

# Bethlehem & Grace

A C O M M U N I T Y O F F A I T H

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN \* VIENNA, SD

LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS IN MISSION FOR CHRIST [LCMC]

GRACE LUTHERAN \* WILLOW LAKE, SD

## Advent: God Shines a Light of Hope

*A message from Pastor Colin*

Here we go, folks! Winter, snow, Advent, Christmas. It's quite the series of circumstances and events. Full of beauty, challenge, hope, and trial, the promise of Christmas is that God will be with us in it all, our Immanuel.

John chapter 1 talks of the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, bringing light into a dark world. **It is my prayer that Christ would be your light.**

We are all faced with darkness in this world, in our own lives, in our own hearts – and yet the Word of God shines a light of hope. Stand in the light, use it to see clearly, let it shine in and through you as God equips you to love and serve those around you.

Remember Jesus' own words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." [Acts 20:35] As usual, Jesus is not simply setting an example or giving you some pro tips on how to live. He is simply telling you how it is. All things were made through and for Jesus after all, so it makes sense that we should listen when he is telling us how things are.

I've been reflecting recently about the Lord's Prayer and the request there to receive forgiveness for our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Often this is taken to say, "See, you must forgive in order to be forgiven."

While this is not entirely wrong, it is often said as if forgiving is a commandment that you must work to obey, and as a reward for your obedience you will receive forgiveness. What a silly thought – that God would

make our forgiveness contingent on our obedience. That sounds like Law, not Gospel.

Rather, the image of our lungs comes to mind: you must exhale before you can inhale. Just listen to a good boxing match and you can see the truth of this. Every boxer trains to exhale with each punch. But no training is required to inhale, for inhaling is so natural that there is little to no training required.

The body of Christ, the Church, the people of God need forgiveness to live in the same way our bodies need breath. We were made to receive it, to breathe it in, and live in it every moment. Breathing it out, giving it to others, letting it flow out of us is a must, but not as a legal requirement, but because that's what we were made to do – like lungs were made to breathe in and out.

Christmas is about Christ, God's anointed one, Jesus, who has come into the world, into our lives to bring forgiveness and life. **So come and worship with the body, hear the good news, the gospel, the promise of forgiveness. Breathe it in, breathe it out, and live.**

Your friend in Christ,

*Colin Beveridge*

Pastor Colin Beveridge



## Calendar

### Sunday, Dec. 1

8:30am Worship at Bethlehem  
9:30am Sunday School at Grace  
10:30am Worship at Grace

### Wednesday, Dec. 4

10:30am Advent Bible Study at Grace  
4:00pm Confirmation Class  
5:30pm Wed. Night Church School & evening Advent Bible Study in Vienna

### Sunday, Dec. 8

8:30am Worship at Bethlehem  
9:30am Grace Sunday School  
10:30am Worship at Grace

### Wednesday, Dec. 11

10:30am Advent Bible Study at Grace  
4:00pm Confirmation Class  
5:30pm Wed. Night Church School & evening Advent Bible Study in Vienna

### Sunday, Dec. 15 — Sunday School Christmas Programs

8:30am Worship at Bethlehem  
9:30am Sunday School at Grace  
10:30am Worship at Grace

### Wednesday, Dec. 18

10:30am Advent Bible Study at Grace  
4:00pm Confirmation Class  
5:30pm Advent Bible Study in Vienna

### Sunday, Dec. 22

8:30am Worship at Bethlehem  
10:30am Worship at Grace

## Christmas Eve

### Tuesday, Dec. 24

4:00pm Worship at Bethlehem  
6:30pm Worship at Grace

## Merry Christmas

### Wednesday, Dec. 25

### Sunday, Dec. 29

Worship at 10:30am in Vienna  
Breakfast served beginning at 8:30am

## What is Advent? What does it mean?

We have entered the first season of the church year. Yes, that's right! On November 24, we observed "Christ the King" Sunday, which is the last Sunday in our church year. Now, we begin Advent, which is the 4 weeks leading up to Christmas.

