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Facebook page: "Bethlehem Lutheran Vinton"

From the Pastor's Desk

At the end of 2017, I believe the congregation is in a good place. Worship attendance, while it is not what it might be, remains steady. The Sunday School Christmas program showed that when all our kids get together, they are a good number and are willing and capable. Financial support is steady. We have experienced together in this year significant things:

- Intern Dr. Lynn Banderob completed her year-long, half-time internship at the end of April. Her work inspired the Potato Patch project and continues on in the form increased Bible awareness from the discipleship class and in a Monday afternoon women's group. The visioning project she led will be fleshed out as we engage people again in discerning God's vision for this congregation. Dr. Lynn was ordained by Bishop Steven Ullestad of the Northeast Iowa Synod at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I was privileged to deliver the sermon. On December 10, she was installed as pastor of Unity of the Cross parish of Peace Lutheran Church in Ryan and St. John Lutheran Church in Dundee in the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

- The centennial project of giving \$100 each month to a local cause was brought to satisfactory conclusion after growing over five years to \$100+4.

- The original Bethlehem Inn on the northeast corner of our block was removed in February and the site cleared for lawn space and other future use.

- Volunteers helped with the summer lunch program and with bell ringing for the Salvation Army. Bethlehem hosted the Community Thanksgiving Service sponsored by the Vinton Area Ministerial Association.

- Harold and Barb Cassens offered their property on the southeast corner of our block to

the church, and on May 7, the congregation voted 69-1 to purchase it. The \$105,000 price was almost 100% funded by new designated donations garnered in just a month's time. The house and property were thoroughly cleaned up by a small group of volunteers and is now successfully rented as a home.

- The LYO completed a mission trip to Minneapolis, working in several different projects. Ten children attended ELCA camps. Our somewhat small cadre of high school students served faithfully, willingly, and well as acolytes in Sunday worship.

- The council led a series of talks by members at worship on the stewardship theme "Abundant Joy. Overflowing Generosity" with lively discussion by the congregation.

- Vinton Feeds the World, our "God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday" project engaged a wide community of volunteers and provided thousands of meals for hurricane victims.

- We sadly noted the passing of Evelyn Greenwood, at her death the most senior member of the congregation; long-time and faithful member Dr. O.R. Corbett; Donald Selken, a senior member tragically perished in a car accident only just over a month after his marriage; and Dell Hanson, a life-long active member and only person to be included in all four church anniversary photos (25th, 50th, 75th, and centennial).

- The congregation shared my time to serve as member of the Southeastern Synod Council, chairman of the Nominating Committee for the 2018 synod assembly and as president of the Vinton Area Ministerial Association.

In addition to organized functions of the congregation our members make a difference in the community. Many are involved and leaders in business groups, school, government, community service groups and other organizations, and many other activities.

I believe we are ready to engage the future and grow the ministry footprint of Bethlehem in Vinton and beyond. I look forward to your participation in this.

~Pastor Urlaub

Youth Ministry

Several children from Preschool -5th grade, along with middle school and high school instrumentalists, participated in the children's Christmas service on December 20th. The service was called "Lessons and Carols for Christmas Eve". Look for more pictures on the bulletin board.

On December 24th, Sunday school service Sunday, the kids made Christmas cards to deliver to the shut-ins in the congregation.



Parents please watch the bulletin and e-mails for information on Lutheran



Lakeside camp. Information will become available in February. There is a discount for early registration. We are hoping to send another group of kids this summer!

LIGHTS will be on January 3rd. LIGHTS is a fellowship group from kids in preschool-5th grade. We meet the first Wednesday of the

month from 5:30-6:30 for a lesson and then fun games, crafts, and food.

LYO continues to meet on Wednesday nights. We have devotions and discussions and then do a service project or something fun. This month we created collages and made Christmas cookies. We also rang the bell at Fareway.



