



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Fergus Falls, MN

2019 Annual Report

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Church Officers and Council Members

Executive Committee

Mark Petersen - Chair
 Jeff Hatlewick - Vice Chair
 Val Johnson - Secretary
 Kim Langbehn - Treasurer

Term ending January 2020

Marian Barry
 Judy Bradow
 Don Fick
 Adrienne Miller
 Mark Petersen

Term ending January 2021

Jeff Hatlewick
 Lynn Johnson
 Kim Langbehn
 Joyce Peterson

Term ending January 2022

Ryan Anderson
 Val Johnson
 Julie Nelson
 Jenna Noland
 Glen Noyes
 Tom Rasmusson

Your continuing prayers and participation are crucial to fulfilling the mission and ministry of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in the years to come.



Council President's Report

2019 was a great year to serve at Bethlehem. Working together, much was accomplished in ministering to our members, caring for our facilities, and participating in community and global outreach through the hands-on efforts and financial giving of this congregation.

With respect to staffing, some opportunities arose and/or continued in 2019:

- Hiring and supporting a new Director of Faith Formation in Ken Dessellier.
- Continuing to support the seminary education and pastoral training of Anna Gervais.
- Continuing to have the services of Pastor Jeff McCracken as part-time Pastor assisting Pastor Tom.
- The announcement of the upcoming retirement of Pastor Tom and the assembly of the Call Committee and undertaking of the call process to secure a new Senior Pastor.

The ministerial and office staff met the increasing workload head-on and I say with much credit to them that a smooth-running and understanding staff makes all the difference. They offered timely and effective solutions when decisions or approval were needed. This was very much appreciated.

I also want to offer a big "Thanks" to everyone who serves on the many committees and support groups including those individuals serving at funerals and other functions that arise unexpectedly. I know that if I were asked to name them all, I could not.

Regarding our facilities we completed the "Beyond the Building" campaign, meeting and exceeding the financial commitments. Many, many other projects were completed, are underway, or are scheduled to preserve current functionality or update and enhance our church property as personal resources and congregational funds allow.

Financially, this congregation finds itself in a unique and enviable position ending this year and heading into next. Many congregations are struggling to find the funds to continue. Bethlehem, on the other hand, experienced a temporary sizeable decrease in expenses and has at the same time increased giving placing us in a position to accomplish much in 2020. A great big "Thank You" to all of you as members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church for your generosity.

In closing, I believe we seek to be caring and effective members within the collective body of the church, both in our community and as part the global church. To effectively help fulfill this mission a "work group" within the Council was formed and is exploring options for using a portion of the financial surplus this year for community missions and outreach. They will soon come back with recommendations to the Council so that we may proceed. Let us continue to move forward boldly as we deal with the challenges and opportunities before us.

Council President
 Mark Petersen

A special thanks to our church staff and volunteers for their work in preparing this Annual Report. We would also like to thank all our members for their gifts of time, talent, energy, and finances given to the ministry of Bethlehem Lutheran Church!

Our Staff

Senior Pastor.....Tom Peterson
 Interim Part-time Associate Pastor.....Jeff McCracken
 Director of Faith Formation.....Ken Dessellier
 Director of Operations.....Amy Fronning
 Accountant.....Kelly Peasley
 Office Support.....V.J. Block
 Interim Children's Ministry Coord. (Jan-June).....Leah Anderson
 Seminary Student.....Anna Gervais
 Part Time Custodian.....Jessica Knutson
 Praise Team Leader.....Kim Blumberg
 Organist.....Susie Sanner
 Accompanists.....LuAnn Canepa
Faye Pederson

OUR CORE VALUES

Boundaries, Procedures, Concerns

Adopted by the Bethlehem Church Council in December 2014

Value # 1: We will communicate freely.

- We will practice direct, face-to-face communication.
- We will take upon ourselves the responsibility for understanding and will seek clarification when necessary.
- We will ask ourselves what others need to know from us to do their jobs well – and will take the initiative in communicating it to them.
- We will ask ourselves what we need to know from others to do our job well – and will take the initiative in asking for that information.
- We will endeavor to communicate in a timely fashion, respecting the time-sensitive nature of much that we need to share with each other.
- We will acknowledge and respect the feelings of those with whom we communicate.
- We will endeavor to ensure that all people who are impacted by a decision are consulted as part of the decision-making process.

Value #2: We will work through relational issues.

- We will commit ourselves to creating an atmosphere of personal and professional respect in the workplace.
- We will always assume good will on the part of those we work with and will take the initiative in seeking clarification and understanding.
- We will always avoid triangulation and will speak personally, or with a third party present, with individuals with whom we have a problem.
- When conflict cannot be resolved on the personal level, we will take the initiative in seeking third party mediation of the conflict.
- We will take the initiative in seeking prompt resolution of all conflict.
- We will commit ourselves to the idea that conflict – when properly managed – can be healthy and an impetus to positive growth.
- Senior Staff should clarify for program and support staff the channels/systems for resolving serious conflict.

Value #3: We will keep our commitments.

- We commit ourselves to be men and women of integrity whose “yes” means “yes” and whose “no” means “no.” This means that we will be realistic in our personal and professional commitments.
- As an organization we give people the right to responsibly “revisit” their commitments.
- We will ensure that if any other staff person is professionally involved in a commitment we are making they will be consulted or informed in the commitment-making process.
- We will respect each other’s schedules.

Value #4: We will lead through servant hood.

- We affirm the example of Christ (Philippians 2:5-8) as the model of our servant hood.
- Following the example of Christ, we will accept suffering as normative for Christian servant leadership, but we reject both masochistic suffering and a “victimization” mentality.
- We will lead by example, unashamed to do whatever needs to be done for the greater good of the whole Body of Christ in obedience to God.
- Our servant leadership will model health to the congregation. That is, we will understand and respect our limits and the limits of others.
- We affirm the other-directedness of servant leadership, however, we understand that our responsibility is to – and not for – people.
- Our servant leadership will be authoritative but non-authoritarian.

Value # 5: We will staff (professional or volunteer) on the basis of spiritual, personal, and professional gifts.

- We will implement procedures for discerning gifts before staffing (professional or volunteer).
- We will seek appropriate personal and professional gifts/skills as well as spiritual gifts in staffing decisions.
- We will develop and support appropriate career development plans for paid staff.
- We will develop and support appropriate leadership training plans for volunteer staff.
- With respect to volunteer staff we will 1) avoid a “warm body” approach to staffing; 2) avoid the use of guilt, shame or coercion to fill slots; and 3) be sensitive to the personal situation and “energy levels” of volunteers.
- We will develop and maintain a database of spiritual, personal, and professional gifts with the goal of maximizing participation and minimizing burn-out.

Value #6: We will value creativity and risk-taking.

- We will create structures, e.g., teams, for fostering and supporting creativity.
- We will encourage brainstorming and creative problem solving.
- We will budget “seed money” for experimental ministries; however, we affirm that creativity does not always take money.
- We will create an ethos within which: 1) we are encouraged to step outside of our “comfort zones”; 2) we see failure as neither final nor fatal, but as an opportunity to learn what works and what doesn’t; 3) creativity and risk taking is driven by human need; 4) we are willing to bury old projects/ministries in order to move forward with new and more responsive projects/ministries.
- We will avoid “micromanagement.”

Value #7: We will value excellence.

- We affirm that our commitment to excellence is driven by 1) our commitment to the glory of God; and 2) our commitment to the world that God loves.
- We affirm that excellence does not mean perfection.
- We understand that across different ministries and within different contexts definitions of excellence may differ. Therefore we commit ourselves to ongoing collegial conversation on the nature of excellence.
- We understand the pursuit of excellence to be objective/goal driven and commit ourselves to the ongoing clarification and articulation of ministry goals and objectives.
- We are committed to the notion that form follows function/essence.
- We are committed to developing both objective and subjective tools/methods of assessing the effectiveness of our ministries/programs. The purpose of assessment is to assure ourselves that 1) we are doing what we said we would do; and 2) what we said we would do is, in fact, the right thing to do.
- We will develop and utilize “listening posts” in the congregation and in the larger community.
- We affirm that excellence in ministry will always demand ministries and programs with theological integrity and relevance, and we, therefore, commit ourselves to careful, collegial theological reflection about what we do, why we do it, and how we do it.

Value #8: We will value honest feedback and evaluation.