You may notice that the paraments at the front of the church are blue, which is known as the color of Hope. You may also notice an Advent wreath that has 4 candles around the outside and 1 candle in the middle. Each week we'll light 1 candle, traditionally understood as representing Hope, Faith, Joy, and Peace. On Christmas Eve, finally we can light the one in the center: the Christ Candle.

Advent invites us into the heart of the Gospel — the proclamation of Christ's coming for the forgiveness of sins. Advent is a season rich with promise and hope, as we focus on what God is doing for us in Christ. Each week centers on the message that Christ's coming brings forgiveness and renewal, drawing us deeper into the joy of His presence.

Advent is not just about waiting — it's about receiving. We receive Christ's love, His forgiveness, and His promises, made known to us through His Word and Sacraments. Christ's coming brings grace, life, and forgiveness.

*Adapted from Pastor Mark Anderson's LCMC Advent Planning Guide 2024*

## New Parish Directory

It's been more than 10 years since we published a church directory with everyone's pictures & contact info. Especially with all the new faces around, it's time for a new one!

### You can help us with this project by sending in these items:

- ♦ A family photo
- ♦ Names
- ♦ Mailing address
- ♦ Phone number(s)
- ♦ Email address

Ideally we'd like this information emailed to the parish office at: [bethlehem.grace.sd@gmail.com](mailto:bethlehem.grace.sd@gmail.com). But, if you only have a physical copy of your family photo, that is ok! We can scan it and return it to you. If email is inconvenient for you, get your photo & info to either Dianne Rider or Kristin Vandersnick. Thank you so much!

Would your family like to light the Advent wreath? Bethlehem & Grace are looking for families willing to read a brief passage & light the Advent candle to begin our December worship services. Talk to Pastor Colin if you're interested!



## Join us on Wednesdays for an Advent Bible Study

**\*Dec. 4, Dec. 11, and Dec. 18\***

### MORNING OPTION:

10:30am at Grace in W.L.

### EVENING OPTION:

5:30pm at Bethlehem in Vienna

Pastor Colin will host an Advent Bible Study on these three Wednesdays leading up to Christmas. All are welcome! Come to all three, or just come when you can. If the morning time does not work for your schedule, he will offer the same study on Wednesday evenings during Church School at Bethlehem.

## Bethlehem & Grace Welcome New Members



Both of our congregations are blessed and excited to be growing! Many new members were officially welcomed on Sunday, October 28. At Grace Lutheran Church in Willow Lake, these new members were welcomed: **Scott Clark, Richard & Kristen Clark**, and **the Engel family** (David, Crystal, Larisa, Axel, Oriona).

At Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Vienna, these new members were welcomed: **The Coauette family** (Anthony, Alexis, Steven, Mylon, Maggie), **the Morvant family** (Travis, Tayler, Dawson, Quorra, Waylon, Delores "Della"), **the Neeman family** (Tyler, Jordana, Brooks, Maren, Kase), and **the Roberts family** (Kirk, Shelby, Preston, Parker, Dawson, Liam, Sawyer, Alianna "Ali"). Holy Baptism was also celebrated at Bethlehem, for Steven Rogalski, Mylon & Maggie Coauette, children of Anthony & Lexi. God bless you!

You are a blessing to our churches! Whether you "officially" join, come regularly, or just visit, we pray that you find God's Word faithfully preached and joyful fellowship with us.

# Worship with us!

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## Bethlehem Lutheran Church \* Vienna, South Dakota

8:30am Sundays – Worship / 5:30pm Wednesdays – Church School  
[www.bethlehemvienna.org](http://www.bethlehemvienna.org) \* [www.facebook.com/bethlehemvienna](https://www.facebook.com/bethlehemvienna)



### SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

**Sunday, Dec. 15**  
**During 8:30am Worship in Vienna**

WORSHIP WITH US AS THE CHILDREN  
TELL AND SHOW US THE CHRISTMAS STORY  
THROUGH SCRIPTURE AND SONG

Brought to you by our Wednesday Night Church  
School kids, ages preschool–6th grade



This fall, our congregation blessed 80 quilts made by our Bethlehem quilters and sent them off through Lutheran World Relief. Thank you to these dedicated ladies who are continuing this tradition of making quilts for those in need around the world!

