



*Belonging to Christ,
Sharing Christ on the
North Shore and beyond.*

2023 Annual Report

January 28, 2024

Bethlehem Lutheran Church – Grand Marais, MN

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Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Annual Meeting Agenda

January 28, 2024 - 11:15 AM

Location: In the Fellowship Hall as soon as we can get people from Zoom and in person to sign in to assemble a quorum of at least 50 voting members. Help yourself to coffee, beverages, and treats as council prepares for the meeting.

Call to Order: Mike Chmelik

Devotion/Prayer: Pastor Calvin Konop

How We Will Vote: Zoom and in the same room with a show of hands.

Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes from January 29, 2023:

Pastoral Address: Pastor Calvin Konop

Review/Questions for Submitted Reports:

New Business:

- 2024 Slate of Nominees
- 2024 General Budget

Adjourn:

Note:

Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized members received by affirmation of faith. (C 8.02.b.) *Note: Every new member who joins Bethlehem have been received by affirmation of faith.*

Voting members are confirmed members. *Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. (C 8.02.c.)*

2022 Annual Meeting Minutes from January 29, 2023

Minutes of January 29th, 2023, held in the Sanctuary of Church, Quorum was met.

Attendance of meeting was done on sign-up sheets which were passed around with 54 people in person and 6 people attending via Zoom: Myron Bursheim, Cathi Williams, Kathleen Johnson, Lynn Schulte, Phyllis Parker, & Laurie Spry.

The meeting was called to order at 11:14 AM by Congregational President Mike Chmelik. Pastor Rolf Morck offered a devotion about “being impatient”, then we prayed.

Motion made by Craig Peterson, seconded by Nathan Kristensen “to approve the Minutes of the Congregational meeting of January 30, 2022”, - carried.

Motion made by Jessica Markusen, seconded by Shelby Anderson, “to accept the reports that were submitted - carried.

Gwen Lenz asked for an update of the damaged solar panels, There were 13 panels damaged. Estimates are coming, but it is not a ‘safe time to work on the equipment. The ones we have are still operational and generating electricity.’

There was no OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS: Kathleen Johnson will be leaving the council, with a thank you from all of us for all her work. Mike reminded the Constitution states the council can have more members and we have ‘room’ for anyone wishing leadership roles.

Motion made by Cindy Muus, seconded by Craig Peterson “to accept the current slate of candidates and the additional committee slate of nominations” - carried.

Chmelik then asked if there were any other comments.: Joni Kristensen asked to mention those on the “Transition team” — Jessica Markusen, Cathi Williams, Mike Chmelik, Craig Peterson, Carrie Jansen and Lynnea Morse. The team has done a lot of work on the Ministry Site Profile. Please give them your personal ‘Thank You!’

Constitutional changes: were advertised in Bethlehem Star newsletter and other conditions to proposal with the help of Eric Anderson and Pastor Mark Ditmanson. They reflect what we have been already doing for years. Motion made by Stacy Hawkins, seconded by Chet Lindskog “to accept the Constitutional changes” - carried unanimously.

GENERAL BUDGET- Pastoral salaries, pulpit fill, & cost of living increases. Mark Youngdahl spoke of some unknown expenses, and reflection of what was spent last year.

Motion made by Eric Anderson, seconded by Rhonda Schulte, “to accept the budget as presented” - carried.

The congregation is so thankful for all the work that Denise Murray has done for the Bethlehem Church, we are truly blessed, followed by applause. Martha Rosbacka added “Thank you” to Mike Chmelik, Nathan Kristensen, and John Muus. A “Boom” which was in reference to Pastor Morck’s sermon this morning.

The meeting was adjourned before noon.

Submitted by Gwen Lenz, Church Council Secretary

Special Congregational Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2023

Meeting called to order at 11:27 AM

1. Eric Anderson made the first motion - "The council moves to extend a call to Pastor Calvin Konop to serve as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church."
 - a. Cathi Williams seconded the motion
 - b. No Discussion

2. Kris Hedstrom made the second motion - "The council moves to accept Pastor Calvin Konop's compensation, benefits, and responsibilities package as approved by the congregation council."
 - a. Lori Spry seconded the motion
 - b. Discussion - Joyce Heiskari asked a question regarding housing allowance. It was quickly answered - the salary of the Pastor includes the housing allowance.

The vote happened next with 92 unanimous votes for Motion #1 and 92 unanimous votes for Motion #2. (Zoom votes included.)

Mark Youngdahl motioned to adjourn. Craig Peterson seconded the motion.

Minutes submitted by Kristin Lindholm, Council Member

Special Congregational Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2023

This meeting was held in social room following worship. Quorum was met.

Attendance recorded by collecting signatures at the door. Attendees via Zoom: Myron Bursheim, Lynn and Craig Schulte, Anne DeBevec, Mindy Jacobsen, Rolf Morck, Lois Johnson, and Kathleen Johnson.

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 am by President Mike Chmelik.

A devotion to start our meeting given by Pastor Calvin Konop- Proverbs 22. Called to a vocation, gifts to work in Church life.

Chmelik clarified purpose and rules of a "Special Congregational meeting", citing that only one motion/question is to be considered.

Proposal for Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries which was read aloud.

Pastor Calvin gave us highlights of how many students we now serve in Confirmation (14), 9 High schoolers involved in Wednesday worship; the many helpers at VBS. Bethlehem has enough children, youth and families for a full-time position with Sunday school, Holy Moly, intergenerational efforts, etc.

A Motion made by Eric Anderson, seconded by Stacey Hawkins, “that the Church council moves to create a full-time position with benefits for a Director of Children, Youth, and Families Ministries”

Discussion:

The Church will be looking for an increase in our budget.

If we don’t have the funds, we will not hire the position.

Normal pledge to make-up an increase, more money needed.

Housing issues, cooperation with other youth organizations?

A need to reach out to those not giving/ attending/ come back!

This is “home”. Community of Faith. Many more comments.

Mark Abrahamson called for the question. Motion re-read.

The vote carried, unanimously.

A motion was made by Kelly Swearingen, seconded by Jessica Markusen & Nathan Kristenson, “to adjourn the meeting”, carried

We all thanked Mindy Jacobsen, our former Youth & Family part-time Director, for all her work before her family moved away.

Submitted by Gwen Lenz, Church Council Secretary

Church Council & Committees 2023-2024

Executive Committee: Consists of 5 council elected officers plus the senior pastor

Mike Chmelik	President
Eric Anderson	Vice President
Mark Youngdahl	Treasurer
Theresa Oberg	Financial Secretary
Gwen Lenz	Council Secretary
Calvin Konop	Senior Pastor (joined in July 2023)

Council Members:

Up to 15 Council Members are elected by the congregation to serve for three years. In addition the council includes the pastor(s), a possible BLCW representative appointed by the BLCW, and a possible

youth representative appointed by council. (C 12.01) Elected council members may serve two consecutive 3-year terms. (C 12.02)

Eric Anderson	Stewardship & Smart Re-entry Committee
Sue Anderson	Church in Society & Worship
Mike Chmelik	
Kris Hedstrom	Youth & Family
Hilja Iverson	Worship (resigning)
Bruce Johnson	Property
Gwen Lenz	BLCW & Stewardship
Kristin Lindstrom	
Jessica Markusen	Church in Society
Theresa Oberg	
Mark Youngdahl	

We currently do not have any council members serving on Membership, Finance, or as a Youth Representative.

Audit Committee:

An Audit Committee of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election. (C 13.03)

Mike Youngquist	1 st Term
Robin Johnson	1 st Term

Mission Endowment Committee:

Five members who serve a term of three years. May serve two consecutive terms.

(Bylaws Part XII A .1)

Eric Anderson	1 st Term ending 2026
Stacy Hawkins	2 nd Term ending 2026
Dianne Peterson	2 nd Term ending 2026
Kathleen Johnson	1 st Term ending 2024
Janet Simonen	1 st Term ending 2024

Nominating Committee appointed in 2023 for the year 2024

Six members. Two of whom shall be outgoing members of the council. Nominating committee members are not eligible for consecutive reelection. (C 13.02)

Kathleen Johnson

Mike Chmelik

Eric Anderson

Calvin Konop

2024 Slate of Nominations

Note that the congregation no longer elects people to serve a particular office or committee assignment on church council. We now elect Council Members who are willing to serve or are called to help lead Bethlehem in its mission. At their first council meeting in February, the outgoing president will convene the meeting and lead the council in the election of a new president. The new president will then take over leading the meeting and oversee the election of the remaining officers and the selection of committee responsibilities.

We have a place for you:

Our constitution allows flexibility in the size of our church council. If you are interested, willing, or called in serving in some capacity on the Bethlehem Church Council, **we have a place for you.** Talk to someone on church council to see about the possibilities of joining us.

Council Members at large (3-year terms)

Up to 15 Council Members are elected by the congregation to serve for three years. In addition the council includes the pastor(s), a possible BLCW representative appointed by the BLCW, and a possible youth representative appointed by council. (C 12.01) Elected council members may serve two consecutive 3-year terms. (C 12.02)

<u>Elected Council Members</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Expires</u>
Eric Anderson	2 nd term	Jan 2025
Sue Anderson	2 nd term	Jan 2025
Jess Markusen	2 nd term	Jan 2025
Mike Chmelik	2 nd term	Jan 2026
Kris Hedstrom	2 nd term	Jan 2026
Gwen Lenz	1 st term	Jan 2024 (2 nd term Jan 2027)
Bruce Johnson	1 st term	Jan 2025 (2 nd term Jan 2028)
Mark Youngdahl	1 st term	Jan 2025 (2 nd term Jan 2028)

Theresa Oberg	1 st term	Jan 2025 (2 nd term Jan 2028)
Kristin Lindholm	1 st term	Jan 2026 (2 nd term Jan 2029)
Shawn Swearingen	1 st term	Jan 2027 (2 nd term Jan 2030)
_____	1 st term	
_____	1 st term	
_____	1 st term	
_____	1 st term	

Appointed Council Members

_____	BLCW Representative (appointed annually by BLCW)
_____	Youth Representative (appointed annually by Council)

Mission Endowment Committee

Five members who serve a term of three years. May serve two consecutive terms.

(Bylaws Part XII A .1)

<u>Elected Council Members</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Expires</u>
Stacey Hawkins	2 nd Term	Jan 2026
Dianne Peterson	2 nd Term	Jan 2026
Kathleen Johnson	1 st Term	Jan 2024 (2 nd term Jan 2027)
Janet Simonen	1 st Term	Jan 2024 (2 nd term Jan 2027)
Eric Anderson	1 st Term	Jan 2026 (2 nd term Jan 2029)

Audit Committee

*An Audit Committee of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members **shall not be members of the Congregation Council***. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election. (C 13.03)*

Robin Johnson	1 st Term
Mike Youngquist	1 st Term

Nominating Committee appointed in January 2023 for 2024

Six members. Two of whom shall be outgoing members of the council. Nominating committee members are not eligible for consecutive reelection. (C 13.02)

- | | |
|------------------|----|
| 1. Hilja Iverson | 2. |
| 3. | 4. |
| 5. | 6. |

2024 Proposed Budget

	Approved 2023 Budget	(2023 YTD Actual + Dec 22) Dec 2022 - Nov 2023	Preliminary 2024 Budget	2023 v. 2024 Budget Difference
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
41500 - Weekly Offerings	241,608.62	220,525.90	254,997.00	13,388.38
44000 - Youth & Family		4,749.00		-
46100 - Mission Offerings	8,000.00	4,379.00	6,000.00	(2,000.00)
46200 - Coffee An' Mission Offerings		683.90		-
48000 - Designated Giving	20,000.00	29,001.89	29,000.00	9,000.00
49000 - Other Income	16,000.00	18,625.75	18,500.00	2,500.00
Intern Salary Reimb. from Luther	3,000.00			(3,000.00)
49000* - Special Events Income	2,000.00	-	2,000.00	-
Total Income	290,608.62	277,965.44	310,497.00	19,888.38
Designated Funds for CYF Director	15,000.00	-	20,000.00	5,000.00
Total Revenue	305,608.62	277,965.44	330,497.00	24,888.38
Expense				
Salary & Benefits	209,783.62	109,934.55	243,027.00	33,243.38
68000 - Designated Gifts		30,083.20		
60000 - Administration		542.40		
60002 - Duplication Supplies	2,400.00	-	-	(2,400.00)
60003 - Equipment Maintenance	1,000.00	127.30	130.00	(870.00)
60004 - Newsletter supplies and Postage	2,100.00	1,400.00	1,400.00	(700.00)
60005 - Office Supplies	3,500.00	6,526.80	6,500.00	3,000.00
60006 - Telephone	2,400.00	2,275.80	2,275.00	(125.00)
60007 - Website	-	270.30	270.00	270.00
60008 - Internet Access	1,200.00	1,079.60	1,100.00	(100.00)
60009 - Workers Comp	1,500.00	1,339.60	1,350.00	(150.00)
60010 - Professional services	1,400.00	1,842.00	1,650.00	250.00
60012 - Equipment Purchases	2,000.00	4,080.60	2,000.00	-
60013 - Bookkeeper Salary	3,852.00	3,205.00	3,200.00	(652.00)
FICA	288.90	240.38	240.00	(48.90)
Total 60000 - Administration	17,500.00	19,284.40	16,675.00	-825.00
60200 - Benevolence				
60202 - Global Missions	8,000.00	8,059.00	8,000.00	-
60204 - NE MN Synod ELCA	10,000.00	9,245.00	9,245.00	(755.00)
60200 - Benevolence - Other		-		-
Total 60200 - Benevolence	18,000.00	17,304.00	17,245.00	(755.00)
60800 - Christian Education				
60802 - Christ in the Home Booklets	375.00	360.30	375.00	-
60803 - Youth Education		748.30	-	-
60805 - Adult Education	250.00	-	-	(250.00)
60800 - Christian Education - Other				-
Total 60800 - Christian Education	625.00	1,108.60	375.00	-250.00
61400 - Outreach				
61406 - QUILTERS		1,871.65		-
61401 - Lay Conference and Lodging	400.00	-	-	(400.00)
61402 - Mission Endowment Promotion	8,000.00	1,350.00	1,500.00	(6,500.00)
61403 - Stewardship	450.00	-	-	(450.00)
61404 - Special Events Expense	1,500.00	603.14	600.00	(900.00)
61400 - Outreach - Other	750.00	144.98	150.00	(600.00)
Total 61400 - Outreach	11,100.00	3,969.77	2,250.00	-8,850.00

	Approved 2023 Budget	(2023 YTD Actual + Dec 22) Dec 2022 - Nov 2023	Preliminary 2024 Budget	2023 v. 2024 Budget Difference
61700 - Pastoral Ministry				
61714 - Pastor Continuing Education	750.00	-	750.00	-
61715 - Pulpit Fill	3,600.00	7,420.00		(3,600.00)
61719 - Mileage	1,000.00	4,292.26	1,000.00	-
61720 - PastorsConference Fee and Lodg Pastor Reimbursable Expenses	200.00 1,200.00	538.95	200.00 600.00	- (600.00)
61700 - Pastoral Ministry Expense - Other		1,813.08		-
61722 - Donation for Pastor				-
Total 61700 - Pastoral Ministry	6,750.00	14,064.27	2,550.00	(4,200.00)
62000 - Property		72.39		
62020 - Church Energy (Heat and Util)	11,000.00	9,668.64	10,000.00	(1,000.00)
62021 - Custodial Supplies	750.00	822.56	825.00	75.00
62022 - Fire Alarm Service	300.00		300.00	-
62024 - Church upkeep	2,200.00	11,942.86	2,000.00	(200.00)
62025 - Building Reserve	1,200.00	700.00	1,200.00	-
62027 - Waste removal	1,200.00	1,404.00	1,400.00	200.00
62028 - Insurance	5,400.00	6,495.00	12,000.00	6,600.00
62029 - Permits		100.00	100.00	100.00
62300 - Renovation Projects	-	1,550.00	-	-
Total 62000 - Property	22,050.00	32,755.45	27,825.00	5,775.00
63000 - Worship				
63400 - Music and Copyright	1,200.00	1,904.31	2,000.00	800.00
63500 - Musicians	1,000.00	580.00	600.00	(400.00)
63550 - Videograqpher	4,200.00	5,100.00	5,100.00	900.00
63700 - Instrument Maintenance		1,355.00		-
63700 - Worship supplies - other	2,400.00	2,558.28	2,600.00	200.00
Total 63000 - Worship	8,800.00	11,497.59	10,300.00	1,500.00
64000 - Youth and Family Ministry		601.94		
64050 - Y&F Misc.				-
64200 - Nursery				-
64300 - Sunday School	450.00		450.00	-
64400 - Vacation Bible School	1,200.00	-	1,200.00	-
64500 - Wednesday After School Program	1,200.00		1,200.00	-
64600 - First Communion	150.00		150.00	-
64700 - Confirmation (6th-9th)	3,000.00	1,518.14	3,000.00	-
64800 - Scholarships and Grants	1,000.00	2,750.00	1,750.00	750.00
64900 - Youth Group (6th-12th)	1,000.00	1,440.69	1,000.00	-
Total 64000 - Youth and Family Ministry	8,000.00	6,310.77	8,750.00	750.00
65000 - Outside Services		75.00		-
65300 - VANCO service charge	1,000.00	1,052.74	1,000.00	-
65500 - Capital Projects		2,733.69		-
65600 - Misc.		4,903.70		-
65610 - Cemetery	1,000.00	-	-	(1,000.00)
65700 - BLCW	1,000.00	451.50	500.00	(500.00)
Total 65000 - Outside Services	3,000.00	9,218.63	1,500.00	(1,500.00)
66000 - Payroll Expenses				
Total Expense	305,608.62	255,529.23	330,497.00	24,888.38
Net Ordinary Income	-	22,436.21	-	-

REPORTS

STAFF REPORTS

2023 Pastor's Report by Pastor Calvin Konop

Grace and peace to you in the name of God Almighty and our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

“There’s a buzz around here.” That’s a phrase that I’ve heard quite often. There is a sense of excitement, hope, renewal, and energy at Bethlehem. God is up to something here!

