

# Connecting with God, One Another & Our Mission in the World



**Sunday, May 10th**  
worship services  
8:30 a.m. & 10:10 a.m.

## YOU ARE INVITED to the Ordination & Installation of *Amber Dawn Wichmann*

Ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament  
and Installed as Staff Pastor of Bethlehem

Bishop Constanze Hagmaier Preaching  
Reception to Follow

**6:15 PM on Thursday, May 21st** in the **Sanctuary**

Livestream at <https://www.bethlehemaberdeen.org/worship/worship-online>

## REVIEW YOUR CONTRIBUTION PLANS

As the year continues, we invite you to take a moment to review your plans for 2026 giving alongside your personal giving records, to ensure your contributions align with your intended amount. This is simply an opportunity to check in and make any adjustments, if needed.

If you'd like help reviewing or updating your online giving, please contact Bethlehem's Business Office at 605-225-9740. We're happy to assist in whatever way is most helpful.

Thank you for your continued support and care for our shared ministry.

Jeannie Haaland  
Director of Administration



# FROM THE PASTOR

Blessed People of Bethlehem,

Springtime is time for planting: farmers planting the fields, gardeners planting their gardens, and dog-owners like me planting grass in the never-ending challenge to have both a lawn and dogs. Thinking about planting leads me to ponder how planting is not merely a physical activity, but also a spiritual reality.

Planting is vital for Bethlehem. A few examples of our “planting:”

- Our children’s VBS and youth ministry mission trips are about planting seeds of faith and God’s Word in young people.
- Our *Peace Be With You* series is about planting the gift of peace in the lives of all who participate. (We’ve been praying: “Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon...”).
- Our funeral ministries are about planting hope in the midst of grief and “planting” our beloved departed in the rich soil of God’s grace and promise of eternal life.

This May, we also rejoice with another “planting” as a wonderful minister is emerging from seminary. Seminary is a “seedbed” where people are planted and cultivated so that they emerge as fruitful ministers. At our Special Congregation Meeting on April 19th the congregation overwhelmingly voted to call Amber Wickmann to be a Staff Pastor. Amber will graduate from Wartburg Seminary on May 17th. Then on Thursday evening, May 21st, South Dakota Synod Bishop Constanze Hagmaier will be at Bethlehem to celebrate the milestones of ordination and installation. Ordination is the rite of being formally marked as a pastor. Installation is the rite marking the start of partnership with a specific faith community. Please plan to share in this celebration! (*Details in this Journal*)

As a congregation, we also “plant seeds” as we invest in the many ministries of Bethlehem. Your financial support of Bethlehem is vital in the mission we share: touching lives by welcoming, worshiping, teaching, and serving. Thank you for your part in the life-changing ministry of Bethlehem!

God bless your planting, cultivating, and bearing fruit!

## Jeff Whillock

Lead Pastor

**P. S.** A beloved Easter hymn, *Now the Green Blade Rises*, connects the resurrection with planting and new life. Here’s the first stanza:

*Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,  
wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
love lives again, that with the dead has been;  
love is come again like wheat arising green.*

You can also listen to a fun Irish rendition by Steve Winwood [here](#).

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## A few spots remain for the 2026-2027 School Year

We offer **Pre-K only** Mondays – Thursday  
from 8 – 11 a.m. or 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.  
or

**Pre-K with Out of School Time (Daycare)** Monday – Fridays  
from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Register online today at:  
[www.bethlehemaberdeen.org/teach/pre-k](http://www.bethlehemaberdeen.org/teach/pre-k) or contact  
Cyndi Holtz at [choltz@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:choltz@bethlehemaberdeen.org) for more  
information or to setup a tour!

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## Help support the Bethlehem Pre-K!

Bring your Kessler's and Ken's receipts to  
church and place them in the containers  
near the Pre-K Classroom or on top of the  
coat rack near the Hub. Thank you for your  
support!

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## First Communion Class

First Communion class will be held on **Wednesday, June 10  
from 5:15 – 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel**. Students will receive their  
First Communion during worship on Sunday, June 21 at 8:30  
or 10:10 a.m. or Wednesday, June 24 at 6:15 p.m.

At Bethlehem, families are welcome to decide when their  
children will receive First Communion. Most children take the  
class in mid to upper elementary, though any age is  
welcome. An adult is required to be at the class with the  
student.

