

Bethany Lutheran Church

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



Important Dates

- 12-02 Cookie Walk 9-11 AM
- 12-03 Hanging of Greens Worship 9:30 AM
- 12-03 High School Youth Night 6:00-7:30 PM
- 12-10 Children's Christmas Program 9:30 AM
- 12-11 Council Meeting
- 12-13 Women's Circle
- 12-24 Christmas Eve Worship 5:00&7:00PM

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 X!

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

[The angel said to the shepherds], "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."

Luke 2:10 (NRSV)



Dear faithful servants of Christ,

"Do not be afraid!" A quick search of these four words in the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Bible translation revealed 78 occurrences beginning in the first book of the Old Testament Genesis in which the Lord says to Abram, "Do not be afraid Abram, I am your shield." (Genesis 15:1) And then in the last book of the New Testament Revelation in which the author John encounters Jesus in a vision and Jesus says to him, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living one." (Revelation 1:17) An angel says these words to the women at the empty tomb and the risen Jesus says these words to his disciples while they were huddled together behind closed doors in fear they may encounter the same fate.

Fear in and of itself is not bad. It is an emotion we were created with that helps protect us from harm. Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us, "For everything there is a season..." While fear is not specifically listed, I believe there is a time to be afraid. It's perfectly normal to have some sense of fear in the face of peril. As a child when I heard a noise in the middle of the night, I was afraid. When Lauren got lost in a large department store, I was afraid. Heading to seminary and the many unknowns in 2006, I was afraid. Several years ago as I prepared to have surgery on my neck, I was afraid. Following the onset of the pandemic in 2020, I was afraid. None of us could even begin to count the number of times we have encountered fear.

When I read the Bible and so many of the passages in which we encounter the divine imperative, "Do not be afraid" it seems to me it is about our relationship with God. Our relationship with Jesus. Do not be afraid, for he is with us. Do not fear death, because you have been saved by grace through faith. Do not let the fear of scarcity strip us from the abundance we have in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

This Advent, a season of preparation and waiting for the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior, many resources have been provided to assist you. On a table just outside the kitchen (*see photo on page 5 and the continuation of this article*) are several things.

There are Advent wreaths first assembled and distributed in 2020. Also included is a devotion that was prepared at that time. I have updated it slightly.

There are several items from [Illustrated Ministry](#) that can be used by people of all ages. There is an Advent Wreath that can be colored and assembled. There are ornaments that be made and hung on your Christmas tree.

See page 5.



Birthdays

12-01 Kent Kaeser
12-02 Bruce Jeffries
12-05 Samantha Yeater
12-06 Wanda Anderson
12-07 Kellee McCrory
12-10 Barb Campbell
Ellanora Halls
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.

Special Offering

During worship in October a special offering was taken for Lutheran Disaster Response to help provide support for those in need following conflict in the Middle East. \$1,496 was generously given by the faithful people of God at Bethany. This is amazing! Thank you so much! To learn more about Lutheran Disaster Response visit their website at:

<https://tinyurl.com/4awn49ej>

Or scan the QR code to the right.



Bethany Books

by Frank Frostestad

Book For Adults

How do we walk with Christ - daily follow him, grow in him, and faithfully serve him? In the Gospels, Jesus modeled for us the Christian spiritual life. The apostles taught it in their writings. The church has, through the last 2,000 years, sought to pursue this Christian spiritual life. In *The Walk*, Adam Hamilton focuses on five essential practices that are rooted in Jesus' own walk with God and taught throughout the New Testament. Each of these practices is a part of our daily walk with Christ and an essential part of growing together in the church. Hamilton explores each of these practices, their New Testament foundation, and what it looks like to pursue them daily in our personal lives. These practices are: worship, study, serving, giving, and sharing our faith. The early Thursday morning women's bible study group has studied this book during the past year. It is worth your time taking a look at it also.