- We will foster an environment of safety and respect within which feedback and evaluation are welcomed rather than perceived as threats.
- We will pro-actively seek feedback from those in a position to give it.
- We will adopt the attitude that “bad news is good news,” for we cannot correct faults/problems/conflicts that we are unaware of.
- We will avoid defensiveness when receiving feedback from others.
- When giving feedback we will focus on strengths/successes as well as on areas needing attention/improvement.
- We affirm that helpful feedback has a “constructive” component and will seek to make constructive comments when giving feedback.
- We will take the initiative in holding “debriefing” sessions involving key persons in events/ministries/programs that we are responsible for.

Value #9: We will value loyalty to the head leadership.

- We are committed to public support and respect for senior leadership.
- We are committed to and will work for the success of all leaders.
- We will be proactive in our response to leadership.
- We will pray for all leaders in the church.
- We will embrace the vision cast by our senior pastor. This does not imply an uncritical acceptance, but does imply that, where there is serious disagreement, staff and council members will have the personal integrity to respect and publicly support the “common vision” of the community. If they cannot do this, they should resign.
- We will actively seek to keep senior leadership “in the loop” so that there are no “surprises” with respect to ministries, programs, or pastoral care issues.

Value #10: We will value a healthy, balanced lifestyle (spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and physically).

- We will observe a regular Sabbath rest.
- We will worship regularly.
- We will care for our bodies with regular exercise.
- We will care for our minds with intellectual pursuits.
- We will establish healthy boundaries between 1) work, 2) church, and 3) our personal lives, recognizing that effective boundaries are flexible and not rigid.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING

January 28, 2018

The Best of Bethlehem Worship Service and Annual Meeting was held on January 28, 2018 at 9:30am. Pastor Tom welcomed the congregation and President Darcy Koeckeritz called the 144th meeting of the Congregation to order.

Pastor Tom and Pastor Jake led the worship service, which included special music from the Bethlehem Singers, Sunday School Children and Joyful Noise. At the conclusion of the worship service, the Annual Meeting of the congregation commenced.

The Secretary Report 2016 & 2017

A motion was made by Tammy Richards with a 2nd by Ginny Ronning to approve the 2016 and 2017 annual meeting minutes. Motion carried.

The Treasurer's/Examiners' Report

The Treasurer's report was presented by Kim Langbehn. A motion was made by DiaAnn Juven Smidt with a 2nd by Ione Anderson to approve the report. Motion carried.

Question & Answer Time

No questions were raised at this time.

New Business

There was no new business.

Presentation of the Budget

The Finance Committee has proposed a budget of \$566,800. This is \$19,000 shy of pledged and projected offerings. It will take diligence by all members of Bethlehem to be mindful of this expected shortfall. Expenses remain close and a decrease in salary due to custodial changes should help with the deficiency. Special recognition was given to staff members Kelly Peasley and Amy Fronning, as well as Finance committee members Bonnie Denzel, Dean Monke, Alex Schwarhoff and Kim Langbehn for their leadership and due diligence in preparing a comprehensive, realistic budget. A motion was made by Keith Olson with a 2nd by Dennis Johnson to approve the 2018 budget as written. Motion carried.

Elections

Ballots were handed out to all congregation members to vote on the proposed positions. A motion was made by Tom Rasmusson with a 2nd by Marc Rinke to cast a unanimous ballot for elections. Motion carried. The results are as follows:

Church Council: Kim Langbehn, Lynn Johnson, Jeff Hatlewick, Joyce Peterson

Pioneer Retirement Community Annual Meeting: David and Tudy Nycklemoe

Delegates to Luther Crest Bible Camp Annual Meeting: Ken and Kristi Edman

Bethlehem Foundation Fund Inc. Board: Renae Rasmusson, Todd Wahlund

Nominating Committee: Leon Keller, Laura Pearson, Leah Anderson

Personnel Committee: Barb Welle

Beyond the Building Report

Facts and Figures as of December 31, 2017: Total Amount Pledged - \$743,077.00, Total Cash Received - \$481,428.16, Total Pledge Cards - 203

Phase 1 is complete and includes: adding steeple lighting, replacement of the heating and air conditioning systems, replacement of the windows in the Sunday School wing, and reframing the stained glass windows. Phase 2 has begun and includes: installing a camera security system and may include other items yet to be determined. Because of the generous donations of members the majority of improvements have been cash flowed, with a loan draw of only \$61,075 which is scheduled to be paid of by mid-January.

There being no further business, the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Congregation was adjourned with a motion by Tudy Nycklemoe and 2nd by Chuck VanSickle. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Val Johnson
Church Council Secretary

THE PASTORAL ACTS REPORT FOR 2019

The Pastoral Acts as recorded in the "Church Record Journal" of Bethlehem Lutheran Church,
102 West Junius Avenue, Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56537,
and in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631-4189.

CHURCH WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday and Wednesday Services and V.S.P.....	136
Special Services (Easter, Lenten, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.)	35
Holy Communion Services	67

MINISTERIAL ACTS

Baptisms.....	5
Confirmations.....	10
Weddings.....	2
Funerals.....	19
(Members - 17 Non-Members - 2)	

MEMBERSHIP

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
Membership as of January 1, 2019	839	702
Members received during 2019:		
By Baptism (Children)	5	0
By Baptism (Adults)	0	0
By Affirmation of Faith	0	0
By Transfer from ELCA Congregations	13	13
By Transfer from other Lutheran cong.	0	0
By Transfer from non-Lutheran cong.	0	0
From other sources	3	0
Total Members Received in 2019	21	13
Baptized Members Confirmed		10
Total	860	725
Members Removed during 2019:		
By Death	17	17
By Transfer to Other ELCA cong.	2	2
By Transfer to Other Lutheran cong.	1	1
By Transfer to non-Lutheran cong.	0	0
Other Reasons/Statistical Adjustments	0	4
Total Members Removed in 2019:	20	20
Membership as of December 31, 2019:	840	705

Pastoral Acts - 2019

BAPTISMS

Knox Irving Anderson
MaCallan Dean Gervais

Zella June Green
Tucker Verle Martin

David Carl Munsterman

FIRST COMMUNION

Trenton Drouillard
Alec Prischmann
Austin Huus
Hunter Welle

Jonah Gullickson
Parker Thielke
Chloe Nelson

Simon McGovern
Margaret Greenagel
Joshua Rogal

CONFIRMATION

Maddie Boyd
Connor Adam Johnson
Elizabeth Grace Moxness
Carter Martin Thielke

Michael Scott Debritto
Easton Keller
Alec John Richards

Ainsley Christine Hansen
Sydney Rachel Langbehn
Cheyanne Stundahl

WEDDINGS

Sophie Russell & Tyler Peterson
Hattie Russell & Hunter Haarstad

FUNERALS (*Non-member)

Jason Shemon	Jason Cross
Joyce Johnson	Erwin Johnson
Donald Skogstad	Michael Dean Hoeper*
Brian Bakke	Edna Brothen
Clarice Johnson	Ernest Kollar

Patrick Murray	Dennis Amundson
Ardys Brensike	Larry Gedde
Lloyd Einerson*	Chase Keller
Richard Pemberton	Ronald Peterson
Eugene D. Wilde	

NEW MEMBERS

Arlis Danielowski
Scott & Amy Hopper
Ken & Sarah Dessellier

Jill Denny
Jim & Sharon Christenson
Mark & Amy Schulz

Lucas Gervais
Susie Sanner
Sandra Boice

MEMBERS TRANSFERRED OUT

Jennifer Johnson

Darwin Stigen

Pastor Jake Anderson

From our Senior Pastor

Pastor Tom Peterson

I return to the cover of the magazine *The New Yorker* a few years ago when it showed Father Time and the New Year Baby sledding together down a steep hill at great speed. Father Time, with his long beard flowing backwards behind his head, has an expression of confidence that conveyed the sense of “I’ve been here before.” The New Year Baby, sitting in Father Time’s lap, his hands raised high in the air like a teenager on a roller coaster has a face showing exhilaration, enjoyment and anticipation for what is around the next curve.

I like the positive message in that editorial cartoon that the future awaits us and that God is always about new beginnings built upon past experiences. I don’t ever want to lose the excitement of congregations continuing to do ministry planted in long running, effective ministries and the dreaming of new ways of serving and doing outreach in a new time to the glory of God and the welfare of His world and everyone He has created. That is quite a calling we have been given.