**Registration with the church office by June 4 is required.**  
Contact Cyndi Holtz, Director of Children's Ministries, at  
225-9740 or [choltz@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:choltz@bethlehemaberdeen.org) with any  
questions.

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## Summer Camp Registration is Now Open!



There is nothing better than having your child(ren) experience a  
Lutherans Outdoors Summer camp!

And even better is the fact that Bethlehem offers scholarships to kids  
attending camp! **To sign up for camp visit: [losd.org](http://losd.org)**

**We offer \$150 scholarship for full week camps and \$75 for the half week camps** – all you  
need to do is sign your child up and email us the receipt! **Questions, talk to Cyndi Holtz or  
Stan Jung.**

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## Sunday and Wednesday School Registration

Registration is now open for the 2026-2027  
school year. Getting your child signed up  
early gives you one less thing to do come  
August and helps us plan accordingly. Get  
your child's name on the list for whichever  
day works best for your family.

Registration is available online at:  
[bit.ly/2026-27blcsunwedschool](http://bit.ly/2026-27blcsunwedschool) or by using  
the QR code.



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## VBS Food Drive for the Community Alliance Group in McLaughlin

We invite our **VBS students and the congregation**  
to participate in a non-perishable food drive for  
the Community Alliance Group in McLaughlin, SD.  
You are encouraged to bring the following items in  
any time before or during the week of VBS. Canned  
Tuna, Chicken, Salmon or Sardines in water, Rice,  
Ramen, Pasta, Pasta Sauce, Canned Soups, Stews,  
Chili and Ravioli (easy-open tops if possible),  
Canned Vegetables, Tomatoes and Fruit, Instant  
Oatmeal, Cream of Wheat, Cereals, Granola Bars,  
Peanut Butter, Spices, Sugar, and Can Openers.  
Thank you so much for your support!

## Middle School Mission Trip Duluth, MN – June 21–26, 2026 AVAILABLE SPOTS, JUST FOR YOU!

We have a few spots available yet!

You don't have to be a member of BLC to attend; so ask a friend and spend a week in Duluth doing service projects, having fun and meeting new friends! Open to all current 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grade students. There is a link on the BLC website (BLC website, TEACH tab, YOUTH 6TH-10TH dropdown, scroll down to ROUTE 67 and select the 2026 MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION TRIP-DULUTH button) to register. Please connect with Stan for more information.

Stan's contact info:

Phone (605) 225-9740 ext. 113

Email [sjung@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:sjung@bethlehemaberdeen.org)

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## Easter Breakfast

Thank you to everyone that came and had breakfast served by our youth that will be attending mission trips this summer. We appreciate you!

Our young people will be going out to serve others, growing their faith and being the hands and feet of Jesus in Duluth, MN and Niagara Falls, NY.

*Thank you so much!*

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## Puffins Pastry Fundraiser

**Deliver date is Tuesday, April 28th.**

Thank you to everyone that supported our youth through this fundraiser!



## Board Game Night

Itching to get out and do something fun? Board Game Night is just the thing for you! All are welcome to come on **May 28th starting at 5:30pm and ending at 8:00pm** in the Fellowship Hall. New players are welcome to attend! Pizza will be provided. Water will also be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own beverage. If you arrive late or leave early, that's okay! If you would like more information about board game night, talk to Pastor Matt at [mspoden@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:mspoden@bethlehemaberdeen.org)

## Senior Milestone

All graduating seniors will receive a special milestone in May. **The milestone will be celebrated on Sunday, May 10th at the 10:10 AM service and on Wednesday, May 13th at the 6:15PM service.** All seniors and parents are encouraged to participate. This is a very special milestone, as our youth enter the next phase of life. Please join us for one of those services.

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## High School Youth Group

Youth Group is open for all 9th -12th graders, and we do a variety of activities including Bible studies, service projects, community trips, and fun free nights. If you are a high schooler looking for a community of peers who value faith, this would be a great group for you! We usually meet on **Wednesdays** from 7:30pm-9:30pm.

**On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, we will meet from 7:00pm - 9:30pm.** If you would like more information about youth group, talk to Pastor Matt at [mspoden@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:mspoden@bethlehemaberdeen.org) or Stan and [sjung@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:sjung@bethlehemaberdeen.org)

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## Invitation for 8th and 9th Graders

As the school year wraps up, the High School Youth Group would like to extend a special invitation for current 8th and 9th grade students to come join us on **June 3rd starting at 7pm.**

The High School students are delighted to welcome their younger peers to join them and experience the Youth Group rhythm. We'll gather for fellowship, followed by a Bible study, and a time for fun and games. You are invited to bring a friend, and if you have to come late or leave early, that's okay!

