

A red felt heart is positioned on the right side of the header image, resting on a light-colored wooden surface with visible grain. The heart is slightly tilted and has a soft, textured appearance.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

February 2024 Newsletter

Bethlehem Family and Friends,

Have you ever experienced what it is like to truly belong somewhere? Have you ever experienced a feeling like you didn't belong? Sometimes it takes getting out of our comfort zones and doing something new for us to experience whether or not we belong somewhere. Other times, the feeling of belonging or not belonging is thrust upon us as we are forced to move to a place where we know no one and have to learn the cultures and customs all over again.

February for me, and Feb 13 in particular is all about having a place to belong. It was the day that I was adopted into my family whom I grew up with. My "gotcha day" has been a day that has always been a celebration of sorts, and as I grew older, has been a day where I take the time to thank my parents for giving me the gift of being raised in such a loving family.

Here at Bethlehem, we are often welcoming new family members and saying good-bye to other family members. This past month we said goodbye to Don Tomanka Sr, and Raymond Kuhlman, both of whom will be deeply missed. The month before that, we welcomed 4 new members to our church family, and we give thanks for their joining us.

As Lutherans, we often become creatures of routine. Whether that is our daily schedule, our weekly schedule, or even who we sit by in church or gather with at coffee fellowship. We have been blessed to build relationships with each other, and those relationships get stronger with the more time that we spend together.

But we also run the danger of missing out on relationships with others when we constantly surround ourselves with those we already know. We don't necessarily want to rock the boat and do things differently because it might make us uncomfortable. But if we never branch out, we might miss out on having someone in our lives who blesses us in ways we cannot even begin to imagine.

So I wanted to take this month or even the next couple of months to offer you a challenge. Try and see what it feels like to sit by someone different in worship. Go up to someone you don't know at coffee hour, and find out more about them. Who knows? You might even make a lifelong friend!

Thank you for your care and commitment to our church family. Each of you is truly a blessing!

Your partner on the journey, *Pastor Amy*

Did you know that you are able to stay connected with your friends and peers at church on BLC Connect? BLC Connect is a new private Facebook Group is a place where members of the congregation can interact with one another and maintain your connection at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, whether you are home or away!



You can find BLC Connect by going to Bethlehem Lutheran Church's main [Facebook](#) profile page. Locate the MORE tab and click on GROUPS where you will see BLC Connect. You may also type in the link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2014414095582328/>

Bethlehem Family,

I hope this message finds you in good health and spirits. I wanted to extend a heartfelt invitation to each member of our congregation to join the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Choir! No prior choir experience is necessary, and all ages are welcome to join. Whether you're a seasoned vocalist or have never sung in a choir before, your voice is a valuable addition to our ensemble.

Our rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and during Lent the rehearsal time will shift to 7:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. If there are enough people who are interested in joining but have a conflict with Wednesdays, we can talk as an ensemble and figure out a day that works best for everyone!

If you have interest in joining or if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to my email: bregan99@uni.edu

Come and make a joyful noise with us this year!

Thank you,

Brennan Regan, BLC Choir Director

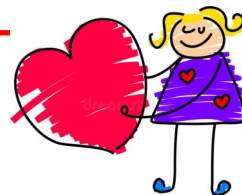


Be sure to check out the back of our calendar for a special event coming to the **Waterloo Center for the Arts, on Feb 4** from the Cedar Valley Interfaith Council!

As the CVIC focuses on mental wellness this year, we wanted to offer an educational seminar that would shine a light on the intersection of faith and mental health. All are welcome & encouraged to attend!



Join us Feb 11 for a fun project-making day for our shut-ins and homebound members..as we share the love with others during Fellowship Hour!





We have spent many days at home so far this winter due to winter storms, blizzards, and sub-zero temperatures that can last for days. It has made me reflect more about being home.

