

Bethany Lutheran Church

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



Important Dates

12-3 Cookie Walk 9:00 - 10:30 AM
12-11 Children's Program 9:30 AM
12-12 Council Meeting 6:30 PM
12-14 Women's Circle 9:00 AM
12-24 Christmas Eve Worship
5:00 PM & 7:00 PM
12-25 No Worship Service
Merry Christmas!

Jesus  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
blcsecretary@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 @blewestbranch

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

*Give thanks to the
Lord, for he is good;
his love endures
forever.*

1 CHRONICLES 16:34 (NIV)



Dear Faithful Saints,

The pastor at my father-in-law's funeral offered this quote from
Meister Eckhardt, a 13th century monk, "If the only prayer you
ever prayed was 'thank you', it would be enough."

While this article is not a prayer, it is a THANK YOU! For the many prayers
that were lifted up for our family. For the many cards received in the mailbox or
slid under my door. For the flowers that were sent. For the words of care and
concern. For those who attended the visitation or funeral. For bringing the
presence of Christ near and being the light amidst our darkness. On behalf of
our family, I say thank you wonderful people of God.

At about the same time, our Affirmation of Baptism youth were learning the
verse above from 1 Chronicles. Countless times in the Bible we are invited to
give thanks to God. I did a quick search of the New International Version (NIV)
Bible on BibleGateway to see how many times the word "thanks" or some form
of it shows up. The result was 100 times. Not 99 or 101, but 100, which is a
perfect square number. Maybe it's just a coincidence, but this just further solid-
ified the importance of coming before God with grateful hearts.

A simple prayer of "thank you" is enough because it acknowledges all we have
is from God. It turns our focus toward the one whose love endures forever. As
we enter the season of Advent, one in which is often deemed a season of
preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, I pondered if one
way I (we) might prepare this year is giving thanks daily. Giving thanks for the
many ways in which God's light breaks in upon us.

So, I created a calendar (see page 7) as a guide for a way to give thanks on
the weekdays leading up to Christmas Eve, when the true Light of the world
breaks in upon us. May the peace of Christ be with you all!

Pastor Chad



God loves you!!!



Birthdays

- 12-02 Bruce Jeffries
- 12-05 Samantha Yeater
- 12-06 Wanda Anderson
- 12-07 Kellee McCrory
- 12-10 Barb Campbell
- 12-13 Marshall McElhinney
- 12-14 Beth Kaufman,
Elizabeth McCrory Johnson
- 12-15 Kami Poppen
- 12-17 Traci Fryauf
- 12-18 Marilyn Crow
- 12-19 Jim Friis
- 12-20 Auron Marsh
- 12-21 Lindsey Zimmerman
- 12-22 Mark Colvin
- 12-23 Amber Marsh
- 12-24 Monica Hinkhouse,
Howard Moss
- 12-26 Nancy Bruns
- 12-31 Jon Twing

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

ELCA Good Gifts

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we believe that God is calling us into the world – together. And with generous, loving hands, we can make a difference.

ELCA Good Gifts is your opportunity to provide critical support to the ministries and programs that mean the most to you and the people you love.

<https://goodgifts.elca.org/>



Bethany Books

by Frank Frostestad

I did not grow up watching *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* on television. One reason is that it first aired in 1968 and by that time I was married and working. My children, however, were of the age where they could watch the show. His program was a departure from the loud, noisy shows that predominated for children. His calm slow manner had a positive influence on many. This month's book is *The Simple Faith Of Mister Rogers : Spiritual Insights From The World's Most Beloved Neighbor* by Amy Hollingsworth. This book is by a longtime friend of

Mister Rogers, and she reveals how he touched her and her family through years of correspondence. He was everyone's neighbor. Their friend. For more than thirty years he visited so quietly with the children of America. Most people did not know that he was a Presbyterian minister. Using puppets instead of a pulpit, he shared with America's youngsters the basic principles of the Christian faith - forgiveness, kindness, compassion, and respect. He made these values real for his audience. The book also deals with topics such as the importance of silence, prayer, the Holy Spirit, who is my neighbor, and difficult times. Every day he taught God's message without preaching a word. To paraphrase the words of St. Francis of Assisi, "preached the gospel at all times, and when necessary, used words."



Have a prayer request?

Go to the virtual prayer wall on our website.

