



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America



# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

Over the past year we have continued to experience changes in the world around us. Even as our church finds ways to adapt to this changing world, we find hope in the unchanging and always present promise of God's love through Jesus Christ. We change and adapt not to conform to the world but because we believe that the gift of God's Son is for the world, and that our congregations and worshiping communities are places to gather and be sent into the world, where we will tell the story of God's love in word and deed.

The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the churchwide organization provide ways for the church to move beyond the boundaries of structures and geography and to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, our cities, our country and beyond. We engage in this ministry knowing that our church walks by faith, trusting in God's promise in the gospel, and that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word. In John 15:5, Jesus reminds us, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." We are connected by the promise that we do all through Christ and can do nothing apart from him.

God gives the Holy Spirit, who uses gospel proclamation — in preaching and sacraments, in forgiveness and in healing conversations — to create and sustain this faith. Just as we rely on God to sustain our faith, we rely on each other to sustain the ministries that offer God's love to the world. Through your generosity to each expression

of this church — your congregation, your synod and your churchwide organization — you add to our collective voice proclaiming God's love for all.

I am grateful for your generosity over this last year. My gratitude spreads far beyond your generous financial gifts. You've shared your gifts of time through countless hours of volunteering, serving and accompanying. You've shared the gifts of your voices as we've tried to discover and learn how God is calling us to be the church now and into the future. And, finally, dear church, you have shared the gift of the realness of God's love with the world around you. Be well, dear church, and stand steadfast in the promise of God's love and grace as you take that promise with you into the world.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” —John 15:5

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## Annual Report-2023

### STAFF:

Lead Pastor	Amy Eisenmann	218-290-3982
Visitation Pastor	Kristi Grieder	507-995-1538
Community Engagement Dir.	Gabby Greco	319-240-3939
Administrative Assistant	Kelly Rodriguez	319-505-7056
Choir Director	Brennan Regan	319-540-6010
Organist	Hudson Lourenco	319-621-1736
Worship Tech	Noah Anderson	319-529-0824
Custodian	Patty Nelson	319-404-3371

### CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL 2022-2023:

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
Derek Kettle	608-314-4356
Rich Fisher	319-939-8055
Sara Randall	319-269-2078
Mardy Holst	319-404-0421
Pastor Amy Eisenmann	218-290-3982

### STAYING CONNECTED TO BETHLEHEM:

#### WEBSITE:

<http://www.bethlehemcf.org>

#### FACEBOOK:

<https://www.facebook.com/BethlehemCF>

#### YOUTUBE:

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

#### INSTAGRAM:

## Membership Update 2023

Membership, end of 2022	298
Received by Baptism (youth)	1
Received by Baptism (adult)	0
Received by Affirmation of Faith	0
Transfer in from ELCA congregation	7
Transfer in from other Lutheran	0
Transfer in from non-Lutheran church	1
Other (statistical adjustment)	

<b>Total members gained in 2023</b>	<b>9</b>
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Removed by death	6
Removed by transfer to other ELCA congregation	2
Removed by transfer to other Lutheran church	0
Removed by transfer to non-Lutheran church	0
Other (statistical adjustment)	0

<b>Total members lost in 2022</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Total Membership, End of 2023</b>	<b>299</b>

## **Membership 2023**

### **Baptism**

Kate Grieder

### **Confirmation**

Aiden Schmidt

### **Death**

Ron Bro

Donald Brown

Marilyn Gossage

Betty Hilton

Inge Kress

Jim Timmer

# President's Report

A few months back we sang a hymn that kind of stuck with me and rings true today.

Hymn # 576 "We All Are One in Mission"

Verse 1

We all are one in mission; we all are one in call,  
Our varied gifts united by Christ the Lord of all.  
A single great commission compels us from above  
To plan and work together that all may know Christ's love.

This verse says a lot. "We ALL are one in mission; we all are one in call," It doesn't say some of us have a mission. It doesn't say that the staff has a mission, or the pastor has a mission. It says we ALL are ONE in mission. Meaning that we ALL should be working towards our mission. How do we do that? This verse tells us how. "Our varied gifts united by Christ the Lord of all." We each have a gift that God has given us. We are called as the body of Christ to use those gifts "to plan and work together that all may know Christ love." What is your gift? Do you know what your gift is? If you don't, ask a friend, I bet they can tell you what you are good at. How can you use your gift to live the mission of Bethlehem?

Verse 2

We all are called to service, to witness in God's name.  
Our ministries are different; our purpose is the same:  
To touch the lives of others with God's surprising grace,  
So every folk and nation may feel God's warm embrace.

