



sharing the bread of life with the hungry world

bethlehem lutheran church *newsletter*

Volume 57, Issue 12 • December 2018



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

'Tis the Season of Peace, Joy, Love, and Hope

Advent holds wonderful memories growing up as a child. Our family would gather around the table after supper to have devotions and light the advent wreath. The wreath, made from a fallen birch tree from our neighbor's back yard, had 4 holes drilled into it. We decorated it with fresh evergreens from trees planted by my father and it sat at the center of our dining room table. We turned off the lights, taking turns to light the candle as we read from appointed readings for the day. Back then, we used purple candles, now replaced with blue candles, a symbol of hope and new life. We prepared for the celebration of the Christ Child and anticipated for Christ's coming again.

In the weeks ahead as we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth, may we take time to ponder and reflect on the new life the Christ Child has brought into each of our lives. Peace, joy, love, and hope are themes woven together throughout Advent and Christmas. What a wonderful gift God sent his Son down from heaven to reveal God's love for us, bringing light in a world filled with darkness.

A Christmas Affirmation, written by Nathan Nettleton, will be used throughout our Advent and Christmas worship time together. I share one portion of that affirmation as it captures a small portion of what this season is all about.

*We believe that each new child
Is a glimpse of the face of God,
A sign of the life to come,
And a call to live in peace
And celebrate living together.
Glory to God in the highest,
And peace to God's people on earth.*

May this season of expectant hope and the promise of abundant love fill you with the peace that only the Christ Child can bring. Have a blessed Advent and Christmas season.

Pastor Audrey



HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Advent ~ Christmas ~ New Year

Midweek Advent Worship

Holden Evening Prayer
Wednesday, December 5, 12, 19, 5:30pm

Christmas Program

Sunday, December 16, 11:00am

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

Monday, December 24, 4:00 and 7:00pm

*There is no 11:00pm worship.

***One worship service**

Sunday, December 30, 10:00am

MONTHLY POTLUCK

Bethlehem's December potluck will be Sunday, December 2, following 11:00am worship. Bring a dish to share; coffee and water provided. (Ovens available at 10:00am.) **Everyone is welcome!**

ADVENT WORSHIP & SOUP SUPPERS

Following our 5:30pm Holden Evening Prayer Advent Worship Service, join us for soup suppers served by members of the congregation. Supper will be served at 6:00pm Wednesday December 5, 12, and 19.



COMMUNITY MEALS
— LOVE IN ACTION —

Bethlehem "Shares the Bread of Life with a Hungry World" by hosting the Community Meal Tuesday, December 18, 4:30-6:00pm. The **Jr. High Youth Group** will help this month and

you can too! Please sign up on the Welcome Table in the Church Lobby if you are able to volunteer.



We welcome Lynn and Joan Christensen who joined Bethlehem on November 18.



STAFF GIFT

The Congregational Council invites you to join us in expressing our thanks to Pastor Audrey and the entire paid staff with a bonus gift. Monetary gifts, clearly marked as "Staff Gift," may be placed in the offering plate or dropped off in the office by December 31.

- Courtney Lubs, Congregational President

Christmas Bells



Bring your favorite bell to worship the first Sunday after Christmas, **December 30, 10:00am**. What better way to ring in the new year as we continue to ring Christmas joy.

MINISTRY MISSION PLAN FORUM

During the Fellowship Hour, 9:45am Sunday, December 2, the 2019 Ministry Mission Plan information will be available and open for discussion.

CONGREGATION SPECIAL MEETING

Sunday, December 9 there will be a Congregation special meeting to vote on the 2019 Ministry Mission Plan.

OFFICE CLOSED

During the December and January holidays, the office will be closed at Noon December 24 and December 25, 26, and January 1.



POINSETTIAS will adorn the Sanctuary again on Christmas Eve. If you would like to donate one, there is a collection box with envelopes on the Welcome Table.

