

Bethany Beacon

DECEMBER 2020



CHRISTMAS EVE | December 24

4:30 PM | Service of Lessons and Carols

7:00 PM | Service of Lessons and Carols

11:00 PM | Service with Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY | December 25

10:00 AM | Service with Communion

Safety Precautions for Christmas

Face masks and signing up will be required for those attending December 24 & 25 services.

Please check your email for the online signup, or call the church office at 319-364-6026 to sign up for a Christmas service. Signups will begin on Monday, December 7.

Please see page 7 for more information on our
“Christmas is for COVID” Advent video series.



Bethany
Lutheran Church

Living and Sharing God's Love

Advent and Christmas Greetings in the Name of the Lord,

It's hard to believe that this will be the last *Beacon* of 2020, but the way this year has going many people will be happy to see 2021. To be sure, there have been many blessings during 2020 (children born, marriages, etc...). However for most of the year, including right now, the dark cloud of the pandemic has never been very far from hanging over our heads. So, many of us, myself included, may be getting tired of hearing about the Coronavirus. But nevertheless, I'd still like to take a moment or two to share with you what our congregation will be doing over the next few weeks as we *Live and Share God's Love* together.

As the Elders and I have been discussing, Lutherans believe the purpose of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. The challenge is how to do this ministry with a reasonable amount of safety during a pandemic. While there are no clear-cut answers to this question, it should be said that safety is not a concern out of fear or lack of faith, but rather out of love - the highest law for Christians to practice in the Church and in the community. Therefore, Bethany will not be having our traditional Midweek Advent services on Wednesday evenings this year. While I understand that many of us look forward to these evenings of worship, food, and fellowship together, the fact that we are currently still able to worship on Sundays, it seems that having these services would increase the risk to our members and community to an unacceptable level.

However, while we will not be having Midweek Advent Services this year, we will be having our normal service on Christmas Day at 10:00 am and actually adding a service on Christmas Eve. This year, Christmas Eve services will be held at 4:30, 7:00, and 11:00 pm. The 4:30 and 7:00 pm services will be the traditional Service of Lessons and Carols with Carolyn Sternowski playing the organ, while the 11:00 pm service will have Holy Communion and Luke Viertel playing the key-

board. In addition to all of the normal safety precautions we have been doing in services for the last few months, we will also be asking those who plan to attend services on Christmas Eve to sign up so that we can assign seating and make sure there is enough room for everyone.

As we move through Advent and into Christmas, we can be encouraged by the progress made on many fronts in this battle against the Coronavirus. While church attendance has dropped ever since the first days of the pandemic, I have noticed over the last few weeks that number of people coming to church has declined even further. This is understandable as the number of Covid cases has increased dramatically in the county during this same time period and people are being extra careful about where they go. Thankfully, thanks to many of you, Bethany has remained a healthy congregation throughout this year. However, as vaccines become available and treatments continue to improve, all of us will have to begin to ask what our lives will look like in a post-Covid world.

I'm afraid that there will be a real danger for many who have developed the habit of not coming to church over the last few months. Again, as of right now this is understandable. But as we move forward and it becomes safer and safer for everyone to return, those who feel no need to be present in Sunday Services will be putting their lives of faith at risk. The leadership of the congregation is aware of this and will be working to address the issue. And we need to remember that the good news is literally, the Good News. Christ, who first came into this world as the child of Bethlehem, still comes to us today through His Word and the Sacraments. He is Immanuel - God with us, and will always be with us before, during, and after all of the pandemics of life. Therefore let us continue to try to be safe and have a blessed Advent and Christmas.

