



Give Thanks

We are a Christian community rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ that gathers to worship, learn and share, and reaches out to welcome, witness and serve.

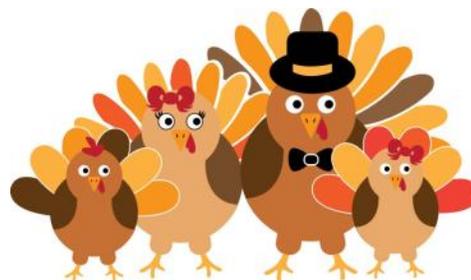
Greening of the Church

It's that time of year again to decorate our church for the Christmas Season. We will meet on Saturday, **November 29th** at 9:30 and there will be coffee and cookies and probably some Christmas carols playing! Please bring a ladder if you have a tall one and we also need people to "fluff" the greenery and redo some bows so there is a job for everyone! The Fellowship Committee thanks you so much for your help each year. See you on the 30th!



Thank You

Thank you to everyone who provided school supplies for Lutheran World Relief. Your continued support is vital for children and families in need and we are grateful that our church can help in a multitude of ways.



Let's talk about the mission of our church!

Do you know Bethlehem's Mission Statement? Can you recite it? I'm guessing not. It's on the front page of this newsletter if you want a reminder. But what if we tried to say the same thing using fewer words. What if we could have a short statement that expressed our mission as a church in a way that each of us could rattle off at a moment's notice. I think that would help us share with others how much we love this church and what God is doing through us. So come to a couple of gatherings - after church on November 9 and 23, 10:30-11:30 am. We'll rediscover our Mission Statement together and find a way to make it short and memorable - but just as meaningful!

FROM
THE
PASTOR



Thankfulness is contagious...

I saw a bumper sticker not too long ago that said "I love you!" And then in smaller print, "If people can hate randomly, I can love randomly."

I think this is a message that we have lost in the noise of our world. I really think that the vast majority of people don't want to hate or feel negatively about others. People want (and need) to trust one another and want the best for all our neighbors. It's a message of coercion perpetuated for the sake of some people's pride and fear which tells us that we should distrust our neighbor – that they are out to get us or take something from us.

And that fear is contagious... I don't know much about the reptilian brain, but I hear that one of our primal instincts is to sense one another's body language. When one of us senses danger (real or imagined) those of us around that person feel it, too. Like gazelles, when one hears a predator, they all perk up and get ready to run.

We have been told that we should be afraid of our neighbors or that we should not let certain people into our communities. In rare circumstances, this may be true. But mostly, this message comes from manipulative sources and false narratives. It breaks down community, encourages isolation, and fuels anxiety. At worst, it leads to confrontations of violence.

But if fear is contagious, love and goodwill can be contagious, too! When we surround ourselves with messages of hope and trust in one another – actions of shared generosity – we develop feelings of comfort and security. Our primal brains relax, and we allow ourselves to be happy, content, and at peace.

There is risk in letting our guard down... but the rewards can far exceed the dangers. We can also look out for one another. We can take turns tuning into the potential dangers and allow each other to take a break. But this requires that we do not abandon community. It means that we cannot go it alone. We need one another... we are each a gift to one another.

So, that's why I think thanksgiving is contagious. To give thanks is to declare our dependence on one another for the love, protection, generosity and responsibility we have for one another. When one of us raises a glass, other around us do so as well. We enlarge the circle by including newcomers and strangers. They share their hopes and joys – and fears – and together, we celebrate community.

Thanksgiving is meant not to bring in the trusted members of the clan only – excluding others, but to open our doors and let the joy out into the world that all may experience the love of life!

Happy Thanksgiving!
Pastor Scott



October 2025 Council Notes

Treasurer's Report- Budget Reports/Balance Statement

- Income- \$29,078 Expenses- \$33,001 Ending September- \$33,177
Spoke to Byan about running an in-house audit

Pastor's Report-

- PS & PL have begun the Excellence in Leadership course via Zoom. Going well so far
- Romans Bible Study after church and in person groups have begun
- Confirmation has begun with 8 students
- Advent Mid-Week Suppers- W& M have decided to share Mid-Week Advent supper and worship with ELC and NLC.

Old Business-

Repair update at 623 1st Ave-

- Repairs of safety issues have been completed.

Update on Elevator Maintenance

- Working with Kone for clarification on what our maintenance program includes

Congregational Meeting

- October 19th after worship. Agenda items include Trust Committee members, by law changes, and 2026 Mission Plan.

