

# Bethany Lutheran Church

"To grow so deep in Christ through worship, education,  
and fellowship that we celebrate by reaching out to others."



## IMPORTANT DATES

- 12-1 Hanging of the Greens
- 12-7 Cookie walk
- 12-9 Council meeting
- 12-15 Children's program
- 12-15 EPIC
- 12-24 Candlelight Services  
@ 5:00 & 8:00 pm
- 01-19 Annual meeting



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you! It's hard to believe another year of the church calendar has flown by and we embark on the beginning of a new one with the season of Advent. But what really is Advent? The name Advent is from a Latin word that means "coming." During this first liturgical season of the church year we focus on the infant Jesus coming in the past, the risen Christ coming in the present through word and sacrament and in fellowship with one another, and lastly we prepare and look forward to the second coming of Christ at the end of time when He will make all things new. (S. Anita Stauffer, *Altar Guild and Sacristy Handbook*: Augsburg Fortress, 2000) Advent is a season of hope.

Our culture is full of things we need to do in order to prepare for Christmas. We know what they are: string the lights on the house, decorate the tree, shop for the perfect gift, get the cards out in the mail, buy the Christmas ham and all the fixings, clean the house, etc. At times, these preparations can so fully consume us that we completely gloss over Advent and jump right into the Christmas festivities. I wonder if we were making a list and added "prepare for the second coming of Christ" what others might say if they saw it. I suppose even we might look at it and wonder aloud, "What in the world does that mean?"

Most certainly part of this preparation is done in the presence of the gathered assembly on Sunday morning where the resurrected Christ meets us in word, sacrament, and one another. This is where we hear, see, touch, and taste the promises of God made in Jesus Christ. This is where we come to remember we are part of God's storied people. We come to recall how in Christ God came to the world in a new way. We come to proclaim the Easter message that "He has died. He is risen. He will come again!" We come to be filled with the hope of the resurrection that says death will not have the final say. We come but then Christ sends us. He sends us into the world and part of our Advent preparation is certainly done in the world as we testify to the good news of His coming. This testimony is done in words but also in action as the risen Christ meets the world through our hands. Advent is one season of the church year but in all reality Advent is lived out each day of our life as baptized children of God. Each day is an opportunity to testify to the Christ who has come, is still with us, and most assuredly will come again to take us to Himself and make all things new!

Blessings on your Advent preparations! May the peace of Christ be with you all!

Pastor Chad

## Contact Information

Bethany Lutheran Church  
235 South Second Street  
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Pastor Chad Whaley  
pastor@wbbethany.org

Office Hours  
Monday & Thursday  
9:00 am - Noon

Admin. Assistant: Paula Casper  
blcsecretary@lcom.net

Office Hours  
Tuesday & Thursday 7:30-11:30 AM  
Office Phone: (319) 643-5998

\*Pastor Chad is also available by  
appointment.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK!

Simply search "Bethany Lutheran  
Church (ELCA) West Branch, Iowa" on  
facebook and "like" our page!



# BIRTHDAYS

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- 12/02 Bruce Jeffries
- 12/05 Jim Yanecek
- 12/06 Wanda Anderson
- 12/07 Kellee McCrory
- 12/10 Barb Campbell
- 12/14 Beth Kaufman  
Liz McCrory
- 12/15 Kami Poppen
- 12/17 Traci Fryauf
- 12/19 Jim Friis
- 12/20 Auron Marsh
- 12/21 Lindsey Zimmerman
- 12/23 Amber Marsh
- 12/26 Nancy Bruns

## Bethany Books

by Frank Frostestad

### Books for Adults

The theme for this month is books that have been recommended to me either by members or in *The Lutheran* magazine. The book *Zealot: The Life And Times Of Jesus of Nazareth* by Reza Aslan was recommended by a member. This is not a conventional biography of the life of Jesus. It proved to be most thought provoking for me. The author puts Jesus in the context of first century Palestine which was filled with would-be messiahs and Roman control. He attempts to strip away centuries of assumptions and traditions of the man we know as Jesus of Nazareth. Balancing the Jesus of the Gospels against the historical sources, Aslan describes a man full of conviction and passion but with contradictions. He grapples with who Jesus understood himself to be. *Zealot* gives a fresh perspective on of the greatest stories ever told as it affirms the radical and transformative nature of Jesus's life and mission.

