

# The Bethlehem Star April 2026



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

## Holy Week 2026

**Mar 29th** Palm Sunday with SS kids  
9:00am Worship at **BLC**

**April 2nd** Maundy Thursday  
6:30pm Worship at **ELC**

**April 3rd** Good Friday  
6:30pm Worship at **BLC**

**April 5th** Easter Sunday  
9:00am Worship at **BLC**  
10:00am Easter Brunch, **BLC**  
11:00am Worship at Eidsvold



## In Need of Easter Candy

Easter is near! Education Committee is planning once again to hold their Egg Hunt between services for all kids who attend. Mini candies or other small egg filler donations are appreciated!



## Easter Brunch

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for a light brunch at about 10:00 am following the 9:00am service on Easter morning. The Fellowship Committee will be serving ham, breakfast hot dishes, rolls, quick breads, fruit trays, coffee and juice. Come and enjoy fantastic food as we celebrate the season with fellowship and fun. We'd love to see you there!



## Easter Egg Hunt

BLC will also hold our annual Easter Egg Hunt for the children on Easter Sunday. So hop on over after Easter church and join us for an egg-cellent time filled with treats and surprises!



## FROM THE PASTOR



In the gospel of Matthew, when Jesus dies on the cross, it says that the earth shook and rocks split in two. Also, tombs “were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.” and “after his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.”

I’d never really thought about this portion of the story, but it caught my attention this year as it came around again. Matthew is unique in his description of these events. The other gospel writers only say that when Jesus died, “the curtain of the temple was torn in two.” I’ve often associated this curtain-tearing with the idea that Jesus’ death and the impending resurrection brings about a new era in which God is accessible to all. Or, as a professor of mine used to say, this tearing of the curtain means that God is now “loose in the world.” God cannot be contained. God breaks free for the sake of reaching the whole world.

But this part about the rocks splitting and tombs opening seems to bring a different perspective. This isn’t just about God being loose – but that ordinary people – and the very core of creation – is opened up and exposed in a new way to the future. Jesus’ death and resurrection reveal the heart of the God’s gift of creation, its resources, the sustaining elements it provides – and the raising of the dead seems to indicate that there is more that God hopes to do in and through our lives.

Sometimes we say that through Jesus’ death and resurrection we are saved and given life after we die, which is not untrue. But I’ve encouraged you to understand salvation, and new or eternal life, not just as something that happens after we die, but as a new life that begins now, every day, every moment. These details of the rocks and the earthquake begin to make that point. God doesn’t wait until after we die to make us whole – God raises us up from whatever sleep we have fallen into and from every place that we have found ourselves entombed. God animates our tired bodies in new ways – God revives our purpose and calls us to new tasks – God even recreates the world around us so that we can be nourished and sustained for the days ahead.

This is resurrection – this is new life in Christ. And it’s not just for us alone. “Many,” Matthew says... “Many bodies of the saints were raised.” And then, they “appeared to many.” This is community rebuilt from the ground up... this is relationships re-established so that never again are we left alone and without the joy and peace of friendship and love.

God is splitting the world wide open for us – all of us... and God is loose in this new creation to celebrate with us the gift of life. God is calling us to be opened in new ways to our neighbors and to strangers – to share the life of Christ with those animated by the Spirit and those still entombed and buried by the weight of the world.

Our Easter proclamation is LIFE that shakes the world and splits the rocks in new ways every day! Rejoice! Alleluia! Christ has died... Christ is risen!!!

## **March 2026 Council Notes**

### **Treasurer's Report-** Budget Reports/Balance Statement

- Income- \$39,380 Expenses- \$31,158 Ending February- \$74,294

### **Pastor's Report-**

- Holy week and Easter are coming
- Thank you to those who helped with Family Game Night and Pancake Sunday
- We will be sharing part of Holy Week with Eidsvold

### **Old Business-**

#### **Lola Vulles Gift Update-**

- Paperwork is being drawn up. Process is still ongoing.

#### **Council Retreat April 18<sup>th</sup>**

- April 18<sup>th</sup> is the Council Retreat at FLBC. PS encouraged Council to think of what the future of the church will look like while we move forward with the process.

#### **Offering Process Change- Council Approved Purchase of Safe**

- Safe purchased and installed. Training given to Ushers.

