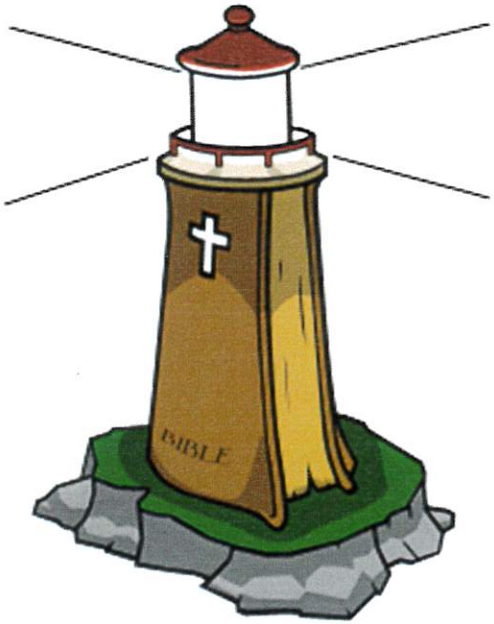
Bethany and East Lemonweir Lutheran Churches
618 West River Street
New Lisbon, WI. 53950

RETURN SERVICES *REQUESTED*

The Beacon

Bethany / East Lemonweir Parish
February 2026



"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?" – **Psalm 27:1**

God's beloved,

February is usually a month that gets me to ponder love in my life. The love shared between friends and family, how I have felt love, tried to show love, and yes—how I could not love without God's love so whole heartedly given to us through God's gifts. But this year, due to an early full moon after the spring equinox (Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon after March 21st) I've been pondering Lent.

It is one of my favorite church seasons (up there with Christmas and Easter) because it helps me remember that being a disciple of Jesus is transformative. It's a dedicated time where we focus on Jesus' message of repentance, forgiveness, and grace. Which brings me to introduce our Lenten theme for mid-week services.

As my colleagues and I got together to discern our theme for this year—we thought about what does it mean to go through Lent as Lutherans. We are not the only denomination that practices a time of intensified worship during Lent. We are not the only denomination that proclaims that we believe only through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Yet—the Christian church is filled with different denominations. So, what does being Lutheran mean? What makes us unique?

Each Wednesday we will hear scripture and a reflection on several of the unique facets of the Lutheran interpretation of God's word in our lives. It can sound intimidating—but I promise it won't be. We are hoping these services become a time to discover our unique way of looking at how God acts in the world and that they can help you begin to answer the questions of: why do I follow Jesus and why am I Lutheran? I hope you join me. Themes for each week are as follows...

February 18 (Ash Wednesday): Saint and Sinner
February 25: Justification by grace through faith
March 4: Law and Gospel
March 11: Means of Grace
March 18: Theology of the Cross
March 25: Mercy
April 2 (Munday Thursday): Vocation

---Pastor Lucy

Bethany 2026 Annual Meeting Updates

On January 18 Bethany held their annual church meeting. Updates from the meeting:

- The 2026 budget of ~$171,000 was approved, with an agreed upon motion to add the *Council Development Retreat* and *Synod Assembly Retreat* expenses as part of the regular budget line items going forward.
- Election Updates:
  - **Mark and Debby Hansen, Keith and William Korbein**, and **Larry and Kathy Thome** were voted to continue as Financial Secretaries (responsible for counting each week).
  - **Michaele Korbein** was voted in as Treasurer.
  - Karl Katuin, Deanna Smith, and Glenda Swinehart terms on Council ended in 2025. Glenda has stated that she would continue on as and two other nominees, Tim Parker and Galen Lingl were added to the slate of new Council members. **Glenda Swinehart, Tim Parker and Galen Lingl** were voted in as new Council members.
  - After the Annual Meeting, the new Council has a short meeting. Mark Hansen was voted in as President, Galen Lingl as Vice-President, and Larry Thome as Secretary.
  - **Deanna Smith and Joanne Klinker** were voted in as Synod Assembly members representing Bethany.
  - **Ross Hardie** was voted in as Sugar Creek Bible Camp delegate.
  - The Financial Audit position was not voted on as there are some changes being looked at for 2026 in the auditing process which may require changes to the Bethany by-laws. The Financial Auditors will be determined in the near future.

Here's a Technology Update!

Online Giving

Did you know that 78% of Americans prefer digital banking over regular banking and that mobile bank account usage increased by 62.8% between 2014 and 2024? (*per Moneyzine Financial*)

Also, the growth of online giving to churches has been significant, with 39% of donations made electronically, such as through credit cards or apps. (*per Ministry Brands Technology*)

Bethany has now implemented this functionality as an alternative to writing checks or giving cash donations each week. Why would I want to use online giving when it's different that the way I normally give?

