



sharing the bread of life with the hungry world

bethlehem lutheran church *newsletter*

Volume 48, Issue 1 · January 2019



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



Christmas is a time when we celebrate and give God thanks for sending the Christ Child down from heaven to be with us. Jesus is the greatest gift we could ever receive, and it was free. Soon the decorations will be put away until next year, the last of the Christmas cookies eaten, family and friends return home or to school, and radio stations stop playing our favorite Christmas carols. However, the gift of the Christ Child will continue to be with us, gifting us with grace, peace, joy, love, and hope, not just on Christmas, but every day of our life. We may forget in a few months what we received in wrapped gifts this past year, but let's not forget God's gift to us.

Many years ago, I would make resolutions for the new year, only to be disappointed by failure by the end of January. In recent years, I have replaced resolutions by adding a new spiritual practice or renewing the spiritual practices that ground me every day of the year. This past Advent season, I was introduced to a new way to take my daily "have to do" list and replace the word "have to" with "get to." I have begun this new practice and begin my daily list with "I get to..." I "get to" do these things because I am blessed with good health, have a home to rest at night, food to feed my body and soul, and so much more than I ever imagined I would have. Starting a day with gratitude and grace makes such a difference.

This next year, we here at BLC "get to" come together for worship each week. We "get to" grow in our faith and we "get to" serve God's people in the world through many ministry opportunities. This year we "get to" work with the Mission Forward Team as we "get to" prepare ourselves to call and welcome a new pastor. We have work to do, but what a gift that we "get to" reclaim and identify our strengths while exploring our needs and concerns. The best part of this process is that we "get to" dream, listen, and act on what God is calling us to be.

This past month, I have come to appreciate what many of you have experienced when a new health diagnosis visits one's family. My sister's terminal cancer diagnosis came as a shock and without warning. It comes as an unwelcome friend but we are praying this "unwelcome friend" will teach about life and living in the present moment with gratitude. As I discerned how to meet the needs of my family in Ohio and the needs here at BLC, I presented a proposal to the Congregation Council to reduce my time here at BLC to .8 time. During my short tenure with you, I've witnessed some of your strengths as a congregation, i.e. faithful council leadership, dedicated staff, many members sharing their time and talents doing ministry in this church, and a commitment to strong benevolence as you adopted a ministry plan to give 10% of your financial resources to the ELCA. I would not have requested this change if I did not feel this change would benefit all of us. Now I "get to" spend more time with my sister as she navigates cancer treatment, while allowing BLC to hold strong in benevolence giving.

Someone asked, "What message might this say to a pastor coming in?" I believe this change reflects a strong congregation who has committed lay leadership and dedicated staff who are able to carry on the ministry of this place while the pastor is away and shows care and compassion to its pastor and family. In addition, it shows a congregation who continues to support the ministries of the ELCA through your generous hearts. Thank you for sharing and living the gifts given to us through the Christ Child.

Pastor Audrey

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE STAFF

It is a joy for us to serve a congregation dedicated to "Sharing the Bread of Life with a Hungry World". The promise of Jesus' birth fills all our hearts with grace and the fullness of God's great love. We anticipate ministry in the coming year that continues our commitment to proclaiming Jesus Christ and serving our neighbor in His Name. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.



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 January, and February. Please contact Kelly Martin, 464-6608 or kelly.davison.martin@gmail.com with ??? or to volunteer your time.

DON'T FORGET...

- ◆ **OFFICE CLOSED** During the December and January holidays, the office will **close at Noon** December 24 and 31, and the office will be **closed** December 25, 26, and January 1.
- ◆ **2018 OFFERING** must be turned into the Church Office by **Noon** or postmarked by **December 31, 2018** to be included in 2018 contributions.
- ◆ **SIMPLY GIVING** Update contributions for 2019 giving.
- ◆ **ANNUAL MEETING** **Sunday, January 20, 9:45am.** The annual meeting is a time to celebrate ministries of the past year and anticipate the ministries for 2019.



CHURCH POTLUCK

Sunday, January 6
following 11:00am worship

Ovens available
at 10:00am.

Everyone is welcome!



HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Christmas ~ New Year

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

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.

CHOIR NEWS

Children's choirs resume
Wednesday, January 2.



6:15pm - **Cherub Choir** (Kindergarden-3rd Grade)

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

Chancel choir resumes
Wednesday, January 9.

