

Bethany Lutheran Church

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



DECEMBER

Important Dates

- 12-01 **Hanging of the Greens
Worship** 9:30 AM
- 12-07 **Cookie Walk** 9-11AM
- 12-09 **Council Meeting** 6:30 PM
- 12-15 **Children's Christmas
Program** 9:30AM
- 12-22 **Worship (First Communion)**
9:30 AM
- 12-24 **Christmas Eve Worship**
5:00 PM and 7:00 PM

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. www.wbbethany.org) or images

[Jesus said], "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:20 (NIV)



Dear faithful people of God,

During worship on November 17th, those gathered proceeded
from the worship space outdoors to conclude worship around the
recently carved wood figure of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We sang two verses of "Beautiful Savior," said a short prayer,
and dedicated this carving to the mission and ministry we share together at
Bethany Lutheran.

For those who may not know, this carving is a replica of the Jesus statue on
the altar. That statue was a replica of the Christus statue by Danish sculptor
Bertel Thorvaldsen.

When the idea was breathed to life to save the stump of the dead tree that was
removed this past summer and carve that into a replica of the Jesus found on
the altar, I began to reflect upon it. Three things came to mind.

First, resurrection. We are an Easter people and believe Christ is alive. God is
active in the world transforming places of decay and death into new life and
hope. That is what is being done here. The tree that served us so many years
with its beauty, shade, fall colors, and a resting space for many of God's crea-
tures has given way to something new. In this case, it's Jesus with his arms
wide open welcoming members and visitors to "come and see".

Secondly, this "new" Jesus statue connects us to our Danish brothers and sis-
ters who have come before us and placed the
Jesus statue on the altar out of their love and devotion to their Lord and Savior.

Lastly, at the end of worship we are sent most often
with the words, "Go in peace. Christ is with you!" This
carving outdoors is that reminder. Jesus goes with us.
He is not confined to the walls of our worship space
where the priesthood of all believers gathers. He is also
with us outside that space as we venture into our com-
munities, homes, places of work, etc.

We do well to remember it is not the statue or carving
we worship, but it is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
The statue and carvings are but another means of
grace that remind us of his presence.

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the
age." He informed his disciples of that promise and he
continues to assure us with that promise.

May you have a blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

Pastor Chad





Birthdays

- 12-01 Kent Kaeser
- 12-02 Bruce Jeffries
- 12-05 Samantha (Yeater) Lilienthal
- 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.*

Jesus  You!



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



Clint of Carve R Way at work creating anew from a dead tree stump.



The people of God gathered around our Lord during worship November 17.



SUNDAY SCHOOL



December 1

December 8

December 15



Church Staff

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

Admin. Assistant—Paula Casper
blcsecretary@lcom.net

Custodian—Pat Cassabaum

Pianist—Jill Barnhart

Church Council

Kent Kaufman—**President**

Howard Moss—**Building & Grounds**

Dale Swenson—**Stewardship**

Kristen Van Scoyoc—**Education**

Jon Twing—**Treasurer**

Jessica Fonseca—**Evangelism & Missions**

Courtney Heid—**Youth/Secretary**

Pat Cassabaum—**Fellowship**

Cindy Knoop—**Worship & Music/Vice President**

Claudia Beyer—**Financial Secretary**



December Holy Communion Schedule

As a result of the Hanging of the Greens service on December 1 and the Children’s Christmas Program December 15, the sacrament of Holy Communion will not be celebrated on the customary first, third and fifth Sunday of the month.

We will celebrate this sacrament instead on December 8, December 22, and Christmas Eve.

On the 22nd we will also welcome 6 children to the Lord’s Supper as they celebrate their first communion. They are: Avery Fonseca, Cadence Heid, Ainsley Kinsinger, Sienna McElhinney, Cozette Sexton and Theodore Wiele.

Angel Meals

Did you know? Angel Meals provides a freshly prepared meal and a brief time of conversation with many senior saints in our congregation and community. These meals are delivered by high school students and adults. If you know someone who may benefit from receiving a meal, please contact Sara Klabo.

Fourth Sunday Community Meal

Did you know? On most fourth Sundays of the month we host a free community meal from 5-6:00 PM in the fellowship hall.

Note: there will be no meal in December.