Bethlehem has many ministries. We do a lot. In the past few years we have made a list of what we do and what is important to us, all with the same purpose, to share the bread of life with a hungry world. We have set goals and are trying to figure out how to put those goals into practice. "We ALL are called to service..." What ministry at Bethlehem are you passionate about? How can you share that passion?

Verse 3

Now let us be united, and let our song be heard.  
Now let us be a vessel for God's redeeming Word.  
We all are one in mission; we all are one in call,  
Our varied gifts united by Christ the Lord of all.

Again, we ALL are one in mission. My challenge for you in the coming year. Don't sit back and watch others do the work that God is calling YOU to do. Find one thing that we do at Bethlehem that you are passionate about and get involved. If you are passionate about more than one thing, great, do more! At least do one thing. Even the smallest action will help. Second, invite someone. We can plan worship and events. We can advertise and post things everywhere, but the one thing that will get people here is for you to ask them to come.

"We all are one in mission; we all are one in call"

Ellen Hermanson, Congregational Council President

# Lead Pastor's Report

*"For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building. "*

*-1 Corinthians 3:9*

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we look back on our fourth year together, let me start by saying thank you. Thank you for your generosity, your faithfulness, your care and support. Last year, we focused on the acronym B.L.E.S.S. and lived into the idea that we would "Begin with prayer, listen with care, eat together, serve in love, and share our story".

This year, we will be living into the idea of what it means to "belong". The need to belong is one of our deepest desires as humans. And that connection with one another has had more than its fair share of challenges these past few years. This year therefore, we will be focusing on what it means to belong to God, belong to Bethlehem, and belong to each other. My prayer for us this year is that we might continue to move towards being a church where people are loved and welcomed as their authentic selves, and that each of us is challenged to grow more deeply into who God is calling us to be...both as individuals and as a community of faith.

This past year during Lent, we had cottage meetings that determined that our values are: Relationships, Education, Service/Outreach, Stewardship/Generosity and Worship. We spent time during VBS exploring what it meant to live into each of those values for all the different generations. Throughout the year, we were intentional about focusing our programming around each of these values, finding ways to live into each of them as disciples of Christ.

This coming year we will continue to live into those values. We are working prayerfully to find ways to find room for all those who want to be a part of the ongoing ministry of Bethlehem to have a place to share their gifts and be a part of what happens both within our walls, and outside them.

This coming year you will see different ways to get involved, from small projects to big ideas, from things that encourage you to use your gifts, to other things that might put you outside of your comfort zone. I hope you will be open to exploring them together.

This year we will be asking you to continue to step up and take leadership in the future of our congregation within and outside this community. We will be doing a Time and Talent Survey in January that will hopefully let more of our members and friends share their gifts and deepen the work being done here. I hope you will prayerfully discern which spaces are the right spaces for you to lead and participate in.

This year we will be inviting you to deepen your faith, through Bible Study, through relationships with one another, and through fellowship with people you don't know yet. I hope you will have the courage to go deeper and begin to know that this is truly a place where you belong, and where all people regardless of who they are, find welcome.

I ask for your continued prayers as we move into this fourth year together. May God continue to work in us, through us, and among us, to help all who we encounter find a place where they truly "belong."

Your partner on the journey,  
Pastor Amy Eisenmann

# Visitation Pastor's Report

Greetings! I am very grateful to have walked with and accompanied this congregation through this year as the Visitation Pastor. I look forward with hope to the new year and anticipate the many ways that the Holy Spirit is stirring up transformation and new life among us.

We started last January with our 6-week Grief Class. This was the first time we had done something like this and the first time I taught it. We had a small group of about 8 people who were from Bethlehem, had a connection to Bethlehem in the past, or from our neighboring church, St. John's Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls. Over 6 weeks, we supported each other and listened and held space for one another's grief without judgment. We learned about what is normal with grief and what is a myth or misconception in order to help us develop greater self-compassion and understanding. This year, I look forward to continuing this partnership with St. John's by preaching at the Quiet Christmas Service. I also look forward to adding a new devotion this year for the Winter Solstice/Longest Night of the Year as special outreach for those who are grieving during the holidays.

Our Grief Group continued to meet sporadically throughout the year. In the fall, we decided to launch an ongoing, monthly, open group on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month. We met regularly so that people have a space to drop in when they need more support. We have open time for sharing and we often also discuss a topic related to grief to be better equipped for the journey. This is a very joyful and tearful time of community and deep connection with God and others. I am so very grateful for the privilege to facilitate an experience like this at Bethlehem. We will continue to meet once a month in the new year.