In Christ's Service,
✠ Pastor Erickson

Thanksgiving:

Baby Boy Russman (infant son of *Robby & *Annie Russman)- born 11/30

Zoe (granddaughter of *Mary Nanke)- Recovering after cornea transplant

Lee (husband of *Brenda Heims)- Recovered after surgery

Steve (uncle of *E Heller & *M Rinderknecht)- Recovered after health issues

Illness, injuries, health issues:

Gene (husband of *Nancy Owens)- Recovering after surgery

Wilson (infant son of Luke Viertel)- health issues

Donald (brother of *Carol Edwards)- recovering after COVID-19

Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders (IDE President)- health issues

Those affected by COVID-19 and the derecho storm

Nancy (mother of Carolyn Sternowski)- recovering after broken hip

Alyse (granddaughter of *Janelle Dunbar)- brain tumor

Judy (niece of *Bonnie Bubke)- Recovering after surgery

Ron (brother of *Gloria Schumacher)- Health issues

Joe (relative of *Bonnie Bubke)- Medical issues

LoAnn (relative of * Bonnie Bubke)- Recovering after broken leg

Agnes (friend of *Siebenmanns)- Health issues

Jane (daughter of *Bonnie Bubke)- Recovering after procedure

Gene (husband of *K. Schmidt)- Recovering after surgery

Andrew (relative of *B Heims)- Recovering after surgery

Mary Lou (mother of *Becky Thur)- Recovering after surgery

Carolyn (mother of Mary Vezina)- Recovering from shingles

Jennifer (daughter of *Pat Krekeler)- Life challenges

Jeff Mellgren (former member)- Recovering after stroke

Hayden (relative of *Bonnie Bubke)- Brain disorder

Gwendolyn- (friend of *Karen Swanson)- Terminal illness

Pastor Renfro (Trinity)- Health issues

Steve (friend of *Pete Larson)- Recovering after stroke

John (nephew of *Bonnie Bubke)- Health issues

Ruth (friend of *Velma Zieseimer)- Health issues

David (relative of *Melissa Loney)- Health issues

Rod (nephew of *Bonnie Bubke)- Parkinson's Disease

Safety:

Taylor & Charlie (grandsons of *Kim Neuhaus)- Deployed

Homebound members of Bethany:

*Wayne Schilling- at home

Candi Engel- at Garnett Place

*Nadine Wax- at home

*Ann Meyer- Terrace Glen, Marion

*Del & *Dee Block- Summit Pointe, Marion

*Larry & *Sharon Easler- Summit Pointe, Marion

*Dee Rose- hospice care at Meth-Wick

*Darlene Eckert- recovering after broken leg

Cancer:

Janet (sister in law of *Ronda Anderson)- cancer treatment

Darrel (father of *Janet Hoech)- cancer treatment

Marcia (relative of *Brenda Heims)- cancer

Oz (father of *Dathan Hinrichs & *Josie Hester)- cancer treatment

Pat (niece of *Bonnie Bubke)- cancer

Jerry (father of Missy Gingrich)- cancer treatment

Glen (brother of *Rob Sieck)- cancer

Jim (friend of *Sheryl Knutson)- cancer surgery

Tony (friend of *Mike Thomas)- cancer

David (relative of *Hasses)- cancer

Julie (friend of *Brenda Heims)- cancer

Janet (friend of *Brenda Heims)-cancer

Judy (godmother of *Jim Novitch)- cancer treatment

Chad (son of *Vicki Huschka)- leukemia

Rita (friend of *Shirley Kellogg)- cancer

Grief, family and friends of:

Bernie Rehnstrom- Died 11/25

Ray (uncle of *Karen Pfeffer)- Died 11/7

Merle (brother of *Bernice Stonewall)- Died 10/31

Scott (son of *Bonnie Bubke) - Died 10/27

Susan (niece of *Bonnie Bubke)- Died

Richard (uncle of *Brenda Heims)- Died 10/26

June (relative of *Brenda Heims)- Died 10/25

Local/National/World:

Local, state, and national leaders

Victims of floods, hurricanes, fires and disasters

Bethany Prayers

Do you have prayer requests? Let us know if you would like your request added to the prayer list, the email prayer chain, or both. Call 364-6026 or email requests to nurse.bethanycr@gmail.com.