Choir

Chapel Choir: rehearse Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., January 17th and January 31st.
Sing in worship January 21st with 8:15 warm-up/

YoungStars Choir: rehearse Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. on January 10th.
Sing in worship January 14th with 8:25 warm-up.

Christian Life

A big thank you to all who volunteered on Saturday, November 25 to ring the Salvation Army bell at Fareway. Bethlehem volunteers spent the entire day from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. ringing the bell and joyfully greeting all Fareway visitors and thanking those who generously contributed to the cause. Early reports sound like the total amount raised through donations made during the several weeks of bell ringing was a very good number and will be used to help many in need in our local area.

Our caroling event on December 10 was a success again this year. Seventeen people attended, and we visited seven homes. The

carolers presented each home with a fruit basket. We followed the caroling with a time of fellowship at the church with maidrites and other goodies. Thank you to those who were able to join in on the fun.

On Wednesday, December 13, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. we had an informal Advent mid-week gathering with beverages and snacks, conversation, and Christmas trivia time. Fourteen were in attendance and all seemed to enjoy the gathering. We will put this on the list for next year again.

Many Bethlehem members have contributed to the ELCA Good Gifts Advent tree project. As of December 3, gifts with a total of \$690 had already been purchased. Many more ornaments/gifts have been purchased since then. We will run this project through January 1 and then the money will be sent in to the ELCA. Thank you so much for your interest in the project and your generosity. Many people who have so very little will benefit from your gifts.

Perhaps you have noticed if you stay for coffee during the Fellowship hour after worship services, that donations placed into the basket are being donated this winter to the Vinton heating assistance program. So thank you. As we gather in a warm setting all winter, it is nice to know we can help those who might have trouble paying their heating bills.

On a final note, thanks also to those who contribute to the Benton County Food Shelf. Please continue to leave the food, personal hygiene, and cleaning items in the basket placed in the narthex. Whether you are able to contribute often or only once in a great while, it all makes a BIG difference to those in need.

Women's Evening Bible Study

Starting January 8th, from 6:30 to 8pm, we be starting a new video-based study of Deuteronomy called The Law of Love. We will meet twice monthly on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month.

Stuck? Wandering? Looking for your promised land? Asking, "What's the point?"
" He brought us out...that He might bring us in." Deuteronomy 6:23

Please join us!

Southeastern Iowa Synod: God's work. Our Hands

Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." – John 8:31-32

These opening verses from the gospel text for Reformation Sunday are the crux of what it means to be a continually reforming church. In them are grace, life, freedom, permission, love, and peace; aspects which are desperately needed in a church that is facing yet another reformation, or upheaval, as Anna Madsen and Bishop Guy Erwin reminded the leaders gathered at the Tri-Synodical Convocation in September.

As the world is continually bombarded with the devil, powers, and sin which separate us from God, this is the time to return to the courageous proclamation that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ matters. Today. For all creation everywhere. To be sure this upheaval seems daunting, a moving of an institution (and perhaps even more challenging the hearts of those who make the institution) in a new direction, open to the Spirit and life that comes with the freedom of living as God's people. In the face of such challenges and uncertainty it is good to be #inthistgether as communities, synods, and people of God everywhere. Change is happening, stories are being shared, Jesus is renewing hearts, lives, congregations.

Thank you for your shared partnership in the gospel. Proclamation of new life, work and ministry at the local level, and the sharing of financial support to the synod are all ways in which we are working to point to and see God's kingdom among us. And it really is not possible without the latter.

Mission support makes possible the work of our advocacy partners to proclaim to the powers of this world that hungry and uninsured people matter. Mission support make possible the seemingly unending work of Lutheran Disaster Response. Mission support makes possible events which equip and empower leaders and congregations in Southeastern Iowa to become the people God has called us to be: courageously

facing an unknown future with the reckless abandon of those sure that there is life in Jesus. Know that the office of the Bishop holds all leaders and congregations in prayer, giving thanks for the work you do, partnering to be even bolder witnesses to life in Christ, and working on behalf of all congregations to foster a vital synod.