The envelope will have a place to print your name and a place to print the name, "in memory of" or "in honor of", for whom you are giving. Each plant is \$12 which includes a 7" pot with foil, ribbon, saucer, tax, and delivery. Please make check payable to Bethlehem with "poinsettias" in the memo line by Sunday, December 2.

CHRISTMAS PROJECT The Council on Service is once again posting stars for Christmas in the Fellowship Hall. We are adopting several area families and would appreciate your help. Please take a star and purchase a gift. Directions will be posted to assist you. If you would like us to do the shopping for you, make checks payable to BLC with "Christmas Project" marked in the memo area. Gifts need to be wrapped and returned with the star attached by December 9. We also collect donated Christmas decorations and winter clothing, especially children's sizes, for the families. Please bring any items you wish to donate and put them under the tables in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you to everyone for your generosity.



A++ CONGREGATION

Bethlehem has a strong tradition of supporting our youth. Our "Global Farm Challenge" fundraiser was no different. Our 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering group feels so blessed to have had the assistance of the Bethlehem congregation in raising over \$4700.00 in this challenge, including the anonymous donation from one of our members. This will allow us to purchase 5 farms, 2 oxen and plow, and some other individual animals to assist smallholder farmers through ELCA World Hunger. **The last day to donate to this campaign will be**

Sunday, December 16. If you have your piggy banks to return, please do so by this date. Thank you so much for supporting this fundraising effort!
#changeiseverything
#thischangeiseverything
#blcsharing



On behalf of the Spiritual Renewal Mission Council, we wish to extend our gratitude to all who helped make the

Bethlehem Harvest Dinner successful. Special thanks to all who made mouthwatering pies, Nino and Kim Costarella for preparing a great Danish pork loin meal, and all the volunteers for setting up and cleaning up. As volunteers, the fruits of your labor are a testament to the success of Bethlehem's ministry.

- Craig Goetsch

BETHLEHEM NURSERY UPDATE

Nursery
Volunteers



Our Bethlehem Nursery will no longer be staffed by a paid employee. We are looking for volunteers to staff the Nursery rather than continue with a paid position. Moving to a volunteer staffing model supports efforts to reduce the Ministry Mission Plan.

Without volunteers, the Nursery would still be available; however, parents would need to stay with their children. Volunteers are needed for both services, 8:30-9:30am and 11:00am-12:00pm and during the Christian Education hour, 9:30-11:00am. Volunteers have been secured through mid-December. ??? Contact Heather Schneider, heather@bethlehemcf.net

Mission Forward Team

We are excited for the Mission Forward Team to begin its next step in the call process. Their two major goals are:

- to discover a new and deepened sense of identity and purpose for the congregation
- to establish a healthy relationship with the next pastor who will walk with the congregation toward the renewed sense of purpose

This team allows the Congregational Council to focus on continuing to support the ministries of the congregation and the regular business of the church.

The members of the Mission Forward Team commit to the unique opportunity presented in the transition time. It is a time of high challenge for any congregation, a time for self-assessment, and a time for visioning and recommitment to mission and ministry.

The overall goal is to bring the congregation into a state of readiness to move forward under the leadership of a new pastor. Feel free to contact the members of the Mission Forward Team for more information:

- † **Carissa Froyum-Roise, Facilitator**
- † **Becky Chittenden, Secretary**
- † **Theresa Elverum**
- † **Zach Engbrecht**
- † **Reg Green**
- † **Jack Gregersen**
- † **Ellen Hermanson**
- † **Terry Kestner**
- † **Linda Mixdorf**
- † **Erica Nelson**
- † **Adam Reilly**

Please keep the Mission Forward Team in your prayers.



NEW Taking Faith Home decks of cards for Year C are here, hot off the press, just in time for Advent, the beginning of the church year.

Similar to the Taking Faith Home bulletin inserts, each of the cards in a deck are based on the Revised Common Lectionary and feature a theme statement, key scripture verse, a prayer and blessing that complement the key verse, and a caring conversation and service question to provide meaningful, faith forming conversations. They are a compact, handy, complete tool for home devotions and/or times when one is away and unable to worship in a congregational setting. Each family is welcome to have a set. They are on the Devotions Table in the Church Lobby.