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

Wednesday Night Meals

Wednesday Night Meals return January 2, and we are in need of volunteers who would like to help serve pizza during the months of January, 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





The Mission Forward Team is tasked with doing background work to prepare to call a new pastor. We are here to listen to you, the congregation, about the strengths and weaknesses of our worship, ministry, leadership structure, and other aspects of church life. We also will make recommendations to council, the future call committee, and you. We ask you to prayerfully reflect on what we would like our ministry to look like in the future. This is a time for us all to dream big! We will be seeking your input in a variety of ways in the next few months. Our next listening session will be January 6 in the Fellowship

Hall during the education hour. We will gather a diverse group of congregation members around each table. In preparation, please prayerfully consider what challenges or changes we as a congregation should address before calling a new pastor? We will discuss this question on January 6 and also will seek your responses on this question through written, online, and other sources. In the meantime, please seek out and share your thoughts with any of our team members: Becky Chittenden, Theresa Elverum, Zac Engbrecht, Carissa Froyum Roise, Reg Green, Jack Gregersen, Ellen Hermanson, Terry Kestner, Linda Mixdorf, Erica Nelson, and Adam Reilly.

Congregational Council 2019 Ministry Plan Update

As it is the holiday season, we know that many of you have been busy and may have not been present for all events and meetings at Bethlehem of late. We wanted to provide a brief summary for anyone who is interested.

On December 2, Congregational Council and Finance Committee jointly presented a second iteration of Ministry Plan 2019 co-constructed by both teams. This version took into consideration questions and concerns that came up during the vote that did not approve the first version. We had asked each council to take another look at their ministry plan, reducing as possible so to lower our overall expenses to ensure that they could be covered by giving. Council/Finance considered each revision and councils' statements of impact, as well as lowering our benevolence giving, to arrive at the presented plan of \$359,332. There were again many questions and concerns.

On Thursday, December 6, Congregational Council and Finance met again. At this time, Pastor Audrey requested that we reduce her position to .8 so that she could assist her sister during her illness and treatment, to be available to her family one week per month. This arrangement would include our needing to locate a supply/on call pastor during Pastor's time away. Council approved this request and made the appropriate adjustments to salary and substitute line items. Subsequently, we moved the percentages of benevolence up to 9.5 and .5 percent, and prepared to share this revision with the congregation prior to the special meeting.

On Sunday, December 9, our Mission Forward Team facilitated a conversation that asked us to consider "What makes Bethlehem Bethlehem?" Following cross-generational table conversation and a brief large group sharing, Council and Finance shared the two major ministry plan updates noted above, along with

a statement that communicated our priorities and mindset as we've made decisions. Are we...

- Being good stewards of our finances?
- Planning for growth and a new pastor?
- Maintaining quality and inviting worship experiences?
- Maintaining ministry programming?
- Remaining benevolent to our community and ELCA?

Our joint Council/Finance conversations and decisions have been lengthy and difficult, and these lenses were used faithfully and with love for Bethlehem in each conversation.

Our special meeting was full of questions and comments, concerns and critical thinking. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Ministry Plan as presented (now at \$352,823). Discussion brought an amendment, moved and seconded, to remove the sound tech position from the plan. This motion did not pass, and the sound tech position remained in the ministry plan. Concern about reductions to Youth and Family and Faith and Learning programming led to a motion, seconded, to amend the ministry plan to return funds to these councils. This motion carried. A final vote to approve the amended Ministry Plan 2019, at \$356,378, was passed.

While we have an approved Ministry Plan, we have a congregation, its councils, and a church that is weary from a long process. We danced and sang around the Christmas tree together before enjoying our talented children (and the many adults who guided them) in their Christmas program on December 16. This is a new year, one with much potential for reflection and growth. At the end of our special meeting, we were reminded of one of our goals: to be hospitable and welcoming, but also to be inviting. Let's bring others to Bethlehem and show them a church who is moving forward with intention.

- Courtney Lubs, Congregation President



CLOCKS AND NEW YEARS BLESSINGS

Lord, You who live outside of time, and reside in the imperishable moment, we ask Your blessing this New Year upon Your gift to us of time.

Bless our clocks, watches, and time display devices, You who kindly direct us to observe the passing of minutes and hours.

May they make us aware of the miracle of each second of life we experience.

May these our ticking or digital servants help us not to miss that which is important, while You keep us from machine-like routine.

May we ever be free from being clock watchers and instead become time lovers.

Bless our calendars, these ordered lists of days, weeks and months, of holidays, holydays, fasts and feasts – all our special days of remembering.

May these servants, our calendars, once reserved for the royal few, for magi and pyramid priests, now grace our homes and our lives.

May they remind us of birthdays and other gift-days, as they teach us the secret that all life is meant for celebration and contemplation.