Tuesday, December 1

6:00 pm Evangelism Committee - Zoom
6:30 pm Handbell Practice

Wednesday, December 2

6:00 am Men's Bible Study - Zoom
6:00 pm Confirmation - Zoom

Thursday, December 3

6:00 pm Human Care Meeting - Zoom

Sunday, December 6

1:00 pm Communion

Monday, December 7

10:00 am Women's Group - Zoom
6:00 pm Trustees Meeting - Zoom

Tuesday, December 8

6:30 pm Handbell Practice
7:00 pm Council Meeting - Zoom

Wednesday, December 9

6:00 am Men's Bible Study - Zoom
6:00 pm Confirmation - Zoom

Monday, December 14

10:00 am Women's Group - Zoom

Wednesday, December 16

6:00 am Men's Bible Study - Zoom
9:00 am Angel Tree gift pick-up
6:00 pm Confirmation - Zoom

Sunday, December 20

12:00 pm Drive-thru Birthday Party
for Jesus

Monday, December 21

10:00 am Women's Group - Zoom

Wednesday, December 23

6:00 am Men's Bible Study - Zoom

Thursday, December 24

4:30 pm Christmas Eve Service
7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service
11:00 pm Christmas Eve Service

Friday, December 25

10:00 am Christmas Day Service

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/1 Gloria Schumacher

12/2 Cindy Goerd
Brian Holt

12/3 Paula Bulicek
Tracy Donels
Marvelene Foreman

12/4 Ronda Anderson
Ava Henderson
Jim Novitch
Donna Stranathan

12/7 Nadine Wax

12/10 Mike Thomas
Mary Vezina

12/11 Tracy Bond

12/13 Karen Hass

12/13 David Johnson

12/14 Kiaya Fortner
Barb Lauthen
Bridget Rinderknecht

12/15 Henry Smith
Diane Zenor

12/16 Patricia Hinrichs

12/17 Stacy Brusius
Kaylee Hedtke
Anna Ranbarger

12/18 Addy Stackhouse

12/19 Bree Robinson

12/21 Hogan Myers
Angela Yuza

12/24 Karen Rutz

12/24 Jeff Stranathan

12/25 Valerie Koelper
Becky McCarley

12/26 Maren Elm
Diane Holub

12/27 Shirley Kellogg
Ann Meyer

12/28 Hannah Madsen
Ella Smith

12/29 Nate Ackerman
Jaden Harris
Sue Kroemer

12/30 Shari Mehlhoff
Malcolm Scott

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12/23 Mark & Barb Lauthen

November Voters' Meeting

A voters' meeting was held on Sunday, November 15.

The following people were voted into their positions in the church elections:

Treasurer: Bill Freese

Board of Stewardship Chair: Dave Dohrmann

Board of Human Care Chair: Rita Tiedt

Board of Elders: Mark Holt, Karl Hoech, Nate Ackerman

Board of Trustees: Mitch Myers, Richard Hass, Ray McGraw, Aaron Moffett, Greg Dunn, Troy Donels, Dathan Hinrichs

At the meeting, the annual budget was passed. In addition, it was passed to continue supporting seminary students through a scholarship from our congregational fund.

Those who participated in the November meeting had the option to attend in the Family Life Center, or by listening in on the radio from the church parking lot.



ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held in January. Plan to attend this meeting to hear an overview of 2020. Please look for information to come regarding the format of this meeting.



Poinsettias

Poinsettias will be available for purchase this year. Please sign up for a plant by December 20 at the Welcome Center, or call the church office at 364-6026. The plants come in red, white, or pink and cost \$9 each. You may pay at the Welcome Center, or online at bethanycr.org under "Giving." Poinsettias can be picked up after 11:00 service on December 27.