Book For Teens

The teen book is *Invisible* by Christina Diaz Gonzalez and Gabriela Epstein. There is George: the brain, Sara: the loner, Dayara: the tough kid, Nico: the rich kid, and Miguel: the athlete. They are stuck together when they are forced to complete their school's community service hours. Although they are sure they have nothing in common with one another, some people see them as all the same... just five Spanish-speaking kids. Then they meet someone who truly needs their help, and they must decide whether they are each willing to expose their own secrets to help...or if remaining invisible is the only way to survive middle school. What gets in the way of the students in the book being kind to or accepting of (much less actually loving) each other? What finally brings them together? How are they able to see beyond the labels they have assigned to each other? What happened when they showed love to someone else?

Book For Children

The children's book is *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins. Ma has made a dozen delicious cookies. It should be plenty for her two children. But then the doorbell rings - and rings and rings and rings. Each time the doorbell rings, there are more people who have come to share Ma's wonderful cookies. This book is about sharing and not running out. When we share love with each other, we also never run out of love.



TO FULFILL WHAT THE LORD HAD SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET.

Matthew 1:22, ESV

Church Staff

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Pianist—Jill Barnhart

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Claudia Beyer—**Financial Secretary**
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5:00 and 7:00 PM

5:00 PM streamed live on Facebook

No morning worship on December 24th



Holy Communion Schedule

As a result of the Hanging of the Greens service on December 3rd and the Children's Christmas Program December 10th, the sacrament of Holy Communion will not be celebrated. It will be shared on December 17th, Christmas Eve, December 31st, and January 7th.
Thanks for your understanding!



It's time to order your poinsettia.
to decorate the altar for Christmas.
Plants are \$10.00 each.

Please return this form with payment to the church office. Or mail to:
P.O. Box 236 West Branch, IA 52358
by December 10th. Please make checks out to Bethany Lutheran.
Plants will be set out for the Christmas Eve service.



Name: _____

I would like to order _____ poinsettias in memory or in honor of:

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/>



Time and Talent

Now is your chance to join in on the good things happening at Bethany. The Stewardship committee is looking to update our database of volunteers who help Bethany spread the word of Christ. By filling out a Time and Talent Survey we can pass along your areas of interest to committees and get you involved at Bethany.

Last year we debuted an online version of the Survey, which we have updated and can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/356v33uj>

For those of you that wish to fill out a paper version, it is available on the table at the base of the stairs in front of the Church office, and it can be returned to the office.

All are welcome to fill out the survey. If you filled out one last year, you may complete a new one if you wish to make changes, otherwise we will use the one on file.

If you need any assistance please reach out to Stacy Beyer, Kent Kaufman, or Dave Poppen.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

God loves you!!!



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

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

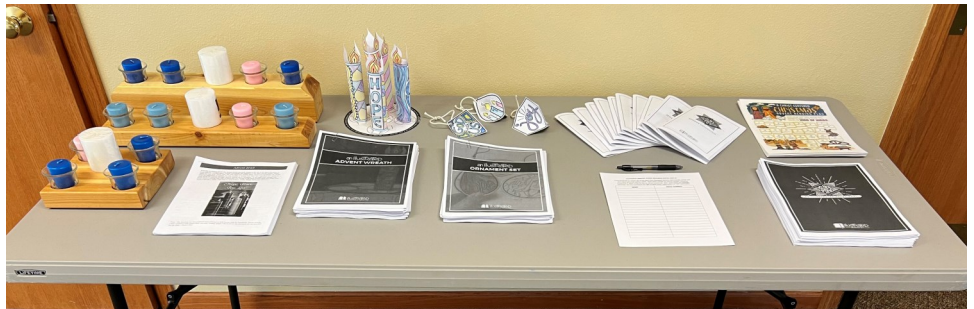
Tax-free donation directly from an IRA to Bethany Lutheran Church
This is a tax-free way to give your required minimum distributions from your IRA to charity.

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.



Advent resource table near kitchen in the Great Hall.

Pastor Chad continued from page 1.

There is also a devotional aptly titled, "Do not be afraid." It is provided in two formats. One is a booklet that reads like a traditional devotional. The second is full of different activities and provides room to doodle and color and may be more suited to families, but certainly is available to anyone. While this devotional was written following the onset of the pandemic, the experience of fear as pointed out earlier knows no boundaries or limits.

