

## Temple Talk: Living Our Mission at Bethany Lutheran Church

This week, I invite you to reflect on Bethany Lutheran Church's mission statement:

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

How do you feel we are living up to this mission, and how do your contributions support it? Personally, I believe we're right on target.

We all know Bethany's worship opportunities, whether in person or virtually via Facebook. But our mission goes beyond worship to include fellowship. I remember when Kami and I joined this community nearly 30 years ago. From warm conversations with John Black and Al Beyer to Sharon and Dru inviting us to the church volleyball league, we felt welcomed and supported in many ways. These are just a couple of examples of how God has been active among us at Bethany.

In education, I've had the privilege of watching Bethany's children grow through Sunday School, Faith Formation, and VBS. This congregation's support of my own children is something I hold deeply. Now, with the new "Faith Forward" program, we are nurturing the next generation. Recently, over 50 people gathered for a meal, prayer, and faith-filled conversations—parents, grandparents, children, and youth, all growing together in Christ. This initiative is a beautiful expression of our baptismal promise to support and equip parents and children in their faith journey.

But how well do we "celebrate by reaching out to others"? Bethany has a rich tradition of outreach:

- **Angel Meals** supporting our senior members.
- **Quilters** crafting blankets for the Domestic Violence Intervention Program.
- **Cookie Walk** raising funds for outreach efforts.
- A shared **community tailgate** with West Branch United Methodist, celebrating our students and uniting the wider community.
- Our support for **Lutheran Services in Iowa, Shelter House**, and the **West Branch Community Food Pantry**.
- Personal care kits for **Lutheran World Relief** and ongoing support for **Lutheran Disaster Response**.

Additionally, through stewardship initiatives like our solar panels, we are caring for God's creation and reducing costs, allowing us to better live out our mission.

Your generosity—both in time and resources—makes all of this possible.

As we look toward the end of 2024, we face a \$5,000 shortfall, and we ask for your help. Here's how you can support Bethany moving forward:

- Please return your 2025 pledge card by October 27.
- Consider increasing your weekly offering to help cover the 2024 shortfall.
- We are also praying for a 3-5% increase in pledges for 2025 to support new initiatives and ensure we continue celebrating by reaching out to others.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to Bethany's mission.

**With gratitude,**

*David Poppen & The Stewardship Committee*