Christmas Scavenger Hunt

Sunday School families are invited to participate in a Christmas photo scavenger hunt. Check your email for the scavenger list, and post your photos on the Bethany Facebook group. Contact the church office if you need to be added to the private Facebook group, which is separate from the public page.



Children's Christmas Program

This year's children's program will be virtual. If you would like your child to participate, send in a horizontal video of your child by December 14. The video will be sent out to Bethany members via email. Please contact Debbie Mills for more information.

Birthday Party for Jesus

This year's birthday party for Jesus will be a drive-through. Plan to drive by Bethany's front doors on Sunday, December 20, from noon-2:00 p.m.





Midweek Advent Services

Midweek Advent services will be on video only. Please check your email on Wednesdays to find the links to the videos. To access the videos on our website, go to www.bethanycr.org, click on “Resources” on the top menu bar, then click on “Worship” to find videos of sermons listed by date.



DVDs will be provided to those without internet access.

Services will be on the theme “Christmas is for COVID,” and each video will be based on an Advent or Christmas hymn:

December 2 | O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (*Isaiah 11:1-10*)

December 9 | O Come All Ye Faithful (*John 1:1-14*)

December 16 | Silent Night (*Luke 2:13-16*)

About “Christmas is for COVID”

Many people today feel that Christmas and the holidays are ruined by the conditions of the sinful world around us. But for generations God’s people have raised up their voices to sing that Christ was born because of the sin and evil around us.

Therefore, I pray this year that we may all find comfort in some of these songs and God’s Word, as they tell us that Christmas is for COVID and whatever other struggles we face.

✝ Pastor Erickson



Bethany Quilters

Even though we are experiencing a pandemic and can't meet as a group, the ladies are still working on quilts at home. We are in need of sheets for the insides of our quilts. If you have any used sheets you no longer use, don't discard them but we ask that you donate them to the LWML. Please drop these off at church.



Family Promise

Thank you to everyone who donated groceries during our Family Promise week in November.

If you have volunteered with Family Promise in the past, you may remember the Kikongo family. The Kikongos were the very first family we hosted through Family Promise, and **Papy Kikongo has written a book about their story.** The book chronicles their journey from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Cedar Rapids, and the ways they have witnessed God's mercy along the way. Copies of this book are available to pick on the table outside the Bethany library. If you take a book, please consider contributing a freewill donation.



Thank you, Blood Donors

Thank you to everyone who donated blood at our drive last month! The American Red Cross collected 34 units of blood at our drive.



Angel Tree

Bethany is again participating in Angel Tree this year, a program that helps provide Christmas gifts for children with parents who are incarcerated. If you picked up an angel ornament from the tree, please purchase a gift for the child listed, and bring the gift back to Bethany on or before December 13. Contact the Angel Tree coordinator, Shari Mehlhoff at 319-361-5539 if you have any questions.

Christmas Baskets

Christmas baskets (gift cards) will again be distributed to Bethany members in need. Please consider giving by placing your donation in the offering plate in the back of the sanctuary. Donations should be in an envelope marked "Christmas Giving" and should be turned in by December 10.

Amazon Smile

Doing some Christmas shopping on Amazon? Be sure to use Amazon Smile when you shop. Amazon Smile is a program that can be used to direct funds to charitable organizations of your choice. When shopping on Amazon, you can direct .5% of eligible purchases to go to Bethany Lutheran.



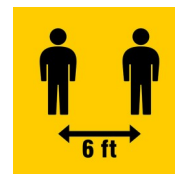
Communion Schedule

Communion will be served at the 8:30 and 11:00 services on the first and third Sunday of each month. If you would prefer receiving communion, apart from these services, in a small group at Bethany, you may sign up to receive communion in the afternoon on the first Sunday of each month. The next one will be on December 6.

Time slots will be limited to one family group at a time. To sign up for a 15-minute slot, call the church office at 364-6026 or use the link sent to your email.

