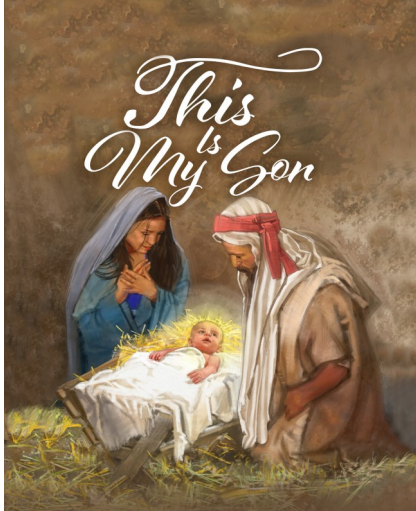


Bethany Beacon

DECEMBER 2022



Advent: This Is My Son

During the Advent season, we prepare our hearts to focus on Jesus being born as a humble human baby. He is both son of Mary and Son of God, the ultimate son of Adam who fulfilled the Law and Prophets. Through Him, we take on our identity as children of God, heirs to heaven and made new in baptism. Explore the theme of sonhood through Jesus, biblical sons, and our identity as children of the Father.

Advent Midweek:

Fellowship Meals at 6:00 p.m. | Services at 7:00 p.m.
November 30 | December 7 | December 14



Join us for
Christmas
Services

Sunday, December 18

Sunday School Program at 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service at 4:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Service at 11:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 25

Christmas Day Service at 10:00 a.m.



Bethany
Lutheran Church

Living and Sharing God's Love

For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:11

Earlier today I read a news article about a famous actor trying to make amends for something that he did as a young teen. Growing up this actor and his family were quite poor. Therefore, every-day before football practice he would steal a Snickers bar from a local convenience store. According to the article, this had always bothered the actor, especially as he became rich and famous. So recently, he went back to the very same convenience store that he stole dozens of candy bars from, bought every single Snickers they had, and left them all on the counter for the store to hand out. In addition, he also paid for all the groceries of the other customers in the store and left the cashier a generous tip. He said that he always knew that he needed to go in and clean out every Snickers bar they had – “the right way”. And he said, “We can’t change the past and some of the dumb stuff we may have done, but every once in a while we can add a little redeeming grace note to that situation – and maybe put a big smile on some stranger’s face.”

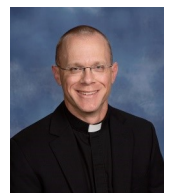
As I read this, I had mixed emotions. On the one hand, it is nice to see someone owning up to something they have done wrong in the past and trying to make it right. Even better that this person is quite the celebrity. But on the other hand, does his actions actually make amends for his stealing in the past? More than likely, it was the person who owned the store long ago that had to pay the price for the stolen candy. And this person, most likely, would never see a nickel of the money spent recently at the store. In addition, there are the economics of stolen merchandise and profit margins on candy that don’t really add up to making this score even. But then again, at least he tried, even though “we can’t change the past”. Well, if I wasn’t really sure of what to think of this man’s efforts to make amends, there was one thing I was certain of. And that is Jesus Christ has atoned for the stealing of this actor, as well as the sins of the whole world. This is really the whole point of Christmas.

There is no doubt that in the next several weeks we will all be bombarded by messages telling us what Christmas is supposed to be about. Some of these messages will obviously miss the point – for example messages about giving or receiving presents. But others will look good on the surface, and still fall far short of the Good News that our Savior has been born. It is good that we are all encouraged to spend time with loved ones and to help others who are less fortunate than we are. But while doing these things have their value, they do nothing to repair our broken relationship with God, and often others, because of the sins we have done in the past. In fact, there is nothing that we can do to take care of this problem and atone for our sins.

But thankfully, God has acted to save us. Promising in the Garden of Eden to send a savior (Genesis 3:15), that promise became a promise fulfilled in Bethlehem. Looking at Mary’s Son, the shepherds gazed upon God in the flesh, the promised Savior who would rescue all of humanity from the power of sin and death. He did come so that we could exchange presents. He did not come to give us a reason to gather with others during the dark days of winter. Rather Jesus Christ was born to save sinners - to pay the price for all of our sins, whether it be idolatry, adultery, or stealing some candy bars.

As the pastor of Bethany, it has given me a great level of satisfaction, and even pride, to see how we have responded together to this Good News over the last several years. But this Christmas, and in the years ahead, let us never forget what Christmas, our congregation, and even our faith is all about. Let us never forget that our Savior has been born. And He alone has atoned for all of our sins.