I think that we have shared a wonderful partnership here at Bethlehem. Good, faithful people; A strong sense of community; Love for singing and plenty of laughter; United in Christ; Diverse in faith; Active in ministry – these are some statements that stick out in my mind when I think about the character of this congregation.

For many, this is a place of encouragement for spiritual grounding and growth and a place where God’s Spirit is allowed the opportunity to work through others to touch lives. I am glad to have had the past eight years to walk with you as a member of this Christian fellowship in ministry and mission. It has been a rewarding partnership we have shared.

Highlights for this year include the willingness to share ministry together as we were short staffed. Thanks to all who volunteered with carrying on our children and youth ministries until (and after) Ken Dessellier came on board as our new Youth Faith Formation Director. We are glad to have that important position filled and to have such a willing spirit occupying that office.

To continue being served by two pastors is proving to be a longer process of discernment and actual filling of those positions than we had originally thought. I thank Interim Pastor Jeff McCracken’s part-time work with us – his preaching once a month, visitation schedule, work with the Deacon’s Fund and the needs we address, and helping with some committee work and bible study groups. The Call Committee has done all its preparatory work and will be meeting with the Synod leadership to agree upon a timetable/process to begin interviewing for a new senior pastor by around mid-year. Then, the discussion will be had again and decision made to secure further staffing. A new voice and presence in the senior pastor’s office will be welcomed by many. There is much good that we have worked together on over these years and many successes and expansions on ministries. There is much ministry still yet to be renewed and strengthened and even created new for the first time. That should be exciting for you. Keep God in the mix and it will be better than okay, it will be great. Grow strong.

You, as a congregation, were awesome in your extravagant generosity. Being short staffed, and with expenses down, you could have cut back on your giving but you did not. In fact, this year it increased. As a result, this parish has a very strong closing general fund balance and the decision will be made as to how to share it – whether toward special projects/needs of this congregation or toward the supporting of charitable work beyond our walls. What a great discussion that has the possibility of being. Besides that, the “Beyond the Building Campaign” is wrapping up and the follow through on meeting pledges, as well as additional special gifts, have helped us pay for all the projects we have completed and given us a reserve fund for future projects as they arise. And besides that, the Deacon’s Fund has been strongly supported through this year, especially over these last four months, and left us at the end of the year with reserves that will allow us to help many people. Well done, good and faithful stewards.

A couple of other highlights for the year include 1) being able to coordinate and chaperone the Middle School Mission Trip to Rapid City this past summer and 2) the joint, rotating church, local ELCA congregations’ worship services during Lent and then again for the summer mid-week services. Churches included were Augustana, Bethlehem, First, Hope, and Zion in FF and Austad/Rock Prairie of rural FF and Our Savior’s of Dalton. We also held a joint Thanksgiving service and joined together for mid-week Advent services. These collaborative events went very well and the spirit of fellowship we shared was warm and welcoming. We will plan for the same in 2020.

For me, an important happening in this parish over these years has been the lighting of the steeples and the Good Shepherd stained glass window and the front of the church for all to see, including those on the third floor of Lake Region Hospital, at night.

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From our Senior Pastor

Pastor Tom Peterson

.....continued from page 9

The statement we make, that “Bethlehem Lutheran Church seeks to be a light shining brightly in Fergus Falls, offering hope, help, healing and home to everyone” is something I pray that you will continue to grow into. Be a “flagship congregation” in this community. You have that capacity and tradition in Fergus Falls.

I do want to tell you a story that helps remind me regularly as to what is at the heart of our life together in Christ and His calling to us to His ambassadors here. Its message encourages any congregation to not be overly concerned with its maintenance, but with God’s calling to ministry and mission. That is where long-term vibrancy is found. The story is called, “The Parable of the Life-Saving Station.”

“On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur, there was once a crude little lifesaving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves they went out day and night tirelessly searching for the lost. Many lives were saved by this wonderful little station, so that it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding area, wanted to associate and give their time and money. New boats were bought and new crews were trained. The little lifesaving station grew.

“Some of the members of the lifesaving station began to become unhappy that the building was so crude and so poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge for those saved from the sea. So they replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in an enlarged building. Now the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they redecorated it beautifully and furnished it exquisitely. Fewer members were interested in going on lifesaving missions – so they hired lifeboat crews. The lifesaving motif still prevailed in the club decoration and there was a liturgical lifesaving boat in the meeting room

“About this time, a large ship was wrecked off the coast and the hired crews brought in boatloads of cold, wet, and half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick and some of them had different color skin. The beautiful new club was considerably messed up. Children cried and ran around. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where victims of the shipwrecks could be cleaned up before coming inside.

“At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club’s lifesaving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club. Some members insisted upon lifesaving as their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a lifesaving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save lives of all the various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own lifesaving station down the coast. They did.

“As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. It evolved into a club, and yet another lifesaving station was founded. History continued to repeat itself, and today you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown.”

Bethlehem Lutheran Church has been, and will always be a “lifesaving station” in the tradition of our great Christian heritage. This congregation has provided a sanctuary for many throughout these past, nearly 150 years to be introduced to God’s love for them as seen in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection on our behalf; to find comfort and guidance through the scriptures; support from caring members; and to feel honored to serve in His name. You just never want to lose sight of this parish’s purpose and the difference it has made, and will continue to make in people’s lives. The community of Fergus Falls will let this congregation know how it is being perceived as a caring, vibrant community by people checking us out.

Never stop being a generous, inviting, hospitable, and warm spirited place of faith that is committed to reaching out to others – young and old, visitor and long-time resident. It is a great gift you have to offer to this Fergus Falls area and the larger Church. God bless you.

A special word of thanks to the staff that I get to work with, Amy, Kelly, Ken, VJ, Kim and Leah Anderson (interim children’s ministries during the vacancy), Pastor Jeff McCracken, and Anna Gervais (seminary student doing her contextual education work with us.) A hearty thank you goes out to our Church Council members, Mark Petersen, president. And to all who volunteer their time and take part in the life and ministries of this congregation, I appreciate you. Thanks.

Sincerely, Pastor Tom Peterson

Interim Past-Time Associate Pastor

Pastor Jeff McCracken

Dear Friends at Bethlehem,

I have served as part time interim pastor at Bethlehem for a year. Usually serving one or two days a week, filling in one Sunday a month preaching and serving the occasional time Pastor Tom has off. I will be concluding my part time ministry here this spring. It is easy to see the need for at least two full time ministers to support the ministry of Bethlehem. You have a dedicated, faithful, talented staff here at Bethlehem that works well together and supports the ministry in and through this church. Bethlehem is blessed with gifted lay leaders in many areas of leadership and ministry. We have a key mission to the community of Fergus Falls as leading, helping the needy, seeing where our gifts fit here and many places in need locally, through our NWMN Synod and the ELCA. I have had a special ministry through the "Deacon's" fund and visitation.

Ministry is thriving through Christ in ministry in, through, from you, Bethlehem.

The support inward and outward is very evident in this congregation. Bethlehem has challenges ahead and new ministries to enliven as you see the needs arise and call leadership into being.

Blessings as we serve our risen Lord Jesus.

Jeff McCracken

Director of Faith Formation

Ken Dessellier

Before I continue, I would first like to thank the amazing parents and volunteers that have helped out in various ways this past year. These people give their time by teaching Sunday School, providing supper and snacks for different activities, by chaperoning for summer trips and activity nights, and many more things. All of the things that I am able to do here, would not be possible without them.

It was quite a wild first couple of weeks for me when I started in the middle of June. It all started with VBS. The next week was the middle school mission trip to Rapid City South Dakota. These two weeks provided a great start to build relationships with students and their parents as I began. Our Middle School students had a wonderful week in Rapid City.

As our students went back to school, the weekly youth programming started here at Bethlehem. Every Sunday we meet up in the meeting room for Sunday School. All of our students gather upstairs for a time to sing some fun songs to get the energy going before they head to their class rooms. This time is one of the highlights of my week. Due to a few small class sizes, we have two combination classes.

Every Wednesday the Bethlehem Bus travels to Kennedy School and brings our fourth through sixth graders to the Church. Our time begins with a snack that is provided by a parent. We then spend our time with conversations, devotion, and activities. Our confirmation classes start at 5:30 with a supper that is provided by a parent or other members in the congregation. After supper we head upstairs for class that is taught by Pr. Tom. After 30-40 minutes of large group time, we break into small groups time. Small groups have the rest of the time to discuss the lesson and how it applies to their lives. About once a month our small groups have a fellowship/service night. The night comes to an end with our Sr. High Youth students. They arrive at the church for a time of devotions, fellowship, and activities.