During Lent this year, I co-led and facilitated a Spiritual Practice Small Group for those who wanted to take a Deep Dive into the themes each week. We engaged in a variety of spiritual practices, including some ancient and some contemporary ones. My favorite part was during Holy Week where our partners from Threehouse let us set up their large canvas labyrinth in our fellowship hall. We were able to hold a sacred space for people to come and walk throughout Holy Week as we made our way to the cross.

On a day-to-day basis, my primary role is to get out and visit those who cannot come to us. I bring Holy Communion, share in fellowship, provide companionship, prayer, and pastoral counseling. One of the highlights of my year has been undergoing a 9-month training program to become a Certified Grief and End of Life Coach. I anticipate completing my program in February 2024. This has helped me use my gifts in facilitating grief groups and providing one-to-one care for people who are grieving or dealing with end of life issues. One of my hopes in the new year is to be able to offer this care to others in our community as part of our outreach ministry at Bethlehem. I encourage all of you to reach out and make an appointment with me if you would like someone to listen, help you find clarity or process through a problem in your life, especially if you are dealing with the loss of a loved one, loss of health or a significant life change. You can call my cell (507) 995-1538 or email me at [pastorkristi.grieder@gmail.com](mailto:pastorkristi.grieder@gmail.com).

This year we have also continued to facilitate worship at New Aldaya a few times throughout the year. We continue to work closely with our amazing Care and Connect Team. I continue to preside and preach during worship to support our pastoral team and officiate at funerals. I also share in the planning and development of other ministries here at Bethlehem and enjoy being a participant and member with my family.

As we end this year, I am struck by how much this work of visitation and caring for others with compassion is not just the role of one or two people, but by a whole community. Thank you for your devoted prayers for myself, my family, and your brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you for all of the cards you send to me and to others, artwork, and the notes of encouragement. Thank you for the treats and flowers that brighten our day in the office. Thank you for going with me on visits and giving of your dedication, time and gifts. Most importantly, thank you for being present and belonging to this community. I am so glad you are here.

God's peace to you in the New Year, Pastor Kristi Grieder



# Community Engagement Coordinator's Report

A major goal set at the start of my employment on May 15, 2023, was to increase the exposure of Bethlehem Lutheran Church throughout the Cedar Valley. I launched a marketing campaign for a major door-to-door effort in the summer. By the first weekend in September, we printed brochures, packaged door hangers, and walked three different neighborhoods to spread the news about Bethlehem Lutheran Church. This effort would not have been possible without the help of wonderful volunteers from the congregation, thank you to all involved in this effort!

Since then, staff members and I have made a collaborative effort to brainstorm ideas for programming, service, and events Bethlehem could offer the community. We reached out to Threehouse Collaborative Campus Ministries to see how we could become better connected with the UNI student community. We discussed Sunday school options for kids, and looked internally to nurture the community established here at Bethlehem, all while aspiring to welcome new faces into our church.

We increased our use of social media, utilizing the Meta platform with Facebook and Instagram. This is most beneficial to list and promote the events and activities. I also created a private Facebook group for church members to discuss more personal matters, prayer requests, etc. so that sensitive or more private information is not posted on the public church page.

We were successful in bringing back in-person Trunk-or-Treat this year, where we saw over 200 kids and their families come to Bethlehem for the event. We collaborated with Touch-a-Truck that allowed participants to see public safety vehicles and officers. Another successful event was Live Nativity. Experiencing the event for the first time was heartwarming. It was beautifully and simply done in a manner that humbles everyone to the true meaning of Christmas. It was great to see how many people from the community came to see the event.

There was much to learn about the community when I started, and after spending half a year interacting with this great community, I feel I have a better understanding of the values, passions, and strengths here at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. I am excited to work into the new year with many ideas I hope come to fruition.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Gabrielle Greco

# Choir Director Report

I have had the excellent opportunity to serve as Bethlehem's choir director since August 2022. 2023 was a huge year for the Bethlehem choir, raising our numbers to twelve singers, three more singers than the previous year. I am so proud of the music the singers have been able to share with you all this year. The BLC Choir performed eight services in the fall of 2023, including Confirmation Sunday, the Native Thanksgiving Service shared with Saint John's, and the Christmas Eve Evening Service. We have enjoyed providing beautiful, faith-filled songs to you all this season. In 2024, I am looking forward to preparing pieces for Palm Sunday, Easter, and many more services throughout the spring.

I plan to continue reaching out to the congregation to grow our choir. I plan to potentially increase the frequency of our performances with the increase of members in the choir. Most of all, I plan to continue my pursuit of connecting and getting to know every one of you! I look forward to making more wonderful music with the Bethlehem Choir and building connections rooted in faith with the singers and the congregation this year. Thank you all for your continued support of the Bethlehem Choir. It means the world to us all.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brennan Regan, Choir Director

# Altar Guild Report

The altar guild, primarily responsible for altar preparations, includes both regular volunteers and additional support when there is special decorating done. Weekly duties involve putting oil in the candles, setting the communion table, and organizing flower arrangements.

