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

The Bethany Herald
January 2022

Inviting People to Experience the Grace of God through Jesus Christ & Be Transformed

Volume 01-22

Handy 'clip & save' box with contact data and other useful information.

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA

Bethany Lutheran Church - ELCA
15 W. 14th St. Spencer, IA 51301
Phone: (712) 262-2327
www.bethluthspencer.com

FACEBOOK SITES:
Bethany Lutheran Church, Spencer IA-ELCA
Spencer Bethany-Youth
BLC Spencer Music Ministry
BLC Spencer Sunday School

STAFF:

Pastor: Jeffrey Geiger
pastorjeff@bethluthspencer.com

Coordinator of Children, Youth & Family Ministry: Lynn Egesdal
Lynn@bethluthspencer.com

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bethany@bethluthspencer.com

Custodian: Lois Becker
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CHURCH COUNCIL:
Randy Riecks, President
Matt Kuehler, Vice-President
Sue Boblit, Secretary
Sandi Schmidt, Treasurer
Council members at large:
Jim Rusk, Jamie Rusk-Blume,
Paul Wick, Justin Falline,
Mallory Graves, Zoey Metcalf

Pastor's Message

NEW YEAR THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR JEFF

Happy New Year! In December we were able to celebrate Christmas at Bethany, hold our Christmas Program, and we gathered for our Christmas Eve services. I'm sure that there were also family gatherings, and all of the other things that go along with the season too. Hopefully this can be a time to stop and take a breath! The programs here went well, were meaningful, and needed, in light of our continued struggles with the pandemic. It has been really good to have these gatherings and ways to celebrate the season. Thank you to all who have helped to make these bright spots happen!

And, we are getting started on 2022. We sure wish and hope that 2022 will be bright and healthy. As we enter the New Year, resolutions are often talked about, and then (it seems) just as quickly revised or forgotten. But, we still like to plan and think of ways to do better in the New Year.

I found the following entry in the book, Daily Celebration by William Barclay. Mr. Barclay writes, "Really good talkers may be scarce, but really good listeners are very much scarcer. We are usually much more eager to tell people what we think and what we have done than we are to listen to what they think and what they have done... We even take this talkativeness into prayer with us. We forget so often that prayer means listening at least as much as it means talking...."

When it comes to prayer, I realize that I often fall into this trap. I do most of the talking and thinking, and fail to listen or try to see what God might be saying to me. Maybe there is a lesson and a call, first to prayer, and second, a call to listen. Listen to God and listen to where God may be leading us.

I will close with a passage from Proverbs. I went to the Bible Gateway website (www.biblegateway.com) and searched for the term "listen" and the book of Proverbs, it turns out, is full of advice about listening. This verse in particular stuck out to me: Proverbs 19:20, "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom for the future." As we pray, be sure to listen and to be discerning what God might be saying. Again, Happy New Year!

PR. JEFF GEIGER

Listed below are current prayer concerns along with those from the past month. Prayers have been lifted for these folks at Bethany and beyond. If you have a prayer request, let us know.

Health Concerns:

Larry Anderson, Mallory Graves, Sherrie Green,
Francis Hiemstra, Gary Lundquist, Sue Riecks,
Mary Jean Schmidt,
Ed Duffney *(Lloyd Duffney's son);*
Lawrence Johnson *(Susan Rohan's father)*
Emma Ritz *(Kellie Power's mother)*
Sheila King *(T Youngdahl, L Youngdahl & B Miller's sister)*
Myron Schneider *(Twila Henning's brother)*
Grace Rosado *(Friend of Lynn Egesdal)*
Colton McLaury *(Judy Leinen's grandson)*
Scott Beriswill *(Susan Geiger's cousin)*
Steven Geiger *(Jeff Geiger's brother)*

Those who mourn (the families of):

Cheryl Riley *(Steph Garberson's mother)*
Duane Engstler *(Dianne Wallwey's father-in-law*
Gordon Rouse *(Sue Boblit's uncle)*
Ferne Toft *(Diana Mingus' mother)*

On behalf of the family of Roger Green, I would like to express our belated thanks to all of those who performed services at his funeral. The memorials are designated to Landscaping as Roger always admired the trees and flowers surrounding the church. *Sherrie Green and Family*

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I would like to extend a HUGE thank you to everyone who shared their voices for the recent Advent cantata at Bethany Lutheran and First Congregational. It was a beautiful worship music offering, enjoyed by many. And it was a wonderful opportunity to partner with First Congregational Church. A special thank you to the Tech team for their assistance and the extra hours spent helping.
Elina Leander Ozolins, Director of Music

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Many, many thanks to everyone who helped with and supported our recent celebration – Christmas at Bethany, Yesterday and Today. It was a fun-filled day for many who enjoyed celebrating our Scandinavian heritage and some of the new traditions at Bethany. It was a big success because of all the people who helped in so many ways. Once again, thank you to all who supported this event!

