



sharing the bread of life with the hungry world

bethlehem lutheran church *newsletter*

Volume 48, Issue 2 • February 2018



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

Lent is a time to speak, hear, and live the truth. I mean the truth about who we are and who God is. I suppose that we ought to be doing that all the time, but, I think the only way to make that happen is to take some special time to concentrate our attention on the truth about us and God.

The truth about us is that we are wonderfully formed and deeply loved, but also tragically and, sometimes, intentionally nasty to ourselves, our neighbors, and God. We call this last bit sin and it involves being determinedly self-centered in an unhealthy way. These are truths about us that we don't want to acknowledge or admit. In fact, it takes an enormous amount of energy to hide this from ourselves and others. It can be exhausting. The only way to address this sin is to hear the truth about us, speak the truth about us – we call it the beginning of repentance – and then focus on the truth about God.

The truth about God is what gives us the courage to hear and speak the truth about ourselves. During Lent we watch Jesus as he makes his way to Jerusalem, where he will be arrested, suffer, and be killed. This is another thing to which it is hard to pay attention. It is sad. It is a little grisly. It is frustrating that no one seems to help him. The deep truth however, is that Jesus goes this way so that we might hear the truth of the deeply loved part of who we are. It shows us the limitless extent of God's love, as God, in Jesus spends his life for us. That is a truth that redeems the truth about our nasty streak. Trusting that truth is the conclusion of repentance. Believing we are forgiven because of Jesus is the joy of repentance.

Living the truth helps us to pull the truth into us and invites it to stay. Ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday helps us live it. Taking extra time for prayer, devotions, weekday worship, and Bible reading helps us live the truth. It may even inspire us to live the truth all the time. Have a blessed Lent.

Pastor Gay



“The Doors of Lent”

Wednesday

Lenten Schedule

- Praise Band Rehearsal 5:15pm
- Supper 6:00pm
- Celestial Choir 6:15pm
- Cherub Choir 6:30pm
- Worship 7:00pm
- Chancel Choir following worship



<p>February 14 Ash Wednesday No Meal</p> <p>February 21 “Better Late Than Never” Lutheran Student Center Fundraiser Meal</p> <p>February 28 “Look Who’s Coming to Dinner” Potluck Meal</p>	<p>March 7 “When God Closes A Door... Open the Roof” Service Council Fundraiser Meal</p> <p>March 14 “Bloody Knuckles” Potluck Meal</p> <p>March 21 “Behind Closed Doors” Potluck Meal</p>
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CHILI COOK-OFF & MONTHLY POTLUCK Sunday, February 4, Noon

It's time for our annual Chili Cook-Off/Potluck. Bring a side dish or dessert that pairs well with chili and your appetite! Those wishing to enter the chili cook-off, please sign up before January 31 at the table in the Fellowship Hall. Extra outlets will

be provided for all the crockpots. Please have them here before 11:30am to allow for set-up. Ovens will be on and available by 10:45am. Kathy Timmer was our winner last year, and was the first to sign up for this year. May the chef with the tastiest chili win! ??? Contact Sue Jorgensen, 404-3942.

CONGREGATIONAL THEME & GOALS FOR 2018

- +Support an ongoing system of cross-generational faith formation through community building, outreach, and involvement
- +Grow the church through generous giving of our time, tithes, and talent
- +Recognize and respond to community needs by expanding current community outreach involvements
- +Commit to being inviting and hospitable

Wednesday Night Meals

FEBRUARY

7-Pizza, 14-No Meal-Ash Wednesday,
21-LSC Fundraiser, 28-Potluck

We are in need of volunteers to help with Wednesday night meals after Easter. We are in need of help on April 11, 25, and May 9. If you can help with a meal on any of these dates, please contact Heather, heather@bethlehemcf.net or 266-3541.