Covid was hard (and *is* hard, when you find yourself self-isolating again); as we continue to come out of Covid protocols, we leave the feelings of isolation behind. Instead I’ve seen our congregation embracing a posture of hope, curiosity, and excitement. Ministry groups have been meeting regularly again, and our ministry events (like The Harvest Dinner, and the Jule Fest) have started happening again with great success.

New and prospective members have started to join us for worship, bringing a new energy to our congregation. We had 9 kids, some being visitors, join us for our Vacation Bible School in August. Our youth ministry partnered with Pastor Tom Murray and Lutsen Lutheran, and have 14 students joining for Confirmation. The Average Worship Band took on leading worship weekly at our Wednesday services, and a large group of volunteers have taken on the community dinner rotation for our church.

We’ve done special services, including a Blessing of the Pets in October, and a Healing Service in November. We had a recognition of our Veterans over Veteran’s Day weekend, a beautiful memorial PowerPoint of those we have lost in the last year on All Saints Day, and 3 well attended Christmas Eve Services.

Our staff are a small but mighty group of dedicated servants who care deeply about the church and our community. Denise’s efforts and skills in organization, communication, and hospitality are truly a gift to our church. Kristen’s attention to detail and work ethic keeps our building clean, tidy, and safe. Karina’s musical talents and passion for including *all people* make our worship services worship, meaningful, and inviting. Killeen Limvere keeps our books in order, and keeps us on track and in line with Minnesota State Law, all the while carrying a non-anxious presence. And Mark Abrahamson, Duane Ege, and Roger Barton work quickly, efficiently, and tirelessly to make our livestream and audio-visual experience top of line.

Bethlehem has a **great many** volunteers who step up regularly to make our ministries possible. To our Sunday morning volunteers, our office volunteers, our kitchen helpers, those who plan and lead ministry and community events, property volunteers, cemetery volunteers, one-time volunteers, children and youth volunteers, and any others than I may be forgetting: Thank you! Because of you our church is not only Belonging to Christ, but also Sharing Christ on the North Shore and Beyond.

And to our Council: Thank you for your leadership, patience, care, organization, passion, and spirit of servitude that keeps us close to our mission, and keeps us moving forward with faith and hope.

Finally, as we look to the future, I am hopeful. We approved funding and hiring a Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries. This position is important because it invests in our next generation, opens our current staff up for more ministry opportunities, and will continue to help us Share Christ on the North Shore and Beyond. This position, as with the whole church budget, is

completely funded by congregation members and regular attenders - so I want to thank you for taking this step of faith by approving this position.

May the Lord bless you and keep you this new year. May God's face shine on you with grace a mercy. May God look upon you with favor, and give you peace. In the name of the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Counselor - our triune God, three in one. Amen.

-Pastor Calvin Konop

2023 Pastoral Acts

Installation:

Rev. Calvin Konop, Pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, August 27, 2023. Officiant: Bishop Amy Odgren.

Baptism:

Boman Lee Smith, July 23, 2023. Parents: Hilja Iverson & Shawn Smith. Sponsors: Clayton Smith, brother, and Amelia Thomason, aunt. Officiant: Rev. Calvin Konop

Confirmation:

Chance Jacobsen, June 11, 2023. Officiant: Rev. Rolf Morck

Lute Jansen, October 29, 2023. Officiant: Rev. Calvin Konop

Bianna Monson, October 29, 2023. Officiant: Rev. Calvin Konop

Grant Oberg, October 29, 2023. Officiant: Rev. Calvin Konop

Katie Shannon, October 29, 2023. Officiant: Rev. Calvin Konop

Patience Sifferath, October 29, 2023. Officiant: Rev. Calvin Konop

First Communion:

Funeral/Memorials:

Jessie Anderson, January 18, 2023. Memorial. Officiant: Rev. Mark Ditmanson

James Ford, January 21, 2023. Memorial. Officiant: Rev. Kris Garey

Kaye Tavernier, March 25, 2023. Memorial. Officiant: Rev. Tom Murray

Anna Speck, April 22, 2023. Memorial. Officiant: Rev. Kris Garey

B. J. Muus, June 17, 2023. Memorial. Officiant: Rev. Mark Ditmanson

Elaine Rabold, July 22, 2023. Memorial. Officiant: Rev. Calvin Konop

Janice Toftey, August 5, 2023. Gravesite service. Officiant: Rev. Calvin Konop

Eleanor Waha, September 13, 2023. Funeral. Officiant: Rev. Calvin Konop

Bradley Rude, October 28, 2023. Gravesite service. Officiant: Rev. Calvin Konop

Eliassen, Sharon, died Oct. 27, 2023. Service may be in Spring 2024

Weddings:

Brady Rosbacka & Anna Benson, January 27, 2023, Officiant: Rev. Steve Benson

Kaitlyn Mumm & Parker Slanga, September 23, 2023. Officiant: Rev. Kris Garey

Welcome New Members:

4/23/24: Patti Beyer, Kaitlyn Mumm & Parker Slanga

Transfer Members:

Mark & Janet Ditmanson, March 6, 2023, to Trinity Lutheran Church, Hovland, MN

Peter & Amy James, Oct. 2, 2023; to First Congregational Church of Dundee, West Dundee, IL

2023 Office Manager's Report by Denise Murray

To the Saints of Bethlehem Lutheran Church who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Creator and our Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. - 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3.

Office Notes:

Our **redesigned website** has been up about a year now and I am pleased with how user friendly the software continues to be. There are always updates that can be made to the site. I encourage you to use the website often and provide feedback for updates.

Our **copier/printer** continues to work well with a few minor service calls this year. I have investigated upgrading and preparing for the next one. There are options that may be able to save on copy costs. The **folding machine** has had a few quirks this year and I've had to call for service repairs a few times. It's a work-horse and necessary part of my publishing duties.

The **Bookkeeper's computer** is slow but *Kileen Limvere*, bookkeeper, is pleased that it continues to work. Her printer but it is old and has been refurbished a few years ago. Jeremy Ridlbauer from Sundew Technical, our computer technical services resource, looked into it and said that it is getting pretty old and low on physical RAM memory. "It's probably worth just replacing to not have it fail, over upgrades." This is the main "hub" computer for our network and thus important that it continues to work. So, 2024 should include a few upgrades to the business office.

Debbie Bieber, my Las Vegas sister, continues to be a blessing to me and Bethlehem. She is able to send several weeks visiting in Grand Marais every year and I put her talents to use while she's here. She loves to clean, organize, type and to do little projects, so I take full advantage of her while she's here. This year she made sure that our Church Record documents are up-to-date and that we have the required documents kept for each year. She completed all of the years 2000-2023 and will continue to dive into the archives as far as we can go. It's great to have someone willing to take on projects such as these because I don't seem to find the time. *Thanks, Debbie.*

Joan Bieber, my 91-year-old mom, comes in almost every Friday to help put the bulletins together. She always helps out in a pinch as well. **Kathleen Johnson** helps with the newsletter most months and

is quick to offer help in anything I need. **Joan Ege, Barb Coe, a few others** have consistently helped with the monthly newsletters and with other mailing projects as they occur. It's great to have helpers willing to jump in when I don't have enough hands or time. *Thanks, ladies!*

Thanks to **John Muus** for "being volunteered" to take pictures of members for a new directory prior to Pastor Calvin's arrival. John has been great and responds kindly to any request I make for pictures. *Thanks, John!* These new directories are available upon request and are specifically for team members and council. A more **formal directory** may be part of the **125th Anniversary Celebration**, and Laura Muus has volunteered to take professional pictures of members for the directory. We will need LOTS of pictures for the directory and continuing website updates, and **all members are encouraged to snap pictures** at events and forward them to the office at any time.

Chuck Soderholm has been the "caretaker" of our boiler since it was installed a few decades ago. He has gotten *AMAX Plumbing & Heating*, a new business in Grand Marais, to keep up the maintenance and repairs as needed. They replaced a fan on the boiler in September.

Volunteer Lists: I spent a bunch of time accumulating information from "Time & Talent Sheets" and previous lists of volunteers to create a new database for council members and team leaders. This is a dynamic list and *I encourage anyone interested in becoming more involved to contact the office.*

Decorating for the Holidays: Thank you to **Cathi Williams** who once again decorated the sanctuary for the fall and Thanksgiving. Thanks to **Janet Simonen and Hilja Iverson** (and **family and friends**) always spearhead decorating for Christmas and the Borealis Concerts. This year's theme was natural driftwood Christmas which was simply elegant. **Kent & Lyndsay Anderson** provided another spectacularly beautiful and mammoth tree for Christmas this year, and led a last-minute team of volunteers to decorate it following the Borealis concerts. *Thanks to Lindsay, Aaron, Oscar & Ty Mielke, Amery Oberg, Kaj Erickson, Kendra Berglund, Jake Mixdorf and all the helpers that* It's such a shame that this tree couldn't be up all year! This was Kent's 35th year for providing Christmas trees to Bethlehem. Lyndsay will be stepping away from leading the tree decorating and we are hopeful that our volunteers will be able to take this on for years to come!

Undecorating the Tree: A giant thank you to Mike, Teresa & Joey Chmelik and Butch Schulte for jumping in to undecorate and dismantle the mammoth tree. This takes a delicate touch, skill, patience and a bit of luck which was done with precision and love. *Thank you all!*

Library Updates:

Shelby Anderson is very passionate about libraries and brings this passion to Bethlehem by taking on the task of updating our library. She is in process (and will be for quite a while) of reviewing all the books in the library. She will "withdraw" books that are no longer current or where content does not match with Bethlehem/ELCA standards. Books are made available to members when they are withdrawn. Shelby will be digitizing our book titles so members may look up to check out any book in our system. Help is welcomed as this is a super large task. If you have some time and passion, please contact Shelby or myself. *Thanks, Shelby!*

We ordered a "Kids Corner" rug and Shelby will be setting it up as an area kids can read and enjoy the library.

Technicians & Technology:

We were able to find a replacement for *Sue Hennessy* who started our live stream and recording of services at the beginning of Covid. She did a fabulous job getting us online with our services and made transfer of responsibilities with relative ease. *Thanks, Sue, for all you've done for Bethlehem.*

Mark Abrahamson is our Live Stream Technician and has done a fabulous job keeping Bethlehem available on the World-Wide Web. *Thanks, Mark!* He provides this on the majority of services, and when he needs a day off, we are lucky to have **Roger Barton** as backup. Our goal continues to have a pool of “technicians” so the time commitment of EVERY Sunday doesn’t become a burden to one person. **(No luck yet coming up with this team.** If you have any interest in helping out with any of these jobs, please contact me or Pastor Calvin.)

Duane Ege continues to be our Sound Technician and he works with both Roger and Mark to provide quality sound within the sanctuary and streaming. Duane is the guy ringing the bell every Sunday morning sending the joyful announcement of worship is about to start. He is such an invaluable member of our team with his knowledge of sound, electricity, technical know-how, etc. I know he would appreciate having someone or a small team of helpers that he can work with so he might be able to pass this baton. *Thanks, Duane!* (Again we have had **no luck yet coming up with this team to date.** If you have any interest in helping out with any of these jobs, please contact me or Pastor Calvin.)

Roger Barton also provides a Bethlehem with a variety of technical support including troubleshooting, research and has been an important member of our technical team. Special thanks to Roger for always being willing to take on special projects including private streaming weddings, memorials, etc., which is remarkable since he’s only a part-time Cook County resident. *Thanks, Roger!*

We have made purchases this year to continue to enhance our sound, streaming and zooming capabilities. Noteworthy is a new laptop for Pastor Calvin, and a new camera which Roger & Duane installed this January. Next, we need to address the lighting and sound which continue to need improvement. Hopefully 2024 will see these awaited items completed.

Building Use:

As part of our community outreach, Bethlehem has opened its doors to a variety of activities:

Borealis Chorale & Orchestra: practices and concerts. North Shore Music Association provides \$400 to cover the building use costs.

Piano, Musical practices & concerts: individuals and groups (Swing Band, Jazz Band) use the sanctuary and other rooms for practices/concerts. We ask for “donations” from individuals/organizations for non-profit events.

Overnights: Advent Lutheran Church from Maple Grove, MN; Grace Lutheran, Mankato, MN; Westminster Presbyterian, Minneapolis, MN. We have been delighted with these groups who have respectfully used our facilities and with whom we have created networks with. In the future I would recommend these groups to use the facilities again and they have all offered to be reciprocal in building use for our groups. We ask these group for a donation or provide a fee schedule to groups that want to use our facilities overnight and for extended periods of time.

School use of facility: ISD 166 uses BLC as an Emergency Evacuation Location and yearly we host an evacuation drill. We also supply testing rooms and a quiet environment for students taking AP testing in May yearly, generally 6 or so testing times each spring.

Any request for building use comes through the office and is moved to the council for approval. Bethlehem's arms are open to community outreach when aligned with our mission: *Belonging to Christ, Sharing Christ on the North Shore and Beyond!*

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Murray, Bethlehem's Office Manager

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because of your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, sisters and brothers, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people. – Philemon 1:4-7

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS:

2023 President's Report submitted by Mike Chmelik

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

What a year this past year has been for Bethlehem. We reaffirmed that we belong to Christ. We recommitted ourselves to the mission of sharing Christ on the North Shore and beyond. It was a year where we as a congregation listened to each other, gave the Spirit the time to bring to us counsel and discernment, and then acted with a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

After a year like this, the simplest thing to do is a long summary with reflections on what we have been through, the choices we have made, and the fruits of those choices. To a certain extent, I will do that. But, rather than supply you with a summary of the year in this letter, I am going to append some of the contents from my monthly president reports to the church council. Do not feel obliged to read all of this. You might want to pick and choose those items of interest to you. They are included mostly so you have some reference points to what Bethlehem and your council has been doing through 2023.

However, what I want to do with this letter is talk about Bethlehem's future and where we are headed as we continue to belong to Christ and share Christ on the North Shore and beyond. Last year in my president's report for the annual meeting, I said that as I thought about Bethlehem the words that came to mind for our transition time between pastors were "blessed", "gratitude", and "excitement". Now as I look to Bethlehem's future the same three words come to mind.

Bethlehem is "blessed" with Pastor Calvin to provide leadership forward in our mission. I am so "grateful" for all the work done and being done by Bethlehem to bring Pastor Calvin and Ashley to our community and welcome them into our community. And there is "excitement" in the air as we see

what is happening particularly on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. We are “excited” to see familiar faces at worship that we have not seen for a while. We are “excited” to welcome new faces to Bethlehem and invite them to be part of our mission. We are “excited” to see more young people in our building. We are “excited” to see the work and presence of the Spirit at Bethlehem.

We are truly “blessed” to have a pastor who knows how to build a successful youth ministry. Pastor Calvin will do his part and now we need to support him with the personnel, monetary giving, and the volunteer time he needs to build this ministry. We are “excited” by the prospect of hiring a full-time Director of Children, Youth, and Family (CYF) Ministries. We are “excited” to fully support this director for success. And finally, we are “grateful” that we get to be part of it.

Now let us continue to belong to Christ. And let us continue to share Christ on the North Shore and beyond.

Your brother in Christ, Mike Chmelik (he/him/his)

See Appendix at back of report (page 26) for President’s Report: Supplemental Monthly Reports

2023 Treasurer’s Report submitted by Mark Youngdahl

See the 2023-24 Budget (pages 10-12)

2023 Financial Secretary’s Report

(To come)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit Committee submitted by Mike Chmelik

Robin Johnson and Mike Youngquist agreed to participate on an informal audit in 2023. Theresa Oberg prepared a couple sample documents with suggested questions and an outline that the audit committee could follow. Our bookkeeper, Kileen Limvere, would show our auditors how Bethlehem’s books are managed and what procedures and safeguards Bethlehem has in place. Mike Chmelik and Pastor Calvin Konop were interested in observing our informal audit. Unfortunately, limited time and conflicting schedules did not allow us to complete this audit in 2023. However, Kileen is trying to coordinate a time at the end of January or early February 2024 that the informal audit can take place.