<https://bit.ly/bethanyprays>



Bethany Lutheran Church's
Children & Youth
invite you to their



Christmas PROGRAM

DEC 11



9:30 AM

Cake and refreshments to follow



Women's Group

Thursdays at 6:00 AM
Small Fellowship Hall



*Wednesday Women's
Bible Study*

Second Wednesday of the Month
9:00 AM in the Great Hall

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

5:00 PM and 7:00 PM

Note: second service time change to 7:00 PM this year

5:00 PM streamed live on Facebook



235 S 2nd St., West Branch



(319)643-5998



www.wbbethany.org



Men's Group

WEDNESDAYS @ 7:00 AM
Breakfast, Bible Study and
Discussion

MEETS IN THE
GREAT HALL

THANK
you.

Thank you Linda
Black for reviewing
and editing the
newsletter every
month.

Church Staff

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Pianist - Jill Barnhart

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Stewardship News

Are you looking for ways to donate your Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) from your retirement accounts? Consider an IRA Charitable Rollover

Normally, when you take a distribution from a traditional IRA (not a Roth), you have to pay taxes on it because you didn't pay taxes on the money when you put it in the IRA.

If you are 70 1/2 or older, you can make a charitable contribution from the IRA directly to a qualified charity (like a church) without having to treat it as a taxable distribution. The effect of this is to lower your adjusted gross distribution for tax purposes by the amount of the charitable contribution.

Because you do not have to claim the amount of the donation as taxable income, you also do not claim the deduction on schedule A. This means you do not need to itemize your deductions in order to utilize this option.

This option is particularly attractive if you are 72 and are required to make a minimum distribution. You can avoid taxes on it by donating it to a charity that you would otherwise donate directly to and avoid the taxes.

To make a donation through your traditional IRA, assuming you are at least 70 1/2, you notify your IRA trustee and he or she will process the direct transfer to the charity. The IRA sends the check directly to the charity. The charity must provide a receipt stating that the donor received no goods or services in return for it.

If you are interested in doing this, talk to your IRA custodian about how to do it and be sure to leave sufficient time for the funds to reach the charity in the year you want them to.

SUPPORT THE MANY MINISTRIES

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

1

OFFERING PLATE

Money can be placed in offering plate on Sunday morning or mailed to:
Bethany Lutheran Church Box 236, West Branch, IA 52358.

2



ON-LINE DONATIONS

Scan QR code with your phone or visit our website
<https://wbbethany.org>. Click on the blue "Give Now" button.

3

AUTOMATIC WITHDRAWAL

Sign up for the "Simply Giving" program for automatic withdrawals from your account. Contact blcsecretary@lcom.net



Donate Now

4

MOBILE APP

Download the new Vanco Mobile App from your smartphone app store. Select Bethany Lutheran Church, West Branch, IA and make your donation.



5

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER

Tax-free donation directly from an IRA to Bethany Lutheran Church
This is a tax-free way to give your required minimum distributions from your IRA to charity.



Greetings! This is to inform you of the upcoming Bethany Lutheran Church Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 22, 2022 immediately following worship.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Please note our Constitution states we must have 30 voting members present in order 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.

Dave Poppen, Council President

Merry Christmas from LSI!

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." — John 1:5

As Christmas approaches, we give thanks to you! Because of your generosity LSI has continued to offer hope and healing to Iowans of all ages. Thank you for bringing the light of Christ to your neighbors who rely on these important services!

At LSI we see veterans getting help, children overcoming fear, moms and dads parenting with renewed joy and confidence, new neighbors from foreign lands becoming established and active in their communities, the pride of independence for those experiencing challenges in everyday life. We know parents who feel hopeless, with few resources to raise their young children. We know adults with disabilities who feel voiceless, with no support system or connection to their community. We know teens who are aging out of foster care, who fear they will never have a forever family.

The spirit of giving, the spirit of love, and the spirit of working together, allows us to stand together and celebrate this Christmas season.

LSI's annual matching gift campaign gives opportunities to double new and increased gifts through the end of the year. If you would like to learn more about how you can support Iowa children and families, contact Deb Whitford, LSI Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at 563.676.2065 or Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org.

LSI is also available to provide a customized virtual shared ministry opportunity for your congregation. If you would like to share the message of LSI with your community, please visit LSIowa.org/church-relations or contact our Waverly office at 319.352.2630 to get started.

Wishing you a blessed and merry Christmas from LSI!

Thank you!

As 2022 comes to an end, we reflect back on all those whose lives have been impacted by your gifts.

From Iowa's newest citizens, those you've helped to feel at home in a new country: "Thank you"; from the young first-time mom who has learned how to care for her newborn: "Thank you"; from the teenager who needed some redirection and support: "Thank you".

