

PASTOR'S PAGE

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, March 29th. Please join us as we gather outside and process into the sanctuary with our palms on this day. We will then enter into the story of the Passion and hear it read that day. Throughout those first few days of April we will complete our journey to the cross and on Easter we will gather to celebrate the resurrection.

A couple of things for Easter Sunday. If someone says to you: Christ is risen, the proper response is: He is risen indeed! Also, during children's moment we will open our treasure chest that we locked up at the end of Epiphany with all the Alleluias in it. When I open the box on Easter Sunday, I need all of you to yell Alleluia! Because we will have let them out of the locked box and now we share them with everyone. Thanks for those two little things to help make Easter more festive.

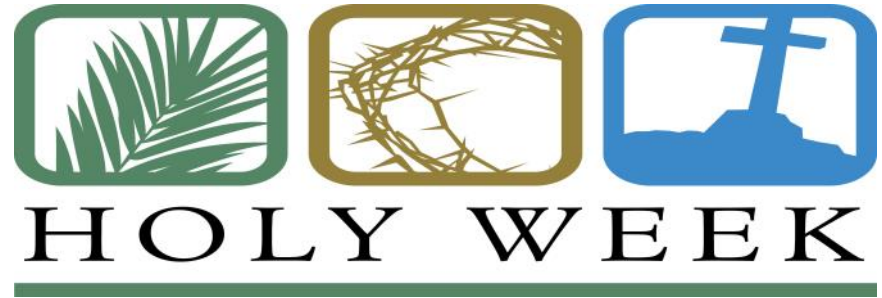
The Easter season coincides with the coming of spring, the hope for new life, the joy of the return of longer days and warmer weather. It is a time to celebrate new life, new things. We are offering a couple of new ideas in this newsletter for you to consider, one is to shepherd others in the congregation and the other is to reach out to the community. We are seeking people who have hearts for these kinds of things. Together we can build a stronger congregation, but we need to begin with one another and also our community. One person cannot do this alone, it takes all of us in ministry to make it happen. What ideas could you share? A community picnic? An event on the lawn in the summer? Blessing of pets? What could you help make happen? Who could you invite?

Spring is a busy time, but it is also a time to plan for the summer and what could be possible. If you have ideas, if you would like to help, we need you! Enjoy these warmer days of spring and join us as we celebrate in this month!

Easter Joys,

Pastor Lori

*Pastor Lori will be on vacation from April 6-13.



HOLY WEEK

Plan to join us for worship in Holy Week. On Thursday, we will gather at 7:00pm and celebrate the Lord's Supper. On Good Friday, we will again worship at 7:00pm, as we remember Jesus on the cross. In the Lenten season we heard from witnesses of Jesus' death. On Maundy Thursday we will hear from Judas and on Good Friday, Mary, Jesus' mother. Plan to join in the continuing witness to what was experienced by those at the cross.

EASTER

Plan to join us on April 5th at 7:00am for Easter Worship. We will celebrate the resurrection with Holy Communion. After worship, join us for a brunch of Eggs Benedict or Egg Sandwiches, fresh fruit, juice and coffee. A free will donation will be accepted. If you would like to provide an Easter Lily for our Easter Altar, please bring it in on Good Friday and take it home with you to enjoy on Easter Sunday. Plants do not do well in the sanctuary, there isn't enough light for them, so please take yours home and enjoy it!

NEW CARPET

Carpet will be laid the week after Easter in the youth rooms, the stage and the stairway by the office. We will also be adding carpet to the balcony where the technology area will be. We are moving the equipment that sends the feed out to the world of our worship service up to the balcony soon. Questions, talk to a Trustee.

WOMEN'S GATHERING

Please join us April 16th at 1:00pm to make cards. We are hoping to make a stockpile to send to people from church as needed, birthday cards, thinking of you cards, etc. If you would like to join us, you are welcome! If you are not a card maker, join us anyway and share in the fellowship. We would like to get together to do different things, like a tea or serving a lemonade stand after worship this summer, or going to a play or having a book discussion. We will plan as we go, so keep watch and join us when/if you can.

COMMUNION SUNDAYS

We continue to look for volunteers to help with Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. We will have two stations of bread, Pastor Lori and a deacon for Communion Sundays. We are looking for people willing to hold trays of wine. Please sign up to help. Anyone of any age can help with this. See the sign up list on the elevator door. We always have grape juice in the center of the trays.

