

Bethany Lutheran Church

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



Important Dates

- 2/13 Council meeting 6:30 PM
- 2/22 Ash Wednesday Worship
7:00 PM
- 2/26 4th Sunday meal 5:00 PM

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 @blcwestbranch

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

[Jesus said], "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)



Dear beloved saints,

In many ways 2022 was a year of renewal, restoration and healing in the life of our congregation. The annual report highlighted the many ways things returned to normalcy again. There was a renewed sense of community and vibrancy in the work we accomplished in the name of Jesus Christ.

That does not mean we were not without grief and loss. We commended five saints to God's everlasting arms. Additionally, many of you encountered losses in your own families or friendships. The pain is still real and raw. You are not alone! Jesus, gentle and humble in heart, is present.

As people of faith, we place our trust in the healing and wholeness that only God can provide. We trust in the words of our Lord and Savior that he will provide rest for our weary and burdened hearts, bodies, minds and souls. May the peace of Christ be with us all!

Soon, we will move into the season of Lent. Ash Wednesday is February 22nd. We will dawn the cross of ashen dust upon our foreheads remembering our mortality, while at the same time remembering the salvation that comes through the cross of Christ and his subsequent resurrection on the third day.

I hope you join us on Ash Wednesday, as well as Wednesday evenings during Lent (see the schedule on page 9). Returning this year will be a meal and time of fellowship. This time together is life-giving itself as stories are shared and our bodies are nourished by a warm meal.

Then, we will move to prayer around the cross. Words spoken, prayers offered, songs sung and candles lit will further focus on the Holy Spirit's ability to draw near, provide comfort, hope, and the steadfast love of God that surpasses all understanding. On the final Wednesday during Lent, the cross will again be traced upon our foreheads as a reminder that, "neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39).

So, at Jesus' invitation, "Come to me ... and I will give you rest." Come and eat! Come and converse! Come and worship! Come and pray! Come and let him fill your hearts with his love!

Living each day in his abundant grace and mercy,

Pastor Chad

Birthdays

02/01 Jennie Wombacher
 02/02 Becky Paulsen
 02/04 Del Hughes
 02/06 Jamie Fetzer
 02/10 Dave Bahnsen
 Kristin McElhinney
 02/12 Katherine White
 02/15 Kyle Colvin, Dave Poppen
 02/20 Joshua Snyder,
 Jamie Zimmerman
 02/21 Tina Webb, Avery Fonseca
 02/23 Arik Marsh
 02/24 Lynn Lovetinsky
 02/26 Isaac Kimpe
 02/27 Dorothy Holmes
 02/28 JoAnne Brooksheer



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



Donate Now

www.wbbethany.org



Youth Faith Formation

4-8th Grade
 Wednesdays 6:30-7:30 PM

Bethany Books



The book this month is *Our Missing Hearts* by Celeste Ng. Twelve-year-old Bird Gardner lives a quiet existence with his loving but broken father, a former linguist who now shelves books in a university library. Bird knows to not ask too many questions, stand out too much, or stray too far. For a decade, their lives have been governed by laws written to preserve "American culture" in the wake of years of economic instability and violence. To keep the peace and restore property, the authorities are now allowed to relocate children of dissidents, especially those of Asian origin and libraries have been forced to remove books seen as unpatriotic. This includes Bird's mother, an author, who left the family when he was nine years old. Bird has grown up disavowing his mother. He does not know what happened to her. When, one day, he receives a mysterious letter, he is pulled into a quest to find her. This book is a work of fiction. It is the old story of the ways that supposedly civilized communities can ignore the most searing injustice. In the United States we have seen the effects from McCarthyism to the treatment of the "other" We have seen Indigenous children taken from their families and put into schools. More recently we have seen the separation of children from their families at the southern border. Hate crimes against the Asian-American community have increased since the beginning of Covid. How many books have been challenged in libraries? In a broken world, it is sometimes hard to see if any of us survive with our hearts intact.

sunday school 
 with Bethany Lutheran Church

Preschool - Grade 3

February 5, 12, 26

8:30 - 9:15 AM

WORSHIP AT 9:30 AM

Church Staff

Pastor—Chad Whaley
(319) 643-5998 or (319) 643-7257
pastor@wbbethany.org

Admin. Assistant—Paula Casper
(319) 331-9456
blcsecretary@lcom.net

Custodian—Pat Cassabaum

Pianist—Jill Barnhart

Church Council

Dave Poppen—**President**
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Howard Moss—**Building & Grounds**
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Claudia Beyer—**Financial Secretary**
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The Beatitudes

Unscramble these words found in the blessings Jesus spoke in Matthew 5:1-12 (NRSV) read in worship January 29th. Answers on page 7.