*99 Blessings: An Invitation To Life* By Brother David Steindl-Rast is a collection of original blessings meant to guide readers through each day with wisdom and spirit. They help to focus our attention on all the blessings, big and small, that we tend to overlook in our rushed lives. This book was recommended in the May, 2013 *Lutheran*.

*Simple Faith: Moving Beyond Religion As You Know It To Grow In Your Relationship With God* by Margaret Silf was recommended in the July, 2012 *Lutheran*. For many people, faith is based on creeds, doctrine, and head knowledge. It's about mastering the "facts" and having the "right" answers. Silf believes that faith is not about mastery but about mystery, and that living that mystery allows us to properly shift our focus from religion to relationship. She talks about the call for Christians to discern the divine presence in everyday life.

*Soul Unfinished: Finding Happiness, Taking Risks & Trusting God As We Grow Older* by Robert Atwell is an examination of some of the challenges and rewards of the last quarter of life. In other words, what is important? This book has wise advice by a man who has been a college chaplain, a monk, parish minister, and bishop. He sees the last third of life as a time of freedom, abundance, with many choices, and a renaissance of creativity and wonder. Contentment should be the aim of elders, but for many it is not. It is the changing attitude to the life we have on earth and our growing thoughtfulness about what it means to be alive that is important. This book was recommended in the January, 2013 *Lutheran*.

*The Welcoming Congregation: Roots And Fruits Of Christian Hospitality* by Henry G. Brinton was recommended in the December, 2012 *Lutheran*. Brinton believes that hospitality is the key to becoming a Christian community. This is especially true since we are living in a society that is becoming increasingly polarized. He is a parish pastor who took a three month sabbatical to examine congregations where hospitality is evident in their respect for people of diverse opinions, perspectives and lifestyles. He came to the conclusion that five areas of focus are needed to transform more congregations into uncommon communities: worship, nurture, extend hospitality, serve, and work for reconciliation.

### Books For Children

Note the Christmas books that are on display.

### DVD's

Note the Christmas themed DVD's on display.



Bethany's annual meeting will be held following worship on January 19th. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend.

At the 2013 Churchwide Assembly this past August, a number of mandatory amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations were adopted. These amendments are required to be added to Bethany's constitution and approved at our annual meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup>. A document showing the proposed additions, deletions, and modifications will be available in the Great Hall to pick up and review prior to the annual meeting or you can go to the website and there will be a link to that document on the synod website. *The Church Council asks that you please review this document prior to the annual meeting.* Thank you!



## Adult Education Opportunities

Pastor Chad's sermons can now be found on Bethany's website ([www.wbbethany.org](http://www.wbbethany.org)) by placing your cursor over the "Resource" tab found on the home page and then selecting "Sermons" when it pops up. Additionally, some people have requested an email with the sermon attached. If you prefer that method please contact Pastor Chad.

### Thursday Women's Bible Study

7:00 p.m. in the Great Hall  
All are Welcome



### Bethany Men's Breakfast Bible Study Group

Wednesdays at 6:00 a.m. in the Great Hall  
All are Welcome

## Updates/Reminders

### Reminder:

If you or a loved one is in the hospital and desire a pastoral visit, please have someone contact the church at 643-5998.



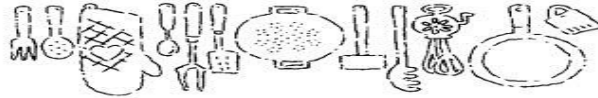
## Cookie Walk is December 7

The church will be open until 9:00 pm Friday and will open at 7:00 am Saturday so you can drop off all those cookies you have been busy baking.