Merry Christmas,
✠ Pastor Erickson



Thanksgiving:

Jesus' birth

Arrival of DCE intern, Kierra, in January 2023

Illness, injuries, health issues:

Rowan (granddaughter of Thomas')- recovering

Marian (friend of Hein's)- end of life

Trevor (son of *Thomas')- recovering after hospitalization

Chuck (father of J Novitch) - recovering after hospitalization

Sylvia (aunt of Patricia Hinrichs) - health issues

Rhonda (friend of Larsons) - health issues

Dan (father of *Michelle Wiersig) - recovering after surgery

Teri (relative of *Schoens)- health issues

Dave (relative of *Jennet Volden)- bike accident

Judy (relative of *Brenda Heims)- health issues

Tom Mark (former member)- recovering after accident

Alyse (granddaughter of *Janelle Dunbar)- brain tumor

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

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 & *Smith)- U.S. Navy

Harrison (son of *Siecks)- U.S. Army, deployed to Poland

Local/National/World:

Local, state, and national leaders

Victims of floods, hurricanes, fires and disasters

Grief, family and friends of:

Wayne (relative of Rick Foreman)- died 11/7

Walter (relative of Rick Foreman)- died 11/5

Valerie Koelper- died 11/2

Betty Hein- died 10/28

Homebound members of Bethany:

*Wayne Schilling- Linn Manor Care Center, Marion

Candi Engel- Garnett Place

*Nadine Wax- at home

*Del Block- The Gardens

*Tom Stock- at home

*Larry & *Sharon Easler- Summit Pointe, Marion

*Darlene Eckert- at home

*Melba Davison- Terrace Glen Village, Marion

*Shirley Kellogg- at home

*Dorothy Freese- Keystone Place

Cancer/Hospice:

Norm Rutz- cancer treatment

Sam (friend of *Carol Grimminger)- cancer treatment

Francis (friend of *Larsons) - cancer treatment

Maureen (aunt of *Janet Hoech)- hospice care

Patrick (friend of *Mary Vezina)- cancer treatment

John (friend of *Dunns)- chemo treatment

Ron (brother of *Ray McGraw)- cancer treatment

Shauna (niece of *Schmiths)- cancer

Jerry (brother of *Ronda Anderson)- cancer treatment

John (brother of *Donice McDonald)- cancer

Rose (friend of *Kay Karsten)- cancer treatments

Karen (mother of Bethany friend)- cancer treatment

Karen (relative of *Carol Grimminger)- hospice care

Marcia (relative of *Brenda Heims)- 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

Chad (son of *Vicki Huschka)- leukemia



Prayer Chain

Are you a prayer warrior? If you would like to receive periodic prayer requests from the congregation via email, contact the church office at office.bethanycr@gmail.com to be added to the prayer chain email list.

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.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Thursday, December 1

9:00 am Adult Bible Study
6:00 pm Human Care Meeting
6:00 pm Visioning Meeting

Saturday, December 3

9:00 am Holy Yoga

Sunday, December 4

1:00 pm Food Pantry Open

Monday, December 5

6:30 am Coffee Outreach
1:30 pm LWML Board Meeting
6:00 pm Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, December 6

6:30 pm Handbells Rehearsal

Wednesday, December 7

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
6:00 pm Confirmation Class
6:00 pm Advent Meal
7:00 pm Advent Service

Thursday, December 8

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

Saturday, December 10

9:00 am Holy Yoga

Sunday, December 11

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

Monday, December 12

6:30 am Coffee Outreach
6:00 pm Stephen Ministry Supervision
7:00 pm Elders' Meeting

Tuesday, December 13

6:30 pm Handbells Rehearsal
7:00 pm Church Council Meeting

Wednesday, December 14

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
6:00 pm Confirmation Class
6:00 pm Advent Meal
7:00 pm Advent Service

Thursday, December 15

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

Saturday, December 17

9:00 am Holy Yoga
10:00 am Sunday School Program Rehearsal

Sunday, December 18

1:00 pm Food Pantry Open
4:30 pm Sunday School Program

Monday, December 19

6:30 am Coffee Outreach

Tuesday, December 20

6:30 pm Handbells Rehearsal

Wednesday, December 21

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
4:00 pm Cottage Grove Devotion
6:00 pm Confirmation Class

Thursday, December 22

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

Saturday, December 24

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

Sunday, December 25

10:00 am Christmas Day Service

Monday, December 26

Office Closed

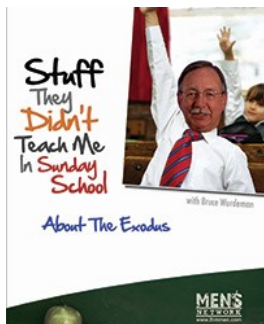


DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12/28 Caleb & Mandy Pfeil

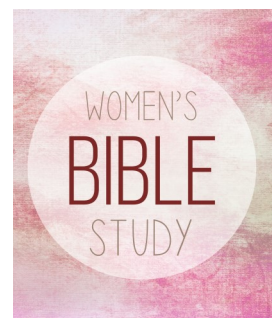


Men's Bible Study

Bethany men meet via Zoom on Wednesdays at 6:00 a.m. On November 30, they resumed their “Stuff They Didn’t Teach Me in Sunday School” study on the book of Exodus. All men are welcome and encouraged to participate in this group for study and fellowship! The group also meets occasionally for breakfast. If you would like the link to the Zoom meeting, please contact that church office.

Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study is currently on break. The group will start a new study and resume on Monday, February 13. The Monday group will meet in the Bethany Family Life Center at 10:00 a.m. All women are welcome and encouraged to participate in this group for study and fellowship! If you would like to learn more about women's Bible study, contact Ronda at nurse.bethanycr@gmail.com.





Christmas Poinsettias

Help decorate the sanctuary with a poinsettia plant during the Christmas season. To order a plant, please sign up at the Welcome Center or contact the church office by December 11. The cost will be \$11. Plants can be purchased in honor or memory of a loved one. **If you order a plant, please remember to take it home with you after Christmas Day service!**

Christmas Bake Sale

Let the Women's Guild handle your Christmas baking this year! Baked goods will be for sale before and after both services on December 18. Stock up on a variety of goodies for your family and friends (and yourself!). Proceeds from the bake sale will be used for mission donations in the upcoming year.



Angel Tree

Bethany is participating in the Angel Tree program to provide gifts for children on behalf of their incarcerated parent. This year we are providing gifts for 35 children from 17 families. Our Angel Tree is in the Gathering Area, and the angels went quickly... thank you to everyone who took an angel from the tree! If you took an ornament, please return gifts to Bethany by December 11.

Caroling on December 11

Join us for Christmas caroling at Cottage Grove Place! Please plan to meet in the Gathering Area immediately following 11:00 service (around noon) on Sunday, December 11. We will walk over to Cottage Grove together to carol.





Kenya's Archbishop Visits Bethany

The Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK) was at Bethany on November 3. Bethany members along with friends from other local congregations had the opportunity to learn about the ways the Lord is at work in the church all around the world! The Rev. Dr. Joseph Ochola Omolo spoke about Hope for the Destitute, Project 24, and other ministry happening in the ELCK. He reported on ministries in need of support, including Hope for the Destitute.

Hope for the Destitute is a ministry caring for widows and orphans in Kisumu, Kenya. Please find more information online at www.hftdestitute.org. If you feel called to contribute, send a check made out to Aboite Lutheran Church and write "Hope for the Destitute" on the memo line. Send donations to:

**Aboite Lutheran Church
10312 Aboite Center Rd.
Fort Wayne, IN, 46804-5436**

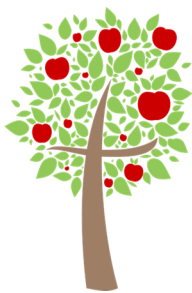


December Evangelism Challenge

There are ways we can all live and share God's love with those around us. Last month your evangelism challenge was to invite a friend to church.

In December, your evangelism challenge is to support Bethany Lutheran Food Pantry. Cold season is upon us, and the pantry is once again in need of boxes of tissues! Please bring boxes of tissues to Bethany during the month of December.





Growing in Faith Sunday School

This year's Sunday School theme is "Growing in Faith"! Sunday School is held on Sundays at 9:45-10:45 a.m. for students in preschool through high school. Please join us each Sunday in the lower level. If it is your child's first time attending Sunday School, please accompany them downstairs and bring them to the Sunday School office, and someone will be happy to show you to their classroom! Not sure where to go while your child is in Sunday School? All parents are invited to Pastor Erickson's Bible study for adults in the Family Life Center.

Family Faith Night: Wednesday, January 11

Family Faith Night is a ministry for students in preschool through high school and their parents to attend on the second Wednesday of each month! Our next Family Faith Night will be on Wednesday, January 11. A meal is served at 5:30 p.m. and the program is held 6:00-7:30 p.m. If you plan to attend Family Faith Night, RSVP at www.bethanycr.org/children-youth.



Sunday School Christmas Program

This year's program will have one practice on Saturday, December 17 at 10:00 a.m. followed by the program itself on Sunday, December 18 at 4:30 p.m. We would love all Sunday School students preschool through high school to be involved in the program. The program will be followed by a birthday party for Jesus and everyone is invited! Contact Becky or Kristi at sundayschool.bethanycr@gmail.com for details.

Senior Worship

(no Senior Worship in December)

Thursday, January 19, 2022

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.