New Business

Proposed Mission Statement Congregational Conversations

- Proposal to hold a couple of sessions in November on BLCs Mission Statement and how we might be able to “share it in fewer words”.

Mission Plan Approval- 2026 Plan

- **MOTION** made and **SECONDED** to approve the recommended mission plan to put forward to the congregation for discussion and voting. **MOTION CARRIES**

Business Manager Update, October 2025

We wrapped up fiscal year (FY) 24/25 on Sep. 30 with an ending fund balance of about \$33,000. General Fund (GF) offerings were below average in September and our cumulative giving for the FY ended up at about \$3000 lower than last year. The ending fund (carryover) balance declined about \$23,000 over the year. Given that our non-discretionary expenses escalate every year, and our GF giving has remained static or declined slightly over the past several years, the resulting imbalance in our operating plan has required increasing reliance on dollars from our real estate revenue, and cuts in our discretionary Mission Partner donations to arrive at a balanced budget.

Our annual meeting was held on October 19th. The Council presented the first phase of BLC bylaw updates which were approved unanimously. The updates included modernizing some language, updating some operational aspects of the Council, changing to a single annual congregational meeting (in the fall) from our current practice of two meetings, and changing the fiscal year to match the calendar year, starting in FY 26 which will run from Jan 1 – Dec 31. Phase 2 of updates will commence in 2026 and be focused on reviewing and updating our standing committee structures and duties.

As a result of the change to our FY definition, 2 Mission Plan proposals were presented and voted on; the first was to extend the 24/25 FY by 3 months to take us to end of this calendar year, and the 2nd for the new FY 26 plan (Jan 1 – Dec 31). Both proposals passed unanimously, thanks to all who attended, asked great questions, and supported the proposals! The FY 26 Mission Plan includes a modest staff salary increase, increases in fixed costs (benefits, property insurance, utilities, etc.) and a decrease in Mission Partner giving from the GF. To arrive at a balanced plan, we added a \$10,000 increase to the GF from our real estate (rental) program, from \$85,000 to \$95,000. This is about the limit to which we can tap this program on an annual basis and still maintain a pool of reserve funds for operational maintenance of the rentals. We also forecast a 1.5% increase in GF giving but despite the increases in income, this plan fully depletes the carryover (ending fund) balance at the end of next year. While we've had the luxury of a significant ending fund balance for several years, we will no longer have this cushion unless we see some increases in GF gifts. If GF giving remains static or declines over the year, we will be forced to make additional cuts in our Mission Partner donations, as discussed above. While we are grateful for ongoing financial support, we are asking everyone to prayerfully consider a 3-5% increase in their regular giving for the remainder of this year and during 2026. A modest 5% increase in giving would result in a \$10-\$15,000 carryover balance at the end of 2026 and allow us to maintain our Mission Partner giving as proposed. Please consider this as part of your support for BLC's mission as we move forward.

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

Sincerely, Duane Anderson, BLC Business Manager

Supper/Evening Prayer 2025

The Advent season will look a little different this year. We will be sharing this special time with our friends at Eidsvold Lutheran Church and Northridge Lutheran Church. There are three Wednesday's this Advent so it is the perfect time to gather together at each location to break bread and worship as a Lutheran family and share the joy we feel at this time of the year. The schedule will flow as follows:



Wed, Dec 3rd

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Hosting

5:30pm Supper

6:30pm Evening Prayer

Wed, Dec 10th

Eidsvold Lutheran Church Hosting

5:30pm Supper

6:30pm Evening Prayer

Wed, Dec 17th

Northridge Lutheran Church Hosting

5:30pm Supper

6:30pm Evening Prayer

All are welcome to attend. We look forward to seeing you!! there!

Heart Locker Needs Our Help

The HEART market is seeing a higher volume of usage than ever before; which is great but our funds can't quite keep up. We could use your support with these specific items:

- Frozen foods like burritos, personal pizzas, pot pies
- Fresh foods like: Fruit, string cheese, Yogurts
- Any quick snacks (beef jerky, granola bars, tuna packs)
- Bottled water
- Hygiene products: Deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, body wash

Please drop off any offerings to the BLC church office or The Commons.



Tree of Sharing

The tree of sharing will have envelopes for gifts to help the homeless and many other worthy causes. Please consider taking an envelope and donating to those in need. Gifts must be received by December 21st.