Candlelight Service

Christmas Eve Services  
will be at  
5:00 PM and 8:00 PM



### Kitchen News

Donations are being accepted to replenish kitchen supplies. Needed: tea towels, lemonade mix, coffee, gallon and quart baggies, and dish rags. Thanks.

## Schedule change

The worship team would like you to be aware that the sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated on the second and fourth Sundays of December (rather than the first and third). This is due to the fact we will have our traditional Hanging of the Green service on December 1<sup>st</sup> and Pastor Chad will also be away on vacation and on December 15 we will have our annual youth Christmas program. Therefore, services of Holy Communion will be on December 8, December 22, Christmas Eve and also December 29<sup>th</sup> since there is a fifth Sunday in December. Thank you for your understanding!



## Church Staff

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**Admin. Assistant** - Paula Casper  
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**Custodian**– Deb Lund  
**Organist**– Elizabeth Gotlund

## Church Council

**President** - Del Hughes  
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hughesdelsue@yahoo.com

**Secretary/Stewardship** - Nancy Bruns  
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**Treasurer** - Claudia Beyer  
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**Youth** - Courtney Heid  
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**Fellowship**– Candy Madsen  
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## Stewardship Spotlight by Nancy Bruns

In the week after we wrapped up our fall stewardship emphasis, “Found Faithful with Little, with Much, with All”, I read a devotion written by June Gunden. In it she suggested that when we get all caught up in our service to God rather than with God himself we can get overwhelmed and burned out because our work is simply revolving around ourselves. “Service for the kingdom does not consist of what you do or what you give; it depends on who you are. When you give God control, he will give you ways to serve. You will not need to drum up any areas to be of use to God. He will give you a zestful, fruitful life purely as his gift to you because you gave your life to him. “

Then I heard the song, “Do Everything” by Steven Curtis Chapman on the radio. Here is the refrain:

*Well let me remind you, it all matters just as long  
As you do everything you do to the glory of the One who made you,  
Cause he made you,  
To do  
Every little thing that you do  
To bring a smile to His face  
Tell the story of grace  
With every move that you make  
And every little thing you do*

The devotion and the song both reinforced the themes we discussed in October. Every little thing we do matters as long as we do it to the glory of God and give Him our lives. Found Faithful with Little, with Much, with All.

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”  
-Ephesians 2:10 (New International Version)

## Synod Delegates Needed

We are looking for people that would like to represent Bethany at this year’s Synod Assembly. Our constitution states that we need 1 male and 1 female delegate. The assembly will be held in Iowa City at the Marriott Hotel on Friday and Saturday May 30-31. Please prayerfully consider attending the assembly. We will vote on who our delegates will be at the Annual meeting January 19th. If you are interested or have any questions please contact Del Hughes.



BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
COUNCIL MINUTES October 14, 2013

**Members present:** Claudia Beyer, Nancy Bruns, Bonnie Conner, Toni Dodds, Courtney Heid, Del Hughes, Laura Twing

**Members Absent:** Pastor Chad, Kent Kaufman, Candy Madsen

**Meeting Called to Order:** 6:27p.m. by President Del Hughes

**Opening Prayer/Devotions:** Del opened with devotion from Galatians.

**Pastor's Report:** Del read a letter and report provided by Pastor Chad, which outlined his activities for the month. Some of the highlights he noted in his letter was the addition of new members, two baptisms, the growth in number of middle school youth coming to Bethany, the strong attendance on Sunday mornings, the success of the outdoor/pet blessing service, and commitment from the congregation to expand the parking lot. All are examples of God's work at Bethany.

**Secretary's Report:** Minutes from the September regular meeting and October 6 special meeting to be approved: Claudia Beyer moved to accept the minutes. Courtney Heid seconded. Approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Claudia presented the September financials. Laura Twing moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Toni Dodds seconded. Approved.

**Committee Reports:**

**Building & Grounds:** Del reported that the city wants an easement on part of our property for a sidewalk. So we will stop our parking lot pavement where the sidewalk starts, which will save us some money. A tree by the parsonage was taken down. Volunteers included Dan Haub, Jamie Zimmerman, Jeff Arp and others.

