



Bethlehem Lutheran Church
 2245 Hayden Avenue, Altoona, WI 54720
 (715) 832-9953 www.blcaltoona.org

April 2024 - Volume XX, Issue 4

FROM THE PASTOR Surprise!

I'd like to offer a sympathetic "I'm sorry" to everyone in Wisconsin. Do you remember last December? When we did NOT have a white Christmas? When everything was brown and dry? I made the comment that because we had no snow for Christmas, we could expect 10 inches for Easter. Yeah, I put that out into the universe. Well, and I've also been praying for precipitation.

Continued on next page

Lending a Helping Hand

Each month, your free-will offerings during fellowship go directly to a variety of mission efforts – some here at Bethlehem, some in the community, and some around the world.

Recently our leadership team considered the words of James 2:

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?
 (James 2:15-16)



As we considered how to live out a crazy love for our neighbors, we realized that we might have brothers and sisters in need right here in our congregation.

We realized that we want to follow the example of the early church, where the believers gave to anyone who had need (see Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32-35).

That's why the mission recipient for this month will be a new program at Bethlehem called Daily Bread.

Continued on next page

Worship & Study at Bethlehem

WORSHIP 8:30 & 10:45 am Sundays

Traditional worship on the 1st Sunday of the month
 Communion is celebrated on the 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays of each month

CHRISTIAN ED 9:45 am Sundays

Sunday School (3 years-5th grade) and Youth Group (6th-12th grades) in downstairs classrooms

BIBLE STUDY 10:00 am Sundays in the Fellowship Hall

DEVOTIONS 9:00 am Tuesdays

Go to www.facebook.com/PastorTimStein

WEDNESDAY MEAL 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall

CONFIRMATION 6:45 pm Wednesdays

WORSHIP ONLINE

Go to <https://bit.ly/BLC-live> to watch the worship service on YouTube.

APRIL 2024

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7	PACK THE PANTRY SUNDAY (see pg. 7 for details)						
14	TRADITIONAL WORSHIP W/HC 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am NO Bible Study 10:00 am TRADITIONAL WORSHIP W/HC 10:45 am						
21	TRADITIONAL WORSHIP W/HC 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am Bible Study 10:00 am WORSHIP 10:45 am Christian Ed Mtg 12:00 pm						
28	WORSHIP 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am Bible Study 10:00 am WORSHIP W/HC 10:45 am						
7	WORSHIP 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am Bible Study 10:00 am WORSHIP 10:45 am Christian Ed Mtg 12:00 pm						
14	WORSHIP 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am Bible Study 10:00 am WORSHIP 10:45 am Christian Ed Mtg 12:00 pm						
21	WORSHIP W/HC 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am Bible Study 10:00 am WORSHIP W/HC 10:45 am						
28	DAYCARE SUNDAY WORSHIP 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am Bible Study 10:00 am WORSHIP W/LITTLE STAR 10:45 am Sundae Bar 12:00 pm						
5	Church office closed						
12	1						
19	2						
26	3						
7	4						
14	5						
21	6						
28	7						
5	8						
12	9						
19	10						
26	11						
7	12						
14	13						
21	14						
28	15						
5	16						
12	17						
19	18						
26	19						
7	20						
14	21						
21	22						
28	23						
5	24						
12	25						
19	26						
26	27						
7	28						
14	29						
21	30						
28	MAY 1						
5	MAY 2						
12	MAY 3						
19	MAY 4						
26							
7							
14							
21							
28							

Let Easter Amaze You

From the Pastor, continued from front page

Knowing how dry our winter has been, and knowing how much our land and crops need the moisture, I've been asking God to do whatever is necessary to replenish the earth.

So I'm not sure if this wintry weather we've had is actually my fault. But considering the long-range forecast I made, maybe I could get a side job in meteorology.

This winter, this spring, even this Holy Week, have not been what we expected. But maybe that's no surprise, seeing as Jesus confounded expectations all the time.

No one expected a prophet from Nazareth (John 1:46). No one expected a rabbi who taught with authority (Mark 1:22).

No one expected that God's Messiah would be at odds

Jesus confounded expectations all the time.

with the religious leaders (Luke 11:45-46). The Pharisees didn't expect that Jesus would choose not to condemn sinners (Matthew 9:11, John 8:11).

The disciples didn't expect Jesus to cast out demons, walk on water, or feed thousands with one person's lunch.

They didn't expect Him to wash their feet. They didn't expect Him to surrender without a fight.

