



Star on the Hill

The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Lanesboro, Minnesota **May 2026**

Contact us at:

200 Kenilworth Ave S.
P.O. Box 314
Lanesboro, MN 55949
507-467-3344
bethlehem@acegroup.cc

website:

www.staronthehill.com

Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Lanesboro

Pastor Heidi Wallace
402-870-1972

pastorheid Wallace@gmail.com

Watch our worship on Facebook Sunday mornings at 10:00 am Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Lanesboro

Financial Summary

Year to Date thru March 2026

Income: \$41,589

Expenses: \$47,092

Pentecost is Sunday, May 24.

Wear red!

There will be roles for Sunday school-aged children willing to be runners.

Along with Christmas and Easter, Pentecost is one of the major festivals in the church year. Come, celebrate the Spirit!



Mothers Day May 10th

Heavenly Father,
On this Mother's Day, we pause with grateful hearts to honor the women who have nurtured, guided, and loved us.

We thank You for the gift of mothers — for their patience when we faltered, their strength when we were weak, and their unwavering love that reflects Your own.

Lord, we are grateful for the countless sacrifices mothers make, often unseen and unspoken. Thank You for the wisdom they share, the comfort they give, and the example they set in faith, kindness, and perseverance. May we never take their presence for granted, but cherish them in word and deed.

Bless every mother today — those raising children, those who have grown children, and those who mother in spirit through mentorship, friendship, and care.

Grant them renewed strength, joy in their hearts, and peace in their minds.

For mothers who are weary, be their rest. For those who are grieving, be their comfort.

For those who feel unseen, remind them that You see every act of love.

Lord, may the seeds of love and faith that mothers plant continue to grow for generations.

Let their influence be a light that guides families toward compassion, unity, and hope.

Today, we honor mother's past, present, and future. May Your blessing be upon them richly, and may we, in turn, live in a way that honors their love and Your grace.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.



Sunday, May 17th
Six Bethlehem members will graduate from High School.

****Congratulations****

- Elizabeth Clarke,**
- Mason Gilbertson,**
- Morgan Hanson,**
- Tristen Hareldson,**
- Reid Allen Olson,**
- Levi Rogers.**

A time of blessing and prayers for our graduates will take place during worship on Sunday, May 17. A reception will be held in their honor in the fellowship hall following worship.



May has been compared to December in the amount of extra activities scheduled: field days, field trips, graduations, holidays, awards nights, year-end concerts, sporting events . . .

And there are additional church events: Synod Assembly, senior recognition, baccalaureates. One of our major festivals even falls in May this year. Pentecost is Sunday, May 24. (Wear red and see other announcements about this celebration elsewhere in this newsletter.)

This year I have two graduations in my own family. The Class of 2026 includes my middle nephew who graduates from college and my youngest godchild who graduates from preschool. Opposite ends of the academic world, but both are milestones nonetheless.

We created milestones as part of our midweek Lenten series “Lord, Be with Us in These 40 Days”. These were literal stones on which we drew representations in marker of things we had accomplished with the help of God.

We were also reminded that the church loves to celebrate milestones with us. Beyond senior recognition and baccalaureates marking graduations, we have additional blessings we can do whenever to remember God’s presence with us in and through life experiences.

This summer we will provide Blessings of the Bicycles for anyone riding the trails. These will be prayers that God keeps these pedal pushers safe and that God opens their eyes to the wonders of God’s creation in these parts.

When school is about to start again in the fall, we will offer a Blessing of the Backpacks. Besides the corporate prayers for students’ and teachers’ protection, wisdom, and growth, we will add individual prayers of what we expect God will do in the new year.

While each of these blessings has an object attached to it, the prayers are for the people and their experiences. That said, the objects remind us of the prayers that have been spoken. For example, a newly licensed driver would be reminded of the prayers for God’s presence with them on the road when they hold their keys.

Blessings can happen at any time, for any reason. They can happen during a worship service, in a parking lot, on a bike trail, in a field, at a home, or in my office. I once had a member request to come into my office for a blessing of his new eyeglasses. It was a special moment as he transitioned to new lenses that would be with him on a daily basis.

Whatever this year – or just this month – holds for you in the way of life experiences, consider how we, the church, can help you bring reminders of our prayers and God’s presence into it. With the help of God, you can and will do it!