1. RONUM _____

2. EKEM _____

3. KMAPERCASEE _____

4. MELCFURI _____

5. ROPO _____

6. NGRUEH _____

7. ELEDSSB _____

8. MEORCODFT _____

9. JOECREI _____

10. ELDIFL _____



Our Camera Crew is in need of a few more people to run the video cameras during our Sunday Service. As many people join us in worship online, this is an essential ministry role in our proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ! This is easy to learn and do! You would only be scheduled once a month or less. We will train you!

Please contact Paula at (319)-331-9456 or
blcsecretary@lcom.net if interested. Thank you!



Happy Valentine's Day from LSI

At LSI, loving our neighbor is an essential value that we continuously work and grow towards. This Valentine's Day, take time to share with your friends, family and neighbors how important they are to you. February is a time of giving, a time of love and a time of gratitude. Share with those around you how much they mean to you and the impact they have had on you.

It's also a time when we want to thank you, the congregations that so generously support the work of LSI throughout the year. We are blessed by your love and support. Your generosity has continued to offer hope and healing to Iowans of all ages. For 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.

Love Your Neighbor

At LSI, loving our neighbor is an integral value. Our staff continuously work towards loving their neighbors and investing their time, energy and resources into helping their neighbors.

"I love getting to know my LSI colleagues and teammates, and I feel fortunate to be surrounded by such talented, passionate and inspiring individuals," said Nick Wuertz, Director of Immigrant and Refugee Community Services (IRCS). "The team around me makes me better, and by getting to know my team and understanding their unique skills and perspectives, I feel I can love and support them in sharing those gifts with others on our team, our clients and the broader community."

Barbra Jotzke-Torrier, Director of Philanthropy, shared that loving her neighbor means treating others with respect. "It means remembering my way is not always the best way, and certainly not the only way to live, love, make a home or be a part of a family." Barbra shared that her job at LSI has given her the opportunity to share people's stories and to connect people with programs they are passionate about.

"Loving my neighbor means caring for them and being there for them in good times and hard times," shared Patrick Karemera, a Resettlement Caseworker. "Loving my neighbor through my job is about welcoming our new neighbors from all over the world who flee their homes in hopes of a better life."

As Nick shared, loving your neighbors is complex and requires you to take the time to get to know them on a personal level. This Valentine's Day, we invite you to take that step and get to know your neighbors.

Lutheran Day on the Hill



Lutheran Day on the Hill is Lutheran Services in Iowa's (LSI) biggest advocacy event of the year. Over 200 participants gather at a local downtown church to learn about critical issues Iowa children, adults and families are facing. After learning about advocacy and LSI's mission in action, the group heads to the Iowa State Capitol to talk directly with legislators.

Thursday, March 14
9:30—11:30 AM

The event begins at St. John's Lutheran Church, 600 Sixth Avenue, Des Moines. If you plan to attend, contact Pastor Chad.

For more information visit: <https://lsiowa.org/ldh/>



West Branch Area Religious Council (WBARC)



January 12, 2022

To: WBARC Representatives and Congregations

Re: 2022 WBARC Financial Recap

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As Treasurer of the West Branch Area Religious Council (WBARC) and on behalf of my colleagues, I want to once again thank all of you for your faithful partnership and support of our shared ministry together. Through your faithful stewardship and monetary donations to our joint account we were able to continue our shared mission in assisting those in need in our community.

During 2022 WBARC received \$3,470 in monetary gifts. We had mission expenditures of \$1,883.03 as we assisted several individuals and/or families with needs such as lodging at Day's Inn, a bus ticket, auto repair, food vouchers to Jack and Jill, and other needed supplies. WBARC continued its strong support of food assistance programs within the West Branch Community School District with a donation of \$500.

Once again, on behalf of my colleagues, let me express our gratitude and thankfulness for your commitment and faithfulness to our shared ministry. We do our best to faithfully steward these gifts and see they are making a difference and extending God's care and love to all. We look forward to 2023, our partnership together, and our joint efforts in doing God's work in our communities.

