

Bethany Lutheran Church

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



Important Dates

1-8 Council meeting
1-21 Annual Meeting
1-28 Fourth Sunday meal

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 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) or images

Give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18



Happy New Year Beloved Saints in Light!

In the message at the funeral and celebration of life of Dorothy Holmes I mentioned her final words to me were, "Thank you!" I also shared that when I asked how she was continuing to let the light of Christ shine as she moved to Cedar Manor and her body grew a bit weaker and weary, she said, "I do my best to say 'thank you' often to the staff in this facility." One of her favorite hymns was, "This Little Light of Mine" and she did let her light shine brightly for 91 years.

So, that is what I do as 2023 draws to a close and we move into 2024. I say, "Thank you" amazing, wonderful, faithful people of God for all you do. The list is long and there is no way to catch everything that is done to keep things running smoothly and share God mission to proclaim the good news of great joy for all people: Christ has come! Christ has died! Christ has risen! Christ will come again! Hallelujah, let our voices shout praises of joy and thanksgiving with the saints who have gone before us and joined the multitude of the heavenly hosts and angels of Christmas! So, once again thank you everyone for your steadfast faithfulness and commitment to doing God's work and shining Christ's light! You are so loved!!! In peace, Pastor Chad.



Amplifying the Voices of Iowa Children and Families

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

These are all issues faced by Iowans from all different walks of life. Join Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) to advocate for our community members at **Lutheran Day on the Hill (LDH) on Monday, February 19, 2024.**

In partnership with the three Iowa synods of the ELCA, LDH is LSI's biggest day of advocacy. Over 150 participants gather at Capitol Hill Lutheran Church in Des Moines to learn about critical issues Iowa children, adults, and families are facing. You'll learn more about the legislative process, the issues impacting your neighbors, and your role as a citizen in helping to amplify their voices.

After learning how to advocate for our neighbors, the group heads to the Iowa State Capitol to talk directly with legislators.

For more information and to register for this year's Lutheran Day on the Hill, visit:
<https://lsiowa.org/LDH/>

Birthdays

1/09 Hallie Fitzgerald
 1/11 Tonya Lovetinsky
 1/14 Deanna Pedersen
 1/15 Alberta Sweat
 1/17 Cliff Hinkhouse
 1/20 Tonya Samuelson
 1/23 Deb Lund
 1/24 Robbie Boaz, Paul Bruns
 1/25 Lisa Zimmerman
 1/26 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.



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!

If interested or have questions, please contact Paula at: blcsecretary@lcom.net (319) 643-5998

Thank you!

Bethany Books



Book For Adults

It has been over a year since I have added a book by Beverly Lewis on the Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The latest book is *The Heirloom*. This book is the prequel to *The Shunning* which is possibly the most famous of Lewis's books. In this book, after her widowed father remarries, nineteen-year-old Clara Bender is no longer needed at home to run his household. Marriage seems like her best hope of moving out. However, there are few young men in her tiny Indiana Amish community. She comes across letters from her mother's aunt and decides to visit her in Hickory Hollow in Lancaster County. A visit that is supposed to last a week turns into something much longer than that. The two women form a warm bond while working on a quilt and sharing their lives. She decides to stay the summer. Read the book to find out the unexpected turns that take place in her life.

Book For Teens

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a private school known for its academics. There he is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from home to school he finds himself torn between two worlds and not really fitting into either one. Middle school is hard enough without being the new kid. Read the book to find out the adventures he faces as he learns how to navigate his new school culture. Can he keep his neighborhood friends and stay true to himself?

Book For Children

We often wonder if we are correct in our prayer life. Even the disciples asked Jesus how it is best to pray. In the book *There's No Wrong Way To Pray* by Rebecca Ninke and Kate E.H. Watson, a mother and 10 years old daughter, team up to answer this question. In the book, a child reflects on prayer, including different ways to pray, things to pray for, and times to pray. The prayers range from silly, wish-like prayers at Christmas to nightly prayers for all children to be fed, sheltered, and loved. She used to believe that there was only one right way to pray. She concludes that now she thinks that there is no wrong way to pray. This book is a helpful guide in dealing with the subject of prayer with children.

Thank you to Frank Frotestad for his "Bethany Book" articles and his faithfulness in keeping the church library looking so nice as he adds new books and rotates them by seasons of the church year.