God's peace to you, *Reverend Erika Uthe*
Director for Evangelical Mission
Assistant to the Bishop, Southeastern Iowa
Synod

Notes and things:

It is a custom here to place a rose in the church at worship to celebrate and give thanks to God for the birth of a child in a member family of this congregation. Please let the office or Brenda Sutton know (and the pastor will want to be aware as well) of babies born to member families so a rose can be placed at no cost to the family. If any wish to have a rose placed at their own expense in celebration of other births when parents are not members, Brenda and/or the office can facilitate this as well.

Pastor and LuAnn Urlaub wish to thank the congregation for the generous Christmas gift presented Christmas Eve and other gifts, cards, and greetings. The support and encouragement of the members of this congregation at this time and all through the year are much appreciated.

Wish LuAnn Urlaub happy birthday and have some cake in her honor after worship on January 7th, her birthday!

There are a few items still left in the kitchen and a couple of coats that have lost their owners. Please take a minute to check and see if they may be yours.

Upcoming Events:

Food Pantry: Please don't forget to donate to the food pantry. They are in need of the following items; Toilet Paper, Laundry Soap, Hand Soap, Shampoo, Toothpaste, Pancake mix, Syrup, Tuna, Pasta.

Don't forget to sign up for **flowers for 2018**. The flower chart is located next to the restrooms. A reminder will be sent the week before you are scheduled. You can order from Nature's Corner and they'll deliver.

Thank You's Received:

Lutheran World Relief:

Thank you for your generous gift to Lutheran World Relief's Quilt & Kit Shipping Fund! Your donation ensures that LWR Quilts and Kits get into the hands of people who need them most.

Last spring, a shipment of Quilts, School Kits, Personal Care Kits, Baby Care Kits and Fabric Kits traveled to Peru. LWR staff and our partner, CARITAS, distributed the quilts and kits to 30,600 women, men and children all across the country (Peru). Mountain-dwelling families especially welcomed the warmth of quilts as winter temperatures began to set in, hitting average lows in the 30s in July and August.

...
On behalf of LWR, our partners and those we serve together, please accept my heartfelt thanks once more for your gift and all that it will do.

Warm Regards, Daniel V. Speckhard, President and CEO, LWR

LSI:

We are so grateful for your donation of \$179.00 to LSI. Thousands of Iowans are on their path to hope and healing, thanks to you.

You are making a difference for couples like Bhakti and Chhali, who felt overwhelmed when the time came to take their U.S. Citizenship Exam.

...
"We appreciate the help our LSI volunteers gave us on the Citizenship Exam," Bhakti says. "They are so committed to seeing us meet our goals."

Thank you for empowering your Iowa neighbors We couldn't do this important work without you!

With gratitude, Jason Lee, Vice President of Philanthropy and Church Relations

Lee Corbett:

Thank you for all the assistance, kindness and comfort you gave to me and my family at Dr. Corbett's open house, funeral and luncheon. It was a difficult time and you are all appreciated by the entire family for your efforts.

In July, I moved to Grundy Center to an apartment just across the driveway from son Cameron's house. Since I am unable to drive,

this was a good solution. It is nice to be near him, Brenda, and the two granddaughters. Bethlehem will always be in my heart. I miss seeing you, the classes, functions and hugs.

Sincerely, Lee Corbett

Hanson Family:

We want to thank everyone for all the kindness shown to us during Dell's illness and after his death. We are blessed to have a caring church family. We appreciate all the support we received during this difficult time.

Mona, Mike and Mary Jo, John and Shirale, Tom and Dana and Ken.

Benton County Food Pantry:

Thank you so much for your recent food drive, which brought more than 300 lbs. of food and non-food items to our food pantry!!

This was an amazing gift for us and we so appreciate your generosity!

Sherry C. Vinton Food Pantry

Congregation

Thank you to Team Life for their Advent get together. We all had a great time. Tasty treats and a Christian Trivia Game that was so fun. Thank you!

