

JUNE / July



BETHLEHEM STAR

MONTHLY PUBLICATION



BETHLEHEM

LUTHERAN



CHURCH

WEBSITE
www.bethlehemstar.org

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A WORD FROM PASTOR LESHER



"Farewell!

It is hard to believe that nearly a year together in ministry has come to completion. Now that Bethlehem is engaged in pastoral candidate interviews my time with you is drawing to a close. Your congregational culture of care and hospitality has been encouraging. Your willingness to discern in love of God and each other is wonderful. Your ability to disagree but stay focused on your mission in Bayport and the world has been refreshing. Job well done!

I remember our first council meeting started with pie and not a fight! That describes well our time together here. It has been sweet and rewarding. I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Interim Pastor. My next assignment is already unfolding. At the time of this writing, I cannot go into all the details but it will be an assignment to a larger congregation with a full staff that includes an associate pastor. So different but not necessarily better.

Both my next congregation and Bethlehem are doing a great job of glorifying God and proclaiming the Gospel in word, sacrament and service. Good things happen in a broken world because of congregations like this one and the next one!

My last Sunday will be June 25th and then I will spend that week clearing the pastor's office and taking care of anything else. I will then take some PTO from July 1-11. I hope to start my next assignment on July 12th.

A Bridge Pastor will be assigned to cover the gap between myself and the next pastor.

So, God be with you until we meet again!

Rev. Eric Leshner
Interim Pastor
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

FROM OUR COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Good day members of Bethlehem. As we transition from Spring into Summer, we also are transitioning here at Church. As you probably have already read, Pastor Leshner has been called to another congregation and his last service will be Sunday June 25th. Please remember to thank him for the wonderful gift of ministry he has shared with us here at Bethlehem. I know the children will miss his sermons as much as the adults do. What does that mean for Bethlehem going forward? We are fortunate enough to have Pastor Bonnie Lomen back through the rest of the summer.

As I mentioned last month, we are in Phase III, calling a Pastor. The call committee has started to interview candidates. Please keep those on the committee in your prayers as they are tasked with interviewing these candidates. Remember not to ask about who the committee members have interviewed. We need to maintain strict confidentiality with these candidates. We must respect their privacy and not spread uncertainty in other congregations. I know it's hard being this far in the process, but we are almost there. A bit more patience and I'm confident will have an answer soon. If you have additional questions about this phase of the process, I encourage you to go the St. Paul Synod's website at <https://www.elca.org/call-process>. There you will find a .pdf of the call process manual, and you can find all the information you need on page 32.

Our shared outdoor service with People's congregation will be Sunday July 2nd, 2023, out at Lakeside Park. Don't forget your lawn chair. Vacation Bible School will begin Wednesday July 12th from 5:30-7PM and will run for 5 sessions, concluding on Wednesday evening August 9th. This year's theme is "Go & Tell Kids". It begins with the story of creation and traces God's resurrection and the Great Commission. Registration & ability to pay for VBS is live on the BLC website <https://www.bethlehemstar.org/>.

Please remember Sally Harris in your prayers, as she and her family travel to Tanzania to serve on the board that her late husband Paul Harris founded as well as helping to start Radio Furaha. That radio program has been broadcasting on Christian radio for the last 14 years. A reminder of the wonderful outreach this congregation provides not only our community but in Tanzania as well.

Couple of updates about the building from last month. The contracts for Twin Cities Elevator and Hamline Construction have been signed. The first payment has been sent and received. We are currently waiting to hear back when they will start to modernize the elevator. As for the roof, we are waiting to hear back from our insurance provider Church Mutual. The original claim did not include 3,000 square feet of roof that is on the education building. So more to come on that.

A quick financial update. We renewed our line of credit with First State Bank and Trust for another two years. We were unsuccessful in receiving any grants to help with our building and we are continuing to look for ways to help fund upcoming projects. With that said, please remember to support the ministry that helps to sustain you and your family. We have been putting in a brief summary of our budget in the weekly announcements for the last few months. We believe an informed congregation helps provide understanding and transparency in making the best decisions possible for our Church.