Blessings on whatever experiences, especially the “extras” the merry month of May may hold for you!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Heidi <><



****Sunday, May 3rd**

5th Sunday of Easter-White

First Reading: (NLT)

Acts 7:55-60

Second Reading: (NLT)

1 Peter 2:2-10

Doors: Deane Benson

Ushers: Roger Bothun, Mark Hermanson, Sherri Briggman & Erin Doering

Reader: Roger Bothun

*Altar Care H/C: Kathryn Wade & Gwen Harmon

Refreshments: Sherri Briggman & Erin Doering

Sunday, May 10th

6th Sunday of Easter – White

Mothers Day

First Reading: (NLT)

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm:66:80-20 (NLT)

Second Reading: (NLT)

1 Peter 3:13-22

Doors: Gwen Harmon

Ushers: Gwen Harmon, Izzy Swan & Lance Harmon

Reader: Izzy Swan

Altar Care: -

Refreshments: Sue Holst

****Sunday, May 17th**

7th Sunday of Easter -White

Senior Recognition

First Reading: (NLT)

Acts 1:6-14

Second Reading: (NLT)

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Doors: Mark Hermanson

Ushers: Bryn Harmon, Kynlee Hungerholt, Izzy Swan, Paige & Cooper Aiken

Reader: Izzy Swan,

Altar Care/HC: Kathryn Wade & Gwen Harmon

Refreshments: Bryn Harmon & Paige Aiken (serve cake)

****Sunday, May 24th**

Pentecost - Red

First Reading: (NLT)

Acts 2:1-21

Second Reading: (NLT)

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

Doors: Roger Bothun

Ushers: Ed & Cheryl Brekke, Kathryn Wade & Gwen Harmon

Reader: Roger Bothun

Altar Care/HC: Kathryn Wade & Gwen Harmon

Refreshments: Ed & Cheryl Brekke & Julie Norby

Sunday, May 31st

Holy Trinity - White

First Reading: (NLT)

Genesis 1:1—2:4a

Psalm:8 (NLT)

Second Reading: (NLT)

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Sunday, May 31st

Continued

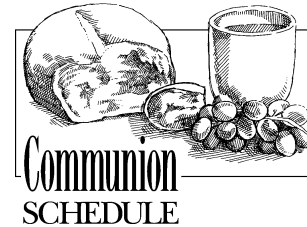
Doors: Kathryn Wade

Ushers: Gary & Kathryn Wade
Blaine Harmon & Cooper Aiken

Reader: Kathryn Wade

Altar Care: Kathryn Wade

Refreshments: Kathryn Wade



***Sunday, May 3rd**

***Sunday, May 17th**

***Sunday, May 24th**

June Service Group Please reach out to your Group Coordinator to sign up for a Sunday of Service.

Members of the June service group are: Mike & Norine Ask, Deane Benson & Mindy Albrecht-Benson, Gene & Rene Bergstrom, Don & Jean Brink, Brett & Hollie Clarke Family, Jim, Becky & Alyssa Iverson, Jerry Johnson, Mike Johnson, Lillian Linde, Tammy Nielson, John & Sarah Peterson Family, Greg & Shari Qualy, Vern Riddle & Jennifer Wood, and Ed Taylor.

Group leaders are Vern Riddle & Jennifer Wood.



Our Confirmands

Lux Holst, Theodore Pruett,
Oliver Hanson

Knox Holst, Bristol Clarke

Arya Meyer, Rylan Meyer,
Arianna Himli

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

Denise Dahle

Those Living with Cancer

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

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

Those Living in Care Centers

Don Lukkason at Chosen
Valley Care Center, Chatfield

Vern Riddle at Gunderson,
Harmony Care Center

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

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

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



Mavis Musselman on the
Passing of her Bother Leland
Mickelson on March 29th

Please keep their families in
your prayers.

**Senior Dining Servers
at Kenilworth Apt.**

May 1st : Denise Dahle &
Phylliss Penheiter

May 8th : Judy Kingsbury &
Gwen Harmon

May 15th : Judy Kingsbury &
Chris Olson

May 22nd : Sue Holst &
Norine Ask

May 29th : Jennifer Wood &
Gwen Harmon



**One Year to Live
Men's Retreat**

*****Canceled Due to
Lack of Attendance**

Held at Good Earth Village in
Collaboration with Lutheran
Men In Mission.

Good Earth Village

507-346-2494

www.goodearthvillage.org

LMM

www.lutheranmeninmission.org

WELCA activities

Wednesday, May 6th
9:00 am WELCA Quilting Day

Wednesday, May 20th
9:00 am WELCA Bible study

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



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.

