



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Newsletter

September 2020

Bethlehem Family and Friends,

I began a practice a couple of months ago now of praying my way through our church membership, and when I get to the end of starting again. We can all use some prayer in these challenging times. As we live into figuring out how to balance social distancing and staying connected to friends and family and church family, we can find ourselves discouraged. I want you to know I hear you. I hear you when you say you are longing for us to gather in the building again. I hear you when you say you are scared to come back together but miss your friends. I hear you when you say you are barely keeping your heads above water while your kids head back to school. I hear you when you say you are out of projects at home and longing for something to do. I hear you. We are, each of us, riding the wave of pandemic emotions and doing our best to make it through.

As we move into fall and programming and more consistent schedules, I wanted to let you know about a few things that are being offered at Bethlehem this fall that you can be looking forward to.

A Bigger Table-on **September 13 at 10:00 am**, we are hoping to have as many of you join us in person as possible for a gathering that will include conversation and worship. We will be socially distancing outside in small groups at tables. We will be **meeting the new staff** and hearing some of what they have planned that we can be a part of this fall, we will be sharing with each other our dreams for our church as we move forward, as well as talking about where we would like the staff to focus their time and energy. We need every voice at the table. **You will ALL get a chance to be heard and to hear some exciting things that are coming your way!** If you do not feel safe joining us in person, we will offer a Zoom group for you. We hope you will be able to join us as we dream together about the bigger table that we are being called to!

We have heard your desire to be in contact with one another, so we are looking at forming some small group ministry happenings. Do you have a book you would like to read with others? Wish for an adult Bible Study? Have a fun idea for our youth? **We want to hear what you would like to do!** We invite you to talk with staff, especially Heather and Pastor Amy, if you have ideas you would like to be a part of this fall.

Blessing of the Pets-October 4. Do you have a furry, fanged, finned, or feathered friend? On October 4 we will celebrate all of God's Creation with a gathering of our friends out in the parking lot. Come and have your picture taken with your pet, a personal blessing for you and your pet, and get some treats for your furry friends too! Don't have a pet but love to see pets? Come join the fun! Or, if your littles have a stuffed animal that they would like to have blessed, bring them too!

However you choose to be involved at Bethlehem this fall, know that we are so thankful for your partnership on the journey. If there is ANYTHING that we can do to support you and your family, please let us know! May God bless you and keep you, friends! Today and always!

Grace and peace, *Pastor Amy*



Bethlehem is excited to announce that we have added 1 new staff member to our team and may be adding one more during September. Here's a bit about who she is and how you can meet her!

Hanna Stolper, New Music Director

Hello Bethlehem! My name is Hanna Stolper and I am excited to be your new Music Director. I am currently a Graduate student at the University of Northern Iowa for Piano Pedagogy and Performance. Originally, I am from Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where I grew up and completed my undergraduate degree. I have experience playing in many varieties of ensembles from worship teams, jazz ensembles and choirs, to playing the keyboard in musical theater pits. Along with this, I enjoy teaching piano to people of all ages! Outside of my busy music life, I enjoy bike riding, which has been a great experience since I moved here and have been able to ride all the trails!



My experience in church music has really helped my love for playing in ensembles grow, so I knew as soon as I moved to Iowa, I would need to find a church I could call home! I'm very excited to begin working with everyone at Bethlehem Lutheran Church to continue my walk with the Lord in music, and help guide others towards Him through worship!

Visitation Ministry Update

We are excited to announce that we will be hiring a part-time Visitation Pastor whose main focus will be visiting with our shut-ins and seniors! Pastor Amy will still visit and care for all members of Bethlehem, but this additional staff will be able to focus specifically on visitation ministry while Pastor Amy focuses on Youth and Education Ministry! If you would like a pastoral visit or would like to be added to the visitation rotation, please call the church office at 266-3541. If you have input about this addition to our staff, we would love to hear it.

We invite you to call the church council whose names and numbers are listed in this newsletter.



Do you like to sing? Play an instrument? Want to be part of the praise band? As Hanna gets started here with us at Bethlehem she is looking for folks who would like to share special music or be part of **musical small groups**. If this is something that you would be interested in, call the church office at 266-3541 and let Hanna know that you are excited to share your gift of music!

To my friends at Bethlehem,

My greatest joy was in having so many cards come from the people of Bethlehem for my birthday. I have enjoyed going through them several times now. I used our church directory to renew my acquaintance with you, and enjoyed hearing from some of you for the first time. Though I haven't met all of you, I still feel like each of you are all dear friends.