They didn't expect Him to be crucified. Although Jesus told them numerous times, His death still came as a surprise.

And, of course, no one – *no one* – expected Jesus to rise from the grave. The notion of a resurrection seemed like “nonsense” (Luke 24:11). When Jesus appeared to His followers, they were amazed, frightened, and bewildered.

Does the Easter story still surprise you? Does the love of Jesus still catch you off-guard? Are you amazed by His grace for so many undeserving people?

Even though Easter is past, don't let the wonder of this moment fade away. Read the story again. Sing the songs again. Ask your family what the first disciples must have felt. Reflect on how Jesus catches us off-guard even today.

— In Christ, Pastor Tim

Contact Us

Pastor: Rev. Tim Stein
715-832-9953, ext. 3 (office)
715-829-1247 (cell in emergency)
PastorTim@blcaltoona.org

Little Star Daycare: Krystina Schumacher, director
715-832-1513
krystina.littlestar@gmail.com
www.AltoonaLittleStar.com

Church office: Charleen Graff, secretary
715-832-9953, ext. 2
blcsecretary@gmail.com

Congregation Chairman: Mark Jordan

Confidential Prayer Chain: Sharon Stelter

Donations of Gift Cards, Cash Also Encouraged

Daily Bread, continued from front page

We'll use the fellowship gifts collected in April to start a fund designed to help anyone in this congregation who might be struggling financially, for whatever reason.

If someone has a need, they can ask for help and receive cash or gift cards to help pay for groceries, gas, rent, or other basic necessities for a month.

The great thing is we don't have to rely just on fellowship offerings.

If you have the resources, and God is leading you to do this, maybe you'd like to buy a gift card to Festival Foods or Kwik Trip and add it to the fund. Maybe you'd like to buy a scrip card for families in need.

Maybe, down the road, we'll find that in addition to taking care of families at Bethlehem, we can include daycare families. Maybe we could start providing pre-paid meals at Altoona Family or A&W. Let's see where Jesus takes us.

When we pray in the Lord's Prayer, “Give us today our daily bread,” we recognize that our Lord can work *through us* to help provide for the needs of others.

If you're interested in helping to get this program off the ground, please talk to Pastor Tim.

Offering Reports

In an effort to have a more consistent report of offerings and other gifts, Bethlehem will start to publish giving totals on a monthly basis rather than weekly.

Last year we noticed that different financial reports ended up with different giving totals. For example, the weekly bulletin would use the counters' reports to list regular offerings and special gifts for designated funds like debt reduction and mission. Then, the monthly newsletter would include a number of separate listings for amounts received from fellowship, Thrivent Choice, and scrip sales.

Meanwhile, the monthly Financial Secretary's report presented to the church council and shared at the annual voters' meeting would include all those totals, along with memorial gifts, youth fund-raisers, and so on.

After a discussion with a financial team consisting of Financial Secretary Heidi Ender, Treasurer Kegan Fassler, Secretary Charleen Graff, Pastor Tim, and our bookkeeper Haley, it was decided to switch to a monthly report in the bulletin starting in April.

We want to continue to be 100% transparent with your generous donations, and we believe this method of reporting will more accurately reflect every dollar given to Bethlehem.

Thank you for your continued support of this congregation as we strive to share the love of Jesus with our community!



If you are interested in a secure, convenient way to regularly send your offerings to Bethlehem, consider **giving online**. Go to www.blcaltoona.org and click on “Give” to make a one-time donation or to set up a recurring gift.



PACK THE PANTRY

Suggested items for food pantry supplies for March include: **fruit cups, granola bars, cereals, pastas** (mac & cheese, spaghetti, ramen) and **paper/personal products**.

Please bring these items to Bethlehem this **Sunday, April 7**, and put them in the grocery cart in the narthex.

If your family has a need, please help yourself to anything on the cart near the daycare stairs and library.

The Altoona Food Pantry

will be open **Thursday, April 18**, from **4:30-6 pm** at 701 7th St. West, Altoona.

Sponsored by The Altoona Compassion Coalition. Open to the public; only requirement is that you live in the Altoona School District. Call 715-255-0783.



Quarterly Memorials or Honorariums

In January, February & March gifts were received in memory of **Jim & Rosemary Guenther** by Dale & Elaine Emberson; in memory of **Cletus Licht** by Marlene Bredesen, Marcella Jordan, Sharon Stelter, Louise Nyre, Cletus Shively, Arlene Christ, Randy & Anna Boyea, Dale & Elaine Emberson, Greg & Sherry Schantz, Heather Krause, and other friends & family; in memory of **Ron Olson** by Arlene Christ & Louise Nyre; and in memory of **James Hohman** by Duane & Carol Cance.

