

Bethany Lutheran Church

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



Important Dates

1-10 Council meeting 6:30PM
1-23 Annual meeting 10:30AM

Jesus  's You!

Contact Information

Bethany Lutheran Church
235 South Second Street
PO Box 236
West Branch, Iowa 52358
(319) 643-5998

www.wbbethany.org

Pastor Chad Whaley
pastor@wbbethany.org

Pastor is in the office often. Call him at
(319) 643-5998 if needed, schedule an
appointment, or just to say "Hi!"

Admin. Assistant: Paula Casper
blsecretary@lcom.net

Office Hours
Tuesday & Thursday 8:00-11:30 a.m.

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

Links to websites are built into the
digital version of this newsletter.
Click on words highlighted in blue
(e.g. www.wbbethany.org) or certain images.

You can be sure of this:

The LORD set apart the godly for himself.

The LORD will answer when I call to him.

(Psalm 4:3 NLT)



Faithful People of God,

Happy New Year! In our most recent Monday Gospel
Gathering group there was discussion about fears we may
have when it comes to our relationship with God.

It was unanimous among the group that through the
incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, and the life he lived it has
been revealed to humanity, God is love and as beloved, precious
children of God we do not have to fear God. With that said, it was also
discussed there may continue to be people who feel unworthy to
approach God or live in fear that they are not good enough.

I was reading Psalm 4 earlier today as part of my devotional. The Psalms are
works of poetry, song, lament, joy, and real-life experiences so easily
relatable yet today. As part of my devotional reading, I frequently turn to a
small book, *Reading the Psalms with Luther* (Concordia Publishing, 2007) to
gather further insight and reflection. Luther writes, "Psalm 4 is a psalm of
comfort, and at the same time a psalm of prayer and instruction that teaches
us to trust in God when things go wrong." The third verse above embodies
every component of these words from Luther.

"You can be sure of this" the New Living Translation (NLT) Bible renders this
text. Whatever it is we experience in our earthly bodies. Through all the ups
and downs. Amidst everything, we can be sure of this: the Lord has set apart
the faithful for himself. The Lord hears us when we can call. We never have
to fear not being good enough in God's eyes or approaching God because
God has drawn us to Godself.

It's not unlike Paul's message to the Ephesians as he writes, "Blessed be the
God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with
every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ
before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in
love." (Ephesians 1:3-4 NRSV) We can be sure of this!

How might trusting in this good news shape who we are and/or guide the
decisions we make and interactions we undertake? Today, Psalm 4 has
been a source of great comfort to me, but it has also led me to reflect
carefully on what it means to be set apart for God individually and as a
member of the beautiful body of Christ we are called to through our
baptisms.

Living daily in the abundant, amazing, and glorious grace and love of our
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! - Pastor Chad



Birthdays

01/09 Hallie Fitzgerald
 01/11 Tonya Lovetinsky, Robin Benz
 01/14 Deanna Pedersen
 01/15 Alberta Sweat
 01/17 Cliff Hinkhouse
 01/20 Tonya Samuelson
 01/23 Deb Lund
 01/24 Robbie Boaz, Paul Bruns
 01/25 Lisa Zimmerman
 01/26 Hunter Niles,
 Diana Fuhrmeister
 01/29 Lance Schiele
 01/30 Kent Pedersen
 01/31 Pat Cassabaum

*If you don't see your birthday listed,
 please contact Paula so we can update
 our database.*



Altar Care

We are looking for a few more people or families to prepare our worship space for one month this coming year.

The tasks include: changing the altar cloths (paraments), filling the candles with oil (we have a new filler!), providing flowers, and setting up for Communion. I will show you everything, and there are detailed instructions in the sacristy.

Thanks for considering this!

Patsy Ernst 319-800-5647
 Worship and Music

Bethany Books



Books For Adults

A number of you follow the books written by Beverly Lewis about the Amish in Lancaster County. The latest one is titled *The Beginning*. The main character is Susie Mast. Her life has been shaped by events beyond her control. She has been affected by the deaths of her father and also by her close in age brother. These events cast a shadow over her daily life. When the book begins, she is twenty-two years old and is unmarried. This is beyond the normal age for marriage in the Amish community.

She appears to be headed to an unmarried life despite the longtime acquaintance of a friend. He, however, treats her more like a brother would than a romantic interest. The story progresses as her mother's health becomes worse. Their financial situation is questionable. Her younger sister Britta is adopted and increasingly has questions about her adoption and her birth mother. Long-held family secrets and missed opportunities appear to influence her hopes for the future. It is interesting to see how the author finally pulls all these threads together to find resolution.

