

Bethany Lutheran Church

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



Important Dates

5-11 Council meeting (Zoom)

**We are currently closed through May 15th. Any activities beyond that date are currently pending future decisions.*

Contact Information

Bethany Lutheran Church
235 South Second Street
West Branch, Iowa 52358
(319) 643-5998

Pastor Chad Whaley
pastor@wbbethany.org

Office Hours
Monday & Thursday
9:00 AM - Noon

*Pastor Chad is also available by
appointment.

Admin. Assistant: Paula Casper
blcsecretary@lcom.net

Office Hours
Tuesday & Thursday
8:00-11:30 AM

FIND US ON FACEBOOK!

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

FIND US ON TWITTER!

Search @blcwestbranch

"He has risen."

Matthew 28:6 (NIV)



Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At some point in our lives I suspect each of us have endured the pain of being in the sun too long without applying lotion to prevent an unwanted burn to our skin. It happened to me on more than one occasion last summer; however, one instance was more severe leaving me to find whatever I could to bring relief. One thing in particular that seemed to soothe my aching skin was Aloe Vera lotion. While it still took time for the burnt layer of skin to peel away and a new pain-free layer to replace it, the presence of this lotion on my skin provided momentary relief from my present state of affliction.

We are living in a moment in time in which it seems there isn't a balm strong enough to ease the world's pain, which is present in many forms such as financial, social, mental, physical and spiritual. Yet, there is a promise of hope that is the soothing comfort our bodies yearn for. It's those three words the angel of the Lord spoke to the women at the empty tomb, "He has risen."

We don't know when or even if life will return to the way it was just a couple months ago. Yet, as people of faith we live each day in the hope new life emerges from the seasons of pain, illness, death, doubt, and despair we encounter in this life on earth. "Christ has risen" is our proclamation. "Sin and death have no power over us" is our conviction. "Alleluia!" is our song. As the church has done throughout the ages and will continue to do so now and into the future we will, equipped by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, journey onward and be a beacon of light and hope in this weary world. "He has risen" is indeed the soothing balm we adorn ourselves with today, tomorrow, and in the days to come!

Blessings!





Birthdays

05-01 Olivia Poppen, Cozette Sexton
 05-01 Rick Paulsen
 05-06 Deb Anderson, Brittney Heath
 05-09 Tyler Haub, Curt Friis
 05-10 Jenna Sexton
 05-12 Elijah Fetzer
 05-15 Claire Kaufman, Matt Whaley,
 Bonnie Conner
 05-16 Kody Crow
 05-17 Candy Madsen, Cadence Heid,
 Maggie Paulsen
 05-19 Carla Friis
 05-21 Jayden Roth, Linda Black,
 Wayne Frauenholtz
 05-22 Andrew Niles
 05-26 Bill Holmes
 05-29 Nicole Zimmerman



ELCA Worship in the Home

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has provided a variety of resource to facilitate worship in the home. They can be viewed at the link below.

<https://blogs.elca.org/worship/>

O come, let us
WORSHIP
 AND
BOW DOWN,
 let us kneel before
THE LORD,
 our Maker!
 Psalm 95:6, NRSV

Bethany Books



Books For Adults

Love Big: The Power Of Revolutionary Relationships To Heal The World is by Rozella Haydee White. We have forgotten that we belong to each other. We have become disconnected as fear, hatred, and division have infected out lives together. White introduces readers to the power of revolutionary relationships, which leads us to love in ways that change us all. This book provides an invitation into deeper relationships with God, ourselves and the people around us. The book emphasizes the importance of those relationships in bringing about real change in our lives, our communities and our world. The June 2019 *Living Lutheran* has a two page interview with the author.

Parenting Forward: How To Raise Children With Justice, Mercy, And Kindness is by Cindy Wang Brandt. In this book the author models a way of following Jesus as parents that has an outward focus, putting priority on loving others, avoiding judgement, and helping those in need. She shows how parents must work on dismantling their own racial, cultural, gender, economic, and religious biases in order to avoid passing them on to their children. This book is a guide for parents looking to raise their children in a faith that sees the image of God in everyone, understands the importance of our bodies to God, and seeks justice for all people. She believes that the world begins to change at home, with our kids. The May 2019 issue of the *Living Lutheran* has a two page interview with the author.

