



The Bethlehem STAR



September 2022

Call Extended

Thank you to all who came together, prayed, discerned, and finally voted to call a new associate pastor to Bethlehem. Because she has not announced her resignation, we are keeping the name out of our online publications. She has 30 days to reply to our call, and you will know as soon as we do of her response! Please keep up your prayers, as she too prays and discerns.

Small Groups for Adults

Part of my call to you is to play with the adults! We have many opportunities for learning, service, and just plain fun, some new, and some we have been doing for years. Here are some of the groups that I am part of (and a few I am not). You are invited!

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We are forming a new group on a familiar idea. We will match up three BLC couples/individuals, and you set up three different get-togethers over a meal, hosted by each member of the group one time. We ask that your three eat and meets happen before January 1, and we will pair you up with a new group after the holidays. Sign up by going online, or calling the office, **by September 15**, and we will match you with dining partners. You are invited to submit a name for our new group! The top entry will be selected by the staff at their September 14 staff meeting. The winning entry will receive a \$10 gift card to the Coffee Hag.

BLC Men

The mission of our BLC Men's Group is to grow closer to God as we grow closer to one another. We will begin again on **Monday, September 12**, with grilling and a get-together at Derek Brown's home. RSVP to pastorjay@blcmankato.org for more information. Other BLC Men's Fall Events include:

- October 4:** Serving Lunch for a Buck at Crossroads Lutheran Campus Ministry
- November 12:** Rake the Town intergenerational activity with our Bethlehem Youth
- December 1:** 3rd Annual BLC Men's Bowling Championship

Book of Faith

Our Book of Faith group together opens Scripture and joins in conversation. **We meet each Wednesday morning at 10:30 a.m. in Grounds for Joy**, and our study this fall will be Jeremiah/Lamentations. Cost of the 8-session book is \$12.

Life in the Spirit

Life in the Spirit is a long-standing Bethlehem group meeting monthly to learn and develop classic Christian practices like contemplative prayer. **We meet every second Thursday at 6:30 p.m.**

Tuesday Morning Lectionary Study

Each week a group of Bethlehem members and friends gathers online to study and discuss the coming week's preaching text. Contact the office for an invitation to become involved.

Thanks!

I am most grateful for the kindness you extended to me as we celebrated the 25th anniversary of my ordination. Thanks for the wonderful party, and for the gift to Chanhassen. I am honored and blessed to be your pastor and appreciate you, and all God is doing in you and through you. ~ Pr. Jay



We need radio broadcast sponsors for several Sundays until the end of the year.

The broadcasts are important to our members who are not able to attend worship in person. If you would like to sponsor a broadcast in honor of or in memory of someone — or just because! — please contact the office.

Thank you!



Wednesday Night Supper

Join Us For Supper!
Wednesday Night Suppers are back at Bethlehem! Our own Amy Haigh has assumed supper planning and coordination; JD Truffles Catering will prepare a variety of delicious weekly meals; and Bethlehem volunteers will greet and serve you. Connect and converse with fellow members and community residents. **All are welcome!** It doesn't get any better than this!

The September offerings are:

- Wednesday, September 14:** Hamburger/cheeseburger & fries, dessert, beverages
- Wednesday, September 21:** Chicken Alfredo, salad, garlic toast, dessert, beverages
- Wednesday, September 28:** Hamburger goulash, roll, salad, garlic toast, dessert, beverages

Free will donations are welcomed to cover supper expenses.



BLC children, youth & families:

The whole congregation is invited to join us for *God's Work, Our Hands* on **September 11 & 14** as we reconnect with our church family and celebrate with worship, service, food, and fun.

Keep your eye out for a full schedule of events!



Monthly Mission



Notes from the Community & Global Missions Board

Iambi Secondary School (ISS) is our September monthly mission. The school is a boarding school for both girls and boys. School capacity is about 200 students. ISS has a total of 20 workers (teachers and non-teachers) who cooperatively work together to attain school mission and vision.