We continue to live in a world in which many are bound by fear...of the unknown, of the other, of not having enough, of exclusion, of war and unrest, and fear of living in the peace, joy, hope and love that come from God. As the devotion says at the onset:

The inspiration for our theme comes from the angels' message in the first two chapters of the gospel of Luke: "Do not be afraid!" This phrase is an instruction God gave to God's people throughout their history, and it's a message God continues to give us today. This Advent, we invite you to explore what it looks like to hold hope when life feels really uncertain, to bring peace in the face of fear, to practice joy when everything seems burdensome, and to choose love when, sometimes, it's just really hard.

If you would like a digital copy of any of the items from Illustrated Ministry, there is a sign up on the table. All items from Illustrated Ministry have been purchased and are copyright protected and can be shared only within our faith community.

Lastly, there is a Christ-Centered Christmas Advent Reading Plan. May you have a blessed Advent and Christmas!

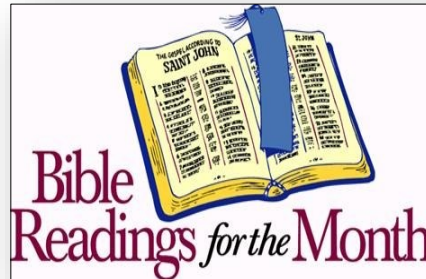
Pastor Chad

December Sunday Bible Readings

The passages below are the assigned readings for December. 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.

December 3

[Isaiah 64:1-9](#)
[Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19](#)
[1 Corinthians 1:3-9](#)
[Mark 13:24-37](#)



December 10

[Isaiah 64:1-9](#)
[Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19](#)
[1 Corinthians 1:3-9](#)
[Mark 13:24-37](#)

December 17

[Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11](#)
[Psalm 126](#)
[1 Thessalonians 5:16-24](#)
[John 1:6-8, 19-28](#)

December 24

[2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16](#)
[Luke 1:46b-55](#)
[Romans 16:25-27](#)
[Luke 1:26-38](#)

December 31

[Isaiah 61:10—62:3](#)
[Psalm 148](#)
[Galatians 4:4-7](#)
[Luke 2:22-40](#)



Greetings! This is to inform you of the upcoming Bethany Lutheran Church Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 21, 2024 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



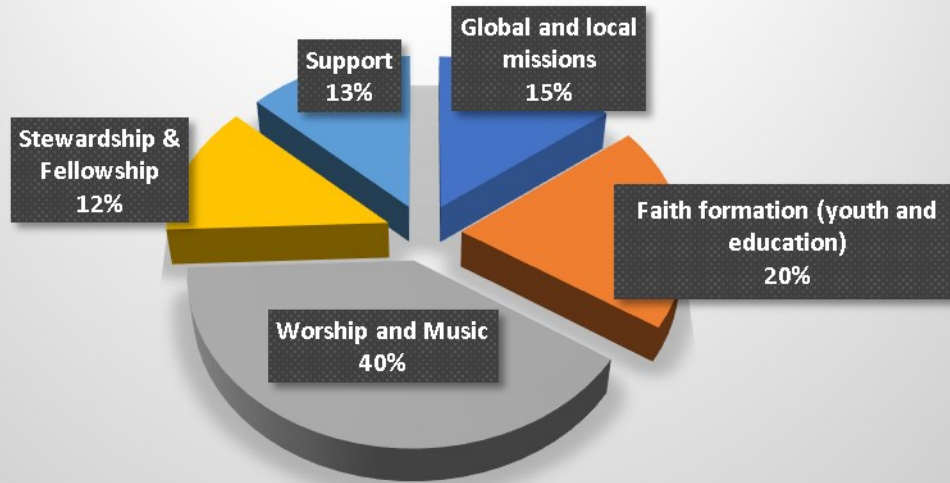


From the Stewardship Committee

Supporting the Bethany Lutheran Church Mission Statement through Our Weekly Offerings:

Have you ever wondered how your weekly offering goes to support the church mission Statement? Our 2023 budget has projected offerings of \$172,000 and the following chart breaks down how we are using our blessings to support our mission and grow in Christ.