Recently, we received correspondence from Pat Dow, whose mother attends these meals. Speaking about the value of the meal for her mother, she states, “It’s so wonderful that she and others can get out locally and enjoy some conversation and great food. This gathering and meal is truly the epitome of a community project!”

Thanks to all who have provided a meal and attended. If interested in serving a meal, please contact Pat Cassabaum.





Bethany Lutheran's 34th Annual
Cookie Walk
 Saturday, December 7 | 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
 West Branch's Christmas Past



Children's Christmas Program
 Sunday, December 15
 9:30 AM
*"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward all!"
 Luke 2:14*



Annual Meeting
 January 19, 2025

Greetings! This is to inform you of the upcoming Bethany Lutheran Church Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 19, 2025 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.

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.



Hanging Of The Greens
 During Worship
 Sunday, December 1st
 First Sunday of Advent



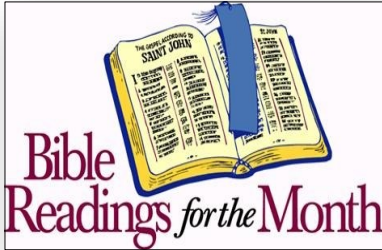
*Christmas Eve
 Candlelight Worship*
 5:00 and 7:00 PM
 5:00 PM streamed live on Facebook



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 1
[Jeremiah 33:14-16](#)
[Psalm 25:1-10](#)
[1 Thessalonians 3:9-13](#)
[Luke 21:25-36](#)



December 8
[Malachi 3:1-4](#)
[Luke 1:68-79](#)
[Philippians 1:3-11](#)
[Luke 3:1-6](#)

December 15
[Zephaniah 3:14-20](#)
[Isaiah 12:2-6](#)
[Philippians 4:4-7](#)
[Luke 3:7-18](#)

December 22
[Micah 5:2-5a](#)
[Luke 1:46b-55](#)
[Hebrews 10:5-10](#)
[Luke 1:39-45 \[46-55\]](#)

December 24
[1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26](#)
[Psalm 148](#)
[Colossians 3:12-17](#)
[Luke 2:41-52](#)

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 2:10-12

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

- For me, Christmas...
- The gifts I bring to Jesus are...
- My star, or what is guiding me to Jesus, is...



2 Corinthians 4:6-7

For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

- In my heart...
- An experience of moving from dark to light...
- Power that belongs to God...





Use the activities below and the next page to start some family conversation and prepare for the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior.

Be sure to check out the *Faith Forward* table for additional family resources.



Getting Ready for Christmas Fun-n-Faith #1

Directions: Check out the nine boxes below to enjoy a little getting ready for Christmas family fun-n-faith. See if you can do all of them together. Paraphrase for younger family members.

What can our family do to serve others during this Christmas season?	Who wins the most board games at Christmas?	Who has the ugliest Christmas sweater?	Who bakes the Christmas cookies?
Who likes to shop when the stores are crowded?	 <p><i>“A child has been born for us. We have been given a son who will be our ruler. His names will be Wonderful Advisor and Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace.” —Isaiah 9:6 (CEV)</i></p> 		Name two things that excite you about celebrating Christ’s birth?
What is unique about celebrating Christmas for Christians?			Read John 3:16-17 aloud.
Read John 1:14 aloud.	Sing a favorite Christmas carol together.	What are your family’s favorite Christmas movies?	