Worship Guidelines

Please refer to the “2020 Updates” tab on our website at www.bethanycr.org to stay up to date on guidelines during the pandemic. At this time, the only events that will take place in-person are worship services. Thank you for doing your part to keep our community safe with smart practices as we continue to put our trust in the Lord.



Sunday Morning Education

Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study: *Join by Zoom*

On Sundays Pastor Erickson leads Bible study at 9:45 a.m.

There is a link on the email sent to the congregation each Saturday or you can go to the church website under Resources/Bible Study. On Zoom just enter the following ID and passcode:

Meeting ID: 857 1656 9719

Passcode: 660091



Sunday School

Sunday School has been meeting online via Zoom on Sunday mornings from 10-10:30 am. Sunday school is for preschool through grade 12.

This year Sunday School is doing an overview of the Old Testament. In November we finished the story of Joseph and began studying Moses.

Thrivent Choice

Each year Thrivent credits members with dollars that can be contributed to Lutheran-affiliated nonprofit organizations and congregations, including Bethany Lutheran Church. Thrivent Financial will distribute Choice Dollars funds directed by members to organizations monthly. Through

Thrivent Choice, Bethany has received over \$6,000 over the last 3 years. Thank you for supporting our congregation through this program. These gifts will be directed to the Maintenance Reserve Fund for future large item replacement needs of the church.



Eligible Thrivent Financial members need to designate their Choice Dollars. You can continue to designate 2020 dollars throughout the year. To do so, go to www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice/ or call 800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836) and ask for “Thrivent Choice” to designate your choice dollars to Bethany Lutheran Church.

Giving Envelopes

Giving envelopes will be available to pick up at Bethany by December 27.

Giving Options

Online Giving

Visit bethanycr.org. Look for the GIVING tab to manage or set up recurring and one-time offerings using your bank account or debit or credit card. Set up an account for easier access, make changes, and see past giving history.

Mobile App Giving

Search your app store for “GivePlus Church” and download the GivePlus app to make a one-time or recurring offering. Set up an account so you can make changes at any time and see past giving history.



Paper Form

Authorization forms for direct deposit can be mailed to you. Mail the completed form along with a voided check or deposit slip to the church office. You will receive a confirmation email or call when it has been set up.

GIVE PLUS AUTHORIZATION FORM

DATE: _____		ENVELOPE NUMBER: _____
Name: _____		
Address: _____		
City State Zip: _____		
Email Address: _____		
FIRST CONTRIBUTION DATE: _____	FUNDS: General Operating	AMOUNTS: \$ _____
	Use of Funds	\$ _____
FREQUENCY OF DONATION: Weekly - Monday	Use of Funds	\$ _____
Semi-monthly - 1st & 15th	Weekly Amount	\$ _____
Monthly on the 1st	Monthly TOTAL:	\$ _____
Monthly on the 15th		

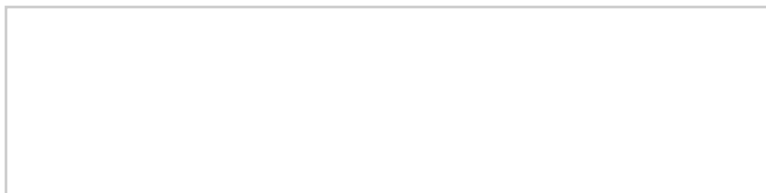
Offering Envelopes

You can mail your giving envelopes to the church office at 2202 Forest Dr. SE. They are deposited weekly.

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
2202 FOREST DR SE
CEDAR RAPIDS IA 52403-1654

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit #118
CEDAR RAPIDS IA, 52403

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED




Living and Sharing God's Love

WORSHIP WITH US

Sunday Mornings

8:30 am	Traditional Service
9:45 am	Education Hour
11:00 am	Contemporary Service

CONNECT WITH US

Website	www.bethanycr.org
Email	office.bethanycr@gmail.com
Phone	319-364-6026
	facebook.com/bethanycria