For some of us, home is not as relaxing as we want it to feel because we are reminded of never-ending chores and to do's. Home is a place of real work and labor. For some of us, home can be lonely. If you live alone, or are struggling in your relationships, not being able to go out and do what we like to do can feel isolating. This has been especially apparent the last few years and weather can make a big difference. Maybe your home is far away. Maybe home is where you were born—another country or state, or your true home was with a loved one who is no longer with you, and it just doesn't feel the same anymore.

Sometimes, our church can feel like home. Perhaps you have returned to Bethlehem after years of being away and it can feel like coming home. Perhaps you are new to the Cedar Valley and look for a place to call your church home. Maybe you have been going to worship at Bethlehem since you were an infant and know no other church. Even still, sometimes conflict or change can make church feel unfamiliar.

I want to share a blessing with you that is called, "For Home" by Meta Herrick Carlson. No matter what home feels like and looks like for you in this season of life, I invite you to look for how it can be a place of belonging. We also hope you can not only call Bethlehem your church home, but find real connection and a deep sense of belonging here.

If you would like to have a warm cup of coffee or tea this winter with me, please email me at pastorkristi.grieder@gmail.com, call me, or come up to me after worship and we will find a time to connect. I would love to get to know each of you more deeply and know what we can do at Bethlehem to make you feel more at *home*.

Peace,

Pastor Kristi

"For Home" by Meta Herrick Carlson, from the book *Ordinary Blessings: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Everyday Life*

*I give thanks for this space
Thoroughly lived in—
The clutter and crumbs,
Laundry piled high,
A door to close and lock,*

*The wily weeds woven into the lawn.
I am glad for that which is mine to tend—
A bookshelf and bedroom,
Apartment or acre.*

*I will keep it so that my soul
Is well lived and examined here,
Gentle and enough.*

*These walls watch me
Rehearse declarations that
I take up space.
I belong.
I am here.*

Ways to get involved at Bethlehem in the next few weeks...

Our next gathering of Wine, Women and the Word (women's Bible Study and fellowship) will take place on Thursday, February 22nd at 6:00pm at the Gilmore Pub! All women and friends of Bethlehem are invited to join us!



Come and worship with the Bishop on Feb 25! Bishop Kevin will be coming to Cedar Falls for the Spring Conference Assembly on Feb 25 in the afternoon, and



we have invited him to come join us in the morning to share the good news and gather at fellowship together! **Grab your friends & neighbors and join us as at 9 am, Feb 25, we welcome Bishop Kevin!**



Join us at 7 pm on Valentine's Day (Wednesday, Feb 14) as we officially kick off our Lenten season with our annual Ash Wednesday service. If you worship online, ashes will be available earlier in the week for you to pick up and use during livestream on Weds night.



Do you have a passion for education? Do you love kids? Enjoy learning as an adult? Are teenagers more your jam? **We are hoping to gather a group of people passionate about education for a brainstorming session on Monday, Jan 29 at 6 pm.** Bring your ideas and come dream with us what the next chapter of Bethlehem's Education program might look like. All are welcome!



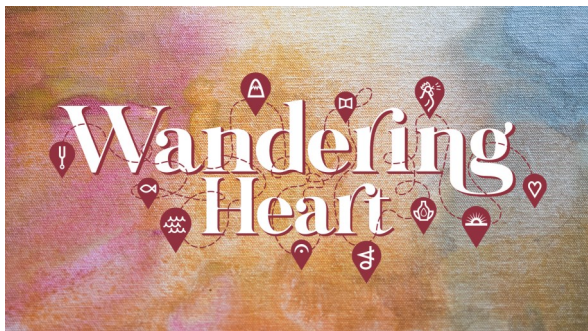
February 20: "Paint Out Loud" with Kathy Cessna

Kathy Cessna has invited people into her home studio to discuss her art and the abstract expressionism style of painting. After learning from Kathy, we will head to lunch at Peppers. Space is limited, so sign up on the Welcome Table today!

