



# CHIMES Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2024 VOLUME 86, ISSUE 11

## MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear church,

This month will you join me in prayer for our nation? We are in a season marked by significant division and polarization and that reality will not disappear with a single election or event. I find comfort and hope from the words of Meta Herrick Carlson who is a pastor in Minnesota. Will you join me in reading her words below, praying for our communities, and working towards a world that reflects the expansive and inclusive nature of the body of Christ? Together, we can bring the love of God for all into the center of who we are.

In peace,  
Pr. Jaime Benson

*For More Than Tolerance*  
by Meta Herrick Carlson from  
Ordinary Blessings



This minimal coexistence is physically exhausting because it is unnatural to barely put up with one another, to withhold care and curiosity, to feign an unrelated distance when someone is hurting.

It requires a terrible kind of energy to merely deal with someone, to restrain your true self in their presence, to manifest another narrative about who they are that validates separation.

We are not built for mere tolerance, skepticism fear hate disgust indifference.

We are built for proximity in body and spirit, to delight in God's manifold image, decorating each person with love that is natural to honor, affirm, and celebrate.

## FOOD DRIVE

Now through **November 17<sup>th</sup>** we are collecting food for the Portage & Wyocena Food Pantries. Let's help keep the shelves stocked, especially during the holiday season.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

The lessons we will be learning in November are A Message from God – Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Be Ready-Mark 13:1-8 we will also be practicing for the Christmas program as part of these classes.

Looking ahead to December, Our Christmas program this year is God's Gift to Us. This year's Christmas Program will be performed as part of Gifts of Bethlehem on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:00 am. We will be providing food for coffee hour.

We will be having a practice and decorating day for the program on Saturday December 7<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am -12:00 pm with lunch provided. During practice time you are welcome to attend and help as needed.

If you have any questions, please see or call Jeanette Gessner or your child's teacher.

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church, ELCA**  
W8267 Hwy 33 East  
Portage, WI 53901  
608-742-8502

## OUR CHURCH

### THANK YOU

Thank you to **Harry & Peggy Benson** for donating the large pumpkins used to add to the beautiful fall décor this year! Thank you to **Margaret Molden and others** for decorating the church for the fall season! Special thanks to the Fall Clean-up volunteers: **Kory Anderson, Joe Jackowski, Chad Hayes, Ian Hayes, Alex Hayes, Ben Rudolph, Barb Rothwell, Ken Thiele, and Del Molden.** As a great group of workers we accomplished a lot in a couple of hours.



### UPDATE FROM THE QUILTERS

- We **blessed 92 quilts** at the October 16<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> services!
- Correction from last month's newsletter article should read "The quilts will get boxed up and transported to Wisconsin Rapids by **Ann Ciske.**"
- Tickets are on sale now for a **Quilt Drawing** that will take place on November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 3:00 pm. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Stop in the narthex to see the beautiful quilt.

### SEARCHING FOR FAITH STORIES!



Do you have a faith story to share? Of course you do! We all have a faith story to share. We may not always think we do, but God is always present in our lives, so how can we not have a faith story? **We are looking for individuals to write a short reflection or story about their faith and faith experiences.** These can be submitted to the office to be included in future communications (bulletin, Chimes, etc.) and can be submitted anonymously if you would like. Feel free to send these reflections to the office at your earliest convenience. We will try to keep sharing these in the months ahead and we welcome submissions on a rolling basis. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Jaime or a stewardship committee member.

### NOTICE FOR ALL WEDNESDAY EVENING MEETINGS, CLASSES, OR ACTIVITIES

Effective immediately, **the doors will be locked at 5:30 pm for the duration of Wednesday worship service.** They will be unlocked around 6:15 pm. Please make note of this if you are dropping someone off to make sure they enter the building before you leave, especially with the colder weather.

If you would like to participate in this year's Gifts of Bethlehem program, please reach out to Tania Anderson at [parishassociate@blcportage.org](mailto:parishassociate@blcportage.org) or contact the church office. We have placed a sign-up sheet for participants in the narthex. Also, immediately following the program this year we will be gathering in the fellowship hall for baked goods and beverages. Thank you!

2024  
*Gifts of Bethlehem*  
Annual Program

Please join us on  
**Sunday, December 8th 9:00am**

*Our program includes:*  
The Sunday School Christmas play, instrumental performances, beautiful holiday singing, and the BLC choir and Praise Team.  
Refreshments and fellowship following the program.  
Everyone is welcome!!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church      W8267 Hwy 33, Portage

## A WORD FROM OUR STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

### Our Giving, Our Future

Like any other organization, we will experience increased operating and maintenance costs. Our church is 18 years old and like any structure that ages, continued maintenance will be necessary to keep our building and grounds in the best shape possible. We also want to plan for the cost of living and other circumstances. Our stewardship committee wants members to know that we are doing well financially, but budgeting and prioritizing for our future needs will help us to continue to be strong. Thank you for reading this important overview of our budget.