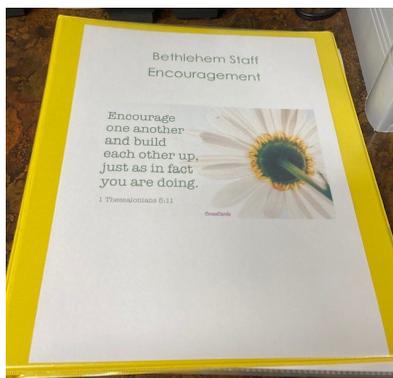
Being in quarantine, we have to stay in our rooms. I cannot even go out into the hall. I cannot describe the joy your cards and letters brought to me during this time. I had a good birthday, the highlight of which was seeing my children, and touching their hands with mine through the window screen. You all helped me to have a wonderful birthday, and I am so thankful for each one of you. I am sorry that I cannot join you in person, but please know that you are in my prayers.

God bless, *Margaret Cundy*

Want to keep the joy going? You can send Margaret mail at:

7511 University Avenue Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Calling all parents! Pastor Amy would love to hear your thoughts on what you would like for youth ministry and education for our 0-18 year olds. Just like at school, you sometimes would have an input conference. We would love to talk with you about your kids. What do they like? What don't they like? What activities or events would you like to see for their age group? **What can we do to support you in helping to raise them in the faith?** We will be talking to the kids too, but first **we want to hear from YOU!** Want to schedule a time to chat? Call the church office or call or text Pastor Amy at 218-290-3982.



In the first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul reminds his readers to encourage each other and build each other up. In response to that call, Bethlehem Staff are working on finding ways to encourage each other. If you have ever wondered how you might encourage a particular staff member, or if you are wondering about their likes and dislikes for other reasons, we invite you to look at the **yellow encouragement binder** in the church office. As we add staff, we will also add their information. **Let us continue to be a church that builds each other up and encourages each other along the way!**



Bethlehem Lutheran Church Covid-19 Reopening Strategy for Small Group Meetings

The following strategy was passed by the Congregational Council at their meeting on August 13, 2020.

COVID-19 REOPENING STRATEGY FOR BLC SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

Effective September 1, 2020, Bethlehem-based groups (e.g. Congregation and other councils, committees like Finance, Confirmation and other classes) of 15 or fewer may meet in the church building under the following guidelines:

Groups of up to 8 people should plan to meet in the Library; groups of 9 through 15 should plan to meet in the Fellowship Hall.

Groups must wear masks, practice social distancing, and apply hand sanitizer frequently.

Meetings can include people on site as well as offer participation via Zoom or related technology (hybrid meetings).

Meetings must be on the church calendar at least 3 days in advance. To get your group's meeting on the calendar, please talk to Cayla (office manager) or Pastor Amy. Upon putting your group meeting on the calendar, your group leader will be given a log-in sheet.

The log-in sheet needs to list each participant at each meeting to verify attendance along with contact information should someone from the group become ill.

Each group will be expected to sanitize the room they used before leaving the building. Cleaning supplies will be readily available.

If you have any questions or concerns to this policy, please notify the Congregational Council. Our objective is not to crowd people's comfort zones, but rather to ease our thoughts and fears and begin to bring back a sense of what will be our new normal. It can and should be a gradual and prayerful process.

Thank you for understanding.

Bethlehem Church Staff & Leadership

Parents and confirmation students are encouraged to join us on **Wednesday, September 23, 2020**, for our **Confirmation Kick-off**. Come and hear about some exciting new things that are happening for confirmands this fall. **Come and get your student registered for class**. Come and have some fun and treats together with your church friends! See you **at 7pm** on September 23!



Confirmation Kick-Off!

Weds, Sept 23
7:00 pm

All parents & students
encouraged to attend!



UPDATE

Parents of Bethlehem Youth,

At the writing of the last newsletter, we were excited to inform you of a new staff member that had been hired to do the Youth and Education Ministry at Bethlehem. Since the writing of that letter, we were informed that she was unable to take the position. We also offered the position to another individual who accepted and then had a family emergency that kept her from being able to join our team. After those two events, I began to wonder if the spirit might be moving in a new way, trying to get our attention to do something differently. After prayer and discernment, I proposed to the council that we look at the possibility of staffing our youth ministry differently.