You Can Talk To God Like That: The Surprising Power Of Lament To Save Your Faith by Abby Norman is a hopeful and transformative introduction to the practice of lament. She wrote the book because neither our modern churches or culture seem to be very good at the practice. She argues, in the book, that people of faith must lament to God, with one another, and to the world. Lament is used in much of the Bible. Lament is a faithful way to pray to God. We long to connect with God over the very real sorrow in our lives and the world around us. Many of us were never shown how. This lack of knowing how the lament - an ancient practice of expressing anger and pain to God - damages us personally and spiritually. She tells us that we can talk to God like that. She shows us how to express our laments to God and to each other when things are definitely not okay. Through this process we will discover a richer connection with God., who has wanted nothing more than our whole selves from the start. (reviewed in the *Living Lutheran*) (donated)



Annual Meeting

This is to inform you of the upcoming Bethany Lutheran Church Annual Meeting January 23, 2022 at 10:30 AM.

We are planning to gather in person as well as online for those unable to gather in person. We are continuing to work out the logistics of meeting in this manner and will keep you updated on any future modifications or additional information.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Please note that our constitution states we must have 30 voting members present to have a quorum.

Additionally, a "voting" member is defined as:

C8.02.c Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation.

Thank you and please prayerfully consider where God may be calling you to service within Christ's church here at Bethany Lutheran. May God's peace be with you!



Southeastern Iowa Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 God's work. Our hands.



Invitation to Nominate for Synod committees and leadership

The Nominating Committee of the Southeastern Iowa Synod invite you to lift members of your congregations that are eager to serve synod ministries. Positions such as the Synod Council, the Synod Candidacy Committee, Synod

Finance Committee, Synod Nominating Committee and more are looking for people who want to learn more about the wider church and use their knowledge and gifts to benefit ministry in Southeastern Iowa.

If you are interested, or you know someone who would be a good fit to serve our synod, there is a short online form to make a nomination. You can even nominate yourself. Our synod is in need of a diversity of leaders to serve in partnership with local churches and communities so that we might proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ with mutual support and encouragement.

Access more information, including a short video and online nomination form at: <https://tinyurl.com/2ft84e3k>

If you have any questions, please see Pastor Chad who

?? ? Bible Quiz ? ? ?

Hebrews 11 is called the Hall of Faith because it's a partial list of ancestors who lived out their belief in God. Who is named in this chapter?

- A. Adam, Eve and Seth
- B. Abel, Enoch, Noah and Sarah
- C. Moses' parents, Moses and Rahab
- D. Deborah, Bathsheba and Huldah
- E. A and B
- F. B and C
- G. C and D



Answer: F

Jesus Only You
J.O.Y.

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) News

Amplifying the Voices of Iowa Children and Families

Individuals struggling without access to critical healthcare and family support services. Human service providers overworked and underpaid. Former refugees and immigrants striving to build new lives in the U.S.

These are all issues faced by Iowans. Help us ensure their voices are heard at the Iowa State Capitol.

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) will be advocating for our community members who are so often overlooked in our society. You can join us in this important work. Visit LSIowa.org/advocacy and sign up for our Advocacy Alerts.

Learn more about the legislative process, the issues impacting your neighbors, and your role as a citizen in helping to amplify their voices. Save the date for March 10, 2022, and join us for Lutheran Day on the Hill, a day of advocacy and education at the Iowa State Capitol. If you would like more information, please contact Deb

Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Entrepreneurship, Food, and Welcoming

In 2006, Ali and her family traveled from Kenya and resettled in the U.S. They found themselves in an unfamiliar place: Iowa. But today, they still call Iowa home, thanks to the community they built and the support they received while resettling in the U.S. LSI Refugee and Immigrant Services helped the family become comfortable and confident living in their new community.

"They taught us to shop, register for school – all the basic needs. Even winter shopping for the Iowa weather," Ali says. "They taught us how to get by. It was nice to help us get settled in."

After some time in Iowa, Ali and her husband, Salah, decided they wanted to open a restaurant as successful as the one they had in Kenya. They soon realized how challenging this would be – the biggest obstacle being the financial burden of opening a restaurant in the Des Moines area. After 15 years of never giving up on their goals, they were able to open Gursha Ethiopian Grill.

Opening during a pandemic, when other restaurants in the industry struggled to remain open, has come with its share of obstacles. But thanks to community support, the restaurant is a popular destination in the area.

Ali dreams of one day franchising to other locations. With their continuously growing clientele and delicious food, this goal is not far away.