??? Contact Robin Souhrada, robin@bethlehemcf.net

"Where Christ is present in faith,
the home is church, too."

Milestones Ministry, www.minestonesministry.org



When I was young: My earliest Christmas memory...

Gifts: One of the most special gifts I received was... It was special because ... A special gift I gave someone... Some gifts that I made...

Decorations: Stories about the tree (kind of tree used, how it was chosen, ways we got it home)... My favorite ornament was... We decorated the tree (who, when, how)... There are stories about the lights and kind of lights used (1st time when lights were used)... We decorated the outside with... My favorite decoration was... Some of the decorations I made were...

Tastes and smells of the season: There were traditional foods prepared only for Christmas, they were... Our traditional meal on Christmas was... My favorite cookies were... The kind of cookies I especially liked to make were... Recipes that have been passed on... My favorite smell of the season is...

Traditions: Our family traditions include... Traditions passed on from previous generations... The family traditions our family began... Family traditions I would like to see created...

Music: My favorite carol or hymn, or song... How we lifted up Christmas music in the home...

Movies and Stories: My favorite Christmas movie ... My favorite Christmas story... The stories I remember about Santa Claus...

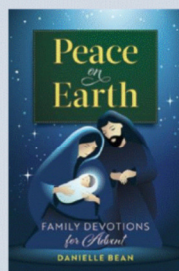
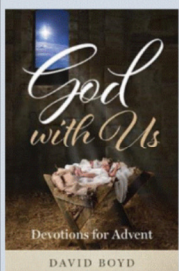
Time: Ways we spent the holidays (worship, special people you visited, places we visited)...

Special Programs: Way I participated in school or in church programs (name the character played, instrument played, solos)...

All I want for Christmas...: Ways I want to spend this Christmas...

ADVENT RESOURCES

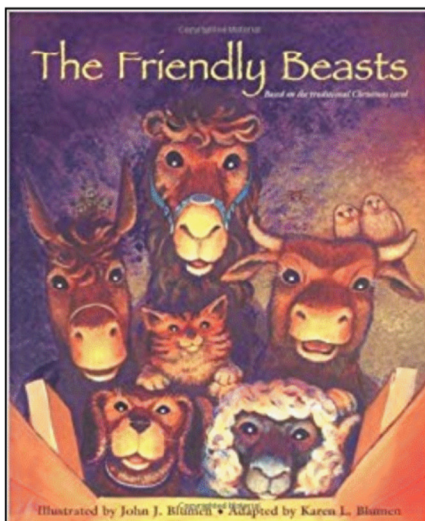
There are a variety of Advent resources, for all ages, available on the devotions table in the church lobby for your personal and family use while supplies remain.





B.L.Y.M.P. & FM4000 NEWS!

Bethlehem Lutheran Youth Ministry Programs & Family Ministry at 4000 Hudson Road



ADVENT WORKSHOP & MONTHLY CHURCH POTLUCK CROSS-GENERATIONAL EVENT

**Sunday, December 2
Noon**

Join us for a special "Bethlehem Family" family time as we prepare and decorate the Fellowship Hall Christmas tree. We have planned a little something for everyone: devotions, crafts, music, and activities. You won't want to miss it! ??? Contact Karen Dowell, dowell.family@cfu.net

Elementary Youth Group Follow-up Reflection from Bev Smith. "Sunday was Veterans Day. I always have to think ahead, so I came up with Operation Christmas Cards! I enlisted the help of my Preschool/Kindergarten class. We worked for 15 minutes on making cards. After potluck, the BLC Youth Group also worked on cards. We had so much fun! It's important for us to let our service men and women know that we remember and appreciate their service. It's even more important during the holidays. In case you are curious about how many we made, the grand total was 52! They will be mailed to some of our troops in the Air Force. Thanks again to everyone who helped with this project! Operation Christmas Cards was a success!"

Youth and adult leaders of Elementary Youth Group pictured with the cards.