Book For Children

Maybe God Is Like That Too is by Jennifer Grant and illustrated by Benjamin Schipper. In this book, a young boy asks his grandma where God is in their city. Where love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are, there too is God. An ordinary day in his city opens the young boy's eyes to God's Spirit at work all around him.

Alleluia!

Executive Committee Updates

Note: The following message was sent via electronic mail to the congregation Tuesday, April 28th.

Yesterday, Governor Reynolds outlined plans for slowly beginning to reopen the state. 77 of 99 counties were identified that could reopen under specific restrictions and guidelines. If you want to read the entire proclamation, you can access it here: <https://governor.iowa.gov/press-release/gov-reynolds-signs-new-proclamation-continuing-the-state-public-health-emergency-0>

Cedar county is one of those 77 counties. The proclamation does give religious institutions the option to gather again in groups exceeding 10 people given *“a church, synagogue, or other host of a spiritual or religious gathering shall implement reasonable measures under the circumstances of each gathering to ensure social distancing of employees, volunteers, and other participants, increased hygiene practices, and other public health measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 consistent with guidance issued by the Iowa Department of Public Health.”* (Section 6, A.)

Further, the proclamation recommends individuals 65 and over or having preexisting health conditions to *“continue to limit their activities outside of their home, including their visits to businesses and other establishments and their participation in gatherings of any size and any purpose.”*

The Executive Committee convened last evening to discuss this proclamation and our next course of action. First off, I want to commend the work of these leaders, along with that of the entire Council in making decisions no one could ever have imagined would need to be made. I stand behind each of those decisions and believe they were the correct ones for our community. We have always done our utmost best to err on the side of caution and seek the safety of staff, parishioners and all people who utilize our building.

With that said and after careful deliberation, *we were unanimous in concluding at this time we will continue as is through May 15th*. All activities will continue to be suspended and the building closed, with the exception of limited hours. The council will meet via Zoom on May 11th and determine future plans at that time.

Many factors went into this decision; but one in particular is West Branch's location to both Johnson and Muscatine counties in particular, both of which are in the 22 that are required to adhere to prior recommendations through May 15th.

When we do begin to resume normal activities, plans on how to do so will need to be carefully and deliberately thought out and implemented. The Office of the Bishop of Southeastern Iowa Synod advised yesterday that Bishop Burk will provide suggestions to congregations on when and how to do this next week.

We appreciate your continued patience, support and faithfulness to the work we do together in the name of Christ. May the peace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ comfort and sustain us each and every day!

Pastor Chad



We are grateful for your gifts, which are needed to continue the work of the church. We understand in this time some have lost their jobs, had hours reduced and may be incurring a financial hardship and therefore are unable to financially give; while, others may be able to give more. In this time of physical distancing, there are three primary ways to give an offering as indicated in the column to the right. Thank you again!

- Online “Simply Giving” (Contact the office for a form to set this up through your bank)
- Cellular App “Give Plus”
- Mail Check to: Bethany Lutheran Church, PO Box 236, West Branch, IA 52358

VBS up-date

2020 Vacation Bible School scheduled for June 8th—June 11th has been canceled for the safety of all children, volunteers, and camp counselors. A decision to reschedule or not has not been made at this time.



Wednesday Night Faith Formation will not meet in May. We are working on potential resources for parents to utilize at home. Please watch for more information to come.



2020 Synod Assembly

The Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly scheduled for May 1-3 has been canceled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. It will now be held August 7th at Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines.

Confirmation Update



We will attempt to hold class via Zoom on April 29th, May 6th, 13th and 20th. Confirmation Sunday, scheduled for May 31st has been postponed with a new date to be determined in the future.



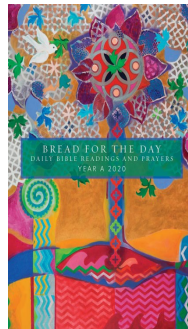
Devotional Resources

During this time of physical distancing, here are some available resources that can be utilized daily in the home.

