



February 2026

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Bethlehem Star

A publication of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Grand Marais, MN

Grace and Peace to you all, People of God!

On Sunday, January 25th we had our Annual Meeting in the Fellowship Hall and on Zoom. We had 69 people in attendance, in addition to many children. Our Annual Meeting is an important meeting for our congregation to review our ministry from the past year, and look to the future of ministry on the *North Shore and Beyond*.

This year we celebrated some of our ministries from 2025. We celebrated hiring Jess Christenson as our CYF Director, and we heard a report from her on the state of our CYF ministry. 29 kids in confirmation, 27 kids at VBS, and plenty of events planned for 2026. We celebrated our Wednesday evening services with a message from Stacey Johnson, who also encouraged all members to join us on Wednesdays. We also celebrated the Men's Bible Study, the BLCW, the Quilters, and the local Food Shelf at the Congregational Church.

Our 2025 budget ended in the black due to your generous and consistent giving. Thank you to all of our Simply Giving givers, QCD (Qualified Charitable Distribution) and RMD (Required Minimum Distribution) givers, and those who write checks or give cash in envelopes. Your support of Bethlehem keeps our ministries vibrant. We approved our 2026 budget, with a small increase to keep up with rising costs.

Finally, we voted on our Welcome Statement and to officially be recognized as a Reconciling in Christ congregation. The vote passed 67-2, and there were celebrations from those in attendance after the vote was counted and announced. We are looking forward to celebrating this important step in being welcoming to everyone with a special service in the coming months.

Thank you to everyone who gives of their time, talents, and treasures to Bethlehem. In 2026, we look with hope to how the Spirit leads us to live out our mission: *Belonging to Christ, Sharing Christ on the North Shore and Beyond.*



Peace in Christ.
Pastor Calvin Konop



A message from
outgoing Congregational
President,
Kristin Lindholm:

In these dark days of a “not so normal” Minnesota winter, where is hope?

... .It's in people gathering in droves on a ridiculously cold weekend to protest injustice.

... .it's in checking on those we love and letting them know they are not alone.

... .it's in becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

... .it's gathering at Bethlehem Lutheran Church for a prayer vigil with neighboring churches and community members.

... .it's in using our gifts and talents to help others like knitting red hats (in the 1940s, Norwegians knit and wore red hats to protest the Nazis)

... .it's in praying for our neighbors, our country, our world.

... .it's in reaching out for help when it all feels too heavy.

Dear God,

In these dark days, help us to do justice, show mercy, and walk humbly with you.

Amen.



On January 13th, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA) Volunteer Services held an Awards Luncheon. **Ethel Johnson** received the "Legacy Award" as she is still an active volunteer at age 94! **Gwen Lenz** received the "Community Impact Award" for all and the many community agencies she is involved with in Grand Marais. Pictured here are Kirsten Ryden (AEOA), Ethel Johnson, Gwen Lenz, Denise Murray (nominated Gwen), and Sharon Hexum-Platzer (Lutsen's version of Gwen Lenz).

New Members joined Bethlehem on Jan. 25. Pictured here are: **Martha Williams**; **Melanie Olsen** (Matt, Elijah & Jonathan too. Solomon is already a member); **Jane Gellner**; and **Eric and Jessica Christenson**. (Not pictured but joined, **Ben Rasmussen**)



Community Vigil
on January 26th
(see page 3)



Devotions

By Pastor Calvin Konop

*"The Lord is my shepherd:
I shall not want."*

Psalm 23:1

At our Annual Meeting I used this Psalm for our time of devotion. This is one of the most famous Psalms, and is read frequently at funerals, in hospitals, and during times of crisis.

The Psalm gives vivid imagery of how God operates in our lives. A gentle shepherd, leading us and guiding us to all of our needs. A shepherd that protects us and walks with us through darkness.

Dear sibling in Christ, God is with you no matter what you're going through. God will lead you into times of rest in green pastures and beside still waters - even as chaos reigns around you. The power of the Good Shepherd is that God is with us. We are not alone. You are not alone.

Adult Education Opportunities

Men's Bible Study - Every Thursday morning from 8-9:15am in the Library at Church, or on zoom. Join us as we study the Book of Acts.

BLCW Women's Circle - The BLCW meets once a month on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 9:30 am in the library. Join us for fellowship, Bible Study, and helping to plan ministry events at Bethlehem. Contact Joy Oberg or Cindy Muus with questions.

Book Study: Wisdom Jesus - This book study will be starting up again in the new year and meets in the Library at Church. Historically we have met on Sunday evenings at 7pm, but a new day and time might be happening. Contact Sue Hennessy with questions.

