

The Bethlehem Star February 2026



We are called by God to follow Christ in love and service to all.

Congregation Matters

Feb 1st 10:30am

Are you curious to know what your church council committees are working on? Would you like more information on what each committee is in charge of and where you could possibly volunteer your talents? BLC will be holding our very first Congregation Matters meeting after worship on February 1st to bring you those details and so much more. All are encouraged to attend.



Lenten Calendar 2026

Feb 18, 25, & March 4th BLC Hosting

5:30pm Lenten Supper

6:30pm Evening Prayer

March 11th ELC Hosting

5:30pm Lenten Supper

6:30pm Evening Prayer

March 18th & 25th NLC Hosting

5:30pm Lenten Supper

6:30pm Evening Prayer

*More details regarding
Holy Week to come.....*



Calling All Cooks!

Midweek Lenten Worship is approaching quickly and we need your help. We are looking for anyone who is able to bring soups or desserts for Wednesday evenings throughout lent. If cooking is not your forte', but you would still like to contribute, please consider helping with set up or clean up on these evenings as well. You can sign up using the form in The Commons or you can get in touch with Linda Erfle or Peggy Agenes-Janzer. Together we can make Lent filled with great food and amazing fellowship as we share in this sacred season of the church year!



Going All In– by Bill Erickson

I'm sitting down to write this following Sunday worship where we had John the Baptist pointing out Jesus to some of his followers, "Behold the Lamb of God.". One of those was Andrew who went and grabbed his brother, Simon, and they went to find Jesus. The capper of that is Christ saying, "You are Simon, son of John (or Jonah). You shall be called Cephas (Peter to us today)." And Simon Peter was all in at that point. I mean seriously all in to the end of his life. That's some faith right there.

Myself, I've gone "all in" on a few things so far in my life. The first time (sorta) was when I decided to be baptized as a teen in our Assembly of God church (Charismatic Pentecostals). I had been fairly involved in faith as a kid, getting myself to church on Sundays, Vacation Bible Schools and all that. Then as a teenager of 13, I committed to getting baptized, which was our tradition. I came up out of that baptismal pool at the front of our church with a "Whoop!" That got a chuckle from the congregation. Then the world tugged away at me and though I kept my faith in Christ, I wasn't too consistent with church attendance.

My next 'all in' was when I enlisted in the Marine Corps as an 18 year old and made it my career. Instead of bailing and quitting, I dug in and pushed forward hard. This time I was really all in. I have lived and breathed being a Marine ever since. I served for 20 years on active duty and have been retired for almost 26 years now. One aspect of being a Marine was that "hard living" lifestyle. Lots of alcohol and less than upright behavior there. During this time I woke up one day and realized that my life was heading down a path. I knew where the path went without ever treading it before. My Pop had been on this road, right through his marriage and divorce to my mom and then his second wife. Until one day he had a choice of coming to get my brothers and me or drinking away what he had in his pocket. He came and got us. I guess it was a little wobbly for him at the start, but he has remained sober to this day.

I share that last bit because it leads to this bit: during January 1984, sometime after Epiphany (the 6th of January) I finally had my hardest "all in" moment. It occurred when I woke up after a night of ridiculous drinking excess and said, "Oh, this can't go on." And, as I gingerly walked around that day, it cemented my resolve. That was 42 years ago now. I've remained true to that resolve since that Epiphany moment. Because of that resolve, I did serve my full twenty years in the Marines, I did find my Bride of now 36 years, I did return to my faith (even though I switched brands to Lutheran) and I strive to serve our congregation through serving on the Youth Committee and more.

One thing I'd like to ask as I close this missive: if you have a desire to help out on a committee, even if it is only a short-term project, please do. There is always a need on every committee for helping hands for different things. You may not want to commit to an "all in" situation at first (or ever), but maybe that is the way you find out what you do want to go "all in" on here at Bethlehem.

Pastor Scott is asking all to go "All in for God's love" this Lenten season. What's your "all in" going to be?

January 2026 Council Notes

Treasurer's Report- Budget Reports/Balance Statement

- Income- \$83,461 Expenses- \$36,428 Ending December- \$75,426

Pastor's Report-

- Christmas- good attendance and positive feedback on sharing with ELC/NLC
- Lent starts in a month. Will share mid-week suppers/evening prayer with ELC and NLC. Wed. services will highlight various Saints with a "Lent Madness bracket"
- Confirmation Sunday- will have 3 confirmands- May 17th
- Sabbatical plan- Last day Sun June 7th Return will be Aug 31st. Pastor Lucy will cover 6 of those Sundays. For the rest, possibly community-partner leaders and/or congregation members to lead worship. Summer theme "How BLC intersects with the Flathead"
- Brewed Theology- Jan 29th 10am Wheat MT and 6pm @ Branigans
- Roman's Study- looking to resume/finish in Feb and March

Old Business-

Lola Vulles Gift-

- Process is ongoing

Congregation Matters- February Plan

- Feb 1st. Duane will update on finances and breakdown giving. Charlene will speak regarding the Worship & Music Committee.

