

Director of Christian Education Installation



Kierra Penney completed her DCE internship at Bethany in January-December 2023, and we are excited to announce she has accepted the call to serve as Director of Christian Education here at Bethany!

Kierra's commissioning and installation will be at Bethany on Sunday, January 14 during both services. A potluck will follow the second service in celebration of this special day. Please bring a side dish to share. Arby's roast beef, drinks, and cake will be provided. A card basket will be available at the potluck. Cards may also be mailed to church.

We thank God for you, Kierra! May the blessings of the Lord be with you and your ministry.



Bethany
Lutheran Church

Living and Sharing God's Love



Pastor's Page

"Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house." – II Samuel 7:11b

When things had finally settled down for King David, he pointed out to the great prophet Nathan that he was living in a fancy house of cedar, but that God seemed to be residing with the Ark of the Covenant in a tent. Therefore, Nathan told David to do whatever his heart desired, which was to build a temple for the Lord. But that night, the word of the Lord came to Nathan and He said, "No". God asked Nathan, had He had ever complained about the Tabernacle or had asked for a temple to be built? So instead of David building God a house, God told Nathan to tell David that God would build him a house! And this house would be a kingdom that would reign forever. God was immediately speaking of David's son, Solomon, eventually taking David's throne, but this rule and reign ultimately foreshadowed the coming of David's Greater Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Church Year began back at the beginning of Advent on December 3rd, but as you read this copy of the Beacon you are more than likely close to the beginning of the new calendar year on January 1st. And during this time of year, it seems that much of the world enjoys reflecting on what has happened over the last 12 months and what might happen during our next trip around the sun. Doing so here at Bethany, we can easily see how much God has blessed our congregation over this last year. Tina and Anne are new staff members in the office serving God and His people, and the Spirit has led Kierra to accept the call to serve as our Director of Christian Education. We've continued great ministries like making quilts for Lutheran World Relief, Care Warriors, playing Bingo at Winslow House, Angel Tree, Stephen Ministry, Monday morning coffee outreach and our food pantry, while starting new ones including our Prayer at the Square. This past year (and for many years before) our congregation has also benefitted greatly from the leadership of two people who are stepping down from their positions – Lissa Novitch who served as the chair on the Board of Evangelism and Debbie Mills who served as the

chair on the Board of Education. And of course, I can't forget to mention that Joy, our Comfort Dog, is as busy as ever bringing God's joy and comfort all over eastern Iowa.

And while we give thanks to God for all of His blessings over this past year, we also look forward to the new year. God has raised up many new leaders in the congregation, who will join with all of us to Live and Share God's Love in 2024. But as we begin this new year, I can't help but to think of David's plan to build a temple. It seemed like such a good idea! Even Nathan initially signed off on it. But God had other plans. Might this happen to us at Bethany? There's much for all of us to do in the new year, but maybe God has other plans. If so, then that should be perfectly all right with us.

Remember, God had other plans for David. And His plan turned out to be so much more than David or Nathan could have ever dreamed of! Forget a temple made with hands for God to dwell, God promised (again) that He would dwell with all people through Jesus Christ! Jesus was a descendent of David and Solomon, and therefore the rule and reign of Christ would be the "house" that God would build that would last forever. For by it, all people who believe in Him are saved by grace through faith.

In this upcoming year of 2024 A.D. you may have many plans, hopes, and dreams. For those that include our congregation, I continue to look forward to serving with all of you to make all of those things happen. But whether or plans for next year include Bethany, or just belong to us and other parts of our lives, don't ever forget that they all depend upon God. Which is Good News for this New Year, because through Christ, God always blesses us more than what we expect or deserve. God's Blessings and Happy New Year!

✝ Pastor Erickson





Prayer Page

Illness, injuries, health issues:

Kathy (sister of *Mark Holt) - health issues
Diane (relative of *Brenda Heims)- health issues
Jacquiline (daughter of *C Kroemer)- health issues
Don (friend of *Mary Vezina)- recovering after surgery
Jenn (relative of *Mary Nanke)- recovering after surgery
Skip (brother of *Faye Sieck) - grief issues
David (father of *E. Heller & *M. Rinderknecht) - recovering after surgery
Sarah (daughter of *Henkelmanns) - health issues
Ezra (infant son of Ben Venteicher) - health issues
Chuck (friend of *Linda Patten)- health issues
Margaret (relative of *Karl Hoech)- recovering after fall
Merlin (grandfather of *Dathan Hinrichs)- health issues
Gloria (granddaughter of *Kim Neuhaus)- personal issues
Jill (cousin of *Karen Pfeffer) - recovering after transplant
Ann (relative of *Elaine Behrens) - recovering after surgery
Lorena (sister of *Brenda Heims) - recovering after surgery
Marcia (relative of *Brenda Heims) - health issues
Sylvia (aunt of *Patricia Hinrichs) - health issues
Teri (relative of *Schoens) - health issues
Judy (relative of *Brenda Heims) - health issues
Tom Mark (former member) - recovering after accident
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:

Andrea (relative of *Steggalls)- teaching in Bulgaria
Jordan (grandson of *K Neuhaus)- IA Army National Guard
Devin- (friend of *Kroemers)- IA Army National Guard
Ben (son of *Kroemers)- IA National Guard
Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of *Schoens & *Smith)- U.S. Navy
Harrison (son of *Siecks) - U.S. Army, stationed in TX

Thanksgiving:

Kierra Penney- accepted call to be Bethany's DCE
David (relative of *Hasses) - completed immunotherapy
Jan (friend of Joni Schmith)- improved health

Homebound members of Bethany:

Cindy Broadwater- at home
Candi Engel - Heritage Care Center
*Nadine Wax - at home
*Dorothy Freese - Keystone Place
*Verlyn & *Paul LeFevere- at home
*Chuck Stoelting- Garnet Place

Cancer/Hospice:

Rodney (relative of Betty Happel)- cancer
Ruth (relative of *Karl Hoech)- hospice care
Ellie (relative of *Lynn Madsen)- cancer treatment
Jim (friend of *Dave Johnson)- cancer treatment
David (friend of *Angela Yuza)- cancer
Rachel (Bethany neighbor)- cancer
Tom (friend of *Dave Johnson)- cancer
Natalia (friend of *Karstens)- cancer
Angie (friend of *Deb Heitland)- cancer
Alice (friend of *Brenda Heims) - cancer
John (friend of *Dunns) - chemo treatment
Tony (friend of *Mike Thomas) - cancer
Julie (friend of *Brenda Heims) - cancer
Chad (son of *Vicki Huschka) - leukemia

Grief, family and friends of:

Todd (friend of *Rick Foreman)- died 12/23
*Del Block - died 12/21
*Lee Rathje- died 12/19
*Shirley Kellogg- died 12/17
Loretta (relative of *B Rocarek & *T Steggall)- died 12/4
Denny (relative of *Brenda Heims)- died 12/3

Bethany Prayer Ministry

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

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 319-364-6026 or email to nurse.bethanycr@gmail.com.



Calendar

Monday, January 1

Office Closed - New Year's Day

Tuesday, January 2

8:00 am Greene Square Outreach Ministry
5:00 pm LWML Board Meeting
9:00 am Walking Exercise
6:00 pm Evangelism Meeting

Wednesday, January 3

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
6:00 pm High School Youth
6:00 pm Confirmation Class
6:30 pm Vocal Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, January 4

9:00 am Adult Bible Study
9:00 am Walking Exercise
6:00 pm Human Care Meeting
7:00 pm Christian Faith Class

Saturday, January 6

8:00 am Pancakes and Proverbs
9:00 am Holy Yoga - Opening Room

Sunday, January 7

1:00 pm Food Pantry Open

Monday, January 8

6:30 am Coffee & Cocoa Outreach
6:00 pm Stewardship Meeting
7:00 pm Elders Meeting

Tuesday, January 9

8:00 am Greene Square Outreach Ministry
9:00 am Quilting for World Relief
9:00 am Walking Exercise
6:30 pm Handbells Rehearsal
7:00 pm Council Meeting

Wednesday, January 10

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
5:30 pm Family Meal
6:00 pm Family Faith Night
6:30 pm Vocal Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, January 11

9:00 am Adult Bible Study
9:00 am Walking Exercise
1:00 pm Leah Circle
6:00 pm Naomi Circle
7:00 pm Christian Faith Class

Friday, January 12

9:00 am Rebekah Circle

Saturday, January 13

9:00 am Holy Yoga - Opening Room

Sunday, January 14

12:15 pm Kierra's Installation Celebration
1:00 pm Food Pantry Open

Monday, January 15

Caucus held at Bethany

Tuesday, January 16

8:00 am Greene Square Outreach Ministry
9:00 am Walking Exercise
6:30 pm Handbells Rehearsal

