

Bethany Beacon

DECEMBER 2021



Advent Answers TO Hard Questions

Advent began on Sunday, November 28. Join us for Advent Midweek services the first three Wednesdays in December. Fellowship meals will be served at 5:45, followed by service at 7:00 p.m.

Advent Answers to Hard Questions

December 1: The Birth of God: How and Why?

December 8: Did the Child Know He Was God?

(Communion on December 8)

December 15: Why Would Jesus Cry? *(Blue Christmas)*

Midweek Advent Service Schedule

5:45 - 6:45 PM: Fellowship Meal

7:00 PM: Service



Christmas Services

Christmas Eve (December 24)

4:30 PM Service of Lessons and Carols

11:00 PM Candlelight Service

(Communion at 11:00 PM)

Christmas Day (December 25)

10:00 AM Divine Service

(Communion at 10:00 AM)



Bethany
Lutheran Church

Living and Sharing God's Love

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

- Hebrews 13:8

Last year at this time I'm fairly certain that I was like most of you, looking forward to the end of 2020 and the beginning of a new year. The Spring of 2020 saw the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and all of the fallout from it. (Remember the toilet paper shortage?) There was civil unrest and protests in our country, the likes of which hadn't been seen in decades. And if all of that wasn't enough, here in eastern Iowa we had to deal with the derecho in August that brought unparalleled destruction to the community from which we are still recovering. So, as we began the new year many of us hoped that we had turned the proverbial page or corner.

This feeling of optimism didn't last too long as six days after the new year began, I couldn't believe my eyes as I watched an angry mob/protesters (depending on your view) overrun the United States Capital. With the development of three vaccines against COVID many thought the pandemic would soon be in our rearview mirrors. But for whatever reason (again depending on your view of things) COVID is still with us. In fact, even as I sit here writing today, a new "variant of concern" has emerged and is causing travel restrictions, lockdowns, and economic havoc once again. And while these national and global events affect us all, there have been countless other deaths, illnesses, accidents, injuries, broken relationships, and other events that have caused so much trouble in our individuals lives this past year. I can't wait for 2022. That will be much better...right?

Now, I don't mean to be pessimistic about all of this. After all, even with everything that has gone on over the last two years, there were still plenty of blessings from God and things for which to be grateful. In one four-week period we had three weddings! We've almost run out of room once again on the choir balcony to hang baptismal banners! And our services at Bethany are once again filled, not only with the Word and Sacraments, but also singing! We all have much to be thankful for. But if these last two years have taught

us anything, it is that we live in a world that is corrupted by sin. And the solution to that sin cannot be developed by a pharmaceutical company. There are no laws or policies our government can pass to prevent it. And even the largest army of volunteers with chainsaws cannot clean up its devastating effects. There is only one solution to sin and the death and destruction that it brings – Jesus Christ our Lord.

As Christians all over the world move through the Advent season this year and prepare for our Christmas celebrations, we once again are reminded of why Jesus Christ came into this world as that infant in Bethlehem and has promised to come again in glory. That is because no matter what year it is and no matter what consequences of sin we face, He is the One that takes care of our greatest needs and gives us hope for the future. Whether we are dealing with sin in the Garden of Eden or in our own homes today; whether we are dealing with the bondage of slavery in Egypt or dealing with the consequences of past slavery here in this country; pandemics, wars, or storms in any age; in all of these things we and the rest of the world can only find hope in Jesus Christ. And the reason we all can find hope and peace in Jesus whatever we face, whenever we face it, is because He never changes. He is exactly the same when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden as He is today when we sin and live in this sinful world.

As we celebrate Advent and Christmas this year know that our Lord, who out of His amazing love for each one of us took upon Himself our human nature so long ago, still loves us the same today as He always has. And if His love brought Him to Bethlehem and took Him to the cross to die for our sins, we can be sure that His love is still moving Him to care for us today whatever we face and whatever year it is.

May we all have a blessed Christmas this year!