Bread for the Day: Daily Bible Readings and Prayers, Year A 2020

(Cost is \$6.99-\$7.99 depending on app)

<https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/9781506450049/ebook--Bread-for-the-day>



Worship with us from HOME

For now we will continue to worship remotely via Facebook Live Sundays at 9:30 AM

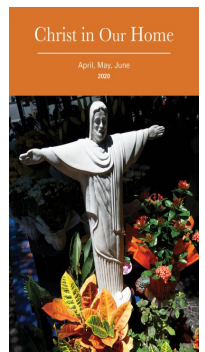
There are a variety of projects needed to be done around the exterior of the church property. If interested, please contact Curt Casper at 319-331-2811. He will arrange times in order to safely maintain safe physical distancing.



Christ in Our Home

A short devotion emailed daily available free through June 30th. Sign up at the link below.

<https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/CIOH-EMAIL/Christ-in-Our-Home-Email-Edition>





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Senior Recognition & Blessing

Congratulations to our high school graduates!

Matt Paulsen
Matt Whaley
Mia Olson
Jaylen Votroubek



Normally, we invite our seniors to join us in worship prior to graduation to recognize and bless them. With so many uncertainties right now pertaining to when we will be able to gather again safely for worship, our tentative plan is to recognize and pray for them by name online May 24th.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Apart for a Time,



Together in Spirit

**BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MINUTES—March 2020**

The meeting was called to order by President Hughes at 6:30 p.m.

Members present were Del Hughes, Dave Bahnsen, Linda Black, Curt Casper, Nancy Bruns, Alan Beyer, Kristin McElhinney, Anne Fetzer, Amber Marsh, and Pastor Whaley.

Pastor Chad led an opening devotion based on Matthew 14.

Pastor's Report:

Grace and peace in Christ!

3 Joys since last meeting

Annual Meeting (Yes, they can be joyous occasions in which we celebrate God's goodness and faithfulness for the year gone by and look with watchful eyes of how God will use us in the year to come)

Bishop Burk worshipping with us

Opportunity to preach and worship with the men of Free Indeed at the Anamosa State Penitentiary

This evening I am grateful for...

Returning council and newly elected members Kristin, Amber and Anne

Our partnership with Trinity in Tipton and leaders to help plan upcoming women's and men's events

A milder January than last year

A few highlights since our last meeting:

9 pastoral visits

Crestview worship

Text Study (IA City)

Conference 7 Pastor Meeting in Muscatine o
Watch film on Human Trafficking

WBARC meeting

o Finalize our mission statement

Assist Bishop Burk in healing listening posts within a congregation

Preach and preside with men of Free Indeed Plan and lead Confirmation and other

Wednesday activities

Premarital counseling for couple being married in April

Working with Paula (and others) in finalizing Annual Report, Constitution updates, etc.

Wednesday Men's Group

Attend Adult Discussion

Regular activities (sermon prep, bulletin and newsletter preparation, other planning)

Attend a training at Synod Office on Gratitude and Generosity with Nancy and Del

Help on a couple local cases of assistance (work with police and others)

Women's Circle

On the horizon...

Property Safety Meeting at Zion, Iowa City

(attending with Del H. and Curt C.) (Feb. 13)

Lutheran Day on Hill (Feb. 25)

Ash Wednesday (Feb. 26 @ Bethany)

Secretary's Report:

Curt moved to accept the secretary's report. Anne seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

The General Fund Revenue and Expense report reflects offerings of \$12,609 and expenses of \$14,901 for the month. A couple of the larger expenses included annual fees of \$814 for ICON, our bookkeeping and payroll system, and \$720 for Synod Assembly registrations.

Dave moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Amber seconded. Motion passed.

Committee Reports

Building and Grounds:

A spring cleanup is being planned for sometime in April if the weather cooperates.

Education and Youth:

Amber and Kristin met with Tonya to review VBS. They are on the lookout for an EWALU packet with more info on the VBS curriculum and theme for this year.

They are bringing several more people into their committee.