Sincerely submitted, Mike Chmelik

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Women (BLCW) Report submitted by Gwen Lenz

Can you be we are already well into 2024. As always when January comes along, I think to myself how fast the previous year went by. The Quilter's started right up on Thursdays at 9 o'clock as well as our Annual Congregational meeting later in the month with a collective "Coffee 'An fellowship.

One thing that never gets old is the dedication of so many of our ladies to participate in our many Traditional activities: like Bible studies, February's Cookie pack, Altar Guild duties, and hospitality after Memorial Services, ThankOffering Sunday, and willingness to participate in a Bake Sale, Luncheon, and Julefest activities, with music! As I looked back, I remember the volunteer hours of others at the Thrift shop and the donation of funds to Bethlehem and Bethlehem's Women. I remember Laurie Spry stepping up to distribute so many trees on behalf of Carolyn Dry's donation, there was also some participation in "Walk to End Alzheimer's, in Grand Marais.

When BLCW has a party, we celebrate in style to welcome our New Pastor! With an Ice Cream Social, then a "potluck" at Pastor's Installation, BLCWomen did it in style.

In 2023, we lost some very dedicated BLCW members, Kaye Tavernier, Anna Speck, Eleanor Waha. Phyllis Parker and Phyllis Olson moved away, Janet Ditmanson retired/transferred.

I hope this New Year brings you good health, and happiness and new volunteer opportunities.
Submitted by Gwen Lenz

Church in Society submitted by Jessica Markusen

Thank you to all who supported Bethlehem's 2023 Mission of the Month offerings! Our committee works to find a balance between local, regional, national, and global needs. When selecting each Mission of the Month, we also pay attention to where the need is greatest at any given time and pivot when needed.

Here is a recap of our 2023 Mission of the Month offerings:

January – Care Center (to support the activity program for residents) - \$419

February – Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service - \$359

March – CHUM (Duluth) - \$439

April – Lutherans Restoring Creation – \$209

May – Lutheran Volunteer Corps - \$389

June – Lutheran World Relief - \$224

July – Red Cross (Duluth) - \$501.75

August – School supplies for local students and schools (in partnership with the HUB) - \$289
(plus lots of school supplies!)

September – Center for Changing Lives (supporting homeless youth in Duluth) - \$174

October – Cook County Food Shelf - \$289 (+ lots of food donations!)

November – ELCA Good Gifts - \$679

December – Lutheran Disaster Response - \$389

TOTAL GIFTS FOR 2023 = \$4,360.75

Thank you for your continued generosity and support!

The Church in Society Committee also facilitated the following initiatives this year:

We began the year with a card campaign. Members were encouraged to write a letter or send a card to one of our members residing at our local care center and beyond. We enjoyed having the children of Bethlehem take part in this project as well. They created beautiful works of art in Sunday school for care center residents. We hope this card campaign brought joy to the recipients and served as a reminder that they are remembered, missed, and loved by our church community.

In September, we joined with other ELCA congregations to take part in “God’s work. Our hands.” Following worship on Sunday, September 10th, six volunteers gathered at First & Second Thrift Store to help with organization and cleaning projects. At ISD 166, eight Bethlehem volunteers gathered to help spread wood chips on the trails near the school. It was fun to participate in community outreach and spend time serving together.

Most recently, in partnership with the First Congregational Church, in Grand Marais, we held a sock/mitten/hat drive. Thanks to all who contributed and adorned the narthex tree with warm, colorful winter gear. The collected items were dropped off at the Damiano Center in Duluth and we hope they provide warmth and bring hope to those who receive them.

In 2023, the Church in Society Committee met on the first Wednesday of every month at 8am. We typically met via Zoom as that worked well for our committee members. We’ve enjoyed having Pastor Calvin take part in our meetings in recent months.

We look forward to 2024 and welcome new committee members to join us!

Respectfully submitted by the Church in Society Committee

Committee members: Sue Anderson, Joni Kristenson, Libby Larson and Jessica Markusen

Membership Committee submitted by Kathleen Johnson

2023 brought a few more members to Bethlehem Lutheran Church. In April we welcomed three new members: Patti Beyer, Katie Mumm and Parker Slanga. Katie & Parker were united in marriage in September in Bethlehem. We are looking forward to receiving several more households in 2024.

This committee has no representation on the Church Council any longer, and we (I) are looking for a few people that are willing to help with member events. Please contact me at 218-370-2528.

Mission Endowment Committee Report submitted by Janet Simonen

Bethlehem established the Mission Endowment Fund in 1997 to enhance the work and mission of the church. People are invited to donate money, real estate, stocks, mutual funds, and/or bonds to the fund, or can leave a bequest as a part of their estate planning. Gifts are then invested in the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust that is managed by the ELCA Foundation, using criteria of social responsibility consistent with the values of the ELCA. Brochures describing the Fund in greater detail are available in the church narthex.

Endowment fund gifts are permanent, but a percentage of the income from interest and dividends is available for distribution each year to support initiatives in four designated categories:

- 1) Outreach to missions and programs within our local community and Synod.
- 2) Outreach to missions and programs of the ELCA in the U.S. and the World.
- 3) Finding for Bethlehem capital improvements, debt reduction, and/or building programs.
- 4) Funding for other causes and programs that enhance the mission outreach of Bethlehem.

There was approximately \$9,000 available to distribute in 2023. Upon recommendation of the Mission Endowment Committee and ratification by the Church Council, the following gifts were made:

- 1) \$3,000 in college scholarships, divided between CCHS Seniors Rowan Lindholm, Katie Peck, and J Shannon
- 2) \$2,000 to the Bethlehem youth budget to be used for summer "camperships" and/or other youth programming
- 3) \$1,800 to Bethlehem for a new camera and/or other audio-visual needs
- 4) \$900 to Lutheran World Relief
- 5) \$900 to Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
- 6) \$200 to Ruby's Pantry
- 7) \$200 to the Violence Prevention Center

Mission Endowment Committee members this year were: Eric Anderson, Stacey Hawkins, Kathleen Johnson, Dianne Peterson, and Janet Simonen. Please contact any member, or the church office, if you would like to make a donation, honorarium, or memorial gift to the Mission Endowment Fund. It would truly be a "gift that keeps on giving!"

Property Committee – No Report Submitted

Reconciling In Christ (RIC) Committee submitted by Karina Roth

RIC Committee has been in a pause as a BLC found a new pastor. Now that Calvin is here and getting to know our church and culture, it is our goal to reconvene in 2024 and begin working towards becoming a Reconciling in Christ church.

Stewardship Committee submitted by Eric Anderson

The Stewardship Committee organized our annual stewardship drives in two phases this year. The first phase, our estimate of giving cards (brochure) **Ignite the Fire** occurred in November through early December. The theme of this stewardship drive was developed because as stated in the brochure, **“We hoped to ignite the Holy Spirit in every member of the congregation, both young and old. As the tongues of fire from the Holy Spirit lit the fire that would begin the Disciples ministry, and grow into the church; let us ignite the fire of enthusiasm, generosity and service; giving life to our own mission of Sharing Christ on the north shore and beyond”**.

The goal was to increase participation over previous years, and to achieve an 8.5% increase in offerings in 2024. This goal of an 8.5% increase was determined by estimating increased costs of operation, and to include the funding of a full time CYF position for BLC, which was approved at by the congregation at a meeting in November, dependent on the appropriate funds being available. With Simply Giving included with turned in estimate of giving cards, we have seen an increase in pledged offering for the 2024 year. The proposed budget for 2024 reflects this increase.

Our second phase will begin in February. A revised **Time and Talent survey** will be distributed, like last year. This will go out through the weekly newsletter, and will be available for pick up in the church narthex. The shortened up the survey of one page, will hopefully increase participation. In any organization response to surveys like this are generally low. We hope to break this trend. The response from last February’s Time and Talent survey saw a slight improvement over the previous year’s participation, but was still relatively low. It is the hope of the Stewardship committee to increase participation, but that will depend (in the author’s opinion) on continuing to streamline the form and ease of participation, and for the congregation to see more results from (or use of) the survey results gathered. In other words, we feel the best way to encourage participation on the survey is if the information we glean from the survey is actually used. In the past, our members have done these surveys, but the surveys were largely ignored after they were completed. Thanks to the work of our staff and volunteers this last spring, a much more organized compilation of the data has been assembled. We will continue to encourage all committees, service projects, and ministry areas to use the information we have gathered, and will continue to gather.

The Stewardship Committee, Eric Anderson, Gwen Lenz, Dianne Peterson, Craig Peterson, and Pastor Calvin Konop.

Worship Committee submitted by Karina Roth

The Worship Committee has enjoyed working with Calvin since July. We have reinstated singing all verses of the hymns as we longer are trying to cut down the length of the service. This month, we are focusing on learning new hymns in All Creation Sings. I particularly love the inclusive and creative language that is used in this new hymnal.

Bethlehem Lutheran Choir rehearses at 8:40 am Sunday mornings. We offer an anthem at the Offering on the first and third Sundays of the month. Choir is open to all singers in the community.

Worship Wednesdays submitted by Stacey Hawkins

*“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
Ephesians 5:19-20*

Our Wednesday worship services returned to weekly services starting in the fall with the start of confirmation classes for youth. Pastor Tom and Pastor Calvin help lead our services and teach the classes for the youth. Our music team, the Average Worship Band, assist in leading the singing and are grateful for the blessings God provides to all who gather to worship despite any imperfections.

There are many stories in the Bible that took place around the sharing of a meal. Everyone is invited to join us for a shared meal (thank you volunteers!) at 5:30 in the social hall and then move to the sanctuary at 6 pm for our worship service. We gather for worship to communally offer God our praise and give thanks for all He has done.

If you would like to help with the meals, join our music team, or assist with the sound and projection, we would love to have you join us! Come on Wednesdays and bring your friends!

Youth & Family Committee submitted by Kris Hedstrom

Confirmation, Holy Moly and Sunday School classes were offered on Sunday mornings from January through April 2023. The Confirmation students set up our Faith Walk (stations of the Cross) prior to Easter Sunday-April 4,2023. Easter Sunday, we had a brunch of muffins and fresh fruit, hosted by the Confirmation students.

We celebrated with our graduating Senior High students May 14, 2023. They had a lunch with our Quilting group and chose their own favorite quilt. They received a book from Bethlehem, Together We Rise by Joe Davis and a special cake during Coffee An’.

Teacher Appreciation Sunday was June 6,2023. We celebrated Chance Jacobsen’s confirmation and said Farewell to Jacobsen family. Mindy Jacobsen resigned as Interim Youth and Family Director, as they were moving to Alaska. The teachers who served this past year included Kyle and Theresa Oberg, Jens and Mindy Jacobsen, Carrie Jansen, Ben Nicodym (intern pastor), Kris Hedstrom, Shelby Anderson and Stacy Hawkins.

Eight students received scholarships to attend church camp. Six students went to Cathedral of the Pines, one went to Covenant Pines and one went to Val Paraiso Music camp. The average scholarship was \$250.00 per student.

Vacation Bible School was held as a 3-day event August 8-10. It was one of Pastor Calvin Konop’s first youth events as our new pastor. We had 9 students from grades 1-5 and 7 Middle School helpers.

Sunday School is available during Morning worship for children ages 3- 2nd grade. Sometimes the Holy Moly age students join in and are great classroom helpers.

Confirmation classes began October 4th and will continue until May 15th. A community meal is open to all from 5:30 to 6:00 PM. Worship is from 6:00-6:30 and classes are from 6:30 to 7:30 PM. The teachers are Kyle and Theresa Oberg and Pastor Tom Murray. Fourteen students are involved with the classes. Meal time attendance averages 60 people per night.

Confirmation was 10/29/23. Five students were confirmed at this time. The bishop, Taryn Montgomery presided at the service. The students received a Bible, a plaque and a bouquet of red roses.

The Middle-High School retreat at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd was attended by 12 of our students on November 17 and 18, 2023.

Bethlehem Lutheran called a special congregation meeting November 5, 2023. We voted unanimously to fund and hire a Director of CYF (Children, Youth and Family) services. This position will be clarified and presented at the Annual meeting in January 2024.

2023 Annual Report

APPENDIX

President's Report: Supplemental Monthly Reports

Submitted by Mike Chmelik

Jan 12, 2023 President's Report:

Article appearing in the January Bethlehem Star

Questionnaire Results:

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Thank you for your thoughtful responses to our Bethlehem Ministry Questionnaire. I appreciate your prayerful consideration in filling out the questionnaire. We had 65 responses returned and are grateful to have so many participants. The compiled results of these questionnaires are being used by the transition team to create a Ministry Site Profile (MSP) to be placed on the ELCA website to begin our call process for a new pastor.

Here is our tentative timeline:

- The transition team completes a draft MSP to be submitted for council review at the Jan 12 council meeting.
- Council will review and either approve or ask for revisions in the MSP on Jan 12.
- Council members will create an ELCA online account, input the MSP, and notify the NE Minnesota Synod staff that our MSP is complete.
- Bethlehem will elect a call committee slate of candidates at our annual meeting on Jan 29. Our constitution requires that the congregation appoint a call committee. This can only be done at a congregational meeting. It makes sense to do this at the annual meeting rather than calling a special congregational meeting to appoint a call committee.
- Brenda Tibbetts will meet with the council and the call committee to talk about the call process.
- Bishop Odgren will begin assembling interested pastoral candidates for the call committee to review and visit.

Note that except for electing a call committee on Jan 29 this is a tentative timeline. If we need more time to complete the MSP and get a final draft approved by council, we will take it. Having an MSP that accurately reflects Bethlehem will give us a slate of pastoral candidates that will best fit Bethlehem, Bethlehem's mission, and Bethlehem's needs.

Today, I would like to share with you some of what we have learned from our compiled questionnaires. I will begin with the prepackaged questions about Bethlehem's characteristics and pastoral needs. I will then share with you what we learned from our open-ended questions.

Prepackaged Questions:

Bethlehem as a Community:

1. We tend to be formal and programmatic versus informal and spontaneous.
2. We tend to have clearly defined goals and plans for our future versus no stated goals or plans.
3. We are demographically homogeneous.

Bethlehem's Leadership Style:

1. We tend to welcome ideas that are provoking and challenging versus ideas that are tried and true.
2. We rely on our leaders for direction more than group decision-making.
3. We tend to learn how to use conflict constructively versus perceiving conflict as something destructive.

Bethlehem's Programming:

1. Our facilities are often used by community groups.
2. We tend to train people to minister outside our walls versus training people to minister inside our walls.
3. We focus on ideas and beliefs versus skills and action.

Bethlehem's Theological Perspective:

1. We are obviously Lutheran in identity and practice.
2. We participate in synod and ELCA activities versus not being very active in the synod.
3. We focus on biblical studies and doctrine versus focusing on contemporary issues and topics:

Bethlehem's Top Five Ministry Tasks:

1. Preaching/Worship
2. Pastoral Care and Visitation
3. Youth and Family Ministry
4. Christ Centered
5. Building Community

Bethlehem's Top Five Essential Pastoral Gifts:

1. Help people develop their spiritual life
2. Be an effective communicator
3. Be able to share leadership and work in a team
4. Build a sense of community among the people with whom they work
5. Be effective in working with youth

Bethlehem's Top Five Very Helpful Pastoral Gifts:

1. Bring joy and good humor to relationships
2. Be effective in working with children
3. Be an effective teacher
4. Deal effectively with conflict
5. Be active in visitation of members and non-members

Open Ended Questions:

Why are you involved at Bethlehem?

There are so many amazing reasons why people are involved with Bethlehem.

- Life-Long or Long-Time Relationships. One of the most common responses includes being life-long or long-time members where Bethlehem feels like home. Many people identify as life-long Lutherans. They love their Lutheran heritage and our identity as a people of Grace and a people of Faith.
- Music Ministry. Others identified the amazing music ministry that is woven into our worship life.
- Welcoming. Finally, another common response is that Bethlehem is a place of welcome not just for members but for the entire community. You can see the Spirit at work here.

What does Bethlehem do well?

- You cannot talk about Bethlehem without mentioning music. The musical talent is almost intimidating and at the same time enriches our worship life. However, the most remarkable thing about Bethlehem's musical talent pool is that we use it to reach out to the rest of our community.

- Bethlehem preaches the good news of Jesus Christ inclusively to all. This includes strong biblical text based sermons, creative liturgies, and weaving music into worship to support the message. This is done with a Lutheran flavor and emphasis that we are a people of Grace and a people of Faith.
- Bethlehem is a community church that reaches out ecumenically to all flavors of Christianity and to those people that are looking for something that is missing in their spiritual lives. The work of the Spirit is evident in worship, service, and lives of our members.