- **It's Simple** – You can set up recurring donations for automatic giving for any schedule (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually).
- **It's Convenient** – You can give anytime, from anywhere using a phone or computer, without needing cash or checks. If you're away from church for a week, or on vacation, you don't have to write two checks to "catch-up". You re-occurring donation continues to support Bethany's ministries.
- **It's Secure** – Our online giving application, Vanco, protects financial information, and uses the same security processes that all banks use.

You can set up use a credit card, a debit card or use an automatic withdrawal from your bank account to set up regular online giving and Bethany has set up various fund options (regular, quilting, building and grounds) where you can define where you want your giving to be allocated.

Many people already pay bills online. Maybe it's time to see if online giving is an option for you in helping to support Bethany's ministries?

Use the QR code above or go to Bethany's **website** to check out this new functionality!

Bethany's Website

Wait, did someone mention Bethany's website?

Bethany's "new" website (www.bethanyeast.com) has been up and running for over a year. If you haven't looked at it in a bit, it has information for existing members as well as people who may be looking for a new church. The content of the website includes:

- Overview of our churches (Bethany and East)
- Bio of Pastor Lucy and her monthly message
- Council members
- History of our churches (helps with trivia)
- Our ministries
- Gallery of photos
- Bethany W-ELCA updates
- Monthly church calendar
- What a visitor can expect when they visit
- Weekly Bethany bulletins
- Bethany worship video from the prior week
- Weekly news
- Worship assistant schedules
- Beacon newsletters
- Monthly Bethany food pantry themes
- Link to Bethany online giving

If you have any content (information, photos, new pages, etc...) you would like to add to the webpage please contact the church office or Larry Thome (larrythome@aol.com).

February 2026 Worship Assistants

East Lemonweir Readers

2/1 – Audrey Scholl

2/8 – Bret Haschke

2/15 – Jennifer Sarnow

2/22 – Dawn Nelson

East Lemonweir Greeters

2/1 – Bret & Billie Jo Haschke

2/8 – Diane Clark

2/15 – Ted Haschke

2/22 – Henry & Margarete Hummelbeck

Bethany

2/1

Assit Minister – Mark Hansen

Reader – Debby Hansen

Communion Asst – Mark Hansen

Ushers – Pending

2/8

Assit Minister – Michaele Korbein

Reader – Ross Hardie

Communion Assts – Michaele Korbein, Ross Hardie & Inger Kirkwood

Ushers – Beth Preuss & Collette Schultz

2/15

Assist Minister – Beth Preuss

Reader – Barb Parker

Communion Asst – Beth Preuss

Usher – Tim Parker & Karl Katuin

2/22

Assist Minister – Larry Thome

Reader - Sheila Stark

Communion Assts – Larry Thome, Betty Krotzman, Barb Parker

Ushers Mark & Debby Hansen

Bethany & East Lemonweir Lutheran Parishes

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Bethany Council 12PM	**2**	**3** Rachel Circle 4pm @ Bethany	**4** 9 am Quilting @ Bethany	**5** 9 am Bible Study @ Bethany	**6**	**7**
8 BINGO after Worship – Bring a food item for our Blessing Box instead of giving prizes.	**9**	**10**	**11** 9 am Quilting @ Bethany	**12** 9 am Bible Study @ Bethany	**13**	**14** Happy Valentine Day!
15 Family Sunday School after Worship	**16**	**17** **Beacon Articles due.**	**18** Ash Wednesday 6:30 pm Worship 9 am Quilting @ Bethany	**19** 9 am Bible Study @ Bethany	**20**	**21**
22 W-ELCA meeting after Worship	**23**	**24**	9 am Quilting @ Bethany Lenten Supper @ 5 & Worship @ 6:30 pm	**26** 9 am Bible Study @ Bethany	**27**	**28**
Worship **9 am Bethany** **10:30 East Lemonweir**	**AA Meetings** **6:30 PM** **Tues @ East Lemonweir** **Thu @ Bethany**					**March 8th Clocks Spring Ahead**

FEBRURARY 2026 CELEBRATIONS

<u>Bethany Birthdays</u>

Jordan McGuire – 1

Deanna Smith – 8

Betty Krotzman – 9

Greg Gollmar – 11

Simon Schultz – 11

Taylor Bever – 11

Patricia Krause - 12

Maura Baumgart - 14

Kalie Lingl – 16

William Korbein – 16

Alicia Wyss – 24

Leah Faber – 26

Marcia Adams – 28

<u>Bethany Anniversaries</u>

John & Dawn Van Meter – 11

Please let Betty know if we need to include someone on the celebration list.