Evangelism and Outreach:

A 125th Anniversary Committee meeting was held to begin plans for our church's celebration. A committee has been formed for a Hoover's Hometown Days Parade float. Another committee is being formed for the October celebration.

(Continued on page 7)

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES—March 2020

(Continued from page 6)

Fellowship:

The church council will be providing the Lenten supper for the March 18th service. Anne is lining up the 4th Sunday meals.

Stewardship:

Dave participated in a generosity project provided by the synod. Jon Twing has agreed to be part of this committee.

Worship and Music:

Linda and Deanna cleaned up and arranged the music files with a large number of song sheets taken to the high school. A song committee will be meeting soon. Ash Wednesday service went over very well. Easter service will be held at 9:00 a.m. on April 12th. The Memorial Committee has met. The Korsmo family will be planting two trees on the west side of the parking lot to replace those removed last summer. Plans are being made for another tree to be planted near the parsonage. Altar care instructions have been updated.

Old Business:

Curt asked about the progress on the Little Free Food Pantry. Randy Robertson's class at the high school has offered to construct them.

New Business:

Pastor Chad reviewed the Coronavirus (COVID-19) response plan for our church. This document has been sent out to the congregation. Linda moved to accept the plan. Curt seconded. Motion passed. A council retreat is being planned. Dave moved to adjourn at 7:18. Nancy seconded. Motion passed. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH Executive Committee Meeting – Sunday, March 15

Meeting called to order at 10:08 a.m.

Present: Pastor Chad, President Del Hughes, Secretary Alan Beyer, Treasurer Nancy Bruns. Not Present: Vice President Dave Bahnsen

Purpose of Meeting: Early morning, Sunday, March 15 Pastor Chad called an Executive Committee meeting to be held following worship at 9:00 a.m. to discuss current issues surrounding the spread of COVID-19. On Saturday, March 14 Governor Reynolds advised there is now "community" spread of the virus and recommended no gatherings be held of 250+ people.

The outcomes of our meeting following discussions and approved by all in attendance to be presented to the council and then congregation are:

We will cancel the Community Meal on March 22nd. Most of the people that attend are those most vulnerable.

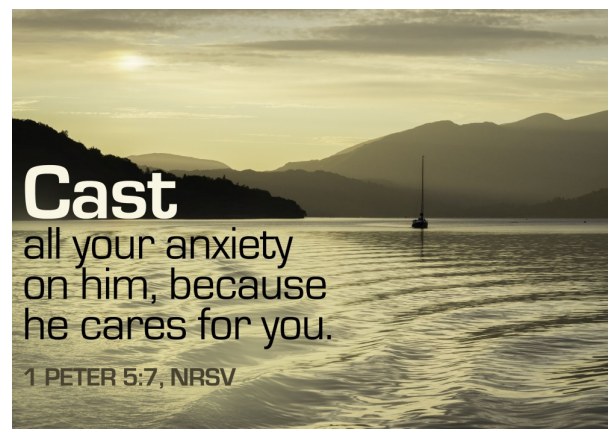
We will cancel the remaining 3 Lenten dinners on Wednesday night.

We will not allow any outside food sources to be brought in for fellowship, men's group, quilters, etc. through the end of the month.

Pastor will not be doing in-person pastoral visits; unless, the situation warrants it such as a parishioner where death is imminent.

All other activities (worship, small groups, etc.) will continue to function as scheduled for the time being

Meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.



Executive Committee Special Meeting March 16, 2020

Due to new CDC guidelines, which came out following a special Executive Committee meeting March 15, 2020 Pastor Chad and President Hughes conversed via phone and decided to hold another specially called meeting utilizing electronic means due to the time sensitive nature and also "social distancing" we are all trying to practice through the spread of COVID-19.

Purpose of meeting: Closing of all church activities through end of March. No outside groups. Staff will be compensated as usual. Council will reconvene at end of month to discuss next plan of action based on current CDC/Government guidelines and recommendations. No in-person pastoral visits by Pastor Chad unless emergency. Sanctuary to remain open M-F 8-4:30 p.m. should people want to come in and pray.