Scrip Profits for the first quarter of 2024 totaled \$76.35. These funds support youth attending the National Youth Gathering in July 2025.



April Ministry Meetings

- **Daycare Board** - Thursday, April 11th at 4:00 pm
- **Christian Ed** - Sunday, April 14th at 12:00 pm
- **Church Council** - Monday, April 15th at 6:30 pm

Annual Walk for Hunger Coming Up on May 11

Mark your calendar for our annual Walk for Hunger Nyre You, to be held on **Saturday, May 11!**

This fund-raiser raises enough dollars to fill the school food pantry open to grades 6-12, as well as providing weekend food bags for students in the Altoona school district, from 4K through high school.

Each week these bags are packed by students in student council, National Honor Society and special-needs classrooms. The food is then delivered to the schools for distribution on Fridays, and children can take home food for the weekend.

Our goal this year is to raise \$10,000 through registration fees, a silent auction, bake sale, food

sales, and sponsorships from businesses.

We are now collecting items for the **silent auction**, which can be dropped off in the Bethlehem church office. Some ideas: gift cards to local businesses, themed baskets (baby, Christmas, fall, reading, car wash/detailing, crafts for kids, summer potted flowers or hanging basket, wine baskets, etc.). Or you could consider donating a service (painting a room, providing a dinner for 4, a few hours of yard work, a loaf a bread a month for 6 months, etc.).

Most of all, we would love to see you on May 11 to join in the celebration and participate in a half-mile or 2-mile walk. If you have any questions, contact Jennie Childs at jennie.childs@thrivent.com.

April Birthdays

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Benjamin Gilbertson | 25 Kenzie Benson |
| 2 Carole Licht | Debbie Gilles |
| 4 Nathan Hansen | Luke Hansen |
| 5 Kolton Burrows | 26 Patty Glover (102) |
| Dale Emberson | Heather Keehn |
| 6 Margaret Johnson | 28 Linda Wollmer |
| 8 Heidi Ender | 29 Whitley Klatt |
| 10 Micheala Stelter | Faith Schultz |
| Dan Treankler | Dan Prust |



April Wedding Anniversaries

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 11 Mark Jordan | 16 John & Doreen Schwab |
| Asher Risler | 18 Steve & Krystina Schumacher |
| 12 Julie Smith | 30 Roy & Cheri Borseth |
| 13 Karen Keehn | <i>If we have missed your birthday or anniversary please call or email the church office.</i> |
| 14 John Nielsen | |
| 16 Taina Hulett | |
| 18 Kendra Drake | |
| Sherry Schantz | |
| 21 Shelly Theiste | |
| 22 Kathy Hulett | |
| 23 Lois Schnorr | |
| Cletus Shively | |



Personal phone numbers & email addresses have been removed from the bulletins and newsletters that are shared online to protect our members from scams and fraud. Contact the church or daycare for more details.



REMEMBER BETHLEHEM'S HOMEBOUND & SHUT-IN MEMBERS

- Barbara Duszynski**
Oak Gardens Place Assisted Living #216
342 Twin Oaks Dr., Altoona WI 54720
- Eunice "Patty" Glover**
Our House Memory Care #2
733 W. Hamilton Ave., Eau Claire WI 54701
- Margaret Johnson**
American Lutheran Communities #15
915 Elm St. E., Menomonie WI 54751
- Ellen Killen**
2111 Garfield Ave., Altoona WI 54720
- Lois (Mrs. Lowell) Olson**
East Ridge Estates #204
3504 Hoover Ave., Altoona WI 54720
- Phyllis Pecor**
Heritage Court Memory Care #16
3515 E. Hamilton Ave., Eau Claire WI 54701
- Rosalie Schreiber**
408 Otter Creek Trail, Altoona WI 54720
- Steve & Karla Streich**
1015 Blazing Star Blvd. #1, Altoona WI 54720



Little Star Daycare

We are so excited to be doing a spring fund-raiser this month! Everyone loved the butter braids that were available in the fall, so we are going to use the same company and have cake rolls for purchase.

Krystina and Felicia will serve samples in between the services on **Sunday, April 28**. Be sure to come try a sample and order if you're interested.

Also, on that same Sunday during the 10:45 service, the daycare students will be singing for everyone! They have been practicing hard!