### **New Business**

#### **Review and Approve 2026 Mission Partner Plan**

- Reviewed Mission Partner Plan. **Motion made to approve as written. Motion carries.**

#### **Review and Approve Revised Large Gift Policy**

- Discussed current policy. Should wording be changed to reflect undesignated gifts above \$100,000 will be considered by Council on a case-by-case basis?  
**Motion made to approve changes as written. Motion carries.**

#### **Review and Approve 2026 Proposed Budget for Pastor Lucy**

- Proposal from Eidsvold is to give Lucy a compensation increase. **Motion made to approve changes as written. Motion carries.**

## Business Manager Update, March 2026

Happy Easter and Happy Spring! What a wonderful time of hope, rebirth, and renewal.

February giving was above average with general fund offerings of about \$30,800. That, combined with lower expenditures during the month, contributed to a strong ending fund balance of about \$49,000 for February. Thanks, as usual, for all for your generous financial gifts.

As you probably know, in addition to our regular monthly gift to the Montana Synod to support their mission, we provide annual gifts to local and state Mission Partners in support of their programs. Please check out the new 'Mission Partner Highlights' section in the newsletter that features a subset of the partners we are supporting in 2026. We will highlight each of the remaining partners throughout the remainder of the year.

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

Sincerely, Duane Anderson, BLC Business Manager

### Women on the Go Update

Women on the Go have changed their meeting days to the **LAST TUESDAY** of each month. So April's meeting date will be Tuesday, April 28th. Please amend your calendars as necessary.



### Hooray! Easter Brunch is Back!

Once again, Easter morning after church the Fellowship Committee will be hosting an Easter Brunch for everyone to enjoy. Bethlehem will be providing ham and sides, however, we need your help to make sure there will be enough for everyone. We are asking those of you who are willing to help to bring a ready-made breakfast casserole. You can drop it off before church and we will keep it warm until it's time to serve. We are expecting over 100 people this year so we are looking for 15 casseroles. If you can help, there is a sign up sheet in the Commons. Together let's make this the best Easter brunch yet!

## *Easter Brunch*

## BLC Scholarships

It's that time of year again when high school seniors are looking towards their future college plans. Did you know that BLC awards scholarships to qualifying students to help with their college expenses? If you are interested in finding out more information, head to our website—[www.bethluth.org](http://www.bethluth.org) to access an application packet to see if you are eligible.



## FLBC Adult Spirituality Retreat 2026— Word Play!

**April 12-14**

Come play with words with Pastor Holly Johnson, an ELCA pastor serving at Spirit Garage in Minneapolis. Pastor Holly spent her recent sabbatical reclaiming a creative writing voice, and has some ideas to share if you also love to write (or think you might love to write) but can't always come up with the time, energy or anything to write about. Our sessions will be spent exploring different ways to play with writing, mostly focused on poetry and memoir, using ideas gleaned from Maggie Smith, Julia Cameron, Jeff Tweety, and more. In addition to sessions with Pastor Holly, explore God's creation at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, with worship, devotions, Sauna, labyrinth, and time to relax in your own ways. A great retreat for church council members to explore their call to serve in their daily life and mission and their role in the church. Contact FLBC for more information.



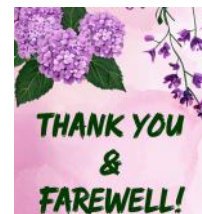
## Fond Farewell from Dorcas Ruth

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Women Dorcas/Ruth Circle have been meeting monthly for many years. They have had a checking account that was opened January 1970, they probably were meeting before then. These friendships run deep as they study God's word.

In Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 the Bible talks about: "There's a time for everything." The women have decided to retire.

They want to thank our congregation for providing a place for us to gather, to Kellie for opening the door for us with her smile, and to Kent for setting up and taking care of our needs all these years.

God's Peace  
BLCW



## Fabric and Sheets Needed

The quilters are requesting any fabric and/or flat sheets you may be willing to part with. They are low on fabric and can always use sheets to use as backing for their quilts. Please consider looking in your linen closet for any extras you might be able to donate and drop off at the church or church office. Thank you!



## 2026 Mission Partner Highlights

BLC has a long tradition and strong reputation for being a generous giver to mission programs outside of its walls. As you probably know, in addition to our regular monthly Mission Support giving that goes through the Montana Synod and largely on to the work done through the ELCA, BLC supports local and state mission partners that are supported annually with cash gifts. The local and state mission partner donations total \$30,000 allocated across 14 groups. Funding for the local/state partners in 2026 is \$5,000 from the general fund and \$25,000 from the Bethlehem Mission Endowment Fund (managed by the Trust Committee).

Starting this month, and continuing throughout the year, the newsletter will include short descriptions of the local and state mission partners BLC is supporting in 2026.