Root River Conference Spring Event

The Women of the Root River Conference Spring Gathering was held at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Houston on April 18th. Six women from Bethlehem attended. The bible verse theme was Mathew 6:28-29, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

The guest speaker, Master Gardener Linda Lind, gave a



presentation on "Gardens of the Bible."

Other speakers included representatives from Thrivent, Bundles of Love, The SE Minnesota Synod Board and the Owl Center of Houston, including an appearance by Pierce, the barred owl. Garden Flutes provided lovely music. The program was followed by a lunch served by the men of Cross of Christ.



The 2026 Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention and Gathering will be in Des Moines, Iowa, on July 16-19.

The Theme is "I am Worthy" and the bible Verse is "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Psalm 139:14. More information may be found at www.womenoftheelca.org. Look under EVENTS and scroll down to Triennial Convention and Triennial Gathering.



Good Earth Village Programs for preschool - 12th grade, family events, etc. Bethlehem WELCA does pay 10/overnight per night for each camper. If Interested Please reach out to the church office.



Gifts We Did Not Make, We Are Called to

Care for Both

By Andrew Pruett

There are two remarkable forces reshaping life on Earth right now. One as ancient as creation itself, the other born only moments ago in the long arc of human history. One is water. In **Genesis 1:2** we read, *The earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.* The other is artificial intelligence. At first glance, they seem like an unlikely pairing for a church newsletter. I believe they belong together, because both press us toward the same fundamental question. What does faithful stewardship look like when something is too powerful to ignore and too important to misuse?

AI is a water issue, not just a technology issue. Data centers require enormous amounts of water to cool their servers. Researchers project that AI infrastructure across the US consumes between 193 and 297 billion gallons annually, roughly 19 to 30 months of current Twin Cities municipal water use. In Minnesota, 2,798 water bodies already carry 6,349 recorded impairments. Many of our lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands are no longer safe for drinking, swimming, or fishing.

The broader picture is sobering. Minnesota's average temperature has risen measurably within a single lifetime. Precipitation patterns are shifting. Road salt, agricultural runoff and warming waters are quietly changing what our lakes and rivers can sustain. Minnesota lakes are now 4 degrees warmer in midsummer than they were 50 years ago and have lost an average of 14 days of ice cover. Species that have called this landscape home for thousands of years are under pressure. **Genesis 2:15** reminds us that, *The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.* Every species living around us is a neighbor. Creation care is not an abstract principle, it is a relationship with specific, named, living things.

AI is already shaping our lives, and right now our faith community has left that conversation to others. I believe that is a mistake. **Psalms 65:9** tells us, *You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly.* God cares about the land and water, and the life therein. We cannot be indifferent to technologies that increasingly affect both. At its best, AI can help researchers track pollution, model ecosystem change, and put critical environmental information into the hands of people. At its worst, it can concentrate power in the hands of a few, erode human agency, and spread misinformation faster than communities can respond. Which future we inherit depends, in part, on whether people with moral convictions are willing to engage, or whether we step back and assume someone else will sort it out.

The communities most shaped by faith, relationship, and commitment to the common good need to be in the room where and when decisions get made about water policy, AI development, and what kind of world we hand to our children. In 2025, AI adoption transitioned from experimental use to a nearly universal presence. Reports from major research firms show that roughly **88% of organizations** globally now use AI. Meanwhile, Minnesota has already lost between 50% and 90% of its original wetland acreage. These trajectories are not unrelated. **Jeremiah 29:7** calls us not to withdraw but to engage, *Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.*

You don't have to be a tech expert or an environmental scientist to matter in these conversations. You just must care, pay attention, and be willing to say what you believe out loud. That is something church congregations know how to do. These are not problems to be solved from a distance. They are callings to be answered together, right here, by people who share a pew with you.

Sincerely,
Andrew and JoAnna

Should you have any questions or concerns about the following article, you are invited to engage in respectful conversation with the author directly. readbooksbya.pruett@gmail.com

Remember that according to Martin Luther's explanation of the eighth commandment, we interpret everything our neighbors do in the best possible light.