Wednesday, January 17

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
4:00 pm Cottage Grove Devotion
6:00 pm High School Youth
6:00 pm Confirmation Class
6:30 pm Vocal Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, January 18

9:00 am Adult Bible Study
9:00 am Walking Exercise
11:00 am Senior Worship
7:00 pm Christian Faith Class

Saturday, January 20

9:00 am Holy Yoga - Opening Room

Sunday, January 21

12:30 pm Annual Meeting
1:00 pm Food Pantry Open

Monday, January 22

6:30 am Coffee & Cocoa Outreach

Tuesday, January 23

8:00 am Greene Square Outreach Ministry
9:00 am Walking Exercise
6:30 pm Handbells Rehearsal

Wednesday, January 24

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
6:00 pm High School Youth
6:00 pm Confirmation Class
6:30 pm Vocal Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, January 25

9:00 am Adult Bible Study
9:00 am Walking Exercise
7:00 pm Christian Faith Class

Saturday, January 27

9:00 am Holy Yoga - Opening Room

Sunday, January 28

9:30 am Blood Pressure Checks
12:15 pm Board of Education Meeting
1:00 pm Food Pantry Open

Monday, January 29

6:30 am Coffee & Cocoa Outreach

Tuesday, January 30

8:00 am Greene Square Outreach Ministry
9:00 am Walking Exercise
6:30 pm Handbells Rehearsal

Wednesday, January 31

6:00 am Men's Bible Study
6:00 pm High School Youth
6:00 pm Confirmation Class
6:30 pm Vocal Choir Rehearsal



Birthdays and Anniversaries

1/1	Julie Gutman	1/11	Kellen Volden	1/18	Tami Vande Weerd	1/26	Candi Engel
1/2	Sarah Potter		Everly Zimmerman	1/19	Caleb Strait		Tina Freese
1/4	Janelle Dunbar	1/13	Mary Nanke		Pastor Erickson		Ella Potter
	Darren Scott	1/15	Kathryn Deetz	1/20	Jake Vande Weerd	1/27	Amy Smith
1/5	Nate Smith	1/16	Shirley Hoppe	1/21	Sarah Kaufman	1/28	Elianna Novitch
1/8	Hudson Freese		Duane Pfeffer	1/22	Kris Larson	1/29	Lori Siebenmann
1/9	Phil Hoppe		Stephanie Macke		Tyler Hedtke		Laurie Jasper
1/10	Lissa Novitch	1/17	Kelly Johnson	1/23	Stephanie Chittick	1/30	Lynn Kellogg
	Sebastian Foreman		Diana Long		Tyler Gates		Laura Holt
	Jeff Jasper						

1/1 Joseph & Anne Railsback
Alan & Kathy Echtenkamp

1/3 Pete & Kris Larson
1/4 Ken & Elaine Cook

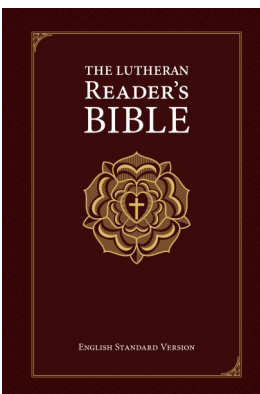
1/6 Pat & Mindy Thies

Annual Meeting

Our congregation's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 21. Please plan to attend this meeting at 12:30 p.m. in the Family Life Center. The church leadership will review the accomplishments of 2023 and look forward to plans for 2024. All members are encouraged to attend this meeting!

ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21
12:30 PM



Bible Reading Plan

In 2024 we will read selected Bible passages together as a congregation. The reading plans are used by permission from CPH from *The Lutheran Reader's Bible*. In January we will read ten passages of "Understanding God's Plan of Salvation." During Lent we will read 45 passages on "The Life of Jesus." Please pick up a copy of the January reading plan from the Welcome Center which includes a reflection on each passage.

Though not necessary to participate in this reading plan, *The Lutheran Reader's Bible* is available to purchase at www.cph.org/the-lutheran-readers-bible for those interested.



Opportunities to Give and Serve



Giving Envelopes

Giving envelopes for 2024 are now available. Please pick up your box from the table outside the sanctuary. You may start using these envelopes after January 1.

Sewing Quilts for World Relief

On Tuesday, January 9, the LWML will tie quilts for Lutheran World Relief in the Family Life Center at 9:00 a.m. to noon. Stop in for an hour or stay the whole time; we appreciate any time you can give! Bring a sack lunch for fellowship after quilting. Contact Betty Happel or Donna Bogner for details.