As you can see, there is a lot happening here at Church. A lot to be thankful for and a lot to be involved with. So, bring a lawn chair, a friend, a neighbor and experience the joy of finding out what the future holds for you here at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. All are welcome!

Ben Crowder, Council President

INTERACT | ENGAGE | LEARN

Chair Dancing | Tuesdays & Fridays @ 8:45am

We meet in The Connection on Fridays at 8:45 and move and groove while following an **easy-to-follow, low impact** exercise DVD together. We finish up in time to catch our breath and stay for Tuesday Bible Study. Wear comfortable clothing that is easy to move in **ALL ARE WELCOME!** Contact Judy Smith @ heyjoodsmith@gmail.com

Bible Study | Tuesdays @ 10am

This group will meet the 2nd Tuesday of June, July and August (June 13, July 11 and August 7). We will meet at 10:00 am in the Larson Forum Room or outside in the front lawn. (Weather permitting). So, bring a lawn chair if you want or use one of the red folding chairs in the back of the sanctuary. Please contact Pastor Eric pastor.blcbayport@gmail.com

Prayer Circle | Fridays @ 8am

We meet via Zoom for Centering Prayer for about one hour.

BLCW | BLC Quilters

We are taking the summer off. Likely resuming in August...keep an eye out for updates. Continue to collect items for the Baby Kits. We will assemble more kits this Fall. There are also some quilting activities you can do from home during our hiatus. If you have any questions, please reach out to Wilma Mc Gowan, Mary Olson, or Mary Trenda, or Ginny Peulen.

CHURCH NEWS

Altar Flowers

Altar Flower sponsorship will continue over the Summer. Contact the church office or add your name to the Altar Flower Sign-up Poster which is located just outside the church office to pick your week. Payments may conveniently be made on the BLC website on our "Giving" page or dropped in the office.

Completed orders, including payments, due by midnight on the Tuesday prior to the Sunday that the flowers are to be displayed.

Please contact Lori with each online order to share dedication information for the Weekly Sunday Announcements. - Thank you!

Quilt Display

Take a look in The Connection and see if you can spot the display of this very special quilt. (Hint: look up!)

This quilt was constructed by Judy Smith with materials dating way back. The fabric is likely flour sacks. Chat with Judy and she can tell you more about the history of this very special piece and how it came to be.



Financial Scorecard | May 2023

	May 2023				May YTD [Month 8]			
	Revenue / Expense		Variance		Revenue / Expense		Variance	
	Actual	Plan	\$	%	Actual	Plan	\$	%
INCOME								
All Income	19,903	25,832	(5,929)	-23%	168,840	198,355	(29,515)	-15%
TOTAL INCOME	19,903	25,832	(5,929)	-23%	168,840	198,355	(29,515)	-15%
EXPENSE								
All Expenses	24,522	24,001	(521)	-2%	204,624	199,323	(5,301)	-3%
TOTAL EXPENSE	24,522	24,001	(521)	-2%	204,624	199,323	(5,301)	-3%
NET INCOME / (LOSS)	(4,619)	1,831	(6,450)	-25%	(35,784)	(968)	(34,816)	-18%

Giving Opportunities

You may now give anytime by scanning the QR code on your phone!
 You may also give online through the GIVING page on the BLC Website
https://bit.ly/BLC_online_giving
 (https://bit.ly/BLC_online_giving)
 (this link brings you directly to the GIVING page on our website)



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PLEASE PRAY FOR

- the call committee and the candidates moving through the interview process to be led by the Holy Spirit.
- the VBS kids and volunteers to have fun while learning more about God's Word.
- the faith journey of our youth to be strengthened by experiences and interactions within our congregation and to share their light in their everyday lives.

CHILDREN | YOUTH | FAMILIES

Vacation Bible School (VBS) | Begins July 12

There is **STILL TIME** to register! "Go & Tell Kids" begins with the story of creation and traces God's redemptive plan to Christ's resurrection and the Great Commission. Pack your bags and "Go and Tell Kids" about Jesus! Join us for fun games & activities, yummy snacks, and much more on the church lawn as we learn about God's Great love!