Please reach out to Pastor Matt at [mspoden@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:mspoden@bethlehemaberdeen.org) or Stan at [sjung@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:sjung@bethlehemaberdeen.org) if you'd like additional information.

## 15-51 Young Men's Group

Come join Pastor Matt and other young men between the ages of 15-51 for a night of faith, fellowship, and good conversation! 15-51 meets the first Tuesday of every month from 6-8pm at Bethlehem in the Youth Center. This group is for all men who are seeking a supportive faith based community to think deeper about topics and issues that men wrestle with. If you have any questions about 15-51, please reach out to Pastor Matt at [mspoden@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:mspoden@bethlehemaberdeen.org)

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## AGING Gracefully

Tuesday, May 12, 2026  
2-3 p.m. - East Fellowship Hall

Presenter: Sarah Donaldson, Registered Nurse at the Avera ICU unit

Sarah will speak on general ER/hospital admittance procedures and much more. Sarah will help us understand the hospital setting as well as feeling more comfortable when we or a loved one is hospitalized.

Hope to see you at our last Aging Gracefully presentation for the season.

Welcome  
May

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## Greetings from Pastoral Care Ministry

*"O God of PEACE, you brought from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep. By the blood of your eternal covenant, make us complete in everything good that we may do your will, and work among us all that is well-pleasing in your sight, through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen"*

In this troubled world, may we find peace and comfort in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Take time with scripture, song, nature and what ever else brings calmness in your life.

Please join us for our last **Aging Gracefully** of the season on **May 12th at 2pm** in the **East Fellowship Hall**. Sarah Donaldson, a RN from the Avera Hospital ICU will speak about general hospital procedures as well as other important information.

Also, on **May 14th at 12noon**, Gayla Martens from the American Foundation for the Prevention of Suicide will be presenting on the topic of "post-vention". This information will help you to better understand how to extend care for those who have lost family/friends to death by suicide. Please bring your lunch and join us in the West Fellowship Hall.

Peace be with you.

Ann Rasmussen  
Janis Heier  
Pastoral Care Ministers

## **Thursdays by the Fire** **Enriching Mind, Body & Spirit**

Are you longing for meaningful conversation and connection with other women?

Join us for **Thursdays by the Fire**, a five-week women's gathering designed to bring gentle rhythm, reflection, and joy to your week.

We will meet **Thursdays from 10–11 a.m. in the Fireside Room** on:

**May 14   May 21   May 28   June 11   June 18**

Each gathering will include fellowship, a short devotion, thoughtful conversation around a meaningful topic, and a brief prayerful meditation to close our time together.

Come as you are—no preparation needed. Simply bring an open heart. You'll find a warm chair by the fire, kind conversation, and a peaceful moment in God's presence.

**Facilitators:** Marion Hartung and Janis Heier

**Register:** [mhartung4@abe.midco.net](mailto:mhartung4@abe.midco.net) or [jheier@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:jheier@bethlehemaberdeen.org)

**Space is limited to 12 participants.**

## **Spark Joy**

**Friday, May 29th, 2026 - 12:10–12:50 p.m.**  
**East Fellowship Hall - Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

Gigi Browning will be our speaker featuring *Dorothy's Garden*. Gigi is a gardener/small farmer specializing in fresh cut flowers for bouquets and perennial plants to local area communities.

### **Looking Ahead: Save The Dates**

**Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>** - Ashley Geist-Cusick and Rebecca Christiansen of Inner Peace Counseling

**Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>** - William Deng, a South Sudanese American humanitarian, author and founder of the Brother Deng Foundation.

## **TUESDAY LADIES**

Tuesday Ladies are continuing their look at *Women of the Bible* until May 12, before taking a break. Studies will start again early in September. Stay tuned for more information.

*Have a great summer!*

Contact Crystal Swenson at [crystal0955@gmail.com](mailto:crystal0955@gmail.com) if you have any questions.