Joy's Journal

Advent blessings to my Bethany FURiends as we prepare our hearts and minds for the birth of our Savior. As I reflect on the last year, I am especially thankful that I am Bethany's comfort dog and for the opportunities it provides to meet and greet people. I currently visit three senior facilities each month and make a weekly visit to Trinity Lutheran School. I also get the chance to meet some FURiends in their homes. Later this month I get to comfort the college students at the University of Iowa as they prepare for their stressful final exams.

God's blessings to you this Christmas!



Christmas Collection

The Women's Guild is collecting money through December 11 for Hy-Vee gift cards for Bethany members in need. Please consider contributing to your fellow members at Christmas by placing your donation in the offering plate. Please put donations in an envelope marked "Christmas Giving" and place in the offering plate or turn into the church office. Please make checks out to "Bethany LWML".

Quilts for World Relief

The sewing group will not meet in December but will start again in January 2023. Join us at 9:00-noon on Tuesday, January 10.

We are always in need of bed sheets you are no longer using, which are used for quilt insides. We can also use cotton fabric and yarn.



November Voters' Meeting

Bethany would like to thank everyone who attended and helped with our annual Voters' Meeting on November 13. While together, we passed the 2023 budget and had the first vote to accept changes made to the Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation. (As required, we will be having a second vote on the constitutional changes at our meeting in January.) The voters also elected Mark Elias to the position of Elder, Julie Elias to the position of Congregational Treasurer, and Mary Nanke to chair the Stewardship Committee. Finally, we would also like to thank the members of the Church Council who will be stepping away from their positions at the end of the year. This would include: Ed Schumacher, who agreed to serve as the Congregational Chairman for 2022 after the departure of Jeff Crow; Bill Freese, who is stepping down as Congregational Treasurer after many years of faithful service; Dave Dohrmann, whose term of Stewardship Chair has ended; and Mitch Myers, who, while still remaining a Trustee will be stepping down as the chairman.

Office Staff Updates

- Office and Communications Coordinator Maren Elm will be on maternity leave December through February. When she returns to Bethany, she will work part-time (two days per week) and will continue the communications portion of her position (publishing bulletins and Beacons, managing Bethany's website and social media pages, creating announcement slides, and emailing out news updates). While Maren is on maternity leave, Mark Holt will cover her position in the office. **Mark can be contacted at office.bethanycr@gmail.com.**
- Bethany welcomes Wendi Wallander as Office Manager! She will work on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. **Wendi can be contacted at officemanager.bethanycr@gmail.com.** Let's share a warm Bethany welcome: take the time to send an email or stop by the office to introduce yourself!
- DCE Intern Kierra Penney will arrive in January. She is a student at Concordia University Nebraska and will spend one year learning and serving at Bethany to complete her studies in the Director of Christian Education program. **Kierra's induction will be during services on Sunday, January 8.**

Monday Morning Outreach

On Mondays during the school year we set up a tent out front to serve free coffee and cocoa to Washington High School students and any neighbors who stop by. This outreach is very well received by the community! We hand out about 80 cups each week. Each Monday we need volunteers at 6:30-8:00 a.m. to help serve warm drinks and smiles. If you would like to serve in this unique ministry, sign up for a Monday at www.bethanycr.org/serve.





Bethany Lutheran FOOD PANTRY

How many neighbors have been utilizing Bethany Lutheran Food Pantry?

The average weekly attendance this past month has been 73 neighbors that visit the food pantry on Sundays at 1:00-3:00 p.m. These neighbors take food back to their households. When counting the number of people in each household, that's an average of 288 neighbors served each week.

Those of us that regularly work in the pantry know the first names of some of the neighbors that visit each week. Each week there are 6-16 new neighbors who are first-time visitors to our food pantry.

What have we heard from the neighbors?

"I feel respected when I visit this food pantry, I get to pick what I want."

Bethany Lutheran Food Pantry is a client-choice pantry (vs. pre-boxed food that is given to the neighbors). Those that visit our food pantry are asked to take what they need for the week, respecting the limits that are posted.

"The people that work at this pantry are so happy!"

Nurse Ronda was able to share with this person that the reason we have happy hearts is because Jesus loves us and in turn we are able to love our neighbors.

I'd love to get involved! What can I do?

Each Sunday we need six volunteers to staff the food pantry at 12:30-3:00 p.m. To volunteer, please sign up online at www.bethanycr.org/food-pantry. If you would like to know more about the pantry, Nurse Ronda would be glad to talk about any part of the pantry and/or give you a tour.



Read about the local need for food pantries

The Cedar Rapids Gazette published an article on the local need for pantries on November 25, including quotes from Nurse Ronda and Pastor Erickson. Use the QR code for the link.



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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/bethanycr