Living daily in the abundance of Christ's love and grace,

Chad Whaley
Pastor, Bethany Lutheran Church
WBARC Treasurer



Hazel Mae Perkins was baptized January 15, 2023. She is the daughter of Sam and Kelsi Perkins. Baptismal sponsor is her uncle Cole Cook. Junior Sponsor is her sister Charlotte. Let us rejoice for this precious child of God.





February Sunday Bible Readings

The passages below are the assigned readings for February. You can click on each reading and be taken to the passage on "[Bible Gateway](#)." May this be one more way we can hear and study the word of God.

Epiphany 5 February 5, 2023

Isaiah 58:1-9a
Psalm 112:1-9
1 Corinthians 2:1-12
Matthew 5:13-20

Epiphany 6 February 12, 2023

Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Psalm 119:1-8
1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Matthew 5:21-37

Transfiguration of Jesus February 19, 2023

Exodus 24:12-18
Psalm 2
2 Peter 1:16-21
Matthew 17:1-9

Ash Wednesday February 22, 2023

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

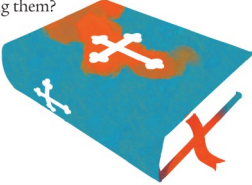
Lent 1 February 26, 2023

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7
Psalm 32
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11

Bible Quiz

A few Bible books have only one chapter. Which of the following is not among them?

A. Obadiah
B. Philemon
C. 1 John
D. 2 John
E. 3 John
F. Jude




Answer: C



Bible Quiz

According to the fourth Gospel, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the _____."

A. love
B. life
C. light
D. Lord



Answer: C (See John 1:6-7, NRSV.)

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 5:3

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

- A poor in spirit time of life for me...
- When someone feels hopeless, I...
- The church brings hope to others by...

Amos 5:24

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

- An injustice in our world now...
- Injustice and unfairness happen when people...
- People with extra advantages in life...



The annual Cookie Walk was held December 3, 2022. Below are a few photos from the day. Thanks to Kristin McElhinney for her efforts in planning and organizing the event. Thanks to all who made cookies, volunteered or purchased cookies.



Word Scramble Answers

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. mourn | 6. hunger |
| 2. meek | 7. blessed |
| 3. peacemakers | 8. comforted |
| 4. merciful | 9. rejoice |
| 5. poor | 10. filled |



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

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



**Southeastern Iowa Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

<https://seiasynod.org/>

Council Minutes — December 2022

We opened with a prayer then the meeting was called to order by President Dave Poppen at 6:00 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Patricia Ernst, Amber Marsh

Pastor's Report – Pastor Chad Whaley

There are just too many joys and thanksgivings to list without forgetting something. The Cookie Walk was another huge success. It's always fun to see (and sample) the beautiful cookies. Many people entered our doors and I enjoy greeting and conversing with them. Thanks to all our bakers, those who worked on the day of the event, and to Kristin McElhinney for organizing it. We have had wonderful worship attendance in person and online. Together we are proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. Thanks to the choir and their gift of music. Thanks to all who assisted with the Hanging of the Greens service; especially Cindy Knoop for lining up helpers and setting up much of the decorations. What a joy it was to have the children and youth participate in the Christmas program. Thanks to Kristin McElhinney and Amber Marsh for their help. Thanks to Howard Moss for setting up the nativity and joy sign outside. So many things are happening with so many people assisting – thank you everyone for all you do to further God's work!

Ministry Happenings:

Fourteen pastoral visits

Wedding of Charles Headings and Anna Bruns

Budget meeting

Thanks to Jill Taylor, Dave Poppen, John Black, Nancy Bruns, and Claudia Beyer for serving

Constitution Task Force

Thanks to Neil Korsmo, Deb Anderson, and Claudia Beyer for serving

WBARC Meeting

Cookie Walk

Men's Bible Study

Women's Circle

Baptismal instruction

Wednesday Faith Formation

These are a few of the monthly happenings in addition to the regular ministry happenings of worship and sermon preparation, bulletin and newsletter preparation, and other administrative tasks.

Secretary's Report – Anne Fetzer

Kent moved to approve the November minutes, seconded by Howard. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report – Jill Taylor

Kent moved to approve the November report,

seconded by Cindy. Motion approved.

Committee Reports

Building & Grounds – Howard Moss

Alliant is picking up the old refrigerator on Friday, December 16. They will reimburse us \$50.