On Sundays during Lent, our theme will be:

“Wandering Heart: Figuring Out Faith with Peter”

In Peter, we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and a betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. In Peter, we often see ourselves. We will look for ourselves in the stepping stones of Peter’s story. We will reflect on the stages of our own faith journey as well as who and what has shaped us along the way. For each step of Peter’s journey, we will focus on a phrase from the hymn “Come Thou Fount”, as it reflects Peter’s life. As we wander, let us tune our hearts to sing God’s grace. May we rest in streams of mercy, never ceasing.



Feb 18-Jesus Sought Me (Calling of Peter)

Feb 25-Rescue Me From Danger (Calming the Storm)

Mar 3-Praise the Mount (Peter proclaims who Jesus is)

Mar 10-I’m Fixed Upon It (Call to Discipleship)

Mar 17-Teach Me (Jesus Teaches about Forgiveness)

Mar 24-Songs of Loudest Praise (Palm Sunday)

On Wednesdays this Lent, we will be living into the theme “This is My Body”.

We will be exploring how Jesus lived in his body on earth and how we are invited to take care of and embrace the goodness of our own bodies. Each week will highlight a different story from Jesus’ life and connect us to our shared human experiences.

Feb 14-Ash Wednesday

**Feb 21-Caring for the Inner Child
(Jesus in the Temple)**

**Feb 28-Importance of Rest and Sabbath
(Examples of Rest from Jesus)**

**Mar 6-Quenching Our Thirst
(Woman at the Well)**

**Mar 13-Advocating for Yourself and Others
(Healing of Paralytic & Hemorrhaging Woman)**

**Mar 20-Feeding Our Bodies and Souls
(Jesus & the Fig Tree, Feeding the 5,000)**





If you are looking for a way to deepen your Lenten experience this year, or to live into our Lenten themes in a new way, we invite you to join us for “Living Lent”. Each week, we will take the scripture readings either from Wednesday or Sunday worship and live them out with our bodies, souls and minds in a new way. Come and join other Bethlehem folks and experience Lent more deeply. You are welcome to join us for 1 week or all 6, we just ask that you let us know if you plan on attending a certain week so that we ensure we have enough materials. There will be a sign up each week to help us keep track of who will be joining us. Intrigued, but want to know more? Talk to Pastor Amy today!

Week 1-Feb 12 at noon-Experiencing Ashes-Join us at noon Monday, Feb 12 to remind ourselves of where ashes come from. From an experience burning the palm leaves to make ash for service to experimenting with charcoal art as we share a devotion, this hands-on week will help us all begin to prepare our hearts and minds for the Lenten Season.

Week 2-Feb 20 at noon-Our Inner Child-Bring your lunch and join us at noon on Tues, Feb 20 for a conversation about what it was like when we grew up and how that has affected how we see the world today. Feel free to bring pictures to share if you have them, or just bring your memories and see how much you have in common with others from our church family.

Week 3-Importance of Rest-This week, we invite you to take home a packet on Sunday, Feb 25 that will help you find ways to incorporate rest into your daily routine all week long. Whether it is in creating a morning routine that is energizing, finding pauses in the middle of your work day, or helping you unwind before you go to sleep at night, our hope is that each BLC member can find a new tool that will bring them more rest and renewal this week!

Week 4-March 5 at noon-Quenching Our Thirst-Meet us at Bethlehem at noon and join us for an outing to do our Bible Study at the “Daily Dose”, a shake and energy bar that is new to our community that serves teas, smoothies, and shakes that are full of vitamins and protein!

Week 5-March 12 at noon-Being an Advocate-Come and hear about Lutheran Day on the Hill and some ways that we might take action for those in need in our own communities. Bring your ideas for how BLC might help others become aware of ways they can help those less fortunate too!