### Youth Schedule for December

Confirmation families, please note that Confirmation class will be held on Wednesdays 12/4, 12/11, and 12/18. There will NOT be Confirmation class on Wednesday 12/24 or 1/1.

Church School families, please note that children will be practicing for the Christmas program on Wednesdays 12/4 and 12/11. There will NOT be Church School on Wednesdays 12/18, 12/25, or 1/1. We will resume as usual in the new year.

Thank you, all, for faithfully ensuring that your students attend these Christian Education opportunities! Thank you also to Pastor Colin and the many teachers and volunteers that work so hard to make this all happen!

Let the little children  
*come to me*  
and do not hinder them,  
for to such belongs  
*the kingdom*  
of *heaven.*

Matthew 19:14 (ESV)

[DoNotDepart.com](http://DoNotDepart.com)



### Join us for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24th at 4:00pm  
Bethlehem Lutheran in Vienna

Celebrate the birth of Christ with Scripture,  
candles, and favorite Christmas hymns of faith

### I ♥ LEFSE

On Saturday morning, Nov. 23, the Bethlehem women's group once again hosted a "Heritage Baking Day," a tradition we truly enjoy! More than 20 people — from ages 70-something down to age 3 — rolled, cooked, and sampled Lefse. The group also made Krumkake, another Norwegian specialty. One family recipe included the traditional spice Cardamom, and another included almond flavoring. Both options were delicious! The inter-generational fellowship was wonderful, and we are pleased to be keeping these heritage food traditions alive!

### A Note about Online Offerings

Bethlehem Lutheran Church truly appreciates your financial offerings! With your support, our ministry of proclaiming God's Word can continue strongly here in this congregation and in our community. If you appreciate the ability to take care of financial transactions online, we do have an Online Giving option set up through our website: [www.bethlehemvienna.org](http://www.bethlehemvienna.org). Click on the "Online Giving" option in the top menu. There you can give a one-time gift or set up a recurring gift with your credit card or bank account. Thank you so much for your support!



# Worship with us!

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## Grace Lutheran Church \* Willow Lake, South Dakota

9:30am Sunday School / 10:30am Worship  
SD Highway 28, east side of Willow Lake, S.D.



### SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

**Sunday, Dec. 15**  
**During 10:30am Worship**

WORSHIP WITH US AS THE CHILDREN  
TELL AND SHOW US THE CHRISTMAS STORY  
THROUGH SCRIPTURE AND SONG

Brought to you by the Grace Sunday School



### Join us for our Christmas Eve Worship

December 24th at 6:30pm  
Grace Lutheran Church, Willow Lake

**Celebrate the birth of Christ with Scripture,  
candles, and favorite Christmas hymns of faith**



This fall has seen a renewal of activity at Grace Lutheran Church, with the successful return of its Sunday School! The congregation has enjoyed the energy and activity of about 15 children who are taking part in the Sunday morning class, held at 9:30am prior to the 10:30am worship service. Grace would like to express a big THANK YOU to the families who are participating, as well as the volunteers who are making it all happen. You are a blessing to this congregation & to the Lord!

### Youth Attend Augustana District High School Retreat

Pastor Colin, along with Teresa Verdon (Grace), and Ella Vandersnick (Bethlehem), traveled to Vining, MN in October to attend a High School Retreat hosted by the Augustana District of the LCMC. All reports point to a wonderful experience! The students did an in-depth study of the Book of Galatians, plus had time for games, fellowship, and worship. Around 40 students from several surrounding states attended the event.

### Youth Serve "Poultry Party"

On opening weekend of pheasant hunting season, middle school & high school youth from both Grace and Bethlehem served food at the annual Poultry Party in Vienna. The youth group would like to thank everyone who attended and enjoyed food and Bingo sponsored by the Vienna Fire Dept. Your freewill offerings will be used by the youth for mission work in our community!