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AT BETHANY

January 1 ----------Jeremy Keefer
January 2 ---------- Darlene Stough
----------Wendy Ahlrichs
----------Jennifer McWhirter
January 3 ---------- Kailey Krull
January 4 ----------Anthony Loehr
January 5 ----------Vanessa Reardon
January 6 ----------Reba Schulz
January 7 ---------- Jody Vollmer
----------Kristin Bensen
----------Holly Reardon
January 8 ----------Maynard Dahl
----------Erin O'Brien
January 10 ---------- Grayson Falline
January 11 ---------- Mallory Graves
January 12 ----------Aliza Huntoon
January 13 ---------- Corinne Dahl
---------- Alayna McEntee
January 14 ---------- Ryan Reardon
January 15 ---------- Sylvia Moore
----------Susanne Hallett
----------Kent Hanson
----------Ryan Kabrick
---------- Emily Baker
January 16 ---------- Mike Thu
January 18 ----------Judith Hiemstra
January 19 ---------- Darlene White
----------Mallory Klemme
January 21 ----------Greg Manwarren
January 22 ----------Jan Palm
----------Donna Cooke
January 24 ----------Hannah Geiger
January 25 ---------- Kendell Schmidt
January 26 ---------- Dexter Rutter
January 27 ----------Sue Metcalf
----------Janet Rusk
----------Macie Seversen
January 28 ----------Jill Meyer
----------Jazlyn Hauschen
January 30 ---------- Bob Nase
---------- Lee Miller
----------Jane Youngdahl
----------Carly Borth

Happy Birthday Brothers & Sisters in Christ!!

WORSHIP TIMES & SCRIPTURE READINGS IN JANUARY

Our Sunday morning worship services are held at 9am. Come to the Sanctuary at Bethany or watch our livestream on You Tube. Services are rebroadcast on SMU channel 2, Tuesday evening at 5pm or Wednesday morning at 10am.

In addition to our Sunday service, we will be offering a time of worship on Wednesday evenings. See page 4 of this newsletter for more details.

One way or another, please join us!

JANUARY 2 – THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Scriptures: Jeremiah 3:7-14, Psalm 147:12-20
Ephesians 1:3-14, John 1:[1-9] 10-18
Greeter: Jill Meyer; Reader: Mary Marske;
Communion servers: Sue Geiger, Mary Marske
Ushers: Jill Meyer, Doug Marske;
Acolyte: Bode Finkbeiner

JANUARY 9 – THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Scriptures: Isaiah 43:1-7, Psalm 29, Acts 8:14-17,
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
Greeter: Judy Hiemstra; Reader: Don Moore;
Communion servers: Jaci Schrier, Francis Hiemstra
Ushers: Susan Rohan, Judy Hiemstra
Acolyte: Mikalah Prickett

JANUARY 16 – THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Scriptures: Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 36:5-10,
2 Corinthians 12:1-11, John 2:1-11
Greeter: Doug Marske; Reader: Kirby Schmidt
Communion servers: Sue Boblit, Mary Marske
Ushers: Kirby Schmidt, Doug Marske
Acolyte: Ryan Reardon

JANUARY 23 – THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Scriptures: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19,
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21
Greeter: Jaci Scherier; Reader: Pixie Jensen;
Communion servers: Pixie Jensen, Twila Henning
Ushers: Susan Rohan, Jaci Schreier;
Acolyte: Maddie McWhirter

JANUARY 30 – THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

Scriptures: Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6
1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Luke 4:21-30
Greeter: Jill Meyer; Reader: Judy Hiemstra;
Communion servers: Sue Geiger, Sue Boblit
Ushers: Jill Meyer, Cindy Heiter;
Acolyte: Evan Storley

ALTAR FOWERS 2022

Many thanks to everyone who provided flowers to beautify the altar in 2021. The flower chart for 2022 is posted on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you are interested in providing altar flowers for a service in this new year, please fill out a yellow card and leave it at the church office or in the offering plate. Giving flowers is one way to observe special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries or memorials.

We are moving into the Season of Epiphany, the time from the Epiphany of our Lord (January 6) through the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. The length of the season varies according to the date of Easter. For 2022, the season is longer, as Easter is on April 17 this year. Our worship resource, Sundays and Seasons, shares this information about Epiphany:

During the time after Epiphany, the church celebrates the gift of the gospel being shared throughout the world. There is no better reminder of this gift than the arrival of the magi. These are Gentiles, not Jews, the wrong people to show up. Even worse, they were astrologers, a practice forbidden by the Torah. Yet these are the people who travel long days to bring amazing gifts to Jesus. If the birth of Jesus is for the magi, surely the birth of Jesus is a gift for all people everywhere.