Week 6-March 19 at noon-Feeding Our Bodies and Souls-Join us at noon with your favorite dish to share from your family. Come ready to share the story of who used to cook the food you brought, or some other story from your family of eating together! Join us to have your body and soul fed too!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>28</div> <div>9am - Worship 10am - Coffee Fellowship</div>	<div>29</div> <div>4:15pm - Piano Lessons 6pm - Education Dreaming</div>	<div>30</div> <div>11:30am - Text Study @ Waverly, 4pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>31</div> <div>1pm - Knitters 2pm - Piano Lessons 7pm - Choir</div>	<div>1</div> <div>4:15pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Pastor Amy's Day Off 4:15pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>3</div>
<div>4</div> <div>9am - Worship 10am - Coffee Fellowship 10:15am - Nominating Team 10:30am - Youth Gathering Mtg 2pm - Emotional Sanctuaries</div>	<div>5</div> <div>4:15pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>6</div> <div>10am - Staff Meeting 11:30am - Text Study @ Waverly, 1pm - Deans & Chaplains Meeting 4pm - Piano Lessons 7pm - Worship Team Meeting</div>	<div>7</div> <div>1pm - Knitters 2pm - Piano Lessons 7pm - Choir</div>	<div>8</div> <div>4:15pm - Piano Lessons Pastor Amy's Day Off 4:15pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>9</div> <div>Pastor Amy's Day Off 4:15pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>10</div>
<div>11</div> <div>9am - Worship 10am - Coffee Fellowship 10:15am - Finance Team</div>	<div>12</div> <div>4:15pm - Piano Lessons 5:15pm - Exec Team Meeting</div>	<div>13</div> <div>9:30am - Joyful Times Mtg 11:30am - Text Study @ Waverly, 4pm - Piano Lessons 7pm - Service And Outreach</div>	<div>14</div> <div>1pm - Knitters 2pm - No Piano Lessons 7pm - Ash Wednesday Worship 7:45pm - Choir</div>	<div>15</div> <div>Newsletter Deadline Pastor Amy's Day Off 4:15pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>16</div> <div>4:15pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>17</div> <div>8am - Men's Bible Study Breakfast</div>
<div>18</div> <div>9am - Worship 10am - Coffee Fellowship</div>	<div>19</div> <div>Lutheran Day on the Hill 8am - Keepsake Quilters 4:15pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>20</div> <div>9:45am - JT "Paint Out Loud" 11:30am - Text Study @ Waverly, 4pm - Piano Lessons 6:30pm - Care and Connect Team</div>	<div>21</div> <div>1pm - Knitters 2pm - Piano Lessons 5:45pm - Lenten Supper 7pm - Midweek Worship 7:45pm - Choir</div>	<div>22</div> <div>4:15pm - Piano Lessons 6pm - Wine, Women, and the Word</div>	<div>23</div> <div>4:15pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>24</div> <div>9am - Wandering @ St John</div>
<div>25</div> <div>9am - Worship w/ Bishop Kevin 10am - Coffee Fellowship 2pm - Jubilee Spring Gathering</div>	<div>26</div> <div>4:15pm - Piano Lessons 6pm - Church Council Meeting</div>	<div>27</div> <div>11:30am - Text Study @ Waverly, 4pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>28</div> <div>11am - Become a Dementia 1pm - Knitters 2pm - Piano Lessons 5:45pm - Lenten Supper 7pm - Midweek Worship 7:45pm - Choir</div>	<div>29</div> <div>Pastor Amy's Day Off 12pm - Hilton Birthday Party 4:15pm - Piano Lessons</div>	<div>1</div>	<div>2</div>



Emotional Sanctuaries: How Faith Communities Can Promote Mental Health (Keynote & Presentations)

Sunday February 4, 2:00 PM-4:00 PM (**FREE/OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**)

Waterloo Center for the Arts, 225 Commercial St, Waterloo

Keynote Speaker, Dr. Sharon Duclos (Peoples Community Health Clinic, Waterloo)

Keynote Address: "Mental Health Resources for Moderate-Severe Illness, Regardless of Income"