2024 Advent Five Faith Promises Calendar

Advent is the season beginning four Sundays before Christmas. During Advent, Christians prepare to celebrate Christ's coming as their Lord and Savior. The word Advent means arrival or coming. While many Christmas activities focus on preparing for Christ's birth, Advent refers to the first and second coming of Christ.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>"A child has been born for us. We have been given a son who will be our ruler. His names will be Wonderful Advisor and Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6 (CEV)</p>						
Read Matthew 1:18-25. BIBLE READING	1 While you decorate talk about Jesus' birth leading to his death, resurrection and your salvation. FAITH CONVERSATION	2 Shop for a gift for a charity. Say a prayer for the recipient. PRAYER	3 Leave a note and cookies for your mail carrier. ACT OF SERVICE	4 Watch your favorite Christmas movie. RITUAL/TRADITION	5 Bake cookies for elderly church members who are living in care facilities. ACT OF SERVICE	6 Read Luke 1:26-38. BIBLE READING
8 Make a gingerbread house using graham crackers and frosting. RITUAL/TRADITION	9 Sing Christmas carols at mealtime. SHARED MEALTIME	10 Say a prayer only for others. PRAYER	11 Use the Nativity scene pieces to retell the Christmas story. FAITH CONVERSATION	12 Donate your gently-used clothes to Goodwill or the Salvation Army. ACT OF SERVICE	13 Decorate a birthday cake or cupcake and sing Happy Birthday to Jesus. RITUAL/TRADITION	14 Read Micah 5:2 BIBLE READING
15 Donate a sack of groceries to a local food bank. ACT OF SERVICE	16 Pray the words of the Advent candles: HOPE, LOVE JOY, PEACE, & CHRIST. PRAYER	17 Bake Christmas cookies. Read 1 Timothy 1:15-17 while you make them. SHARED MEALTIME	18 Text "Merry Christmas, Jesus Loves You" to a friend. FAITH CONVERSATION	19 Instead of a letter to Santa write a prayer to Jesus. PRAYER	20 Take a plate of homemade cookies to your mechanic, doctor, or neighbor with a note of Christian encouragement. ACT OF SERVICE	21 Read Matthew 2:1-12. BIBLE READING
22 Take treats to your local animal shelter in the name of Christ. ACT OF SERVICE	23 Cut out sandwiches with a star-shaped cookie cutter. Talk about following Christ as the Wise Men followed the star. FAITH CONVERSATION	24 Attend a candle-light Christmas Eve church service. RITUAL/TRADITION	25 Read Luke 2:1-20. BIBLE READING			

FIVE FAITH PROMISES: PRAYER • BIBLE READING • FAITH CONVERSATION • ACTS OF SERVICE • SHARED MEALTIMES & OTHER RITUALS/TRADITIONS

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Five Faith Promises

#1 Prayer

We promise to pray together every day.

#2 Bible Reading

We promise to read the Bible together regularly.

#3 Faith Conversations

We promise to talk together often about Jesus and our faith.

#4 Acts of Service

We promise to perform acts of service together in our community, our congregation, and our homes.

#5 Shared Mealtimes

We promise to share five or more meals together each week, and to engage in other rituals and traditions together.



<https://faithforwardnow.org/church/BethanyWestBranch/>

Wednesday Faith Formation (Grades 3-8)
December Schedule
December 4, 11, 18



Advent

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

John the Baptist
 Waiting
 Blue
 Candles
 Love

Expectation
 Preparation
 Four weeks
 Wreath
 Joy

Anticipation
 Pink
 Evergreens
 Peace
 Hope



Have fun unscrambling these well-known Christmas hymns. The answers are at the bottom of the next page if needed.

1. ISELTN HNGTI HLOY GNHTI _____
2. YWAA IN A ENGRMA _____
3. OJY OT THE ODRLW _____
4. ATHW DHILC SI IHTS _____
5. EHT FSIRT EOLN _____
6. O EOCM ALL EY UAFHFTIL _____
7. ELNASG WE EHAV DEARH ON HGHI _____
8. GO LTLE IT ON EHT ANUOINMT _____
9. O TTIELL NWT0 OF EBTLHEEHM _____

It's time to order your poinsettia
to adorn our altar for Christmas.



Plants will be 12.50 each

Please return this form with payment to the church office,
or mail to:

Bethany Lutheran P.O. Box 236 West Branch, IA 52358
by December 8th.

Plants will be set out for the Christmas Eve services.

Name: _____

I would like to order _____ poinsettias in memory

or in honor of: _____

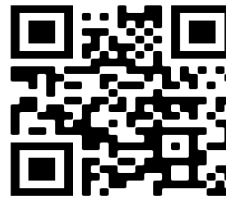


ELCA Good Gifts

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/>



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.

Angel Tree

We will be supporting two families within our community this Christmas as part of the Angel Tree Program. For more information and to sign up for requested items use the link or QR code below. Please return items to the church by December 13. If you wish to contribute financially, we welcome those and will shop for you. You can make a donation during offering and designate it "Angel Tree Contribution."

Contact Kami Poppen with questions.