Blankets and Towels for Willis Dady

Willis Dady Homeless Services is an emergency shelter providing shelter, case management, homeless prevention, and veteran support for Cedar Rapids and the surrounding area. Willis Dady currently has a great need for blankets of any size (not sheets) and towels of any size. Bethany will collect these items through January 14. Please bring blankets and towels to church and place them in the collection area located just outside the sanctuary.

Bethany Lutheran Food Pantry Updates

Garden for the Pantry

Bethany's garden was established in partnership with Feed Iowa First to grow produce for Bethany Lutheran Food Pantry. This year we grew 113 pounds! We received this note from Feed Iowa First:

"Thank you for a very successful year of habaneros and cabbages. The cabbage heads that grew were massive! We are glad to hear that the peppers and cabbage were highly sought after in your neighborhood pantry! Thanks again for all that you do supporting our mission, we could not do it without you!"



January Pantry Donation Item

The January donation item of the month is 13-gallon trash bags (preferably with drawstrings). Please bring in trash bags during the month of January, and place your donations on the collection table located outside the sanctuary.

Serve in the Pantry

Bethany Lutheran Food Pantry is open Sundays from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Every Sunday we need six volunteers to serve 12:30-3:00 p.m. If you would like to serve, please sign up at bethanycr.org/food-pantry. If this is your first time, please call Ronda at 364-6026.





Youth and Family Ministry



GIFTS Stewardship Program

Bethany Sunday School students are learning about stewardship in the GIFTS (**G**lorify God/**I**ntegrate Generations/**F**aith-Building Mentorship/**T**alents and Time/**S**erve) program. On the second Sunday of each month at 9:30-9:45, adult members mentor students and serve together by tidying the sanctuary and replenishing pew cards. Students are learning about stewardship and how church members use their time and talents to serve the congregation. If you are interested in working alongside students in this intergenerational program, please contact the church office or speak with Rachel Henderson.

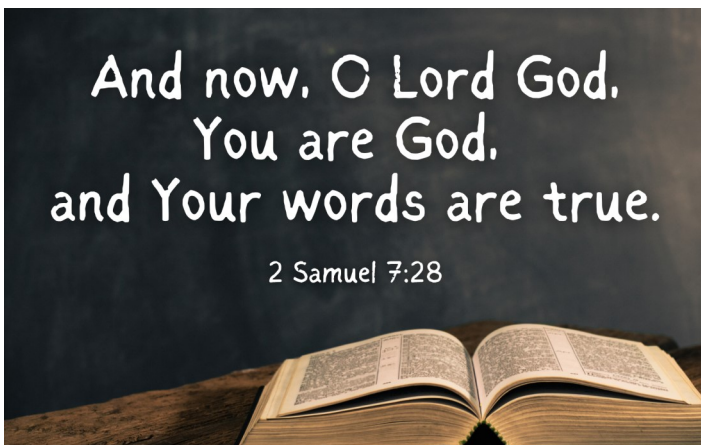


Youth Mission Trip

Bethany youth will embark on a mission trip to Denver, Colorado the week of July 21, 2024. To start supporting this mission trip today, you may give online (select "Youth Trips" at www.bethanycr.org/giving).



You can also support the youth mission trip by donating items to Stuff Etc. When you drop off items at Stuff Etc., provide Bethany's consignor number 42223 to support youth trips. Stuff Etc. is not accepting items January 1-15, but will accept Easter, Valentine's, St. Patrick's Day and spring apparel January 16-26 and January 29-February 29. So far we have raised \$135 through Stuff Etc. Thank you for contributing!



Family Faith Night

Family Faith Night is a ministry for students in pre-school through 12th grade and their parents. Plan to join us on January 10 for an evening of connecting with other families, learning a Bible lesson together, and participating in fun activities! Dinner is served at 5:30 and the program takes place 6:00-7:30.

Memory Verse

Be sure to arrive with this memory verse memorized on January 10: "And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true." 2 Samuel 7:28

Pancakes and Proverbs

Fathers, father-figures, and their children are invited to join us for Pancakes and Proverbs, a ministry at Bethany on the first Saturday of the month. We have breakfast, a devotion, and an activity for fathers and their children to participate in together. Plan to attend the next session on Saturday, January 6 at 8:00 a.m. at Bethany.