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS are one way to support the ministries of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. People with Thrivent Financial contracts or accounts may have the ability to designate fraternal funds from Thrivent to qualifying charities. Bethlehem qualifies as an eligible ministry to receive these funds. Currently, the Congregation Council has dedicated all Thrivent Choice Dollars received by June 2018 to the ELCA Youth Gathering participants. Check with your Thrivent agent for more information.



COME CELEBRATE Norma Williams' 85th birthday on Sunday, February 18, 2:00-4:00pm, Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Your presence is her gift!



CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE HYMN SUNDAY



Twice a year we have a "choose your favorite hymn" Sunday at our 8:30am worship service. We look forward to this "stump the organist" day, Sunday, February 11.



THANK YOU!! It is awesome the amount of contributions to Community Meals. We received over \$1,300. It is a wonderful charity and I recognize the generosity of our congregation. - Norma Williams

THANK YOU for the generous gifts given to us by members of the congregation for Christmas and New Year's. Your support is valued and appreciated. — Bethlehem Staff Members



BOY SCOUT SUNDAY Service Participants are wanted Sunday, February 4. All Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Adult Scout Leaders are encouraged to volunteer during services. The Boy Scouts of America will also celebrate 108 years of service Thursday, February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day. If you wish to volunteer on Boy Scout Sunday, contact Stephen Becker, 234-2374. Wear your uniform and "Be Prepared" to "Do a Good Turn Daily."



QUILT 'N CRAFT

Thursday, February 8, 7:00pm, at the home of Wendy Reilly, 617 Baker Dr. and Thursday, February 22, 7:00pm, at the home of Becky Anderson, 1716 Timberledge Dr. Bring your own craft or learn a new one. All are welcome.





Gathering For Relationship - February 2018

St. Paul reminded the community of the Ephesians: **"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."**

This changes everything! Amen!

The Bible is about relationships: God's relationship to us, our relationship to God, our relationships with each other. This month we're going to focus on aspects of healthy relationships, and how to nurture and sustain healthy relationships, and on aspects of unhealthy relationships and how to disengage from them.

Being in relationship also is about being in community. Community comes from building healthy relationships with those we know and those we don't, with those who are different from us. These differences are a building block to healthy community.

Beginning Prayer:

God of love, you ask us to be in relationship with one another. In a world where the messages of relationships are unrealistic or warped, please open us to learning how you want us to be in relationship. We ask for guidance as we learn the desires you have for our lives. In your name, we pray. Amen.

God's Story – Scripture

The Ancient Greek text of the New Testament has several words that mean love. We're going to look at the differences between two of these. **The first is "phileo"**. Phileo is the kind of love for a friend.

Read John 11:1-3 and discuss:

We see in this passage that Lazarus was a friend of Jesus, along with his sisters, Mary and Martha. How does our world define "friend" love?

The next kind of love is "agape". Agape is called out

of one's heart. It is unconditional love. It is the noblest word for love in the Greek language. This love keeps on loving even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable, and unworthy.

Read John 3:16, Matthew 5:44, and John 14:21a and discuss:

God so "loved" (agape) that God gave God's Son. It did not feel good to God to do that, but it was the loving thing to do. He did not want to die, but he loved, so he did what God required. Agape love is related to obedience and commitment and not necessarily feeling and emotion. The way to show that we love (agape) God is to keep God's commandments. How can we help keep each other accountable to these commandments?

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 and discuss:

How are we to be in our relationships, with both friends and romantic partners? How is this different from what society tells us?

Read Ephesians 4:29-32 and discuss:

What examples of relationships are given here? How can we do these in our relationships? How is this different from what society tells us?

Sending Prayer:

God of relationships, you created us to be in relationship. Help us to have healthy relationships, displaying those things from ourselves that we want to have from others. Give us the strength and wisdom to recognize toxic relationships and end them to keep ourselves safe. We are worthy of love because you first loved us. Let us show that love in the world. In your name, we pray. Amen.