About once a month we host an activity night for our middle school students. These activity nights attract many different students in the area. These events are an important part in reaching out to all students in Fergus Falls. It isn't uncommon to see more non-member students at these events. In October we had to reschedule our activity night on a short notice due to weather. On a night where the weather was not the greatest, I was shocked to have such a huge turnout of students. It went to show how much they value and enjoy these events.

Continued on page 12.....

Director of Faith Formation

Ken Dessellier

.....continued from page 11

As we look back on this past year, we also want to look forward to what we can expect in 2020. Our family ministry area has a big potential for growth in this coming year. We will look at ways that we can grow it and make a difference in our families lives. We will continue to work with Luther Crest for our Vacation Bible School in June. We have two summer trips planned for 2020. Our middle school students are looking forward to traveling to Duluth in June, and our high school students will be traveling to Denver Colorado in July! These trips are will be a great opportunity for me to not only keep building relationships with our students, but for them to see the types of service work happening in other communities. My hope is that they will be inspired to look for the ways that they can make a difference in Fergus Falls, Otter Tail county, and where ever they go in their lives.

When coming into this position, I didn't want to change everything right away. I figured the best thing to do, would be to try and run things as they were and try to get a feel for this congregation and everyone in it. As the relationships form, and I have a better understanding of our young ones and their families, small changes and additions will happen to make the current programming better for our students and their families. I am excited to see where 2020 takes us!

-Peace Love and Happy Trails
Ken Dessellier

Faith/Life Christian Education for Adults

Pastor Tom is leading "The Divine Drama" on Fridays at 10:30. "The Divine Drama" is an overview of the biblical narrative and an overview of our narrative as Christians as to our pillars of faith/doctrines/convictions.

Pastor Tom and Pastor Jeff are helping to facilitate a study on "Revelation," the final book in the Bible. We are in the midst of that study on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 and Wednesdays at noon. One of the resources we are using is an overview of Revelation in the book "Revelation and the End of All Things" by Luther Seminary Professor Craig Koester.

Other study groups include four different Circles that meet monthly at different times on the third Thursday of every month and a men's group (Men of Bethlehem – MOB) which meets at 7:00 on Thursday mornings at Café 116. Come join a group for fellowship and the opportunity to grow in our faith understanding.

V.S.P. (Very Special People) A Seniors Ministry of Bethlehem

We meet on the second Thursday of the month at 11:00am for worship, a meal and program. The invitation is for all to come take part.

The events this past year included: February – "Friends of Friends Fighting Hunger in Otter Tail County;" May – a trip to the Otter Tail Historical Society Museum for a presentation on the 1919 Cyclone Catastrophy (100th anniversary); June – presentation by retired FF Public School Superintendent Jerry Ness; July – "Pelican Rapids – A Neighbor of Diversity;" August – New FF Public School Superintendent Jeff Drake; September –presentation by Judy Bradow, "Death and Resurrection; Angels Among Us;" October – Blair Anderson "Understanding the Uniqueness of Four Adult Generations Worshipping at Bethlehem;" November – Beth Randklev presentation on "Compassion International;" December – Musical program by Dennis Johnson and Bo Anderson.

Our next event is scheduled for May, 2020.

Worship and Music Team

2019 was another great year for the Music and Worship team.

The Bethlehem Choir sang a few times this last year under the direction of Bob Perrier and Tony Munsterman.

We joined in worship with the other ELCA congregations for Lent, Summer, and Advent worship services. It was great to see the congregations worshipping together. We look forward for continued collaboration.

We tried something new for summer worship by going to 1 service at 9:00. This was well received by the majority of the congregation.

Our Joyful Noise worship team and Pastor Jeff McCracken went to Phelps Mill again in July for their annual festival. Each year the attendance of the summer worship service increases. The offerings given this year went to the Deacon's Fund.

The Music and Worship team continues to support the audio and visual aspects of worship. We will be looking to upgrade our system this year as the sound system is aging and there is better technology available. We will be looking to improve the quality of the radio broadcast through this upgrade.

We would like to thank all our volunteers who make Sunday morning worship possible. From ushers, to singers, to sound and video operators, worship wouldn't be the same without you!

Stewardship Report

For 2019, 174 congregation individuals/families sent in an Estimate of Giving card for a total of \$417,856. 95.6% of the pledged amount was received. We had estimated that we would receive \$106,000 through non-Estimate of Giving support. Instead, we received through those offerings \$123,140. All of it - Terrific!

For 2020, 188 congregation individuals/families sent in an Estimate of Giving card for a total of \$489,016. That is an impressive increase. In 2019, our annual revenue budget had been set at \$560,900 and our members/visitors gave in total, through tithes and offerings and other special gifts, \$572,970 – 102.1%.

We attempted to keep the ministries and mission outreach of this congregation before the members of the parish this year and emphasize the good work being done through the sharing of our members' time (volunteering), talents and financial offerings. Pastor Laurie Natwick was our guest preacher on Consecration Sunday. The brunch afterwards was delicious and well attended.

Our members showed great faithfulness and generosity in their support. Thanks to everyone. Let us continue to believe in and support the calling this congregation has in FF to be a positive presence and caring contributor where we are and beyond this town.

Property & Management Team

Congratulations on the closure of our Beyond the Building project. Remarkable that we were able to come so close to our original pledges. As a congregation we were able to get our big three on the wish list. Many secondary project were also completed. We now have set ourselves up to absorb any major expenses in the future. As a result of our many changes; we have again developed a great sense of pride in our facility.

This past year we were able to complete the louver project in our steeples. They have proven to be the capstone of our exterior projects. Some of our proposed sidewalk replacement projects were completed. However, due to a wet season not all of these projects were completed.

Next year's projects include: retirement of our bus (as it nears its end of life), Sanctuary lighting rebuilding of the wiring. Partial conversion of office lighting to LED. A sub-group is working on the bus issues at this time.

Our group remains active and growing into 2020. We would like to thank our caring and devoted members of the property management committee.

Mission Team

The Mission Team has been active this year in a number of projects to help Bethlehem Church be more active and visible in our outreach in the community.

The Community Meals have been extremely successful. The Bethlehem congregation responded well by signing up to provide meals once a month for 30 – 45 persons from the community. Augustana Church also provided a month of meals. Invitations are sent to Augustana apartments, Salvation Army, and A Place to Belong. Approximately 60 volunteers were involved to serve over 360 – 400 meals.

In February the Mission Team encouraged members to take part in the Feed My Starving Children program in Fargo, ND. 18 persons took part in this event. The cost of the gas for the church bus was paid by the Mission Team.

While the Project Friendship has gotten off to a slow start, the first client family is meeting with their mentor family. The updated brochure has been distributed to several local agencies and there has been positive preliminary response.

In May the Mission Team coordinated with the Mahube OTWA organization to provide household items to some of their clients who are going from homelessness or being released from rehabilitation programs into a home. The congregation responded well by providing literally a room full of donated items.

October 12 the Mission Team sponsored a work day with the current Habitat for Humanity project. In spite of extremely cold weather 12 Bethlehem members responded.

October 13 was the Mission Team's annual fundraiser, the Potato Bar. 127 persons were served and \$885.90 was cleared. It involved 105 volunteer hours. The Mission Team members served the October Community Meal on October 17 with intentionally planned leftovers from the Potato Bar fundraiser.

The Godspell production has been postponed until 2020. If plans are activated the Mission Team has designated \$2,000 to help sponsor it. This would probably be done in conjunction with the Worship and Music Committee.

The Mission Team has been exploring the idea of having more publicity about events, not only for their projects, but possibly other committees events. This is only to help provide information and possibly pictures to assist the Director of Operations.

Joyce Skogstad, Mission Team Secretary

Under Misc. Funds: Mission Team Account

2019 Beginning Balance	\$3,403.91	
Received	1,385.90	
Distributed	<u>151.68</u>	
2019 Ending Balance	\$4,638.13	(\$2,000 designated for music event) (\$1,000 designated for local Habitat for Humanity)



**Annual Fall Fundraiser
Potato Bar**



**Feed My Starving Children
Food Pack Event**



**Mahube OTWA
Household Shower Collection**

Hospitality Team

This year the Hospitality Team includes Bobbi Nycklemoe, team chair, Amy Fronning, staff member, Val Johnson, and Marcia Johnson.

