



January 2026

Volume 45 Number 1

# Bethlehem Star

A publication of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Grand Marais, MN

## Happy New Year, People of Bethlehem!

I'm excited to see where God continues to call us as a church in 2026. The Holy Spirit has continued to call people to our church, whether it's new families, individuals, confirmation students, or visitors - God is working in people's lives.

For new folks, regulars, or long timers, we're offering an adult ed class called Lutheranism 101. It's an opportunity to learn or be refreshed about the basics of Lutheranism, and an opportunity to learn about Bethlehem. There will be an opportunity to become a new member for anyone that isn't yet a member, too. Lutheranism 101 will meet after church on Sunday 1/11 and 1/18, and we'll do a reception of new members on Sunday, 1/25 before our Annual Meeting. This is a free event, and all are encouraged to join us for both gatherings.

Our Annual Meeting will happen after worship on Sunday, 1/25/26 both in person (Fellowship Hall) or on Zoom. We'll recap and celebrate 2025, vote on our proposed welcome statement, and approve the 2026 budget. If you are a member, please join us for the Annual Meeting so that we can have a quorum, and to have as many of our people gather together as possible.

As we look to the new possibilities of 2026, I want to remind us of our mission statement:

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

May Jesus be our foundation, and may we shine the light of Christ right in here in Grand Marais, across the North Shore, and throughout the world.

Peace in Christ.

Pastor Calvin Konop







# Devotions

By Pastor Calvin Konop

“So if anyone is in Christ,  
there is a new creation:  
everything old has passed away;  
look, new things have come into being!”

2 Corinthians 5:17

A new year often means New Year's Resolutions. These are things that we've been wanting to change, try, take on, or get rid of - and a new year is the perfect time to try. New Year's Resolutions are so commonly quit, that there is a day dedicated to quitting them called "Quitter's Day." Quitters Day is the second Friday after the new year has come - just two weeks after starting something. Resolutions are good things to do, regardless if we quit them or not - but I think that they're often quit because we depend on our own power to make them happen.

There is a promise from God in 2 Corinthians, that you are a new creation in Christ. This is something that we don't need to worry about because it doesn't depend on our own power. It is the power of Christ that makes this happen. Jesus makes us new in the waters of baptism, and the Holy Spirit equips us with what we need for the days ahead.

In 2026, find power in Christ that you are a new creation, and nothing can change that.



## Lutheranism 101: Intro to Bethlehem & Lutheranism

This January on the 11th and 18th, after the church service, we will be offering a class that we're calling 101. This is an intro to Lutheranism, and an intro into our church (our history, how we function, what we do, our mission, and more!). If

you have ever wondered about what it means to be a Lutheran, or if you've ever wanted to learn more about our church, this is the class for you!

101 is free and is open to everyone: members and non-members alike. Participants should come to both the gathering on the 11th, and on the 18th, both of which will go for 1 hour with some light snacks provided. There will be discussion, opportunities to get to know each other, a chance to become a member if you aren't one, and of course information on Lutheranism and BLC. Mark your calendars now, and we will see you at the gatherings in January!

-Pastor Calvin



Traditionally speaking, January is the month of resolutions. If you are anything like me, you're really good at making them, but not so good at keeping them. A few years ago, I changed my focus. Instead of setting a goal, I chose a word to focus on throughout the year. Last year, my word was "Gratitude." I vowed to think of this word often. I drew it out on a piece of paper and placed it where I could see it every day. It shaped my thinking on days that weren't so great. There's always something to be thankful for, right?

This year, my word is "Breathe." I need reminders to slow down, to look at the beauty around me, to reflect on what's good. Perhaps you might consider focusing on a word this year. What will it be?

Kristin Lindholm, Congregational President

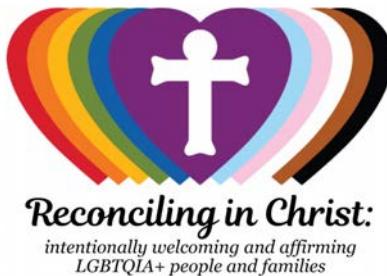


By Ashley Konop

Our Mission of the Month for January is the **Violence Prevention Center** of Cook County, MN.