Pastor Chad contacted each member via phone. Was unable to connect with Treasurer Bruns and Vice President Bahnsen.

An email was sent to the group with a proposed letter to the congregation. Upon approval by Executive Committee, this letter to be forwarded to Council electronically for their vote and if approved, then onto congregation as soon as possible.

Vote: 4 yes, 1 abstained.

Proposed recommendations carry.

Special Council Meeting – March 16, 2020

Following the special Executive Committee meeting held electronically (see notes above) the approved recommendations presented in a proposed letter to the congregation were sent electronically to the council due to time sensitive nature and "social distancing" being practiced.

Vote: 9 Yes, 1 No, 1 abstained

Free Indeed Prison Ministry Updates

Below is a special greeting from recently called *Free Indeed* Pastor Dirk Stadtlander.

I'm Dirk Stadtlander, the recently called pastor of *Free Indeed*, a Prison Congregation of the ELCA at Anamosa (Iowa) State Penitentiary (ASP).

First of all, **thank you!** Thank you for your support of this ministry either from its inception or coming on board more recently, and now through its pastoral transition. I'm indebted to all of you and am thankful for your collaboration, as well as Pastor Jerry Collet's ministry among you and the incarcerated individuals at ASP.

As COVID-19 has brought about many changes in our personal lives, this is also the case for FreeIndeed. One major change is that **no outside volunteers are able to visit the institution at this time.** I'm eager to meet all of you and look forward to a time when time and opportunity allows for that and your return to worshiping/bible study inside the walls.

A bit **about me...** I was born and raised in Southeastern Iowa. I was baptized at Christ the King--Iowa City and affirmed faith at Zion--Iowa City. After high school, I studied at Luther College and Wartburg Theological Seminary. My internship year was in a congregation in Sacramento, California. My first call as pastor was serving as an ELCA Missionary in the country of Senegal (West Africa) for eight years before returning to the United States and being called as pastor to a congregation in Colorado. Most recently, I completed a second unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (chaplaincy training) and was on the Spiritual Services staff as an Interfaith Chaplain at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. I'm married to a teacher and we have two daughters.

Thank you, again, for your continued support of FreeIndeed. I was pleasantly surprised to hear a **prayer request from an incarcerated individual** at our Ecumenical Easter Worship Service to include the Governor, the Director of the Iowa Department of Corrections, and the Warden of ASP... a request of thanksgiving for their leadership and decisions made that have "up to now" kept COVID-19 out of Anamosa State Penitentiary. A side benefit was noted as well in this thanksgiving that with the closing of schools and reduced demand of restaurant kitchens, the food preparation at ASP has included much better produce: fresh asparagus, pineapples, grapes, and kiwis!

Peace, Pastor Dirk Stadtlander



For additional information on happenings at Free Indeed visit their Facebook page by searching "Free Indeed". There is also a video greeting from Pastor Dirk.



Faith at Home

These short Bible passages and reflection starters are one more way we are trying to spur conversation about faith at home and also absorb ourselves in the word of God. We hope you find them beneficial.

Romans 5:8-10

But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.

- Christ dying for me...
- Christ loving me...
- Christ saving or healing me...



Psalms 22:1

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

- I am in the most need of help when...
- When bad things in life happen, I wonder...
- God seems far away when...

Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

- If I had watched this, I would have...
- The Holy Spirit...
- God's spirit in our world...

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*.