Pastor notified Dan Haub about fixing the lighting behind the Great Hall cross.

Howard to work with Pat Cassabaum on purchasing another kitchen garbage can for large events.

Education & Youth – Kristin McElhinney & Amber Marsh

The Christmas program was held on Sunday, December 11. Most of the children participated and they are already excited about next year's program. The extra help with the setup was appreciated.

Currently, pausing the story time events.

Also looking at reorganizing the Faith Formation and Sunday School classes to even out class sizes in the future.

Evangelism & Missions – Anne Fetzer

Neil and Chris Korsmo reported that Bethany's Hope Chest served seven individuals this year. In addition, Korsmo's delivered 198 bags of goods to the community food pantry on behalf of Bethany this year to date. Served three families through the Angel Tree. All gifts have been purchased and extra monetary donations have been made on behalf of the mission.

Fellowship – Patsy Ernst

No Fourth Sunday meal planned for December due to Christmas.

Stewardship – Kent Kaufman

Stacy Beyer and Dave Poppen prepared the Time and Talent sheet in Google Forms. The council tested it, and it is ready for distribution. A help desk will also be hosted following worship.

Worship & Music – Cindy Knoop

Cindy, Pastor Chad, and Jill Barnhart met on worship ideas. Potential future ideas include a worship Hymn Sing, and a Blue Christmas service.

Christmas Eve services are planned for 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. No service is planned on Christmas Day.

Old Business

Updates from Constitution Review Committee

Jill moves that we proceed with the Constitution updates recommended by the Synod Churchwide Assembly including the optional text, seconded by Cindy.

Motion approved.

December Council Minutes

(Continued from page 8)

Pastor will email and provide paper copies of the updated Constitution for congregational review 30 days before the annual meeting.

Budget Review

Increases in offering and expenses in 2022. Currently, the 2022 deficit is projected around \$5,000.

The projected income for the 2023 budget is based on historical offering increases by about 2% each year.

It was proposed if we face a deficit of over \$5,000 in 2023, the council has the option to reduce the size of the local mission donation. The council did not accept this proposal since currently we have other funds that could be used to cover expenses.

2022 Local Missions Fund

Jill proposes we drop the UIHC Chaplaincy donation since there is not a chaplain staffed and then split the funds among the other five designated charities. Jill also proposes we keep the WBARC donation at \$400. Kent seconded. Motion approved.

Updates from Council Nominating Committee
The committee continues to finalize candidates.
Updates from the Audit Committee
Committee consists of John Black, Tim Shields, Paul Bruns, and Nancy Bruns

New Business

Synod Assembly nominations

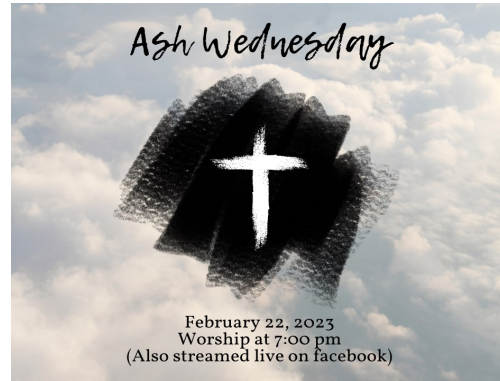
Generally, we ask the congregation during the annual meeting to confirm nominees. The Synod Assembly meeting will be online this year.

Kent moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m., and Howard seconded. Motion approved.

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

Next Regular Meeting – 01/09/2023

God loves you!!!



Wednesday Lent Fellowship and Worship Opportunities

Join us for a meal and fellowship beginning at 6:15 PM followed by prayer around the cross at 7:00 PM. *Note:* We will not gather on the third Wednesday of Lent, March 15.

March 1

A Heart of Flesh

Prayer for renewal and mercy

March 22

For the Healing of Creation

Prayers for the whole creation

March 8

For the Healing of the Nations

Intercessory prayer for peoples, lands, and nations

March 29

Beside Still Waters

A liturgy of healing prayer with laying on of hands and anointing

Below is a word search for our younger readers of commonly used words in church. The words are all horizontal or vertical and no words share a letter. Have fun!