To give you a bit more background, part of what excited the call committee for me to come and be your pastor was my gifts in youth and family ministry. I come to you from a congregation that had lots of kids and young families, and where youth ministry was growing. I loved being out in the community with our kids, supporting them at their events, talking with parents, inviting them to come and check out what was happening for them at church.

So, to make a long story short, after some discussion with the council, we have decided that I am going to focus my attention on the Youth and Education Programs at Bethlehem, and we are going to be hiring a Visitation Pastor who will be able to focus on visiting our older members more frequently.

What this means for you and your family...I am PUMPED to be able to work with your kids and give them more time than I have been able to so far. I look forward to supporting them, helping them learn and grow, and helping them come to love being a part of the Bethlehem family. I look forward to helping them find ways to be more involved...whether that is in worship, in fellowship, or in service activities.

In the coming weeks we will be rolling out what the fall season will look like for our BLC Youth. I believe that we have some super fun ideas in store just for the kids, but also some intergenerational events that are going to help our youth get to know ALL members of Bethlehem better. If you and your kids join us at the Bigger Table Event on Sept. 13, you will hear some of the fun coming your way!

Thank you for the opportunity to work with all of you, and for sharing your kids with us at Bethlehem! We are so glad that you are part of our church family!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Amy





Did you know ... **we collected \$585 for our backpacks this year**, plus Thrivent gave us \$250 for the project? Thanks to your support we will be able to purchase backpacks, school supplies, paper towels, Kleenex, and hand sanitizer and gift the school with \$400 so that they can buy what is needed in the coming days and weeks! **Thanks for your support!**

Service Council is working on putting together a list of ways to help with the Derecho Storm that went through our area a couple of weeks ago. Watch the church Facebook Page for more information about how we can help in Cedar Rapids and for how we might send a team down to lend a hand. The next few weeks we will be **collecting HyVee and Walmart Gift Cards** to share with the people of **Zion Lutheran in Dysart**. Every single member of their congregation was affected by the storm and we want them to know we are walking with them. **Gift cards can be dropped off in the tub outside the church or in the church office.**



Holy Communion Options During September

- * Come to drive-in worship on the first or third weekends of the month. (This month Sept 6 and 20)
- * Grab your friends and neighbors and set up a time with the church office to have your own communion service with Pastor presiding at Bethlehem's outdoor worship space.
- * Call Pastor Amy to come bring you communion at your residence.

BETHLEHEM STAFF

Church phone: 319-266-3541

Pastor Amy Eisenmann

Pastor Amy's cell phone: 218-290-3982
pastoramy@bethlehemcf.net

Cayla Morris- Office Manager

office@bethlehemcf.net

Heather Hurd-Schneider Director of Fellowship and Outreach

heather@bethlehemcf.net

Seth Bullerman-IT Director

seth@bethlehemcf.net

Hanna Stolper-Music Director

hanna@bethlehemcf.net

Hudson Lourenco - Organist

Patty Nelson-Custodian



2020-20201

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Kurt Leistikow - President

319-269-7178

Kent Anderson-Vice President

319-290-4866

Jill Schulte- Treasurer

319-290-5725

Mindy Fisher - Secretary

319-290-4365

Mardy Holst: 319-277-0328

Reed Hunemuller: 319-277-6381

Brendan Alexander: 319-290-1237

Ellen Hermanson: 319-573-0719

Joan Christiansen: 319-269-5634



GIVING MADE EASY!

Scan the QR code with your smart phone to share your offering with Bethlehem.



Join us at "A Bigger Table" on September 13 at 10:00 am.
Our first in-person gathering since March! More info inside!

Nonprofit Organization
U.S.POSTAGE
PAID
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613
Permit No. 33

VOLUME 55 ISSUE 7 August 27, 2020



Our Pastor
Rev. Amy Eisenmann
(218) 290-3982 cell phone
(319) 266-3541 work phone
pastoramy@bethlehemcf.net

Our website:
www.bethlehemcf.org

Our YouTube Channel:
Bethlehem Lutheran CF

Our Facebook page:
[www.facebook.com/
Bethlehem-Lutheran-Church-
ELCA-451552121584266](http://www.facebook.com/Bethlehem-Lutheran-Church-ELCA-451552121584266)

Our Instagram page:
[@bethlehemcf](https://www.instagram.com/bethlehemcf)