### BLC Budget Quick Overview

**Cost of Living Increase** \$1,020/month

Our #1 priority must be maintaining a strong operating budget that not only covers our ongoing expenses but also allows us to adjust for normal increases such as cost of living, salaries, benefits, insurance, etc.

**Roof Top Units** \$1,600/month

We know through many reports over the past couple of years that we must plan for the eventual replacement of all our roof top units. We have already replaced one and are set for the second. This plan allows us to put \$1,000 per month into the designated funds set aside to replace these units.

**Increase Reserve Fund Balance** \$1,000/month

Since 2017 we have had to use the fund reserve to continue to meet our expenses. We feel that it is in the greater interest of Bethlehem Lutheran to increase our Reserve Fund Balance to an amount much like we had in 2017.

**Driveway/Blacktop Repair and Seal** \$500/month

This is a cost above and beyond our normal Buildings and Grounds Budget that we must incur every number of years. The estimated cost of this is \$6,000 to be completed in the next year.

**Total increase to our monthly budget needed (starting 2025):** **\$4,120/month**

### Your help to meet the monthly budget

Will everyone be able to increase their giving? Perhaps not, yet ANY increase in giving will be beneficial. All contributions will benefit the Vision and Mission of BLC and our future.

### All of the gifts that have been given to us, what will we give in return?

Again, this budget is a sustainable solution to maintaining and increasing our church's financial stability and future. Everything and everyone matters! We are all at different places and we hope everyone will think and pray for what you can do.

## KITCHEN CLEANING



A friendly reminder to please label your container/dish when bringing a dish to pass. We will be recycling non-labeled items in December.

Please make sure food is stored in a container and labeled.

Thank you!



**Get ready to check a few things off your  
Christmas list and maybe find a little  
something for yourself!**



**November 22, 2024**

**12:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

**&**

**November 23, 2024**

**9:00 am – 3:00 pm**

**Food available onsite.**

**Quilt Drawing – Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5  
Drawing held at 3:00 pm on November 23<sup>rd</sup>,  
need not be present to win!**

**Sponsored by**

The former Saddle Ridge Craft Group & Bethlehem Lutheran Church

**Event held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

W8267 Hwy 33 E, Portage

## November 2024 BLC Worship Volunteers - Thank you!

| Date                 | Usher            | Reader          | Video Production | Communion Assistant | Communion Assistant | Altar Guild     | Acolyte                           | Music       | Coffee Hour    |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Sun 11/3<br>9 am     | Ellen Kabele     | Ellen Kabele    | Lori & Brady Cox | Bobbie Goodman      | Lisa Cook           | Lisa Cook       | Hartley Bell & Ben Haroldson      | Ronna       |                |
| Wed 11/6<br>5:30 pm  | Geoff Gilbert    |                 |                  |                     | Cheryl Hebel        | Cheryl Hebel    | Kinleyh Anderson                  | Jody        |                |
| Sun 11/10<br>9am     | Larry Sween      | Ginny McNeal    | Joe Jackowski    | Ginny McNeal        | Nancy Loether       | Nancy Loether   | Mikayla Bovre & Alyvia Bell       | Jody        | Tania Anderson |
| Wed 11/13<br>5:30 pm | Geoff Gilbert    |                 |                  |                     | Judy Donahue        | Judy Donahue    | Makenzie Schmidtke                | Ronna       |                |
| Sun 11/17<br>9am     | Dianna Bush      | Nancy Buckley   |                  | Bonnie Dixon        | Marie Kucksdorf     | Marie Kucksdorf | Lindsay Nickel & Wyatt Hernkind   | Praise Team | Sween Family   |
| Wed 11/20<br>5:30 pm | Geoff Gilbert    |                 |                  |                     | Sharon Horvath      | Sharon Horvath  | Kathryn Thiele                    | Jody        |                |
| Sun 11/24<br>9:30 am | Marie Rohrbacher | Various Pastors |                  | Ann Ciske           | Sue Conner          | Sue Conner      | Clara Georgeson & Phillip Steiger | Carla       | Bethlehem      |
| Wed 11/27<br>5:30 pm | Geoff Gilbert    |                 |                  |                     | Cara Druckrey       | Cara Druckrey   | Kayson Bulgrin                    | Carla       |                |

**Remember – if the Portage Schools are closed due to bad weather, so is the church and any activity planned for that day or evening!**