There is a centuries-old tradition of "Chalking the Door" on the day of Epiphany. Families offer a prayer and then mark the door with chalk, inscribing the year and the letters CMB, so for 2022 it would read: 20 + CMB + 22. The letters CMB stand for the Latin Christus mansionem benedictat, "May Christ bless this house." The letters can also refer to the traditional names of the three magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. (Source: Sundays & Seasons v.20211220.1117 Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.)

Chalking of the Door is most commonly done on the Day of Epiphany, however it can be done on any day of the Epiphany season. It can be done to serve as a house blessing to invite the presence of God into one's home, or represent the hospitality of the Holy Family to the Magi (and all Gentiles) and to protect Christian homes from evil spirits until the next Day of Epiphany, at which time the custom is repeated. (Source: Wikipedia)

The Sundays and Seasons library of seasonal rites for the time after Epiphany provides a house blessing service. If you are interested in doing this, look for copies of this resource at the Welcome Center.

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Lynn Egesdal, Coordinator
lynn@bethluthspencer.com 712-262-2327

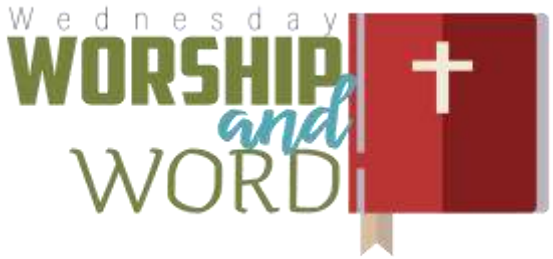
ANNIVERSARY OF BAPTISM MILESTONE

At our worship service on Sunday, January 9th we will celebrate the baptisms that have happened at Bethany over the past year. Anniversaries that we will recognize and present with a gift are:

Reba Schulz	Rylee Stephas
Elliott Barrick	Archer Quail

MENTOR MEETING

We will plan on having a meeting for confirmation mentors on Sunday, January 9th at 10:30 am. Please feel free to go to fellowship for a brief time and then come and join us in the Archive Room on the lower level – across from the elevator exit. We will do a check in and share ideas as we continue this important ministry.



WEDNESDAY LEARNING AND WORSHIPING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2022

There has been a good response in favor of our Weekly on Wednesday (WOW) learning opportunities here at Bethany, and also for the meal and evening worship opportunity. So, here is what we are planning for the beginning of 2022. We will begin this schedule on Wednesday, January 12th!

4:00–5:30 pm - Learning time for kids grades K-6

5:30–6:00 pm - Meal for anyone that wants to attend

6:00–6:30 pm - Worship Service

6:30-7:30 pm - Confirmation Class

7:00-8:00 pm - Bethany Youth Group (BYG)

SYNOD CONDUCTED MEMBER INTERVIEWS

Bethany members should have received a letter in December regarding interviews being conducted by the Western IA Synod, asking all members to call and set up an appointment. If you are a member and haven't received a letter, please call the church office.

In the past several months the church council has been working with the synod regarding leadership at Bethany, especially pastoral leadership. Please remember that we took on a first-call pastor and evaluation is part of the process.

Interviews were conducted on December 29 and will continue on **January 8 from 9am to 1pm** and on **Sunday, January 9 from 4pm to 8pm**. You can sign up to do your interview in person at the church, by phone or by ZOOM. They will take approximately 20 minutes. To set up an interview, please call the church office (712-262-2327).

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GIVING MADE EASY

When it comes to giving, Bethany has options to make it convenient for you., Did you know that we have offer secure, on-line giving via our website? To find out more log on to our website: www.bethluthspencer.com and click on "Give" on the top menu bar. Mobile and text giving are also options. Or if you prefer, you can setup a recurring bank draft. There is no charge for this service. Pick up a form at the church office, find one on our website (click "Forms" on the top menu bar or use this link: https://bit.ly/3sNPnWh . If you have questions about any of these giving methods, please contact our church treasurer, Sandi Schmidt, at 262-7975 or call the church office. Thank you!

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A FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT AT NOVEMBER30, 2021

Year-to-Date Revenues ---------- $265,865.64

Year-to-Date Expenses ----------$273,955.72

Year-to-Date Net Gain (Loss) ---------- $ (8,090.38)

Thank you everyone for your generous gifts in support of the missions and ministries of Bethany Lutheran Church!

WOMEN OF BETHANY

FUN & FELLOWSHIP WORKDAY

For those who may not know, our Fun and Fellowship Workday is a time to gather and spend time preparing mission kits and quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Held on the second Thursday of most months, we meet in the Dining Room downstairs. This month our meeting is on Thursday, January 13. Please consider joining us for Fun and Fellowship!