FLBC Yoga Spirituality Retreat

Nov 14-16th

Join Pastor Kelsey Beebe and recenter your heart, soul, and body with a weekend full of prayerful movement! Throughout the weekend, yoga classes will be offered in a variety of styles and levels: gentle/restorative; chair yoga; vinyasa flow; and more! There will be opportunities for guided meditation and prayer, as well as dialogue around how we can use movement as a form of prayer. All levels of experience are welcome!



FLBC Advent Retreat

Dec 5-7th

Come to camp to prepare for Christmas! All are welcome to join us for a cozy winter getaway with crafts, delicious food, and an opportunity to find & take home your perfect Christmas tree! Make gingerbread houses and Advent wreaths, eat plenty of cookies, sing seasonal favorites, and much more: take a weekend at camp for a deep breath at the start of the Advent (and Christmas) season.



FLBC Cookie Making Day

Dec 6th

If you don't have the chance to join us for the Advent Retreat, please consider joining us for the day to make Christmas cookies. \$35 per person (any age) and you get to take home LOTS of cookies (min 8 dozen)! Contact FLBC for more information.



Food on the 4th Sunday

On a table in the Commons you will find blue bags which you can take home and/or to the store to fill with food during the month and return to the church on the 4th Sunday of the month and we will take the donated food to the food bank. If you would rather donate money, you will also find "Food on the Fourth Sunday" envelopes on the table to put your donations in and you can place them in the offering plates or take to the church office. Thank you for the unending support you show to our community. **Together we are making a big difference!**

LET OUR LIVES BE FULL
OF BOTH
Thanks
&
Giving



November Calendar 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 All Saints Sunday <u>9:00am</u> Worship <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Adult Bible Study, FH <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice	3 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH	4 <u>1:00pm</u> Fellowship Committee, FH <u>7:00pm</u> Confirmation	5 <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 <u>5:30pm</u> Worship & Music Committee, FH <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice	6 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH	7	8 <u>11:00am</u> Sons of Norway
9 <u>9:00am</u> Worship <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Mission Review Gathering, FH <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice	10 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH	11 <u>9:45am</u> Dorcas Ruth, FH <u>5:30pm</u> Council, FH	12 <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> Weavers <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice	13 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>1:00pm</u> Brewed Theology, Wheat MT <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH	14	15
16 <u>9:00am</u> Worship <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Adult Bible Study, FH <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice	17 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH— BLC Serving <i>Newsletter deadline</i>	18 <u>7:00pm</u> Confirmation	19 <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 <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice	20 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH	21	22
23 Food on the 4th Sunday <u>9:00am</u> Worship <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Mission Review Gathering, FH <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice <u>4:00pm</u> Music Recital	24 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>12:00pm</u> Women on the Go <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH	25	26 <u>6:45am</u> Men's Bible Study, FH <u>10:00am</u> Staff Meeting <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice	27 Thanksgiving Office Closed	28	29 9:30am Church Greening
30 <u>9:00am</u> Worship <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice <u>1:30pm</u> Blood Drive, FH <u>3:00pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Concert					<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0f2f1;"> Locations: CM-Commons FH -Fellowship Hall FR-Fireside Room HB-Hjortland Bld. </div>	

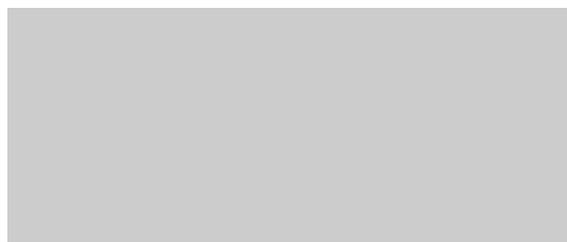




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**The deadline for
 the December
 newsletter is
 November 17th.
 Thank you!**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Linda	Fredenberg	11/3
Kaitlyn	Gunderson	11/4
Roe	Hatlen	11/6
Larry	Simpson	11/9
Lauri	Erickson	11/18
Jill	Black	11/19
Margerette	Dahlgren	11/19
June	Seelye	11/23

Church Council

President:

Julie Miller

Vice Presidents:

Tony Nelson

VACANT

Treasurer:

VACANT

Recording Secretary:

Kellie Nelson

Committee Chairs

Christian Education:

Katie Havens

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Terry Brosten

Worship and Music:

Charlene Singley

Youth:

Bill Erickson