CHURCH WORDS

H	I	O	V	C	G	R	A	C	E
O	P	B	F	O	R	G	I	V	E
P	V	P	S	P	I	R	I	T	J
E	B	P	L	V	N	Z	B	T	E
I	R	E	O	C	R	O	S	S	S
J	T	A	V	M	W	B	T	L	U
O	K	C	E	F	R	I	K	I	S
Y	H	E	E	O	U	B	G	O	D
V	Z	P	R	A	Y	L	D	Z	N
N	R	N	C	A	C	E	J	V	C

pray	hope	peace	bible
forgive	joy	spirit	grace
cross	god	love	jesus

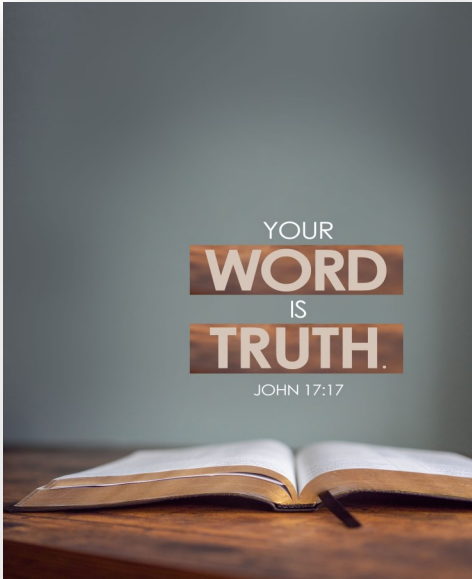


Adult Faith Formation Opportunities



Men's Group
WEDNESDAYS @ 7:00 AM
Breakfast, Bible Study and Discussion

MEETS IN THE GREAT HALL



YOUR
WORD
IS
TRUTH.
JOHN 17:17

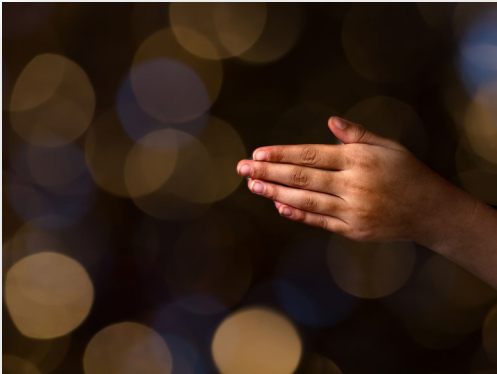


Women's Group
Thursdays at 6:00 AM
Small Fellowship Hall



Wednesday Women's Bible Study

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



February 2023

View Calendar on our [website](#).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:15pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Youth Faith Formation (Grade 4-8)	2 6:00am Women's Study	3	4
5 8:30-9:15 Sunday School 9:30am Worship in person and Online via Facebook 5:30pm Clover Kids	6	7	8 7:00am Men's Study Group 9:00am Wednesday Women's Bible Study 6:15pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Youth Faith	9 6:00am Women's Study	10	11
12 8:30-9:15 Sunday School 9:30am Worship in person and Online via Facebook	13 6:30pm Council Meeting	14	15 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:15pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Youth Faith Formation (Grade 4-8)	16 6:00am Women's Study	17	18
19 9:30am Worship in person and Online via Facebook	20 7:00pm WB Study Club	21	22 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:15pm Choir Practice 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Worship	23 6:00am Women's Study	24	25
26 8:30-9:15 Sunday School 9:30am Worship in person and Online via Facebook 5:00pm Community Meal Open to All	27	28 Blood drive at Bethany 3-6:30 PM				



Monetary Gifts Report Submitted by Jill Taylor

	December 2022		YTD	
Total Receipts	Actual \$16,131	Budget \$13,837	Actual \$168,735	Budget \$166,050
Total Expenses	Actual \$18,051	Budget \$14,144	Actual \$170,853	Budget \$169,966

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

Bethany Branches
February 2023

Ministry Assistants

Ministers of Proclamation

(Lectors)

2/5 Toni Dodds

2/12 Jon Tving

2/19 John Black

2/26 Wayne Frauenholtz

Ministers of Technology

2/5 Paula Casper

2/12 Alex Poppen

2/19 Jill Taylor

2/26 Cole Crosthwaite &

Tate Franz

Ministers of Christ's Light

(Acolytes)

Opportunities available. Sign Up:

<https://tinyurl.com/nhkyywjs>

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!

 Twitter

Follow us on Twitter!
Our Twitter Handle is:
[@blwestbranch](https://twitter.com/blwestbranch)

You Are Loved!

We
Love
because
He first
loved us.
1 John 4:19