Five consecutive
Wednesday Evenings, 5:30-7pm.

July 12, July 19, July 26,
August 2, August 9

\$35 for one child \$50 per family
Scholarships available!



You may Register by scanning the QR code with your phone or go to:
<https://bit.ly/BLC-VBS-Registration>
Contact Ali any questions or if you would like to volunteer. cyf.blcbayport@gmail.com

BLC MUSIC

Pop-Up Choirs

Simply come at 8am on any of the listed dates to practice and then stay to perform at Worship that same day. No experience needed. No long-term commitment. Come and give it a try! We would love to have you join together for **Pop-Up Choir on July 16.** and/or **Pop-Up Handbells on July 23** and/or the last **Pop-Up Choir on August 20.**

WORSHIP IN THE PARK | July 2, 9am

Worship in the Park is happening **July 2 at 9am!** Meet at **Lakeside Park shelter #4** to join in worship with People's Congregational Church. Pastor Bonnie Lomen will be preaching. Stay for fellowship and treats that will be provided by Bayport Community Action League (BCAL). **Bring a lawn chair or blanket to sit on and non-perishable food item for Valley Outreach Food Shelf.** All undesignated and loose offerings will be donated to Valley Outreach.

OUR COMMUNITY

Meet, Greet & Thank Will Antell | July 18

Meet, Greet & Thank Will Antell of the White Earth Nation at a Reception in his honor Tuesday, July 18, 2023 7-9 p.m. Lowell Inn Event Center. Space is limited. Reservations are required, please email Ann Wolff at wolff701@msn.com.

We are going to uplift the voice of Will Antell and his phenomenal justice and equity work, with our deepest honor, respect, and gratitude, for mending the deplorable brokenness that our ancestors caused and that still need healing today. All are invited to join us in celebration! Will Antell has lived in Stillwater and Bayport for 60 years. Many of us know that he left his position at Stillwater Junior High as social studies teacher, athletic director, 7th and 8th grade football coach, and varsity baseball coach, in 1968, to work at the Minnesota State Department of Education. We know him as a very sociable, likeable, neighbor, friend, coach, and Elk. Almost no one knows of the groundbreaking work he did providing leadership to historic reform in state and federal Indian education policy to support students from pre-school through doctorate programs and adult ed.

Most of us have no idea that he served under Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter, appointed as member and chair of the National Indian Advisory Board; which was created by the National Indian Education Act of 1972; that he advocated for; and that bears strong resemblance to the Minnesota first-of-its-kind plan for Indian education; that he inspired and led; which was based on the first-ever advisory committee for an urban school district with a large population of Native Americans; that he chaired; that would become a model for other Indian communities to engage their local school districts; and also that he organized and became the first president of the National Indian Education Association in 1970; that lobbied for the National Indian Education Act mentioned above at the very beginning.

Such were Will's ever-expanding spiral of efforts and multitudinous connections—withIndians at the center of determining their unique educational needs and programs. This is beyond amazing for the oldest of eight children, raised by a single mother, on the poverty-stricken White Earth Reservation; at a time when nation-wide, drop-out rates were high, achievement scores low, and very few Indians received any kind of post-secondary training; a time when a unique form of racism blamed Indians instead of the treaties and policies (and people) that exploited and expropriated their land and resources—among other egregious things. Against all odds, Will earned a diploma, a master's, and doctoral degrees. Because of his mother's dedication and respect for education, all of her children earned college degrees or more. Bernice died at age 39, without ever having the opportunity to complete her nursing degree. In 2019, Will and Mary Lou Antell endowed the Bernice Lena Fairbanks Antell American Indian Scholarship at Bemidji State University.

Valley Outreach Seeking Volunteers!



They have the most in need of volunteers on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4-7 pm shifts. Please sign up today. <https://valleyoutreachmn.org/become-a-volunteer/> If you have questions about volunteering, please don't hesitate to email our Volunteer Manager at volunteer@valleyoutreachmn.org or give us a call at 651-430-2739

*In Partnership with God,
with each Other,
with the World!*



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**Bethlehem
Lutheran
Church**

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