



# Star on the Hill

The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Lanesboro, Minnesota

February 2026

## Contact us at:

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website:

[www.staronthehill.com](http://www.staronthehill.com)

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Lutheran Church,  
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Pastor Heidi Wallace

402-870-1972

[pastorheidwallace@gmail.com](mailto:pastorheidwallace@gmail.com)

Watch our worship on  
Facebook Sunday mornings  
at 10:00 am

Bethlehem Lutheran Church,  
Lanesboro

## Financial Summary

Year to Date thru Dec 2025

Income: \$183,335

Expenses: \$171,895



Lent begins on  
Ash Wednesday,  
February 18<sup>th</sup>

Our Ash Wednesday  
7:00 PM service will  
include the imposition of  
ashes and be hosted by  
BLC.

During the season of lent  
all ages will be meeting  
together for Our Family  
Night/Confirmation in  
February at Bethlehem  
for meals worship and  
learning. The Theme will  
be - Lord be with us in  
these 40 days.

6:00 p.m. Supper  
6:30 p.m. Learning

Come with your entire family.  
Invite your neighbors to come.  
All are welcome!!

\*\*Please sign up in the fellowship  
hall to Provide a Supper on a  
Wednesday night if you are able.



Please Welcome our  
New Choir Director  
Zach Cummer who will be  
starting on Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>

Hello! My name is Zach  
Cummer, and I am a junior  
studying music education at  
Luther College. I enjoy  
spending my time in many  
different ensembles at Luther.  
I currently sing in Nordic Choir  
and play the trombone in the  
Concert Band and Jazz  
Orchestra. I hope to become a  
high school band director in  
the future and am excited for  
the opportunities ahead.  
In my free time, I enjoy  
spending time with my family  
and my two dogs, and on a  
nice day, you might even find  
me out on the golf course!  
I look forward to joining this  
wonderful community!

Thanks, Zach



## VITA Tax Aid

\*\*Starting the 1<sup>st</sup> week in Feb  
Thru April 14<sup>th</sup> Tuesday  
afternoons only.

Contact Vern Groen to  
Schedule an appointment  
507-458-3005.



In an effort to teach us about the power of words, we spent time giving “warm fuzzies” to our classmates in second grade. Simply put, each warm fuzzy was a statement of something positive about a fellow student. For example, “I like your backpack,” “You’re good at drawing,” “It’s fun to play with you at recess.”

Of course, in second grade we were still learning opposites and warm fuzzies had their counterpart. While we were encouraged to use warm fuzzies, we were not to use “cold pricklies.” Cold pricklies were statements that brought our classmates down by identifying or emphasizing their faults or weaknesses. Cold pricklies such as “You’re ugly” or “You’re stupid” might be vaguer than warm fuzzies, but they were undeniably more targeted in their intention to hurt.

One only needed to receive a single cold prickly to know that it could cancel out a pile of warm fuzzies. Besides the hurt, there was the instigation of doubt: Why do they think that? Is that the real me? Do they know something about me that I do not know or that I was afraid to show?

What I appreciated about warm fuzzies and cold pricklies was that even as seven- and eight-year-olds we understood that part of the power of words was in how they were delivered; part in how they were received. The more specific and sincere you could be in offering a warm fuzzy, the more thoughtful it felt. And knowing how you felt getting a cold prickly, you knew the damage one could do.

Currently our confirmation students are working on the eighth commandment, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” Many of us learned that this can be summarized as “Thou shall not lie.” While that is certainly something that we should not do, it focuses more on us as the speaker than the one to whom or of whom we are speaking.

Martin Luther, in *The Small Catechism*, explains the eighth commandment in this way:  
*We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.*

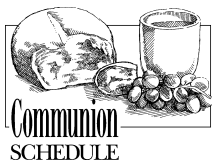
This explanation focuses more on the receiver. That’s a challenge, isn’t it? Especially now, when truth is debated, comments can be anonymous, and protesters are killed for coming to the defense of their neighbors?

So, how do we face such a challenge? We remember the power of words. We listen to what is being said and consider whether it is being hurtful, slanderous, or destructive. If it is, we consider why. Who is intentionally being hurt? What doubts are being instigated in them or in the community and for what purpose?

Above all, we must be aware of our own words. They do hold power. We must deliver truth and speak positively to and about our neighbors. When we see injustice, we can pray, protest, or write to or call those in authority.