Located in the heart of Grand Marais, the Violence Prevention Center works with survivors of domestic and sexual assault. In 2025, the Violence Prevention Center provided services to more than 280 clients in Cook County. Services include safety planning to flee abusive situations, safety lodging for people in immediate danger, legal advocacy and help in obtaining restraining orders or orders for protection, grocery and gas assistance and much more.

By choosing the Violence Prevention Center as our Mission of the Month we are providing direct help to our own Cook County neighbors. In 2026 the Violence Prevention Center celebrates 40 years of service to our community. Let's help them reach their fundraising goals so they can continue their work for the next 40 years!



## Update on Reconciling in Christ

It has been a busy year for the Reconciling in Christ Committee. The Committee met often the beginning of the year and is now wrapping up. We sent letters in January 2025 to members of the congregation with our Statement of Intent. Mike Chmelik and Karina Roth reached out to members to offer one-on-one meetings

with the goal of listening to feelings and thoughts and concerns regarding the Statement of Intent.

Emmy Kegler visited in February, spoke on what it means to be Welcoming and led a workshop on How to Read the Bible.

In July, Pastor Diane Jacobsen spoke on inclusiveness and led a workshop on the story of Lydia in the Bible.

In addition, Pastor Calvin wrote numerous newsletters addressing each step in the Statement of Intent, clarifying the RIC Committee's intentions.

In October, the RIC Committee drafted a Welcome Statement, which will go on the website. The purpose of this Welcome Statement is that visitors or new folks to the community can see, before stepping into the building, that they will be welcomed into all aspects of our church, including communion, fellowship and leadership roles. The Welcome Statement was presented to the Church Council in October, and has since been mailed out to all church members, with the opportunity to offer feedback if desired.

In January 2026, at the Annual Meeting, we will vote on the Welcome Statement, which will determine if we become a Reconciling in Christ church.

If you haven't yet had the opportunity to have a one-on-one conversation about becoming an RIC church, please reach out to Karina Roth at [karina.roth@hotmail.com](mailto:karina.roth@hotmail.com).

Thank you to everyone who has participated in any way in this process. We have had many good conversations!

## Table Tennis Anyone?

by Dave Walter

There is a weekly table tennis gathering at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Every Thursday at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Paddles, balls and tables will be available, all you need to do is show up. **Everyone is welcome**, absolutely no experience or table tennis skills are necessary. If you're interested, just show up. We'll go through the end of March. Please enter through the east door by the offices.





**Jess Christenson, Director**

**blyouth@boreal.org** ☎ **507-530-2763**

While 2025 was filled with so much joy, I am so excited to turn our calendar to 2026 here at Bethlehem. We have so many fun things to look forward to together here in the New Year! In January Confirmation and Sunday School will start back up after Christmas break. We are still moving back into our newly remodeled youth room space, but we have really been enjoying getting settled in.

In February we will be having an “Owl Night” Lock in for youth grades 6-12. Students will come to church on Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup>, and spend the night here at Bethlehem. We will play games, have snacks, participate in worship & spend some time learning about prayer and how to talk to God. Youth will attend worship on Sunday morning after the lock in and help lead prayer in worship. It is sure to be a “HOOT” of a good time. All are welcome!

I am so excited to share that in March, we will be running a test of a Wednesday after school program for all 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> graders. We currently don’t have a Sunday School option for this age group, so we are going to do four weeks of Wednesdays afterschool to see if this is something that might work for families next year. If you have a student in 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I will be reaching out to you shortly with specific details and signup information. I am very hopeful that this will be a good time for our 3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> graders to learn more about their Bibles, more about Bethlehem, more

about themselves and more about God’s unending love for them!

We have so much to look forward to this year together. I am already starting to dream of Vacation Bible School, warm summer days, green grass and endless popsicles! I am so thankful for this community supporting me and this ministry in the ways you do. With your support we will be able to create safe spaces, share God’s love and help our neighbors. What more could I ask for?! As always, please reach out if there is any way that I can support you and the children and youth in your life.

Peace, Jess Christenson

## **No Rehearsal Christmas Program**

Thank you all for your participation and joy surrounding our Christmas program this Advent. It was such a joy to see so many Angels, Shepherds & Wise People among our congregation on a Sunday morning! It was truly a beautiful sight on a Sunday morning to be surrounded by such joy and excitement. There is something about telling the story of Jesus birth, collectively as a community that feels so special to me. That we each take a part and help share the wonder, the excitement, the fear and the joy of a story that we have all heard many times, but each year it’s made new.