From the veterans needing help readjusting from trauma they endured: "Thank you"; from the person who was able to receive the kind of mental health therapy they needed: "Thank you".

From the person with disabilities who is able to live as independently as possible with our help: "Thank you"; from the parents who are learning new processes to provide healthy, safe environments for their children: "Thank you"; from the foster parents who are providing care when needed, "Thank you".

From those kids in residential whose lives have come to a turning point with new skills to use going forward: "Thank you!"

And from all of us at LSI that you have encouraged and supported:
"Thank you!"



SENIOR *Saints*





December 2022

ADVENT

A Season of Preparation

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 27 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT	28	29	30	1 Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for a friend.	2 Write a thank you letter to Jesus for all he has done for you.	3 <i>Peace</i>
 4 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT	5 Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for a special talent God has equipped you with.	6 Text someone special & thank them for their presence in your life.	7 Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for someone who is sick.	8 Read Ephesians 1:15-16. Then, give thanks & pray for the people of Bethany.	9 Listen to Chris Tomlin sing "Joy to the World" (search on YouTube). Give thanks for the unspeakable joy of Jesus Christ.	10 <i>Joy</i>
 11 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	12 Write a note of gratitude to someone instrumental in your faith journey.	13 Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the forgiveness we have through Jesus Christ. Ponder how you are a vessel of forgiveness.	14 Light a candle & offer a prayer of thanksgiving for a saint who now rests in the eternal arms of God.	15 Write a short poem of thanksgiving.	16 Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for your favorite food & pray for those who hunger.	17 <i>Love</i>
 18 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	19 Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for Bishop Eaton and Bishop Current.	20 Email or call an elected official or community leader thanking them for their service.	21 Tell someone thank you that you may not normally (e.g., mail carrier, delivery driver, bus driver).	22 Connect with someone who may be alone and let them know how grateful you are for them.	23 Read Luke 2:1-20. Ponder in your heart the story of the birth of our Lord and Savior as you prepare for Christmas.	24  CHRISTMAS EVE Come worship, celebrate, and give thanks! (5 & 7 PM)
 25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27	28	29	30	31

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.



Mark 1:14-15

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

- The good news of God, for me...
- Repenting and believing...
- What Jesus asks of me...

Ecclesiastes 1:2

Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

- All is vanity, or worthless, pointless, without meaning...
- In the long run, life is...
- Meaning, purpose and my life...

GRAND VIEW UNIVERSITY

NEXUS

where God's call meets your life



High school students!

Dig into Lutheran theology

Immerse in community

Discern God's call on your life

Apply to The NEXUS Institute at Grand View University!

NEXUS is a week-long, on-campus experience that will change your life. Come live in the residence halls, explore Des Moines, & make new friends who are passionate about learning & living for Jesus, just like you! Space is limited - applications taken starting Sept 1! Preference given to those interested in working in vocational ministry.

NEXUS Dates: July 16-22, 2023

www.grandview.edu/NEXUS



How will YOU be a Christian leader?



www.grandview.edu/NEXUS

The Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton. She was reelected to serve a second six-year term at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. To learn more about Bishop Eaton and to view her latest messages and/or videos please visit the link below or scan the QR Code.

<https://www.elca.org/About/Leadership/Churchwide-Officers/Presiding-Bishop>



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Council Meeting October 10, 2022

Alex Poppen presented before the regular meeting her Angel Meals presentation for the Hoover Foundation Uncommon Student Award nomination. We wish her luck with her presentation taking place on October 22. We opened with a prayer then the meeting was called to order by President Dave Poppen at 6:36 p.m.

Members Present: Anne Fetzer, Kent Kaufman, Cindy Knoop, Kristin McElhinney, Dave Poppen, Jill Taylor, Pastor Chad Whaley

Members Absent: Patricia Ernst, Amber Marsh, Howard Moss

Pastor's Report – Pastor Chad Whaley

Joys, Celebrations, and Thanksgivings

New Copy Machine to assist us in doing kingdom work

Thank you people, of God!!!

Spaghetti Dinner God's work, our Hands! Way to go!!!

Worship - Attendance up, children, youth, and families

- Thanks be to God!