Church Staff

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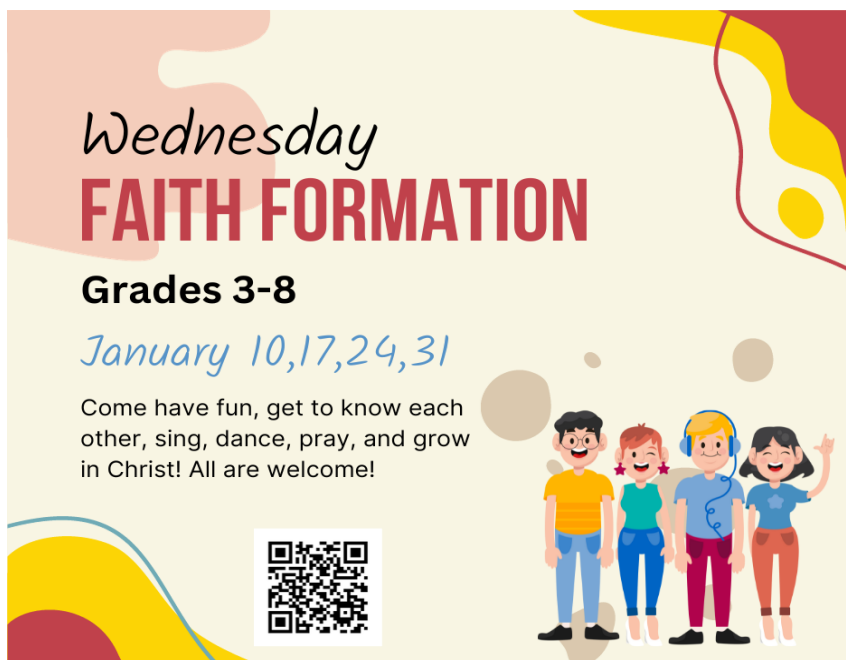
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Children & Youth Christmas Program

It was a wonderful day in worship December 10th for the children and youth Christmas program. Thanks to Courtney Heid for organizing it and those who assisted her: Amber and Scott Marsh, Kristin McElhinney, Kristen Van Scoyoc, Stacy Beyer and Jess Fonseca. Thanks to Jill Barnhart for helping the children with songs. Thanks to the parents for providing treats for fellowship. And of course, thanks to the children and youth for bringing us so much joy!



Quilting News

A small but mighty group of women gather Thursday afternoons from 1:00-3:30 and makes beautiful quilts. Presently, these quilts are being made for Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a program that provides beds free to any child that does not have a bed of their own. Below is a photo recently taken of the group.



Cookie Walk Photos



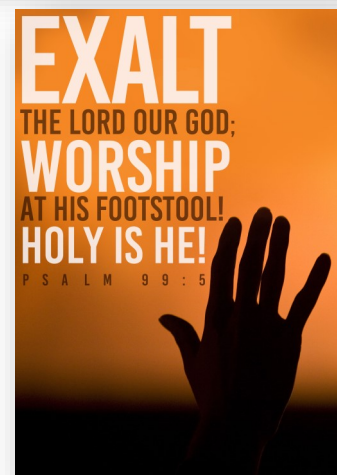
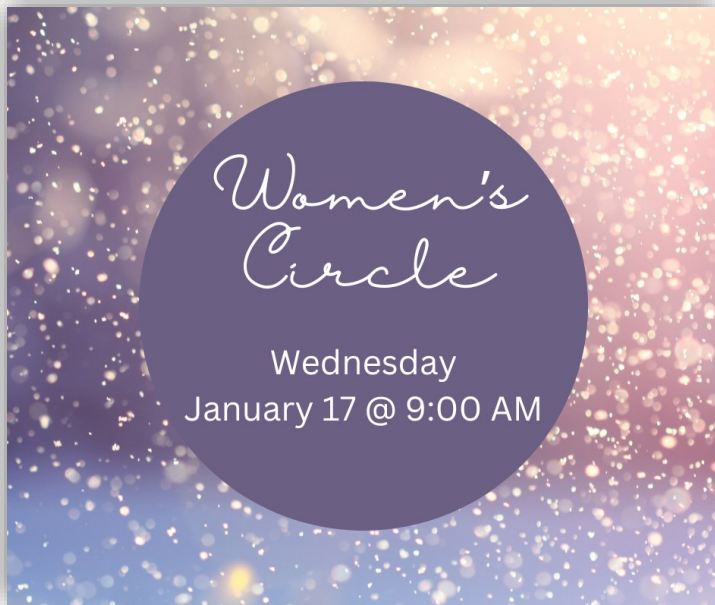
Watch a short video on Facebook of a few of the choir members singing Christmas carols at the Cookie Walk. Scan the QR Code or go to the link below.