**Education:** Nothing new to report.

**Youth:** Courtney reported on the "Trunk or Treat" event to be held on Halloween. The EPIC youth will be hosting activities for young trick-or-treaters inside the church.

**Evangelism & Missions:** Nothing new to report.

**Music and Worship:** Bonnie Conner reported that we will have the Hanging of the Greens service at the beginning of Advent again this year. The committee will meet again in November.

**Fellowship:** No report.

**Stewardship:** Nancy reported that the Stewardship Committee is working on a new time and talent form using a format Pastor Chad found on the internet. The council liked the new format. The new form will be distributed on October 27, the final Sunday of the fall stewardship emphasis. The committee will also provide a brunch that day.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- Book Study follow-up – Next steps in follow-up to the study of "Unbinding the Gospel" by Martha Grace Reece. Pastor Chad has one of the next books, "Unbinding Your Heart" and distributed for some to read.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- Date for 2014 Annual Meeting. Claudia moved that we have the annual congregational meeting on Sunday, January 19, 2014. Bonnie seconded. Approved.
- Congregation Membership Committee. Del noted the need for a small committee to review the membership records before the annual meeting. He will contact people about serving on this committee.
- Delegates needed for annual Synod Assembly. Del also noted the need for one male member and one female member to represent Bethany at the annual Synod Assembly. Delegates should be approved by the congregation at the annual meeting, so we will start looking for volunteers.
- Constitution update – there are new updates that need to be incorporated into our constitution. Will look for volunteers who may be willing to work on this.
- Synod Visioning Event – to be held at Bethany on Monday, October 21. Del and Claudia volunteered to attend.
- Candidates for council – Neil Korsmo and Cindy Knoop are working on finding people who are willing to serve a 3 year term on the council.
- Conference Annual Meeting – to be held in Muscatine on Sunday, November 17. Pastor Chad would like to have 2 representatives from Bethany.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 7:35pm by President Del Hughes

**Next Meeting:** Monday, November 11, 2013 @ 6:30 p.m.



## Daily Bible Readings

The foundational premise of this set of daily readings is their relationship to the Sunday lectionary. The readings are chosen so that the days leading up to Sunday (Thursday through Saturday) prepare for the Sunday readings. The days flowing out from Sunday (Monday through Wednesday) reflect upon the Sunday readings. The complete Daily Lectionary is also found on pages 1121-1153 of our hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