Ministry Happenings

Seventeen pastoral visits, Text Study with area pastors

Women's Circle, Men's Group, Hiking Ministry

Community Tailgate, Meet with mentee

Pre-marital session

Met with Cindy re: upcoming worship happenings

Attended middle school football game

Confirmation

Created online lessons and quizzes for weeks unable to have the class for West Branch & Tipton Homecoming and Community Tailgate

Other day-to-day ministry happenings: Sermon preparation, bulletin and newsletter preparation, website and Facebook updating, worship preparation

Upcoming

Staff Appreciation Sunday - October 16

Bible Presentation - October 23

Bible Trivia Night - October 26

Confirmation - October 30

All Saints - November 6

Advent 1 - November 27

Secretary's Report – Anne Fetzer

Kent moved to approve the September minutes, seconded by Jill. Motion approved.

Kent moved to approve the September 25 special congregational meeting minutes, seconded by Cindy.

Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report – Jill Taylor

Kent moved to approve the September report, seconded by Kristin. Motion approved.

Discussion regarding concerns about the budget overrun and how to communicate it to the congregation. More discussion to continue within the Stewardship committee.

Committee Reports

Building & Grounds – Howard Moss

Pat Cassabaum doing a tremendous job with the custodial duties.

Items from the shed taken to Community Trash Day held last week.

Kent Kaufman began painting the hall ceiling, and several layers of primer were added to cover the water stains.

New refrigerator installed in the kitchen.

Dave Poppen repaired the parsonage refrigerator.

Butterfly garden looking great. It was made possible through donations.

Curt Casper also did a lot of yard cleanup this fall.

Water bill is very high in the parsonage, it is believed due to a running toilet. Lynch Plumbing inspected but did not find anything other than the toilet which was repaired by Pastor.

Education & Youth – Kristin McElhinney & Amber Marsh

Average ten students at Sunday School, occurring three times per month.

First story time occurring on October 16, plan to host once a month. Looking for volunteers to read two stories at each event.

Bible presentation on October 23. Most will receive the Frolic First Bibles which are geared toward kids aged 0-3. Invited 18 children to receive their first Bible. Asking permission to use pictures or video in church communications.

Upcoming trivia night during Faith Formation on October 26.

Evangelism & Missions – Anne Fetzer

Bethany hosted the 2nd Annual Spaghetti Dinner on September 25. Served 160 meals to the community

(Continued on page 10)

(October 2022 Council Minutes continued from page 9)

by dine-in, drive-up, and delivery.

Although the meal's purpose was to serve the community as part of *God's work*. *Our hands*, we received approximately \$450 in donations that could be used to fund next year's event.

We planned for 400 meals, so there are leftovers frozen for future use. Cookies were donated to the community tailgate held on September 28 and the garlic knots were donated to the United Methodist Church. We plan to host the November Fourth Sunday meal but expect to only use a portion of the leftover noodles, meat, and sauce. If there are other community needs, we could donate to another cause.

Discuss future needs for church marketing materials like brochures for Main Street West Branch baskets for new residents or other events. A small group to discuss.

Possible meal packaging event this fall or winter.

Fellowship – Patsy Ernst

Many thanks to our fellowship volunteers.

Stewardship – Kent Kaufman

Continued stewardship promotional work.

Worship & Music – Cindy Knoop

Several events upcoming as noted in the Pastor's report.

Putting together cards for Staff Appreciation Sunday.

Celebrating two confirmation students on October 30.

Working on All Saints Sunday invites for November 6. Celebrating 17 seniors, three baptisms, and four deaths.

Working on Advent plans and volunteer needs.

Hanging of the Greens will once again be done on the first Sunday of Advent, November 27

Two Christmas Eve services are planned for 5:00 and 7:00.

With Christmas on Sunday there will be no worship service. The 5:00pm Christmas Eve service will be streamed live for people to view.

Old Business

Recap of God's work. Our hands held on September 25 noted in Evangelism and Missions report.

Update on the Community tailgate held on September 28. Went well, but plan to advertise more in the

future to families with younger children.

Update on the Fall Fest held on October 8

Al Beyer participated on behalf of the congregation. A board and flyers were created for the event.

Two students called Alex Poppen to help with Angel Meals after seeing us at the Fall Fest.

Update on the family-friendly service

Marketing through the newsletter, Bible bags, and social media.

Ideas for how to involve the youth in service include greeters, readers, offering, or communion assistance.

New Business

Create a committee for the Constitution review

The review would include an update to the dollar threshold for the council to approve non-budgeted items, plus other changes from the churchwide assembly this past August.

Committee includes Neil Korsmo, Deb Anderson, and Claudia Beyer.

Establish a Budget Committee

Budget planning for 2023 - committees start thinking about their needs for 2023

Committee budget requests need to be submitted to Jill, Dave, and Pastor by October 31.