Excerpts from the ELCA 2018 Youth Gathering Bible Study



A++ Congregation 'Offering' Bibles for Houston

Each Sunday during the school year, our Sunday School students give an offering during class. This 'offering' gets collected throughout the year and then distributed in some way to benefit people with a need. Often the ideas come from our very own Bethlehem Lutheran Church Sunday School students. This year, Ethan Rea's third grade class at North Tama held a book drive for a school that lost all their library books during Hurricane Harvey. Ethan brought the idea of using the Sunday School offering to purchase Bibles for churches in Houston. This idea was accepted and turned into a congregation wide opportunity to help. Parishioners can allocate money through their regular offering at church for this project if they choose. Once the money raising campaign is over in May, Bibles will be purchased and delivered by the BLC contingent going to Houston for the 2018 Youth Gathering at the end of June.



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

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

Jr. High Youth will be participating in Souper Bowl of Caring again.



Donations this year will go to Lutheran Disaster Response for domestic relief which was chosen in part because of our participation in the ELCA 2018 Youth Gathering in Houston. We have a long history of participating in Souper Bowl of Caring. Some years we've given to **local charities:** Catholic Worker House food program, Student Food Pantry, Cedar Valley Hospitality House, Community Meals, Northeast Iowa Food Bank, other years to **global charities:** ELCA Hunger Relief, ELCA Disaster Response/Haiti Earthquake, ELCA Good Gifts, Lutheran World Relief, and one year **nationally** to ELCA Disaster Response/Hurricane Katrina.

Look for the "soup cans" to make your donations to the NFC, AFC, or IDC (I Don't Care) team you think will win. Last year we collected over \$1200 for the Catholic Worker House food program. Our goal is to beat last year's total. We will collect **through February 4.** Please make checks payable to Bethlehem with "Souper Bowl of Caring" marked in the memo.

??? Contact Sue Jorgensen, 404-3942



Chili Cook-Off & Potluck Sunday, February 4

Get your recipes ready! **Sign up before January 31** on the table in the Fellowship Hall. Kathy Timmer won last year, and already has a recipe ready for this year.

Coming for the potluck? Bring a side dish or dessert that is tasty with savory chili.

Jr. and Sr. High Youth planning to serve, it would be helpful to Sue J. and Theresa E. if you use the sign-up sheet on the Youth and Family Ministry bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall.

??? Contact Sue Jorgensen, 404-3942



Elementary Youth Group (Kindergarten - 5th Grade)

Sunday, February 4

12:30pm - 1:30pm

Join the congregation for lunch at the Chili Cook-Off Potluck Lunch. Following lunch, Debbie will have Valentine's Day projects to do and everything ready for a game of Bible BINGO.

??? Contact Debbie Burroughs, 239-7498.



Gathering Meetings

Youth and Leaders: Sunday, February 4, 1:30-3:00pm.

Parents: Wednesday, February 7, 6:30pm.

Volume 18, Issue 7

February 2018

Upcoming Events

Souper Bowl of Caring	Jan. 28, Feb. 4
Bake Sale	Feb. 4
Chili Cook-Off	Feb. 4
Elementary Youth Group	Feb. 4
Gathering mtg.	Feb. 4
Gathering Parent mtg.	Feb. 7
Y&F Min. mtg.	Feb. 15

Summer Church Camp

Information about summer church camps will be available in the Church Lobby. **Earliest registration fees** will end soon. BLC pays 1/2 of the registration fee (up to \$300) for BLC members. Family camps are included. If you need help finding a specific camp, have questions, and/or need to set up a campership payment, contact Robin, 266.3541 or robin@bethlehemcf.net. See Robin about other camp volunteer and summer staff opportunities as well.

Fundraising for the ELCA 2018 Youth Gathering

Bake Sale, Sunday, February 4 in the church Fellowship Hall. Free will offering.



Purchase Casey's Pizza Punch Cards, \$20/10 punches each.

With purchase of 1 Large specialty pizza receive 1 free medium 1-topping pizza at participating Casey's gas stations. ??? Contact Colette Sternhagen.