Post-Easter Bible Study - Pastor Calvin will be leading a Bible Study on the Book of Galatians after Easter. Look for more information coming soon!



Community Vigil

On Monday January 26th the Cook County Ecumenical Ministerium held a vigil for the community at large. Over 130 people joined in person and over 85 have viewed the service online. The event was hosted by Bethlehem Lutheran Church and was organized, advertised and coordinated in one day. (Congratulations)

The clergy read scriptures from Psalm 94 and Revelation 21, and led the prayers each followed by a time of silence for personal prayer concerns and meditation. The participating clergy included: Pastor Calvin Konop, Pastor Enno Limvere (First Congregational United Church of Christ), Priest Peggy Schnack (Spirit of the Wilderness Episcopal Church), Pastor Tom Murray (Lutsen Evangelical Lutheran Church), and Stephanie Voss (Unitarian Minister).

The Bethlehem Choir, under the direction of Karina Roth, led the music, including a chanted song "Carry This All" by Ahlay-Blakely; "Sometimes Our Only Song is Weeping (from All Creation Sings Hymnal #1050), and "Let There Be Peace On Earth."

The overall theme of the service was to gather as community to pray for healing and mercy, to lift all who have been affected by violence; prayers of thanksgiving and compassion for the safety and good judgement and protection for all law enforcement officers, medical professionals, and all who offer compassion in situations of tragedy. We gathered to lift our prayers of lament for all killed, harmed or grieving following the violence of events that have and are happening in the state of Minnesota and throughout our country. Included also were prayers for elected leaders - for their strength and courage to lead us toward domestic harmony.

There has been tremendous positive responses to the event from the community. If you would like to see the service, the link to the recording is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lopjhO2-Jds>



Jess Christenson, Director

blcyouth@boreal.org  507-530-2763

There are so many exciting things happening here at Bethlehem this year and I am so grateful to be on this journey with all of you! Confirmation and Sunday School has kicked off after our Christmas break and we are back in full swing! A giant “thank you” to all of our volunteers on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, you all keep our ministry moving! The way you continually show up for our children and youth is so inspiring and means so much to these kids! We are really starting to settle into the Youth Room downstairs! There are still a few more things to hang on the walls, we need to order a few more tables and chairs and then everything will be complete! The youth have really loved being in this space on Wednesday evening. Thank you again for all your help with that renovation!

On Saturday, February 21st we will be having our “Owl Night” Lock in! All youth grades 6th - 12th are welcome to join. We will be staying up all night (if you want to), playing games, worshipping together and taking some time to learn about prayer. We will be learning about different ways that we can communicate with God and find new tools and ideas to use! Students will be joining Sunday morning worship to help lead prayers, even if we might be a bit sleepy. I will be asking for volunteers to join in the fun soon, with different time slots available, so please consider joining the fun! Please email me to register a student or let me know if you would like to volunteer to join the fun!

We will be having **Communion Learners Class**

on March 15th, 22nd, & 29th at 11am after worship in the library. This class is for students who haven't received communion yet, or if they have been taking communion but have not attended a class. In this class we will learn about why we take communion, where the practice came from and what it means for us today! Students are encouraged to attend with at least one trusted adult! Please email me to register!

Finally, the last exciting thing to share is our new afterschool test program called **Bethlehem Builders Club!** Where we will be building a strong foundation of faith. **This afterschool program is for 3rd- 5th graders and we will be meeting every Wednesday in March from 3:30 - 5:30.** This program will be much like Sunday School. We will have snacks, play games, sing songs and have Bible Study together. I am really looking forward to this time! If you would like to register your child or volunteer for this program, please email me and I will get you connected!

I hope you all are staying warm and finding fun ways to connect. As always, I am here for you, your student and this community! Please reach out if you have any questions, comments or concerns!
blcyouth@boreal.org - 507-530-2763



Upcoming Children, Youth & Family Events:

Owl Night Lock In

It's going to be a hoot!

**February 21st @ 8pm -
February 22nd @ 11am**

For 6th - 12th students.

All are welcome!



Register Now!
Contact Jess with any questions,
comments or concerns!
blcyouth@boreal.org
507-530-2763



Communion Class at Bethlehem

Come and learn about Communion! For 3rd - 5th graders and at least one trusted adult.

March 15th, 22nd & 29th @11am after Worship.



Register online now or contact Jess!

Contact Jess with any questions, comments or concerns!
blcyouth@boreal.org 507-530-2763

Join us for Bethlehem Builders Club!

An afterschool program for 3rd - 5th graders where we are building a strong foundation of faith!

We will be meeting every Wednesday in March from 3:30-5:30

During this time we will worship together, play games, have snacks, have Bible study & more. All are welcome!