What are Bethlehem's top pastoral needs?

This is a hard question to answer since we really need a “Jack or Jill of all trades” for our single pastor congregation. Identifying the top pastoral needs does not imply that the other needs are not important.

- Preaching/Worship. We need a pastor that preaches the good news and keeps politics out of the pulpit while embracing gospel themes such as loving our neighbors and enemies, seeking justice and mercy for the disadvantaged, being good stewards of God's creation, and leaving judgement for God. To do this we need a pastor who is a student of the bible and rooted in sound theology.
- Pastoral Care and Visitation. Pastoral care and visitation not just for members, not just for care center residents, not just for the physically sick, was mentioned again and again as a pastoral priority. Considering that demographically our congregation and community are aging, this is not surprising.
- Youth and Family Ministry. Youth and young families are Bethlehem's future. Nurturing families through spiritual and faith formation has always been a priority. During the pandemic, many programs including our youth and family activities have suffered. We need a pastor to lead, reinvigorate, and commit to our youth and family ministry.
- Christ Centered. We need a pastor that is “Christ centered” in both their public and personal lives.
- Building Community. I had a pastor many decades ago who said that all church programming is ultimately about building community. It did my heart good to hear that idea reverberated in our questionnaire responses. It is through building community that our call and mission can be brought into being. A pastor with energy, enthusiasm, and creativity can help us build community at Bethlehem and all of Cook County.

What is the Spirit calling Bethlehem to do?

The responses to this question are so diverse. Indeed, the Spirit speaks to each one of us to discern God's will for each of us and answer that call individually. So, it is not surprising to hear so many different responses for Bethlehem's calling. Bethlehem can have multiple calls and missions. However, a pattern of responses did start to take shape. Bethlehem is uniquely positioned in the middle of the Christian flavors in Cook County. In this time of unprecedented divisiveness in our country, Bethlehem is a mix of conservatives and liberals in political issues, economic issues, and social issues. And yet, through the Spirit we find a way to do the work of Christ. My personal fear is that in this transition time we might lose some of our diversity. But my hope is that Bethlehem can use our diversity and our ability to work together to bring about a more ecumenical Cook County where churches of all flavors can lessen divisiveness between community members and to serve together in doing the work of Christ. As I read the responses, I heard about becoming even more welcoming, about being a church that serves the entire community, about ministering to non-Christians and atheists, about promoting affordable housing, about being a safe place for all, about inclusivity, and about holding more ecumenical services and activities. In short, making Bethlehem a place that shares Christ on the North Shore and beyond.

What would you change at Bethlehem?

These responses were mostly a long list of little things that frustrate us, many of which could easily be taken care of except that many contradict each other. Worship should be earlier, worship should be later, etc. I choose to ignore these little things for now. What is left is that many, many people talk about the biggest change Bethlehem needs is for Bethlehem to be “willing” to change. As we transition to a newly called pastor, we will likely do a number of things to change things up. Some of those changes may work, some may fail, some may be permanent, some may be temporary, some may be trying something completely new and creative, some may be trying tried and true things that worked in the past. But the key is that we are flexible and “willing” to try

changes. Most of these changes involve ways to make Bethlehem even more welcoming. Some may be suggestions to get old members back who have fallen away or left Bethlehem while others may be ways to invite new people to worship. Some may ask us to leave some old traditions behind while others encourage starting new programs. Many of suggested changes speak about the excitement and energy that can be generated by trying something really new such as a pastor unlike any pastor Bethlehem has had in the past.

What does a more Christ-centered Bethlehem look like?

The responses to this question include many “What Would Jesus Do” (WWJD) type observations. This includes more service projects, a greater concentration on “red letter” passages in the gospel, more community outreach, more sharing the love of Christ, and continuing to work at Bethlehem becoming an even more welcoming place for all in our community. I have been part of the Thursday Morning Men’s Bible Study for 19 years. We are a mixture of different Christian flavors. One thing I hear again and again from our non-Bethlehem members is that Bethlehem is a place that they can see the Spirit at work. How amazing is that. I think a more Christ-centered Bethlehem would have all of us sisters and brothers in Christ clearly seeing the Spirit at work here.

Next month I hope to share with you pieces of our Ministry Site Profile (MSP) once we have submitted it to the ELCA website.

Your brother in Christ, Mike Chmelik (he/him/his)

Article appearing in the January Bethlehem Star

Solar array damage: It is with sadness that I need to report that the record high winds on December 23, 2022, have caused damage to our solar array. Our array was designed to withstand hurricane force winds but that wasn’t enough for the gusts of that day. At this time, it appears that 12 of our panels on the east end of the fellowship hall were forced off the roof and onto the south lawn. In addition, one window in the fellowship hall was cracked and will need replacement. Of our remaining 42 panels, it appears 3 have their wires disconnected from their inverter and 39 panels remain operational and generating electricity for us. We have not yet assessed if any damage was done to our roof. We have been in touch with TruNorth Solar who installed our system to perform the repairs. We have also been in touch with our insurance company and began the claim process to cover the cost of the repairs. Repairs to the solar array are likely to take place in the spring.

Your brother in Christ, Mike Chmelik (he/him/his)

Update on Transition Team: The transition team is comprised of Jess Markusen, Lynnea Morse, Cathi Williams, Craig Peterson, Carrie Jansen, and Mike Chmelik. In addition, Dianne Peterson has been helping us to take notes and compile the questionnaire results. Our initial meeting was on Sunday, Oct 30, after worship. We meet semi-regularly on Mondays at 11am. Our goal was to have a draft Ministry Site Profile to present to the council at the January Council Meeting for their discussion and approval. Unfortunately, the team was not able to make this goal mostly due to time restrictions by me. This is OK, it is more important to get a good profile in place even if it takes a little longer rather than hurrying it along too quickly. We can still elect a call committee at our January 29th Annual Meeting. Council can approve the profile at our Feb 9, 2023 meeting.

Christmas Services:

- Thank you to Tom Murray (3pm Christmas Eve), Ben Nikodym (5pm Christmas Eve), William Strand (9pm Christmas Eve, 10am Christmas Day), Jonathan Rova (New Year’s Day), and John Bragstad (New Year’s Day) for providing us with pulpit fill over our Christmas season.
- Thank you to all the musicians who enhanced our worship during our Christmas services. There are too many to name and I am sure I would forget someone.

- Thank you to all the people who helped in decorating and undecorating our sanctuary for the Christmas services. Again, there are too many to name and I am sure I would forget someone.
- Christmas attendance:

3pm Christmas Eve	65
5pm Christmas Eve	84
9pm Christmas Eve	11
10am Christmas Day	21

Borealis Christmas Concerts: Bethlehem had the privilege of hosting the Borealis Chorale and Orchestra Christmas Concerts on Dec 11 and Dec 12 after missing 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was so good to hear this amazing band of musicians together again providing the community with a concert that feels more like a worship service. I felt so happy for our own Karina Roth who took over the director duties without missing a beat. She honored the former directors by continuing the tradition of musical excellence while putting her own unique flair to the concert. This is an example of our Cook County community of believers in Jesus Christ at our best. I am so pleased that Bethlehem takes a prominent role in this ecumenical outreach.

Feb 9, 2023 President’s Report:

Ministry Site Profile: The Transition Team has finished their draft Ministry Site Profile (MSP) for consideration and review by the church council. Please be sure to thank the members of this team for their service. Team members are Carrie Jansen, Cathi Williams, Craig Peterson, Jess Markusen, Lynnea Morse, and Mike Chmelik. Once council has approved the MSP, I will open an account for Bethlehem on the ELCA website and the pieces of the MSP will be cut and pasted into the ELCA website. Once submitted, the ELCA will send emails to Bishop Amy Odgren to get her approval of the site and to Bill Beckstrand who has agreed to be our “Reference for a Congregation”. Bill will have 2 pages of forms and short questions to answer online. Once we have Bishop Odgren’s approval and Bill’s reference submitted, our MSP will become visible for pastors searching for a new call. Bishop Odgren will then pass candidates on to our call committee to consider.

Bethlehem Website: One of the concerns of the Transition Team is the importance of congruence between our Ministry Site Profile (MSP) on the ELCA website and our own website. The MSP will be the first impression a pastoral candidate will get of Bethlehem. If the candidate is at all interested in Bethlehem, they will almost certainly go next to our own www.sharingchrist.org website. As we get ready to submit our MSP, we need to make sure that at the very least our website has accurate and up-to-date information. Better yet, would be a website that hints at the uniqueness of Bethlehem and its setting on the North Shore.

John Bragstad has been working on an altered website using the WIX web builder and platform that changes the focus to who we serve rather than who we are. It is visually interesting with dramatic photography and short repeating videos. It is a website that is more narrative driven than menu driven. Kirk Oberg currently manages our website that was built using the Joomla web builder. Kirk laughed when I asked him about WIX and said that he had suggested to Denise the possibility of changing over to WIX because of the easiness to make modifications. Kirk said we would not be “stepping on his toes” if we choose to switch platforms and he would be glad to help us if we decide to switch.

Annual Meeting: Thank you to all that helped out with the annual meeting and made it go smoothly. In particular I want to thank Eric Anderson for his work on our constitutional changes, Mark Youngdahl for explaining and answering questions on the 2023 budget, and Rolf Morck for the opening devotion and prayer. I also want to thank Theresa Oberg, Mindy Jacobsen, and Chance Jacobsen for monitoring microphones, getting people to sign in, and monitoring the Zoom participants for our annual meeting. And thank you to Gwen Lenz for setting up Coffee ‘An in the narthex and keeping our quorum contained close by before the start of the meeting. Finally, I want to thank Kathy Johnson for her thorough membership report. She filled in many of the statistics and records of the congregation in 2022 that are usually found in our pastor’s report.

Call Committee: The first meeting of our newly elected call committee will be a joint meeting with the church council at 6pm on March 9, 2023. Brenda Tibbetts will come from the NE Minnesota Synod and take us through

the call process steps and answer questions. John Bragstad has agreed to serve as chairman on the committee. Our other members include Eric Anderson representing the council, Jess Markusen representing the Transition Team, Annie DeBevec, Katie Stieler, Nathan Kristenson, and Mindy Jacobsen.

Mar 9, 2023 President's Report:

Welcome to Deacon Brenda Tibbetts and our Call Committee: Join me in welcoming Brenda Tibbetts from the Northeastern Minnesota Synod and the non-council members of our Call Committee to our special joint meeting. Note the special starting time of 6pm. We will hold this meeting in the Fellowship Hall. I will have call process documents included in the packet Denise sends out for council and I will have hard copies available in the fellowship hall before the meeting. It is hard to predict how long Deacon Brenda's presentation and our questions for her will last. If it goes longer than expected, I may ask council to abbreviate and table much of our remaining agenda until the April meeting. To my knowledge, there is nothing on the agenda that cannot wait until the April meeting.

Article submitted for March 2023 Bethlehem Star:

Thank you to the Transition Team and the Call Committee:

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I suspect that you may get impatient with me always talking about gratitude. However, as your church council president gratitude is what has overwhelmed me as I look at Bethlehem from the role I am currently serving. Today I am giving thanks for our Transition Team who have completed their work and for our newly elected Call Committee's willingness to serve and whose work is just beginning.

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." First Thessalonians 5:16-18

Our transition team members were Craig Peterson, Jess Markusen, Cathi Williams, Carrie Jansen, Lynnea Morse, and me. The Transition Team began meeting in late October. We developed the Bethlehem Ministry Questionnaire in November and compiled its results in November and early December to guide us in the creation of the Ministry Site Profile (MSP). In mid-December we began writing the MSP. The MSP was approved by council on Feb 9, 2023, and submitted to the ELCA website on Feb 18, 2023. This profile will be the first impression pastoral candidates will get of Bethlehem. The MSP is the result of compiling 65 thoughtful responses to our Bethlehem Ministry Questionnaire by our transition team. It is our hope that the prayerful consideration in filling out the questionnaire will result in a profile that accurately reflects Bethlehem and will give us a slate of pastoral candidates that will best fit Bethlehem, Bethlehem's mission, and Bethlehem's needs. A well written MSP can make the hard job of our Call Committee easier. Please be sure to thank Craig, Jess, Cathi, Carrie, and Lynnea for their steady and thoughtful work in writing Bethlehem's MSP.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in various forms." First Peter 4:10

Finally, let us show our gratitude to the Call Committee members and their willingness to serve. The work of this committee is open-ended and will only be complete when we have a newly installed pastor at Bethlehem. Although we pray that this will be a speedy process there is no guarantee on how long a commitment this is for the committee members. Members of our Call Committee are Mindy Jacobsen, John Bragstad, Annie DeBevec, Nathan Kristenson, Jess Markusen, Eric Anderson, and Katie Stieler. Pray for them and wish them well. The first meeting of the Call Committee will be a special joint meeting with the Church Council on Mar 9, 2023. At this meeting Brenda Tibbetts from the Northeastern Minnesota Synod will be here to walk us through the call process and answer the Call Committee and Church Council questions.

Your brother in Christ, Mike Chmelik (he/him/his)

Ministry Site Profile: On Feb 19, I entered and submitted the Ministry Site Profile on the ELCA website that was approved by council at the February meeting. I had to add a 75-word summary that was not in the original form I was given by the synod. I also had to abbreviate 2 answers to comply with a 250-word maximum that also was not in the original form supplied by the synod. This was no big deal, I suspect the MSP form continues to be modified by the ELCA as needs change. The ELCA sent emails to Bishop Amy Odgren's staff to get her approval of the site and to Bill Beckstrand who has agreed to be our "Reference for a Congregation". Bill and Brenda have acknowledged receipt of the emails. Bill has already submitted his reference. Once we have Bishop Odgren's staff approval submitted, our MSP will become visible for pastors searching for a new call.

Bethlehem Website: One of the concerns of the Transition Team was the importance of congruence between our Ministry Site Profile (MSP) on the ELCA website and our own website. The MSP will be the first impression a pastoral candidate will get of Bethlehem. If the candidate is at all interested in Bethlehem, they will almost certainly go next to our own www.sharingchrist.org website. We needed to make sure that at the very least our website has accurate and up-to-date information. Better yet, would be a website that hints at the uniqueness of Bethlehem and its setting on the North Shore.

Council approved at the February meeting the website prototype proposed by John Bragstad. This altered website using the WIX web builder and platform changes the focus to who we serve rather than who we are. It is visually interesting with dramatic photography and short repeating videos. It is a website that is more narrative driven than menu driven. Our former website manager, Kirk Oberg, supported the switch affirming the easiness to make modifications. On Feb 20, 2023, Denise, John, and myself switched to our new website with the help of Kirk Oberg. When you see Kirk, be sure to let him know how thankful we are for him making the transition to the new website go smoothly. There is still work to do to make modifications and optimize the new website. We appreciate continued feedback from users with suggestions on how to improve it.

Apr 13, 2023 President's Report:

Thank you to all who helped with Holy Week Worship Services:

In my welcome at the beginning of our Easter worship services, I mentioned how much Bethlehem has gone through during this past year. We have battled COVID-19, acclimated to a new normal as the pandemic subsided, had our pastor retire, and did not have an interim pastor available during this time between installed pastors. Through all of this we have continued to celebrate the Resurrection every Sunday and have continued in our mission of belonging to Christ and sharing Christ on the North Shore and beyond. No where has this been more manifest and visible than in the help Bethlehem has had with worship during Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.

- Thank you to Kristen Carlsgaard who has kept our facilities looking so clean for worship.
- Thank you to Denise Murray for her coordination and making sure our bulletins are ready to go and that those presiding at worship know what is happening.
- Thank you to Sue Hennesy, Duane Ege, and Mark Abrahamson for making sure our sound and online presence work smoothly.
- Thank you to our worship committee for planning such meaningful worship experiences and coordinating our text with liturgy and music.
- Thank you to the youth and adult leaders who set up the stations of the cross for Palm Sunday and provided breakfast food between Easter worship services.
- Thank you to all those who have helped preside at worship including Eric Anderson, William Strand, Brad Shannon, Rolf Morck, Jonathan Rova, and John Bragstad.
- Thank you to members of the Altar Guild who not only set our communion table but also decorate our sanctuary. A special thank you to Sue Anderson and Sue Bragstad that made the sanctuary so festive for Easter.
- Thank you to our readers who did such a wonderful job setting the context for our worship services.

- Thank you to all the amazing musicians who gifted us with such inspirational music with their voices and instruments.
- Thank you for all the people I have forgotten who without their contributions and service our worship experiences would have been lessened.
- And thank you to all the kids on Easter morning who were not too scared to help me ring our bell as a call to worship.

I am most grateful for every one of you.

Call Committee is at work: We are blessed with a hard-working call committee who are taking their responsibilities seriously, asking hard questions, becoming well versed with the Bethlehem profile, and are reflecting and analyzing about what is said. Even better, I think the committee likes working with each other. Please take the time to thank your committee members for the service, time, and insight they are providing to Bethlehem in the call process. And please take the time to thank Nathan Kristenson for his leadership as chairperson.

