

Lent

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14.

Our first Lent Midweek service will be on **February 21 at Zion**. We will alternate with Zion as usual. We will follow the pattern we have in recent years with a meal at 6:00 followed by some type of learning activity and worship. The topic has not yet been determined so if you have ideas, please let me know.

The Sunday mornings in Lent will be a series called “Learning from Jesus.”

Church Website—bethlehemdavey.org



Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Davey

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Bethlehem Star



January/February 2018

Encounter Christ Grow in faith Love as Christ loved Tell the Story

The Year in Review

Blessings to all of you as we begin this new year. In January, the newsletter does two things – first, I go through a “year in review” which serves as my annual report. As a spirituality practice, that’s known as an examen.

What were the highpoints of the year? What were some of the reactions and feelings surrounding things we did? What worked and what didn’t?

In an examen, you next look at God’s activity in the midst of those events, activities and feelings and look for what it might say about where God is leading us in the coming year. The second part of the newsletter looks forward to my thoughts and ideas for the coming year. I am always open to other ideas...I would especially appreciate some input for our Lent services, especially ideas you might have for topics or activities.

Pastoral Acts

March 26 – Baptism of Brecken Knox Taylor, son of Brandy and Ty Taylor

November 30 – Funeral for Richard Kreiner

Worship

In commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation we have been working our way through Luther’s Small Catechism in the sermon. We’ve completed the Ten Commandments and the Creed. We have the Lord’s Prayer, Communion and Baptism left. We will finish by Lent and start something new. Worship attendance fluctuates but is probably around 30. It has declined some over the last couple years, mostly due to kids graduating...or just not coming, and the oldest members no longer coming due to age. If everyone who comes at least somewhat regularly came on the same Sunday we would have 51. This is perhaps my biggest struggle as a pastor.

Adult Education

Also as part of the Reformation 500 observation Mike Unverferth led an adult small group study called *By Heart*, based on the Small Catechism. There was a good little group that made most of the sessions and the discussion was good. Mike felt the video didn’t offer enough of the theology This is something we will likely try again.

A Bethlehem-Zion women’s group has continued to meet roughly monthly. We’ve used a variety of sources for discussion. There have regularly been 5 – 7 women in attendance.

Lent Midweek services included an education/discussion time. The attempt this year was to make it a bit more cross-generational. Will keep working to make this as quality as possible for all ages.

Children's Education/Confirmation/Cross-generational Education

We have revamped how we are doing all of this. We have 5 boys in confirmation and Makenna who is Sunday school aged. One Sunday a month is "All-Congregation Sunday School" which is a part of the confirmation program as well as Sunday school and adult education.

In addition, the confirmation class meets once per month with parents and Pastor Kris. There are occasional home assignments as well.

There is another Sunday per month that is a more youth focused Sunday school time.

The Christmas program was a cross-generational program put together by those attending the All-Congregation Sunday school under the final writing and direction of Annie Mumgaard. It was amazing!

Service/Giving

We prepared and served lunch at Matt Talbot Kitchen on a Sunday morning, with worship at Matt Talbot before serving

We collected health care items during Lent for Clinic With a Heart in Lincoln

We had a table at the Freed for Life dinner which supports the Nebraska Synod prison and transitional ministries

You donated money for the Bridges to Hope Bike-A-Thon in which Pastor Kris rode a miserable, wet 18 miles.

A portion of our Potato Bake proceeds went to the Waverly Teammates program

We've supported the mission of the Nebraska Synod with our Mission Share of \$4800 annually plus dividends from our investment fund

We've given to Oaks Indian Mission with our Lent offerings

We collected and put together LWR personal care kits

75 – 100 quilts were donated to Lutheran World relief

We collected school supplies for the Center for People in Need

Several people participated in the Center for People in Need Toyland

We've taken worship services to the Saunders County Care Center

It is a blessing to me to have continued to serve God's world with you all this past year. I look forward to the coming year and new opportunities to grow and serve.

The Coming Year

Worship—we have been through the Narrative Lectionary cycle once (4 years) and this year the series on Luther's Small Catechism. I love the Narrative Lectionary but I'm considering going back to the old Revised Common Lectionary for at least a year to keep things fresh. It would also give us a chance to focus a little on the rhythm of the church year.

Digital world—As someone for whom most of my life thus far was lived before the digital age, I've probably done pretty well. But in this day and age, the spread of the gospel to people who don't show up on Sunday and whom we may never encounter face to face will be through a digital platform. Digital resources will also become increasingly important for those in the church as well. I'm hoping to use some continuing education money and time to learn more about how to effectively use our online presence for ministry

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Education—I anticipate using the same format for Confirmation and Sunday school for at least the next two years. At that point the five boys will all be confirmed. I think the cross-generational Sunday school model will continue to work well for the two younger kids for as long as we need to. Adult education remains an important cornerstone, whether it's done with just adults or a mixed generation group. Having adult role models who continue to learn and grow in faith is crucial. I am always open to ideas for topics, events, etc.

Service/Giving

I continue to be grateful for your willingness to step up and participate in our serving and giving activities. I anticipate continuing to support, either financially or by work, the different ministries we've been a part of. If you have organizations or ministries you'd especially like to see us support, please talk to me. I'm especially interested in hearing about local opportunities...at one of the schools our kids attend or another organization that serves the community in which we are placed. We have a second investment fund that should begin earning dividends in the near future. Half of those dividends have been pegged for local ministries. The three activities I would like us to do are serving at Matt Talbot, going to worship at the Penitentiary and going to the Tri-Faith initiative in Omaha

January/February Calendar

January 28	9:15—Youth focus Sunday school 10:30—Worship Blessing for those who work in computers, IT and human resources
January 30	6:00 pm—Women's group
January 31	9:00 am—Quilting
February 4	10:30 am—Worship with Holy Communion 11:30 am—Souper Bowl lunch. Bring a free will offering for Matt Talbot
February 7	9:00 am—Quilting
February 11	9:15 am—All-Congregation Sunday school 10:30 am—Guitar worship—3rd grade Bible Blessing for those in maintenance, property management, grounds keepers, waste management
February 14	Ash Wednesday worship—6:30 pm
February 18	9:15—Youth focus Sunday school 10:30—Worship with Holy Communion
February 21	9:00 am—Quilting 6:00 pm—Lent midweek supper, discussion and worship at Zion
February 25	No Sunday school 10:30 am—worship

Looking ahead

March 4—First Communion for Makenna Hellerich