Academically, Iambi Secondary School has been doing very well in various exams. In the Mkalama district, it is a leading school, and in the Singida region it is among the top ten schools in regional and national examination results. ISS has a conducive environment for students to learn with a reliable power supply, enough books, and enough teachers for all subjects. They also teach computer studies courses and religion. Gifts from Bethlehem have been transformative for ISS, and our past generosity enabled the school to install electricity, allowing the students and teachers to study and prepare lessons after the sun went down. Test scores soared, and enrollment boomed. Please give prayerfully and financially to our friends at Iambi Secondary School. Our goal is \$7,000.



Forum Schedule ~ 10:45 a.m. in Grounds for Joy

September 4 — Mission Partnership in Zambia with Pastor Kristin Engstrom

September 11 — Rally Sunday — NO FORUM

September 18 — Dragonfly Project with Julie Bonde

September 25 — “I Will Walk 500 Miles: Anna’s Sabbatical Adventure” with Anna Wencel



Council Corner



Highlights from the Monthly Council Meeting

Here are the “highlights” of the Bethlehem Council meeting held on **August 16**. Meeting minutes with details are posted at www.blcmankato.org and also available in the church office notebook. Visit with Council members with questions and concerns! We welcome your conversation & feedback!

Calling a New Associate Pastor: The BLC congregation will gather in a special meeting on **Sunday, August 21 at 10:45** to review and act upon the call committee recommendation to call a new Associate Pastor. Join us in the Dining Room to learn about the candidate and cast your vote. 75 BLC members needed for a quorum to conduct business. Come one, come all!

Financial Report: July 31 balance is **-\$28,459.21** compared to June 30 deficit of **-\$22,140.60**. General fund offerings are significantly below what was pledged and budgeted for the past 3 months. Actual member giving is at 85% of what was budgeted since January 1. **Mortgage** balance is **\$1,043,642** with monthly payments of \$8,187 to cover principal & interest.

2022-23 Council Goals: 7 annual goals approved to focus on support for: 1. Strategic Plan; 2. Capital Campaign & Mortgage Payoff; 3. New Associate Pastor; 4. Zambia Ministry Partnership; 5. Connections Ministry; 6. Welcome & Inclusion; 7. BLC Pastoral & Lay Staff.

Lead Pastor Performance Review: Questions, timeline & process approved for Pr. Jay’s annual performance review in August & September. M. Bliesmer, J. Bruns, B. Ihrig to conduct review.

Capital Campaign: “Imagine...A Vision of Hope” has been approved as the theme to guide this fall’s capital campaign. The 4 teams (Information, Inspiration, Response, Special Events) are making plans for activities for the congregation. Steering committee meets again on 8/18 and teams gather again on 8/24. Line of credit approved by Council to cover campaign expenses.

RIC Welcome Statement Revision: Bethlehem RIC Welcome Statement update approved to include these words: “We are a community committed to racial equity and social justice.”

Family Faith Formation Sabbatical Policy Revision: Personnel Committee & Council approved revised policy update based upon first sabbatical experience last spring/summer.

Fall Semi-Annual Meeting: Save the date on Sunday, November 20 for semi-annual meeting.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, September 20.



2022 ALS WALK to honor Pastor Don and in memory of Jon Nelson

Finally... after 3 cancellations, the walk is going to happen! Please join the Bethlehem Gaitkeepers on

SATURDAY— SEPTEMBER 17

Location: Spring Lake Park, Shelter #1
650 Webster Avenue, North Mankato

CHECK IN TIME: 8:30 a.m.

WALK: 10:00 a.m. The walk is 2.5 miles.

Can’t make the walk? A donation would be appreciated! A form to do so is available in the church office, or you can make a donation on the day of the walk. We always need a cheering squad and group photo! We are hoping for a great turnout for the walk. If you have any questions, please contact Ginger Erlandson.



