

PASTOR'S PAGE

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it."

Earth Day happens in April. As we mark that day we rejoice in the magnificent creation we all enjoy. The sun, the trees, the flowers, new life coming in the strains of spring. It is a time to rejoice and give thanks for all that God has and does give us.

Everything we have comes from God. We might think we earn it, or deserve it, but it all comes from the bounty that God gives us. We often take for granted what is before us, we assume others will take care of things, we forget to thank those who go the extra mile.

You each are a gift from God to the world. Some of you are talkers, some of you are listeners, some of you are joiners, some volunteers, some creative, some set in your ways, but all of us put together are the church! Some are young, some are old, together we are the church. So how do we show ourselves to the world to be the church?

We are a place where opinions are valued, we do not all have to agree on everything or anything! We each bring our own unique lenses to things, some see glasses half full, others, half empty. We can all agree that there is something in the glasses!

We have been blessed as a congregation and as people. We show others who we are by how we live, what we say, how we value the church. Are we open to new ideas, or do we have to do things the same way? Are we willing to listen to each other? Do we live as thankful people, or do we long for things from the past, or haven't let go of past hurts, pains, slights we have experienced? Sometimes it's hard to let go, but if we open our hands to allow God to be at work we are often surprised that the past is past, the pain is less, the joy is immense. Allow God to work in you and your life, you may not realize it, but God is already at work in you and in this congregation! Open your eyes and see what God is up to!

Anticipating the coming of the Holy Spirit,

Pastor Lori

SUNDAY SCHOOL WRAP UP

Sunday, May 3, is the last Sunday of Sunday School until fall. That day the kids will provide special music at worship and the Board of Education will provide lunch after worship. Many thanks to those who have taught our children this past year! They are: Macy Ellingson, Ann Sandager, Maleeka Rozeboom and Dawn Leenderts. We appreciate your dedication to the kids of Bethlehem!

NATIONAL NURSING HOME WEEK

We will celebrate the workers and residents of Tuff Home during May 11-15, Nursing Home Week. We are planning to deliver cake for the workers late in the week and we will be giving small gift bags to the residents. We are still seeking donations for these bags. We need socks, small packs of tissues, hard candy, handkerchiefs, lip balm, lotion and pens. Please bring your donations to the office or leave in the bin in the narthex. Help us celebrate 'our' nursing home this spring!

WOMEN'S GATHERING

Mark your calendars for May 14th at 1:00pm. We will meet at Chud's in Larchwood for lunch and then head to the Knoblach greenhouse to do some browsing and/or buying! Come and enjoy the fellowship at lunch or at the green house! Everyone is welcome. Meet at church at 12:30 to carpool. Last month a number of cards were made and maybe you will see one in your mailbox soon! Thanks to all who attended, made cards and enjoyed the fellowship! Watch for a June happening in next month's newsletter.

PENTECOST

You are invited to wear RED for worship on May 24th, as we celebrate Pentecost. This marks the coming of the Holy Spirit and the end of the Easter season. Join us for this festival Sunday!

SENIOR SUNDAY

We extend our congratulations to our graduating seniors, who will be recognized during worship on May 17th. This year's graduates are Mya Erickson, Abigail Harris, Jayden Kueter, Abigayl Olson, and Hadley Spath. While Mya, Abigail, and Abigayl are now attending church elsewhere, we continue to keep them in our thoughts and wish them success in their future endeavors. Each of these young women will receive a quilt from the Hills Quilters as a gesture of encouragement. Please join us in offering your prayers as they embark on this new chapter after high school graduation. Best wishes to all.



Jayden will be attending Northwest Iowa Community College for Radiology Tech

Hadley will be attending the University of South Dakota in Vermillion for elementary education with a special education endorsement.



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.

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!

GENERATIONS MEAL

Bethlehem has agreed to host a half price meal once a month at Generations this year. On May 1st, the meal features Cheesy Egg Bake, herb diced potatoes, peas & carrots, dinner roll, chocolate chip 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!

ROCK COUNTY FOOD SHELF

The Rock County Food Shelf is in need of volunteers to help with keeping the food shelf operational. They need assistance in weekly pick up of boxes (bringing from the liquor store to the food shelf). Food pickup from Kwiktrip on Mondays and Thursdays between 9-11 am, and takes about 1-1 1/2 hours. Food distribution days and times are 2nd Tuesday of the month from 1-3 pm, Thursdays 1-3 pm, and 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month afternoon shift from 5-6 pm. If you have any questions or are interested in helping out, please contact Mary Gehrke (mcgehrke@mchsi.com) or Tammy Loosbrock (tammy.loosbrock@sanfordhealth.org).

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. Our system has undergone some updates and a move to the balcony where the operators will have a better sightline. You will still be able to see us on Facebook each week.

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.

FROM THE BOARDS

Trustees – Technology move to balcony. Flooring in basement. Parsonage renovations.

Deacons – Looking for shepherds to help people in congregation.