## *Be Still & Know*

Thursdays in the Chapel  
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM & 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
Enter through East Doors

*Join us May 27 for Music  
from 11:30 - 12:30*

Music will be played at the quarter hours  
for 10 minutes & then 5 minutes  
of quiet reflection

Music will be played by:  
Mallory Scott

## Memorials and Honorariums

### Endowment Fund Memorials

**Given in memory of MaryAnn Wehde by:** Vicki & Doug Bierschbach

### Livestream/Online Ministry Memorials

**Given in memory of Louise Clark by:** Bill & Linda Roth

### Youth Fundraiser Memorials

**Given in memory of Ida Adam by:** Stan & Kari Jung

**Given in memory of Kathy Henjum by:** Stan & Kari Jung

### Youth Ministry Memorials

**Given in memory of David Tople by:** Gary & Dlon Kvernevig

**Given in memory of Betsy Vehe by:** Gary & Dlon Kvernevig

### Wednesday Night Supper Memorials

**Given in memory of Kathy Henjum by:** Jerry & Susan Brick, Mike & Kelly Grieben; Gordon & Beth Kopecky

**Given in memory of Loretta Koch by:** Mike & Kelly Grieben

**Given in memory of Richard Bakeberg by:** Sandra Maier

### Christian Education Memorials

**Given in memory of Loretta Koch by:** Robert & Wilma Luce

### Call Committee Honorariums

**Given in honor of The Call Committee by:** Stan & Kari Jung

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## WOMEN'S CHOIR

Women's Choir will sing on  
Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup> for Mother's Day.

Please contact Mallory if you are  
interested. One more brief rehearsal  
will be held on May 3rd at 11:00AM  
in the Choir Room.

# Greetings to you from Amber!

I am excited to get to know you! As we step into this new season of me joining your pastoral team, I wanted to write about one of our most powerful promises of our faith: hope. This is a holy kind of hope, one that is not fleeting or wishful thinking, but a deep and steady confidence in God's presence and His faithfulness in every circumstance. The Bible reminds us, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and **peace** as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope" (Romans 15:13). Even in uncertain times, hope gives us strength to persevere, courage to serve, and faith to believe that God is always at work. This is hope that has buoyed me through life and has led me to you.

For a quick introduction, I grew up in Rosholt, SD and received my undergraduate degree from Concordia College in Moorhead, MN. I have two children: Cade and Danika. Cade is a sophomore at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT. Danika is in seventh grade. To round our family, we have one dog – Sunday – our Golden Retriever. I'm an active runner and have loved kayaking, hiking, backpacking and rock climbing in the Black Hills. I love to spend time outside; I tell my kids to "go chase some sunshine!"

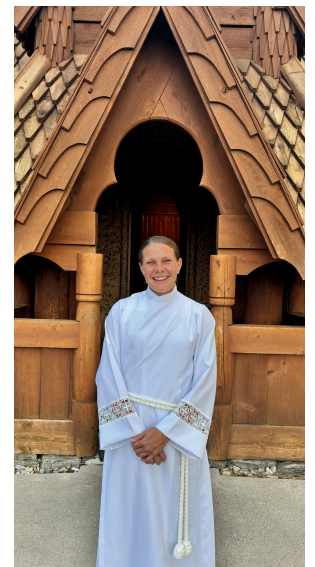
In the Fall of 2022, I started my seminary journey at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA. Part of their Collaborative Learning pathway is that I got to be a student and serve as a vicar to my church – Lord of Life Lutheran in Rapid City, SD. I will graduate with my Master of Divinity Degree in Word and Sacrament on May 17th .

I am excited to hear about your stories of hope, faith, and what brings you joy in being part of Bethlehem Lutheran's church family. I look forward to building relationships with you that are rooted in love, strengthened by faith, and sustained by hope.

May you be renewed by God's promises and filled with His peace in the days ahead!

Soli deo Gloria!

*Amber*



## Bethlehem Times

- 1884** Bethlehem organized as a congregation to serve the people of Aberdeen and beyond.
- 1925** Construction of brick multi-level church building on the corner of 4th & Jay.
- 1955** Addition of education wing to serve hundreds of Sunday School families and more.
- 1998** Congregation moves to “New Bethlehem” facility to welcome, worship, teach & serve.
- 2016** Creating Room at the Table expansion including Re-Creation Center, East Fellowship Hall, Chapel, Youth Center, Fireside Room and classrooms for Pre-K.

## Now Is The Time

- 2026** Celebrating a decade in the expanded facility and Special Appeal to care for the spaces God has entrusted to us so that ministries can continue to thrive – today and into the future.

*Please pray for this important part of our journey together in faith and watch for more information about how you can make a difference.*





## Graduation & Mother's Day cards

Cards made by our Card Making Group are for sale at the Welcome Desk for 50 cents.



