



sharing the bread of life with the hungry world

# bethlehem lutheran church *newsletter*

Volume 48, Issue 2 • February 2019



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



## PLANTING SEEDS ON THE SNOW

The last few winters I have gone on retreat with friends and planted seeds on the snow. One of the rituals we do at the end of our retreat is to walk on a snow-covered labyrinth. A labyrinth, a form of meditation and/or prayer, has a way to quiet the mind and invites one to reflect on a spiritual question or prayer.

Winter offers a special beauty walking a labyrinth. The tracks in the snow remind one we are not alone. The dried seeds left behind from the beautiful summer wildflowers, are now scattered by winter winds and rest gently on the snow. These seeds have a temporary home and wait for the spring thaw. They wait with trust and faith. They know they will have new life once the season of spring and summer arrive.

The last few winter months here at BLC have been like "planting seeds on the snow." Members of the Mission Forward Team have gathered you together and invited you to share stories. Your stories are like seeds of faith, as there are reasons each of you have been engaged in the ministry of this place. Some have been baptized here, others have been uprooted from other churches or communities. Each person, like each seed, is unique and holds its own beauty in the landscape of BLC. While there may have been times you may have felt the conversations have created a winter chill, the Spirit of God continues to breathe healing light and warmth to us as a community.

Transition time is hard work for everyone, but it is also necessary work. There are important and necessary steps to plan the future. Sometimes we want to skip some steps or even avoid certain conversations. When Jesus was forming his team and created his vision for mission, his disciples questioned the process. Jesus had to reassure them and say, "trust the process, trust that God is at work." Our conversations happen to take place during winter months. Winter is a time when gardeners and farmers receive seed catalogues in their mailboxes, sharpen their tools and make careful decisions what to plant. The work of a gardener or farmer is like a congregation going through the call process. The planter reviews what has been sown in the past, just as a congregation comes to terms with its history and assesses the current needs and membership. The gardener sharpens his/her tools, while a congregation reviews what ministries are going well and identifies places that may need some "repair." A farmer or gardener explores "do I want to try something new this year?" A congregation in a call process listens to God's voice and thinks "outside the box" to see if it might want to try something new, while honoring and celebrating the traditions that ground our faith and theology.

Continue to join me in prayer and engage in the process as together we plant seeds on the snow during this call process. Hold on to the hope that come late summer and early fall you will be calling your new pastor. Remember, God is also preparing your new pastor to join in the ministry of this place.

*Pastor Audrey*



## CHILI COOK-OFF AND CHURCH POTLUCK

**Sunday, February 3**

The Souper Bowl of Caring Chili Cook-Off will begin following our 11:00am worship service in the Fellowship Hall. If you think your chili recipe is a winner, look for the sign-up sheet on the table in the Fellowship Hall. If you're not a chili cook, consider bringing something that pairs well with chili for the potluck. For more information on the Souper Bowl of Caring, see the "B.L.Y.M.P & FM 4000 News" page. ??? Contact Sue Jorgensen, 404-3942.

## Church Office Updates

Ministry Partnership continues to seek candidates for the two office staff positions. In the meantime, we need office volunteers to assist with answering phone calls and assist with small tasks. Please call the office if you are able to volunteer a few hours Monday to Friday. Thank you!

### Nursery Volunteers



We currently are exploring the option of staffing Bethlehem's Nursery with volunteers. Volunteers are needed:

- 1st service (8:15-9:30)
- Education Hour (9:30-10:45)
- 2nd Service (10:45-12:00)

We need volunteers for February and March. Please contact Kelly Martin, 464-6608 or [kelly.davison.martin@gmail.com](mailto:kelly.davison.martin@gmail.com) with ??? or to volunteer your time.

## Wednesday Night Meals

We are in need of volunteers who would like to help serve pizza during the months of February, April, or May. Volunteers are appreciated and it is helpful for planning to have volunteers sign up early. To help serve pizza for our Wednesday night meal, sign up on the bulletin board near the kitchen or contact Heather, [heather@bethlehemcf.net](mailto:heather@bethlehemcf.net).



February Volunteer Servers:

- 6- Need Help
- 13- Need Help
- 20- Mary Jo Juel
- 27- Keith Graber

## CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE HYMN SUNDAY



Twice a year we have a "choose your favorite hymn" Sunday. February 17 we will choose hymns to be played at our 8:30am worship service on Sunday, February 24.