Friday, May 1	Psalm 23 Exodus 3:16-22; 4:18-20 1 Peter 2:13-17	Sunday, May 17	Acts 17:22-31 1 Peter 3:13-22 John 14:15-21
Saturday, May 2	Psalm 23 Ezekiel 34:1-16 Luke 15:1-7	Monday, May 18	Psalm 93 Genesis 9:8-17 Acts 27:39-44
Sunday, May 3	Acts 2:42-47 1 Peter 2:19-25 John 10:1-10	Tuesday, May 19	Psalm 93 Deuteronomy 5:22-33 1 Peter 3:8-12
Monday, May 4	Psalm 100 Ezekiel 34:17-23 1 Peter 5:1-5	Wednesday, May 20	Psalm 93 Deuteronomy 31:1-13 John 16:16-24
Tuesday, May 5	Psalm 100 Ezekiel 34:23-31 Hebrews 13:20-21	Thursday, May 21	Acts 1:1-11 Psalm 47 or Psalm 93 Ephesians 1:15-23
Wednesday, May 6	Psalm 100 Jeremiah 23:1-8 Matthew 20:17-28	Friday, May 22	Luke 24:44-53 Psalm 93 2 Kings 2:1-12
Thursday, May 7	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 Genesis 12:1-3 Acts 6:8-15	Saturday, May 23	Ephesians 2:1-7 Psalm 93 2 Kings 2:13-15
Friday, May 8	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 Exodus 3:1-12 Acts 7:1-16	Sunday, May 24	John 8:21-30 Acts 1:6-14 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
Saturday, May 9	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 Jeremiah 26:20-24 John 8:48-59	Monday, May 25	John 17:1-11 Psalm 99 Leviticus 9:1-11, 22-24
Sunday, May 10	Acts 7:55-60 1 Peter 2:2-10 John 14:1-14	Tuesday, May 26	1 Peter 4:1-6 Psalm 99 Numbers 16:41-50
Monday, May 11	Psalm 102:1-17 Exodus 13:17-22 Acts 7:17-40	Wednesday, May 27	1 Peter 4:7-11 Psalm 99 1 Kings 8:54-65
Tuesday, May 12	Psalm 102:1-17 Proverbs 3:5-12 Acts 7:44-56	Thursday, May 28	John 3:31-36 Psalm 33:12-22 Exodus 19:1-9a
Wednesday, May 13	Psalm 102:1-17 Proverbs 3:13-18 John 8:31-38	Friday, May 29	Acts 2:1-11 Psalm 33:12-22 Exodus 19:16-25
Thursday, May 14	Psalm 66:8-20 Genesis 6:5-22 Acts 27:1-12	Saturday, May 30	Romans 8:14-17 Psalm 33:12-22 Exodus 20:1-21
Friday, May 15	Psalm 66:8-20 Genesis 7:1-24 Acts 27:13-38	Sunday, May 31	Matthew 5:1-12 Acts 2:1-21 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13
Saturday, May 16	Psalm 66:8-20 Genesis 8:13-19 John 14:27-29		John 20:19-23

May 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3 9:30 AM Online Worship (Facebook Live)	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 9:30 AM Online Worship (Facebook Live)	11 6:30 PM Council Meeting (via Zoom)	12	13	14	15 <i>Closed through May 15th. Activities beyond this date pending.</i>	16
17 9:00 AM Worship	18	19 1:00 PM Hope Chest Open 1:00 PM Quilters	20 6:00 AM Men's Break- fast and Bible Study 6:15 PM Choir Practice	21 6:00 AM Women's Bible study	22	23
24 9:00 AM Worship	25	26 1:00 PM Hope Chest Open 1:00 PM Quilters	27 6:00 AM Men's Break- fast and Bible Study	28 6:00 AM Women's Bible study	29	30
31 9:00 AM Worship	1	2 1:00 PM Hope Chest Open 1:00 PM Quilters	3 6:00 AM Men's Break- fast and Bible Study	4 6:00 AM Women's Bible study	5	6

Monetary Gifts Report Submitted by Nancy Bruns

Saints in Worship

April worship done
online the entire
month.

Thanks for tuning in!

**Our online Easter
worship currently has
616 views.*

	2020		YTD	
Total Receipts	Actual 10,651	Budget 12,984	Actual 35,952	Budget 38,952
Total Expenses	Actual 12,356	Budget 13,514	Actual 39,374	Budget 40,555

Thank you all for faithfully stewarding the gifts God has entrusted us with in fulfilling the ministry and mission of God here at Bethany Lutheran Church! In so many ways, not just monetarily, God is abundantly providing for our needs.

[illegible]

www.wbbethany.org · Bethany Lutheran Church (ELCA) 235 South 2nd Street West Branch, Iowa 52358