✠ Pastor Erickson

Thanksgiving:

Noah (son of Josh & Hailey Dohrmann)- baptized 11/27
 Tim & Nancy (parents of C. Erickson)- health issues improved
 Milestones Bible Blessing
 Dipak (friend of Greg Dunn)- recovering after hospitalization

Illness, injuries, health issues:

John (brother of Pat Krekeler)- hospitalization
 Roxanne (former office assistant)- hospitalization
 Jan (friend of Bonnie Bubke)- recovering after surgery
 Marcia (mother of M. Rinderknecht & E Heller)- health issues
 Mary Jane (mother of Phil Hedtke)- health issues
 Charlotte (mother of Chris Frampton) - recovering after surgery
 Cathy (sister-in-law of Melissa Loney) - recovering after COVID
 Ron (father of Jo Godbey & Justin Kirkpatrick) - recovering after hospitalization
 Don (brother of Joann Strang) - health issues
 Dave (father of Jennet Volden)- health issues
 Crysten (wife of Daniel Sanchez, Camp IODISECA) - recovering after accident
 Deputy Halverson- recovering after injury in the line of duty
 Dale (brother of *Marge Grovert)- Parkinson's disease
 Jill (sister of *Bridget Rinderknecht)- health issues
 Kenny (friend of *Bonnie Bubke)- recovering after surgery
 Jane (daughter of *Bonnie Bubke)- recovering after surgery
 Alyse (granddaughter of *Janelle Dunbar)- brain tumor
 Andrew (relative of *B Heims)- recovering after surgery
 Jeff Mellgren (former member)- recovering after stroke
 Hayden (relative of *Bonnie Bubke)- brain disorder
 Gwendolyn- (friend of *Karen Swanson)- terminal illness
 John (nephew of *Bonnie Bubke)- health issues
 Ruth (friend of *Velma Ziesemer)- health issues
 Rod (nephew of *Bonnie Bubke)- Parkinson's Disease

Safety:

Ben— serving in the Iowa National Guard
 Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of *Schoens & Amy Smith)- serving in the Navy
 Tailor & Charlie (grandsons of *Kim Neuhaus)- Deployed
 Harrison (son of *Siecks)- serving in the military

Grief, family and friends of:

Dana (brother of Melissa Loney) - died 11/25
 Bob (relative of Melinda Crow & Luci Stoelting)- died 11/13
 Steve (friend of *Pete Larson)- died 11/6
 Roland (brother of *Bonnie Breiholz)- died 10/30

Homebound members of Bethany:

*Wayne Schilling— Linn Manor Care Center, Marion
 Candi Engel— Garnett Place
 *Nadine Wax— at home
 *Del Block— The Gardens
 *Larry & *Sharon Easler— Summit Pointe, Marion
 *Darlene Eckert— at home
 *Valerie Koelper— Grand Living on Indian Creek
 *Melba Davison— Terrace Glen, Marion
 *Shirley Kellogg— at home

Cancer/Hospice:

Richard (relative of *Carol Grimminger)- cancer
 Austin (grandson of *Fran Struck)- terminal cancer
 Sandy (neighbor of *Bonnie Bubke)- cancer treatment
 Shirley (sister of *Donice McDonald)- cancer
 John (brother of *Donice McDonald)- cancer
 Ron (uncle of *Dawn Thomas)- cancer
 Rose (friend of *Kay Karsten)- cancer treatments
 Tammy (relative of *Bonnie Bubke)- cancer treatment
 Karen (mother of Bethany friend)- cancer treatment
 Karen (relative of *Carol Grimminger)- hospice care
 Marcia (relative of *Brenda Heims)- cancer
 Oz (father of *Dathan Hinrichs & *Josie Hester)- cancer treatment
 Glen (brother of *Rob Sieck)- cancer
 Tony (friend of *Mike Thomas)- cancer
 David (relative of *Hasses)- cancer immunotherapy
 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

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.