**THANK YOU** to all that have contributed, gifted, and helped with my confirmation. Your support and generosity are appreciated.

—Alex Schmidt

## COMMUNITY MEALS

Bethlehem will host Community Meals February 19, 4:30-6:00pm, at United Methodist Church, 718 Clay Street, Cedar Falls. Use the sign-up sheet on the Welcome Table in the Church Lobby if you're able to help. ??? Contact Keith Graber, 269-7784.



**THANK YOU** for the generous gift given to us by members of the congregation for Christmas and New Year's. Your support is valued and appreciated.

—Bethlehem Staff Members



**THANK YOU** to all who contributed to our Christmas project in December. Our recipients were very grateful for your donations. The majority of our families were recommended from North Cedar School. Each child received 3 gifts and the adults were given a gift card. We also supplied them with a large food box. The quilters group that meets at Bethlehem made a quilt for each family and gave a cash donation. Thrivent also donated \$250 through their Action Team program. The Service Mission Council appreciates everyone's generosity.





**Mission Forward Team** The Mission Forward Team's (MFT) charge is to lead the congregation through self-exploration so we are ready to call

a new pastor and thrive into the future. This work includes deeply listening to the congregation's hopes, fears, strengths, purposes, and proposed changes for our ministry together. We are tasked with helping the congregation (1) come to terms with our history, (2) discover a new identity, (3) manage shifts in leadership, and (4) commit to a new future and leadership. Our work will involve developing and/or affirming our mission, vision, core values, and leadership structure.

### **MFT plans and dates to take note of:**

#### **February**

- Host 1-2 forums
- Collect information from congregation via forms, website
- Continue interviewing councils and/or staff
- Begin congregant in-home Cottage Meetings
- Interview neighbors, community members
- Examine mission, vision, core values
- Develop survey for the congregation
- **Key dates:** February 3: Education hour forum  
◊ MFT meeting dates: February 3, 17, at noon

#### **March**

- Host 1-2 forums
- Continue Cottage Meetings
- Conduct phone calls to congregants who have not participated in cottage meetings
- Conduct survey of the congregation
- Draft mission, vision, core values statements
- Draft any structural changes
- **Key dates:** March 3: Education hour forum  
◊ MFT meeting dates: March 3, 10, 31, at noon

#### **April**

- Host 1-2 forums
- Finish any data collection
- Write reports
- Present to congregation at quarterly meeting
- **Key dates:** April 7: Education hour forum  
◊ MFT meeting dates: April 7, 28, at noon

#### **May**

- Host forum on May 5 during Education hour

#### **June**

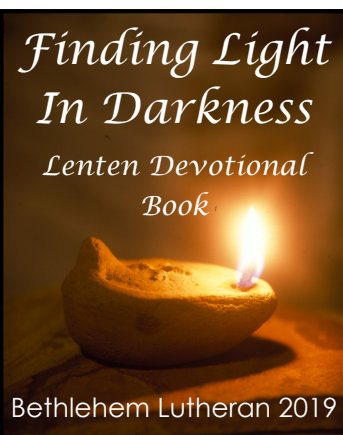
- Report to council
- Hand off to call committee

The mission forward team will produce a summary report based on our conversations with the congregation, neighbors, and research. The topics covered in the report will include:

1. The Goals, Purpose, and Membership of the Mission Forward Team
2. Summary of the history of the congregation
3. The demographics of the community and church
4. Summary of the mission and vision statement
5. Strengths of the congregation
6. Challenges for the congregation
7. Vision for the future of the congregation
8. Desired characteristics of a pastoral leader, what we expect of ourselves

Please contact any member of the MFT at any time with questions, concerns, dreams, or ideas. You can provide us your thoughts through the forums, cottage meetings, survey, in person, over email, via written documents available in the narthex, via the website, or by phone.

We are: Becky Chittenden, Theresa Elverum, Zach Engbrecht, Carissa Froyum Roise, Reg Green, Jack Gregersen, Ellen Hermanson, Terry Kestner, Linda Mixdorf, Erica Nelson, Adam Reilly



Faith takes on new meaning when a cloud of darkness stops us in our tracks during life's greatest challenges. God's healing light, love, hope, and strength may come through a simple prayer, a favorite scripture verse, a poem, knowledge your faith community is praying for

you, a phrase from worship liturgy, music, or a friend showing up and reminding you of God's presence.