<https://fb.watch/pdpwZSGP3I/>





Adult Faith Formation Opportunities



Stewardship News

Bethany Lutheran Church (BLC) Mission Statement:

TO GROW SO DEEP IN CHRIST through worship, fellowship, and education that we celebrate by reaching out to others.

We are asking for your support to help us grow. Think about the things that you love at BLC and what they have in common.

- Many of you love seeing our children & children's sermons in worship. Now think about how the Spirit is at work in and through the people of God at Bethany to bring the children here – they are here because of our education programs that are helping them grow in Christ, and they are here as parents, grandparents and others respond to the call to teach them the good news of Jesus Christ. These programs exist because of our faithful teachers serving God and Christ's church and your financial support through your weekly offering.
- Some of you may love our fellowship opportunities, such as 4th Sunday meals, fellowship after church, or events like the Cookie Walk. Now think about what makes these possible. Again, these exist because of faithful servants and your financial support.
- Or maybe you are moved by the beautiful music from the choir. The choir also relies on faithful servants to sing, and your offerings are used to pay for music, our pianist and upkeep of instruments and worship space.
- As you think of your favorite ministries and the ways God is at work at BLC, you will see a common link. All require **faithful servants** and **your financial support**, along with the help and guidance of God, to make these possible.

So, this brings us to a new growth challenge for 2024. We need your continued financial support to fund the ministries that you love and through which God helps you grow in Christ.

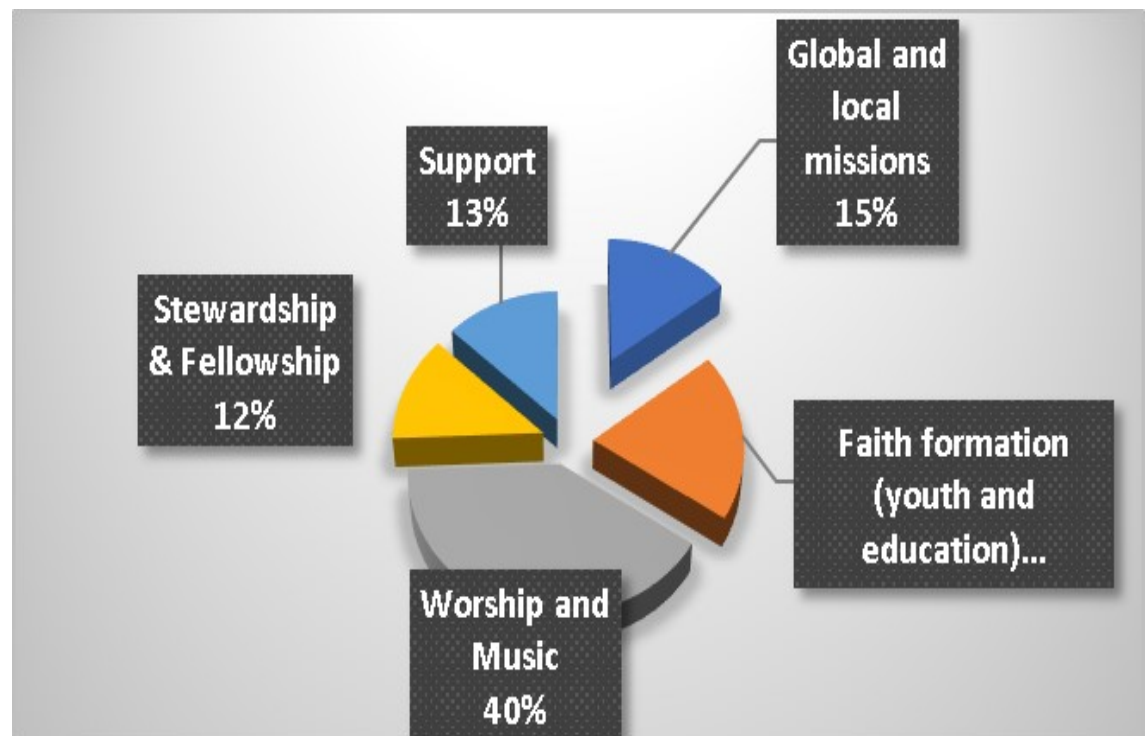
The stewardship committee and church council are asking you to prayerfully consider increasing your weekly offering commitment for 2024.