Bless, Lord, this new year,

Each of its 365 days and nights.

Bless us with new moons and full moons.

Bless us with happy seasons and a long life.

Grant to us, Lord, the new year's gift of a year of love. Amen.

New Year's Eve, as the old year gives way to the new, we pray together this blessing by Edward Hays, taken from his book Prayers for The Domestic Church: A Handbook for Worship in the Home. Pray it with us, and consecrate the minutes and months of your coming year to God.



Baptismal Anniversary Milestone Sunday, January 13

Bethlehem is a congregation that celebrates milestones and special moments that recur in our lives. While we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord, Sunday, January 13 we remember those who were baptized in 2018, Patrick and Kynlie. We also are able to reflect on our own baptism and that of family, godchildren, and friends, too. The following are ways you may celebrate at home and with others.

Caring Conversations:

- ✝ Light the baptismal candle (or any candle). Tell the story of your baptism. Who was there? Who was the pastor?
- ✝ What is something that reminds you of your baptism? Is there something visible in your home or a location that brings back memories?
- ✝ Make bath time a baptismal remembrance; as you wash away the soap, you are cleansed from sin.



Devotions:

- ✝ Read scripture about baptism: Galatians 3:26-28, Ephesians 4:1-6,
- ✝ Use a hymnal and read the baptismal service, ELW pg.227 or the Small Catechism, ELW pg. 1160-1167.

Service:

- ✝ At baptism, we receive the sign of the cross on our forehead as a reminder that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. Make the sign of the cross on your forehead and on those gathered with you, saying "you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever."

Rituals and Traditions:

- ✝ Continue the tradition by making the sign of the cross on your forehead EVERYDAY.
- ✝ Begin the tradition of celebrating your Baptismal Anniversary by inviting godparents, grandparents, other family and friends to dinner or a party each year.
- ✝ Light the baptismal candle and remember that you are loved by God. Bless one another: "God loves you. May your light shine before others to glorify God."



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

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



Swimming Event Saturday, January 5 10:30am-Noon

Adults, youth, and families are invited to swim at the Cedar Valley SportsPlex, 300 Jefferson Street, Waterloo. Bring your own towel. Lifeguards will be on duty; however, children younger than 10 will need an adult with them. The pool area includes a zero-depth entry, spray features, current channel, water slide, and more. Snacks will be served. You may bring a friend.

??? Contact Sue Jorgensen, 404-3942, or Debbie Burroughs, 239-7498.



Jr. High Youth will be participating in Souper Bowl of Caring again this year. Look for the "soup cans" to make your donations to the NFC or AFC team you think will win. We will collect for two weeks before "Souper" Bowl Sunday, starting **January 20 through February 3**. Donations this year will go to someplace awesome!

??? Contact Sue Jorgensen, 268-0011.

Volume 19, Issue 6

January 2019

Upcoming Events

Swim Party	Jan. 5
Youth & Family mtg.	Jan. 21
Souper Bowl of Caring	Jan. 20, 27, Feb. 3
Chili Cook-Off	Feb. 3
Pints of Grace 7:00pm	Jan. 15, 22, 29
LSC Bible Study 8:15pm	Jan. 15, 22, 29
LSC Worship 8:30pm	Jan. 16, 23, 30
LSC Coffee House 8:00pm	Jan. 15, 17, 22, 24, 29, 31

Calling All Chili Cooks!

Souper Bowl of Caring Chili Cook-Off



Sunday, February 3

Get your recipes ready! **Sign up before January 30** on the table in the Fellowship Hall.

??? Contact Sue Jorgensen, 268-0011.

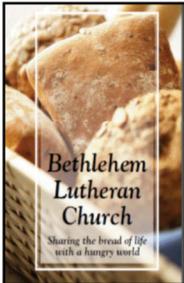
Advent Workshop: "The Friendly Beasts" To keep the theme of our Global Farm Challenge, our Fellowship Hall Christmas tree is filled with darling animal ornaments. Singing along with "The Friendly Beasts" video, sharing memories and traditions with one another, blessing the Christmas tree, and making ornaments together was a delightful way to bring in the Advent season as we prepare for Christmas.



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.



Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Sharing the bread of life with a hungry world

WEATHER ALERT Winter weather will be here soon. 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.



Faith & Learning Mission Council



JANUARY 2019



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. All are welcome. The next meeting is Wednesday, January 16. ??? Contact Jerry Mohling, 240-7571.

