



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



Bethany Lutheran Church - ELCA
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Phone: (712) 262-2327
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FIND US ON FACEBOOK:
Bethany Lutheran Church,
Spencer IA-ELCA

YOU TUBE:
Bethany Lutheran Church
Spencer, IA

CHURCH COUNCIL:
Russ Wright, President
Sue Metcalf, Vice-President
Sue Boblit, Secretary
Sandi Schmidt, Treasurer
Council members-at-large:
Candy Huber
Randy Phillips
Judy Hiemstra
Jaci Scheier

STAFF:
Director of Worship and Music:
Elina Leander Ozolins
sveiks@mediacombb.net

Visitation Ministry:
Onalee Wright
onalee53@gmail.com

Secretary:
Elizabeth Essick
bethany@bethluthspencer.com

Custodian:
Erick Phillips

Holy Week & Easter Services



**Palm Sunday Service & Cantata:
March 29th at 9:00 am**



**Maundy Thursday Service:
April 2nd at 7:00 pm**



**Good Friday Service:
April 3rd at 7:00 pm**



**Easter Sunday Service:
April 5th at 9:00 am**

May the blessings of Holy Week burst fourth in the joy of resurrected life for you and your loved ones this Easter!



David Perry Lawrence

MARCH SCRIPTURE READINGS & VOLUNTEERS



Listed below are the lectionary readings for services March. *Worship onsite, via livestream online (times indicated below), or catch a rebroadcast aired on SMU Channel 2 on Tuesdays at 5 pm or Wednesdays at 10 am.*

MARCH 1 – 9 AM - SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Scriptures: Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121;
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 ; John 3:1-17
Greeter: 1) _____; Reader: Sue Boblit
Communion Servers: Jody Vollmer, Sue Boblit, Onalee Wright, Kristin Bensen
Ushers: Kent Baker; 2) _____
Count: Connie Heien

MARCH 8 – 9 AM - THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Scriptures: Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42
Greeter: People of Bethany; Reader: Deb Mechler
Communion Servers: Jaci Schreier, Onalee Wright, Jodi Volmer, 4) _____
Ushers: Kent Baker; 2) _____
Count: Francis Hiemstra

MARCH 15 – 9 AM - FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23;
Ephesians 5:8-14 ; John 9:1-41
Greeters: People of Bethany; ; Reader: Judy Hiemstra;
Communion Servers: Jaci Schreier, Twila Henning, Onalee Wright, 4) _____
Ushers: Kent Baker; 2) _____
Count: Sue Boblit

MARCH 22 – 9 AM - FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Scriptures: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130;
Romans 8:6-11, John 11:1-45
Greeter: Rhonda Salts; Reader: Mary Marske
Communion Servers: Deb Mechler Twila Henning, Onalee Wright, 4) _____
Ushers: Kent Baker; 2) _____
Count: Connie Heien

MARCH 29 – 9 AM - PASSION / PALM SUNDAY

Scriptures: Isaiah 50:4-9a , 3:1-7; Psalm 31:9-16;
Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14—27:66
Greeter: Falline Family; Reader: Mary Marske
Communion Servers: Mary Marske, Twila Henning, Onalee Wright, 4) _____
Ushers: Kent Baker; 2) _____
Count: Francis Hiemstra

¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

"Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

-Ephesians 5:14

WORSHIP VOLUNTEER opportunities



Every Sunday's worship service at Bethany Lutheran Church comes together through the work of many people. There are numerous opportunities for volunteers to assist, we encourage and welcome your help! We are happy to teach you any aspect you are interested in helping with!

Many thanks to all who share of their time and talent, serving in this way.

EASTER LILIES



Help beautify the sanctuary on Easter morning! Consider sharing an Easter lily in honor or remembrance of a loved one and take it home with you afterward. Look for a sign-up sheet at the Welcome Center.



CONFERENCE MEETING REPORT

Fifteen people attended the Winds of Hope (WOH) Conference Meeting on Sunday, February 15, 2026 from 2:00 – 2:45 PM at Christ Lutheran, rural LeMars. Attendees are a mix of rostered (including retired) and lay (also includes students, vicars, SAMS). Attending from Bethany were Sue Boblit and Denise Kramer Tolzmann.