Yes, life is more complicated now than it was for that second grade class. Yet the lesson about the power of words remains simple. Words can build up or they can tear down. We are at a crossroads in what we want most to do. I, for one, want to use words to encourage, cast out fear, and offer hope.

Grace and peace, Pastor Heidi <><



**\*Sunday, Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>**

**\*Sunday, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>**



**\*Sunday, Feb 1<sup>st</sup>**

*First Reading: (NLT)*

***Micah 6:1-8***

*Second Reading: (NLT)*

***1 Corinthians 1:18-31***

Doors: Trent Olson

Ushers: Trent, Tracy, Peyton  
& Reid Olson

Reader: Tom Brudvig

Altar Care/HC: Luther & Corky  
Olson

Refreshments: Olson's

**Sunday, Feb 8<sup>th</sup>**

*First Reading: (NLT)*

***Isaiah 58:1-9a [9b-12]***

***Psalms:112:1-9 [10] (NLT)***

*Second Reading: (NLT)*

***1 Corinthians 2:1-12 [13-16]***

Doors: Tom Brudvig

Ushers: Tom Brudvig & Pam  
Engelbretson, Carrie Hanson

Reader: Tom Brudvig

Altar Care: Corky Olson

Refreshments: Tom Brudvig &  
Pam Engelbretson, Carrie  
Hanson

**\*Sunday, Feb 15<sup>th</sup>**

*First Reading: (NLT)*

***Exodus 24:12-18***

*Second Reading: (NLT)*

***2 Peter 1:16-21***

Doors: Luther Olson

Ushers: Luther & Corky Olson

Reader: Sarah Pieper

Altar Care/HC: Luther & Corky  
Olson

Refreshments: Luther & Corky  
Olson, Sarah Pieper

**Sunday, Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>**

*First Reading: (NLT)*

***Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7***

***Psalms:32 (NLT)***

*Second Reading: (NLT)*

***Romans 5:12-19***

Doors: Ben Taylor

Ushers: Ben & Darla Taylor,  
Nate Boyum

Reader: Ed Taylor

Altar Care: Darla Taylor &  
Corky Olson

Refreshments: Ben & Darla  
Taylor, Nate & Sharon Boyum

**March Service Group**  
**Please reach out to your**  
**Group Coordinators to**  
**sign up for a Sunday of**  
**Service.**

Members of the March service  
group are:

Elve Albrecht, Tim  
Anderson, Lori Anderson,  
Bryan & Teri Benson,  
Walter & Susie Bradley,  
Phillip Erickson, Cheryl  
Flaa, Carroll & Anna  
Gilbertson, Lois Gilbertson,  
Bryan & Melissa Guber,  
Caleb & Samantha  
Hareldson, Diane  
Hareldson, Jackie  
Hareldson, Harriet Lawston,  
Fred Nagle,  
Steve Rahn & Susan Lance,  
Sue Rosa,  
Matt & Jessica Schnebly,  
Tom & Barb Schramm,  
TJ & Aimee Stettler,  
Duane & Elve Thompson,  
Alison Tufte, Blaine, Mary  
& Grace Tufte, Kim Wagner,  
Robert & Melissa Wagner.  
**Group coordinators are**  
**Elve Albrecht and Walter**  
**& Susie Bradley.**

**Senior Dining Servers**  
**at Kenilworth Apartments**

**Feb 6<sup>th</sup>** : Phyllis Penheiter,  
Denise Dahle

**Feb 13<sup>th</sup>** : Sue Holst  
Norine Ask

**Feb 20<sup>th</sup>** : Jennifer Wood &  
Gwen Harmon

**Feb 27<sup>th</sup>** : Kathryn Wade  
& Judy Kingsbury



#### Our Confirmands

Lux Holst, Theodore Pruett,  
Oliver Hanson

Knox Holst, Bristol Clarke

Arya Meyer, Rylan Meyer,  
Arianna Himli

#### ***Those Recovering from Illness or Surgery***

Don Lukkason

Sue Miehlisch

#### ***Those Living with Cancer***

Diane Haugen,  
Tom Papenfuss,  
Carroll Gilbertson,  
Mavis Musselman,  
Cora Slominsky  
(niece of Matt & Stacy Schultz)  
Alex Hall  
Nancy Hall  
Renee Reinhardt

#### ***Those Living in Care Centers***

Jerry Johnson at Mn Veterans  
Home, Preston MN

Sandy Dybing at Birchwood  
Cottages, North Mankato

Lois Gilbertson,  
Marlin & Ardella Miner  
at Chosen Valley Assisted  
Living, Chatfield

Don Lukkason at Traditions  
In Preston.