Merry Christmas



**Swimming Event
Saturday, January 5, 10:30am-Noon
Save the date!**

Volume 19, Issue 5

December 2018

Upcoming Events

Advent Workshop	Dec. 2
Youth & Family mtg.	Dec. 17
Jr. High Youth Group	Dec. 18
Swim Party	Jan. 5
Pints of Grace 7:00pm	Dec. 4, 11
LSC Bible Study 8:15pm	Dec. 4
LSC Worship 8:30pm	Dec. 5, 12
LSC Coffee House 8:00pm	Dec. 4, 6, 11

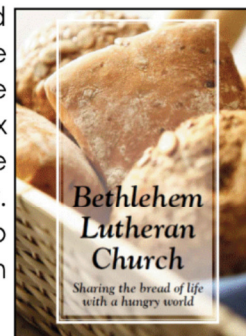
JR. HIGH YOUTH GROUP



Youth, 6th-8th grade, are invited to help serve dinner **4:30pm, Tuesday, December 18** at First United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls. Sign up on the list on the Welcome Table in our Church Lobby. ??? Contact Sue Jorgensen, 404-3942.

COOKBOOKS FOR SALE \$15 EACH

Cookbooks are available on the Welcome Table. Place checks, payable to Bethlehem, with "Cookbook" marked clearly in the memo in the gray box near the office door. Proceeds go to the Youth Trip Fund.





DECEMBER 2018



We offer several opportunities for adults to engage the Bible and talk about God's continuing work in our lives. ??? Contact Pastor Audrey, 266-3541.

Sunday Morning Bible Study will resume in January 2019. ??? Contact Pastor Audrey, 266-3541.

Friends in Faith will resume in January 2019. ??? Contact Diane Kestner, 277-2469.

Men's Bible Study Breakfast will resume in January 2019. ??? Contact Scott Davison, 486-6914.



The Joyful Times group for BLC members and friends of the AARP or "empty nester" ages meets 9:30am on the 3rd Wednesday of each month for coffee fellowship and to plan activities for future months.

Thursday, December 6, join the group as they go to Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids to view fully functioning wind turbines. Meet at BLC, 9:45am to carpool. The tour will last about an hour with lunch following at a Cedar Rapids local restaurant. Please sign up on the sign-up on the Welcome Table in the Church Lobby. ??? Contact Jerry Mohling, 240-7571.

BETHLEHEM KNITTERS & FRIENDS

All those able or wishing to knit or crochet prayer shawls and scarves are welcome to join Bethlehem members and friends in the Church Library Wednesdays, December 5, 12, and 19, 12:30pm. ??? Contact Judy Hill or Nancy Tibbetts.



WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEALS

As we plan for January, we resume serving pizza on Wednesday evenings. Volunteers are appreciated and it is helpful for planning to have volunteers sign up early. To help serve pizza for our Wednesday night meal, please contact Heather, heather@bethlehemcf.net or sign up on the bulletin board near the kitchen. Wednesday night meals will resume January 2.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM "The Gift"

December 16
11:00am worship service.

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL MUSIC

Would you like to share your musical talents before the Christmas Program? We would love to have kids (or adults) play before service on December 16.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM REHEARSAL

Meet at the church Saturday, December 15, 9:30-10:30am.

DANCE AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE December 16, 9:45am

There will be no Sunday School Opening that day so ALL members of the congregation can participate!



SUNDAY SCHOOL There will be no class Sunday, December 23 and 30.



CONFIRMATION Please plan to attend Wednesday evening Advent worship services, 5:30pm December 5, 12, and 19. There will be no Sunday evening class for the month of December.

CHOIR NEWS

Cherub, Celestial, and Chancel Choirs will not meet December 26. All choirs will resume Wednesday, January 2.