- **Abbie Shelter**

\$3,000 was provided to The Abbie Shelter which provides a suite of services to survivors of intimate partner abuse and sexual assault. In addition to shelter, they provide court advocacy, mental health services, one on one support, and community education. If you want to learn more, or explore other ways you can support this mission, please visit <https://www.abbieshelter.org/>.



- **Feeding the Flathead (FTF)** - \$1,250 was provided to FTF to support the meals prepared and served at Bethlehem. FTF provides free dinners 6 nights per week year around at several locations around the valley. Meals are hosted at BLC every Monday night, and are prepared by BLC volunteers 1-2 times per month. In 2024, about 17,500 meals were provided in total throughout the Flathead Valley. To learn more or help out visit <https://communitykitchen-feedingtheflatheadinc.com> for general information or sign-up in the Commons to help at the next BLC sponsored meal.



- **Flathead Food Bank** - \$3,000 was provided to The Flathead Food Bank which strives to eliminate hunger in the Flathead Valley by creating effective solutions and providing access to healthy and nutritious food. It is part of the MT Food Bank Network. The Food Bank operates a free Food Pantry which serves about 500 people per week. Over 2,000 people (800 families) were served by the Whitefish and Kalispell food banks over Thanksgiving. In addition to this cash gift, BLC also holds a 'Food on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday' opportunity to donate food items which are delivered to the Food Bank. For more information on the Food Bank, visit <https://flatheadfoodbank.org/>.



# April Calendar 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Locations:</b> CM-Commons FH -Fellowship Hall FR-Fireside Room HB-Hjortland Bld.			1 <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	2 <b>Maundy Thursday</b> <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH <u>6:30pm</u> Worship, <b>ELC</b>	3 <b>Good Friday</b> <u>6:30pm</u> Worship, <b>BLC</b>	4
5 <b>Easter Sunday</b> <u>9:00am</u> Worship <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:00am</u> Easter Brunch and Children's Easter Egg Hunt <u>11:00am</u> Worship at Eidsvold	6 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH	7 <u>10:00pm</u> Fellowship Committee, FH	8 <u>6:45am</u> Men's Bible Study, FH <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice	9 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>12:30pm</u> Ukelele Practice, FH <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH	10	11
12 <u>9:00am</u> Worship/Sunday School <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice	13 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH	14 <u>5:30pm</u> Council, FH	15 <u>6:45am</u> Men's Bible Study, FH <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>10:30am</u> Spinners and Weavers Guild, CM <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice	16 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH	17 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Training, FH	18 <u>9:00am</u> Council Retreat, FLBC
19 <u>9:00am</u> Worship/Sunday School <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice	20 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH- <b>BLC Serving</b> <b>Newsletter deadline</b>	21 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Training, FH <u>7:00pm</u> Confirmation	22 <u>6:45am</u> Men's Bible Study, FH <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>10:00am</u> Staff Meeting <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice	23 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH	24	25
26 <b>Food on the 4th Sunday</b> <u>9:00am</u> Worship/Sunday School <u>9:00am</u> KOFI <u>10:30am</u> Bell Choir Practice	27 <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>6:00pm</u> FTF, FH	28 <u>12:00pm</u> Women on the Go, FH	29 <u>6:45am</u> Men's Bible Study, FH <u>10:00am</u> Respite Care, FH <u>7:00pm</u> Choir Practice	30 <u>9:00am</u> Quilters, FH <u>9:00am</u> Knitters, FR <u>5:30pm</u> Flathead Valley Community Orchestra Practice, FH		



## 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.





**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**  
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 406/752-6140 - 406/752-6145 FAX  
 KOFI 1180AM at 9:00am Sundays

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**The deadline for  
 the May  
 newsletter is  
 April 20th.  
 Thank you!**

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

John	Erfle	4/3
Judy	Nelson	4/3
Vicky	Nytes	4/5
Bunny	Wilder	4/8
Joyce	Corbett	4/9
Justin	Wang	4/10
John	Lee	4/11
Debbie	Struck	4/14
Paul	Holmgren	4/15
Ron	Sicard	4/15
Margie	Simpson	4/16
Jan	Ulvin	4/27
Chuck	McCoy	4/29

**Church Council**

**President:**

Julie Miller

**Vice Presidents:**

Tony Nelson

VACANT

**Treasurer:**

VACANT

**Recording Secretary:**

Kellie Nelson

**Committee Chairs**

**Christian Education:**

Katie Havens

**Fellowship:**

Peggy Aagenes-Janzer

**Outreach:**

Cindy Galvin

**Property:**

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**Stewardship:**

Terry Brosten

**Worship and Music:**

Charlene Singley

**Youth:**

Bill Erickson