Mission Statement: *To grow so deep in Christ through worship, fellowship, & education that we celebrate by reaching out to others*



Global and Local Missions – 15% of our offering supports our partnership with the Southeastern Iowa Synod and the many ministries those gifts are directed to such as Lutheran Services in Iowa, Lutheran Campus Ministry and Wartburg Theological Seminary. Additionally, these gifts are directed to the West Branch Area Religious Council (WBARC) that assists with community needs, Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), and Shelter House. These gifts also support the ELCA annual day of service God’s work, our Hands. Other outreach ministries such as Angel Meals are also supported through your gifts.

Faith Formation – 20% of our offering supports faith formation efforts such as a growing Sunday school program, Vacation Bible School, men’s and women’s Bible studies, and youth faith formation on Wednesday evenings.

Worship and Music – 40% goes to worship preparation including supplies, copyright licenses, access to online planning resources, choir music, our pianist and choir director, and so much more.

Fellowship – 12% goes to fellowship programs and providing space as well as pastoral visits to our homebound members.

Support - The remaining 13% of the budget goes to general support of the programs.

2024 Offering Growth Challenge: Our financial outlook for 2024 is troubling as we see costs increase, so we ask your help in supporting our mission. We would like to take this opportunity to ask all of you to consider **“How can I help BLC continue to grow? How can I support the growth of our education programs? How can I help BLC continue to create new missions and continue reaching out to others? How can I create new church friends through fellowship?”**

The Stewardship Committee asks that you prayerfully consider increasing your weekly or monthly offering, 2, 3, 5, 10% or as much as you are able so that we can keep up with inflation and continue to support our mission of reaching out to others through the great programs highlighted above.

Thank you for all that you do to help BLC continue to thrive as a congregation serving our Lord.



Council Minutes — October 2023

Call to Order at 6:32pm by President Dave Poppen

Members Present: Jon Twing, Dave Poppen, Courtney Heid, Pastor Chad, Cindy Knoop, Kent Kaufmann, Kristen Van Scoyoc, Jill Taylor, Sue Hughes

Members absent: Howard Moss

Opening Prayer & Discussion

Pastor's Report

Ministry Happenings

11 Pastoral Visits

Synod Happenings

Fall Theological Conference (Ames)

Compensation Meeting

Have been asked to be on Synod Compensation Committee

WBARC

Possible return to pulpit exchange

Discussion over doing more together.

Second meeting at Herb n' Lou's as a group

Funeral of Jim Racey

Crestview Worship (Cathy West assisted – thank you!)

Community Tailgate

Attend Youth Events

High school football games in West Branch and Tipton

Middle school football at CCA

Thanksgiving and closing of Hope Chest

Policy and Procedure

Assisted on credit card policy updates, building use policy and live-streaming policy

Confirmation and Wednesday Youth Faith Formation

Monthly Women's Circle

Regular Ministry Happenings (e.g., sermon & worship preparation, bulletin, newsletter)

Other Community Events

Sleep in Heavenly Peace bed build @ Cedar County

Fairgrounds

Volunteer reading with first grade students at Hoover Elementary

HACAP food pickup for Operation Backpack

Upcoming

Russell Grout funeral

Compensation Committee meeting in Grinnell

Vacation (week of Thanksgiving including Sunday, November 29, December 17 *if supply pastor can be secured* plus one additional Sunday remaining)

Confirmation – October 29

Secretary's Report - Courtney

September Council Meeting Minutes

Kent moved to approve; Kristen seconded. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report - Jill

September Treasurer's Report

Cindy moved to approve; Sue seconded. Motion approved.

Cookie Walk Fund transferred to the Youth Fund.

2022 Cookie Walk income was approved by council for youth expenses/activities.

Committee Reports

Building and Grounds – Howard

Created a committee to discuss capital projects needed in the coming years.

Education & Youth - Kristen & Courtney

Things continue to go well.

Christmas program planning.

Evangelism & Missions – Jon

Working on follow-up with the public library on floor tiles.