<b>Dec. 1</b> Sunday	Isaiah 2:1-5 Romans 13:11-14 Matthew 24:36-44	<b>Dec. 16</b> Monday	Isaiah 29:17-24 Acts 5:12-16 Psalm 42
<b>Dec. 2</b> Monday	Genesis 8:1-19 Romans 6:1-11 Psalm 124	<b>Dec. 17</b> Tuesday	Ezekiel 47:1-12 Jude 17-25 Psalm 42
<b>Dec. 3</b> Tuesday	Genesis 9:1-17 Hebrews 11:32-40 Psalm 124	<b>Dec. 18</b> Wednesday	<a href="#">Zechariah 8:1-17</a> <a href="#">Mth. 8:14-17,28-34</a> <a href="#">Psalm 42</a>
<b>Dec. 4</b> Wednesday	Isaiah 54:1-10 Matthew 24:23-35 Psalm 124	<b>Dec. 19</b> Thursday	2 Samuel 7:1-17 Galatians 3:23-29 Psalm 180:1-7, 17-19
<b>Dec. 5</b> Thursday	Isaiah 4:2-6 Acts 1:12-17, 21-26 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19	<b>Dec. 20</b> Friday	2 Samuel 7:18-22 Galatians 4:1-7 Psalm 180:1-7, 17-19
<b>Dec. 6</b> Friday	Isaiah 30:19-26 Acts 13:16-25 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19	<b>Dec. 21</b> Saturday	2 Samuel 7:23-29 John 3:31-36 Psalm 180:1-7, 17-19
<b>Dec. 7</b> Saturday	Isaiah 40:1-11 John 1:19-28 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19	<b>Dec. 22</b> Sunday	Isaiah 7:10-16 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-25
<b>Dec. 8</b> Sunday	Isaiah 11:1-10 Romans 15:4-13 Matthew 3:1-12	<b>Dec. 23</b> Monday	Luke 1:46b-55 2 Samuel 7:18, 23-29 Galatians 3:6-14
<b>Dec. 9</b> Monday	<a href="#">Isaiah 24:1-16a</a> <a href="#">1 Thess. 4:1-12</a> <a href="#">Psalm 21</a>	<b>Dec. 24</b> Tuesday	Isaiah 9:2-7 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]
<b>Dec. 10</b> Tuesday	Isaiah 41:14-20 Romans 15:14-21 Psalm 21	<b>Dec. 25</b> Wednesday	Isaiah 62:6-12 Titus 3:4-7 Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20
<b>Dec. 11</b> Wednesday	Genesis 15:1-18 Matthew 12:33-37 Psalm 21	<b>Dec. 26</b> Thursday	Acts 7:59-8:8 Psalm 148
<b>Dec. 12</b> Thursday	Ruth 1:6-18 2 Peter 3:1-10 Psalm 146:5-10	<b>Dec. 27</b> Friday	Proverbs 8:22-31 1 John 5:1-12 Psalm 148
<b>Dec. 13</b> Friday	Ruth 4:13-17 2 Peter 3:11-18 Psalm 146:5-10	<b>Dec. 28</b> Saturday	Isaiah 49:13-23 Matthew 18:1-14 Psalm 148
<b>Dec. 14</b> Saturday	1 Samuel 2:1-8 Luke 3:1-18 Psalm 146:5-10	<b>Dec. 29</b> Sunday	Isaiah 63:7-9 Hebrews 2:10-18 Matthew 2:12-23
<b>Dec. 15</b> Sunday	Isaiah 35:1-10 James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11	<b>Dec. 30</b> Monday	Isaiah 26:1-9 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Psalm 20
		<b>Dec 31</b> Tuesday	1 Kings 3:5-14 John 8:12-19 Psalm 20



## Your LSI Shared Ministry Snapshot:

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. – Luke 2:8-10*

Many of us will wake with joy on Christmas morning, and yet, at LSI, we are mindful that others will also wake to situations of despair and hopelessness.

All of us know someone who is carrying an impossible burden— isolation, family crisis, unemployment, abuse, addiction, mental or physical illness, poverty—and sometimes it may feel as though nothing will ever change.

Yet, it is into that very hopelessness and fear, injustice and anxiety, that God enters our world and shines a light that darkness cannot overcome.

May that hope and love bring you great joy this Christmas. Thank you for helping bring hope and love to others every day through our shared ministry. LSI wishes you a blessed Christmas!

For information on Lutheran Services in Iowa, visit [www.LSIowa.org](http://www.LSIowa.org). Visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa](https://www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa).

## Lexi turns her life around

15-year-old Lexi knows what it's like to be picked up by the police. What it's like to follow the wrong friends. What it's like to be so depressed you can't get out of bed in the morning.

Today she also knows the power of her own choices. And Lexi is choosing to be great.

“I was mean to everyone, and it ruined my relationship with my family,” she said, describing her old self. “I didn't know how to act when I was sober. I had a terrible attitude.

When April, an LSI caseworker, started meeting with Lexi, it changed everything.

“First, I thought, ‘Geez, another worker to be in my business,’” Lexi said. “But we got along so well. I invested my trust in her and her happiness rubbed off on me. She has helped me so much.”

April helped Lexi repair relationships, learn coping skills and make healthy decisions. Lexi chose new friends, a shift April described as “quality over quantity.” She joined the cheerleading squad. She studied her way to an impressive 3.0 GPA.

“Lexi had a wake up call about changing her life,” said April. “I'm so proud of who she is today, and I can't wait to see who she becomes as she continues to excel in all she does.”

To feel hopeful, Lexi has learned, is a beautiful thing.