Presenters: Dr. Naomi McCormick, Dr. Rodney Dieser, & Rev. Emma Peterson

(Respectively—Retired Clinical Psychologist; Licensed Mental Health Counselor & Professor at UNI; Pastor at Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalists)



EVENT SCHEDULE (Moderated by Dr. Dave Kivett of Cedar Heights Community Pres. Church):

- 1:30—Visit display tables from local mental health resources and providers.
- 2:00—Welcome/introductory remarks, Dr. Kivett
- 2:05—Dr. McCormick: "Mental Health Benefits of Religion"
- 2:25—Keynote: Dr. Sharon Duclos, Co-Medical Director of Peoples Community Health Clinic
- 2:50—Break with refreshments & opportunity to visit exhibitors
- 3:10—Rev. Peterson: "How Pastors & Faith Communities Can Help"
- 3:30—Dr. Dieser: "Developing Self-care Plans to Increase Mental Well-being"
- 3:50—Closing remarks, Dr. Kivett

Please visit the CVIC Facebook page for more details and full bios of our presenters

Worship

WITH US ONLINE

Not able to join us for worship in person?
No problem! All of our worship services can be found online on our church website at:

<http://www.bethlehemcf.org/online-worship.html>

Or, if you want to join us live from your home, check out our YouTube page Sundays at 9:00 am at:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BethlehemLutheranCF>

Final Financial Information for 2023:

Total Unified Income:

\$265,784.17

Total Unified Expenses:

\$282,444.26

Total In/Out for 2023:

\$ -16,660.09



Would you like communion brought to you?
Call the church office and set up

a time. Pastor Amy or Pastor Kristi will be glad to come and visit! Call the office at 319-266-3541 and we will have communion brought to your residence. May God bless you and keep you today and always!



GIVING MADE EASY!

Scan the QR code with your smart phone to share your offering with Bethlehem.

BETHLEHEM STAFF

Church phone: 319-266-3541

Pastor Amy Eisenmann-Lead Pastor

Pastor Amy's cell phone: 218-290-3982

pastoramyblccf@gmail.com

Pastor Kristi Grieder-Visitation Pastor

Pastor Kristi's cell phone: 507-995-1538

pastorkristi.grieder@gmail.com

Kelly Rodriguez—Administrative Assistant

officeblccf@gmail.com

Gabby Greco-Community Engagement

engageblccf@gmail.com

Noah Anderson-Worship Tech

worshiptechbcf@gmail.com

Brennan Regan-Choir Director

bregan99@uni.edu

Hudson Lourenço - Organist

Patty Nelson-Custodian



2023-2024

CHURCH COUNCIL

Ellen Hermanson-President

319-573-0719

Reed Hunemuller -Vice President

319-277-6381

Joan Christiansen- Treasurer

319-269-5634

Adam Roise - Secretary

919-208-3171

Mardy Holst 319-277-0328

Derek Kettle 608-314-4356

Sara Randall 319-269-2078

Rich Fisher 319-939-8055

Cindy Stow 319-290-8575



Worship at 7 pm,

Feb 14 Ashes will also be available in bags to pick up the week prior for those choosing online worship.

February 2024



Join us on Wednesdays during Lent for supper and worship!

We will gather Ash Weds (Feb 14) for worship at 7 pm
(no supper Ash Weds evening)

Feb 21, 28, and March 6, 13, 20 we will gather for supper at
5:45 pm, and worship at 7:00 pm.

We hope you will join us for this time of fellowship
and worship! All are welcome!

Our Lead Pastor
Rev. Amy Eisenmann
(218) 290-3982 cell phone
(319) 266-3541 work phone
pastoramyblccf@gmail.com

Our website:
www.bethlehemcf.org

Our YouTube Channel:
Bethlehem Lutheran CF

Our Facebook page:
**[www.facebook.com/
Bethlehem-Lutheran-Church-
ELCA-451552121584266](https://www.facebook.com/Bethlehem-Lutheran-Church-ELCA-451552121584266)**

Our Instagram page:
@bethlehemcf