Call committee members: Nathan Kristensen (chairperson), Jess Markusen, Kati Stieler, Eric Anderson, Mindy Jacobsen, John Bragstad, Annie Debevec, and Mike Chmelik.

May 11, 2023 President's Report:

Church Council Email

Apr 30, 2023:

Hi Church Council,

With Nathan's announcement at worship today that we now officially have a "candidate of choice", there are a number of things that must now be set in motion.

For the Church Council we need to:

- 1. Discuss and approve our "candidate of choice" on May 11**
Nathan Kristenson presents our "candidate of choice" to council on May 11 along with the Call Committee's written recommendation.
- 2. Discuss and approve our pastoral duties and expectations on May 11**
The Executive Committee will present their recommendation from their May 4 meeting.
- 3. Discuss and approve our financial compensation package on May 11**
The Executive Committee will present their recommendation from their May 4 meeting.
- 4. Send pastoral duties and compensation to "candidate of choice"**
We will send the approved pastoral duties and expectations and financial compensation package to our "candidate of choice" for review after the May 11 meeting.
- 5. Mail congregational letter**
Send out a congregational letter with the candidate profile provided by the call committee through the mail after the May 11 council meeting.
- 6. Call a special congregational meeting on Sunday, May 21 after worship**
This meeting has only 2 items to discuss and vote on. Vote to approve the "candidate of choice" as our next pastor and vote to approve the negotiated pastoral duties and compensation package.
- 7. Introduce our "candidate of choice" to the full church council on May 18**
I have called a special council meeting on Thursday, May 18 at 6pm. Council will be introduced to our "candidate of choice". Our only item at this meeting is to approve the pastoral duties and compensation package negotiated between our "candidate of choice" and the executive committee just before this special meeting.
- 8. Plan a meal with council and "candidate of choice" after May 18 meeting**
It would be nice to invite spouses and call committee members to take part in this meal as well.
- 9. Plan a "meet and greet" for Bethlehem members on May 19 at 6pm**

The Call Committee has agreed to host this event since they know pastoral candidate the best. It will be Council's job to plan and implement the meal.

10. Discuss a new church directory

We should consider a new church directory and/or bulletin board with names and pictures of our members to help the new pastor.

11. Send me any housing leads that you hear about

I will continue to keep a list of possible housing for sale, long term rental, or short term rental to share with our "candidate of choice".

12. Notify "candidate of choice" of the vote on May 21

This is when we can begin to discuss a timeline for the move to Grand Marais and a starting date at Bethlehem.

13. Prepare formal "Letter of Call"

Send an official "Letter of Call" to the "candidate of choice" through the NE Minnesota Synod offices.

14. Take care of any forgotten items

This will be a busy few months for the council and the executive committee as we negotiate for a starting date at Bethlehem, assist with finding our new pastor a home, and help with the new pastor's move to Grand Marais. This is an exciting and joyous time but it is important for us to be patient and maintain confidentiality until our new pastor gives the green light to make this new call public.

Executive Committee Email

Apr 30, 2023

Hi Eric, Theresa, Mark, and Gwen,

We will hold our regularly scheduled executive meeting on Thursday May 4, 2023 at 7pm. At this meeting we will set the May 11, 2023 council meeting agenda as usual. However, with Nathan's announcement at worship today that we now officially have a "candidate of choice", there are a number of things that must now be set in motion. Keeping confidentiality in mind, I am now sharing with the executive committee that our candidate of choice is Pastor Calvin Konop.

For the executive committee we need to:

1. Have a background check done on the candidate of choice.

Pastor Calvin has already given his approval for us to do a background check on him. Brenda Tibbetts has provided me with who the NE Minnesota Synod uses and with who the ELCA uses. Typically, Bethlehem has our local sheriff's department do our background check.

2. Specify pastoral duties and expectations for council to approve.

Council approved a slightly modified one page job description a few months ago. Our Ministry Site Profile (MSP) already includes five primary areas of activity or focus we wish our new pastor to give special attention to during his first year. We also included five ways Bethlehem will support and encourage our new pastor during his first year. I think these three pieces can be used just as they are to specify pastoral duties and expectations.

3. Propose a financial compensation package for Council to approve.

This is probably the most difficult task we have to do. Brenda Tibbetts has provided us with a worksheet for us to fill out. I also have the 2023 NE Minnesota Synod compensation guidelines to help guide us. Pastor Calvin has given us the birthdates for he and his wife so we can get a health care estimate from Portico. I have also attached relevant information concerning Pastor Calvin's experience and education from his profile (RMP) Our executive committee will meet this Thursday, May 4, 2023 at 7pm to discuss this compensation package.

4. Negotiate with the candidate of choice.

I have arranged to introduce the executive committee to Pastor Calvin at a special executive committee on Thursday, May 18 at 5pm. We will negotiate the pastoral duties and financial compensation package at this meeting before Pastor Calvin is introduced to the full council at 6pm.

As an aside, I am requesting that Theresa and/or Mark give a temple talk before our new pastor begins giving an update on how Bethlehem is doing financially. Certainly we want to emphasize that Bethlehem always answers generously when a financial need is identified. We have done well with giving through our interim period. However, we need to recognize that during the interim period we have not had to pay a pastor's salary and so our financial need will be greater once our new pastor begins.

Short Introduction from Pastor Calvin Konop: This introduction will be included in the congregational letter that will be sent out after the May 11 council meeting.

Hello Bethlehem Lutheran Church!

My name is Pastor Calvin, and I have been named candidate of choice by your call committee. I have been married to my wife Ashley for 6 years (working on 7 years come this November) and we have two dogs, Linus and Nigel, whom we love dearly.

A little bit of background on me: I worked in youth ministry for 11 years in the Twin Cities area. I went to seminary at Luther Seminary and did school full time while working in youth ministry full time. I accepted my first call as an Associate Pastor in Dubuque, Iowa.

Ashley and I have been in love with Grand Marais and the north shore for many years. Ashley's family has vacationed at the Naniboujou Lodge for her entire life (and longer), and we vacation as a couple there whenever we can. During my time in seminary we visited Bethlehem a couple of times and both dreamed about what it would be like to be a part of your community on a regular basis. And now the Spirit has called us, and we are eager to join you all in your mission of Sharing Christ on the North Shore and Beyond!

We will continue to hold you all in prayer during the "in-between time." Blessings to you all!

Solar Repair Correspondences:

Bethlehem to TruNorth (Apr 14):

Thank you for sending the work proposal estimate for repairs on March 9, 2023. And please also thank Zeph O'Rourke for sending me the Unirac engineering report for our ballast system on Jan 31, 2023. We also appreciate TruNorth stabilizing the damaged system in February. I have included Bruce Johnson who is our property chairperson at Bethlehem in this email. I have also provided our insurance company with the information they have asked for.

The good news is that with the thawing I have now had a chance to carefully examine our roof. I can find no evidence of punctures, gouges, or cuts in our roof membrane from the solar panels flying off the roof on Dec 23, 2022. I did find some small pieces of broken tempered glass and a few fragments of broken aluminum brackets on the roof. Either a blower or power washer should be able to safely remove those so they don't work their way into the roof membrane. The last 4 panels could finally be removed from the snow drift they were embedded in yesterday as well. It appears that 2 of those panels may be undamaged, but I have no way of knowing the condition of their inverters. That means that the damage from this storm is limited to the solar panels and 2 windows damaged as the panels came off the roof.

Colton, my understanding is that your work proposal is for putting the system back "as built". Of course, with 16 of our panels flying off of the roof only 2 months after installation was completed, we are not interested in putting the system back in place "as built". I am still waiting from you to provide us with any suggestions or remedies Unirac has for correcting the system. The engineering report talks about the system being able to safely withstand 105mph winds. As powerful as the Dec 23, 2022 storm was in Grand Marais, winds of 70-75mph gusts

were reported which is still a long way away from 105mph. Something was not right with that design or the installation. Have you had a discussion with Unirac on where liability lies with this? There must be some sort of warranty implied with the design and installation specifications for a system that failed so soon after installation.

With the thaw in progress and with conditions now safe, we are anxious to get our solar array back up and running as soon as possible. Please provide us with the steps we need to take to get repairs underway and what steps we must take to not have this happen again.

TruNorth to Bethlehem (Apr 17):

I have sent over photos to Unirac for further investigation and it may get to a point for them needing to go out and check the site themselves. I know our designer had stated there is a unirac system that includes a windscreen which I could see being a big help here. I would like to ask James or Marty to provide any feedback on how we should proceed in terms of this happening so soon after installation.

Bethlehem to TruNorth (May 1):

It has been a couple weeks since I have heard from you. I am wondering where we are with addressing a proposed solution to repair and make the necessary improvements so the damage on our array doesn't happen again. We are ready to get our system back up and running at its full potential. Please provide us with the steps Bethlehem needs to take to get repairs underway.

TruNorth (Colton) to Bethlehem (May 1):

We have submitted inquiries with Unirac for their guidance on how to make sure this does not happen again and await response. I will reach out again today to push for an answer. We will make sure to let you know as soon as we hear something. Thanks for your patience and we all understand the urgency of getting this resolved.

TruNorth (Martin) to Bethlehem (May 1):

Thank you, Mike, and sorry for the wait (and our silence). That was not our intent. I exchanged messages with Unirac late last week requesting a response as well but all they have said is that their "engineers are looking into it". I will continue to press and let you know what we hear back. Thanks.

TruNorth to Bethlehem (May 8):

I just got off the phone with top engineers from Unirac. They have reviewed the installation photos, design and ballast plan inputs. At this time they have not been able to locate any design error of calculation in their software systems, load calculation or design, nor our installation. They are working on a redesign given the evidence through the photos and damage to ensure this doesn't happen again. Our team will be reviewing the new design toward the end of this week, then we would like to set up a meeting between Unirac and church staff to review as well before moving forward with the reinstallation of the system. I am hoping we can schedule something as a whole group by the end of next week. Does that work for you?

Thank you for your patience!

Call Committee's work is nearing completion: We are blessed with a hard-working call committee who have are taken their responsibilities seriously, asking hard questions, becoming well versed with the Bethlehem profile, and are reflecting and analyzing about what is said. Even better, I think the committee likes working with each other.

Many of the call committee members may be at council on May 11 to answer our questions. Please be sure to welcome them to our council meeting. As the call committee's work is nearing completion, please take the time to thank them for the service, time, and insight they are providing to Bethlehem in the call process. And please take the time to thank Nathan Kristenson for his leadership as chairperson.

Call committee members: Nathan Kristensen (chairperson), Jess Markusen, Kati Stieler, Eric Anderson, Mindy Jacobsen, John Bragstad, Annie Debevec, and Mike Chmelik.

Jun 8, 2023 President's Report:

Congregational Letter

May 12, 2023

“Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” Luke 24:29

Dear Members of Bethlehem Lutheran,

Being a resort owner, I am particularly fond of this verse. I find myself reflecting on it often as our journey through the call process is now far enough down the road to see the end in sight. Bethlehem has done so well in this journey. Now I ask that you stay with us as we make the final push to bring our new pastor here to guide us on our continuing mission.

It is my pleasure to inform you of the special congregational meeting on Sunday, May 21 after worship for two votes. First, to extend a letter of call to our Candidate of Choice. Second, to accept the pastor's compensation, benefits, and responsibilities package as proposed by the Congregation Council. You may ask, how are we to vote for someone we know little about. Consider these possible answers:

- Your Call Committee has thoroughly read our Candidate of Choice's profile, watched him in worship, and interacted with him several times by zoom, phone, email, and in person. Every single member on the Call Committee is really excited about our Candidate of Choice becoming our pastor. Place trust in this committee who have placed trust in the Spirit to guide them.
- You can welcome, meet, and share a potluck meal with our Candidate of Choice and his wife on Friday, May 19 at 6pm in the fellowship hall. Take advantage of this opportunity if possible. You also get to learn their names.
- Included in this letter are excerpts from the Call Committee's recommendation to the Church Council.
- Included in this letter is a short introduction from our Candidate of Choice.

I also need to remind all of us Bethlehem members of the importance of maintaining confidentiality. This is a joyous time for us. But for a congregation in Iowa this will be a time of sadness. And for our Candidate of Choice and his wife it will be a bittersweet time. They will look with joy and anticipation to the call and life in Grand Marais while feeling sorrow as they leave their home, friends, and call in Iowa. The best gift we can give to a new pastor is maintaining confidentiality. This gives our new pastor the opportunity to let his current congregation know he is leaving without hearing it from a social media post or from someone who heard it through the grapevine.

We maintain confidentiality by keeping the name and the news of our new pastor limited to just members within Bethlehem until our Candidate of Choice gives us the go-ahead to announce the news publicly. Do not talk to non-members about our Candidate of Choice, do not mention his name or anything about him on any type of social media or online postings. This is hard to do but I know that Bethlehem can do this. Once he gives his OK, we can let the Alleluias ring out for all to hear.

Your brother in Christ,

Mike Chmelik

Bethlehem Council President

May 11, 2023

Accompanying the Congregational Letter:

May 12, 2023

From our Candidate of Choice:

Hello Bethlehem Lutheran Church!

I have been named Candidate of Choice by your call committee. I have been married to my wife for 6 years (working on 7 years come this November) and we have two dogs, Linus and Nigel, whom we love dearly.

A little bit of background on me: I worked in youth ministry for 11 years in the Twin Cities area. I went to seminary at Luther Seminary and did school full time while working in youth ministry full time. I accepted my first call as an Associate Pastor in Iowa.

My wife and I have been in love with Grand Marais and the north shore for many years. My wife's family has vacationed at the Naniboujou Lodge for her entire life (and longer), and we vacation as a couple there whenever we can. During my time in seminary we visited Bethlehem a couple of times and both dreamed about what it would be like to be a part of your community on a regular basis. And now the Spirit has called us, and we are eager to join you all in your mission of Sharing Christ on the North Shore and Beyond!

We will continue to hold you all in prayer during the "in-between time." Blessings to you all!

Accompanying the Congregational Letter:

May 12, 2023

Excerpts from the Call Committee's recommendation to the Church Council:

After much prayerful thought, consideration and discernment, the call committee recommends the council approve our Candidate of Choice as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

- Our Candidate of Choice indicated he had been waiting for Bethlehem's Profile to be ready. He submitted his Rostered Minister Profile (RMP) to the ELCA well before our council had even voted to approve our Ministry Site Profile. He is familiar with the area and has spent time here. He has attended worship at Bethlehem in the past. After careful consideration, and a quick visit to Grand Marais to meet with call committee members, he accepted our invitation to be our Candidate of Choice. The pastor feels he is being led to be our Pastor.
- We are impressed with how closely our candidate of choice's profile aligned with Bethlehem's profile. This includes areas such as Preaching and Worship, Pastoral Care and Visitation, Youth and Family Ministry, Being Christ centered, and Building Community. He has worked with intergenerational programs and has the experience and ability to engage families in ministry.
- Our Candidate of Choice provided YouTube links for examples of his leading worship services and his sermons. He feels liturgy is important and should not be stagnant. He strives to make it meaningful. His sermons are easy to follow, topical without being political, and stay true to the gospel. We believe he will lead meaningful worship services in both traditional and contemporary services.
- A strength both he and his references referred to is his ability to engage members of the church in its ministry. He has an ability to recruit volunteers, train, and work with them. We believe Bethlehem will remain an active congregation under his leadership.
- We are impressed with his ability to address controversial and divisive topics and issues in a non-threatening, non-judgmental and inclusive manner.
- Our Candidate of Choice is interested in other churches in the community and is committed to working with them in an ecumenical manner where possible.
- We are impressed with how our Candidate of Choice handled himself in our two Zoom interviews. He answered our questions well in an easy conversational style. We were impressed with his intellect and ability to think "off the cuff". He requested a second interview with questions of his own as a way for him to better acquaint himself with us and our church and ministry. We feel this was an important step in his process of discernment in deciding to become our pastor.
- In the gifts of ministry section of our congregational profile, "...bring joy and good humor to relationships" was noted by our members as something we were looking for in a candidate. The committee felt at ease with

Pastor Konop, felt he was authentic and personable in our conversations, and we envision him bringing joy and good humor to his relationships with Bethlehem.

- He firmly believes in Lutheran theology. At the same time, he is not dismissive of other church doctrines. He is committed to social and environmental justice issues without making these issues political. His references commented on his ability to serve and be friends with people regardless of political persuasion.

In conclusion, we believe our Candidate of Choice is an excellent candidate to be Pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and recommend that the council continue the call process that will bring him to Bethlehem as our next Pastor.

God's Peace,

Nathan Kristenson (Chair), Annie DeBevec, Mindy Jacobsen, Kati Stieler,
Jessica Markusen, Eric Anderson, John Bragstad, and Mike Chmelik

Agenda for Special Congregational Meeting:

May 21, 2023

Bethlehem Lutheran Special Congregational Meeting

Belonging to Christ, Sharing Christ on the North Shore and beyond

Date: Sunday, May 21, 2023, 11:15am.