Want to join the Stream Team?!

We're looking for individuals to help run our livestream (Camera, ProPresenter, Sound & Online Greeter) on Sunday mornings (8:30 and 10:10 am).

It's simpler than it sounds...And it's fun! Training will be provided.

Please email Teri at [tjohnson@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:tjohnson@bethlehemaberdeen.org) if interested!

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## Sponsorship Opportunities

Bethlehem offers a variety of weekly and monthly sponsorship opportunities which include: Radio Broadcasts, Bulletins, Website, Live Streaming and Wednesday Night Suppers.

The cost of a radio broadcast is \$125. The cost of a Wednesday bulletin is \$55 and the weekend bulletins are \$75 (or sponsor a whole week of bulletins for \$125). Website sponsorships are also available at \$100 per month. Live Stream sponsorships are \$150. The cost of a Wednesday Night Supper Sponsorship is \$1,000 each week or \$500 to co-sponsor a weekly meal.

Please contact the church office at 225-9740 for more information on any of these opportunities.

## MARCH 2026 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### GENERAL FUND

#### Analysis of Budgeted Revenues & Expenses

	MTD	YTD
Undesignated Offerings	\$ 163,692.58	\$ 367,475.94
Other Designated Revenues	\$ 26,899.60	\$ 124,621.59
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 190,592.18</b>	<b>\$ 492,097.53</b>
Less Budget Expenditures	\$ (169,677.73)	\$ (472,220.45)
<b>Net Operating Total from Budget Operations</b>	<b>\$ 20,914.45</b>	<b>\$ 19,877.08</b>

#### Summary of Assets & Liabilities

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,151,978.23
<i>Parking Lot payoff / to be reimbursed to GF</i>	\$ (270,399.30)
Accounts Payable due within 30 days	\$ (36,818.39)
Pre-paid tuition & fees	\$ -
Due to Restricted Fund Accounts	\$ (6,499.23)
Temporary reserve for D. Hagenson estate gift	\$ (205,137.35)
Reserved for Others/Temporary Restricted accounts	\$ (164,617.26)
<b>Total Unrestricted Cash Assets</b>	<b>\$ 468,506.70</b>

### RESTRICTED FUND ACCOUNTS

Restricted Memorials & Accounts	\$ 22,194.87
Prairie Mindset Scholarship	\$ 22,085.73

### ENDOWMENT FUND

Endowment Fund Assets	\$ 1,537,915.44
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### FUTURE MAINTENANCE FUND

#### Income Statement

	MTD	YTD
Revenues, Investment Activity & Other Sources	\$ 6,236.28	\$ 28,607.18
Expenditures	\$ (16,073.05)	\$ (17,149.37)
<b>Net Operating</b>	<b>\$ (9,836.77)</b>	<b>\$ 11,457.81</b>

Future Maintenance Fund Assets	\$ 46,295.44
<i>Due to General Fund (FM owes GF)</i>	\$ 2,195.47

### FUTURE MAINTENANCE FUND - Parking Lot

	MTD	YTD
Revenue	\$ -	\$ 108,000.00
<i>Parking Lot Expenditures</i>	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Net Operating</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 108,000.00</b>

<i>Due to General Fund (FM owes GF for Parking Lot Exp)</i>	\$ 268,203.83
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**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**  
1620 Milwaukee Ave NE  
Aberdeen, SD 57401  
(605) 225-9740  
[www.bethlehemaberdeen.org](http://www.bethlehemaberdeen.org)  
[office@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:office@bethlehemaberdeen.org)

*We are a family of God journeying together in faith,  
touching lives by Welcoming, Worshiping, Teaching and Serving.*

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## Vacation Bible School is coming June 1-5!

Mark your calendars for another amazing week at VBS! Our theme this year is Rainforest: Exploring the Nature of God. VBS is open to children ages 3 (by 9/1/25) through 5th grade. **Register by May 15 to ensure your child will get a VBS t-shirt.** Registration is open at [vbspro.events/p/2026blc](http://vbspro.events/p/2026blc)

**We are also looking for volunteers (completing 6th grade through adults).** Volunteers can register today at: [vbspro.events/p/2026blc](http://vbspro.events/p/2026blc)

Contact Cyndi at [choltz@bethlehemaberdeen.org](mailto:choltz@bethlehemaberdeen.org) with any questions.