The Hospitality Team is continuing to develop hospitality ministries that welcome and engage new members and visitors to Bethlehem. This year we hosted two New Member Sundays May and December welcoming 9 families (13 people) to Bethlehem.

The Hospitality Team was happy to team up with the Beyond the Building Campaign committee in hosting the campaign completion Celebration Sunday the end of September. We had special musical guests the “Holy Hootenanners” leading worship and then celebrated after worship with food, fellowship and a Corn Hole Tournament. Lots of fun was had by all! It was a great opportunity to come together as a congregation and share the successful completion of the building campaign.

The committee has also been working on a new Church Directory, but doing it a new way. No portrait sessions were required, instead we asked you to update your contact information and upload your favorite photo/snapshot of your family into the church directory. The cost of a directory will be \$5. Thank you to all who participated in the directory.

We look forward to continuing to build the hospitality ministries here at Bethlehem.



Celebration Sunday

Tree of Hope

The Tree of Hope is a program sponsored by you, the congregation, to bring Christmas joy to those who might not otherwise be able to experience it. You purchased and wrapped Christmas gifts for 67 individuals who were able to check items off their Christmas wish lists such as warm coats, clothing items, shoes, new undergarments, pillows and blankets. In addition, you purchased children’s toys to fill 15 Salvation Army requests, 15 gift cards for Augustana apartment residents, and 20 personal item care packages for Someplace Safe shelter and 4 teens rescued from sex trafficking in Otter Tail county..

What a difference these efforts have made for families in our community!

Someplace Safe – 20 personal care packages

Victims of Sex Trafficking - 4 gifts for teens

Salvation Army – 15 children’s gifts

Augustana Apartments - 15 gift cards for residents

Family gifts – 67 individuals

Sr. High Rainy Lake Houseboat Trip



Highlights of 2019

- Syttende Mai Dinner
- Family VBS with Luther Crest
- 12 youth and 3 adults went to Rapids City, SD for a Middle School Mission Trip
- 11 youth and 5 adults went to Rainy Lake for a Sr. High Houseboat Trip
- Joint Valley Fair Trip with Fergus Falls ELCA Churches
- Rally Sunday
- NWMN Fall Middle School Youth Gathering at Luther Crest Bible Camp
- Sunday School Christmas Program

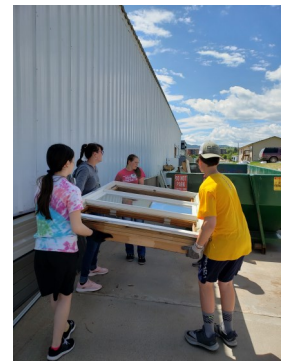
Confirmation meets every Wednesday from 5:30-7:15 p.m. It has a similar but different feel this year. Pastor Tom continues to lead this program with the addition of service/fellowship days for our small groups. Our 9th graders currently meet with their mentors once a month and complete a series of Faith Talk questions. They have had some deep conversations before their faith statements are written in the spring.

4:6 Youth Group-every Wednesday from 3:30-5 p.m. The program includes snack time (fellowship), highs and lows, devotions, and game time. It is well attended (20-25 kids per week!) and liked by our youth.

9:12 Youth Group-every Wednesday from 7:45-9 p.m. The program includes fellowship, highs and lows, devotions, and game time.

5th Quarter Activity Nights-fellowship following sporting events for middle school youth are well attended (sometimes up to 50 kids!), fun-filled evenings.

Sunday School-meets on Sunday mornings from 9-10 a.m. We have large group, music (usually with a guitar or two and a drum), and small group Bible Study. It has been a joy to hear the kids sing in church, collect noisy offering, and take part in the Christmas program.



Middle School Mission Trip—Work Crew



Youth Works

Summer Middle School Mission Trip Rapid City, SD



Discipleship Team

The Discipleship Team consists of 9 dedicated volunteers that meet once a month to discuss topics related to the youth and family programs at Bethlehem. The team includes: Leah Anderson, Abby Drouillard, Alex Schwarzhoff, Laura Pearson, Lisa Huus, Lynn Johnson, Tammy Richards, Anna Gervais and Penny Rogelstad.

We had an eventful year with our youth and family ministries. In June we welcomed Ken Dessellier as our Faith Formation Director. He served four years at Our Savior's Lutheran in East Grand Forks, MN. He will work with our youth and families by providing programming to keep them engaged and active in the church body. Before his arrival, the goal of the Discipleship Team was to keep these programs alive and thriving. Volunteers rose to the occasion and offered to lead Wednesday night youth group, 5th Quarters, and Sunday School.

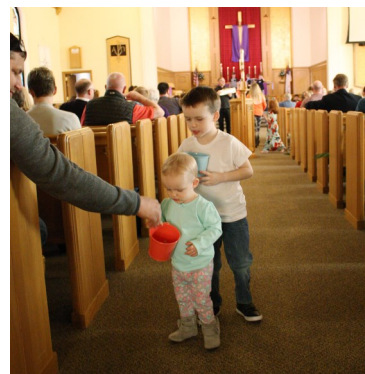
A big project for us was the addition of the Mother's Room and Restroom changing tables. The Mother's Room is a space where any mother can go and nurse their child in private. The room is located behind the sanctuary in the Brides room. Baby changing tables have been added to four restrooms in our church building. We felt that these two projects were important for our young families and growing families here at Bethlehem.

We started off summer with Family VBS led by the Luther Crest counselors. We love the enthusiasm that the counselors bring and hope that by introducing our Bethlehem kids to Luther Crest at a young age, they will be eager to attend camp when they are older. We held VBS in the evening to accommodate working families. We spent three evenings at Bethlehem and got to spend a day at Luther Crest as a group, as well. Luther Crest always has a great day camp curriculum and staff.

In June, we took 12 youth and 3 adults on a mission trip to Rapid City, SD. We, helped with community clean up, hung out with kids we worked with, made and served meals, worked with Habitat for Humanity, and served a community meal.

In July we had 11 high school youth and 5 adults head up to Rainy Lake for a houseboat trip. A trip like this allowed our students to disconnect from our busy world. They had a time without their cell phones. They had plenty of time to reflect and listen to where God could be leading their lives.

Sunday School



Valley Fair Trip



Snow Tubing



Middle School Gathering

Mission - Our Faith in Action

Children's Mission Offering

This year we asked you to come prepared with coins and dollar bills to worship services as our children have been taking a "noisy offering" for two ELCA Mission funds, the **Wildfire Relief and Hurricane Relief and one local mission fund the Bethlehem Deacons Fund.**

Wildfires are raging across California, destroying thousands of homes and wiping out towns. Multiple deaths have been confirmed and large scale, mandatory evacuations have happened.

The world has been experiencing one of the highest concentration of major hurricanes in recent times. Leaving widespread damage across Texas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Haiti, Cuba, the U.S. Virgin Islands. The road to recovery is long, and Lutheran Disaster Response will be there to accompany those affected through every phase of these disasters. Your gifts ensure that our church will be able to provide help and hope for those left homeless or otherwise affected by these disaster for years to come.

For more information about these ELCA Funds visit elca.org.

Thank you for making this work possible through learning, action, prayer and giving.

This year we raised:
Wildfire Relief - \$2,721.08
Hurricane Relief - \$1,048.55
Bethlehem Deacons Fund - \$323.60



Our Deacons Fund

There are many needs in this community. Individuals, couples and families come to this congregation looking for some assistance with gas, food, a utility bill, and so on. We are here to help. Our funds are limited but the pastoral staff visits with everyone with compassion, respect and discernment. The Deacon's Fund is the source we draw from to help with these identified needs.

We take special offerings throughout the year and our Thanksgiving Eve offering is designated entirely to the Deacon's Fund. Your generosity in supporting this fund has been extraordinary over the years. Thank you! Here is how our Deacons Fund helped this past year:

Balance on hand Jan. 1, 2019	\$8,763.30
Total Revenues	\$18,108.74
Total Disbursements	\$13,690.16
Balance on hand Dec. 31, 2019	\$13,211.88

Gas: 227 people or families

Food: 259 people or families

Utilities: 11 people or families

Rent Assistance: 26 people or families

Emergency Housing: 26 people or families

Bus Tickets: 35 people or families

Diapers & Wipes: 61 people or families



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Local Mission Impact

This year in lieu of buying decorative poinsettia plants for the altar area we asked members to sponsor a child for one month in the United Way's Backpack Program. It was a great success! Thank you to all who donated!