If you want a guide on how much to increase, please consider an increase that matches the rate of inflation, but you don't have to stop there. We also want to make known each gift matters no matter the amount.

Have you ever wondered how your weekly offering goes to support the church mission Statment? 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.

For more information, see page 7 of the December Newsletter at the link below.

<http://tinyurl.com/zjhdfspu>



Recently, a committee has been exploring the possibility of converting the church building to solar energy. The flier below provides information on the project. There will be upcoming informational meetings following worship January 7th and 14th. The council has approved the committee to move forward and this item will be placed on the agenda at the Annual Meeting January 21st. Please plan to attend an informational session or see one of the committee members for additional information or questions.

SOLAR ENERGY PROPOSAL

Solar Energy Committee

Howard Moss - Chair

John Black

Laura Twing

Del Hughes

Al Beyer

Dave Poppen

Kent Kaufman

Benefits of Solar

Renewable Energy Source (Stewardship)

Cost Savings

\$3,918.73 Energy Cost Offset Annually

System Pays For Itself

After 6.6 Years as a Result of Cash Savings

\$157,545.61 Projected

25 Year Lifetime Savings

Avoid Projected Annual Energy Rate Increases of 5-9%

Contractor Selected

Rabe Hardware

Blairstown, Iowa

Points of Interest on System

System Cost

System Cost (Including Tax)

\$42,120

Federal Tax Credit

\$12,636

Net Cost

\$29,484

36 VSUN 450w Black Modules

Roof Mount

(South slope of Great Hall)

30 Year Panel Warranty +

Re-Insurance (Warranty
protected if manufacturer goes
out of business)

25 Year Inverter & Optimizer
Warranty

5 Year Parts & Labor Warranty

Can add 16 Additional Panels

Excess energy banked to fill in
gaps on days solar output is
diminished by weather

22,656 kwh Per Year Projected
Production

20,936 kwh Past 3 Year
Average for Bethany

Guaranteed Minimum 13.2%
Return on Investment

22,000 kWhs
(If not, Rabe will reimburse us
the difference)

Rabe has their own licensed
electricians

Rabe Monitors System Output
Daily

One-Day Installation

Informational Meetings

After Worship

January 7th & 14th

Council Minutes November 2023

Call to Order at 6:30 pm by President
Dave Poppen

Members Present: Dave Poppen, Pastor Chad,
Jill Taylor, Sue Hughes, Howard Moss, Jon Twing,
Cindy Knoop, Kent Kaufmann

Members absent: Courtney Heid, Kristen Van
Scoyoc

Opening Prayer & Discussion

Pastor's Report

Joys and Thanksgivings

Worship

Reformation/Affirmation of Baptism

All Saints Day

Baptism of Olivia Burnette

Our ministry needs are being met

\$1,496 raised to be directed to Lutheran Disaster
Response

Ministry Happenings

13 pastoral visits

Funeral of Russell Grout

Faith Formation

Worship Team meeting

Budget team meeting

Executive Committee meeting

AED/CPR Training

Attend Veterans Day Meal hosted by Lions Club at
Bethany and offer prayer and table blessing.

Crestview worship (Thanks to Dale Swenson for
assisting)

Attend Angel Meals preparation.

Be present for early childhood faith formation.

Minister of Christ's Light (aka acolyte) training

Southeastern Iowa Synod Compensation Commit-
tee Meetings (2x)

WBARC meetings (2x)

Purchasing 25 turkeys and sides to assist people
in need this Thanksgiving.

Discussing possibility of an ecumenical Blue
Christmas worship service

Assisted a family in need passing through the
area.

Monthly Women's Circle (2x)

Men's Group

Sermon and worship preparation

Newsletter preparation

Staff Reviews (assisted by Howard Moss and
Cindy Knoop)

Attend middle school and high school football
games (Bethany youth participating)
Attend "Grease" musicals at West Branch and Tip-
ton (Youth participating)
Attend continuing education event in Dubuque
"Nourishing the Preaching Life."

Upcoming

Funeral of Mary Rundell (November 15)

Vacation (week of Thanksgiving and Sunday, No-
vember 26 – Pastor Phil Hougen filling in)

Hanging of Greens (December 3 – 1st Sunday in
Advent)

Christmas Program (December 10 – 2nd Sunday in
Advent)

Secretary's Report - Courtney

October Council Meeting Minutes

Kent moved to approve with corrections; Howard
seconded. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report - Jill

October Treasurer's Report

Cindy moved to approve; Sue seconded. Motion
approved.