Council Structure Ongoing Conversation

- Continue discussions regarding how/if to restructure council. Suggested Council attend a retreat to flesh out ideas.

New Business

Audit Presentation/Discussion

- Duane presented a Biennial Audit Report for the church to the Council. It outlines financial processes and procedures, comments and recommendations.

Business Manager Update, January 2026

By the time you receive this, January will be behind us, and we can start anticipating spring in the Flathead Valley! The days are starting to get a little longer and a new season is approaching. Our Lenten journey is upon us as well which is also a harbinger of spring and renewed life in Christ. The word Lent actually comes from the Middle English word "Lenten," which refers to the lengthening of days or springtime.

We had a very strong December in terms of giving and ended fiscal year 2025 in great shape with an ending fund balance close to \$23,000. This will provide us with a strong foundation to kick off our 2026 fiscal year. General fund giving in the last 6 months of 2025 was up about 9.4% from the same time in 2024. Between new member giving, and increased tithes from regular givers, it is clear you are responding to God's call to be generous givers. On behalf of the Council and staff, we'd all like to express our humble gratitude and thanks for everyone's financial support in 2025.

I completed a fiscal audit of our General Fund accounts with the help of Bryan Gilberson, our accountant. The audit results were presented to the Council at their January meeting. I'm happy to report that the pure fiscal side of the audit (comparing financial reports with financial institution statements) came out within \$2.00 when comparing total fund balances exceeding \$1.5 million (basically small rounding errors). Considerable time was also spent learning and reviewing processes and internal controls used by BLC in financial matters, and, by and large, we passed those accepted norms with flying colors. There were only 2 recommendations made to the Council, one for a procedural change and one to create and record written documentation on our internal procedures and controls. These will both be completed sometime in the first quarter of 2026. If you wish to review a full copy of the 2025 audit, let me know and I will provide it to you.

As shared before, other priorities for 2026 will be to complete a 'Phase 2' revision of our Bylaws (primarily concerning Council and Committee structures/duties), as well as adopting and approving an update to our Constitution. I'm also working with the Trust Committee, which is also reviewing and revising their Bylaws, which may ultimately be incorporated into the main BLC Bylaws, pending more discussion on the matter.

If you have any questions or comments regarding BLC's business matters, please contact me at duane.a.anderson@outlook.com.

Sincerely, Duane Anderson, BLC Business Manager

Lent: What's it good for?

Perhaps it feels like the days and seasons of the year race by without hardly a chance to stop and look around. Well, Lent is an invitation to do just that... more than merely “giving something up,” Lent is an invitation to slow down and hear the Spirit of God in new ways.



This month we'll gather on **Sundays** around the theme of “**All In.**” We'll hear the Gospel from the perspective of, “How has God shown us the way, and what is God giving us in order that we might give ourselves – All In – for the sake of the Good News.”

And on **Wednesdays**, as we meet together with our friends at Northridge and Eidsvold, we'll be taking a **look at some of the Saints** – well-known saints and some a bit less popular. Along with the chance to gather as saints for Soup Suppers, we'll worship using Evening Prayer and live into the light of God's love together!

Shrove Sunday Pancakes

It's a tradition that dates back... well, at least a couple of years... Pancakes after church on the Sunday before the start of Lent! Plan to stick around on **Sunday, Feb 15th**, **following worship** for pancakes and “sausamages” as Bill Erickson like to call 'em. See you there!



Family Game event

March 8th is a day to set aside for fun and community building here at Bethlehem. Plan to stay after worship in the Fellowship Hall for games of all sorts – for kids, teenagers, and even grown-ups. If you have a game your family likes, bring it along!



Brewed Theology

We'll gather twice in February for Brewed Theology – On Feb 12th at 1pm at Wheat Montana and again on Feb 26th at 6pm at Brannigan's. This month's topic is Sabbath: God's Underrated Gift. Plan to join one or both conversations!

**BREW
EDTHE
OLOGY**



SUPER BOWL SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 8, 2026

'SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY'

BLC IS JOINING CHURCHES ACROSS AMERICA COLLECTING FOR LOCAL FOOD BANKS.

YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS OF CASH, CANS OF SOUP AND OTHER NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

LET'S BEAT OUR COLLECTION AMOUNT FROM LAST YEAR AND SCORE BIG IN 2026!

Feeding the Flathead

We are looking for volunteers to help with cooking, serving, cleaning-up, and baking for Feeding the Flathead on February 16. No experience is required! This rewarding ministry serves approximately 50 hot meals an evening so lots of helping hands are needed! There are sign-up sheets in the Commons or contact Julie Miller for info - (703) 862-3490.



BLC March Blood Drive

Our next blood drive at Bethlehem will be Sunday, 03/22. The drawing will be in the Bethlehem basement from 1:30 – 4:00. Your donation is needed. Please call either Glenda Skeim at 406-250-1890 or me, Gary Aasheim at 406-698-4138 for your appointment.



Warming Center

During these cold winter nights, it's important that we remember those most vulnerable. Please consider helping as you are able to provide a meal at the Warming Center once a month. If you are concerned about the cost, all ingredients will be supplied. Meal Coordinators, Jeff (732-453-4208) and Savannah (845-857-8973) have sauces, beans, spaghetti products, etc. Just give them a call and pick up what you need to make a soup or casserole. Let them know that you are from BLC. Sign up sheets are on the table in the Commons. For questions, please contact Sherry Korthase at 770-639-6621. Thank you!



February Calendar 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 <u>9:00am</u> Worship <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice</p>	<p>2 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH</p>	<p>3 <u>10:00pm</u> Fellowship Committee, FH <u>7:00pm</u> Confirmation</p>	<p>4 <u>6:45am</u> Men's Bible Study, FH <u>10:00am</u> Staff Meeting <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>10:30am</u> Spinners, CM <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice</p>	<p>5 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH</p>	6	7
<p>8 Souper Bowl of Caring <u>9:00am</u> Worship <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice</p>	<p>9 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH</p>	<p>10 <u>9:45am</u> Dorcas Ruth, FH <u>5:30pm</u> Council, FH</p>	<p>11 <u>6:45am</u> Men's Bible Study, FH <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>10:30am</u> Weavers, CM <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice</p>	<p>12 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>12:30pm</u> Ukelele Practice, FR <u>1:00pm</u> Brewed Theology, Wheat MT <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community</p>	13	14
<p>15 <u>9:00am</u> Worship/Sunday School <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice <u>10:30am</u> Shrove Sunday Pancakes, FH <u>3:00pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Concert</p>	<p>16 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH–BLC Serving Newsletter deadline</p>	<p>17 <u>7:00pm</u> Confirmation</p>	<p>18 Ash Wednesday <u>6:45am</u> Men's Bible Study, FH <u>10:00am</u> Staff Meeting <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>10:30am</u> Spinners and Weavers Guild, CM <u>5:30pm</u> Soup Supper, BLC <u>6:30pm</u> Worship, BLC <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice</p>	<p>19 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH</p>	20	21
<p>22 Food on the 4th Sunday <u>9:00am</u> Worship/Sunday School <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice</p>	<p>23 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>12:00pm</u> Women on the Go <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH</p>	24	<p>25 <u>6:45am</u> Men's Bible Study, FH <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>5:30pm</u> Soup Supper, BLC <u>6:30pm</u> Worship, BLC <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice</p>	<p>26 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH</p>	27	28

Locations:
 CM-Commons
 FH -Fellowship Hall
 FR-Fireside Room
 HB-Hjortland Bld.



Like to Bake?

Share the calories with Sunday Coffee Hour! Bake a loaf or two of your favorite quick bread and share at Sunday coffee hour. Call Peggy by Saturday afternoon. Thanks to all that have helped and will.





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 KOFI 1180AM at 9:00am Sundays

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**The deadline for
 the March
 newsletter is
 February 16th.
 Thank you!**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Jim	Burkett	2/1
Toth	Mendus	2/7
Dale	Saverud	2/10
Lori	Adkins	2/13
Anja	Stene	2/13
Jo Ann	Swenson	2/13
Linda	Burkett	2/13
John	Hendrickson	2/16
Linda	Erfle	2/17
Jana	Thompson	2/23
Becky	Croucher	2/24
Delphia	Blumenthal	2/25

Church Council

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Julie Miller

Vice Presidents:

Tony Nelson

VACANT

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VACANT

Recording Secretary:

Kellie Nelson

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Christian Education:

Katie Havens

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Youth:

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