— Felicia Verdegan, Assistant Director,
www.facebook.com/AltoonaLittleStar



CHRISTIAN ED Regular Sunday school classes for 3-year-olds through 5th grade are from 9:45 to 10:30 a.m.

The last day of Sunday School will be **April 28**, which is also Daycare Sunday. The Christian Ed team will host an ice cream sundae bar after the late service for all families and the congregation.

If you have any questions, contact Zach and Gina Becker at bethlehemchristed@gmail.com.



The youth of Bethlehem had a very busy March. It started with a retreat to Camp Luther, a well-attended bowling party, leading Wednesday worship, and serving a midweek meal to the congregation.



Later this month we are looking forward to an evening of pizza and playing with puppies at Pastor and Kim's house on **April 14**.

The plan is to have at least one youth event per month. Future plans include a bonfire, Eau Claire Express Game, candy bar bingo, and many other exciting activities. We also will be putting together service projects to benefit Bethlehem and our community.

If you are interested in organizing or supporting an event, contact Jason or Kristine Lenberg.

Thank you for continued support of our youth!!

PRAYER CORNER

This month, please remember these individuals and groups in your prayers:

Our shut-in and homebound members: Barb Duszynski, Patty Glover, Margaret Johnson, Ellen Killen, Lois (Mrs. Lowell) Olson, Phyllis Pecor, Rosalie Schreiber, Steve & Karla Streich.

Those with ongoing health concerns: Ken Anderson, Barb DesForge, Kendra Drake, Barb Hermann, Dave Johnston, Michael Mastrobuoni, Bev Noggle, Becca Roth, Janet Viellieux.

Friends of Bethlehem: Jenie Davis (Shelly Rossano's niece), Gene LaPine (Linda LaPine's father), Dan Posda (Cheri Borseth's brother), John Wicklein (Abby Rowe's uncle), and Katie (Lois Olson's granddaughter).

Ministries: Scenic Hills Youth Ranch, Feed a Child Nyre You, The Community Table, Bethlehem food pantry, Little Star Daycare, the Christian ed and youth ministries, Camp Luther, our seminaries, and all the pastors, leaders, and staff in the North Wisconsin District and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.



PRAYER REQUESTS:

The Prayer Group meets at the church on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am. Feel free to send requests to Sharon Stelter at **715-832-3633**, Pastor Tim at PastorTim@blcaltoona.org, or the church office at **715-832-9953**.

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

James 5:16



Each month we will profile one of the council members at Bethlehem.

Name: Drew Carlson

Ministry role: Leader of Daycare ministry team

Family: Wife Heather, daughters Nora (8) and Kelsey (5), Everest the Dog,



Sophie the Cat, and Spike the Crested Gecko.

Occupation: General school assistant, Roosevelt Elementary.

How long have you been at Bethlehem? 5 years

Favorite Bible verse? Isaiah 41:10, "So do not fear, for

I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

What do you like to do in your free time? Spending time with family, golfing, being outdoors and cooking.

What have you been reading or watching lately? Whatever books Nora and Kelsey want to read.

What's the best part of being at Bethlehem? It makes you feel at home, and members feel like an extension of your family.

Fellowship Reimbursement

We want to make it easier for people to serve snacks during Sunday morning fellowship, and we don't want the cost of groceries to discourage anyone. So if you are interested in helping out with fellowship, you can request a reimbursement to help offset the cost of your supplies.

If you make your own treats, you can be reimbursed up to \$15, and if you buy treats, you can receive up to \$35. Simply fill out one of the forms in the kitchen.

Please sign up on the schedule by the kitchen or contact LeAnne Hohman.

Thank you for blessing the congregation!

Next Ladies Gathering on April 12

All ladies are invited to join a monthly social gathering to deepen the friendships we have at church and cultivate new ones.

The next BOBS (Babes of Bethlehem Social) Gathering will start at **10:00 a.m. on Friday, April 12**, at **McDonalds**, 1513 S. Hastings Way. *Note the change of location.*

Please sign up by the coffee station in the Fellowship Hall so we know how many to expect. For more details, contact Pat Steinberg.



"Main Street Living," a liturgical Lutheran TV program and worship service, airs weekly in the Chippewa Valley at 10 a.m. Sundays on FOX 48.

Broadcasts can also be viewed online at www.mainstreetliving.com/eaclaure.

The show features episodes of "This Is the Life," followed with worship led by pastors from the North Wisconsin District.

Pastor Tim Stein is scheduled to appear on Sunday, April 21.

The program is financially supported by congregations in each viewing area.