The theme for our Lenten journey here at Bethlehem Lutheran Church is on "Finding Light in Darkness." A devotional book, written by members, will be created.

You are invited to submit a short devotion (less than 500 words) on how faith brought light during a time of darkness. Send your submission to the church office, [office@bethlehemcfl.net](mailto:office@bethlehemcfl.net) by February 19.

Devotional booklets will be available by Ash Wednesday, March 6.



## TEACHING OUR CHILDREN



One of the best ways to teach children about faith is to model it for them. One of the best ways to teach children the value of worship is to attend worship with them. While having music, liturgy, lessons, and prayers projected on the screen is very convenient, children are not always able to see the screen. Typically, they only see the pew in front of them or the back side of the person in the pew in front of them.

Part of the **Baptismal Covenant** we, parents, god parents, and congregation members, make is to teach children the Lord's Prayer and Creed. Parents and pew families in this congregation are so well adept in helping children worship and we want to provide you with one more opportunity. Pew cards with the **Lord's Prayer** and **Creed** will adorn our pew cubbies. This will give our new-reader children an opportunity to



have guided reading help as they continue to learn in worship. These cards are available for you to take home, too. It will be a beautiful way to connect worship in the congregational setting with worship in our homes.



"The church is a living partnership between the ministry of the congregation and ministry of the home."  
Milestones Ministry, LLC.

Graphics used with permission from Sundays and Seasons: ELW Cross and Leaves, ELW Small Catechism Holy Baptism 01, Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Household.



## 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 10**. Your marriage, love, and commitment to one another is something to celebrate!

### Continue the Celebration!

Gathering together as a couple, family, or small group to continue the celebration at home is an opportunity to build relationships, bless one another, support one another, and practice faith. Using the 4 Keys of Milestones Ministry is an intentional guide that says, "This is something important and God is here, too." It is a faith formation practice for both home and congregation that helps recognize God's presence in everyday life.

## Caring Conversations

What was the most memorable moment of your wedding/reception?

What do you like to do together on your anniversary?

How has praying for your spouse impacted your relationship?

## Devotions

Scripture readings: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, 1 John 4:7-12, Colossians 3:12-14

How have you experienced or known God's presence in your marriage in the past year?

How is forgiveness important in a marriage?

How does God's love tie us together in our marriages?

## Service

The Ecclesiastes passage states that companionship is important and a gift from God. How do you serve each other in small and big ways each day?

How does it feel to know that you are serving and being served by your spouse?

## Rituals & Traditions

Many couples give each other cards on wedding anniversaries. Try writing a prayer for your spouse to include in the envelope.

Some couples celebrate with a special meal together. As a step to establishing a ritual, set a candle in the middle of the table, light it, and pray together: *Loving God, we are grateful that you promise to be with us always. We are thankful for the love you have shown us in and through our marriage. Help us to share your love in our home and with all whom we encounter. In Jesus' name, Amen.* Close by making the sign of the cross either on the forehead or hand of the other person and say one of the following blessings,

- \* We are bound to each other by the love of God.
- \* I thank God for you and God loves you.

Adapted with permission from Milestones Ministry, LLC, Anniversary of Marriage Milestone





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

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



## CHILI COOK-OFF & POTLUCK LUNCH

**Sunday, February 3**

Get your recipes ready! **Sign up by January 30** on the table in the Fellowship Hall to bring your special pot of chili to help us celebrate our **Souper Bowl of Caring** season.

**Jr. and Sr. High** youth are welcome to volunteer to serve chili. Please sign up by **Wednesday, January 30** on the sign-up sheet on the Youth and Family Ministry Bulletin Board in the Fellowship Hall. Plan to help **Sunday, February 3, 11:00am-2:00pm** with set-up, serving, and clean-up. ??? Contact Sue Jorgensen, 404-3942.

## ELEMENTARY YOUTH GROUP

**Sunday, February 3, 12:30pm-1:30pm**, following the Chili Cook-Off and Potluck lunch, Elementary youth (Pre-K-5th grades) are invited to make Valentine's Day gifts for our shut-ins and to play games. ??? Contact Debbie Burroughs, 239-7498.