Request to use the Great Hall by Clover Kids Club

We were contacted this week about 4-H Clover Kids utilizing our hall. Clover Kids are students from kindergarten to third grade. Meetings would be held the second Sunday of the month at 5:45 PM with less than 20 people attending.

Jill moves we give the club the General Building Usage policy and provide use of the building free of charge. Cindy seconded. Motion approved.

Nominating committee for new council members

Nominating Committee consists of former members: Dave Bahnsen, Del Hughes, and Curt Casper

Ask for members to participate on the Audit Committee

John Black, Tim Shields, and Paul Bruns served on the audit committee last year. The council is working to identify this year's audit committee working within the terms of the Constitution.

Kent moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m., and Kristin seconded. Motion approved.

Council members closed the meeting by reciting the Lord's Prayer.

Next Regular Meeting – 11/14/2022



December 2022

View Calendar on our [website](#).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:00am Women's Study	2	3 9:00am Cookie Walk
4 9:30am Worship in person and Online via Facebook	5	6	7 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:30pm Youth Faith Formation (Grade 4-8)	8 6:00am Women's Study	9	10
11 9:30am Youth Christmas program in person and Online via Facebook 5:30pm Clover Kids GH	12 6:30pm Council Meeting	13	14 7:00am Men's Study Group 9:00am Wednesday Women's Bible Study 6:15pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Youth Faith Formation (Grade 4-8)	15 6:00am Women's Study	16	17
18 9:30am Worship in person and Online via Facebook	19 7:00pm Study Club	20	21 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:15pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Youth Faith Formation (Grade 4-8)	22 6:00am Women's Study	23	24 5:00pm Christmas Eve Worship in person and Online via Facebook 7:00pm Christmas Eve Worship
25 No Worship Christmas Day No 4th Sunday meal	26	27	28 7:00am Men's Study Group	29 6:00am Women's Study	30	31



Monetary Gifts Report

Submitted by Jill Taylor

	October 2022		YTD	
Total Receipts	Actual 18,626	Budget 13,837	Actual 135,309	Budget 138,376
Total Expenses	Actual 14,798	Budget 14,149	Actual 139,802	Budget 141,676

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.

You Are God's Masterpiece!

Ministry Assistants

Ministers of Proclamation (Lectors)

12-4 Alan Beyer
12-11 Pat Cassabaum
12-18 Del Hughes
12-24 5:00PM Paula Casper
7:00PM Shawn Samuelson

Ministers of Technology

12-4 Cole Crosthwaite & Tate
Frantz
12-11 Alex Poppen
12-18 Jill Taylor
12-25 Paula Casper

Ministers of Christ's Light (Acolytes)

Opportunities available. Sign Up:

<https://tinyurl.com/nhkyxwjs>

Ministers of Altar Care :

Paula Casper & Patsy Ernst



Find us on Facebook

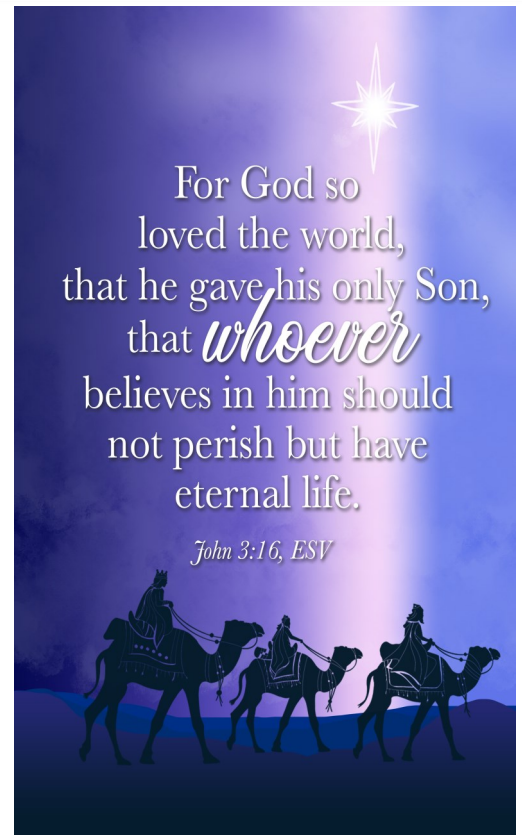
To find Bethany's main page,
search "**Bethany Lutheran
Church (ELCA) West Branch,
Iowa**"

DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US!



Follow us on Twitter!
Our Twitter Handle is:
@blcwestbranch

You Are Loved!



Bethany Branches December 2022

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