Back Pack Program - \$480.00

Bethlehem again hosted a monthly **community meal** the third Thursday of the month serving about 30-45 people each time. Approximately 60 volunteers were involved to serve over 360 – 400 meals.



Beyond the Building Campaign

We did it! The *Beyond the Building* campaign is finished. We praise God for these provisions that you were able to provide. We recognize that your support for this project was above and beyond your annual giving. All your contributions are a blessing to our Congregation.

We hope this FINAL REPORT provides some encouragement to you as you continue to think about your personal stewardship goals and the ongoing needs of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

The Facts and Figures. As of December 31, 2019, these are the balances:

Total Amount Pledged:	\$743,077.00	Percent Pledges Collected: 97%
2016 Pledges Received:	\$242,506.05	Total Pledge Cards: 203
2017 Pledges Received:	\$238,922.11	Project Line of Credit Balance: \$0.00
2018 Pledges Received:	\$141,471.41	
2019 Pledges Received:	<u>\$98,071.26</u>	Building Fund Account Balance: \$183,418.33
Grand Total Pledges Received:	\$720,970.83	

At the outset of this project, a line of credit at Mission Investment Fund was used for a brief two-month period. That was quickly paid off and the rest of the project we were able to cash flow with the pledges received.

The Campaign. An important guiding principle for our campaign was to invite every member of Bethlehem to partner with us. Your response was awesome. Capital campaign experts told us to expect 90% of pledges to come in. We received 97% of pledges. The building improvement projects completed to date include: stained glass window frames, new Sunday school wing windows, new HVAC system, security system, sidewalk replacement, and steeple louver replacement. In addition, our church is debt-free with a healthy balance in our Building Fund of \$183,418.33.

What's Next. We accomplished all the goals of the campaign. A nice *win* for Bethlehem! With the major components completed and paid for, and a *Building Fund* established, we are now in a much better position to handle future building improvement needs. The Church Council will manage these remaining funds so that they are available when future needs arise. With major building concerns now in the rear-view mirror, we can focus on what's in front of us...our ministry.

The *Beyond the Building* campaign is finished.

It has been rewarding to witness this true stewardship and extreme generosity, and we thank you!

From This Place...Our Ministry Grows,

Nathan Johnson and Keith Olson
Campaign Co-Chairs

*And we know in all things God works for the good of those who love him,
who have been called according to His purpose.*

– Romans 8:28

Bethlehem Cemetery Association

The Bethlehem Cemetery Association had a somewhat normal year in 2019. One very sad event was that our part time grounds person, Ron Peterson passed away very unexpectedly on December 3, 2019. Now I am again actively looking for a replacement for Ron.

Losing trees was another big item at both Bethlehem and Kongsberg cemeteries last year. We lost 3 large trees at Kongsberg with one of the larger oak trees going down in a windstorm and then one of the smaller elm trees and the one and only evergreen tree at Kongsberg died. At Bethlehem we lost all of the large elm trees, so we now only have 3 of them left and we also lost 2 boxelders in a wind storm. We are at a situation where we would encourage members to plant some trees as I feel nice trees add to a more pleasant atmosphere in a cemetery. They do add some additional work in the fall with leaf removal and a few root problems but I feel the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. Please consider the possibility of planting a memorial tree at either Bethlehem or Kongsberg cemeteries.

The board only briefly discussed the idea of adding a columbarium at Bethlehem Cemetery last year as we have received very little interest in that item. One item that has had some discussion is weed control. We have hired someone to spray the entire Bethlehem Cemetery the last 2 years and I have been doing some spot spraying in the fall for creeping Charlie the last 3 or 4 years but the creeping Charlie continues to rapidly expand its coverage area. It appears that the only way to get control of this noxious weed is hire someone who has had successful experience with controlling that weed. This operation may get quite expensive so even though we have about \$15,000 in our ending balance we will need to seek additional funding in 2020 to get adequate control of the weed situation.

We had one new addition to the cemetery board last year and we were fortunate to get Richard Barsness to join our board as Daryl Johnson wanted to be replaced. With Dicks experience as a Master Gardener and a tree expert his knowledge in those areas will be very valuable. The board members are Dave Johnson, Judy Bradow, Ginny Ronning, Bonnie Denzel, Richard Barsness, Ron Burt, Erv Hagen, Dick Schauuff and Burnie Wendland. Our 2020 Annual Cemetery meeting will be held at Bethlehem Lutheran church on Wednesday April 29 at 3:30pm and the meeting is open to everyone. The three board members whose 3 year term expires are Bonnie Denzel, Burnie Wendland and Dave Johnson. It would be great to see some new faces at our meeting, so please put it on your schedule.

Thank you,
Dave Johnson
President, Bethlehem Cemetery Board of Directors

Bethlehem WELCA (Women of the ELCA)

As is true each year, 2019 was filled with a variety of activities for the Women of Bethlehem. Our board meets monthly, except for the months of January and July. The board consists of a chair, co-chair, treasurer, secretary, a representative from each of the four circles, and a mission/ action representative.

RECAP OF 2019

Mission/action hosted about 35 Love Days this year. The fruits of their labor resulted in many quilts, layettes, and school kits for Lutheran World Relief. They also donate quilts to Hospice, Salvation Army, A Place to Belong, those who receive mattresses from Slumberland Furniture, The Veteran's Home, and the Haiti team headed by Kevin Wallevand, each Bethlehem graduating senior, and each baby baptized in our church. They accomplish all this by working four days a month from January through November.

The Women of Bethlehem hosted the April 10th Lenten Meal. The money raised from that meal was donated to the youth of Bethlehem.

Mary circle was in charge of the Spring Brunch. This was served on April 6th. Tammy Richards presented the unique program, playing her steel drums. The offering of \$411.00 was added to the fund for new chairs for Fellowship Hall. \$3000 of our savings are promised for the chair fund.

Continued on page 17.....

Bethlehem WELCA (Women of the ELCA)

.....continued from page 16

Conference 7 Spring Gathering was held at Zion of Amor on April 29th. Norma & Dolly attended. Gary and Cindy Nolte spoke about their trips to Honduras and how tent cities remain after the disasters struck their regions. The in-kind physical offerings went to Churches United and for Public Health Family Home Visiting. The large number of items contributed, shows the generosity of churches in Conference 7. We also became aware of Mary Magdalene Awards to be awarded to women in our conference, who, as Mary Magdalene did, go and tell about and show Christ's love. Nominations were sent in for Dolly Johnson and Pat Johnson, to represent all special and treasured Bethlehem women deserving of this honor. At the Luther Crest convention in Sept. they were given a rose, a certificate, and a monetary donation to charity of their choice. They both chose Lutheran Relief.

Once again Women of Bethlehem provided Scandinavian treats for the May 17 Syttende Mai dinner.

Martha circle was in charge of the successful salad luncheon on June 12th, with Naomi circle assisting. Our net profit was \$2,602.42. This was down from last year. Part of the reason might be because people were not called about bringing salads, baked goods or donations. It was made easy to sign up on Computer Genius. Unfortunately, those not comfortable with computer usage didn't receive human contact.

We were able to hold our annual potluck picnic at Roosevelt Park this year! For the past three years we have held our Family Potluck in the Fellowship Hall due to less than picnic like weather. Aug. 7th turned out to be a very inviting day. With the dishes brought by attendees, and the chicken provided by the Women of Bethlehem, everyone enjoyed a tasty meal as well as great fellowship.

JoEllen and I attended the 32nd MN Synodical Women's Organization Annual Convention at Luther Crest entitled "Loving the Least of These" on Sept. 20-21. We had the pleasure of staying in new cabin rooms. The weather was comfortable, the food good, and the fellowship wonderful. It was extra special that Dolly Johnson and Pat Johnson were able to be present to receive their Mary Magdalene Awards described earlier.

We did not get any volunteers for Fall Fundraising. We received some donations and proceeded to plan a raffle. This turned out to be more complicated than expected. The prizes were \$500.00, a "Flowers and Baskets" 90"x102" quilt with two accompanying decorative pillows, and a wood turned bowl. We asked each woman to sell at least one book of tickets. The results were not what we had hoped. I would not recommend a raffle again. Pat Johnson and Adriane Miller ran the Farmers' Market, which brought in \$546.50. This together with \$1,684 from the raffle totaled \$2,230.50 for the Fall Fundraiser.