Council Connection

Council Connection

Welcome to the Council Connection! The purpose of this section is to keep you updated on status, decisions, and other happenings from the Church Council. Look for the latest in each month's Beacon. Our most recent Council meeting was on December 12. Here are the highlights:

- **Thank you Debbie and Lissa.** The Council expressed its appreciation to two long-standing board chairs - Debbie Mills (Education) and Lissa Novitch (Evangelism). Their contributions to the congregation will be felt for years to come. But they won't be far; they will continue to use their passion and gifts to live and share God's love.
- **Welcome to Stacy and Naomi.** Our two newest board chairs attended our last Council meeting of 2023. Stacy Brusius (Education) and Naomi Chiavetta (Evangelism) bring strong backgrounds in their respective areas and a wealth of knowledge, passion, and ideas. We are excited to see these two leaders continue to contribute to our congregation in these new positions. Congratulations!
- **Mark your calendar.** Our next Voters' Assembly will take place on January 21 at 12:30. Among other things, we will highlight some of the ministry the congregation has accomplished in 2023 and a look-ahead to 2024. See you there!
- **We got ourselves a DCE!** Congratulations to Kierra Penney on her prayerful consideration and acceptance of the designation for Director of Christian Education at Bethany. Please congratulate her personally or attend the celebration on January 14.
- **Prayer in the Square.** This winter, we continue our ministry of serving meals, drinks, and prayers in Greene Square for neighbors who have fallen on hard times. King of King's Lutheran Church has partnered with Bethany to serve in this ministry. In addition to the many hands who prepare the food each Monday, we now have a group of 13 people who spend time with our neighbors each Tuesday. We are pleased to work together as the body of Christ to serve our neighbors. If you feel called to join this ministry or would like more information, please contact Naomi Chiavetta or the church office.
- **Our hearts were thankful.** Bethany musicians put on a worship concert benefiting the food pantry. It was well attended and people were generous with their financial resources (thank you!). Several food pantry neighbors were able to attend the concert. It was wonderful worship alongside these friends.
- **Time and Talents.** Have you filled out our Time and Talents survey? Practicing Christian stewardship includes using your God-given gifts and talents to serve. The T&T survey allows church leadership to best match opportunities with congregational talents. Please take a few minutes to fill it out on our website at www.bethanycr.org and click on "Serve."

Please pray for your Church Council

Ronda Anderson (Parish Nurse), Stacy Brusius (Education Chair), Darrell Chiavetta (Council Chair), Naomi Chiavetta (Evangelism Chair), Julie Elias (Council Treasurer), Pastor Erickson, Kelly Frampton (Recording Secretary), Steve Hanchera (Elders Chair), Laura Holt (Financial Secretary), Dave Johnson (Endowment Chair), Mary Nanke (Stewardship Chair), and Rita Tiedt (Human Care Chair)



Announcements

LWML Bake Sale

Bethany LWML hosted a bake sale on December 17. The bake sale raised \$943.25! Half of the proceeds will benefit missions supported by the LWML, and the other half will go toward the church benevolence fund.



Angel Tree

Thank you to everyone who purchased gifts for the Angel Tree program! We provided gifts for 39 children (in 16 families) for Christmas 2023. Our Sunday School students also collected toiletries and household items for the families. Angel Tree is a ministry that provides Christmas gifts for children who have a parent who is currently incarcerated.

Joy's Journal

Happy New Year, Bethany FURiends! The beginning of the year always brings thoughts of what lies ahead. For me I wonder how God will use Bethany's Comfort Dog Ministry to bring people to Him through me, a dog. I also know God's plan is perfect and He will use me and my people to share joy and happiness!

I was a busy pup in December. One afternoon I went to the University of Iowa to give comfort to students when they were taking their finals. I saw about 200 people that afternoon – and was happy to hand out four Bibles. I also attended the children's Christmas program here at Bethany along with regular visits to nursing homes, Trinity Lutheran School, and St. Luke's Hospital.