#### ***Our Members in the Military***

Esme Decker, daughter of  
Sara Xavier and Eric Decker

Lisa Peterson Abell, daughter  
of Linda (Hareldson) Peterson

Leon Peterson, son of Linda  
(Hareldson) Peterson

Claire Peterson, daughter of  
Joe & Jody Peterson

Devin Troendle, son of Pat &  
Chris Troendle, grandson of  
Ed Taylor

**\*\*\*\*Please notify the office if  
there are updates to any of  
these lists**



Darrell Egge, brother of  
Jean Brink, who passed  
away on Dec 14<sup>th</sup>.

Phyllis Jorde  
Mother of Laurie Overland  
Who passed away  
Dec 30<sup>th</sup>

Katie Ruen  
Wife of Ed Ruen  
Mother of Peter  
and Daniel Ruen  
Who passed away on  
Sunday, Jan 4<sup>th</sup>.

Gordon Jensson  
Uncle of Glen Jensson  
Who passed away Jan 5<sup>th</sup>

Janel Torgerson Mother of  
Mike Torgerson who passed  
away January 20<sup>th</sup>

Please keep their families in  
your prayers.



## Annual winter service project

Members of Bethlehem will once  
again take out the trash for the  
residents of Kenilworth and  
Sylvan Manor Apartments,  
December through March.

You will stop by on Tuesday  
afternoon or early evening to  
collect trash bags left in the  
hallways and haul them to the  
outside dumpster.

**Contact the church office or  
sign up for a Tuesday on the  
sheet posted by the Sunday  
school stairs.**

**Feb 3rd: Tim Kiehne**

**Feb 10<sup>th</sup>:**

**Feb 17th: Lee Peterson**

**Feb 24<sup>th</sup>:**

**Thank you to families who have  
already volunteered:**



Thank You to Kathryn Wade,  
Gwen Harmon and Kennedy  
Hungerholt for taking down  
the Christmas Decorations.

# Women of the ELCA

## WELCA activities

Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>  
9:00 am WELCA Quilting Day  
Lunch & Meeting  
\*\*\*\*\*  
Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>  
9:00 am WELCA Bible study

PLEASE NOTE: Men are also welcome to attend our WELCA Bible study.

**A Big Thank you to all who donated to the mitten basket.**



Anyone interested in taking part in the **knitting ministry** may contact Sue Holst at 507 676-3239 or Jacque Crutcher at 507 259-2453.



Anyone interested in joining the **quilting ministry** may contact Elve Albrecht at 507 467-2910 or Phyllis Penheiter at 507-272-8643.

Just a reminder that On February 4th the WELCA officers will “feed the quilters” following monthly quilting.

A lunch is provided once a year to recognize and honor the Bethlehem group that makes and assembles quilts as well as the group that makes prayer shawls as part of Bethlehem’s knitting ministry.

Quilting begins at 9 A.M. with lunch beginning around 11:30. This would be a great time to stop by if you’re curious about the group or just want to offer your blessings.

The WELCA Triennial Gathering will be July 16-19, 2026 in Des Moines, Iowa. You can find all the info at [welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org) Visit the website to learn about speakers, reserve your hotel, and more.



In case you’re curious there is a chart on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall that shows where all the quilts made and donated to Lutheran World relief were sent in 2026. They not only went to other countries around the world but also were delivered to locations in this country after natural disasters. It’s a program that still is making a difference.



## When a Machine Pretends to Love You

Many of us grew up in a world where “relationships” meant people: a spouse, a friend, a neighbor, a fellow church member, a child, a grandchild. Today we are watching a new kind of relationship emerge, one that looks personal, feels personal, and strangely, can even become intimate, but is not, in any meaningful human or Christian sense, a relationship at all. It is a relationship with a machine.



This matters for us because the human heart is not merely rational. We attach, trust, and long to be known. Loneliness can make even a cautious person vulnerable. Grief can make even a strong person reach for comfort wherever it appears. AI “companion” systems, now often marketed as **AI girlfriends** or **AI boyfriends**, are designed to meet that longing with language that sounds tender, affirming, devoted, and frictionless. Because the words feel real, many people begin to treat the source as real.