Contact Jess with any questions, comments or concerns!
blcyouth@boreal.org 507-530-2763



Looking to go to camp this summer?

Camps are a great way to meet new people, grow closer to God and spend time outdoors.

Here at Bethlehem, we want every student to be able to experience camp! Bethlehem offers a \$250 scholarship to any Christian camp, they would like to go to!

Please contact Jess with any questions, comments or concerns!
507-530-2763 - blcyouth@boreal.org

Here are some camps that we love, if you are looking for an amazing camp experience!



**Wilderness
Canoe Base**



Join us for Community Meals on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm. The meals are served by 4 different meal teams including: Italian dinners; Taco, Hotdish, and (make your own) Sub sandwich meals. **All are welcome.** It's your opportunity to be among all generations for good food and fellowship every week (following the school calendar).



The BLCW has set February 13th as our Annual Valentine Cookie Packaging Day The cookie packs will be delivered the afternoon of the 13th to people in the community, at the Care Center and at North Shore Health.



If you know someone you would like to have a Valentine treat delivered, please let us know! Drop off their name and delivery address at church. (phone numbers help too!)

If you would like to donate cookies, help put cookie packs together or deliver cookies we would appreciate your help. All varieties of cookies are welcome!

Drop off cookie donations any time on Thursday, Feb 12th or Feb 13th by 9:30 am.

Cookies will be packaged Friday, Feb. 13th at 10 am. If you would like to help put cookie packs together meet at Bethlehem at 9:30.

Delivery of Valentine cookie packs will take place immediately after packaging! If you are able to deliver a few, let us know, we would appreciate your help.

Thank you for helping put Valentines smiles on faces in our community!



The February Mission of the Month will be the **activities department** of our local Care Center. We want to provide funds for more social events, equipment for games, and materials that will allow residents to pursue creative hobbies that they once enjoyed or would like to try for the first time. We know that isolation and feelings of loneliness are harmful to both mental and physical health. Helping to provide for more social interaction is one way our church can show that we care for all of the residents there. Our committee is planning to host a party at the Care Center on February 14th at 2:00 pm. We will be hoping for a good turnout of members who will be willing to spend a little time - sharing laughs and showing love and care for the people there.



Thank you Oddz & Endz and our faithful volunteers, Patti Beyer & Anne Swallow Gillis! Bethlehem just received **\$11,894** as a pay-out from Oddz & Endz for their 2025 volunteer hours donated by these gals! We are deeply grateful for this gift and to the community for their continued support of this business. Thank you to all who shop, donate and volunteer at Oddz & Endz!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Worship & Sunday School	2	3 8:30am Staff meeting	4 Jess' Birthday!! 8:00am Church in Society Meeting 12:30pm Text Study 5:30pm Meal 6:00pm Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	5 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 6:30pm Table Tennis	6 Clarity Hearing Appts	7
8 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Worship & Sunday School 11:30 am Daisy Troop	9 3:30 pm Girl Scouts 5:30 pm Girl Scout Leader Potluck 6:30pm Executive Committee meeting	10 8:30am Staff meeting 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	11 12:30pm Text Study 5:30pm Meal 6:00pm Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	12 8:00am Monthly Council Reports due to office 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 9:30am BLCW Circle & Bible Study 6:30pm Table Tennis	13 10:00 am Valentine's Cookie Pack 12:00pm Monthly Reports distributed to Council members	14 2:00 pm BINGO PARTY at Care Center
15 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Worship & Sunday School 2:00pm Care Center Worship Service	16 8:00am Deadline for changes to Council agenda and reports 6:30pm Church Council Meeting	17 8:30am Staff meeting 6:30pm Worship Planning Meeting	18 Ash Wednesday 12:30pm Text Study 5:30pm Meal 6:00pm Worship	19 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 6:30pm Table Tennis	20 Clarity Hearing Appts	21 OWL LOCK-IN
22 OWL LOCK-IN ENDS AFTER WORSHIP 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Worship & Sunday School	23 Newsletter articles due 3:30 pm Girl Scouts	24 8:30am Staff meeting	25 12:30pm Text Study 5:30pm Meal 6:00pm Worship	26 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 6:30pm Table Tennis	27	28

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



Bingo Party



February 14, 2026 - 2:00 pm

North Shore Living Care Center
515 Fifth Avenue West
Grand Marais, MN

The Church in Society Team
invites you to Party
with our friends at the
Care Center

Saturday, February 14th
Valentine's Day @ 2:00 pm

Play BINGO with the
Residents,
Eat Snacks,
& Win Prizes



More information available from
Joni Kristenson 218-370-9554