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



November Solar Output

Comparative Production
● 2024



Environmental Benefits

CO2 Emission Saved
28,979.5 lb

Equivalent Trees Planted
219



Answer to Christmas Hymn Unscramble on previous page. 1. Silent Night, Holy Night 2. Away in a Manger 3. Joy to the World 4. What Child is This 5. The First Noel 6. O Come All Ye Faithful 7. Angels We Have Heard on High 8. Go Tell It on the Mountain 9. O Little Town of Bethlehem

December 2024

View Calendar on our [website](#).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30am Worship - Hanging of the Greens (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour	2	3	4 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:00pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Faith Formation (Grades 3-8)	5 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters	6	7
8 9:30am Worship w/ Holy Communion (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour	9 6:30pm Council Meeting	10	11 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:00pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Faith Formation (Grades 3-8)	12 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters	13	14
15 9:30am Worship - Children's Christmas Program (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour	16 7:00pm WB Study Club	17	18 7:00am Men's Study Group 6:00pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Faith Formation (Grades 3-8)	19 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters	20	21
22 9:30am Worship - First Communion (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour	23	24 5:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship w/ Holy Communion 7:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship w/ Holy Communion	25	26 6:00am Women's Study 1:00pm Quilters 2:00pm Crestview Worship	27	28
29 9:30am Worship (Also streamed live on Facebook) 10:30am Fellowship Hour 5:00pm Community meal	30	31				



Monetary Gifts Report Submitted by Jon Twing

	October 2024		YTD	
Total Gifts	Actual 13,064	Budget 14,338	Actual 138,359	Budget 143,385
Total Expenses	Actual 13,953	Budget 14,692	Actual 143,562	Budget 147,082
Net Revenue	(889)		(5,203)	

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.

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

Bethany Branches

December 2024

Ministry Assistants

Ministers of Proclamation (Lectors)

12-01 Hanging of the Greens
12-08 Jill Barnhart
12-15 Children's program
12-22 Jon Twing
12-24 Dave Bahnsen 5:00
12-24 Wayne Frauenholtz 7:00
12-29 John Black

Ministers of Technology

12-01 Jill Taylor
12-08 Cole C & Tate F
12-15 Dale Swenson
12-22 Dave Poppen
12-24 Paula Casper
12-29 Jill Taylor

Ministers of Hospitality

12-01 Kent & Beth Kaufman
12-08 Dave & Kami Poppen
12-15 John & Laura Twing
12-22 Nancy Bruns
12-24 Al & Claudia Beyer 5:00
12-24 Kent & Beth Kaufman 7:00
12-29 Stacy Beyer

Ministers of Altar Care

Stacy Beyer & Cindy Knoop



Find us on
Facebook

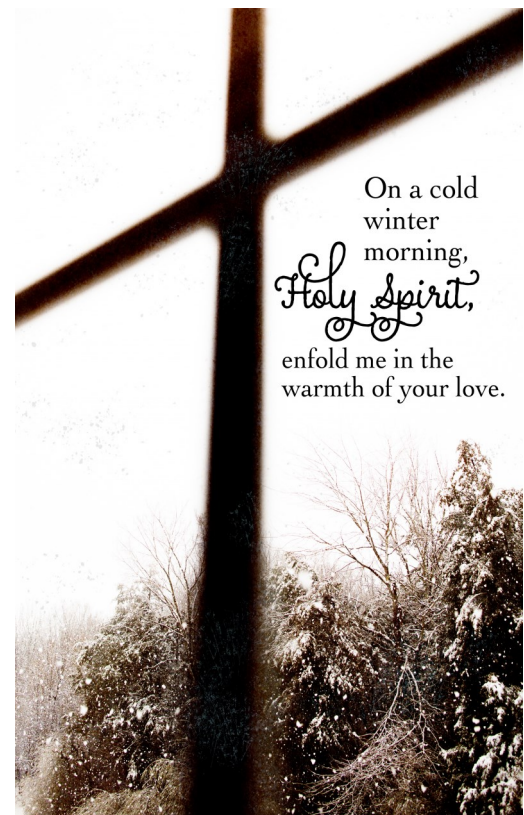
To find Bethany's main page,
search "**Bethany Lutheran
Church (ELCA) West Branch,
Iowa**"

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Follow us on X
@blcwestbranch

You Are Loved!



On a cold
winter
morning,
Holy Spirit,
enfold me in the
warmth of your love.