<u>East Lemonweir Birthdays</u>

Krystle Stoughtenger – 3

Marilyn Wetley – 10

Connie Wolfgram -11

Marion LaFortune – 24

Brad Stoughtenger – 27

<u>East Lemonweir Anniversaries</u>

Heinrich & Margarete Hummelbeck - 28

At Bethany

February 8th

Hint for the big prize game:

Have a **H**appy **H**eart

****NO** prize donations are needed at this time. Thank you to all who have donated to the prize basket.

FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL

February 15th following service

Bethany Lutheran Church – New Lisbon, Wisconsin

Church Council Meeting Minutes

Sunday, January 4, 2026

ouncil Members Present:	Karl Katuin, Pastor Lucy Hardie, Mark Hansen, Debby Hansen, Inger Kirkwood, Glenda Swinehart, Michaele Korbein, Larry Thome
Council Members Absent:	Deanna Smith
Guests:	None

Agenda

Call to Order:	President Karl Katuin called the Council meeting to order at 11:59 AM
Agenda Approval:	Karl Katuin presented the agenda for approval. Larry Thome requested an addition to the agenda – Financial Audit Update. ***Debby Hansen made a motion to accept the meeting agenda as amended, seconded by Mark Hansen; motion passed 7-0.***
Devotion:	Pastor Lucy shared a devotion about praying the Lutheran catechism. Our burdens should not be restrictions, but gifts from God. Everything we have are gifts from God; God who gives us our gifts will be present in the future. How can we look for gifts from God in difficult times.
Secretary's Report: *(Larry)*	Larry Thome presented the minutes from the December 2025 Council Meeting. There were no questions on the report as presented. ***Mark Hansen made a motion to accept the December 2025 Council Meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Glenda Swinehart; motion passed 7-0.***
Treasurer's Report: *(Michaele)*	Michaele Korbein presented the General Fund Checking Register, the Savings Summary Report, the Statement of Financial Income and Expense and the Bethany Memorial Summary Report as of December 31, 2025. There were no questions or comments on the reports as presented. Michaele also mentioned that Bethany renewed the $31,000 CD for one year. ***Larry Thome made a motion to accept the Treasurer's reports as presented, seconded by Inger Kirkwood; motion passed 7-0.***
Pastor's Report:	Pastor Lucy expressed her thanks for the generous Christmas gift from the congregation. Bethany received our renewal for membership in the New Lisbon Chamber of Commerce. We will continue to support this with a non-profit annual membership fee of $75. Similar to last year, Lenten messages will be shared from other area Pastors, but Pastor Lucy will lead all our mid-week services. Pastor Lucy is also planning another Communion class (for new communicants or people who would like a refresher on communion) sometime in March on a Saturday.

Committee Reports

Education: *(Deanna)*	As Deanna is enjoying the warm weather for the winter (jealous?), Debby Hansen will be her back-up while she is gone.
Discipleship: *(Glenda and Debby)*	Decorations for Christmas in the Park (Riverside) need to be taken down soon. A monthly calendar of fellowship activities has been created for 2026.
Social Concerns: *(Inger)*	In lieu of Thanksgiving baskets, Bethany donated 11 Festival gift cards of $50 each to help families over the Christmas break who don't have access to New Lisbon school meals.
Worship: *(Larry)*	No updates, but requested Pastor Lucy to provide any updates on when we will need Supply Pastors. As of now, Pastor Lucy shared 4/19, 6/7 (synod assembly), 6/14 and 11/22 as current dates.

	Bethany Lutheran Church – New Lisbon, Wisconsin
	Church Council Meeting Minutes
	Sunday, January 4, 2026