Lutheran Disaster Response

A special offering was recently taken during worship for Lutheran Disaster Response as they respond to our neighbors in need following deadly tornados and storms. \$490 was collected and 100% of those gifts will go toward providing assistance. Thank you for these gifts that will make a difference! If you would still like to give visit Lutheran Disaster Response's web-site: <https://tinyurl.com/zp522r6r>



Have a prayer request?

Go to the virtual prayer wall on our website.

<https://bit.ly/bethanyprays>

An introductory video on how to use our prayer wall can be viewed at the link below.

<https://vimeo.com/644492944>

Church Staff

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Stewardship News

On behalf of the members of our Stewardship Committee, I would like to express our deep appreciation for your support of the ministries of Bethany Lutheran Church.

Sometimes our gifts may seem small, but God works in amazing ways. Remember the story of the 5000 that were fed with five loaves and two fish? Jesus fed everyone and there was an abundance leftover.

Your gifts in 2021 had similar results. For example, as part of "God's work, Our hands." Sunday, we sponsored a drive-thru spaghetti dinner. We received financial gifts of \$325 prior to this event. Thank you! We served 232 meals and through the generous donations of those receiving meals concluded the event with \$730. We will continue to put these gifts to work in other missions to continue God's Work.

We appreciate your faithfulness in giving according to your means; and your intentional planned giving is an important element in building our church budget. We ask that you look ahead into the new year and prayerfully consider increasing your gifts so we can continue God's Work.

We welcome donations via cash or check and as we have developed an online community, we have set-up additional ways to give while worshipping online. To learn about these options, go to the Bethany website at <https://wbbethany.org> and click on the "How to Give" button on the banner at the top of the page.

Thank you for all that you have done, and we look forward to great things in 2022.

Serving with you in Christ,

David Poppen
Stewardship Chair



January 6th is the feast of Epiphany ("manifestation") and concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. During the eight Sundays of Epiphany our Bible readings will continue to reveal to us how the glory of God shines through the true Light that came into the world. Where do you see the glory of God shining in the world? Where do you see the presence of Christ? Take a picture, send it in and perhaps we'll create a collage of those photos in an upcoming newsletter.

They can be emailed to: blcsecretary@lcom.net



God loves you!!!

+

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
November 2021 Council Minutes

The meeting opened with responsive prayer in the sanctuary and was then called to order by President Hughes at 6:41 p.m.

Members present: Patricia Ernst, Anne Fetzner, Del Hughes, Amber Marsh, Kristin McElhinney, Dave Poppen, Jill Taylor, Pastor Chad Whaley

Members absent: Dave Bahnsen, Curt Casper

Pastor's Report

Highlights from this month's Pastor's report include:

Joys and Thanksgivings for so many people assisting with the 125th-anniversary celebration, Confirmation Sunday, and Wednesday Faith Formation.

Attended to WBARC, Free Indeed Prison Ministry, and Synod Nominating Committee meetings. Celebrated the Clark/Sims wedding.

Several pastoral visits and prayer meetings were held this month.

Attended Monday Gospel Gathering Bible Studies, and text studies with local pastors.

Completing a continuing education course (6-week) through Wartburg Seminary, "Practical Tools for the Journey."

Looking forward to upcoming events which include First Communion and Advent.

Secretary's Report

Dave P. motioned to approve the amended minutes, seconded by Patsy. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report

Amber motioned to approve the report, seconded by Kristin. Motion approved.

Committee Reports

Building and Grounds

No report.

Education & Youth

Committee is teaming up with Alex Poppen on meal ministry in December. Students will assist with preparing and delivering meals.

Sunday School is starting on November 21 from 8:45-9:20 a.m. December dates include December 5th and 19th.

Evangelism

No report.

Fellowship

An online sign-up was created for Fellowship. Anne is drafting an email to send to congregation. [https://](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4DAFAB29A0FD0-fellowship)

www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4DAFAB29A0FD0-fellowship

Stewardship

For the fall campaign, the committee is sending thank you letters to congregation with information on electronic giving.

Worship and Music

Choir sang for the 125th celebration. We received letters from two former pastors and an online member congratulating Bethany.

Piano tuning occurring on November 23.

Special thanks to Deanna Weismann and Candy Madsen on 125th celebration display.

Old Business

Budget Committee

Del reaching out to members recommended by council.

Audit Committee

Del reaching out to members recommended by council.

New Business

Spaghetti Dinner/Angel Tree

Council discussed how to handle remaining funds contributed to projects and designating which funds they belong to. It was determined that newsletter announcements will be used to communicate to congregation about the money that is raised. No specific direction on fund designation.

Two Christmas services are planned for Christmas Eve planned at 5:00 and 8:00 p.m.

Synod-wide Worship – December 26

Online worship service hosted by the Synod. Council discussed possibly opening the Great Hall for in-person viewing.