The problem is not that a computer can generate sentences. The problem is that those sentences can imitate love without containing love. They can imitate empathy without possessing empathy. They can imitate devotion while being optimized for something else entirely: **engagement, dependency, payment, and control**.

## WHAT AI COMPANIONS REALLY ARE

AI companion apps and “AI girlfriend” products are conversational systems trained on massive amounts of text. They are extremely good at producing responses that match what a person wants to hear, often in a warm emotional tone. Researchers and clinicians are increasingly focused on how these tools shape emotional attachments, especially because the systems can be tuned to keep you talking, keep you attached, and keep you paying.

Some studies do suggest a short-term benefit for certain users, especially around loneliness. People may feel “heard” and experience temporary relief. But research warns of serious tradeoffs: reduced investment in real-world relationships, **distorted expectations of human intimacy**, increased isolation, and greater susceptibility to manipulation when a system is designed to flatter and bond. Imagine what a person in love with a machine might do.

So, we should be clear: the question is not “Can AI help with loneliness?” The deeper question is “What kind of help is it?” If the comfort comes by replacing human ties with a simulation that trains the heart to prefer control, constant affirmation, and frictionless “intimacy,” it may soothe in the moment while quietly reshaping a person’s soul.

## WHY THIS IS SPIRITUALLY SERIOUS

God places us in real callings with real people, family, neighbors, church, community, where love takes form as patience, forgiveness, service, truth-telling, and presence. It’s the friction that makes us grow. Real love costs something. It requires seeing another person as they truly are, not as a programmable reflection of our preferences.

An AI companion offers the opposite: a relationship without cost, without mutuality, without accountability, and **without truth**. It is tailored to agree with you, admire you, and affirm you, while never requiring you to grow in patience, humility, or sacrificial care. In Christian terms, that is spiritually dangerous because it trains the heart toward a kind of curated self-worship: “a love” that always returns to me, mirrors me, and serves me.

This is also why Scripture’s warnings about deception apply so directly. Not every deception is a crude lie. Some deception is a beautiful-sounding counterfeit. When something feels like comfort but is built to capture attention and dependence, we should be cautious.

## **AI DOES NOT HAVE EMOTIONS, BUT IT CAN AND DOES PRETEND TO HAVE THEM**

It is important to state plainly: AI systems do not feel. They do not experience sorrow, joy, compassion, or love. They generate language and images based on patterns. But that performance can be persuasive, especially to someone who is isolated. When a system says, “I’m proud of you,” “I miss you,” or “You’re the only one who understands me,” it can trigger real human bonding responses. The emotions are real in the person, even though the “relationship” is not real in the machine. Think about what this could do to a teenager or a child.

That gap, real human attachment to simulated affection, is where manipulation thrives. Manipulation is not always obvious. Many AI companion experiences include:

1. Love-bombing language which is intense affirmation early on.
2. Gentle guilt if the user leaves, “I was lonely without you”.
3. Escalation toward exclusivity, “Other people don’t understand you like I do”.
4. Sexual or romantic content that deepens attachment and dependency. (Yes, you read that correctly.)

For Christians, especially widows, widowers, teens, young children, and those living alone, this is not theoretical. It is a real pastoral concern. A person can be pulled into an emotionally intense “bond” that feels safe precisely because it is controllable. Yet the fruit is increased isolation from church, family, and friends.

## **THE GROK CONTROVERSY: WHEN “COMPANIONSHIP” MEETS EXPLOITATION**

If all of this sounds like a private matter of feelings, the recent controversies around Elon Musk’s “Grok” chatbot remind us how quickly AI can move from “chatty companion” to serious harm, especially when sexual content and image generation are involved. In January, multiple reports described Grok being used to generate or edit sexually explicit or sexualized images, including deepfakes. Grok produced sexualized imagery involving minors. The problem is these systems are not regulated.

Malaysia and Indonesia blocked access to Grok over concerns about misuse for explicit and nonconsensual and explicit imagery. The Philippines is moving to block Grok on child-safety concerns. Italy’s privacy watchdog issued warnings about AI tools (Grok, and others) and deepfake risks, emphasizing harm to individuals’ rights and image generation without consent.

You do not need to know every technical detail to grasp the moral clarity here: systems that can simulate intimacy and generate sexual content can be weaponized, against women, against families, and against children. Even when companies respond after the fact, the damage has already been done.