MINUTES

Sunday, April 12, 2026

Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Lanesboro, MN

Congregation Council Meeting

Members present: Pastor Heidi, Walter Bradley, Tom Brudvig, Jessica Hanson, Tom Holst, Chris Troendle, Carrie Hanson, JoAnna Pruett

Absent: Hollie Clarke

Others present: none

Established Quorum

- 1) Call to Order by Tom Holst at 1056.
- 2) Opening Prayer/Devotion – “The plans of the Lord stand firm forever.” Pastor Heidi explained that if plans are not in line with God, they won’t work. She then led us in prayer.
- 3) Additions to agenda & approval of agenda – approved as presented by Chris T., with Tom B. 2nd.
 - a. Secretary’s Report-Hollie Clarke submitted. Approved as presented by Jessica H., Walter B. 2nd.
 - b. Treasurer’s Report-submitted, reviewed. We are down \$5,503-insurance was paid one month early in 2026, chairs purchased. Approved as presented by Chris T., Carrie H. 2nd.
 - c. Pastoral Report-Easter was successful. We had an intergenerational family night through Lent that attendees enjoyed. We will have our (Senior Recognition Sunday) on May 17. Heidi will be taking vacation the end of April. She also took one day in March. Lastly, she is working with shut-ins at the Nursing home. Her goal is to hear from them, pray for them, and offer communion.
 - d. Council Committee Reports
 - i. Music & Worship – Meet 3rd Sunday of the month.
 - ii. Education – Holly and Taylor - none
 - iii. Youth – Wednesday gatherings? - no updates.
 - iv. Stewardship and Finance - none
 - v. Property –
 1. Tom H. and Carrie – in current state the lights and ceiling fans tied together – plan to have an electrician update. In addition, added LED’s -overall council likes and have approved updated. Carrie has approved use of memorial fund to cover cost.
 2. Mold issue in hallway near bathrooms – need fans or dehumidifier – Carrie has agreed to use memorial to cover coned to fix and paint.
 3. Ceiling repair in kitchen - Tom Holst and Dean will pick up supplies and do the repairs
 4. Snow removal – Tom H. to be pt person instead of Dean and has approved paying the current bill.
 5. Mowing – Nate and Tom H. will take care of mowing.
 - vi. Endowment – no updates.
 - vii. WELCA update – next weekend – Spring gathering.
- 4) Consent Agenda – Motion to approve the reports – Approved as presented by Chris T., Tom B. 2nd.

- 5) Old Business
 - a. Committee Assignments – working on completing. Add JoAnna and Sarah Peterson to Music. Add Tom B. to Stewardship and Finance.
 - b. Ceiling repair in kitchen – See Above.
 - c. Fellowship Hall lights – See Above
- 6) New Business
 - a. Synod workshop reports -
 - i. Current Events – Jessica, Tom B., and JoAnna attended – discussed studying the social statement, how to handle current debates with humility, bringing back “temple talks.”
 - ii. Mission Statement – Chris and JoAnna attended – discussed who are we as a church and who we would like to be.
 - iii. Property – Chris attended
 - iv. Finance – Jessica and Chris attended
 - v. Communications – Heidi attended – need to hear the message a lot to be able to act on it.
 - vi. Youth – Heidi attended – need to involve after church and in conferences.
 - vii. Council Presidents – Tom H. attended – discussed how to speed up council meetings.
 - b. Meeting time during the summer – will keep on Sunday’s.
- 7) Words of Appreciation – Who can we recognize this month for their faithful service to our church community? All volunteers who have helped make Family Night successful.
- 8) Adjournment - Motion to adjourn by Walter B. with Jessica H. 2nd, approved.
- 9) Closing Prayer – with the Lord’s Prayer

Submitted by: JoAnna Pruetz - “published but not approved”

THANK YOU 

As we are about to wrap up our first year of Family Night, the Councils of Bethlehem and Fountain wish to extend a huge THANK YOU to all those who made this year possible:

- ♥ those who provided delicious meals, served them, and cleaned up after them.
- ♥ those who jumped in to lend a hand in the kitchen when such help was needed.
- ♥ Sue Holst who capably offered piano accompaniment in openings and closings.
- ♥ Brett Clarke who faithfully led the adult group.
- ♥ those adults who attended who shared themselves, their stories, and their faith.
- ♥ those confirmation students who welcomed one another, challenged one another, asked good questions, and tried new things.
- ♥ those parents who made it a family night by eating with and learning alongside their teens.
- ♥ Vern Groen and Andrew Pruetz who creatively filled in for Brett and Pastor Heidi.
- ♥ those who participated in our intergenerational sessions when we switched things up during Lent.
- ♥ those who prayed for the program.

Something new was tried and it thrived because of YOU! Receive our heartfelt appreciation.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 314
Lanesboro, MN 55949-0314

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
STD MAIL
US POSTAGE PAID
LANESBORO, MN
PERMIT NO. 16

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Star on the Hill



2026