*November Food Pantry Help is Team B!*

# Bethlehem Lutheran Church






## Profit and Loss Comparison

October 1-21, 2024

|                                | TOTAL              |                     |                     |                            |                               |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                | OCT 1-21, 2024     | OCT 1-21, 2023 (PY) | SEP 1-21, 2024 (FP) | JAN 1 - OCT 21, 2024 (YTD) | JAN 1 - OCT 21, 2023 (PY YTD) |
| Income                         |                    |                     |                     |                            |                               |
| ↳ General Income               | 15,803.16          | 18,576.00           | 16,518.85           | 238,656.00                 | 220,510.72                    |
| ↳ Income, Designated           | 2,069.00           | 3,958.00            | 215.00              | 15,107.11                  | 53,224.61                     |
| <b>Total Income</b>            | <b>\$17,872.16</b> | <b>\$22,534.00</b>  | <b>\$16,733.85</b>  | <b>\$253,763.11</b>        | <b>\$273,735.33</b>           |
| GROSS PROFIT                   | \$17,872.16        | \$22,534.00         | \$16,733.85         | \$253,763.11               | \$273,735.33                  |
| Expenses                       |                    |                     |                     |                            |                               |
| ↳ Operating Expenses           | 21,024.90          | 14,525.86           | 13,439.15           | 217,544.30                 | 243,366.43                    |
| ↳ Other Expense                |                    |                     |                     | 1,591.00                   | 4,769.75                      |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>          | <b>\$21,024.90</b> | <b>\$14,525.86</b>  | <b>\$13,439.15</b>  | <b>\$219,135.30</b>        | <b>\$248,136.18</b>           |
| NET OPERATING INCOME           | \$ -3,152.74       | \$8,008.14          | \$3,294.70          | \$34,627.81                | \$25,599.15                   |
| ↳ Other Income                 | \$1,600.00         | \$3,050.00          | \$1,200.00          | \$15,295.00                | \$26,265.00                   |
| ↳ Other Expenses               | \$1,565.00         | \$2,796.85          | \$1,154.90          | \$14,768.58                | \$25,545.04                   |
| NET OTHER INCOME               | \$35.00            | \$253.15            | \$45.10             | \$526.42                   | \$719.96                      |
| NET INCOME                     | \$ -3,117.74       | \$8,261.29          | \$3,339.80          | \$35,154.23                | \$26,319.11                   |
| <b>Actual Cash Flow Change</b> | <b>\$-5836.99</b>  | <b>\$5647.19</b>    | <b>\$629.47</b>     | <b>\$8438.96</b>           | <b>\$560.00</b>               |

**THANK YOU TO ALL THAT HAVE RETURNED THEIR PLEDGE FORM! IF YOU HAVEN'T PLEASE GET THE FORM TO THE OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THIS HELPS WITH BUDGET PLANNING AND SCHEDULING OF THE VOLUNTEERS. THANK YOU!**

# Bethlehem Lutheran Church

| Sunday   | Monday   | Tuesday   | Wednesday   | Thursday  | Friday                                 | Saturday   |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| <h1>NOVEMBER</h1>  |  |   |   |   | Nov 1                                  | 2  |
|  |  |   |   |   | 10:30am Tai Chi                        | Turn clocks back one hour before bed tonight!<br> |
| 3  | 4  | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8                                      | 9  |
| Food Drive   |  |   |   |   |  |  |
| 9:00am Worship<br>10:15am Sunday School  | 10:30am Tai Chi<br>1:00pm Card Club                        | 9:00am Quilters<br>11:00am Bible Study<br>   | 10:30am Tai Chi<br>5:30pm Worship<br>6:30pm Confirmation Class  |   | 10:30am Tai Chi                        |  |
| 10   | 11   | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15                                     | 16   |
| Food Drive   |  |   |   |   |  |  |
| 9:00am All Saint's Day Recognition<br>9:00am Hope House Speaker<br>9:00am Worship<br>10:00am Coffee Fellowship | 10:30am Tai Chi<br>1:00pm Card Club<br>6:00pm SREA Meeting | 9:00am Quilters   | Food Pantry Helpers<br>10:30am Tai Chi<br>5:30pm Worship<br>6:30pm Praise Team Rehearsal<br> | 9:00am Women's meeting<br>           | 9:00am Organ tuning<br>10:30am Tai Chi |  |
| 17   | 18   | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22                                     | 23   |
| Food Drive<br>9:00am Praise Team<br>9:00am Worship<br>10:15am Sunday School<br>10:00am Coffee Fellowship       | 10:30am Tai Chi<br>1:00pm Card Club<br>6:30pm SRA Meeting  | 9:00am Quilters<br>11:00am Bible Study<br> | 10:00am Chimes Articles Due<br>10:30am Tai Chi<br>5:30pm Worship<br>6:30pm Confirmation Class   | 6:30pm Church Council Meeting<br>  | 12:00pm Craft Fair                     | 9:00am Craft Fair  |
| 24   | 25   | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29                                     | 30   |
| 9:30am Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship<br>10:30am Coffee Fellowship  | 10:30am Tai Chi<br>1:00pm Card Club                        | 9:00am Quilters   | 10:30am Tai Chi<br>5:30pm Worship   | Office Closed for Thanksgiving<br> | Office Closed<br>10:30am Tai Chi       |  |

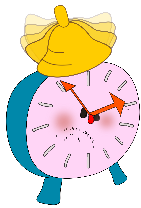
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Daylight Savings Time Ends  
Remember to **turn your clocks back one hour** before you go to bed on Saturday,  
**November 2<sup>nd</sup>**.

Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship Service  
Sunday, November 24<sup>th</sup> **9:30 am** here at  
Bethlehem.