Volume 19, Issue 7

February 2019

## Upcoming Events

Souper Bowl of Caring	Feb. 3
Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group/ Chili Cook-Off	Feb. 3
Elementary Youth Group	Feb. 3
Y&F Council Mtg.	Feb. 18
Pints of Grace 7:00pm	Tuesdays
LSC Worship 8:30pm	Wednesdays
LSC Coffee House 8:00pm	Tuesdays & Thursdays



## JR. HIGH YOUTH

are participating in Souper Bowl of Caring again this year. The goal of Souper Bowl of Caring and our hope is to help hungry people be fed. Look for the "soup cans" to make your donations to the NFC, AFC, or IDC (I Don't Care) team you think will win. We will collect **through February 3**. Last year we nearly reached our \$1200 goal. With your help, we plan to exceed it this year. **Donations** this year will go to the **Northeast Iowa Food Bank Back Pack Program** and **Lutheran World Relief (LWR) hunger funds**. ??? Contact Sue Jorgensen, 404-3942.

About our charities: Back pack food programs helps local students and their families who live in a food insecure home. LWR hunger funds provide food for many around the globe.

## CAMP SUNDAY FEBRUARY 27

We welcome Brittany Swansen, Executive Director of Lutheran Lakeside Camp, to celebrate Camp Sunday with us. She will speak about camping ministry, Lutheran Lakeside, other church camps, and the lasting impact of camping ministry.

**Bethlehem recognizes camping ministry** as a partner in ministry that brings opportunities for life in Christ that are different from congregational and home church. Many youth have been nurtured in faith through camping ministry, some becoming church leaders and pastors.

**Bethlehem supports camping ministry** through our Endowment annually, through our Unified fund, sending youth to Confirmation Camp each year, and through

fundraising efforts for the Youth Trip Fund fundraising camperships.

**Early bird discounts** for some camps go through the end of February. The average cost for a week of church camp is more than \$475. Currently the Youth Trip Fund provides half of the cost for summer church camp up to \$300. See Robin about campership payments to camps.

**Camp isn't just for youth!** Opportunities for Day Camp, Camp Grandparent, Family Camp, and more also are available.

Follow the path to Church Camp:

- Choose a camp and program
- Sign up early for registration discounts.
- Arrange campership payment with Robin, 266-3541 or [robin@bethlehemcf.net](mailto:robin@bethlehemcf.net).

## 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, February 6, 13, 20, and 27, 12:30pm. ??? Contact Judy Hill or Nancy Tibbetts.



## Faith & Learning Mission Council



### CONFIRMATION

Sunday, February 3, 10, 17, 5:30pm  
??? Contact Pastor Audrey, 266-3541.



The Joyful Times group for BLC members and friends of the AARP or "empty nester" ages, meets 9:30am on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month for coffee fellowship and to plan activities for future months. All are welcome. The next meeting is Wednesday, February 20. The next activity is a Valentine luncheon at Sakura tentatively set for February 14 at 11:30am. Please use the sign-up sheet on the Welcome Table in the church lobby. More details to follow.??? Contact Jerry Mohling, 240-7571.

### CHOIR NEWS

All are welcome and encouraged to join any time. ??? Contact Zachary Rogers, Chancel Choir Director, Karen Dowell, Celestial Choir Director, or Amber Halvorsen, Cherub Choir Director.

6:15pm - **Cherub Choir**  
(Kindergarden-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade)

6:15pm - **Celestial Choir**  
(4<sup>th</sup> Grade-Jr. High)

7:00pm - **Chancel Choir**  
(Sr. High/Adult)



### FOOD BANK

Bethlehem continues to support food insecure individuals and families through the Cedar Valley Food Bank and the Student Food Pantry at the Lutheran Student Center. Non-perishable food items and personal care products are welcome. All items for both places may be placed in the big green Cedar Valley Food Bank can. Look for a list near the big green can. ??? Contact Becky Anderson or Theresa Elverum.



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

**Sunday Morning Adult Forum**, *America's Changing Religious Landscape*. This forum will take place in the Church Library, Sunday, February 3, 9:45am.

**Mission Forward Bible Study, Part 2: Being God's Church**. This study ties into the conversations we are conducting on who we are, where we have been as a congregation, and where we want to go. This is a part of several studies we will have in the months ahead. This study will be offered in the Church Library: Sunday, February 10, 9:45am, Wednesday, February 13, 6:00pm, Thursday, February 14, Noon.