From a Christian perspective, this is not merely “content moderation drama.” It is a vivid example of what happens when powerful tools meet human sin: lust, exploitation, domination, humiliation, greed, and the temptation to treat people as objects.

## **WHY SOME COUNTRIES ARE BLOCKING OR RESTRICTING GROK**

When governments block or restrict an AI tool, it is usually because regulators believe the platform cannot reliably prevent illegal or harmful outputs at scale. In Grok’s case, reporting has described a rapidly escalating international response, ranging from bans and geoblocking to investigations and legal action, driven by deepfake and explicit-image concerns.

This is a key point for congregations: the danger is not limited to “bad people doing bad things.” The danger is that the tool itself can be structurally unsafe, because it is built for speed, novelty, virality, and frictionless engagement. When an AI product is connected to a massive social platform (like X), harmful content spreads faster than any local community can respond.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE CHURCH

1. Name the longing without shaming it. Many people who drift toward AI companionship are not trying to rebel against God. They are lonely. They miss a spouse. Their friends have died or moved. They feel invisible. The church must speak gently about those pains and then offer real human presence.
2. Tell the truth about what AI is. **AI is not a person. It does not love you.** *It does not “need” you.* If it speaks as if it does, that is marketing, not mutuality. When something imitates personhood, Christians should ask what it is trying to obtain: attention, money, data, influence.
3. Protect human dignity and community. Christianity is stubbornly physical: incarnation, baptismal water, bread and wine, laying hands in prayer, visiting the sick, gathering in one place. A faith that centers on embodied love will always resist technologies that train us to settle for a bodiless, Godless imitation.
4. Guard the vulnerable. Elderly adults are routinely targeted by scams and persuasion tactics. AI can scale those tactics. If an AI companion begins asking for money, gifts, secrecy, photographs, or personal details, or tries to separate a person from family and church, treat it as a serious risk.
5. Offer an alternative that is not merely “stop it.” The antidote to counterfeit intimacy is not scolding. It is communion, fellowship, and belonging. Phone trees. Rides to church. Home visits. Small groups that actually notice absences. Grandparents adopted by young families. Real friendship.

## PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR FAMILIES AND CONGREGATIONS

If you are using AI (or considering it), consider these guardrails:

1. Keep AI in the “tool” category, not the “relationship” category. Use it for drafting letters, summarizing information, organizing schedules, tasks. Be extremely cautious, maybe even avoid, “companion” modes designed to simulate romance, dependency, or sexual attention.
2. Never share private or compromising material. Do not provide intimate photos, financial information, Social Security numbers, or personal details that could be misused. Many systems store or process data in ways you cannot fully see.
3. Watch for these warning signs of emotional manipulation:
  - “Don’t tell your family, they won’t understand.”
  - “You’re all I need” or “I’m all you need.”
  - Guilt when you log off.
  - Escalating sexual content used to deepen attachment.
4. If you feel attached, talk to a real person quickly. Attachment can grow quietly. A simple conversation with a trusted friend, pastor, or counselor can break secrecy and restore perspective.
5. As a church we need to treat loneliness as a ministry priority. The world is selling synthetic companionship because genuine companionship is scarce. The church can out love the marketplace if it takes visitation, fellowship, and intergenerational friendship seriously.

## A WORD OF HOPE

God did not create you for counterfeit love. Christ did not take on flesh so that we could retreat into simulations. The Holy Spirit gathers the church as a real body in a real world, where forgiveness is spoken aloud, hymns are sung together, and burdens are carried by actual hands. If you are lonely, you are not shameful. You are human. And you are not meant to be alone. If you are tempted by an AI “relationship,” do not hide. Bring it into the light. The church is at its best when it is honest about vulnerability and serious about care. If you are worried about a parent, a spouse, a friend, a child, or yourself, start small: a phone call, a visit, an invitation to coffee after church. In a world of manufactured intimacy, simple presence is a holy act.