Wednesday, December 1

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
5:45 pm Advent Meal - FLC
6:00 pm Confirmation
6:00 pm Human Care Meeting
7:00 pm Advent Midweek Service

Thursday, December 2

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

Friday, December 3

7:00 pm Youth Lock-In

Saturday, December 4

9:00 am Children's Program Practice
9:00 am Holy Yoga - Opening Room

Sunday, December 5

12:15 pm Board of Education Meeting
1:00 pm Food Pantry Open

Monday, December 6

10:00 am Women's Group - Mr. Beans
6:00 pm Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, December 7

6:30 pm Handbells Practice

Wednesday, December 8

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
5:45 pm Advent Meal - FLC
6:00 pm Confirmation
7:00 pm Advent Midweek Service

Thursday, December 9

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

Saturday, December 11

9:00 am Children's Program Practice
9:00 am Holy Yoga - Opening Room

Sunday, December 12

1:00 pm Food Pantry Open
2:00 pm LWML General Meeting

Monday, December 13

10:00 am Women's Group - Mr. Beans

Tuesday, December 14

6:30 pm Handbells Practice
7:00 pm Council Meeting

Wednesday, December 15

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
5:45 pm Advent Meal - FLC
6:00 pm Confirmation
7:00 pm Blue Christmas Service

Thursday, December 16

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

Saturday, December 18

9:00 am Children's Program Practice
9:00 am Holy Yoga - Opening Room

Sunday, December 19

1:00 pm Food Pantry Open
4:30 pm Children's Christmas Program

Monday, December 20

10:00 am Women's Group - Mr. Beans

Tuesday, December 21

6:30 pm Handbells Practice

Thursday, December 23

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

Friday, December 24

4:30 pm Service of Lessons and Carols
11:00 pm Candlelight Service w/ Comm

Saturday, December 25

10:00 am Christmas Day Service w/ Comm

Sunday, December 26

9:30 am Blood Pressure Checks - Office
1:00 pm Food Pantry Open





Prayer Partnership

This Advent season, Bethany members can participate in a Prayer Partnership. If you have signed up to be part of a prayer partnership, please check your email early each week throughout the season of Advent. For more details, contact Jim Novitch, Ronda Anderson, or Pastor Erickson.

Voters' Meeting

A voters' meeting was held on November 17. The budget was passed, seminary student support was passed, and it was determined that funding for several church projects presented by the Trustees will come out of the congregational fund. These projects include replacing sanctuary projectors, sanctuary sound board, fire protection panel and sanctuary cove lighting. If you would like to see those documents, please contact the church office.

Members were also elected into the following positions: **Recording Secretary**- Kelly Frampton; **Financial Secretary**- Laura Holt; **Board of Education**- Debbie Mills; **Board of Evangelism**- Lissa Novitch; **Elders**- Steve Hanchera, Phil Hedtke, and Rick Foreman; **Trustees**- Jeff Madsen and Duane Pfeffer. Our Council Chairman, Jeff Crow will be moving and has appointed Ed Schumacher to fulfill the last year of his term. Darrell Chiavetta will be appointed to Vice-Chair in 2022.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/1	Gloria Schumacher	12/13	David Johnson	12/24	Karen Rutz
12/2	Cindy Goerdt	12/14	Kiaya Fortner		Jeff Stranathan
	Brian Holt		Bridget Rinderknecht	12/25	Valerie Koelper
12/3	Paula Bulicek	12/15	Henry Smith		Becky McCarley
	Tracy Donels		Diane Zenor	12/26	Maren Elm
	Marvelene Foreman	12/16	Patricia Hinrichs		Diane Holub
12/4	Ronda Anderson	12/17	Stacy Brusius	12/27	Shirley Kellogg
	Ava Henderson		Kaylee Hedtke	12/28	Hannah Madsen
	Jim Novitch		Anna Ranbarger		Ella Smith
	Donna Stranathan	12/18	Oliver Knutson	12/29	Nate Ackerman
12/7	Nadine Wax		Addy Stackhouse		Jaden Harris
12/10	Mike Thomas		Bailey Stevens		Sue Kroemer
	Mary Vezina	12/19	Bree Robinson	12/30	Shari Mehlhoff
12/11	Tracy Bond	12/21	Hogan Myers		Malcolm Scott
12/13	Karen Hass		Angela Yuza		

Sunday School

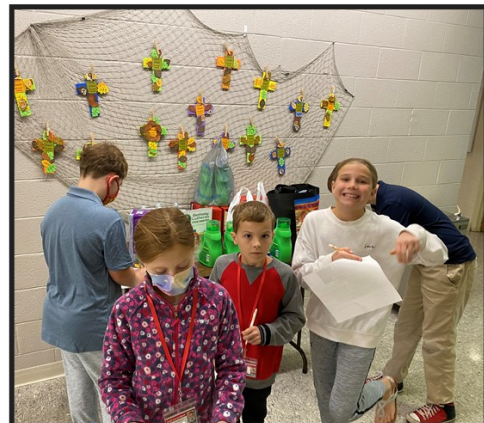
Children in preschool through grade 12 gather for Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. in the lower level. All children are welcome. If your child is attending for the first time, please stop by the Sunday School office in the lower level before taking your child to their classroom.