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Stay tuned to the bulletin announcements for information about our Women's Bible Study resuming. We hope to having something in place soon.

BINGO AT ST. LUKE

Bethany is scheduled to provide prizes for BINGO at St. Luke during the month of March. Bingo is played twice a week, so this adds up to about 200 prizes needed. The way time flies, March will be here before we know it so we are starting our collection efforts now. A list of suggested prizes is included below. If you would like to donate items, look for a collection basket at the Welcome Center and leave them there. Thank you for helping with these efforts!

Snack-size Potato Chips	Peanuts
Caramel/Puff Corn	Diabetic Candy
Candy/Gum	Crackers & cheese
Small Stuffed Animals	Fruit
Snack-size Candy bars	Cookies
Seasonal knick-knacks	Lifesavers
Perfume/Cologne	Jewelry
Body wash/lotion	Granola/Cereal Bars

MEN OF BETHANY

JOIN THE MOB!
FOR BIBLE STUDY IN PERSON OR VIA ZOOM!!!

The **M**en **O**f **B**ethany are diligent in their deeds, meeting every Saturday morning at 7:30am for Bible study. Pastor Jeff says, "Go ahead, make my day!" and join the MOBster's, in the parlor here at Bethany or via Zoom! The scripture readings for the coming Sunday are the study material. You can find these listed on p. 3 of this newsletter. And, if you need the Zoom link, look for it in the E-Blast newsletter or don't hesitate to ask!

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF IOWA CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Individuals struggling without access to critical healthcare and family support services. Human service providers overworked and underpaid. Former refugees and immigrants striving to build new lives in the U.S. These are all issues faced by Iowans. Help us ensure their voices are heard at the Iowa State Capitol.

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) will be advocating for our community members who are so often overlooked in our society. You can join us in this important work. Visit LSIowa.org/advocacy and sign up for our Advocacy Alerts. Learn more about the legislative process, the issues impacting your neighbors, and your role as a citizen in helping to amplify their voices. Save the date for March 10, 2022, and plan to join LSI for Lutheran Day on the Hill, a day of advocacy and education at the Iowa State Capitol. For more info contact Deb Whitford, Director of Philanthropy & Church Relations Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org.

LSI Mission: Responding to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America), proudly serving people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP, FOOD, AND WELCOMING

In 2006, Ali and her family traveled from Kenya and resettled in the U.S. They found themselves in an unfamiliar place: Iowa. But today, they still call Iowa home, thanks to the community they built and the support they received while resettling in the U.S. LSI Refugee and Immigrant Services helped the family become comfortable and confident living in their new community. "They taught us to shop, register for school – all the basic needs. Even winter shopping for the Iowa weather," Ali says. "They taught us how to get by. It was nice to help us get settled in." After some time in Iowa, Ali and her husband, Salah, decided they wanted to open a restaurant as successful as the one they had in Kenya. They soon realized how challenging this would be – the biggest obstacle being the financial burden of opening a restaurant in the Des Moines area. After 15 years of never giving up on their goals, they were able to open Gursha Ethiopian Grill. Opening during a pandemic, when other restaurants in the industry struggled to remain open, has come with its share of obstacles. But thanks to community support, the restaurant is a popular destination in the area. Ali dreams of one day franchising to other locations. With their continuously growing clientele and delicious food, this goal is not far away..

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RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR!!
BLESSINGS & PEACE TO YOU IN 2022!!!

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2022

The annual meeting of the Bethany congregation is Sunday, January 16. We will have our regular 9am worship service followed by the annual meeting afterward at about 10:15am. Some of the agenda items for the meeting will include: Election of the Church Council and Ministry Team chairs, election of the Nominating Committee, and approval of the 2022 budget. All confirmed members are encouraged to attend and be involved with the governance of Bethany Lutheran Church. This is your church – please be involved. Thank you!

BLANKETED IN FAITH

Continuing in January we are collecting fleece to be tied into blankets and donated to those in our community who are in need, including children entering the foster care system to make a frightening experience a little less scary. Any size of fleece can be used…1 yard, 2 yards, 2.5 yards, even 3 yards! We will also accept monetary donations/gift cards that are specifically marked for fleece blankets, and Faith in Action will purchase the fleece. (Please leave monetary donations at the church office) Then, plan to join the Faith in Action Committee for a "Blanketed in Faith" Fellowship Evening on Wednesday, January 19th, 2022, beginning at 6:00 pm. We will gather together for a light meal and then proceed to cut and tie fleece into blankets. No experience is necessary, it's very easy to learn, and everyone is welcome!

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