Items/events discussed included –

- Lutheran Day on the Hill, February 26th in Des Moines, sponsored by LSI
- Western Iowa Synod Assembly, April 17-18th in Sergeant Bluff
- Western Iowa Synod – Women of the ELCA Meeting, June 20, 2026 in Atlantic, IA
- Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering, July 16-19, 2026 in Des Moines
- ELCA Youth Gathering, June 28-July 2, 2027 in Minneapolis
- ELCA Churchwide Assembly, August 7-11, 2028 in Des Moines

Nominations are open for the following to be elected at Synod Assembly:

- Synod Council – at-large youth (18 & under), at-large young adult (19-30), at-large - lay male, WOH lay male, Disciple Committee – WOH lay female

Discussed Rev Daubert’s last ZOOM meeting. “The median worship attendance for churches in the U.S. is approximately 60 to 65 people, according to data from 2023–2025. While large churches receive significant attention, the vast majority of U.S. churches are small, with roughly 59% of congregations having 60 or fewer worshippers per week. The median size has dropped drastically, from 137 in 2000 to 60 in 2023. 39% of churches have 50 or fewer members.” (data from *Hartford Institute for Religious Research*)

People are looking for small, interpersonal relationships. Be welcoming. Appreciate what we have – look at who’s around you and what you have. It’s not the numbers – it’s the ministry.

“Be good neighbors to the neighbors you have.”

Pastor Paige spoke briefly to the online community/ministry for LGBTQ young adults – [fullybeloved.org](https://www.fullybeloved.org)

For more information about Western Iowa Synod activities, read WATERLIFE JOURNAL available on the WIS website – [wisynod.org](https://www.wisynod.org)



DESIGNATE YOUR 2025 THRIVENT CHOICE \$\$

Attention Thrivent Members! The Thrivent Choice® program allows eligible members to recommend where some of Thrivent Financial's charitable outreach funds go by directing their

Choice Dollars®. There are several organizations that can benefit from Choice \$\$, including Bethany Lutheran Church. **March 31, 2026 is the deadline** for members to designate their 2026 Choice Dollars®. Be sure to allocate your dollars before the deadline, as all undesignated choice dollars are forfeited.

PSALM 23

- ¹ The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.
- ² The LORD makes me lie down
in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.
- ³ You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways
for your name's sake.
- ⁴ Though I walk through
the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
- ⁵ You prepare a table before me
In the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.
- ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy
shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell
in the house of the LORD forever.



Listed are current prayer concerns
along with those from over the past month.
Prayers have been lifted up for these folks at
Bethany and beyond.

Health Concerns

Kirk Andersen, Cindy Heiter, Lucille Huber, Donna Jones, Jill Meyer, Sylvia Moore, Liz Vulk, Mike Palm, Carolyn Kruger, Marla Woelber, Betty Lee, Bruce Iverson

Deb Albert (Cheri Klemme's sister),
DeAnna Bensen (Bill Bensen's mother),
LuAnn Becker (Bob Becker's sister),
Lois Sanchez (Deb Mechler's sister),
Bethany Lutheran Church's Call Process
Leadership across the World at local, state and
national levels

The people of Minnesota
The people of the Middle East
Peace in All Nations

Those Who Mourn

Family of Donna Dirksen (Bill Bensen's grandma)



***If you have
a prayer
concern or
request,
please let us
know.***

² O LORD, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

-Psalm 130:2



**WEEKLY ECUMENICAL LENTEN SERVICES
are held on Wednesdays with the meal
beginning at 11:30 am & Worship to follow.**

All are welcome!

- † **March 11—
Grace United Methodist Church**
- † **March 18—
Foundation Church**
- † **March 25—
Sacred Heart Catholic Church**
- † **April 1—
Trinity Lutheran Church**



**DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME
BEGINS ON
SUNDAY, MARCH 8.
SET YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD
ONE HOUR ON SATURDAY NIGHT!**



**Prayer Group & Bible Study
WEDNESDAY MORNINGS
@ 9:30**

This small group meets weekly for a cup of coffee and to read the upcoming Sunday's lessons. After a brief discussion of the lessons, they pray for those on Bethany's prayer list and others in need of special prayers. They also send postcards indicating prayers have been offered. This meeting usually lasts less than an hour.

Feel free to join them in this prayer ministry!

MEN OF BETHANY BIBLE STUDY A.K.A. "THE MOB"

This small group is dedicated to Bible Study, meeting every Saturday morning at 7:30 am. Participants enjoy fellowship, a light breakfast and time spent discussing the Gospel message and readings for the next day. Gain insights and deepen your understanding of the Bible texts as you hear them again on Sunday. All men are welcome to join in the conversation.

Join Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2030878041?
pwd=MWJlRVVTTdtUUZMbnA2RjVhQ2dsZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2030878041?pwd=MWJlRVVTTdtUUZMbnA2RjVhQ2dsZz09)

Meeting ID: 2030878041

Passcode: 618607



**Sunday KIDZ
TIME!**

All children from kindergarten through 6th grade are invited to join Hunter, Kyle, Scott, Autumn or whoever comes from Lutheran Lakeside Camp for KIDZ TIME at 10:15 on Sunday mornings. Come join in the fun!

All are welcome.