Call to order:

Devotion:

Maintaining confidentiality:

How we will vote (Zoom and in the same room):

New Business:

- **Motion 1: The council moves to extend our call to Pastor Calvin Konop to serve as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.**
Followed by a second and discussion.
- **Motion 2: The council moves to accept Pastor Calvin Konop's compensation, benefits, and responsibilities package as approved by the congregation council.**
Followed by a second and discussion.

Note: Base salary plus Portico Benefits which includes health insurance, disability insurance, term life insurance, and retirement contributions equals \$97,957. Other benefits include continuing education, vacation, holidays, sick days, emergency leave, family leave, sabbatical, mileage reimbursement, moving expenses, and no interest down payment loan on a house.

The Vote:

Council tallies votes:

Announcement of vote results:

Adjourn:

What's next in this process:

Mike Chmelik informs Pastor Calvin of the vote: Today

Mike Chmelik informs Bishop Amy of the vote: Tomorrow

Mike Chmelik and Bishop Amy extend letter of call:	Probably 7-14 days
Pastor Calvin has 30 days to accept:	Beginning today
Pastor Calvin notifies his current congregation:	As soon as possible after acceptance
Bethlehem can announce their new pastor:	After notification of current congregation
Pastor Calvin and Ashley move to GM:	Hopefully within 45 days of acceptance
Pastor Calvin's begins at Bethlehem:	Usually within 45 days of acceptance
Pastor Calvin is installed by Bishop Amy:	About a month after his start date
Bethlehem is patient through this process:	As always

Devotion from the Special Congregational Meeting:

May 21, 2023

**Modified from Five Brief Devotions for
Congregations in Call Process**

By the Rev. Ronald Olson, Director of Admissions, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

† † † † †

Listen to Colossians 3:12-15:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

We are being changed. That is what the Spirit of Christ is doing with us.

There is prayer in the "Evening Prayer/Vespers" of the old green LBW:

Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We are not the same congregation we were last year before Mark's retirement, or before the pandemic, or 22 years ago when Bethlehem last called a new pastor. Times have changed, things have changed, we have changed. What do those changes mean for the calling our new pastor? What is different now? How has our community felt the changes? Changing demographics, aging populations, and new arrivals in our community all make for renewal in mission, ministry, service, and witness for the community of faith.

Consider the road we have been down this past year: We have taken the time to celebrate and say goodbye to Mark's 21-year call to Bethlehem. We have explored through many listening sessions, conversations, and questionnaires who Bethlehem is and where we want to go. We have in the spirit of our Hauge Lutheran Synod roots continued our mission without an interim pastor. We have been blessed with the help of active pastors, retired pastors, seminary graduates, interns, and lay people to lead us in worship. The transition team worked hard compiling all these conversations and responses into a profile that caught the eye of Pastor Calvin. The call committee worked tirelessly reviewing profiles of Pastor Calvin and others, planning interview questions, interviewing, choosing Pastor Calvin as our "candidate of choice" and recommending him to the church council. The church council has approved Pastor Calvin and his compensation package and called this meeting for Bethlehem to now extend a letter of call. With hindsight we can see the Spirit at work here at Bethlehem.

Let us pray: Gracious accompanying God, the One in whom we live and move and have our being, give us a vision of the times of our lives, the new situations in which we live out our faith in Jesus. May we ask anew what it means to be the Church in our time, our place. And as we work to call our new pastor to our congregation, may we welcome according to your Spirit the one you are sending to us to lead us into the new days ahead. Amen.

Special Congregational Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the Congregational Meeting (taken by Kristin Lindholm)

Date: Sunday, May 21, 2023

Time: 11:27 AM

1. Eric Anderson made the first motion - "The council moves to extend our call to Pastor Calvin Konop to serve as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church."
 - a. Cathi Williams seconded the motion
 - b. No Discussion
2. Kris Hedstrom made the second motion - "The council moves to accept Pastor Calvin Konop's compensation, benefits, and responsibilities package as approved by the congregation council."
 1. Laurie Spry seconded the motion
 2. Discussion - Joyce Heiskari asked a question regarding housing allowance. It was quickly answered - the salary of the Pastor includes the housing allowance.
3. The vote happened next with 92 unanimous votes for Motion #1 and 92 unanimous votes for Motion #2.
4. Mark Youngdahl motioned to adjourn. Craig Peterson seconded the motion.

Email to Bethlehem:

May 22, 2023

Results of Special Congregational Meeting:

My Brothers and Sisters of Bethlehem,

I have good news to share with you! Yesterday was our special congregational meeting to vote on calling our next pastor. Thank you to all those who attended and the 92 members who voted either in person or by Zoom. For those of you who were not able to attend the meeting and for those of you who joined us by Zoom, I am excited to inform you of the results:

- **Motion 1: I vote to extend our call to Pastor Calvin Konop to serve as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.**
Yes-92 votes No-0 votes
- **Motion 2: I vote to accept Pastor Calvin Konop's compensation, benefits, and responsibilities package as approved by the congregation council.**
Yes-92 votes No-0 vote

A unanimous vote! This is good news and I know we all want to share this with our community and friends of Bethlehem. However, I need to remind you (hopefully for the last time) that we still need to maintain confidentiality. Pastor Calvin still needs to let his current congregation know about his new call. We will give him and Ashley the time they need and for now keep our good news amongst ourselves. Once Pastor Calvin gives me the green light, I will immediately let you know and make the news public.

Consider the road we have been down this past year:

We have taken the time to celebrate and say goodbye to Mark's 21-year call to Bethlehem. We have explored through many listening sessions, conversations, and questionnaires who Bethlehem is and where we want to go. We have in the spirit of our Hauge Lutheran Synod roots continued our mission without an interim pastor. We have been blessed with the help of active pastors, retired pastors, seminary graduates, interns, and lay people to lead us in worship. The transition team worked hard compiling all these conversations and responses into a profile that caught the eye of Pastor Calvin. The call committee worked tirelessly reviewing profiles of Pastor Calvin and others, planning interview questions, interviewing, choosing Pastor Calvin as our "candidate of choice" and recommending him to the church council. The church council has approved Pastor Calvin and his compensation package and called a congregational meeting for Bethlehem to extend a letter of call. And Bethlehem members in attendance voted unanimously to extend this letter of call. **We can see the Spirit at work here at Bethlehem.**

What's next in this process:

Mike Chmelik informs Pastor Calvin of the vote:	Yesterday
Mike Chmelik informs Bishop Amy of the vote:	Today
Mike Chmelik and Bishop Amy extend letter of call:	Probably 7-14 days
Pastor Calvin has 30 days to accept:	Beginning yesterday
Pastor Calvin notifies his current congregation:	As soon as possible after acceptance
Bethlehem can announce their new pastor:	After notification of current congregation
Pastor Calvin and Ashley move to GM:	Hopefully within 45 days of acceptance
Pastor Calvin's begins at Bethlehem:	Usually within 45 days of acceptance
Pastor Calvin is installed by Bishop Amy:	About a month after his start date
Bethlehem is patient through this process:	As always

For those of you who joined us by Zoom I apologize that you did not get to hear the results of the vote at the meeting. We muted the microphone feed and paused the video in the sanctuary to give the people voting by Zoom privacy while we voted by ballot in the sanctuary. I forgot to unmute the microphone feed in the sanctuary when we returned with results of the vote.

Your brother in Christ, Mike Chmelik (he/him/his)

Jul 13, 2023 President's Report:

It is an exciting time for Bethlehem but with excitement can come too many things to do and too little time. Usually, I have a flood of supporting documents that give you a sense of what I have been doing in my role as council president but that is not the case this month. So, I am just providing you a short summary instead.

Pulpit supply: With a first Sunday date for Pastor Calvin to preside at worship on July 16, I felt relieved last month with all my pulpit supply lined up through Sunday, July 9. However, life intervened and due to a family emergency and a health crisis, I lost 2 of my pulpit supply pastors with a week or less notice. However, as you have heard me say many times in this past year, Bethlehem is blessed to have such a rich supply of people to call on for pulpit supply. Once again, John Bragstad and Rolf Morck came through for us to pinch hit with very short notice. They fill me we gratitude.

Jazz service: What a rare privilege to have musical talent the likes of Mike DeBevec and his troupe of gifted instrumentalists and singers. There are times during that service that I want to pinch myself to be sure it is all really happening before me. It is a unique musical way to worship and sing praises to our Lord.

Helping the Konops move into their house: Pastor Calvin asked if it was possible with only a week notice to find some people to help him and Ashley unload their furniture and possessions from the rental moving truck into their new house. Bethlehem answered the question for me with a resounding “yes”. What a great group of people that came to get that truck unloaded. Certainly the superhuman feat of the day was John Muus, Kyle Oberg, and John Bragstad winding a 7ft king mattress around a 3ft corner landing going up the stairs.

Preparing the pastor study: It was a group effort spearheaded by Annie DeBevec to get the pastor’s study cleaned out, freshly painted, and spruced up for the arrival of Pastor Calvin. Thank you to Kristen Carlsgaard, Denise Murray, Debbie Bieber, Laurie Spry, and anyone else who gave a hand with this makeover.

Stained glass panel for the pastor’s study: We are working on installing a stained glass panel donated by the Michel family that has sat in our storage rooms for the past 20 years because we could not decide what to do with it. It is a beautiful piece of art and will be mounted in the wall between the pastor’s study and the hallway.

Shelby Anderson and the library: Shelby has agreed to “weed” our library. The necessity for this came as a result of consolidating books from the pastor’s study, the sacristy, the storage room, the library cart, and various shelving around the church into the library and realizing we have too many books for our space. Pastor Calvin has been invited to take any books in our library he wants for his study.

Debbie Bieber: Debbie spent a substantial portion of her vacation to visit her sister and mom in Grand Marais cleaning and sorting documents and destroying duplicates copies for Bethlehem. What an amazing gift.

Solar array redesign and repairs: Our solar array has been redesigned and repaired. It is now again fully operational. Bruce and I sat in on Zoom design meetings and were part of email strings to get the new design approved and implemented. The new design increased the number of ballast blocks from 71 to 214. The ballast blocks that were supposed to arrive at 7:45am arrived around 3:00pm. Bruce Johnson brought his forklift over to aid the TruNorth installers get the ballast blocks up on the roof quickly. Thankyou to Bruce for helping TruNorth finish their job in a timely manner.

Solar array kiosk/sign: I am in the process of developing a rough design for a sign or kiosk to be placed on or south lawn showcasing our solar array and how we can be good stewards of God’s creation by promoting renewable energy resources and educating our community on solar energy.

Teacher appreciation potluck: Butch Schulte supplied the grill. Bethlehem provided the buns and hot dogs. And our members provided an amazing spread of side dishes and desserts for our outdoor potluck meal on the south lawn and patio to celebrate Sunday School, Confirmation, and say thank you for the teachers and Kris Hedstrom who made this possible in a transition year without an interim pastor. It was a beautiful early summer day for a potluck picnic in Grand Marais.

Chance Jacobsen’s confirmation: Saying goodbye to the Jacobsen family was sad. However, it was heartening to see Chance get confirmed at Bethlehem by Rolf Morck before the Jacobsen’s left for Alsaka. A special thankyou to Rolf Morck who went above and beyond the call of pulpit supply in meeting with Chance during the week and talking to Chance about his faith statement and what confirmation means.

BJ Muus Celebration of Life: If Bethlehem had a royal music family, it would be the Muus family and BJ was their patriarch. BJ and his family have left a mark of amazing witness and service to the Lord and our community. The memorial service was a true musical celebration of a remarkable servant of Christ and a testimony to the legacy he left behind. We will miss BJ and we miss some of his family that feel called away from Bethlehem.

Sue Hennessy appreciation: We said goodbye to Sue Hennessey as our livestream person. Sue doesn’t like the spotlight, but not recognizing her contribution to our online ministry forged out of necessity in response to the pandemic was not an option. A thank you also goes out to Mark Abrahamson for following in Sue’s footsteps.

A second Zoom classroom: Thankyou to Roger Barton and Duane Ege who are setting up a Zoom classroom in the fellowship hall. This will allow us to change the venue for a larger Zoom meeting without having to move and rewire equipment back and forth from the library to the fellowship hall.

Church cleanup: We have slowly been cleaning out rooms, cabinets, and cubbies at Bethlehem and then throwing away or giving away unneeded items to new homes. This process will continue through the summer. A special thankyou to Kris Hedstrom for sorting through education supplies in the storage room.

Denise's vacation: The Executive Committee has approved a 2-week well-deserved paid vacation for Denise for August 6-20 with Tom to Colorado. Be sure to let Denise know how much we have appreciated the extra things she has done for Bethlehem during our interim period.

Formal Letter of Call: Guess what finally arrived. I had thought it would be sent out on May 22 from the synod after our congregational vote on May 21, but it took a bit longer. Gwen Lenz and I have now signed the formal letter of call. Pastor Calvin gets the original copy, a copy has been sent to the synod, and a copy and electronic copy has been saved for us at Bethlehem.

Preparation for July 16 worship: Preparations for the first Sunday Pastor Calvin will preside at Bethlehem are underway. We are planning an affirmation of baptism to welcome Pastor Calvin and Ashley as new members, a litany of welcome and blessing for Pastor Calvin, and an ice cream and cake social on the south lawn and patio after worship. The litany is an adaptation of a litany of welcome from SW Minnesota Synod resources and Bethlehem's 2023 Ministry Site Profile.

Preparations for August 27 Installation: On August 27 we will have the official installation of Pastor Calvin as Bethlehem Pastor by NE Minnesota Synod staff. Guests, family, and community members will be invited and food and beverages will be served. Pastor Calvin has committed to this date, preparations are underway, and we are waiting for synod staff to accept our invitation to attend.

Aug 10, 2023 President's Report:

Vacation Time: I will be in Quetico canoeing with Joey, Cecelia, my brother, and my nephews from Wednesday afternoon, Aug 16, through Wednesday afternoon, Aug 23. Then the next day, Aug 24, we will be taking Cecelia down to move back into Hamline. We will return on Saturday afternoon, Aug 26. That means I will be available for Installation Sunday preparation only on Wednesday evening, Aug 23, and Saturday evening, Aug 26, and early Sunday morning, Aug 27.

Preparations for August 27 Installation: On August 27 we will have the official installation of Pastor Calvin as Bethlehem pastor by NE Minnesota Synod Bishop Amy Odgren. Synod staff, local clergy, guests, family, and community members have been invited. Bishop Amy Odgren will be presiding with Pastor Calvin Konop for Installation Sunday. This is the first time Bishop Amy will worship with us. She will be preaching the message and leading the installation rite for Pastor Calvin. This will be a special day and a day of celebration. Following worship, we will have a potluck meal and short program on the patio and south lawn of Bethlehem to thank all those who helped during the interim period and welcome Pastor Calvin and Ashley to our Grand Marais community. Bethlehem will be providing brats and hot dogs with buns and all the condiments. The potluck part will provide side dishes and desserts.

Solar array redesign, repairs, and liability: Our solar array has been redesigned and repaired. It is now fully operational again. It produced over \$300 of electricity in July while our building used only \$85. Bruce and I sat in on Zoom design meetings and were part of email strings to get the new design approved and implemented. The new design increased the number of ballast blocks from 71 to 214. The ballast blocks that were supposed to arrive at 7:45am arrived around 3:00pm. Bruce Johnson brought his forklift over to aid the TruNorth installers get the ballast blocks up on the roof quickly. Thank you to Bruce for helping TruNorth finish their job in a timely manner.

On Jul 30, Pastor Mark sent me an email letting me know that TruNorth was sending him an invoice for repairs to the solar array. This was odd, because Pastor Mark has been retired for over a year and has not been a part in any of the correspondences with TruNorth for the installation last fall or the repairs and redesign. I sent the following email on Aug 2:

Hi Marty, James, and Colton,

It is so good to report that we have now completed over a full month of our solar array producing electricity at Bethlehem after repairs and the redesign were completed. We have an online display in our narthex that allows those curious about our panels to monitor our solar production and we are working on a brochure and outdoor sign about the array to have on our lawn. It has been a long road with a big bump along the way but working with TruNorth Solar personnel has been a highlight. It was so disheartening to have such a large portion of our array ripped off the roof less than 2 months after installation. Thank you for helping us stabilize the system for the winter and then sorting out what went wrong and redesigning the system with Unirac so it doesn't happen again.

Our retired pastor, Mark Ditmanson, let me know this week he is still receiving correspondences and invoices from TruNorth. Mark has been retired for over a year. Please be sure to remove Mark's email address and make sure all emails come to me as council president and cc'd to Bruce Johnson as property chairman and to Bethlehem's office manager. I have cc'd them in this email.