Butter Braid pastries will be sold beginning the end of February to be delivered before Easter. Order forms will be available soon.



VIBRANT FAITH

FEBRUARY 2018



Lent
BEGINS

Lenten resources for your personal and family devotions will be available on a table in the Church Lobby.

Our congregation has been operating within the Vibrant Faith Ministry Framework for some time now. You have heard about the Four Keys, and the Five Principles, and how Home is Church, Too. You have probably experienced a Cross-generational Event. This Framework is touching just about everything we do at Bethlehem in one way or another.

This has become such a significant part of our ministries that the congregation chose to change the Vibrant Faith Ministry Team to the Vibrant Faith Ministry Mission Council. The change means that Milestones and Blessings Ministry will be managed by this new mission council, and they will be responsible for encouraging all our ministries to be Four Keyed. They now have a council ministry plan.

We are seeking leadership for the VFM Mission Council. Kelly Kestner is our Congregation Council representative. We are looking for other people who value this approach to ministry to work with these leaders. You can contact Kelly, Stephan Becker, Council President, or Robin Souhrada, Director of Faith Formation, to volunteer or gather more information.

"I want to wear my baptismal shell necklace!" Ethan and Lily Chittenden proclaimed. This was the morning their baby sister, Hadley, would be celebrating the anniversary of her baptism. Bethlehem is a congregation that celebrates Milestones to remind us of God's presence in our daily life. The beginning of January, while celebrating the Baptism of Our Lord, we recognize those in our congregation who were baptized in the previous year. Alex and Becky, Ethan and Lily's parents, agreed, this was a perfect day for them to remember their own baptism and celebrate by wearing their baptismal shell "necklace." It may become a ritual we all proclaim and follow.

Thanks for sharing your faith story with us, Alex and Becky. We love hearing how life and faith connect in the church, at home, or out and about in the world! Others are encouraged to share, too.



BLC's baptismal banner & shells.

All Are Invited

*Anniversary
Of Marriage*



Blessing

*Come and celebrate the gift
of marriage and family.
We will have a special blessing
for those couples participating
in worship Sunday, February 11, 2018
Your marriage, love, and commitment
to one another is something to celebrate!*

First Communion Class

Saturday, February 17

9:30-11:30am

Pastor Gary Hedding and artist Dawn Deines-Christensen will co-teach this class. Along with Pastor Gary's theology and ritual and practices training, Dawn will lead participants in an experiential learning time by helping each individual make their own paten and chalice for Holy Communion. ??? Contact Pastor Gary, 266-3541 or pastorgary@bethlehemcf.net.

Class of 2017 pictured right.



THANK YOU to the congregation for their support of our Service Council Christmas Project. We helped 20 area families this year, plus several of our members who are shut-ins. Thanks also to the Keepsake Quilters for their cash donation and the help of the UNI Marketing Club. We couldn't have done it without everyone's kindness.



JOYFUL TIMES GROUP

What is Joyful Times? It is a social get-together for members of Bethlehem Church who are of AARP age or empty nesters. You don't have to be retired to join in the social times, as some things are scheduled in the evening or on weekends. Our next outing will be a tour of the UNI Wellness Center late February. Lunch will follow at Doughy Joey's. Look for a sign-up sheet on the Welcome Table in the Church Lobby.

**NEVER A DULL MOMENT FOR
THE JOYFUL TIMES GANG!**

STUDENT FOOD PANTRY

The Lutheran Student Center is seeking supplies for the ecumenical Student Food Pantry. They are currently in need of the following: ready-to-eat soup (not condensed), easy-cook meals (Rice-a-Roni, Hamburger Helper, macaroni and cheese, Chef Boyardee), pasta, pasta sauce, canned vegetables, canned meat, peanut butter, jelly, honey, cereal, individual fruit cups, and personal hygiene products. Please place donated goods in the grocery cart in the Fellowship Hall.