MARCH 8th & March 29th

Bethany Lutheran Church Planning Council
"A Christ-centered family who serves by sharing God's love and hope with all."
Tuesday, February 16, 2026 - 6:00 PM



Present in Person – Russ Wright, Sue Boblit, Randy Phillips, and Candy Huber

Absent – Sue Metcalf, Sandi Schmidt, Judy Hiemstra, and Jaci Schreier

Devotions – Randy Phillips gave the devotion on "Turning back to what matters" Lent is a time to pause, reminding us of what matters.

Check-in Time – Several spoke to where they had seen or experienced God in the past week.

Secretary Appointment – Motion by Randy Phillips to appoint Sue Boblit as Secretary until a replacement can be found, second by Candy Huber. Motion Carried

Additions/Approval to the agenda – Motion to approved agenda by Candy Huber, second by Randy Phillips. Motion carried.

Secretary's Report – Motion by Candy Huber to approve the January 20, 2026, minutes, second by Randy Phillips. Motion carried.

Correspondence – A Thank you from Lutheran Lakeside Camp for the Christmas at Bethany donation of \$1,600.00 to the "For Every Season" Campaign.

Treasurer's Report/Monthly Expenses for January – Motion by Randy Phillips to approve, second by Candy Huber. Motion carried.

Ministry Teams and other reports – The following reports are attached. Winds of Hope Conference Meeting and talking points. Money sent to Bethany's companion synod in Tanzania.

Congregational Activity Report – Attached

Unfinished Business:

- **Wedding Coordinator update** – Candy Huber reported that she and Sandi Schmidt have a revised version, will bring to March meeting for review.
- **HR Reviews** – Russ Wright will move forward with scheduling the reviews with staff.
- **Newsletter** – Final mailing of the newsletter went out in February. Elizabeth reported that she received a few requests to continue mailing, and a few updated emails to add to the email list.
- **Seminary Fund** – Have not received a list of candidates from the Synod yet.
- **Invite to Bishop** – An invite was sent to Bishop Dalen. I received a thank you for the invitation and said that he would be delighted to join us. The way his schedule looks right now, may be looking at June/July or possibly beyond. He will check back when he has formalized his schedule.

New Business:

- **Installation of Council** – Council will be installed on Sunday, March 1st.
- **Lenten Meals** – We have received volunteers for all Lenten Meals; council will serve the last meal on March 25. Will finalize our menu at March council meeting.
- **Synod Assembly** - Voting members clarification – We received clarification that Deb Mechler as a rostered pastor does not count towards our three allowed voting members. We will look for another, preferable a male member. Hannah Bensen has expressed interest in attending as a young adult (this is in addition to our three voting members). Candy Huber made motion to elect Hannah Bensen as a young adult voting member from Bethany. Second by Randy Phillips. Motion Carried,

President Russ Wright adjourned the meeting.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer, led by Candy Huber

Next meeting = March 16, 2026, at 4:00 PM

Devotions – Sandi Schmidt

Respectfully Submitted by Sue Boblit, Planning Council Secretary

MINUTES SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT March 16, 2026, COUNCIL MEETING.



THANK YOU FROM TANZANIA

On February 3rd, Sandi S and Denise T visited The Bank to wire money to the ELCT-Southern Diocese(SD) for mission projects. Less than 24 hours later, thanks from Bethany's siblings in Christ began arriving!

Money was sent (a) to Imalinyi Parish [Bethany's companion congregation] for construction costs of their hotel/ hostel. They see this as a way to generate revenue; (b) to Igumbilo Girls' School for dining hall construction costs; (c) to the Southern Diocese for other companionship projects and administration; and (d) to drill a water well preferably near an elementary school.

Thank you notes arrived via technology from the SD Treasurer, Gissamo - the girls' school head mistress, and this one from the SD Coordinator of Hatua kwa Hatua –

Halooo Sister Denise Kramer.

Haloo Bethany pastor

Hope you're fine.

I confirm that we have received the US dollars. Many thanks to Bethany Parish!!! Many thanks Bibi Denise. May Almighty God bless you, increase your life span, bless your offspring, and bless the source of your income.

Thank you very much.

On behalf of Bishop Fihavango we invite you to visit the Southern Diocese in 2026.

Rev. Faustin Martin Shawodzidze

Coordinator, HATUA KWA HATUA

MARCH

MARK YOUR CALENDERS



WEDNESDAY LENTEN ACTIVITIES

- † 4:00 pm Bethany Bells Rehearsal
- † 5:45 pm Choir at First Congregational
- † 5:45 pm Confirmation Class
- † 6:15 pm Lenten Fellowship Supper
- † 7:00 pm *“Joyous Light”* Lenten Service

CHILDREN'S
Sunday School

No Kidz Time

March 15th & March 22th

**SPRING
BREAK!**