An altar flower sign-up sheet, posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall, provides members opportunities to designate flower arrangements to commemorate personal occasions or in memory of loved ones.

If anyone has interest in volunteering or questions, contact me after service on Sundays.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Bodensteiner

## Care and Connect Team

The Care and Connect Team is our newest team here at Bethlehem. The team, formed in December of 2021, was created out of our desire to reconnect during Covid, a deep desire for our congregation members to be able to connect through prayer and caring ministry, and because at that time, Pastor Amy was the only one on staff providing pastoral care.

Now that we have two pastors on staff doing pastoral care, the Care and Connect Team continues to strengthen the connection between members of Bethlehem, and has worked hard to continue to help people stay connected that might not be able to make it through our doors.

The team meets most months to talk about those in need of extra care that month, to share their own prayer concerns, and to touch base together. They spend time between meetings writing cards, making phone calls, bringing communion to members who cannot attend in person, making visits, etc. They truly are the hands and feet of Christ in our congregation, and both Pastor Kristi and I give thanks for a chance to partner with them.

If you know of someone in need of some extra care, we invite you to email either of the pastors so that we can care for them, and so that the Care and Connect Team can care for them as well. We thank you for your support of this important ministry, and we thank each of the members of the Care and Connect Team for their hard work and dedication.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Amy



# Education Report

2023 was a year filled with exploring educational options at Bethlehem, and a re-set of sorts as we look to find ways to connect with our ever-changing world.

Confirmation took place in a new format, to better meet the busy lives of our young families by moving to a retreat model of ministry. By doing so, we were also able to welcome one new family into our confirmation program, and have more hands on learning opportunities throughout each weekend retreat. Our confirmands also enjoyed attending the Middle School Luck-in at UNI this fall.

Wine, Women, and the Word is a monthly event that allows women the chance to gather for bible study and fellowship. They moved their meeting location to Gilmore's Pup at the Western Home in the fall. The spring woman's retreat experienced some cooler weather than in other years, but everyone still enjoyed their chance to connect with God and each other as we focused on taking time to "Rest and Renew" through art and thoughtful conversation as a way to learn more about ourselves. Save the date for this year's retreat: May 4-5. Men's Bible Study Breakfast is held once a month on Saturday mornings, and they continue to enjoy their conversations as well.

We continued to grow our involvement with UNI students by being an active part of Three House. By providing sermons, meals, and study treats, along with being a supportive presence at the Block Party, which welcomed students back to school, we helped assure the students we are available, willing, and happy to provide a church family while they are away from home. We also participated in the International Thanksgiving Meal, gave welcome baskets to the students that came from the war-torn country of Ukraine, and hosted a couple of fellowship events for those students at BLC as well.

Pastor Amy took 5 boys to WIYLDE (the synod's annual Wholly Iowa Youth Leadership Discipling Event at EWALU in June. Relationships with God, faith, and friendships were strengthened throughout the week. Three of those youth will be attending the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans this coming summer.

Vacation Bible School was also held in June with the theme of F5-Refresh (F5-Faith, Fellowship, Family, Friends and Fun). All ages were encouraged to join the fun and learn together about the faith values that we had decided were most important during our Lenten Cottage Meetings. Dinner, crafts, games, and songs all reinforced the values of Relationships, Education, Stewardship/Generosity, Service/Outreach, and Worship. Having Hudson come and teach us all about the organ during VBS was a highlight of everyone's week!

In our sanctuary, Bethlehem's PrayGround continues to be open during worship, as a way to welcome our littlest friends during worship. All young children are invited to use the Prayground!

As we move into 2024, we will be having a meeting to dream about the future of education at Bethlehem. **If you have ideas for speakers, classes, bible studies, book studies, etc, we invite you to come to the Education Dreaming Meeting on Monday, Jan 29 at 6 pm.** All are welcome to attend!

# Outreach Report 2023

Bethlehem Lutheran Church is a partner church with LoveINC. Our mission is medical supplies. Community members go through LoveINC and are referred to BLC for things such as wheelchairs, walkers, Depends, tub benches, knee scooters, crutches, canes and many other medical supplies. Most of our items are donated or Love INC purchases them. In 2023 we had 53 requests.

In the fall, school supplies were gathered for Lincoln School in Cedar Falls. In 2023 we delivered 14 backpacks filled with supplies. In addition to monies and supplies donated by our members, Thrivent gave us a \$250 gift card to purchase items not donated. Any left over supplies were given to North Cedar School.