Indoor/Outdoor Worship

Outdoor services likely finished for the year, however discussed an outdoor caroling event in December.

Amber motioned to set the annual meeting for January 23, seconded by Kristin. Motion approved.

Council Reports are due to Paula by December 1. Dave P. moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m. Patsy seconded. Motion approved.

Council closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

Next Regular Meeting – 12/13/2021

Confirmation 2021

Sunday, October 31st we gathered to give thanks and praise to God and to celebrate with our youth affirming their baptism: Auron Marsh, Chloe Klabo, Miley Shields, Layla Samuelson, Dylan Schiele, Cole Crosthwaite and Tate Frantz.



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.



Matthew 2:10-12

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

- For me, Christmas...
- The gifts I bring to Jesus are...
- My star, or what is guiding me to Jesus, is...

Holy Baptism

Dylan Mitchell Casady was baptized Sunday, December 26th. He is the son of Tim and Kristin (Black) Casady. Sponsors were Benjamin Barry and Rebecca Black. Below are photos from the day. Thanks be to God for the newest baptized member of Bethany!





Angel Meals

December was the launch of the Angel Meals Program which is similar to "Meals on Wheels". The hope is to provide meals and fellowship to senior members of the community monthly.

The December 12th event was the trial run of the program started by Alex Poppen.



The team served seven people. Eight youth servers plus two adults assisted in the preparation and delivery of the meals: Alex Poppen, Anna Waterman, Ava Finley, Claire Jarrett, Gage Gingrich, Jack Robertson, Eric Marsh, Scott and Amber Marsh.



Meal served: meatloaf, green beans, potatoes, cookies. Cost was about \$30.

Next meal is scheduled for 1/23/22.

The team will be looking for new seniors to enjoy the meal, and they will look to expand the team of servers.



Christmas Program

The youth of Wednesday Faith Formation presented "The Story", a Christmas program during worship on December 19th. Great job everyone and special thanks to Scott and Amber Marsh for their help.



On December 19th three fabulous youth received the sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time: Hallie Fitzgerald, Brennan Esbeck and Addison Langley.

Welcome to the supper of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!





January 2022

View Calendar on our [website](#).

					31	1
2 9:30 AM Worship in person and Online via Facebook	3 12:00 PM Monday Gospel Gathering (via Zoom Meeting)	4	5 6:30 PM Faith formation (Confirmation) 6:30 PM Faith formation 4th - 6th grade	6 6:00 AM Women's Study	7	8
9 9:30 AM Worship in person and Online via Facebook	10 12:00 PM Monday Gospel Gathering (via Zoom Meeting) 6:30 PM Council Meeting	11	12 6:30 PM Faith formation (Confirmation) 6:30 PM Faith formation 4th - 6th grade	13 6:00 AM Women's Study	14	15
16 9:30 AM Worship in person and Online via Facebook	17 12:00 PM Monday Gospel Gathering (via Zoom Meeting)	18	19 6:30 PM Faith formation (Confirmation) 6:30 PM Faith formation 4th - 6th grade	20 6:00 AM Women's Study	21	22
23 9:30 AM Worship in person and Online via Facebook 10:30 AM Annual Meeting	24 12:00 PM Monday Gospel Gathering (via Zoom Meeting)	25	26 6:30 PM Faith formation (Confirmation) 6:30 PM Faith formation 4th - 6th grade	27 6:00 AM Women's Study	28	29
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Monetary Gifts Report

Submitted by Jill Taylor

	November 2021		YTD	
Total Receipts	Actual 17,545	Budget 13,495	Actual 148,592	Budget 148,455
Total Expenses	Actual 13,586	Budget 13,831	Actual 145,563	Budget 152,394

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.

Bethany Branches January 2022

Bethany Lutheran Church
235 South Second Street
PO BOX 236
West Branch, Iowa 52358
www.wbbethany.org



Ministers of Proclamation (Lectors)

01-02 Bruce Jeffries
01-09 Beth Kaufman
01-16 Jeni Schiele
01-23 Alex Poppen
01-30 Alan Beyer

Ministers of Technology

01-02 Chloe K.
01-09 Paula C. & Miley S.
01-16 Cole C. & Tate F.
01-23 Chloe K.
01-30 Alex P.

Ministers of Christ's Light (Acolytes)

Opportunities available. Sign Up:

<https://tinyurl.com/nhkyxwjs>

Ministers of Altar Care

Patsy Ernst & Paula Casper



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To find Bethany's main page,
search "**Bethany Lutheran
Church (ELCA) West Branch,
Iowa**"

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You Are Loved!