April 2024 Worship Assistants

Date / Time	Elder	Usher	Greeter	Acolyte	Reader	Tech Booth
Sun. 7 w/HC 8:30 am	Joe Rosengarten	(TBD)	Karen Simonson	Brianna Leis	(TBD)	Don Demaree
10:45 am	Joe Rosengarten	(TBD)	Gib & Donna Ganther	Evan Risler	Elizabeth Demaree	Don Demaree
Sun. 14 8:30 am		Gary Hansen	Jean Simpson	Tevin Simpson	Linda Anderson	Luke Hansen
10:45 am		Gary Hansen	June Zillmer	Jazzy Moore	(TBD)	Luke Hansen
Sun. 21 w/HC 8:30 am	Randy Schamberger	(TBD)	Cheri Meyer	Matthew Bucki	(TBD)	Noah Jordan
10:45 am	Randy Schamberger	(TBD)	Marlene Bredesen	Victoria Lenberg	(TBD)	Noah Jordan
Sun. 28 8:30 am		(TBD)	Mark & Lori Olson	Grant Grunewald	Lori Olson	Sully Vargo
10:45 am		(TBD)	Tom & Carol Sippel	Evan Risler	(TBD)	Sully Vargo

Altar Guild Servers: Mary Lou Stelter & Micheala Stelter
Financial Counters: Jennie Childs & Karen Keehn

Sign up to Assist with Worship — The schedule is on a clipboard on the secretary's desk in the church office; or send an email to blcsecretary@gmail.com with a day and time that you would like to serve.

Bethlehem's Board of Elders

Jeff Gilles You can contact an Elder, Officer or Ministry Team Leader by email through the church website or by calling the church office at 715-832-9953.

Gary Hansen

Joe Rosengarten

Randy Schamberger

Mike Smith



Feed a Child Nyre You and Altoona Little Star pages.

"Like" & "Follow" Bethlehem Lutheran Church on Facebook (search for **blcaltoona**). You can also "like" the

2024 OFFICERS and MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS

President: Mark Jordan
Vice President: Brad Bucki
Treasurer: Kegan Fassler
Recording Secretary: Diane Bierbrauer
Financial Secretary: Heidi Ender
Buildings & Property: Jeff Leis
Christian Ed (SS & Confirmation): Gina Becker, Zach Becker
Daycare: Drew Carlson

Discipleship: Kim Stein
Fellowship: LeAnne Hohman
Human Care & Outreach: Anna Fassler
Missions: Kristina Risler
Stewardship: Jim Casetta, Sandy Casetta
Worship: Elizabeth Demaree
Youth (Youth Group & VBS): Kristine Lenberg, Jason Lenberg

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>APRIL 2024</h1>						
	1 Church office closed	2 Prayer Group 10:00 am Daycare Staff Mtg 5:30-7:30 pm in fellowship hall	3 Meal 5:30 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm	4 Bethlehem Reunion Worship & Social 11:30 am	5	6
7 PACK THE PANTRY SUNDAY (see pg. 7 for details) TRADITIONAL WORSHIP w/HC 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am NO Bible Study 10:00 am TRADITIONAL WORSHIP w/HC 10:45 am	8	9 Devotions on FB 9 am Prayer Group 10:00 am	10 Meal 5:30 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm	11 Daycare Board Mtg 4:00 pm	12 BOBS 10:00 am at McDonalds on Hastings Way (see pg. 4 for details)	13
14 WORSHIP 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am Bible Study 10:00 am WORSHIP 10:45 am Christian Ed Mtg 12:00 pm	15 Council Mtg 6:30 pm	16 Devotions on FB 9 am Prayer Group 10:00 am	17 Meal 5:30 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm	18 ACC Food Pantry 4:30 - 6:30 pm at 701 7th St. West	19	20 Newsletter Deadline
21 WORSHIP w/HC 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am Bible Study 10:00 am WORSHIP w/HC 10:45 am	22	23 Devotions on FB 9 am Prayer Group 10:00 am	24 Meal 5:30 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm	25	26	27 Confirmation photos & rehearsal
28 DAYCARE SUNDAY WORSHIP 8:30 am Sun. School & Youth Group 9:45 am Bible Study 10:00 am WORSHIP w/LITTLE STAR 10:45 am Sundae Bar 12:00 pm	29	30 Devotions on FB 9 am Prayer Group 10:00 am	MAY 1 Meal 5:30 pm All-Star Jeopardy! 6:00 pm	MAY 2	MAY 3	MAY 4