Six times in 2023 Bethlehem helped with Community Meals at the Methodist Church in Cedar Falls. Thanks to Keith Graber, Theresa Elverum and all those who helped to make this meal possible. 650 members of the community were served a hot meal this past year by Bethlehem.

In December Bethlehem helped make Christmas special for 13 families from North Cedar School. Each child is given three gifts, parents are given a \$50 gift card and a large box of food. They are also able to choose a quilt made by the Keepsake Quilters (who meet at Bethlehem). The quilters also gave a very generous donation to our project. The knitters group made hats and scarves for everyone. Terri Rea made individualized stockings filled with candy for every one. Thanks to Thrivent for a \$250 donation. All of the families were very appreciative of Bethlehem's generosity.

Thanks to everyone who helped or donated to these projects for our community.

If you would like to help with any of these projects, just let us know. Everyone's kindness is much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Anderson and Theresa Elverum

# Property Report 2023

DATE		MEMBERS
Tuesday, January 3, 2023	Disassembled Pastors old desk for salvage/disposal. Performed adjustments and service on paper cutter	Reed
Wednesday, January 4, 2023	Met at Koch's Construction to pick out cabinet hardware for the library remodel	Kathy Cessna, Reed
Wednesday, January 4, 2023	Remove all items from the library in preparation for the remodel , and take down Christmas tree in the Fellowship Hall	John, Max, John, Rich, Shawn, Mindy, Craig, Dale, Reed
Thursday, January 5, 2023	picked up and disposed of 1 old desk and 1 table	Reed
Thursday, January 5, 2023	Met with Alex from Koch Construction at the Church to go over the library remodel	Reed
Tuesday, January 24, 2023	Lowered flag to Half Staff (Calif shootings)	Reed
Wednesday, January 25, 2023	Met with Koch Const to pick paint color in Library	Kathy, Reed
Friday, January 27, 2023	Reassembled desk in spare office, Raised flag to full staff	Adam, Reed
Friday, February 3, 2023	Added a corner brace to desk in spare office	Reed
Sunday, February 5, 2023	Replace Smoke Det. Battery in kitchen	Jeff
Wednesday, February 8, 2023	Checked in on Library painting progress	Reed
Thursday, February 9, 2023	Checked on library electrical progress	Reed
Thursday, February 9, 2023	Replaced batteries in remaining 6 smoke detectors	Craig, Reed
Thursday, February 9, 2023	Replaced batteries in the office clock, Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall and kitchen	Craig, Reed
Wednesday, March 1, 2023	Got a call from CFU that the water usage was much higher this month and we should check it out. Rick and Shawn will check the toilets and other fixtures to hopefully find the problem	Shawn, Rich , Reed
Saturday, March 4, 2023	Took down Nativity Scene from front of Church( placed them under the garage overhang so that we can do repairs and paint them when weather permits) and took down the live Nativity Scene pallets on the garage. Moved the floor speakers in front of the Sanctuary Prayer Ground to the closet in the NE classroom.	Jeff, Max, Jerry, Craig, Rich, Dale, John, Reed
Monday, March 6, 2023	Shawn checked out the toilets and found that 5 of the 6 toilets were leaking around the flapper into the bowl causing the excessive water usage	Shawn, Rich
Tuesday, March 7, 2023	picked up 6 toilet valve seals at Menards	Reed
Tuesday, March 7, 2023	Met with Koch Const. (Alex) to walk through library and return key to us.	Reed
Tuesday, March 7, 2023	Replaced toilet valve seals on all 6 toilets	Shawn, Reed
Tuesday, March 21, 2023	Replaced flush valve and supply line on Boys bathroom in the basement	Shawn, Liam, Reed
Wednesday, March 22, 2023	Put up Easter Banner, and bring in the mitten tree	Reed
Tuesday, March 28, 2023	Installed new light bulb on the Flag	John
Tuesday, March 28, 2023	Lowered Flag to half staff	Reed
Saturday, April 1, 2023	Raised Flag to full staff	Reed
Saturday, April 1, 2023	Replaced screws on outer South door stop with larger diameter screws, and tightened the head screws on the door to the Vestry	Reed
Wednesday, April 5, 2023	Repaired By-Fold closet door in the Choir Room	Reed
Friday, April 14, 2023	Replaced Easter Banner with Standard BLC Banner	Reed

