

Dear People of Bethlehem,

We give thanks each and every day for your willingness to be a part of the Bethlehem church community. For your commitment to supporting the work of this place where we gather to hear about the radical promise of God's never-ending grace and unconditional love. This place where we support and mutually encourage one another through the joys and sorrows of life. This place which allows us to have an impact on the world in ways that are far greater than any one of us would be able to do individually.

We live in a time where there is great need. So much so that it can feel overwhelming at times. Faith organizations, like Bethlehem, offer us an opportunity to utilize the gifts that God has blessed us with – our time, our talents and skills, and our financial resources – in conjunction with one another to be forces for change, love, and justice. Where we can be a part of something bigger than ourselves and do something to make a difference. That's why this year's stewardship emphasis is entitled **Called to Serve: Here and In the World**. As you consider how you might financially support the work of our congregation, we also encourage you to discern how you are being called to be active in our congregation, in our community, and in the world.

Your council is currently working on creating our 2026 budget. In order to meet rising costs and continue to do crucial ministry work, we estimate that an additional 4% over the giving for 2025, or roughly \$28,000 will be needed. If every family or individual were willing to increase their giving for the coming year, to whatever degree is possible and most meaningful for you, we could easily meet these goals to support the ministry of this congregation.

Please prayerfully consider what you are able to give and complete the **commitment card** included in this letter. Bring it with you to church on **October 19th**, return it to the church office, or submit your pledge virtually using this link: <https://forms.gle/mJ5MmLeNewYK58Hb7>. If you have never made a financial commitment to Bethlehem, please consider joining us this year. And if you need to decrease or stop your giving for any reason, we understand, and invite you to please reach out to let us know so that we can be of support to you and your family.

We've also included a **Ministry Involvement Form** which we'd love for you to fill out and return with your commitment card. Many of you may not have seen this since you first joined Bethlehem as new members, and most likely your interests, skills, talents, and availability have changed since then. We would love for you to look at all the incredible opportunities there are to be involved in the ministry of this congregation and choose one (if not more!) that you would like to do in the coming year. And if you don't quite see exactly what you are looking for, that's okay! We've left room for you to tell us what you think might be the latest and greatest new ministry here at Bethlehem. There is also space to share the names of other organizations you plan to work with, or list other action commitments you have for the coming year.

Together, let us consider not only what we might give, but also what we can do in the interest of making this world a closer reflection of the kingdom of God.

Thank you for your Stewardship,
Pastor Laura, Pastor Sam, and your BLC Council