent out by e-mail. If you would like a printed copy, please let Elizabeth know by calling the church office or by e-mail at elizruiz@blcmankato.org. Please report any questions or errors as we continue to fine-tune our use of the Breeze program. Thank you.

Members and friends of the Sioux Trails American Guild of Organists Chapter will present organ recitals again this summer. Join us at 12:10 p.m. on Tuesdays for some beautiful music that will be performed by talented organists!

At Sts. Peter & Paul's Catholic Church:
 June 28 – Chad Winterfeldt
 July 5 – David Fienen
 July 12 – Grace Kunkel
 July 19 – Elisabeth Urtel

At Bethlehem Lutheran Church:
 July 26 – Craig Hirschmann
 August 2 – Kraig Windschitl
 August 9 – Christine Schulz

THE SOUL AS SOIL



Gardeners who've dealt with inhospitable conditions can relate especially well to Jesus' parable of the sower. Drought, invasive critters, and thorny weeds often seem to conspire against growers' efforts. Yet when seeds fall on "good soil," the crop yield is abundant — up to a hundred times what was sown (Matthew 13:8).

That parable emphasizes the need for hearts to be receptive to God's Word. But it's also a reminder to plant Scripture persistently. Just as soil and weather conditions change, so may someone's attitude toward following Jesus. Pastor J. Ellsworth Kalas writes, "Whenever we serve as witnesses to the faith, we must do so with all earnestness, because one doesn't know the season in which the soul currently abides. That uninterested, distracted, or unresponsive person may be nearer the Kingdom than we — or they — realize." Kalas adds, "We dare not give up on anyone at any time — including ourselves."

From the Call Committee



We are excited to be in the interviewing phase in our search for an Associate Pastor. When we feel we have a candidate that is a good fit for our congregation and its ministry focus, the church council will announce a special meeting for Bethlehem members to vote on whether to extend a call to that candidate. We hope you will attend, learn about the candidate, and be part of the process.

We extend special thanks to Pastor Kristen for her guidance in the development of our Ministry Site Profile prior to the interview phase.

Hooray for VBS!



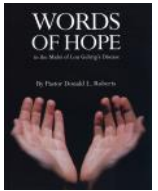
For many churches, vacation Bible school is a summer highlight. The event leads to lasting memories and changed hearts. It also sparks laughter. Maybe you've seen VBS humor online, such as the quote, "You know you're obsessed with VBS when you're excited about a piece of cardboard on the side of the road."

For hungry young learners, snacks make an especially big impression. One excited preschooler shared that she enjoyed "juice and Billy Graham crackers" at VBS. Another boy raved about the first day, saying, "We heard stories and drew pictures. Then we went out to play, and when we came inside, God had juice and cookies waiting for us!"



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.



And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age.' ~ Matthew 28:18-20

We sometimes doubt Jesus' promise to be all authority on earth. We see wars, disease, and starvation. These are not God's will. In the early days of shipping we had lighthouses. Jesus is our lighthouse in tough times. The light overcomes the darkness. Jesus is indeed the authority on earth.

The risen Christ is giving us a mission statement to make disciples of all nations and baptizing them. He also said to keep his command, which includes loving God with all our hearts, souls, and minds and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We can't love our neighbors unless we love ourselves. Sometimes that gets a little tricky. Jesus loved us so much that he died for us to forgive our sins. If Jesus loved us so much, why can't we love ourselves?

Jesus said he would be with us to the end, to the end of the age. That means he is with us when we fight a disease, when we are in the checkout line, or when we are in stress. The risen Christ is with us always.



We're so grateful for a wonderful week of VBS! Our theme was boundless and our kids and youth discovered all the ways God's love for us is boundless. We're especially grateful to the staff from Green Lake for leading and to all of our awesome volunteers who stepped up to serve dinner, decorate, and fill in when Covid-19 got in the way of our plans. We truly couldn't have done it without a team effort.



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*A Reconciling in Christ
Congregation*

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Church Calendar-Summer 2022				
WORSHIP Sunday, 9:30am <i>In sanctuary & online</i> ONLINE SERVICE WILL BE STREAMED LIVE ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE & PLAYED ON KTOE RADIO AT 11AM. <i>Wednesday Worship will return in the fall.</i>	EDUCATION PreK- Confirmation & Adult Forums resume in the fall <i>(See previous page for VBS and camp info.)</i>	BIBLE STUDY Tuesday, 7:00am • Lectionary, online Other studies will resume in the fall.	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 <i>(Wed. meals resume in the fall.)</i>

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.*

Radio Updates:

*The Twins baseball schedule will
preempt our radio broadcast on
the following dates this season:*

- June 5
- July 24
- September 18
- October 2

On these days, the worship service will play at 5pm instead of 11am.