Property: *(Mark)*	There is an issue with the boiler for the sanctuary. The temperature is 45 degrees! Bolder Services was called and the issue was with the starter fly-wheel bearing. A new blower assembly kit will be required and the cost is $1,632. ***Mark Hansen made a motion to accept the proposal to fix the boiler as presented by Bolder Services, seconded by Glenda Swinehart; motion passed 7-0.*** There may also be a potential issue with the furnace for the fellowship hall – the blower makes a loud noise. Bolder will look at it when they come to fix the sanctuary boiler. Grey Electric has not yet provided a timeframe for installing the outlets for the roof heating cable electric outlets that was approved at the December Council meeting.
Old Business	
2026 Council Positions:	The Council discussed open 2026 positions and potential candidates to fill the slots. A recommended slate will be presented at the Annual Meeting on January 18.
New Business	
2025 Audit:	The 2025 Audit is not complete. Part of the reason is that one of the audit members was unable to participate in the audit process. Based on the timing, the audit results may not be available for the Annual Meeting, so they will have to be shared with the congregation at a later date. Currently, the Audit committee serves one term of two years based on the Betany by-laws. Given the skills and knowledge required for this position, it makes more sense to have the terms be a longer length than swapping audit members on and off. Mark Hansen and Larry Thome were tasked with reviewing the by-laws and coming up with a recommendation on what the audit committee terms should be and an update to the by-laws which would need to be presented to the congregation for approval.
Next Meeting:	The next Council meeting will be February 1st, 2026 at 12:00 PM. The devotions and announcement schedule will be created once the new council members are identified.
Prayer/Adjourn Meeting:	Pastor Lucy led the Council in a prayer. ***Glenda Swinehart made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Debby Hansen; motion passed 7-0.*** The meeting adjourned at 12:47 PM.

Submitted by Larry Thome, Council Secretary

EAST LEMONWEIR LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MEETING

January 18, 2026

Present: Pastor Lucy Hardie, Roger Nelson, Roger Pitcel, Kathryn Pitcel, Audrey Scholl, Margaret Hummelbeck, and Marlene Pelton.

Absent: Gayle Hempel and Connie Wolfgram.

Pastor Lucy Hardie gave an opening prayer.

A motion to approve the secretary's minutes was made by Roger Pitcel and second by Audrey Scholl. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Marlene Pelton and second by Audrey Scholl. Motion carried.

Marlene Pelton pointed out that she and Audrey Scholl found two typo's in the treasurer's report in the annual report. The total years expense was $198,827.93 or $1,000. less than printed. And, the checkbook balance is $43,530.65 or $.20 less than in the annual report.

Roger Nelson thanked Margarete Hummelbeck for her tenure as a council member. Bret Haschke and Jennifer Sarnow have accepted that their names be brought before the congregation at the Annual meeting as possible replacement candidates for Margarete Hummelbeck. Roger Nelson's term is also expiring, and he will run again.

Marlene Pelton will contact Melvin Miller of Hillpoint Builders as there are a couple of repairs that need to be addressed on the metal arches on the work done this past year.

Marlene Pelton asked if the Church Council would like to sponsor a Raffle basket for the Prime Rib Dinner event. Motion made by Roger Pitcel and second by Audrey Scholl to do this. Motion carried.

Pastor Hardie advised that Diana Berry will be reinstated as an active member of East Lemonweir Lutheran Church on Sunday, February 1, 2026.

Pastor Hardie advised that Bret and Billie Jo Haschke would like to be considered as our Synod Assembly delegates scheduled for June 5-7, 2026. This will be voted on at our Annual Meeting.

Marlene Pelton pointed out that in 2025 1 couple did janitorial work for 4 months, 1 person did 6 months, and 1 individual did 1 month, and another couple did 1 month. In 2024 1 couple did 5 months, 1 person did 5 months, 1 person did 1 month, and 1 couple did 1 month. Even though we are an aging congregation there should still be some persons able to assist in this activity.

Marlene Pelton pointed out that Roger Nelson with assistance from Dawn Nelson has done snow removal at East Lemonweir for years. Roger has also done numerous handyman projects for the church. And, due to his close proximity to the church, when it is necessary to unlock the church for workmen, Roger has run up to open the door and turn off the alarm. He then returns to turn the alarm back on in the evening. Though Roger is retired, we still don't want to take advantage of him. Marlene suggested a reimbursement of $500.00 per year-same as the treasurer and organist get per year, or going back two years a total of $1,000.00. Motion made by Roger Pitcel and second by Marlene Pelton to pay $1,000.00 to Roger for the past two years. Motion carried. This item will be looked at again next year.

Roger Nelson advised that our parking lot will need to be addressed in the not too distant future. To do the job correctly we will have to tear up the seal coating and replace it with blacktop.

Motion made by Roger Pitcel and second by Marlene Pelton to adjourn.

Closed with praying the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Pelton, pro-tempore

W-ELCA News

Mission statement: To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

This month's bible study from *'gather'* is 'Now let us Pray' – which explores ways we can pray not only for the earth, but with the earth as God has planted the gospel all around us since the beginning of time.

Check out the ***gather*** magazines in the library area for inspirational Bible studies and uplifting stories.

Upcoming events:

Tues. Feb. 3rd – Rachel Circle
W-ELCA – Sunday, Feb 22nd after church service.
If we continue the Lenten soup suppers, they will begin on Wed. Feb. 25

A thought: 1John 4:8 – Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.