Also, we know that some of you cannot make it to worship with us. We are offering you a chance to receive communion with us on Communion Sundays. If you would like to receive a pre-filled wine/wafer cup for communion, please let the office or a deacon know and we will get them to you, or you can pick up the cups from the office. If you live outside the area, we suggest you make sure you have your own bread/wine/grape juice available at the time of communion and join us as we celebrate. If you would like pre-filled cups, we will send them to you for a donation. Questions, please talk to a Deacon.

NURSING HOME WEEK

The beginning of May is National Nursing Home week and we would like to do something special for the workers and residents at Tuff Home. We hope to provide cake or cupcakes for the workers and small gift bags for the residents. We are seeking donations of the following things: socks, hard candy, lip balm, nail polish, body spray, lotion, brush, pen and large print word search books. Please consider donating to this cause to brighten up the lives of the residents of Tuff Home for Nursing Home Week. Donations may be left in the narthex.

GENERATIONS MEAL

Bethlehem has agreed to host a half price meal once a month at Generations this year. In April, the meal is on Friday, April 3 and features Baked pork chop, pork gravy, scalloped potatoes, mixed vegetables, wheat bread & margarine, oatmeal raisin cookie, and milk. The meal is open to anyone. Please call for reservations at least one day ahead. Call Pam at 507-283-9846 to enjoy a meal. The cost to us is about \$100 each time we host this meal. If you would like to help defray this cost, please make a donation through the offering, designated for the meal site. Thank you!

Generations Senior Meal Site is looking for volunteers to assist with serving their scheduled noon meals. If you enjoy visiting with people and serving others, consider becoming a volunteer. There are needs for dishwasher and dining room volunteers...on a regular and/or intermittent basis. Please call Pam at Generations: 507-283-9846 to volunteer or for additional information! Volunteer schedules allow people to select the days they can serve!

SEEKING SHEPHERDS

We are hoping to improve our communication and connection between congregational members. In order to do that, we think the beginning steps are in making connections. We are looking for people who might like to spend some time with someone in the congregation who you may not see regularly, touch base with them, take them a meal or just check in on them. If we can build stronger connections between members, we can be a stronger congregation. Would you be interested in this? Talk to Pastor Lori or a Deacon to find out more!

OUTREACH BOARD

We are seeking some folks who might be interested in making connections in our community. A group of people who could represent us at the Food Shelf, HBCS planning meetings for Friendship and Beaver Days, people who want us to do more in our community. If you have a heart for this, or would like to know more about this, please talk to Pastor Lori or a member of the Church Council. You wouldn't have to meet like the other boards, but maybe give us updates a couple times a year.

BUILDING UPDATES:

Just a reminder if you host an event in the basement, please check out the list of things to do before you leave the basement, particularly in the kitchen. Some of them are common sense, like wiping off the counters, but some are reminders so that things will be clean for the next use. Thanks!

Changes are happening with our technology. A new amplifier has been added and we are moving the sound board and everything else upstairs to the balcony. We had to re-do some of the floor to create space for the board and the rest of the equipment. You will still be able to see us on Facebook each week.

FROM THE BOARDS

Trustees – Technology move to balcony in process. Meyer Electric has addressed some electrical issues, more potentially in the works. Busse Plumbing & Heating replaced a compressor and vacuum pump on a geothermal unit. Looking into less expensive options for insuring the church building.

Deacons – Looking for shepherds to help people in congregation.

Education – Youth Room work close to completion! Tall ceiling room will be the gaming room. Smaller room will be furnished and be a relax/chill room. Potentially looking at purchasing an air hockey, foosball, ping pong table, etc. A sectional/loveseat, tv, storage/shelving for games, etc.

Sunday School ends May 3. Board of Ed will be grilling for students and congregation following service.

May 17, 2026—weather permitting spring ditch walking following the church service. All are encouraged to participate!

Friendship Day is June 13, 2026. Signs for the youth bus have been purchased. Board of Ed will be providing donuts and drinks available for a free will donation during the Sunday morning Church service.

LOOKING AHEAD

Last Sunday of Sunday School is May 3rd.

Senior Sunday is May 17th.