## Property Report 2023 (Continued)

### Activity Diary

DATE	DISCRIPTION	MEMBERS
Monday, April 17, 2023	Built and Installed new Cue Rack in Youth Room, using old oak trim from the Library remodel	Reed
Tuesday, April 25, 2023	Assisted Kathy Green with the Prairie Burn	Craig, John, Rich, Reed
Wednesday, May 3, 2023	Repaired East exterior guard rail North leg pipe	Reed
Tuesday, May 9, 2023	Lowered Flag to half Staff	Reed
Friday, May 12, 2023	Raised Flag to full staff	Reed
Friday, May 12, 2023	Adjusted height of desk in office for outreach	Reed
Friday, May 12, 2023	Installed two Slow Down signs at drive in entrance	Adam, Reed
Monday, May 15, 2023	Lowered Flag to half Staff	Reed
Monday, May 15, 2023	Replaced light bulbs is Craft room	John
Monday, May 15, 2023	Met with Adam Graham (Grinell Mutual) to review the property for Insurance coverage	Paster Amy, Reed
Friday, May 26, 2023	Installed rain barrel and pulled some weeds along South side rock area	Reed
Monday, June 12, 2023	Checked out HC Door , Called Allied Glass to repair	Reed
Monday, June 12, 2023	Picked up materials at Menards for the spring/summer clean up and materials for VBS Cross	Reed
Saturday, June 17, 2023	Paint and do repairs to the Nativity scene and the Banner sign	John, Jeff, Craig, Reed
Tuesday, June 27, 2023	Cook for VBS	Reed
Wednesday, June 28, 2023	Cook for VBS	Reed
Sunday, July 2, 2023	Clean up mess by the garage, put a garbage can out so that people hopefully will use it	Reed
Wednesday, July 5, 2023	Met with Mike from GMAC Automatic doors to replace door controller on South inside entry door	Reed
Tuesday, July 11, 2023	Put Nativity Scene figurines in garage rafter storage	John, Craig, Rich, Dale, Reed
Friday, July 14, 2023	Cleaned out yard waste in parking lot curb area, and sprayed for weeds	Brody, Reed
Wednesday, July 19, 2023	New light bulb above Woman's bath vanity	John
Friday, July 21, 2023	Picked up canopy tent at NewAldaya	Craig, Reed
Saturday, July 22, 2023	Set up[ canopy tent for outdoor worship and put luck	John, Jeff, Rich, Craig, Reed
Tuesday, July 25, 2023	Take down Canopy tent	John, Jeff, Dale, Craig, Reed
Monday, July 31, 2023	Filled up dish washer and rinse fluids for the dishwasher	John
Monday, July 31, 2023	Sprayed wasp nest(South of the East doors)	John
Tuesday, August 22, 2023	Installed 2 new paper towel holders in the kitchen, picked up trash by the garage and put in dumpster, cut up old soccer signs and put in dumpster	Reed
Saturday, August 19, 2023	Changed furnace filters	Rich, Shawn
Friday, September 8, 2023	Set up tables	Craig, Reed
Tuesday, September 12, 2023	Clear out dead bushes and weeds, change batteries in automatic door buttons, change smoke det. Batteries, take inventory of furnace filters.	John, Craig, Reed
Wednesday, September 27, 2023	Move furniture from Narthex, Gather room, and East entry and take to Habitat Restore	John, Jeff, Craig, Pastor Amy, Kurt, Jackson, Reed
Saturday, October 7, 2023	Put up camara warning sign	Reed
Tuesday, October 10, 2023	Put up 3 security cameras outside	John, Craig, Reed
Friday, October 27, 2023	Lower flag to Half staff	Reed
Saturday, November 4, 2023	worked on East automatic door, Disposed of dead bird	Reed
Thursday, November 9, 2023	Re-set up Tables and chairs in Fellowship Hall	Craig, Reed
Wednesday, November 15, 2023	Put rain barrel away for the winter. Put 2 Christmas banner signs	Reed
Friday, November 17, 2023	Located pins for the Nativity scene in front	Reed



### Property Report 2023 (Continued)

DATE	DISCRIPTION	MEMBERS
Sunday, November 19, 2023	Set up front Nativity Scene, set up live Nativity Scene, Brought Christmas trees up from the basement.	John, Max, Craig, Jeff, Dale, Shawn, Liam, Adam, Brodie, Declan, Reed
Tuesday, November 21, 2023	Put up Mitten Tree on front lawn	Reed
Wednesday, November 22, 2023	Made adjustments to Nativity Scenes	Reed
Saturday, November 25, 2023	Lowered flag to Half Staff ( Rosalynn Carter)	Reed
Sunday, November 26, 2023	Set up Christmas tree in Fellowship Hall	John, Craig, Rich, Reed
Wednesday, November 29, 2023	Raised Flag to full staff	Reed
Saturday, December 2, 2023	Repairs to Nativity Scene	Reed
Thursday, December 7, 2023	Lower flag to Half staff ( Pearl Harbor )	Reed
Saturday, December 9, 2023	Raised Flag to full staff	Reed

# Joyful Times

What is **Joyful Times**? It is a social get-together for members of Bethlehem Church who are of AARP age or empty nesters. But you don't have to be retired to join in the social times, as some things are scheduled in the evening or on weekends. The Joyful Times group meet for a monthly planning meeting and coffee fellowship at 9:30am on the second Wednesday of the month.