**Friends in Faith** meets Sunday, **February 17**, 6:30pm, bring a snack to share and a beverage. We will be reading through chapter 2 of the book *Shepherds of Souls: Faith Formation Through Trusted Relationships* by David W. Anderson. His book offers wisdom and opportunity for Bethlehem to reflect on our Vibrant Faith culture. A group order of 10 or more books receives a 20% discount. ??? Contact Diane Kestner, 277-2469 or [tdk325@hotmail.com](mailto:tdk325@hotmail.com). Others are encouraged to read this book and may purchase it through this group order or individually at [store.milestonesministry.org](http://store.milestonesministry.org).

**Men's Bible Study Breakfast** meets Saturday, **February 23**, 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.



**WEATHER ALERT** 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.



## JUBILEE CONFERENCE GATHERING

You are invited to join other ELCA Lutheran Congregations in our Northeast Iowa Synod Conference, Sunday, February 17, 2:00-4:00pm, at Nazareth Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls. Pastor Dan Gerrietts, from Trinity Lutheran Church, Mason City, will lead conversations on the book *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Church Leadership in Uncharted Territory* by Todd Bolsinger. See Pastor Audrey for more information.



**Love INC**  
Love In the Name of Christ

### MEDICAL SUPPLIES AVAILABLE

Bethlehem's Service Council collects medical supplies for Love INC and its clients. Bethlehem members and nonmembers also are welcome to borrow items. If there is a piece of medical equipment (walker, crutches, wheelchair, shower chair, disposable undergarments, etc.) that you or someone you know may need, contact Becky Anderson, 266-4866, or Theresa Elverum, 277-3306.



## YOUNG ADULT & CAMPUS MINISTRY

Lutheran Student Center  
2616 College Street, Cedar Falls

### February Ministry Schedule

#### Pints of Grace

Tuesdays, 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. You're welcome to have dinner, an appetizer, a drink, or just hang out.

#### LSC Worship

Wednesdays, 8:30pm  
Supper preceding, 7:30pm

#### LSC Coffee House

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00pm

Enjoy free coffee, smoothies, cookies, music, and fellowship at the LSC.

#### Retreat

Join college students from UNI, University of Iowa, Waldorf College, Luther College, and UW-Madison for a campus ministry retreat at Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, February 8-10. Contact Jon Fry for more information and to sign up.

??? Contact Jon Fry, UNI LSC Campus Minister, [lsconi@uni.edu](mailto:lsconi@uni.edu) or [www.lutheranstudentcenter.org](http://www.lutheranstudentcenter.org).

**CONTACT INFORMATION** If you are moving, or if you have changed your phone number or email address, please contact the church, 266-3541, or [office@bethlehemcf.net](mailto:office@bethlehemcf.net), so we can stay in touch with you.



**319-226-3541**

**[office@bethlehemcf.net](mailto:office@bethlehemcf.net)**

### CHURCH OFFICE STAFF

**Audrey Lukasak - Interim Pastor**

507-358-6924, [pastor@bethlehemcf.net](mailto:pastor@bethlehemcf.net)

**Robin Souhrada - Director of Faith Formation**

[robin@bethlehemcf.net](mailto:robin@bethlehemcf.net)

**Heather Schneider - Ministry Coordinator**

[heather@bethlehemcf.net](mailto:heather@bethlehemcf.net)

### STAY CONNECTED

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

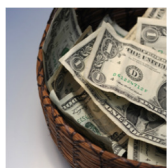
#blcsharing

[www.facebook.com/pages/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bethlehem-Lutheran-Church-ELCA/)

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### UNIFIED ACTIVITY FOR 2018



Income: \$351,680 YTD

Expenses: \$363,284 YTD

(\$11,604) YTD

2019 Mission Plan Total: \$363,893



### GIVING MADE EASY

Scan the QR code or go to [bethlehemcf.org](http://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. Audrey Lukasak  
Church office phone: 319-266-3541  
Office hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:00am-3:00pm  
Friday, 8:00am-Noon  
Email: [office@bethlehemcf.net](mailto:office@bethlehemcf.net)  
Website: [www.bethlehemcf.org](http://www.bethlehemcf.org)  
**\*\*Newsletter deadline: February 15\*\***  
**Bulletin deadline: 9:00am Thursdays**



## Chili Cook-Off & Potluck Lunch

**Sunday, February 3**

Following our 11:00am  
worship service.

Bring a side that pairs  
well with chili.

**All are welcome!**

## *Finding Light In Darkness*

Ash Wednesday  
& Wednesday Lenten services  
begin March 6, 7:00pm