On October 17th it was Women of Bethlehem's turn to provide the entertainment for the Pioneer Care's Sunshine Program. Shar Anderson and Suzie Sanner did a great job of entertaining the residents.

Saturday, Oct. 19 Timmy Wasson and I attended the Conference 7 WELCA Fall Gathering at Eagle Lake Lutheran Church, Battle Lake, MN. The program was provided by the singing group **Heaven Bound Trio**.

On Nov. 12th our annual Thank Offering Service was held. Circle members served as greeters, ushers, readers, etc. We collected \$1443.00 to support global ministries.

Our Christmas brunch was held on Saturday, December 7th. Members of Mary Circle served a delightful brunch. Then Bethlehem members, Joyce Skogstad, and Rud Wasson, put on the skit "God Can Do Anything," after which Suzie Sanner played Christmas Carols while attendees enjoyed singing.

Our year end disbursements were approved as presented by the board. Last year \$10,000 was distributed. A total of \$8,000 was divided among 17 different programs this year after taking \$1000 out of savings. We also donated \$1,472 during the year to post prom party, Altar Guild, Beyond the Building, and Luther Crest campers and scholarships. I'm sure 2020 will bring us many blessings and opportunities for "Loving the Least of These" or displaying the spirit of a Mary Magdalene.

Respectfully Submitted,

Norma Van Sickle (739-9071), 2019 Co-chair with JoEllen Thacker (739-2394), for Bethlehem WELCA

Supplemental Committee Financial Reports



Christ. Compassion. Community.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN FOUNDATION, INC.

Annual Meeting Agenda

January 26, 2020

- I. Call to order
- II. Approval of the Minutes of the January 27, 2019 Annual Meeting
- III. Report to the Congregation
- IV. Questions and Answers
- V. Acceptance of New Board Members (Elected at the Congregational Meeting)
- VI. Adjourn

REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION

Purpose as stated in Bylaws:

The purpose of this corporation shall be to advance the Christian faith through the programs and activities of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and its members, and to manage the assets, make investments, receive and distribute income from money held by this corporation and from future gifts and bequests to the corporation, which assets shall be used for the beneficial programs of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and for the maintenance and improvements of the physical plant and equipment of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Dear Members of Bethlehem Lutheran Foundation Fund, Inc.:

It has been the consistent, long-term policy of the Foundation to financially support the youth of our congregation. In 2019 the Foundation financially supported the following:

- a. Twelve camper scholarships to Luther Crest Bible Camp for a total amount of \$600.
- b. Two \$1,000.00 scholarships to students attending a sponsoring ELCA college (one student attending Concordia College in Moorhead and one student attending St. Olaf College in Northfield). These colleges match the scholarships awarded by a sponsoring congregation.
- c. Youth mission trips in the amount of \$2200.
- d. Support of the Seminary Education of Anna Gervais from July – December of \$4,002

The Foundation has a request form for funding that can be obtained from the church office. This request form informs the Foundation who is requesting funds, the cost of the project, the amount of money requested, the time frame, and a contact person for follow-up questions. It is greatly appreciated that this form be filled out when there is a request for money. We use only interest money generated from money held in perpetuity.

While the Beyond the Building Campaign was active, we took more of a “back seat” role. In 2019, we have met eight times, gearing up to become more visible within the Congregation. We, with the capable assistance of Amy Fronning, have created a new brochure which was sent to the printer in early January. We are hopeful that in 2020 we can also provide the Congregation with some educational forums.

We have reviewed the Foundation’s investments with Bonnie Denzel. Bonnie is a former Foundation Board member and continues to provide valuable advice and service to the Foundation. We have an Investment Policy that we follow, which is quite conservative.

The Foundation wants to thank everyone who supported the Foundation through memorials, bequests, and/or donations. The Foundation encourages all members to remember the Foundation Fund for memorials and donations and in your estate planning.

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.....continued from page 30

We are a 501(c)(3) charitable organization; therefore, your donation or memorial is tax deductible. We have a plaque across the hall from the office for recognition of substantial gifts made to the Foundation (unless they request no recognition), and we would like to express appreciation to all the people who have donated in 2019.

We thank DiaAnn Juven Smidt for continuing to assist the Foundation with the coordination of the College Scholarship Program. The Foundation Board expresses its appreciation to Renae Rasmusson for her service as Treasurer, Todd Wahlund for his service as Vice-President, JoEllen Thacker for her service as President, Pam Olson for her service as Secretary, Penny Rogelstad, Rolf Nycklemoe, Mark Petersen (Church Council President) and Pastor Tom for their service as board members.

Thank you for your continued support,

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN FOUNDATION FUND

Bethlehem Lutheran Foundation Fund, Inc. Annual Meeting January 27, 2019

Call to order by Vice President Todd Wahlund

Minutes from the January 28, 2018 annual meeting, as printed in the congregational report, were approved.

VP Wahlund reported on the purpose of the Foundation and areas that the Foundation has financially supported throughout the year. There is a request form for funding that can be obtained from the church office, and submitted to the Foundation.

The Foundation has been consistent with a long-term policy to financially support the youth of our congregation. We only use interest money generated from money held in perpetuity, and all gifts are tax deductible. There is a plaque across the hall from the office for recognition of substantial gifts made to the Foundation.

THANK YOU to all who have contributed to the foundation throughout the years.

- 2018:
- a. Nine camper scholarships to Luther Crest Bible Camp.
 - b. Five \$1,000 scholarships to students attending a sponsoring ELCA college (four students attending Concordia College in Moorhead and one student attending St. Olaf College in Northfield). These colleges match the scholarships awarded by a sponsoring congregation.
 - c. \$950 in support of youth mission trips.
 - d. \$3,000 in support of National Youth Gathering in Texas (11 youth and 3 adults).
 - e. \$1,250 to cover cost of "The Executive Certificate in Religion Fundraising" requested by Pastor Tom.
 - f. In 2017, the Foundation approved \$4,000 to support travel expenses to allow Pastoral staff to make in person visits to congregational members attending area colleges. Positive responses have been received by students and parents. As of the end of April 2018, there were \$2,532 remaining in the funds to be used for futures visits.
 - g. Bonnie Denzel reviewed the investments of the Foundation and she suggested transferring \$15,000 from cash to a CD.
 - h. \$766 to support Jenny to help cover transportation costs for continuing education in Colorado, which she later indicated that she was not going, so the funds were not spent.
 - i. \$518 to support Pastor Jake continuing education to attend "Leading Well" workshop.
 - j. Committed to financially support the internship of Anna Gervais.

Financial report on page 33 of the congregational annual report, was approved, with a thank you to Linda Johnson for serving as treasurer.

Acceptance of new board member, Penny Rogelstad, elected at the congregational meeting.

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Olson, Secretary

Other Community Reports



Christ. Compassion. Community.



Northwestern Minnesota Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

"Mary was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that."

"I'm bursting with God-news; I'm dancing the song of my Savior God."

Luke 1:29 and 46 (The Message)

Synod Staff



Bishop Bill Tesch



Pr. Karla Mickelson
Associate to the Bishop for
Synodical Administration



Pr. Keith Zeh
Director for
Evangelical Mission



Pr. Jon Olson
Synod Minister for
Vocations

Dear Siblings in Christ of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod,

Greetings in the name of the One who both shakes us to the core and fills us with joy!

I write now in the fourth week of Advent, 2019. The gently falling snow outside my window belies the turmoil now swirling in our world and in our hearts. Deepening political divides both here and abroad, dire reports of a changing climate, mass shootings, the crisis facing our farmers all conspire to convince us that we are headed toward catastrophe. I submit that the world of Mary the mother of Jesus was no less disconcerting. Into such a world God spoke a new word, showed up in a new way and by so doing transformed Mary, then us, then one day: all of creation. I wonder if we could seek the heart of Mary, if we could boldly interrogate God like Mary interrogated the messenger of God, if we could embrace the promised future even if it seems (for now) as fragile as a suckling child. For this I pray, and I invite you to join me. I firmly believe it is a prayer that God and God's angels rush to answer!

As you gather in your annual meeting I invite you to think of the other 222 congregations and 90,000 siblings in Christ across our synod who are also gathering. Many of the decisions you make today will be an expression of your partnership in the Gospel with them, with us. The Gospel is the treasure we cherish and to which we bear witness, a treasure that we guard only by giving it away.

In the first 90 days of my time serving as your Bishop, I am pleased to report on the outstanding accomplishments of your amazing synod staff with whom I am privileged to work.