Carter Urban received a Bible for the 3rd grade Faith Milestones.



Sunday School students participated in a "Mission Possible" scavenger hunt.



LWML General Meeting

The general meeting for the Women's Guild will be Sunday, December 12 at 2:00 p.m. All women of the congregation are invited to join us for a hot chocolate bar, Christmas carols, and Christian fellowship as we prepare our hearts and minds for the birth of our Savior. Please join us!



LWML Christmas Giving

The Women's Guild is again distributing Christmas gifts (Hy-Vee gift cards) to bless Bethany members in need. Please consider contributing to your fellow members at Christmas by placing your donation in the offering plate in the back of the sanctuary marked "LWML Christmas Giving."

If you prefer to donate electronically, go to bethanycr.org/giving and give to "LWML Christmas Giving." Please put donations in an envelope marked "Christmas Giving" and turn in to the church office (or place in the offering plate) by December 15.



Youth Lock-In

Youth in middle school and high school are invited to a lock-in! Please arrive at Bethany at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, December 3. The lock-in will end at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 4. Expect to play fun games, eat snacks, and spend time in God's word together. If you plan to attend, please email Darin Elm at youth.bethanycr@gmail.com.

Quilts for World Relief

This past year, the Bethany sewing group completed 110 quilts for Lutheran World Relief. We thank all who helped with this endeavor. We also thank Doug and Earlene Francik for taking these quilts to Trinity Lutheran Church on October 16. These quilts will be delivered by truck to the World Relief warehouse in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and later shipped around the world to those individuals in need. There were a total of 4100 quilts delivered to Trinity that day from all Lutheran churches in the area.

Our sewing group meets the second Tuesday of the month, and anyone is welcome to join us for tying quilts and, of course, socializing. We will resume our monthly meetings in January (after taking a Christmas break in December). The group is always in need of used sheets, fabric and yarn.



Thursday Morning Bible Study

Pastor Erickson leads Bible study on Thursdays at 9:00 a.m. All adults are welcome to attend this class, held at Bethany in the Family Life Center.

Women's Small Group

Women's Small Group meets on Mondays at 10:00 a.m. at Mr. Beans in Marion. The group is currently discussing the book "Family Trees and Olive Branches: Creating a Culture of Grace in Your Family" by Christina Hergenrader. Contact Nurse Ronda at nurse.bethanycr@gmail.com for more information.

Men's Bible Study

Men's Bible Study meets on Wednesdays at 6:00 a.m. at Bethany. The group is currently discussing a study on the gospels of Luke and John from the Lutheran Hour Ministries series, "Stuff They Didn't Teach Me in Sunday School." All men are welcome; contact the church office for more information.

Bethany Lutheran Church Well Child Policy

The church nursery will be staffed for the 11:00 service beginning in January. In order to ensure the safety and health of all children and volunteers for the Bethany nursery and Sunday School, we ask that you stay home if you are sick. We appreciate your cooperation in helping to make Bethany Lutheran Church a safe environment. Children and adults should not be present in the nursery or classrooms if any of the following symptoms are displayed:

Fever of 100 or higher*

Vomiting or diarrhea**

Croup, wet, dry, or barking cough

Sore throat

Any unexplained rash**

Lice

Any communicable diseases

Any skin infections

Pink eye

Green or yellow discharge from nose

Any symptoms of childhood diseases:

scarlet fever, measles, mumps rubella, chicken pox or whooping cough,
or any other communicable disease not listed here

**Individuals should be free from fever for 24 hours, without the assistance of medication, before returning to the nursery or classroom.*

***Individuals should be free from symptoms for 24 hours before returning to the nursery or classroom.*



Angel Tree

Bethany is participating in the Angel Tree program this season. If you would like to buy a Christmas gift for a child on behalf of their incarcerated parent, please take an angel from the tree (located in the Gathering Area) and bring your gift to Bethany by December 12.