Sincerely, Mike Chmelik

Bethlehem Church Council President

Later that day on Aug 2 I received the following email with a \$19,085.07 invoice attached:

Hello Mike,

Thanks for the kind words and your patience and cooperation through all of this. It is great to see your system back in full production and great to hear the things you are doing to inform your community about the project and it's impacts. I have also updated contact information in our accounting software and resent the invoice. Please let me know if you have any questions about your project and thanks again for going solar and choosing to work TruNorth Solar on your project.

*James Drummond
Operations Director
TruNorth Solar, LLC*

This was the first time I saw this invoice, but it was not the first time I had seen the figure of \$19,085.07. This figure was sent to me as a work proposal for putting the system back together as built by Colton Koch of TruNorth Solar on Mar 9. The proposal's purpose was to assess damage caused by the December storm and generate time and material quote for an insurance claim so Bethlehem's insurance company was aware of the extent of the damage. This was before any discussion about responsibility or liability.

It has been Bruce and my position that even though we have insurance to protect ourselves against damage to our facility, that does not mean that we should use insurance money to pay for the mistakes of someone else. The Executive Committee has concurred with this position. As Bruce and I participated in the discussions between TruNorth Solar and Unirac to decide what should be done to repair and redesign our solar array, we reached the conclusion that this was an error by Unirac in designing an inadequate ballast system to hold out solar array on our roof. TruNorth installed the system according to Unirac specifications that were supposed to safely withstand 105mph winds. Although winds on Dec 23, 2022 were powerful, 75-80mph winds are not close to 105mph winds. The redesign by Unirac that tripled the ballast blocks is an indication of the inadequacy of the original engineering report and design.

We are currently in discussion with TruNorth about where the responsibility lies for the \$19,000 in repairs needed to make our solar array whole.

Installation Invitations: These invitations were sent to Cook County pastors and their congregations, everyone who supplied pulpit fill during our interim period, NE Minnesota Synod staff, Bethlehem staff, Transition team members, and Call Committee members.

The Holy Spirit has provided “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.” Isaiah 11:2

Aug 5, 2023

Dear (fill in pastor’s name) and (fill in congregation name),

It is a time to celebrate. The Spirit has led Bethlehem to call Pastor Calvin Konop as our new pastor. And, the Spirit has led Pastor Calvin to answer Bethlehem’s call. Together, we will now work in our mission to belong to Christ and share Christ on the North Shore and beyond.

On Aug 27th we are having a Service of Installation and celebration to praise God for bringing Pastor Calvin to Bethlehem Lutheran as our pastor and to Cook County as a new community leader. You may have already met Pastor Calvin around town since he began his call at Bethlehem.

We want to invite you and your members to celebrate with Bethlehem and Pastor Calvin. Your presence is welcome for all or part of this day. Worship begins that day at 10:00am with Bishop Amy Odgren presiding with Pastor Calvin Konop. Bishop Odgren will be delivering the message and leading the installation rite for Pastor Calvin. Following worship around 11:00am, we will have a potluck meal on the patio and south lawn of Bethlehem. Bethlehem will be providing brats and hot dogs with buns and all the condiments. Members will provide the side dishes and desserts. A short program welcoming Pastor Calvin and Ashley will begin about 12:00 noon. After the program, there will be ample time for fellowship.

Please come and welcome Pastor Calvin and his wife, Ashley, as they begin their lives as members of our Cook County community. I am not sure just what path God may have planned for Bethlehem and Pastor Calvin, but I am sure our Lord Jesus Christ together with the Spirit will make those plans known to us.

Your brother in Christ,

Mike Chmelik

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council President

Article submitted to the August Bethlehem Star:

Our Creator’s Toolbox Includes Randomness

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

Genesis 1:1-2

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I have been thinking about something Jonathan Rova talked about in his June 4th sermon. He mentioned how the Genesis creation story requires both God and humans. This is different from many creation stories requiring only the gods with humans as bystanders. And it is different than some modern creation stories in which God plays no part. Jonathan emphasized how in this creation story there is a purpose and that humans share in that purpose as stewards of God’s creation. And Jonathan noted the liturgical nature of the story. We could hear the cadence of the story as Jess Markusen read it at that service. We could feel the rhythm of the creative power of God as the purpose of creation unfolded day by day in that story.

Reflecting on the earth as being “formless and empty” I have to wonder what brought light, vibrancy, and spice to it. I suggest that one of the tools our Creator uses is randomness. I suspect that most people think of

randomness as sort of a bland soup of numbers that all stay close to an average with a little bit of variation evenly distributed around that center. What an odd notion that God would use randomness as a vehicle to add color and life to a formless and empty earth. However, as a former research physicist, I believe randomness has been misunderstood.

As a researcher, the simulations I wrote to model phenomena required a random number generator. I began to appreciate how difficult it is to create a truly random sequence of numbers. I also began to recognize how different true randomness looks compared to our preconceived expectations. I have found that when people look at a random sequence of numbers, they would conclude that the sequence of numbers does not seem very random to them. That is because truly random number sequences have remarkable flurries of activity and temporary patterns that do not seem like coincidence to us.

I was talking to my daughter, Cecelia, about randomness and she told me how Apple created a truly random shuffle feature for your music lists. Users complained that it was not working because there were too many songs by the same artist or genre in a row. Apple had to change their shuffle from a truly random shuffle to a more evenly distributed variety of music in the way Apple users expected a random shuffle to behave. How many times have you in a card game accused someone of not properly shuffling the cards because of the patterns you see in the cards that were dealt? How can this be random? Why are games of chance so exciting? Because the results are so unpredictable and full of spice, flavor, and color.

We misunderstand what randomness is. There is nothing boring about randomness. What a great tool for God to wield while forming creation. Our Creator choosing to use randomness as one vehicle for creation does not result in a gray monotone world but in a vibrant, colorful world full of amazing patterns and what to us seem like improbable coincidence. It results in a creation with a purpose.

Your brother in Christ,

Mike Chmelik (he/him/his)

Article submitted to the August Bethlehem Star:

Installation Sunday is Aug 27, 2024

The bishop is coming! Bishop Amy Odgren will be presiding with Pastor Calvin Konop for Installation Sunday. This is the first time Bishop Amy will worship with us. She will be preaching the message and leading the installation rite for Pastor Calvin. This will be a special day and a day of celebration. Following worship, we will have a potluck meal and short program on the patio and south lawn of Bethlehem. We will be inviting the community and local clergy to welcome Pastor Calvin and Ashley to our Grand Marais community. Bethlehem will be providing brats and hot dogs with buns and all the condiments. The potluck part will provide the side dishes and desserts.

Article submitted to the August Bethlehem Star:

We are Called...to be Good Stewards of God's Creation

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”

Psalms 24:1

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”

Genesis 2:15

Stewardship is the responsible care and use of our earth's resources, recognizing that all belongs to God. Our Creator has given us the privilege of enjoying and caring for what God has created. Bethlehem takes seriously our calling to be good stewards of God's earth. Our solar panels are just one way we can express that stewardship.

- Bethlehem can show community leadership by promoting green and renewable energy resources and educating our community.
- Bethlehem's unused energy generated by our solar array goes into the electrical grid to be used by others within our community. This allows our electric utilities to not rely as much on expensive backup systems.
- Bethlehem can help keep electrical costs down for our entire community by encouraging and operating renewable energy resources.

On Nov 11, 2022, Bethlehem's 21.5kW solar array was put into operation to provide over 90% of Bethlehem's non-heating electrical needs. Only 6 weeks later on Dec 23, 2022, a powerful winter storm tore 16 of Bethlehem's solar panels off the roof. Frustrated and disappointed, Bethlehem reaffirmed our commitment to renewable energy. The design problems were identified, reengineered, and repaired by TruNorth Solar. On Jun 27, 2023, the repaired solar array was put back into operation.

Note: There is a laptop computer set up in the narthex that monitors our solar production both instantaneously and historically online. Feel free to take a look at the solar electricity production of our array when you are in the narthex.

Sep 14, 2023 President's Report:

Thank You for the Gift Certificate: Bethlehem continues to overwhelm me. I certainly was not expecting the recognition and the generous gift that all of you organized. Thank you, I genuinely appreciate it. For those of you who did not get to see the card that was given to me by all of you, here is the content:

God has blessed you and made your life a blessing. God has chosen you and called you His own. God has gifted you and rejoices in all that you are. You are indeed a reflection of God's love and we want you to know how very much we appreciate you and all you've done.

Thank you for all you did during the interim. God has equipped you with many gifts, and we are so grateful that you stepped up and used them. Now go get yourself something fun.

From your Church Family, Council, and Staff at Bethlehem

August 27 Installation: On August 27 we had the official installation of Pastor Calvin as Bethlehem pastor by NE Minnesota Synod Bishop Amy Odgren. Synod staff, local clergy, guests, family, and community members were invited. Bishop Amy and Pastor Calvin presided together for Installation Sunday. This was the first time Bishop Amy has worshiped with us. She preached the message and led the installation rite for Pastor Calvin. This was a special day of celebration. Following worship and with perfect weather, we had a potluck meal and short program on the patio and south lawn of Bethlehem to thank all those who helped during the interim period and welcome Pastor Calvin and Ashley to our Grand Marais community. Bethlehem provided brats and hot dogs with buns and all the condiments. Members provided the side dishes and desserts.

Some of the thank you's from the program included:

Thank you's for those attending:

- Friends and family of Pastor Calvin and Ashley
- Local clergy
- Community members
- Bethlehem members

Thank you's for today's service:

- Special guest, Bishop Amy Odgren
- Special Music, Scott Melhaff and Worship Committee: Shelby Anderson, Hilja Iverson, Sue Anderson, Mark Abrahamson, and Karina Roth.

Thank you's for today's program and potluck:

- Planners for the event
- Preparing and setting up lawn
- Preparing and serving meal and refreshments
- Bethlehem members helping to clean up

Thank you's to important groups during the interim:

- Northeast MN Synod staff:
Bishop Amy Odren, Pastor Rollie Bockbrader, Deacon Brenda Tibbetts
- Bethlehem Staff:
Denise Murray, Kristen Carlsgaard, Mindy Jacobsen, Karina Roth, Sue Hennessy, Mark Abrahamson
- People helping with pulpit fill:
William Strand, Ben Nikodym, Kris Garey, Carol Mork, Phil Lund, John Bragstad, Brad Shannon, Stephanie Vos, Rolf Morck, Tim Quarberg, Ann Swallow-Gillis, Doug Cox, Jonathan Rova, Ann Newgard-Larson, Tom Murray
- Members from the Transition Team:
Craig Peterson, Jess Markusen, Lynnea Morse, Carrie Jansen, Cathi Williams
- All 67 members who filled out our questionnaires.
- Members from the Call Committee:
Nathan Kristenson, Kati Stieler, Mindy Jacobsen, Jess Markusen, Annie Debevec, John Bragstad, Eric Anderson
- Members from Church Council:
Eric Anderson, Theresa Oberg, Mark Youngdahl, Gwen Lenz, Kathy Johnson, Kristin Lindholm, Jess Markusen, Bruce Johnson, Sue Anderson, Hilja Iverson, Kris Hedstrom
- Pastor Calvin and Ashley during the call process
- Craig Peterson, our local sausage making expert, thanked me for being the binder for Bethlehem during the interim. What a remarkable and unusual complement to compare Bethlehem with a sausage and to compare me with the pork fat that binds the sausage together.

Solar array redesign, repairs, and liability discussion continues: Our solar array has been redesigned and repaired. It is now fully operational again. It produced over \$300 of electricity in July while our building used only \$85. Bruce and I sat in on Zoom design meetings and were part of email strings to get the new design approved and implemented. The new design increased the number of ballast blocks from 71 to 214. The ballast blocks that were supposed to arrive at 7:45am arrived around 3:00pm. Bruce Johnson brought his forklift over to aid the TruNorth installers get the ballast blocks up on the roof quickly. Thank you to Bruce for helping TruNorth finish their job in a timely manner.

On Aug 11, I wrote to TruNorth Solar after guidance from Bruce, the Executive Committee, and the Council:

Aug 11, 2023

Dear James, Marty, and Colton,

I and Bruce Johnson were not expecting the \$19,085.07 invoice that was sent to us on Aug 2, 2023. I have needed a little time to think about this invoice and consult with other church council members on how to respond.

I want to start by saying how impressed I have been with the TruNorth Solar crews and management as they have made our solar array whole again by redesigning and repairing the damage from the Dec 23, 2022, storm. I also have no doubt that your crew correctly installed the original design according to Unirac design specifications. In addition, I believe there were certainly at least \$19,085.07 worth of repairs and design improvements to our solar array that your workers competently completed. It was a pleasure working with them.

If the Dec 23, 2022, storm had exceeded 105mph winds that the ballasting system by Unirac was designed for, then it would be Bethlehem's responsibility for the repairs and Bethlehem's choice to redesign the array to withstand more severe conditions. Bethlehem carries insurance to protect us against this type of unanticipated property loss.

However, the Dec 23, 2022, storm powerful as it was, did not even come close to the 105mph winds the solar array was designed to withstand. There was something lacking in that design. As Bruce and I participated in the discussions between TruNorth Solar and Unirac to decide what should be done to repair and redesign our solar array, it appeared to us that this was an error by Unirac in designing an inadequate ballast system to hold our solar array on our roof. The redesign by Unirac that tripled the ballast blocks from 71 to 214 is an indication of the inadequacy of the original engineering report and design.

It has been my and Bruce's position that even though we have insurance to protect ourselves against damage to our facility, that does not mean that we should use insurance money to pay for the mistakes of another party. The Executive Committee and the Church Council have concurred with this position.

I understand that TruNorth Solar has done everything you are supposed to do to install, redesign, and repair our solar array. In some ways you are caught in the middle between the damage at Bethlehem and the inadequate design by Unirac. However, Bethlehem had a contract with you to install a 50-panel solar array at Bethlehem. 44 of those panels were ballast mounted on our flat roof to withstand 105mph winds. 16 of those 44 panels flew off the roof only 6 weeks after becoming operational. Bethlehem did not have a contract with Unirac. TruNorth Solar has a working relationship with Unirac and uses Unirac designs and components every day in your installations. It is Bethlehem's position that Unirac should make TruNorth Solar whole for your repair costs and Unirac's insurance should take care of the repairs.

Bruce and I believe it is fair for us to pay for the extra ballast blocks which were not part of the original design. Some church council members suggest that we should not even be responsible for the extra ballast blocks since they were what are required to bring the solar array up to the original contracted design standard to withstand 105mph winds. If you believe we are mistaken in our position, I am certainly willing to listen to your argument on why Bethlehem should bear the cost of the damage to our solar array just 6 weeks after installation.

Sincerely, Mike Chmelik

Bethlehem Lutheran Council President

TruNorth's Marty Morud responded later that same day with:

Thank you Mike. I appreciate your perspective.

James can confirm, but I do believe a Work Order was communicated with Bethlehem. Also, early on in the weeks following the severe weather event, our understanding was that Bethlehem was in contact with your insurance company and had initiated a claim. Is this not the case?

Again, I appreciate your perspective and will share your response with Unirac and see what they say.

Thank you!

And on Aug 14 with:

Just following up. I have shared your response with Unirac engineers and leaders. I will keep you posted with their response.

Thank you.

I replied on Aug 16 with:

Hi Marty,

Thank you for communicating with Unirac.

A work proposal of \$19,085.07 for putting the system back together as built was sent by Colton Koch on Mar 9. My understanding of the proposal's purpose was to assess damage caused by the December storm and generate time and material quote for an insurance claim so Bethlehem's insurance company was aware of the extent of the damage. There was no discussion about responsibility or liability at this point.

Sincerely, Mike

This is the last I have heard from TruNorth. We are currently in discussion with TruNorth about where the responsibility lies for the \$19,000 in repairs needed to make our solar array whole.

Oct 12, 2023 President's Report:

Bethlehem Solar Array Repairs: I received a phone message from Marty Morud at TruNorth Solar LLC on Sep 19, 2023. The message was not asking anything from us but just bringing Bethlehem up-to-date on what was happening with the repair invoice. Marty has been in touch with Unirac asking them to support their repair claim but has not yet heard back from them. He said he intended to press them a little harder to get a response.

Temple Talk: Oct 1, 2023 This is a rough transcript from my notes of a temple talk I gave at Bethlehem on Oct 1, 2023 talking about a Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries full-time position:

Good Morning. I have some good news to share with you. This week you will be receiving a letter from Pastor Calvin and the Church Council. This letter talks about plans for a full-time youth director position with benefits. Of course, with this announcement there naturally comes some questions you would like answered.

The first is, "What will this cost?" Although it is certainly more than we currently have budgeted for a part-time youth director without benefits, this cost will be partially offset by our currently budgeted youth director position. It also can be partially offset by some of our currently budgeted intern expenses. We will seek pledges to make up the difference. I will note that Bethlehem has always responded generously to an identifiable need such as this position.