Prayers:

for health & healing: Helen Burmeister, Gary Simnacher, Larry Bearbower; for sympathy and condolences: Mike Timmermans' family on the death of his father, Henry Timmermans, December 21st; for blessings on the birth of a child: for thanks and safety: for easy travels and safety: for support and comfort: for guidance and joy: or leadership as they begin their service:

Servers in December:

January 7th & 14th:

Acolytes: Emma Dickinson, Evan Sampson
Assist. Minister: Phil Borleski
Altar Guild: Dana Hanson, Mona Hanson
Comm, Server: Lisa Vermedahl
Greeters: Melissa & Trent Sivola
Lector: JJ Jorgensen
Tape Ministry: Dave Vermedahl
Ushers: Stephanie Humiston, Gregg & Deb Sampson, Sheila Stickels

Counters (7th): Ryan/Kelli McClintock
(14th): John/Ellen Olson

January 21st & 28th:

Acolytes: Emma Dickinson, Evan Sampson
Assist. Minister: Phil Borleski
Altar Guild: Dana Hanson, Mona Hanson
Greeters: Tim & Cheryl Jorgensen
Comm. Server: Dana Hanson, Pam Woolison
Lector: Mike Timmermans
Tape Ministry: Elaine Bearbower
Ushers: Carol & Jeff Ealy, Tom & Dana Hanson

Counters (21st): John/Ellen Olson, Will Calderwood
(28th): Will Calderwood, Kimmit Renken
Council Lock-up: Ron Bland

Flowers in January:

7th: LuAnn Urlaub's Birthday
14th: Dave & Lisa Vermedahl
21st: 28th:

Tech terms:

WiFi: Wi-Fi is the name of a popular wireless networking technology that uses radio waves to provide wireless high-speed Internet and network connections. A common misconception is that the term Wi-Fi is short for "wireless fidelity," however this is not the case.

Bluetooth: a standard for the short-range wireless interconnection of mobile phones, computers, and other electronic devices.

ISP: Internet Service Provider. An organization that provides access to the Internet. Connection to the user is typically via DSL, cable or FiOS; however, ISPs can deliver service via satellite, dial-up, ISDN, private lines and wireless.

Modem: a combined device for modulation and demodulation, for example, between the digital data of a computer and the analog signal of a telephone line.

Router: A network device that forwards data packets from one network to another. Based on the address of the destination network in the incoming packet and an internal routing table, the router determines which port (line) to send out the packet (ports typically connect to Ethernet cables).

<i>Bethlehem Lutheran Church</i>					
<i>Consolidated Fund Activity Report for November 2017</i>					
Account Name	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	Transfers/ Journal Entries	Ending Balance
Building Fund	49,625.79	1,270.00	0.00	0.00	50,895.79
Cassens Prop Fund	1,666.17	725.00	51.36	0.00	2,339.81
Equip Replace Fd	3,821.16	0.00	0.00	100.00	3,921.16
General Fund B	0.00	3,865.80	0.00	(3,865.80)	0.00
General Fund A	2,809.89	11,218.00	15,969.19	2,977.80	1,036.50
LYO Fund	3,118.01	177.60	68.12	0.00	3,227.49
Memorial Fund	14,357.81	15.00	0.00	0.00	14,372.81
Property Fund	29,746.38	0.00	0.00	400.00	30,146.38
Sun. School Fund	4,086.53	9.61	18.00	0.00	4,078.14

From the Treasurer...

The General Fund balance decreased \$1,773 during the month of November, ending with a balance of \$1,037. December is typically a very positive giving month for Bethlehem; hopefully we can start the New Year off with the General Fund in a better position.

***Please remain aware and proactive of the General Fund as we head into 2018.

Thank you to all that continue to give towards the mission and ministry we have at Bethlehem.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions!

~Ryan McClintock, Council Treasurer



Happy New Year!