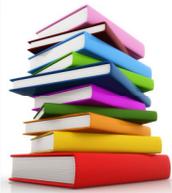
BETHLEHEM KNITTERS & FRIENDS

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, January 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30, 12:30pm. ??? Contact Judy Hill or Nancy Tibbetts.



CHILDREN'S STORY BAGS

We are excited to share that we are moving the story bags for children to the church lobby by the devotional materials. This will enable everyone to easily look at them and check them out for use at home. This month we are spotlighting the story bag "In the Beginning There Was No Sky". It is a story about Creation and Adam and Eve. Activities in the bag include: devotion; family pages to do together; acting out the story with felt figures; making a copy of your own Creation story; making mini-books; activity and coloring pages; and a prayer square to use for your own praying. Check it out!



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.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

No Sunday School December 23 and 30.

Classes **resume** Sunday, January 6, 9:45am. ??? Contact Lisa Newgard.



CONFIRMATION

Class resumes Sunday, January 13, 5:30pm. ??? Contact Pastor Audrey, 266-3541.

Adult Bible Studies

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

Sunday Morning Adult Fourm takes place between morning worship services.

- January 6 - **Mission Forward Team Table Conversations**
- January 13 - **Mission Forward Bible Study, Part I: Being God's Church** On Sunday, January 13, Pastor Audrey and the Mission Forward Team (MFT) will lead a Bible Study during our education hour in fellowship hall. The study will be on John 5 and 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 will be one of several studies we will have in the months ahead.
- January 20 - **Annual Meeting**
- January 27 - **Columbarium Committee Presentation**

Friends in Faith meets Sunday, **January 20**, 6:30pm Bring a snack to share and a beverage. ??? Contact Diane Kestner, 277-2469.

Men's Bible Study Breakfast meets Saturday, **January 26**, 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.



Many THANKS! to Glenn and Lisa Nelson for assisting Residents in their getting to and from Sunday morning Chapel services at NewAldaya during November. Our residents very much appreciated your help!

Words cannot adequately express how grateful we are to so many of our Bethlehem Church members. We have received varied acts of kindness, so, thanks to staff members, volunteers, and all those who in so many ways have been there for us.



Our belief that Bethlehem is a most generous congregation has proven true again.

In Christ,
Ed and Dali Amend



The Service Mission Council would like to thank the congregation and friends for all the thoughtful gifts for our Christmas Project. We were able to "Share the Bread of Life" with 20 families making their Christmas season a little brighter.

A++ CONGREGATION

Our 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering group feels so blessed to have had the assistance from our "A++" Bethlehem Congregation in raising over \$3565 for our Global Farm Challenge. We will let you know all the items we were able to purchase once we have purchased them. Thank you so much for supporting us with our trip to the Gathering, ELCA World Hunger, and the Global Farm Challenge.



UNIFIED GIVING THROUGH NOVEMBER



Income: \$308,088 YTD
Mission Plan: \$328,707 YTD
 (\$20,619) YTD
 2018 Mission Plan Total: \$375,340



GIVING MADE EASY

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



YOUNG ADULT & CAMPUS MINISTRY

Lutheran Student Center
2616 College Street, Cedar Falls

January 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. Come relax, enjoy a soda or beer, and gather together as brothers and sisters in Christ. Resumes Tuesday, January 8, 7:00pm.

LSC Worship

Wednesday, January 16, 23, 30, 8:30pm
Supper preceding, 7:30pm

LSC Coffee House

Enjoy free coffee, smoothies, cookies, music, and fellowship Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00pm at the LSC beginning January 15.

Retreat

Young adults from UNI, U of I, Waldorf, Luther, and UW-Madison will gather at The Castle at Wartburg Seminary Friday, February 8-Sunday, February 10 for a vocation/discernment retreat.

??? Contact Jon Fry, UNI LSC Campus Minister, lsunci@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.org

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www.facebook.com/pages/Bethlehem-Lutheran-Church-ELCA/

Bethlehem-Lutheran-Church-ELCA/

451552121584266?ref=hl

Sunday worship with Holy Communion
8:30am & 11:00am
Nursery available 8:15am-12:15pm
Pastor: Rev. Audrey Lukasak
Church office phone: 507-358-6924
Office hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:00am-3:00pm
Friday, 8:00am-Noon
Email: office@bethlehemcf.net
Website: www.bethlehemcf.org
****Newsletter deadline: January 15****
Bulletin deadline: 9:00am Thursdays

Christmas Bells

Sunday, December 30
*10:00am Worship



Bring your favorite bell to worship! We will celebrate with ***one service**.

What better way to **ring** in the new year as we continue to ring Christmas joy.

WORSHIP WITH US

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

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