“I used to think life was pointless because I kept messing up,” she said. “I would never go to school, my grades were terrible and I would go out and drink with my friends. Things are the exact opposite now. I'm excited to see what life brings me. I love myself now. I want good grades. I want to be honest. I want to make good choices. I feel like I have everything I need for a successful life.”

Thank you for helping teens like Lexi build futures of hope!



# Worship Corner



## *What is the significance of the Advent Wreath?*

This question is answered as part of the Hanging of the Greens service on Sunday December 1. However, if you are not able to attend here are some excerpts taken from *The Advent Wreath – A Light in the Darkness* that will help us understand the symbolism of the Advent Wreath. (Debbie Trafton O’Neal, Augsburg Fortress 1998)

“Traditionally four candles are used, representing the four Sundays of the season. Purple (or blue) candles are often used for the First, Second, and Fourth Sundays in Advent, and a pink or rose candle used on the Third Sunday in Advent. This different colored candle represents joy.”

“There is no historical tradition regarding the meaning of the candles used in the Advent wreath other than their marking the four weeks of Advent. Various explanations or designations for each of the four candles have sprung up, however. The most common themes are listed below:

*First Candle.* The coming of Jesus. As we light the first candle in the Advent wreath, we reflect on the birth and Parousia, or second coming, of Jesus.

*Second Candle.* The coming of Jesus. As with the first candle, our thoughts focus on the birth and second coming of Jesus.

*Third Candle.* John the Baptist – herald of Christ. With the lighting of the candle in the third week of Advent our thoughts turn to John the Baptist, the one who prepared the way for Christ.

*Fourth Candle.* Mary – God’s obedient servant. In the fourth week of Advent, our thoughts turn to Mary, the obedient servant chosen by God to bear the Son in human form.





# DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 9:00 AM Worship followed by fellowship 10:15 AM Adult Study	<b>2</b> 6:30 PM First Call support team meeting	<b>3</b> 1:00 PM Quilters 1:30 PM Hope Chest Open 5:30 PM Yoga class	<b>4</b> 6:00 AM Men's Breakfast and Bible Study 6:15 PM Senior Choir 6:30 PM Confirmation dinner and study	<b>5</b> 7:00 PM Stewardship Meeting 7:00 PM Women's Bible study	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 9:00 AM Worship followed by fellowship 10:15 AM Adult Study 10:15 AM Sunday School all ages	<b>9</b> 6:30 PM Council Meeting	<b>10</b> 1:00 PM Quilters 1:30 PM Hope Chest Open 5:30 PM Yoga class	<b>11</b> 6:00 AM Men's Breakfast and Bible Study 9:00 AM Women's Circle 6:15 PM Senior Choir 6:30 PM Confirmation dinner and study	<b>12</b> 7:00 PM Women's Bible study	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 9:00 AM Worship followed by fellowship 10:15 AM Adult Study 10:15 AM Sunday School all ages 5:30 PM EPIC (Middle School Youth) Night	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 1:00 PM Quilters 1:30 PM Hope Chest Open 5:30 PM Yoga class	<b>18</b> 6:00 AM Men's Breakfast and Bible Study 6:15 PM Senior Choir 6:30 PM Confirmation dinner and study	<b>19</b> 7:00 PM Women's Bible study	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9:00 AM Worship followed by fellowship 10:15 AM Adult Study	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 5:00 PM Candlelight Service 8:00 PM Candlelight Service	<b>25</b> Merry Christmas	<b>26</b> 7:00 PM Women's Bible study	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 9:00 AM Worship followed by fellowship 10:15 AM Adult Study	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	1	2	3	4

## Financial Report

Submitted by Claudia Beyer

	Budget Comparison		YTD thru October	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
Total receipts	\$9,345	\$10,750	\$112,953	\$107,500
Total expenses	\$9,566	\$12,016	\$105,428	\$120,406

Attendance:  
 October 06 96  
 October 13 64  
 October 20 75  
 October 27 65

Bethany's annual meeting will be held following worship on January 19th. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend.