Bethany members donated \$1,496 at the October
22nd service for Lutheran Disaster Response.

(Collected and paid in October business)

Committee Reports

Building and Grounds – Howard

Solar Team will also provide the Capital Improve-
ment recommendations.

New faucet for kitchen sink. Del to do the repair.

Another estimate from Rabe Hardware for Solar

Randy's Carpet provided estimates for all areas of
building.

Education & Youth - Kristen & Courtney (In absen- tia)

Planning for Christmas Program is going well!

Youth will serve fellowship after program.

Plan for High School Night Sunday December 3rd
– pizza and games

Sunday School attendance has been great.

Evangelism & Missions – Jon

(Continued on page 9)

Council Minutes November 2023

(Continued from page 8)

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

Working on banner use policy

Fellowship – Sue

Employee Appreciation / All Saints well received. Brunch was very well received.

Cookie Walk is going well, lots of help and lots of advertising. Music and caroling included!

More Cookies needed.

Mosses to do the fourth Sunday dinner in November—maidrites.

Need more sign up for Fellowship.

Stewardship - Kent

Revisiting time and talent sheets again—online.

Good source of roles for committees to use.

Stewardship campaign likely to start in January.

Worship and Music – Cindy

Thanks everyone for helping with brunch on All Saints Sunday

Hanging of the Greens on Dec 3. Working to fill in all the details.

Nov 26 looking for volunteers to get ready to set up for Christmas Sunday

Piano tuner coming on Nov 22, both sanctuary and small hall pianos.

Two services on Christmas Eve, greeters needed.

Acolyte robes need to be adjusted / modified for youth. Ask the quilters for help?

****Upcoming Deadlines** - 2023 Committee reports (for Annual Report) to be submitted to Paula by December 15.

Old Business

Further discussion on building use fees tabled for December. Discuss in Jan

New Business

Evaluate closing bathrooms in church office – \$500 estimated savings.

Council discussed.

Kent moved, Howard second, motion to close restrooms pending verification from city to change to landscape meter. Motion Approved.

Proposal for Cookie Walk income – 2023 funds

went to youth.

Discuss designation options for 2024.

Youth fund, add to fellowship for 4th Sunday Meals, or should it be designated for missions? Council discussed. What should the money be used for? Outcome: "Use it to support Bethany ministries."

No action taken

Set Annual Meeting date – proposed January 21
How is notification given? Written notification and announced two Sundays prior to the meeting.

January 21 is the latest we can do it.

Kent moved, Howard second, Motion to have annual meeting January 21. Motion approved.

Discuss Pastor review and goal setting retreat (see review process attachment)

Council members to complete doc titled: **Council member survey and goal setting.**

Submit to President by December 15

Proposed retreat for goal setting date: Sunday 1/28, Saturday 2/3, or Saturday 2/17

More discussion is pending.

Student Ambassador donation request - \$140 (see ambassador program attachment)

Hoover elementary students are requesting donations to purchase water bottles to be included in welcome baskets for new students. Courtney attended a presentation given by 4 students where they made the request. Do we have any missions that could support this: Noisy coin fund or other? Council discussion.

Kent motions: Offer the Noisy Coin Collection.
Jon seconds. Motion approved.

Sue moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:13pm, Cindy seconded. Motion approved.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer

Next Regular Meeting December 11th, 2023



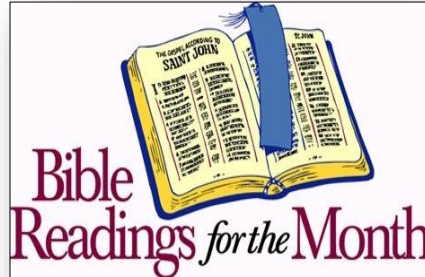


January Sunday Bible Readings

The passages below are the assigned readings for January. 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.

January 7, 2024

[Isaiah 60:1-6](#)
[Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14](#)
[Ephesians 3:1-12](#)
[Matthew 2:1-12](#)



January 14, 2024

[1 Samuel 3:1-10 \[11-20\]](#)
[Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18](#)
[1 Corinthians 6:12-20](#)
[John 1:43-51](#)

January 21, 2024

[Jonah 3:1-5, 10](#)
[Psalm 62:5-12](#)
[1 Corinthians 7:29-31](#)
[Mark 1:14-20](#)

January 28, 2023

[Deuteronomy 18:15-20](#)
[Psalm 111](#)
[1 Corinthians 8:1-13](#)
[Mark 1:21-28](#)

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.