- We have established a vision: "Communities so emboldened by the grace of God through Jesus Christ that we are freed to be wholly devoted to loving Jesus and loving our neighbor."
- We have articulated three core values: "Faithfulness, Authenticity and Love."
- We have put in place three operating principles: "Making a safe space for the ministry of the Gospel to unfold; Making a way into the future; Making places at the table for diverse or unheard voices."
- We have introduced an innovative new synod staffing model that is producing over 200 hours each month of face-to-face engagement with communities and leaders across our synod.
- We have responded to the emerging crisis in our farming communities and have developed plans for further response early this year.
- We have assisted 11 communities in conflict with professional guidance and support.
- We are accompanying 36 congregations and parishes in call processes, and have developed new tools to make our work more efficient and responsive.
- We have invited our eight Conference Deans to play a larger role in the process when congregations have a change of pastors, and they have graciously and professionally stepped up to the challenge!



Kathy Levenhagen, SAM
Synod Minister for
Community & Leader
Engagement
(Conferences 1 & 2)



Pr. Karen Young Trenne
Synod Minister for
Community & Leader
Engagement
(Conferences 3 & 5)



Pr. Genelle Netland
Synod Minister for
Community & Leader
Engagement
(Conferences 4 & 6)



Pr. Brad Skogen
Synod Minister for
Community & Leader
Engagement
(Conferences 7 & 8)

- We have reorganized our Candidacy Committee and clarified the candidacy process, thus clearing the way for what we believe will be many new candidates for ordained ministry.
- We have met with our Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAMs) and are developing a system to equip and support them in their work while also holding them and the congregations they serve accountable to our church's unique witness to the Gospel.
- We have identified and begun work with five clusters of congregations where God may be calling them to move into the future in a new way: reaching out together to their increasingly diverse communities, and/or restructuring for long-term sustainability.
- We have designed a process and pulled together a team for developing a strategic plan - a draft of which will be presented at this year's synod assembly.
- We have 12 congregations engaged in "Cultivating Generous Congregations," a collaborative effort with several other synods to train leaders of small membership congregations to build a culture of generosity in their church and community.

I want you to know how immensely grateful I am for your trust in extending this call to serve with you in this way. I'm a newcomer here, and you have shown me nothing but grace and patience while I have learned the names of people and places, ways of doing things, directions to here and there, etc. I must beg your continued patience, as I continue to learn and to grow to know you, the wonderful people of God of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod!

In Christ our Brother,

Pastor Bill Tesch
Bishop of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA



Cheryl Zeh
Office Manager
Financial Coordinator



Kristina Dernier
LYO Advisor
Gathering Coordinator



John Bell
Interim Webmaster
Newsletter Coordinator

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Annual Report to Congregations

From PioneerCare – January 2020

Our mission is to promote quality of life in a Christ-like way for those we serve by providing diverse and holistic care, focusing always on individual dignity and worth.

Warmest greetings to our partners in this special ministry of caring for those in need. Our partnership goes back to a day in 1926 when local pastors and other community leaders gathered to change the future of aging in our community. From that vision, Pioneer was built. Today, we give thanks for that common connection we have to our five partner congregations.

In the same spirit of that meeting over 90 years ago, leadership and church representatives have positioned Pioneer to respond to the needs of our neighbors, friends, and loved ones through these living settings and services:

- **PioneerCare Center**, our flagship campus, provides up to 105 people with short term rehabilitative therapy and long term care in a beautiful, award winning setting.
- **Pioneer Pointe** is a 55-unit apartment complex designed for independent living with ala carte services for older adults.
- **Pioneer Cottages** provides specialized memory care and support for up to 70 people living with Alzheimer's and other forms of memory loss in Fergus Falls and Breckenridge.
- **PioneerLink** offers technology-based services in more than 650 homes in over a dozen counties, including personal alert services and home medication management solutions.

CHURCH MEMBERS' ROLES IN OUR PARTNERSHIP

We thank those who serve as Auxiliary, Foundation, and Corporate Board members, leading us forward. Your congregation's delegates to Pioneer have a formal role in representing your church, and many of you have served as volunteers, and faithfully visited your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ while they have been with us. Thank you for this partnership in ministry.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions regarding PioneerCare, please contact us:

Nathan Johnson, PioneerCare CEO	Phone 218.998.1518
Pr. David Strom, PioneerCare Chaplain	Phone 218.998.1504
Sara Watkins, PioneerCare Center Administrator	Phone 218.998.1516
Levi Preston, Director of Nursing	Phone 218.998.1514
Steve Guttormson, PioneerCare Foundation	Phone 218.998.1501





Luther Crest Bible Camp

8231 County Road 11 NE Alexandria, MN 56308
(320) 846-2431 Fax (320) 846-0201 www.luthercrest.org



Greetings to all and let's Celebrate 75 years of Luther Crest!

Today, youth and young adults need to hear and experience the love of Jesus in a conflicted world.

This is why Luther Crest provides a safe space and faith-formation leaders who allow the love of Jesus to be heard and felt, giving youth and families the needed confidence to thrive in their lives and know that Jesus loves them.



Join us as Luther Crest celebrates 75 years of developing and equipping disciples who are sent out into the world to share the Christmas message of Christ dwelling in our hearts every day!

Please contact us as you continue to be guided by God in your mission!

Summer 2020 is now in full swing. Registration is open! Please note that the First Early Bird Date is February 14. Register early for great savings and a life changing experience!

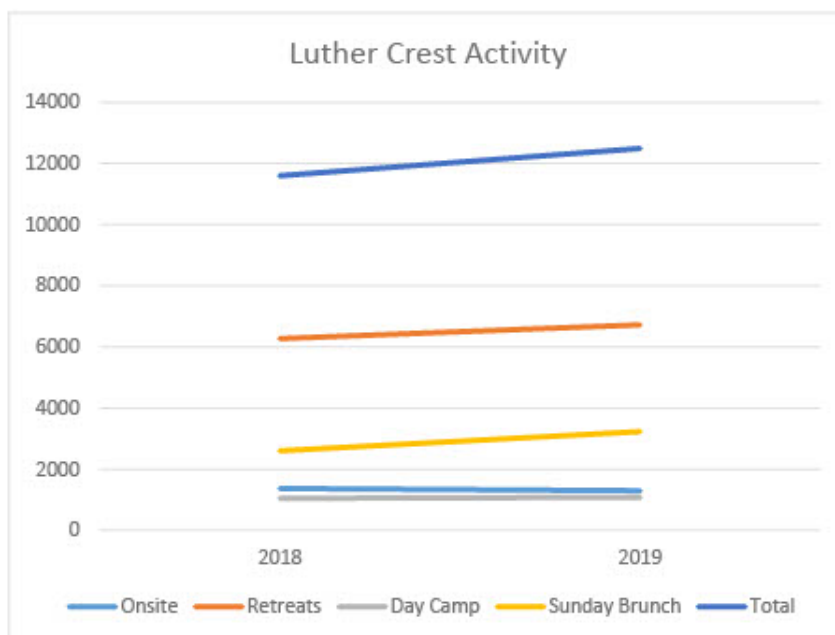
Please come and join us this summer and offer this incredible opportunity to the youth in your church today! Plus, there are many opportunities for families during Women's Week, Family Camp, Family Weekend and Mission trips and more!

Special Events for 2020

- 75th Anniversary Celebration & Luther Crest Staff Alumni Weekend: July 31 – Aug 3
- 75th Anniversary Luther Crest Quilt Auction: Saturday, August 1 at Luther Crest
- 75th Anniversary Celebration Brunch and Worship – Sunday August 2, 2020
 - Worship at 10:45 am / Brunch at 9 am
- 75th Anniversary Luther Crest Golf Scramble: Monday, August 3 at Miliona Golf Club
- 75th Anniversary Celebration Luther Crest Annual Meeting - To Be Announced

Rise Up Campaign Update: Thank you to everyone who has committed to the Rise Up Campaign to retire Luther Crest's missional debt. Including cash and pledges we have reached \$417,358 of our 1.1 million goal.

Volunteer Club: You and your congregation are invited to come and be a part of our wonderful volunteer ministry called *Scattered to Serve*. Built on the philosophy of Christian hospitality and grounded in the idea that many volunteers can make a huge difference and build great things, please contact camp today to see what opportunities are available now!



Inspiring faith, stewardship and community in God's creation

A ministry for all people in all seasons!