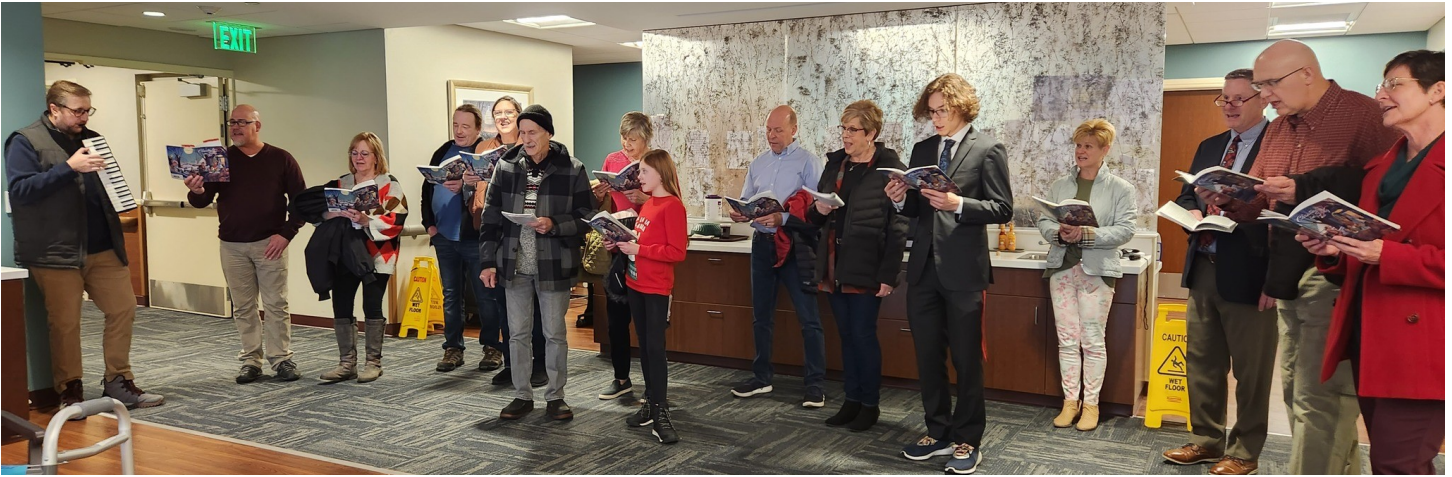
I am excited to see what 2024 brings - to God be the glory!

Blessings,





Bethany Happenings



Caroling and Chili Fellowship

Bethany friends met for chili and cookies, then went Christmas caroling at Cottage Grove Place on Sunday, December 17. The residents at Cottage Grove Place were delighted to have carolers!

Children's Christmas Program

Bethany Sunday School students shared the Christmas message at a children's program on December 17. Thank you, students, for sharing the wonderful news of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!





Thank You for Sharing God's Love

The Bethany family lives and shares God's love with fellow members by praying, sending cards, making meals, visiting and providing comfort and friendship. Here are notes of thanks from Bethany members who have recently felt the love of their church family...

A big thank you to everyone for your continued prayers and kindness during this past year. We are so thankful for all of you. God is good! - **Philip and Lorelei Hackbardt**

Thank you to everyone who remembered me with prayers and cards as I was recovering from my recent surgery. Your Christian love and concern were deeply appreciated. - **Bonnie Breiholz**

To everyone who prayed for me before, during, and after my surgery and who continue to pray for a speedy recovery; who conveyed well-wishes through family; who sent cards of comfort and encouragement; and who prepared and delivered the most delicious meals - I thank you whole-heartedly realizing how blessed I am to be a part of Bethany's Christian family. God's Blessings. - **Carolyn Johnson**

On behalf of Christine, Aiden, and myself, I would like to thank the congregation for their support and generosity throughout the past year and especially this Christmas season. Your kind and generous cards, gifts, and prayers are appreciated and a wonderful reminder of God's providence and love. May God bless us all in 2024! Happy New Year! - **Pastor Erickson**



Join us for Senior Worship

Thursday, January 18
Service at 11:00 AM | Luncheon to follow

CHURCH STATISTICS November 2023

Average Sunday Attendance	180 Souls
Total Revenue	\$40,454.17
Total Expenses	\$41,389.95



Submit an Announcement



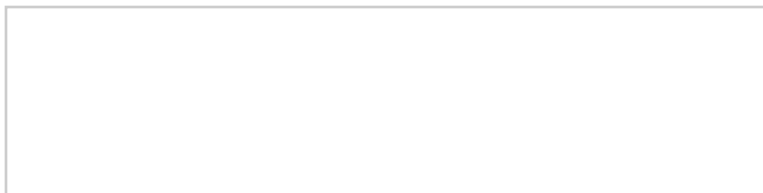
Submit Announcements for Publication

Announcements for the February Beacon are due Thursday, January 18. To submit, please give details to Communications Coordinator Maren Elm. You may email her at comm.bethanycr@gmail.com, or complete a form at bethanycr.org/announcement-request.

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Lutheran Church

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