Young Adult & Campus Ministry

Lutheran Student Center

2616 College St., CF

December Ministry Schedule

Pints of Grace

Tuesday, December 4 & 11, 7:00pm

Pepper's, 620 East 18th, CF

Pints of Grace is a ministry with young adults, over 18 years old, where fellowship and conversations of faith are enjoyed. Come relax, enjoy a soda or beer, and gather together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

LSC Worship 8:30pm

Wednesday, December 5

Wednesday, December 12, Holden Evening Prayer

LSC Christmas Party

Dinner & White Elephant Gift Exchange

Finals Week Snacks from Bethlehem Lutheran

Wednesday, December 5, 7:30pm

Finals Week at the LSC

Join us for lunch, 11:00am-1:00pm Monday and Tuesday, December 10 and 11. All are welcome!

LSC Coffee House

Enjoy free coffee, smoothies, cookies, music, and fellowship Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00pm at the LSC. *The Coffee House will be closed after December 11.

Lutheran Student Movement National Gathering

Please pray for the students attending this gathering in Memphis December 29-January 2.

??? Contact Jon Fry, UNI LSC Campus Minister, lsuni@uni.edu or www.lutheranstudentcenter.org



319-226-3541

office@bethlehemcf.net

CHURCH OFFICE STAFF

Audrey Lukasak - Interim Pastor

507-358-6924, pastor@bethlehemcf.net

Robin Souhrada - Director of Faith Formation

robin@bethlehemcf.net

Heather Schneider - Ministry Coordinator

heather@bethlehemcf.net

STAY CONNECTED

[www.bethlehemcf.net](http://www.bethlehemcf.org)

#blcsharing

www.facebook.com/pages/Bethlehem-Lutheran-Church-ELCA/45155212584266?ref=hl

DON'T FORGET

♦ EARLY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Because of the Christmas holiday, the BLC newsletter deadline is **Monday, December 11**. The January newsletter will be mailed Tuesday, December 18.



♦ **ANNUAL REPORTS are due December 15**. Please email them to Robin, robin@bethlehemcf.net

♦ **SIMPLY GIVING** Update contributions for 2019 giving.

♦ **2018 OFFERING** must be turned into the office or postmarked by **December 31, 2018** to be included in 2018 contributions.



WEATHER ALERT As a reminder, if the Cedar Falls schools are closed or dismissed early on a Wednesday due to weather, all Wednesday night ministries at the church will be cancelled.

CAR FOR SALE

An anonymous donor has donated a car, pictured, for which the purchase price will go to Bethlehem's Unified fund.

For sale: Well-loved 2008 Volvo S60 2.5 model sedan. Less than 125,000 miles, automatic transmission, front wheel drive, power steering, brakes, climate control, memory seats, other features as well. Kelley Blue Book private party value average is \$4,500. All information believed accurate at this time. Sold to highest bidder by December 31. ??? Contact Robin Souhrada, robin@bethlehemcf.net or 266-3541 or Kent Anderson, 319-290-4866.



UNIFIED GIVING THROUGH OCTOBER

Income: \$277,046 YTD

Mission Plan: \$296,000 YTD

(\$18,954) YTD

2018 Mission Plan Total: \$375,340

Giving needed to meet 2018 Mission Plan: \$14,192 per week from November 18 through December 31, 2018.



GIVING MADE EASY Scan the QR code or go to bethlehemcf.org and click on "Give Online" underneath the Worship tab.

VOLUME 57 ISSUE 12 November 27, 2018

Sunday worship with Holy Communion
8:30am & 11:00am
Nursery available 8:15am-12:15pm
Pastor: Rev. Audrey Lukasak
Church office phone: 319-266-3541
Office hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:00am-3:00pm
Friday, 8:00am-Noon
Email: office@bethlehemcf.org
Website: www.bethlehemcf.org
****Newsletter deadline: December 11****
Bulletin deadline: 9:00am Thursdays

ADVENT WORKSHOP

"The Friendly Beasts"

& CHURCH POTLUCK

Sunday, December 2

Following 11:00am Worship

DANCING AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Sunday, December 16

9:45am

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Sunday, December 16

11:00am Worship

WORSHIP WITH US

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Monday, December 24

4:00 & 7:00pm