Senior Worship will **not** be held in December. Please join us in January:

Thursday, January 20, 2021

Senior Worship Service at 11:00 a.m.

Fellowship Luncheon to follow

**If you plan to attend, please call the church at 319-364-6026
to help us plan accordingly for lunch.**

Christ's Care FOR CHILDREN: KENYA



Project 24

Letters

Great news - we have new letters from our sponsor students Yvonne and Lorine! Please pick up a copy from the mission display table located outside the sanctuary.

Fundraising

Our congregation has raised **\$6,407 of our \$10,000 commitment** to Project 24. So far we have sent two quarterly gifts (\$5,000 in total). We plan to send the third quarterly gift at the end of December. In order to make the third quarterly gift, **we will need to raise \$1,093 in December**. If you feel called to make a financial contribution to this mission that shares Christ's love with children in Kenya, you may:

- Use the "Missions" giving envelopes (located at the display table outside the sanctuary) to give cash or checks made to Bethany Lutheran Church, and place in the offering plate.
- Go to www.bethanycr.org/giving to give online. Find the giving tile for "Christ's Care for Children: Kenya" and click the green "Give" button.



Monday Coffee and Cocoa

The Board of Evangelism connects with neighbors and Washington High School students by serving free coffee and cocoa on Monday mornings. New volunteers are welcome! Even if you are not an "early morning" person, you'll find that serving is fun as you share joy and encouragement with those we serve. To volunteer, please sign up for a date at www.bethanycr.org/serve.



Poinsettias

Poinsettias are available for purchase this year. Please sign up for a plant by December 12 at the Welcome Center, or call the church office at 364-6026. The plants come in red or white 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 26.

Joy's Journal

Hello, Bethany FURiends! First off, thank you for a wonderful PAWty for my first birthday... and for the donations to the food pantry. You are all PAWsome! I really enjoyed meeting some of you and hope I can come to Bethany more often in the future. Right now I am hearing a lot of talk about Christmas and my PAWrents said they are bringing a tree into the house soon. I'm very excited about that because I love eating tree leaves! I hope this tree tastes good, too. This picture of me was taken in a barn, but it was much nicer than where our Lord was born. Have a blessed Advent season as we prepare our hearts and minds for the birth of our Savior.

P.S. I'm hearing a lot of songs with my name in it these days!



 Joy



**Bethany
Lutheran
FOOD PANTRY**

Psalm 145:16

The pantry is open every Sunday, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome. In November, we served over 90 households, some multiple times during the month. In total, that equals over 300 individuals in those households that have benefitted from the food and personal care items from the pantry.

MANY thanks to the Bethany friends who have donated personal care items, helped in the pantry on Sundays, and picked up orders from HACAP. We hear "thank you so much" often from the neighbors that visit the pantry. "Living and sharing God's love" is happening at Bethany Lutheran Food Pantry!

Items that are always needed at the pantry are tissues, toothpaste, paper towels, and detergent.

Living Donor Opportunity

Retired LCMS Pastor Jerry Doellinger (who has served at Concordia, Cedar Rapids and St. Paul's, Marion) is searching for a living donor for a kidney transplant. If donating a kidney is something you would like to consider, you may contact the Bethany church office at 319-364-6026 for more information.

2021 Contributions

Contributions for 2021 must be dropped off at the church or postmarked by December 31, 2021 to be applied to your 2021 Giving Statement.



Amazon Smile

Doing Christmas shopping on Amazon? Be sure to use Amazon Smile when you shop. Amazon Smile is 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.



Thrivent Choice

Each year Thrivent credits members with dollars that can be contributed to Lutheran-affiliated 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 \$6,100 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 2021 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.



START USING THE NEW VANCO MOBILE APP!

The Vanco GIVE+ App will be replaced with the Vanco Mobile App. If you have been using the GIVE+ app, please replace it with the "Vanco Mobile App." Get it at your Google or Apple Store. Use your same user ID and password to sign in to the new app.



1. Download the free Vanco Mobile App.
2. Find our church by searching for Bethany Lutheran.
3. Give an offering.

You can also continue to contribute at www.bethanycr.org/giving

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
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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