Working on banner use policy

Fellowship – Sue

Cookie Walk Coordination

Putting together committee

Fourth Sunday Dinner

October – Fish Fry

Stewardship - Kent

Working on putting together a committee for Stewardship Drive.

Worship and Music – Cindy

Confirmation – October 29th– Reformation Sunday

Senior Saint's Sunday – November 5th

Plans to have a brunch for fellowship.

Committee forming for upcoming holiday services.

Christmas Eve is on a Sunday

No morning service.

Two evening services – 5pm and 7pm

Old Business

2024 budgeting review

Review planning calendar in handbook

Nominating committee – Kristin M., Amber M, & Anne F.

Identify synod assembly voting delegates (cannot be council members).

Identify 3 new council members.

Volunteers for budget committee (can include council)

Jon Twing

(Continued on page 9)

Council Minutes Continued

(Continued from page 8)

New Business

Approve Girl Scouts use of the hall every other Tuesday evening. They will not be charged; a donation will be recommended.

Sue moved to approve; Jon seconded. Motion approved.

Discuss building use fees (see attachment)

Pastor working on updating – council will review and give feedback.

Approve changes to credit card policy. Finance Committee recommended:

“Treasurer, Pastor, & Financial Secretary spending policies & limits”

Proposed revision: Pastor's spending limit be raised to \$1,500 and that his single purchase limit be raised to \$750.

Proposed treasurer spending policy: ability to make payments over \$1000 using bill pay online.

Kristen moved to approve; Sue seconded. Motion approved.

Sue moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50pm, Kent seconded. Motion approved.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer

Next Regular Meeting November 13th, 2023



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 6:11

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

- To live life well, I need...
- What I want and what I need...
- When people don't have basic life needs...

Holy Baptism

During worship on November 12th Olivia, daughter of Scott and Katie Burnette was baptized.

Baptismal sponsors standing to the left of Pastor Chad in the photo were Keith Van Beek and Katherine Burnette.



Matthew 6:12

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

- When someone forgives me...
- I find it most difficult to forgive...
- I ask God to forgive me for...

sunday school with Bethany Lutheran Church

Preschool - Grade 3

December 3, 10, 17

8:30 - 9:15 AM

Wednesday
FAITH FORMATION

Grades 3-8

December 6, 13, 20

Come have fun, get to know each other, sing, dance, pray, and grow in Christ! All are welcome!




SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3
6:00-7:30 PM

HIGH SCHOOL NIGHT

All our high school youth are invited to a night of pizza and games such as Ping-Pong, foosball and perhaps the always popular indoor snowball fights. Bring a friend and come have some Sunday night fun!



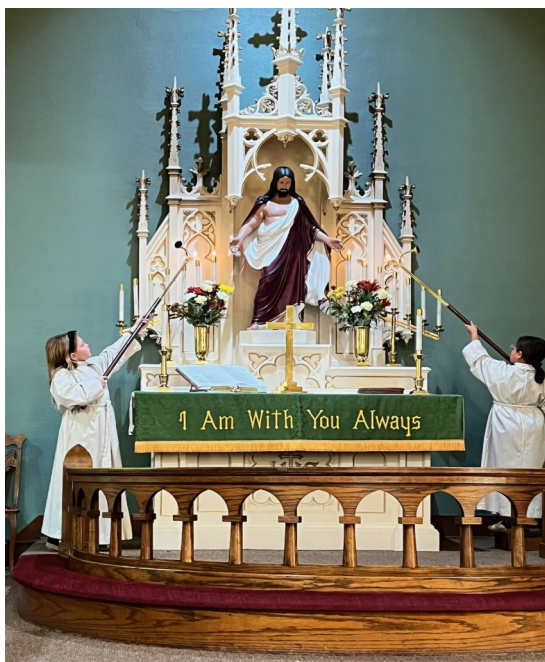
Please join us for our children and youth's

Christmas

P R O G R A M

Preschool through Grade 8

DEC 10  9:30 AM



Ministers of Christ's Light Opportunities

Don't forget we are always in need of acolytes. You can sign up online at:

<http://tinyurl.com/2txuahnc>





December 2023

View Calendar on our [website](#).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3 8:30am Sunday School Preschool - Grade 3 9:30am Worship (Hanging of the Greens) (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour 6:00pm High School Night	4	5 9:00am Prayers with Pastor & Paula	6 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:30pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Faith Formation Youth grade 3-8	7 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters	8	9
10 8:30am Sunday School Preschool - Grade 3 9:30am Worship (Christmas Program) (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour 5:45pm Clover Kids	11 6:30pm Council Meeting	12 9:00am Prayers with Pastor & Paula	13 7:00am Men's Study Group 9:00am Women's Circle 6:15pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Faith Formation Youth grade 3-8	14 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters	15	16
17 8:30am Sunday School Preschool - Grade 3 9:30am Worship with Communion (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour	18 7:00pm WB Study Club	19 9:00am Prayers with Pastor & Paula	20 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:15pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Faith Formation Youth grade 3-8	21 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters	22	23
24 5:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship (Also streamed live on Facebook) 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship <i>No 9:30 AM Worship due to Christmas Eve services at 5:00 PM & 7:00 PM</i>	25	26	27 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:15pm Choir Practice	28 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters 2:00pm Crestview Worship	29	30
31 9:30am Worship (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour	1	2	3	4	5	6



Monetary Gifts Report Submitted by Jill Taylor

	October 2023		YTD	
Total Gifts	Actual 17,987	Budget 14,333	Actual 145,527	Budget 143,334
Total Expenses	Actual 14,653	Budget 14,766	Actual 143,034	Budget 147,801
Net Revenue	3,334		2,493	

To give an offering visit our website wbbethany.org and click on the [Give Now](#) button.

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.

Ministry Assistants

Ministers of Proclamation (Lectors)

12-3 Hanging of the Greens
12-10 Children's program
12-17 Wayne Frauenholtz
12-24 Dave Bahnsen
12-24 Beth Kaufman
12-31 Bruce Jeffries

Ministers of Technology

12-3 Dave Poppen
12-10 Paula Casper
12-17 Jill Taylor
12-24 Paula Casper
12-31 Jill Taylor

Greeters

12-3 Jon & Laura Twing
12-10 Cindy Knoop
12-17 Nancy Bruns
12-24 Del & Sue Hughes
12-24 Kent & Beth Kaufman
12-31 Stacy Beyer

Ministers of Altar Care:

Cindy Knoop & Stacy Beyer



Find us on
Facebook

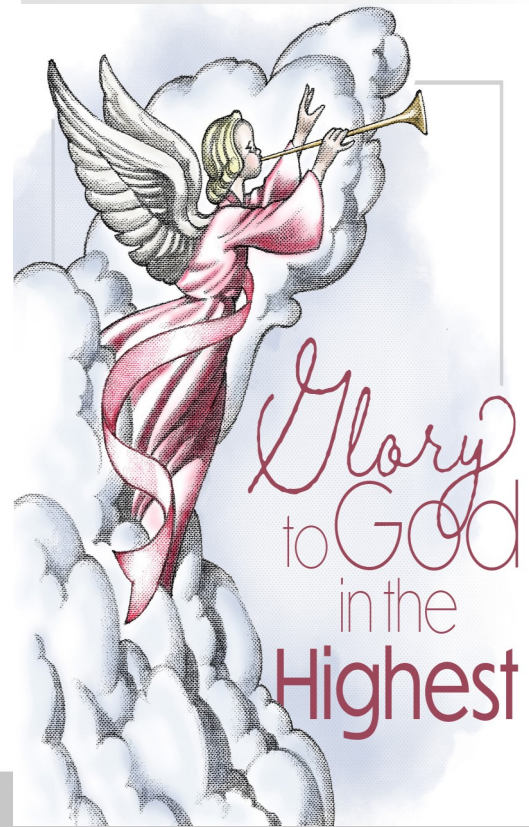
To find Bethany's main page,
search "**Bethany Lutheran
Church (ELCA) West Branch,
Iowa**"

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@blcwestbranch

You Are Loved!



Bethany Branches
December 2023

Bethany Lutheran Church
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