Vacation Bible School is July 19-24, with the program on the 25th. We are hoping to do a BBQ in connection with the end of VBS. (Planning still in progress)

JOYS AND CONCERNS

- + Doug Chapman has been diagnosed with lymphoma cancer and has begun treatments. Please keep him in your prayers.
- + Peggy Goettsch has been having liver problems. She has had significant fluid removed and continues to regain strength. Please keep her in your prayers.
- + Thanks to all the board and groups who provided our Lenten meals over the months of February and March. It's always a good fellowship time before the Lenten services.
- + Thank You to our willing readers who provided testimony from the characters who witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus. Glenda McGaffee, Charlie Sandager, Deb Warner, Dan Ellingson and Andy DeJong did a great job of portraying the witnesses!
- + Thanks to the Sunday School children who sang at Tuff Home and at Bethlehem on Palm Sunday. It's always fun to see your faces and hear your music!
- + Congratulations to the Boys Basketball team from HBC high school, who competed at State. Congrats also to the Pep Band members who supported them through their winning ways!
- + Congratulations to Harper DeJong for being named to the first year honor band.
- + Congrats to the HS Choir for getting an excellent rating and the 8-12 band for getting a superior rating at large group competition in March.
- + Cemetery Board had their annual meeting on March 22nd.
- + Local Causes that could use your donations: Project Love, Tuff Home, Food Shelf and Tuff Home, all have special collection boxes in the narthex. Take a moment and see what they might need and bring in a donation. It doesn't only have to be at holiday time!
- + Just a Word: If you are hospitalized, it is helpful if you let the church office know, or have a family member contact us. We want to care for you, but we cannot do that if we do not know what is happening. Thanks for communicating!

+ Remember to recycle your bulletins on Sunday mornings. We also recycle bottles and cans, so if you are drinking water or soda, please recycle those items. This applies to the basement as well as the main floor!

+ Seeking volunteers to mow the church lawn this season!

FINANCIAL STATISTICS



Income YTD: \$20,915.42

Expenses YTD: \$33,593.00

Inc vs Exp YTD: -12,677.58

*Income of \$16,200 is needed per month to meet the yearly budget.

We are already significantly behind our proposed budget. Please prayerfully consider how/what you give to support the ministry at Bethlehem. Could you make a special donation for Easter? In memory of someone? All your gifts, financial and in kind are most appreciated and valued. Please continue to give what you can, when you can. It makes a difference in the ministry we can do here at Bethlehem.



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APRIL BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Stephanie Page	2 Bonnie Sundem	3	4 Bonnie Leenderts
5 Sandy Bush Coleen Martens Nancy Sandager	6 Emily Sandager	7 Krista Hoyme	8 Derek Spykerboer	9	10 Michaela Abels Amy Brandt Joanna Stroeh	11
12	13	14 Morgan Sandager	15	16	17 Remington Seachris Hailey Spykerboer	18
19	20 Mya Erickson	21	22	23	24 Jarid Hoogendoorn	25
26 Maureen Helgeson Casey Westphal	27 Justin Kerkhove- Brandt	28 Elodie Rozeboom	29 Leanna Gaugler Lary & Juanita Parker (2017)	30 Michele Brandenberg		

**We apologize for any missing or incorrect information. If you find errors, please contact the office so we can correct them. Thank you.



Bethlehem
Lutheran Church

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Web page: www.bethlehem-lutheran.com

Pastor Lori Bonkoski
Cell: 253-330-0262
Email: bethlehemofhills@gmail.com

APRIL 2026

Ushers: Andy & Megan DeJong; Derek & Becca Spykerboer

SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5 7 AM – Easter Service 9 AM – Tuff Service w/ Communion NO Sunday School	6	7	8 9 AM - Quilting	9 7 PM – Trustees Mtg	10 7 PM – Good Friday Service	11
PASTOR LORI ON VACATION						
12 9 AM – Tuff Service 9 AM – Sunday School 10 AM – BLC Service	13	14 2 PM – Tuff Bible Study	15 9 AM - Quilting	16 1 PM – Ladies gathering- card making	17	18
PASTOR LORI GONE						
19 9 AM – Tuff Service 9 AM – Sunday School 10 AM – BLC Service w/ communion Bd of Ed Mtg	20	21 2 PM – Tuff Bible Study	22 9 AM - Quilting	23	24	25
26 9 AM – Tuff Service 9 AM – Sunday School 10 AM – BLC Service	27	28 2 PM – Tuff Bible Study	29 9 AM - Quilting	30		