Jeremiah 1:5-6

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy."

- Being consecrated, chosen, set aside by God makes me wonder...
- God's present purpose for me...
- I sometimes say to God, "But, I am only..."

Scripture Talk

Matthew 6:13a

"And do not bring us to the time of trial,"

- I worry most about...
- Things that most tempt me...
- I ask God to keep me safe from...



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/>

January 2024

View Calendar on our [website](#).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 9:00am Prayers with Pastor & Paula	3 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:15pm Choir Practice	4 6:00am Women's Study	5	6
7 8:30am Sunday School Preschool - Grade 3 9:30am Worship (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour	8 6:30pm Council Meeting	9 9:00am Prayers with Pastor & Paula	10 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:30pm Faith Formation Youth grade 3-8	11 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters	12	13
14 8:30am Sunday School Preschool - Grade 3 9:30am Worship (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour 5:45pm Clover Kids	15 7:00pm WB Study Club	16 9:00am Prayers with Pastor & Paula	17 7:00am Men's Study Group 9:00am Women's Circle 6:30pm Faith Formation Youth grade 3-8	18 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters	19	20
21 Annual Meeting after service 9:30am Worship (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour	22	23 9:00am Prayers with Pastor & Paula	24 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:30pm Faith Formation Youth grade 3-8	25 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters 2:00pm Crestview Worship	26	27
28 8:30am Sunday School Preschool - Grade 3 9:30am Worship (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour 5:00pm 4th Sunday Community meal	29	30 9:00am Prayers with Pastor & Paula	31 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:30pm Faith Formation Youth grade 3-8			

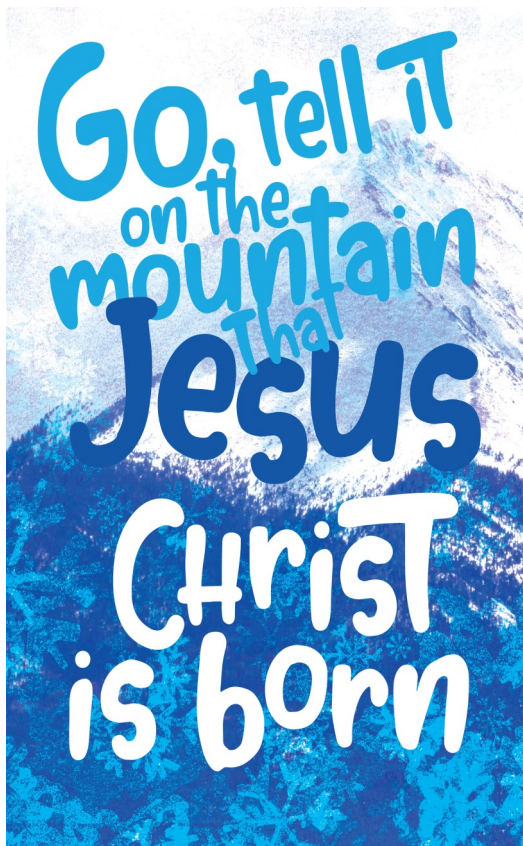


Monetary Gifts Report Submitted by Jill Taylor

	November 2023		YTD	
Total Gifts	Actual 10,598	Budget 14,333	Actual 156,125	Budget 157,667
Total Expenses	Actual 13,571	Budget 14,759	Actual 156,605	Budget 162,560
Net Revenue	(2,973)		(480)	

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.



You Are Loved!

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

DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US!



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[@blcwestbranch](#)



Find us on
Facebook

Ministry Assistants

Ministers of Proclamation (Lectors)

1-7 Al Beyer
1-14 Cheryl Boerjan
1-21 Del Hughes
1-28 Pat Cassabaum

Ministers of Technology

1-7 Cole Crosthwaite &
Tate Frantz
1-14 Dave Poppen
1-21 Dale Swenson
1-28 Paula Casper

Ministers of Hospitality

1-7 Al & Claudia Beyer
1-14 Paula Casper
1-21 Paula Casper
1-28 Patsy Ernst

Ministers of Altar Care:
Samuelson Family

Bethany Branches
January 2024

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