Thank you to all the kids, families and adults who participated in any way, shape or form. Thank you for telling us all about Jesus’ love and grace. I hope that as we all enter this New Year, we can find ways to share Jesus’ love with all we encounter.





The annual Julefest holiday luncheon was held on December 6th by the BLCW. Thanks to all who attended, participated in the raffle and donated baked goods. We received generous raffle donations from local businesses, including Sweetwater, Ben Franklin, Trading Post, Great Gifts, Johnson's Foods, Grand Marais State Bank and North Shore Federal Credit Union. Kris Hedstrom donated beautiful hand knit Norwegian mittens and Mary Schliep donated 3 amazing pieces of Rosemaling. The lucky winners were thrilled and because of your support the BLCW raised approximately \$1,200 that will be donated to programs in the community. Thank you one and all!

Submitted by Joy Oberg



Members of Esther Circle served a delicious lunch and hosted the Julefest events. Pictured here: Cindy Muus, Joanne Smith, Joy Oberg, Patti Beyer, Martha Rosbacka, Joan Ege, and Sue Anderson. **Thanks ladies!**





# January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	2	3
4 <b>8:40am Choir practice</b> <b>10:00am Worship</b> 12:00pm Daisy Troop	5 <b>8:30am Staff meeting</b>	6 Epiphany <b>8:00am Church in Society Meeting</b> 12:30pm Text Study <b>5:30pm Meal</b> <b>6:00pm Worship</b> <b>6:30pm Confirmation</b>	7 <b>8:00am Church in Society Meeting</b> 12:30pm Text Study <b>5:30pm Meal</b> <b>6:00pm Worship</b> <b>6:30pm Confirmation</b>	8 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 9:30am BLCW Circle & Bible Study 6:30pm Table Tennis	9 Clarity Hearing Appts	10
11 8:40am Choir practice <b>10:00am Worship &amp; Sunday School</b> 11:15am Lutheranism 101	12 3:30pm Girl Scouts 6:30pm Executive Committee meeting	13 8:00am Monthly Council Reports due 8:30am Staff meeting 6:30pm Worship Planning	14 12:00pm Monthly Reports distributed to Council members 12:30pm Text Study <b>5:30pm Meal</b>	15 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 6:30pm Table Tennis	16	17
18 8:40am Choir practice <b>10:00am Worship &amp; Sunday School</b> 11:15am Lutheranism 101 2:00pm Care Center Worship Service	19 MLK Holiday <b>Newsletter articles due</b> 8:00am Deadline for changes to Council agenda and reports 6:30pm Church Council Meeting	20 8:30am Staff meeting 5:30pm Girl Scouts	21 12:30pm Text Study <b>5:30pm Meal</b> <b>6:00pm Worship</b> <b>6:30pm Confirmation</b>	22 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 6:30pm Table Tennis	23 Clarity Hearing Appts	24
25 8:40am Choir practice <b>10:00am Contemporary Worship &amp; Sunday School</b> <b>11:15am Annual Meeting</b>	26	27 8:30am Staff meeting	28 8:00am Church in Society 12:30pm Text Study <b>5:30pm Meal</b> <b>6:00pm Worship</b> <b>6:30pm Confirmation</b>	29 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 6:30pm Table Tennis	30	31

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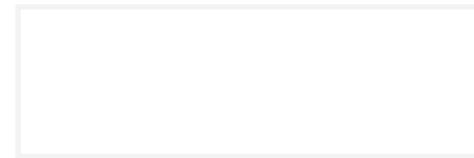
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[www.sharingchrist.org](http://www.sharingchrist.org)



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



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 21<sup>ST</sup> - SUNDAY FEBRUARY 22<sup>ND</sup>

Join us for a night of games,  
worship, snacks & time in  
community! Open for all 6<sup>th</sup>  
- 12<sup>th</sup> graders. All are  
welcome! More information  
to come soon!

It will be a hoot of a time!



### New Years Reflection

By Jessica Christenson

What are you thankful for from last year?

What are some things you want to do this year?

How can you share God's love with everyone you encounter this year?

### Prayer:

*Lord, thank You for this brand-new year. Guide my steps and plans in Your way. Help me start fresh with a joyful heart. Teach me to trust You each new day. Let me life shine with Your love. Help me make it full of kindness, joy, and faith. Amen.*