The next question is, "What is our timeline?" It will begin with the letter you will receive this week. The month of October Pastor Calvin and council members will be answering questions one on one, with temple talks like this, e-weeklies, worship bulletins, and newsletters. On Nov 5, 2023 following worship council has called a special congregational meeting to discuss and approve this position as our only item of business. The in November and December the stewardship committee and council will be securing pledges for increase in our 2024 budget to support this new position. At our January annual meeting we will report the additional pledges we have secured and the congregation can then approve a budget that includes funding for a full-time youth director with benefits. In February we can begin interviewing for the job.

The last question is, "How does this fit in with Bethlehem's mission?" To answer this question for myself I have been thinking about the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) that Bethlehem composed this past year as we prepared for the call process. This profile is the result of five listening sessions, a congregational questionnaire put together by the transition team, the conscientious work of the transition committee, and your council's consent.

Although Bethlehem does not have a single voice, our Ministry Site profile can be thought of as the closest thing we have to Bethlehem speaking with one voice.

So how does this position fit in with Bethlehem's mission? I would like Bethlehem's voice through its profile speak to you directly. Here are some excerpts directly from our Ministry Site Profile. Keep in mind this proposed full-time youth director position as I read these excerpts. Imagine how this position will help with our mission as we listen to Bethlehem's voice.

We identified 5 primary area of focus for Pastor Calvin's first year and 5 ways we as the congregation will support Pastor Calvin. You may remember these from Jul 16th service. One area of focus was Youth and Family Ministry which our profile says:

Youth and young families are Bethlehem's future. Nurturing families through spiritual and faith formation has always been a priority. During the pandemic, many programs including our youth and family activities suffered. We need a pastor to lead, reinvigorate, and commit to our youth and family ministry.

Our profile then identified that we will support Pastor Calvin by being open to change.

We will be open to our new pastor's creative ideas and ways to minister to the community and congregation. We will do our best to not resist change with remarks like "we have never done it that way before" or "this is the way we have always done this".

Emphasizing this "openness to change" our profile answers what would you change at Bethlehem with:

...many, many people talk about the biggest change Bethlehem needs is for Bethlehem to be "willing" to change. As we transition to a newly called pastor, we will likely do a number of things to change things up. Some of those changes may work, some may fail, some may be permanent, some may be temporary, some may be trying something completely new and creative, some may be trying tried and true things that worked in the past. But the key is that we are flexible and "willing" to try changes. Most of these changes involve ways to make Bethlehem even more welcoming. Some may be suggestions to get old members back who have fallen away or left Bethlehem while others may be ways to invite new people to worship. Some may ask us to leave some old traditions behind while others encourage starting new programs.

In particular, as we reflected on our youth ministry our profile and Bethlehem's voice comments on:

1. ***An Identifiable need:*** *One concern of every generation of Christians and every denomination of Christianity is the passing on of the faith to our children and grandchildren. The question becomes how best to do that. Bethlehem begins with finding a Christ centered pastor to lead, preach to, and work with us while being a role model for our children and grandchildren. A pastor filled with the love of Christ and filled with love of Christ's people. Passing on the light and love of God to our next generations is the primary mission we have for our children and grandchildren.*
2. ***Where we have fallen short:*** *We recognize that the youth and families are our future and that retired members are our heritage. This creates a tension between focusing our resources on youth and families versus focusing on ministering to the needs of our more senior members. Our members are saying Bethlehem has to find a way to serve both. We need a fresher multigenerational approach. Over the years, we have not committed fully to what it takes to run a successful youth program from cradle through high school. Bethlehem has seen glimpses of success only to have the people leave and then start over again. Success for a multigenerational approach means full funding and the time required to grow and attract new families.*
3. ***History of wariness for new programming:*** *The sale of the Toftey house parsonage in 2001 and using the proceeds to expand staff and programming affected church finances for many years to come. The idea was to expand with staff and programming and that membership and giving would follow. When this failed due to a variety of reasons, members felt like those assets were foolishly spent. The result has been that Bethlehem may be overly cautious in spending resources on new programming and the needed personnel.*

Now, why have I shared these passages with you this morning? I have shared these excerpts so you can see that your council and pastor are following through on Bethlehem's own voice as expressed in our Ministry Site Profile. I want you to see that this full-time youth director position is not something "out of the blue" but rather a natural continuation of what Bethlehem has already acknowledged as vital to our mission. Pastor Calvin has answered the call Bethlehem voiced in our profile. But Pastor Calvin is not our youth director. We have in Pastor Calvin someone with the experience and expertise to create and oversee a successful youth program. We now need to support him as he builds a successful youth program here at Bethlehem.

I look forward this important step in Bethlehem's mission. And I look forward to listening and talking to you about this proposed position. I am confident that Bethlehem will respond generously to this identifiable need. Thank you for your time this morning.

Proposed Bethlehem Land Acknowledgement Statement: With Oct 9, 2023 being Indigenous People's Day officially replacing Columbus Day in Minnesota and with Pastor Calvin's sermon on Oct 8, 2023 talking about our history with indigenous peoples here in Minnesota, I thought it was appropriate to revisit the proposed land acknowledgement statement the council was considering last year before we got immersed into the Ministry Site Profile and the call process.

Excerpt from Denise's October 2022 Report:

Land Acknowledgement: On Oct. 9th we celebrated Indigenous People's Sunday. At that time, we used a land acknowledgment statement that Ben devised. I am wondering if we should use it on regular publications such as eWeekly's, newsletters, website, etc.? Or only use this language in October every year? This is the statement:

We acknowledge that Bethlehem Lutheran Church is on the land of the Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) people. This place is Mnísota Makhóche (Dakhöta): that is, the Land where the Waters Reflect the Sky. This particular area was taken in 1854 in Cession 332.

We acknowledge the land for a few reasons:

- To challenge the erasure of indigenous peoples, knowledge, and practices,*
- To challenge ongoing settler colonialism,*
- And to publicly commit to working to dismantle the systems of oppression that have dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their lands and denied their rights to self-determination.*

We pray this acknowledgment and service will inspire all of us to further commit to this ongoing work.

Please let me know if I can continue using this language on communications.

Concerns addressed by the council:

- Need to have teeth. If it doesn't make us a bit uncomfortable, then what is the point?
- Someone from GP should review this before we adopt it.
- Are there other points that should be included?
- The tone of the above acknowledgement makes the Anishinaabe sound like a defeated people and that somehow, we need to go in and fix their brokenness. This strikes me as pretentious on our part.
- The Anishinaabe are a people proud of their heritage, language, humor, stories, dancing, and drumming. They have problems with the dominant culture, they talk about institutional racism (The People's Institute and Howard Zinn), but they consider themselves a sovereign nation and are not in need of being fixed.
- GP partners with Cook County for law enforcement, the state park is on GP land, the National Monument is on GP land, Isle Royale National Park will likely someday to be on GP land.

Proposed revisions to the Land Acknowledgement Statement for Bethlehem:

We acknowledge that Bethlehem Lutheran Church is on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe. This place is Mni Sota Makoche. That is, the Land where the Waters Reflect the Sky. This particular area in NE Minnesota was opened to settlers in the 1854 Treaty and is known as the 1854 Ceded Territory. In this treaty the Anishinaabe maintained their hunting, fishing, and wild rice harvesting rights within the ceded territory.

We acknowledge this land's heritage for these reasons:

- To prevent the erasure of the Anishinaabe, their Ojibwe language, their history, their skills, and their practices.
- To examine our continuing role in land use policies from the 1854 treaty and the ways we have benefited and continue to benefit from that treaty.
- To work towards dismantling institutional racism that continues to harm the lives of the Anishinaabe.

We pray this land acknowledgment commits us to maintain and reconcile when needed our partnership with our Anishinaabe neighbors that we share this land with.

Proposed Land Acknowledgement Statement for Bethlehem:

(This final version is a collaboration between Mike Chmelik and Ben Nikodym.)

We acknowledge that Bethlehem Lutheran Church is on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe. This place is Mni Sota Makoche. That is, the Land where the Waters Reflect the Sky. This particular area we now know as NE Minnesota was opened to settlers in the 1854 Treaty and is known as the 1854 Ceded Territory. In this treaty the Anishinaabe maintained their hunting, fishing, and wild rice harvesting rights within the ceded territory.

We acknowledge this land's heritage for these reasons:

- To prevent the erasure of the Anishinaabe, their Ojibwe language, their history, their skills, and their practices.
- To examine our continuing role in land use policies from the 1854 treaty and the ways we have benefited and continue to benefit from that treaty.
- To work towards dismantling institutional racism that continues to harm the lives of the Anishinaabe.

We pray this land acknowledgment will help each of us individually and together as a church work for ongoing reconciliation and partnership with our Anishinaabe neighbors with whom we share this land.

Nov 20, 2023 President's Report:

Agenda from the Nov 5, 2023, Special Congregational Meeting:

Bethlehem Lutheran Special Congregational Meeting

Belonging to Christ, Sharing Christ on the North Shore and beyond

Date: Sunday, Nov 5, 2023, 11:15am.

Call to order: Mike Chmelik

Devotion: Pastor Calvin

Purpose and rules of special congregational meeting:

How we will vote (Zoom and in the same room):

New Business:

Proposal for Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries: Pastor Calvin

Motion: The council moves to create a full-time position with benefits for a Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries.

Second and discussion:

The Vote:

Adjourn:

Outline of position:

Total compensation:

\$51,866 to \$69,688 Base salary of \$40,000 to \$45,000 plus Portico Benefits which includes health insurance, disability insurance, term life insurance, retirement contributions, vacation, holidays, sick days, emergency leave, and family leave

Offsets within our current budget:

\$2,150 Currently budgeted funds for a part-time youth director

\$26,250 Currently budgeted funds to support an internship

\$16,541 Difference in pastoral compensation

Funds to be added to our budget and pledges to be secured:

\$6,925 to \$24,747

- Concentration on Middle School and High School.
- Oversee volunteers for Sunday School aged children.
- Flexibility in duties if certain benchmarks are not met.
- Back up supplement from savings for first 3 years (\$20,000, \$15,000, \$10,000).

What’s next in this process:

Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries is approved:	Today
Stewardship committee and council secure pledges for this position:	November-December
Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries is posted:	January 2024
Congregation approves church budget at Annual Meeting that includes funding for a full-time Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries:	Jan 28, 2024
Executive committee begins interview process:	February 2024
Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries is hired:	As soon as possible
Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries begins:	As soon as possible

Land Easement for Sean Zindren Update: Church Council discussed at the October meeting a utility easement across about 35-40ft of cemetery property we didn’t even realize we owned. The council had no problem approving the easement but wanted to be sure that the easement was worded properly and recorded properly with the county. Below is an email I sent to Sean on Oct 19, 2023 after I spoke with our treasurer, Mark Youngdahl, and city manager, Mike Roth:

Hi Sean,

I went into the PUC (Public Utilities Commission) today to be sure everything was in order before I signed the easement agreement that you had sent. Here is what I discovered while talking to Mike Roth, the city manager.

1. You do not need an easement agreement with Bethlehem. The wires that will be buried through Bethlehem’s property will belong to the City of Grand Marais.
2. The City of Grand Marais will need an easement agreement with Bethlehem.
3. The City of Grand Marais will need an easement agreement with you as well. Everything up through the meter including the wires and transformer will belong to the City of Grand Marais.

4. These 2 easements will be recorded at the county by the City of Grand Marais. It is likely that the City of Grand Marais will charge you for the two recording fees.
5. Mike Roth thanked me for coming in to let the city know that Bethlehem supports your project. Knowing this the city will now schedule for this work to be done.
6. Mike Roth said the city prefers to do the work first before writing up the easement agreement. This gives them flexibility if they run into something unforeseen during the installation that might require them to deviate from the original plan.
7. The “Exhibit A” you provided will be used by the city in writing up their standard easement agreement. They will also require a legal description to be included with the easement agreement. The city will be in contact with you about the legal description once the work is completed.
8. Bethlehem has nothing further to do except sign the easement from the City of Grand Marais when they send it to us after the work is completed. I or my successor will gladly sign it.

Good luck with electrifying your family cabin. I would love to see your renovation project sometime when you are in town.

Sincerely, **Mike Chmelik**

Bethlehem Lutheran Council President

Bethlehem Star Article: Oct 23, 2023

Bethlehem’s 125th Anniversary Celebrations: For years visiting and itinerant Lutheran pastors traveled the long and arduous journey to Grand Marais to preach the Word of God to Scandinavian pioneers. Then on September 18, 1889, a group of faithful servants of Christ met at the home of Mathias Johnson and formed First Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Grand Marais. Less than 3 months later on the first Sunday in Advent, the fledgling congregation that would someday be named Bethlehem Lutheran held its first worship service. That was Dec 3, 1889.

It is a time to celebrate those first fruits. It is time to recall the highlights of Bethlehem’s ministry as we have belonged to Christ and have shared Christ on the North Shore and beyond for 125 years in 2024. And now here in late 2023, it is time to prepare and plan for these celebrations.

On Oct 12, 2023, your Bethlehem Church Council formed an anniversary committee to plan events to celebrate Bethlehem’s beginnings 125 years ago and its many milestones along the way. Our Anniversary Committee’s charter members are Ethyl Johnson, Pastor Calvin Konop, Martha Rosbacka, Darold Rosbacka, and Mike Chmelik. We are hoping to round out our committee with 6-10 total members. If you have the desire to be part of the group that will plan 2024 events to celebrate and highlight Bethlehem’s 125-year mission, please let one of the committee members or Denise in the office know.

Our first meeting will be on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 6:30pm.

Your brother in Christ, Mike Chmelik (he/him/his)

Dec 18, 2023 President’s Report:

I have been taking in the Holden Evening Prayer on Wednesday worship. One of my favorite parts is putting Mary’s Magnificat to music. That has got me thinking about Mary and what Luke 2:19 says about her at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem:

“But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”

This verse has been speaking to me as I have observed, taken in, and reflected on all the activities and bustle at our Bethlehem over the past month. I treasure these events. I treasure and give thanks to God for the people who make these events possible. And I keep these people in my heart.

Consider:

- The Thank Offering service with our guest pastors and all the women that participated to make this worship event happen.
- The Advent sale and raffle.
- The increased presence of the Sunday School youth at worship on Sunday mornings.
- The Wednesday evening meals and worship with our not so average “average worship band” providing musical leadership.
- The presence and participation of our middle and high schoolers on Wednesday evenings.
- The hanging of the greens to beautify our sanctuary.
- The raising and decorating of the Christmas tree along with all the preparation and cleanup required to make this possible.
- The Advent Wednesday services with the Holden Evening Prayer.
- The Borealis Chorale and Orchestra Christmas Concert with the theme “All Earth is Hopeful” and the dedication and generosity of its members to provide this gift to our community.
- Confirmation students and their adult chaperones going door to door collecting food for the Cook County Food Shelf.
- All the events and activities I have forgotten to mention.

I encourage each of us to take the time to treasure up and ponder in our hearts all the amazing things that are happening at our Bethlehem this Christmas season.

Jan 15, 2024 President’s Report:

I went to the eye doctor in December to get new glasses. I have been using “cheaters” for reading glasses and let everything else be blurry since my old bifocals broke 6 or more years ago. I was surprised how with prescription glasses each eye was properly corrected. The result was not only could I see better but the world became more 3-dimensional as my stereoscopic vision improved. The doctor said that was the natural conclusion of each eye individually seeing the best image it can. This is much like the CT algorithms I used to develop and program when I was at the Mayo Clinic. CT imaging takes images from all different angles and combines them in such a way to create a 3-dimensional reconstruction of the object you are taking pictures of. At that time there was the belief that for CT imaging, the reconstruction algorithm didn’t really care if each image used in reconstructing a 3-dimensional volume was the best possible quality. There was sort of a belief that these algorithms were so robust that you could put “garbage” in and get “quality” out. By taking the time to correct each image to its highest possible quality, we quickly discovered that if you put “quality” in, you got real “quality” out. It follows that if you put “garbage” in you indeed got “garbage” out. We just fooled ourselves in thinking that the original poor results were “quality”. Sort of the same thing I did with my cheaters.

Each member of the church takes an image of the church from their own point of view. When we put all those views together, we get sort of a 3-dimensional reconstruction of the church and its mission. In a way, our listening sessions and questionnaires filled out by members of Bethlehem were “images” that we put into our reconstruction algorithm which was our Transition Team. The Transition Team processed these “images” and the result was our Ministry Site Profile (MSP) which was sort of a 3-dimensional reconstruction of Bethlehem and its mission.

The point of this is that for Bethlehem to see itself and its mission clearly, we need the best quality perspective of every member. Ignoring anyone, we get a poorer 3-dimensional reconstruction of Bethlehem and its mission. If any member is without the corrected lenses, they need to focus their own perspective of Bethlehem, then we get a poorer 3-dimensional reconstruction of Bethlehem and its mission.

I encourage each of us in this season of light to take the time to make sure no member of Bethlehem or any member within our community is ignored or marginalized. Who knows what epiphanies may be right around the corner if we take the time to clearly see Bethlehem and its mission.