Financial Report

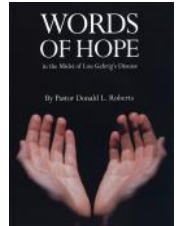


Notes from Elizabeth Ruiz, Financial Secretary

The general fund deficit continues to grow. At the end of July, it had grown to \$28,459. The major cause of this deficit is below budget general fund giving. Year-to-date, giving is \$47,781 below budget. The Finance Committee is looking into this issue. Giving reports were e-mailed in early July. If you are behind on your pledge, and you are able, please catch up. If you have any questions about your pledge, or if you need a printed copy of your contribution report, please contact Elizabeth in the church office or by e-mail at elizruiz@blcmankato.org.

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.



Now may the God of peace who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. ~ Hebrews 13:20, 21



God wants us to have peace. Sometimes that seems difficult. Wars rage across the globe. Wars rage in us. Pray for peace on our planet. Pray for our own problems. We can have peace in our chaotic lives. When peace eludes us, we can find comfort in the words of Jesus in John 16:33: "I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!" We can have peace among the nations. God's will is that there be peace.

The God of peace brought Jesus back from the dead. Without Jesus' resurrection, we die, and that is it. There is no hope and no future apart from the resurrection of Jesus and his promise in John 14 that "I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am, you may be also."

We are the sheep, and the risen Christ is the shepherd. The good shepherd will not abandon his sheep. "...Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20b) The risen Christ is with us in the hospital and in our jobs. He is with us when we die. He promises to lead us to a better future. Throughout the Bible, forgiveness required the shedding of blood. In the Old Testament, priests were required to kill animals for the forgiveness of the sins of the people. The shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross for the sins of humanity ended the requirement of animal sacrifice. It is an eternal covenant for the forgiveness of sins. We do not have to worry about the future. Jesus has taken care of it. **Thanks be to God!**



Family Faith Formation Updates

Anna Wencil, Family Faith Formation Director



FAMILY FAITH FORMATION UPDATES

- Register your child for the program year by Sept. 14th. Visit blcmankato.org/children and blcmankato.org/youth
- All are encouraged to attend the God's Work Our Hands events on Sun., Sept 11th and Wed., Sept 14th as we reconnect to begin a new program year.
- Torchlight & Confirmation families will gather for ice cream and an orientation on Wed., Sept. 21st at 7 pm.
- 3rd-6th graders are invited to the Fall Frenzy Retreat at Green Lake Lutheran Ministries on Sat., Oct. 1st. Look for registration info in the mail.
- Teens Encounter Christ retreat will be held at Bethlehem on Oct. 21-23. 9th graders will attend a T.E.C. retreat this year in preparation for Confirmation.
- Families should have received a postcard in the mail with details about fall programming. If you didn't let us know!

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS



September 18th
& 21st in
worship

Bring your backpack to worship to receive a blessing and a keychain to carry as a reminder you are loved.

7th-12th graders,

USE YOUR VOICE &
VOTE FOR NEXT
SUMMER'S
YOUTH TRIP!



Look for more info about our two destinations at the end of September

BLC YOUTH GO TO SHORES OF ST. ANDREW BIBLE CAMP



GOD'S WORK, our hands



Sunday, Sept. 11
Wednesday, Sept. 14

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



@bethlehem.mankato

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Church Calendar – Fall 2022



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.
1420 AM / 102.7 FM.

Education

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

See Pastor Jay's
article on page 1 and
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
beginning on
September 14.**

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.
Coffee & treats
in Grounds for Joy
after worship.

**Wednesday Night
Suppers** will resume
on **September 14**
from 5-6:15 p.m.

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.*



Can you believe it?

Twelve years ago, a member of Bethlehem named Werner saw a need for school kits. He started gathering supplies and volunteers. To date, he has taken close to **100,000 kits** to Lutheran World Relief! They meet to assemble the kits on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, the same time as the quilters.

Speaking of quilters...we are meeting again starting on **September 6** and we need help! We meet just two Tuesday mornings a month at 9 a.m. in the dining room.
Come and join us!