Faith & Learning Mission Council



BURNING OF PALMS Join us Sunday, February 11, at 10:00am, for a cross-generational Sunday School lesson on the burning of the palms in preparation for Ash Wednesday.



We offer several opportunities for adults to engage the Bible and talk about God's continuing work in our lives.

Sunday Morning Bible Study takes place between morning worship services. Meet at 10:00am in the Church Library. We will be looking at the new ELCA Draft of the Social Statement on Women and Justice. ??? Contact Pastor Gary, 266-3541.

Friends in Faith meets Sunday, **February 18**, 6:30pm in the Church Library. We will discuss "*Fierce: Women of the Bible and Their Stories of Violence, Mercy, Bravery, Wisdom, Sex, and Salvation*," by Alice Connor. Bring a snack to share and a beverage. ??? Contact Linda Hedding, 464-7279.

Adult Bible Study will meet, Tuesday, **February 27**, 7:00pm in the Church Library. We will have conversations on a Rob Bell Bible Study. ??? Contact Pastor Gary, 266-3541.

Men's Bible Study Breakfast meets Saturday, **February 24**, 7:30am in the Church Fellowship Hall to study the gospel reading appointed for worship the next Sunday. Join us for bagels, orange juice, and coffee while we study. ??? Contact Scott Davison, 486-6914.

Young Adult & Campus Ministry

Lutheran Student Center

2616 College St., CF

February Ministry Schedule



Pints of Grace: Tuesdays, 7:00pm
at Pepper's, 620 East 18th, Cedar Falls
Pints of Grace is a ministry with young adults, 18-30 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: Wednesdays, 8:30pm

LSC Coffee House: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00pm
at the LSC. Enjoy free coffee, smoothies, cookies, music, and fellowship

Wartburg Seminary Retreat: Students from UNI, the University of Iowa, and Waldorf College will gather in Dubuque, February 16-18, for a time of growing in faith fellowship with new and old friends, and tours of Wartburg Seminary and New Melleray Abbey. Contact information below.

LSC Fundraiser Supper: Wednesday, February 21, friends from the LSC will provide Bethlehem's Lenten supper. Profits will go to LSC mission trip funds.

Looking for Student Housing? The LSC is looking for students who are interested in living at the LSC next school year, 2018-2019. The LSC's intentional Christian Community has 4 apartments on the upper levels that students can live in each year. Inquiries may be made with Jon Fry.

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

The Lutheran Student Center is an ELCA partner in ministry with Bethlehem and St. John Lutheran churches.



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



Bethlehem's Youth Gathering group is going to have a silent auction in conjunction with the Æbleskiver Dinner, April 22. We would like to include items made by Bethlehem members. Painting, woodworking, quilting, count stitch, canning - whatever your craft, we would love to include it in our auction.

We also need volunteers to donate theme baskets. In the past, people have teamed up to donate a basket. These are very popular. We would be happy to help you choose a theme.

Thanks in advance for helping us with the auction items. If you have questions or would like help with ideas, contact Dorothy Heine, 290-1290 or Ellen Hermanson, 573-0719.



319-226-3541

office@bethlehemcf.net

CHURCH OFFICE STAFF

Pastor Gary Hedding

319-464-7278, pastorgary@bethlehemcf.net

Robin Souhrada - Director of Faith Formation

robin@bethlehemcf.net

Rachel Storm - Office Manager

rachel@bethlehemcf.net

Heather Schneider - Ministry Coordinator

heather@bethlehemcf.net

STAY CONNECTED

www.bethlehemcf.org

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



DONATE NOW

Use your smartphone to scan the QR code or go to bethlehemcf.org and click on "Give Online" underneath the Worship tab.

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

"The Doors of Lent"

Wednesday Lenten Schedule

Meal: 6:00pm

Worship: 7:00pm

February 14
Ash Wednesday
No Meal

February 28
"Look Who's Coming to
Dinner"
Potluck Meal

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