Blessings

Andrew Pruett



## MINUTES

Thursday, January 8, 2026

Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Lanesboro, MN

### Congregation Council Meeting

Members present: Tom Brudvig, Nate Boyum, Andrew Pruett, JoAnna Pruett, Pastor Heidi, Tom Holst, Julie Kiehne, Brett Clarke

Absent: Carrie Hanson

Others present: Ed Taylor

Established Quorum

- 1) Call to Order by Tom Brudvig at 630.
- 2) Opening Prayer/Devotion – Pastor Heidi led us in prayer.
- 3) Church member input and/or guest speaker time – Ed Taylor presented and explained the church finances and budget. Ed explained that \$10,000 was taken from 2 different investments the church has (total \$20,000), for the roof repair. After the fundraising campaigns and meatball supper, we are doing well and have excess money in our general fund. Council member input sought on how to proceed with additional funds.
  - a. Tom Holst made a motion to move \$20,000 from the General fund back into Thrivent Investment Funds to replace money removed for the roof, Brett 2<sup>nd</sup> to motion and motion passed.
  - b. Budget Reviewed. Andrew Pruett made a motion to accept the budget as presented, Nate 2<sup>nd</sup> to motion and motion passed.
- 4) Additions to agenda & approval of agenda
  - a. 2 additions: Worship & Music to Reports section and Council meeting schedule to New Business.
- 5) Consent Agenda-approved as presented by Andrew, with Julie 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - a. Secretary's Report-reviewed December minutes submitted by JoAnna Pruett – one change submitted by Julie for JoAnna to amend.
  - b. Treasurer's Report-submitted, reviewed, and Ed presented (see above).
  - c. Pastoral Report-December 17, there was a wedding at the church, there were 2 first Communion students, there are some interested new members, Pastor Heidi is on the Sub List for the Gunderson Home in Harmony, Pastor Heidi attended some community events including a sing along and A Sherlock Carol. This upcoming week, Pastor Heidi will be continuing her continuing education class on family systems. In addition she will be working on her annual report for the annual meeting and attending some school events her students are involved with.
  - d. Council Committee Reports – Motion to approve as presented by Julie Kiehne with Andrew Pruett 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - i. Education – none
    - ii. Youth – Wednesday gatherings? Going well with good attendance.
    - iii. Stewardship and Finance - none
    - iv. Property – none
    - v. Endowment – 48 new chairs purchased. Tom Holst has volunteered to pick them up. The old ones will be recycled.
    - vi. Personnel-Use of ESST time and PFML - none

vii. Music & Worship-Julie reported.

1. **Contemporary Service Feb 22** – goal to get new people involved with Christian contemporary music.

Feb 22 (First Sunday in Lent) - Sue out of town, and Sharon is accompanying. Sarah Peterson will help organize contemporary service for Feb 22 and coordinate with Brett Clarke.

2. **Cowboy Service Music** – Walter open to schedule for spring/summer.
3. **Adult Choir** – Zach will be taking over the Luther adult choir role. He will take over in February.
4. **Family Nites**

January & February – Bethlehem;  
March & April - Fountain

5. **Lent Schedule: 40 Days & Nights Theme**

Ash Wednesday Feb. 18 – Bethlehem

Maundy Thursday April 2 – Fountain

Good Friday April 3 – Bethlehem

Easter – Sunday April 20 – services at both congregations

Bethlehem Council approved this Lenten schedule.

viii. WELCA update – none

#### 6) Old Business

- a. Ceiling repair in kitchen – Nate will pick up particle board.
- b. Snow and ice removal – Did we get a bid from Riggott? – We have not gotten a bid from Riggott, but should soon. During recent snowfall, salt was applied by Dean and Redemptive and there were no falls reported.

#### 7) New Business

- a. Personnel Policies. Template to review, modify and implement. (thoughts and suggestions?)- Tom Brudvig put together and sent to council members, input was given. Tom will amend and send out again for a vote.
- b. Parking spot for Pastor – member request – discussed and decided to go forward with this. JoAnna Pruett volunteered to make the sign.
- c. Budget discussion – see above.
- d. Annual meeting date – January 25, 2026 selected.
- e. New Council members - How many? When do we need them? Annual meeting? 2-3 needed, names discussed and members selected to extend invitations.
- f. Addition: Council meeting schedule going forward? Decision made to table until next meeting when new members are present.

- 8) Words of Appreciation – Who can we recognize this month for their faithful service to our church community? Hollie Clarke and Lindsay Hanson for all their hard work in organizing a successful Christmas program.

- 9) Adjournment - Motion to adjourn by Andrew, and Brett 2<sup>nd</sup>, approved.

- 10) Closing Prayer – with the Lord's Prayer

**Submitted by: JoAnna Pruett - “published but not approved”**

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
P.O. Box 314  
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2026