## Joyful Times 2023 Tours

**Jan. 19** – ~~Backstage Tour of UNI's GBPAC~~ – cancelled because of a snowstorm.

**Feb. 16** – **Joyful Times Potluck at BLC** – 30 members enjoyed delicious potluck food and learned about Pop-up books from speaker, Reg Green.

**Mar. 21** – **Hartman Reserve Nature Center** – Naturalist Katie Klus gave 13 members an enthusiastic tour of the remodeled center ending with a taste of maple syrup from the Sugar Shack! Five more BLC members joined us for lunch @ OP on University

**Apr. 20** – **Rada Cutlery in Waverly** – 20 members got to see how these great knives are hand crafted and several individuals made purchases after the tour. Lunch @ Z's Pizza & Diner

**May 25** – **"War Bonds: The Songs and Letter of WWII"** performance @ Hawkeye CC Artist Series 20 members attended the matinee show which was very moving experience.

**Jun. 11** – **Bethlehem at the Waterloo Bucks Ballgame** – 30 people enjoyed a beautiful Sunday afternoon at the ballpark.

**July 20** – **Amana Colonies Lunch & Shop** – 18 members dined together at the lovely Ox Yoke Inn and then spent the afternoon shopping at the many different stores in the Amana Colonies.

**Aug. 17** – **Sleepy Creek Tannery in Wellsburg** – Ben Deters led 13 members through the fascinating process of how animal hides are tanned. Lunch @ The Landmark Bistro in Grundy Center

**Sept. 14** – **Edgewood Meat Locker** – 11 members toured the ultra-clean modern meat locker in Edgewood and saw sausages being made and how the meat is smoked. Many of us bought yummy meat treats afterwards. Lunch @ Brady's Bar & Grill. A quick shopping stop at the home décor store THE MARKET afterwards.

**Oct. 30** – **Amish Lunch** – 30 friends were treated to a feast of homecooked food by Clara & Freda Miller in their Amish home. Some folks purchased beautiful fall mums after lunch.

**Nov. 16** – **John Deere Cab Assembly Factory Tour** – Keith Graber gave 20 members a wonderfully informative tour at John Deere. It was an awesome tour!

**Dec. 7** – **C. C. Wolf Mansion Christmas Tour in Parkersburg** – We got into the Christmas spirit by touring the Victorian home, seeing over 17 different Christmas trees, and exploring all 3 floors of this beautiful house. Lunch @ 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Grill & Pub

**NEVER A DULL MOMENT FOR THE JOYFUL TIMES GANG!!**

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Mixdorf

# Endowment Report

Ending Balance as of 12/1/23 was: \$1,115,297.39

Value Change from 12/31/2022 was: \$ 16,873.71

Principle \$981,195.94

## **The following were the distributions for 2022:**

Community Meals \$ 1,500

Bremwood \$ 500

Cedar Valley Angels \$ 250

Eastside Ministerial Alliance \$1,500

Cedar Valley Hospice - Home \$1,000

ELCA Disaster Relief-Domestic \$500

ELCA Dis. Relief- International \$500

EWALU General Fund \$1,000

EWALU Cedar @ 60. \$ 1,000

Iowa Heartland Habitat for Hum. \$1,500

Jubilee Conf Expenses \$ 100

Love, INC \$1,500

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service \$1,000

Lutheran Lakeside Camp \$1,500

Lutheran Services in Iowa \$ 1,500

NewAldaya Lifescapes \$2,000

NE IA Synod -Luth Campus Ministries \$3,000

Northeast Iowa Food Bank \$1,500

Self Help International \$400

SE Iowa Synod ELCA -Iowa Lutheran Campus Ministry \$1,000

The Job Foundation \$ 250

ThreeHouse Campus Ministry (UNI) \$2,000

Total Distributions. \$25,000

EPIC - 1 @ Luther for 2023-2024 Sam Lubs \$1,000

**Total EPIC \$1,000**

**Total Distribution with EPIC \$26,000**

# Finance Committee Report

Thank you for supporting the Mission Plan of your church. We are blessed to have a staff that is conscientious of the budget and does very well stretching the funds to do all the projects and ministries that they do. A summary of the budget numbers follows.