Grace Lutheran Church would like to thank Tyler Neeman for his help in repairing and upgrading our sound system. Tyler is a Bethlehem member and is the Technology Coordinator at the W.L. School. The improved sound is a blessing to our worship services!

THANK  
YOU

### Worship Helpers

Grace would appreciate congregation members' help with worship services on Sunday mornings. Could you help serve as an usher, a scripture reader, or perhaps share a children's sermon? Please consider these opportunities & sign up on the bulletin board in the entryway. Thank you!

# A Survey for our Members

## Introduction:

After our two congregations voted to move from the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) to the LCMC (Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ), we organized ourselves into this current partnership between Bethlehem Lutheran Church & Grace Lutheran Church. We are pleased and grateful to both be served by Pastor Colin Beveridge, who is called as a Contract Pastor and who is continuing his education through Saint Paul Lutheran Seminary, based in St. Paul, MN. Colin's Call to our congregations is on a year-by-year basis, and as part of that Call there is a yearly Review to touch base on how things are going in his Call and in our congregations.



## Your Role:

Pastor Colin, your Parish Council, and your Congregational Council leaders want to hear from you! This survey is part of Pastor Colin's annual Review. The questions are based on the document "Job Description for the Office of Pastor" that was adopted by both congregations at their annual meetings last January.

**Please help us by completing this survey. We realize it is lengthy! We'd love to have you fill out the entire survey, but if time does not allow, please just do as much of it as you are able. Your input is welcomed & appreciated!**

Use the lines below to write your answers, or use additional paper if necessary. Mail your survey back to Bethlehem or Grace at our PO Box 197 in Willow Lake, SD 57278, or drop your survey in the Survey Box available at either church starting next Sunday, Dec. 8. If the church office has your email address on file, you will receive an email survey on Monday, Dec. 2 and you can reply to that email. If you have any questions, please visit with Butch Brenden (Bethlehem council president) or Doug LaMont (Grace council president). Thank you so much for your feedback! **We would appreciate having these surveys back by Dec. 20 if at all possible.**

## SURVEY QUESTIONS

### Spiritual:

1. How does Colin show commitment to prayer and study of the Word?
2. How does Colin show he is willing to teach, model, and apply the Word of God to those listening and watching?
3. How could Colin grow & improve in these areas?

### Personal:

1. Does Colin take time to get to know the people he is serving and become a part of the communities he serves?
2. Does Colin listen carefully to those he serves?
3. Does Colin show self-motivation to work on the mission and ministry of these congregations?
4. How could Colin grow & improve in this areas?

### Professional:

1. Are the Sacraments being administered faithfully according to the Holy Scriptures & to the Lutheran Confessions?
2. How has Colin encouraged and instructed lay people of all ages to participate in worship?
3. Are there any ways Colin could better fulfill these responsibilities?

### Leadership:

1. Does Colin promote the mission & vision of the congregation & the parish, and does he help us revisit these statements annually?
2. How does Colin provide guidance to the organization & ministries of our congregations?
3. How does Colin assist with coordinating the activities of the parish?
4. In what ways does Colin serve as an advisor during council meetings?
5. Does Colin show that he has a goal of strengthening lay leadership & empowering offices, like that of Deacons, to grow as religious leaders for the congregations?
6. Are there any ways Colin could grow & improve in these areas of leadership?

### Pastoral Care & Spiritual Direction

1. Does Colin take the initiative in providing spiritual direction and pastoral care to members and friends of the congregation in all seasons of life?
2. How is Colin doing in leading Confirmation classes?
3. Is Colin visiting congregation members who are homebound, hospitalized, or in care facilities?
4. How does Colin do in engaging non-members or potential members of the congregation?
5. Are there any ways that Colin could better fulfill these responsibilities?

### Public Presence

1. How do you feel Colin does in representing the congregations in the community and at any denominational gatherings?
2. Does Colin take an interest in school & community activities?
3. How could Colin grow in these areas?

### Other Feedback

1. Do you feel positive & optimistic about the direction of your congregation? Why or why not?
2. Do you have any concerns about your congregation's future?
3. Are there any other comments you'd like to add?