Education – Youth Room work is nearing completion! Sunday School ends May 3. Ditch walking on May 17 after worship. VBS July 19-23, program with meal provided Friday, July 24, 6 pm

FINANCIAL STATISTICS



Income YTD: \$28,714.67

Expenses YTD: \$49,899.82

Deficit YTD: -21,185.15

Thank you for all your gifts to Bethlehem. We continue to fall behind our budget and we realize we are entering the summer season, which is traditionally low in attendance and giving. Please prayerfully consider giving what you can, when you can. It makes a difference in the ministry we can do here at Bethlehem.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

- + Doug Chapman has had a couple of infusions of chemo, related to his lymphoma. Each day is different, but he is doing as well as he can. Please keep him in your prayers.
- + Peggy Goettsch is slowly feeling better. She continues to closely monitor her liver function. It is good to see her coming to quilting on Wednesdays. Please keep her in your prayers.
- + Deb Warner had some additional surgery done on her toe in mid April. She is using a walker and boot until things heal. Hold her in your prayers as she recovers.
- + Sympathy is extended to Larry Warner and family on the death of his mother, 101 year old Arlene in mid-April. A service was held in Arkansas on April 18. Blessed be her memory.
- + Sympathy is also extended to Orv Sundem on the death of his brother in March. (We apologize for missing this in last month's newsletter.) Services were held on March 16. Blessed be his memory.
- + Thanks to everyone who helped Doug and Deanna Chapman move at the beginning of April. Your help made things go smoothly and they are happy in their new home in Luverne.
- + Thank You to all who helped make our Holy Week special, from chalking the palm branches on the sidewalk, testimony read by Jan Solberg on Good Friday, and all the work of the Altar Guild! Great job, everyone!
- + Thanks to Jan Solberg who led worship while Pastor Lori was on vacation and to Remington Seachris who sang for special music that day.
- + Thanks to Executive Board for their work to create a yummy breakfast for after worship on Easter. Everyone enjoyed the food and fellowship!
- + New Acolytes have been added to our list. Watch for the sign up sheet and look for Talia Seachris, Hailey Spykerboer, Boyd Luethold, Sadia Rozeboom and Harper DeJong along with Remington and Raylan to light and put out the candles on Sunday mornings.

+ Congratulations to the honor roll students at HBCS: A honor roll: Mya Erickson, Abigal Harris, Jayden Kueter, Abigayl Olson and Haven Kerkhove-Brandt. B honor roll: Hadley Spath, Regan Spath, Karissa Kerhove-Brandt, Auston Olson, Cash Wilsey, Remington Seachris.

+ Congratulations to our spring athletes! They are: Track: Haven Kerkhove-Brandt, Karissa Kerkhove-Brandt, Cash Wilsey and Charlie Wilsey. Golf: Abigayl Olson, Nora Top and Auston Olson. Trap: Jayden Kueter, Auston Olson and Cash Wilsey. We are proud of your work and commitment!

+ Congrats to those from our midst who were elected to the first class of athletes in the Hill-Beaver Creek Athletic Hall of Fame! Notable were Brad Haak and Dan Ellingson! Congratulations!

+ 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!

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who volunteer at Bethlehem! You make things work by giving your time and talent! It takes a lot of volunteers to make a church run smoothly. We are currently looking for **readers, ushers, communion helpers and lawn mowers** for the summer months. Please sign up to help if you are able.





Bethlehem
Lutheran Church

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MAY 2026

Ushers: Dan & Linda, Caleb & Macy Ellingson and family

SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 9 AM – Tuff Service w/ Communion 9 AM - Last day of Sunday School- touch-a-bunny 10 AM – BLC w/ communion	4	5 OFFICE CLOSED Pastor Lori out for conference	6 9 AM - Quilting	7	8	9 Basement reserved
Randy and Brenda ON VACATION						
10 9 AM – Tuff Service 10 AM – BLC Service	11	12 2 PM – Tuff Bible Study	13 9 AM – Quilting 6 PM – Trustees 7 PM – Full Council	14 1 PM - Women’s gathering, meet at Chud’s then to Knobloch	15	16
NURSING HOME WEEK						
17 9 AM – Tuff Service 10 AM – BLC Service w/ communion Senior Sunday Ditch walk	18	19 2 PM – Tuff Bible Study	20 9 AM - Quilting	21	22 7 PM – HBC graduation	23 Basement reserved
24 9 AM – Tuff Service 10 AM – BLC Service 2 PM – Luverne graduation	25 Memorial Day	26 2 PM – Tuff Bible Study	27 9 AM - Quilting	28	29	30
31 9 AM – Tuff Service 10 AM – BLC Service						



					1	2 Cheyenne Albers
3 Alex Harris	4	5	6 Travis Helgeson Bob Johnson Kari Kueter Dana & Alyson Olson - 2006	7 Cooper Vaughn	8 Lee Sells	9 Sherry Paulsen
10 Raylan Leuthold	11 Beckham Ellingson Kelsey McGuire Pucky Sandager	12 Marilyn Nelson	13	14	15	16
17	18 Reagan Spath	19 Dawn Leenderts	20	21	22 Linda Ellingson	23
24	25	26 Rodney & Cami Verhey - 1990	27 Nancy Swanson	28 Cindy Farrell	29 Robin Kroon Karen Soehl	30
31 Marj Roning Spencer Sells						