Unified giving for 2023 was \$265,784.17, while the expenses for the year were \$282,444.26 for a loss of \$16,669.09. Fortunately, there were reserves to cover this shortfall. The staff did a great job controlling expenses and there was the financial benefit of not being fully staffed for half of the year. Actual expenses vs. budget were down \$78,404.74 with about \$50,000 of this savings being due to the short staffing. Had the expenses been at budget, a loss of \$95,065 would have been the result.

Giving for the past several years have been on the decline. The declines are due to fewer giving units which are the result of more than usual deaths, giving to specific projects, increased personal expenses, and attrition of members. Inflation has also put strains on personal finances which also impacts the support that can be donated to the church.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Kestner, Finance Team Chair



# Bethlehem Lutheran Church

## Chart of Account Balances

Jan 01, 2023 through Dec 31, 2023\* (Accounts with zero balance are not listed)

**Balance as of 12/31/23**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,642,624.13</b>
<b>Cedar Falls Community Credit Union</b>	<b>\$ 52,173.16</b>
<b>Checking-Unified (1100)</b>	<b>\$ 20,737.84</b>
Unrestricted (Checking-Unified)	\$ 26,535.95
2022 Heritage Remodel	\$ 103.07
Altar Guild Flowers (2223)	\$ 146.00
Camp Bethlehem (2240)	\$ 521.39
Church Tickets (2224)	\$ 165.60
Designated Donations (2241)	\$ 50.00
ELCA Disaster Relief (2203)*	\$ 159.76
ELCA World Hunger (2206)*	\$ 152.48
Lenten Offering (2210)*	\$ 24.00
National Youth Gathering (2243)	\$ 3,390.94
Retreat (2234)	\$ 232.00
Service Council Project (2218)	\$ 3,526.27
Thrivent Funds (2227)	\$ 234.26
*=Paid out in benevolence check 1/10/24	
<b>Checking-Memorial Fund (1200)</b>	<b>\$ 12,329.81</b>
Unrestricted (Memorials given in name undesignated so far)	\$ 1,054.78
BLC Women's Funeral/LWR Funds (6001)	\$ 1,894.08
Coffee Money (6006)	\$ 969.81
Interest- Undesignated (6003)	\$ 6.17
Maifield Altar Flowers (6008)	\$ 491.46
Unnamed/Undesignated Funds (6002)	\$ 3,734.19
Youth Trip Funds (6011)	\$ 4,179.32
Checking- Maint and Facilities (1500)	\$ 10,369.74
<b>Savings/CDS</b>	<b>\$ 128,870.97</b>
CD-Unified (1125)	\$ 31,560.82
Mission Investment Fund-Youth (1250)	\$ 10,715.00
Mission Investment Fund-Christian Development 1 (1275)	\$ 6,257.89
Mission Investment Fund-Christian Development 2 (1280)	\$ 5,960.89
CD-Maint and Facilities (1525)	\$ 74,376.37
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,461,580.00</b>
Building and Lot (1310)	\$ 1,196,580.00
Organ (1320)	\$ 265,000.00

# Unified 2023 Treasurer's Report

<u>Income</u>	Actual
Contributions (Unified)	\$262,374.12
Use of Facilities	\$2,525
<u>Interest Income</u>	<u>\$885.05</u>
<b>Total Unified Income</b>	<b>\$265,784.17</b>

<u>Expenses</u>	Ministry Plan	Actual	Over/Under
Benevolence*	\$32,200	\$27,316.00	\$4,884
Office Supply	\$18,470	\$17,350.34	\$1,119.66
Building/Maintenance	\$45,400	\$46,040.08	\$-640.08
Staffing	\$234,683	\$180,312.98	\$54,370.02
Worship/Music	\$5,500	\$2,769.85	\$2,730.15
Youth and Education	\$9,450	\$6,576.72	\$2,873.28
Fellowship/Outreach	\$9,500	\$5,078.49	\$4,421.51
Total Unified Expense	\$360,849	\$282,444.26	\$78,404.74
<b>2023 Total Budget vs Expense (amount spent under budget)</b>			<b>\$78,404.74</b>

Income vs Expenses as of 12/31/23: \$-16,660.09

\*=December Benevolence check of \$ paid on January 10, 2024 (not included in total)

## **2023 Mission Funding Plan**

### **Budgeted Expenses**

Benevolence	\$32,300
Office Supply	\$18,470
Building/Maintenance	\$45,400
Staffing	\$234,683
Worship/Music	\$5,500
Youth & Education	\$9,450
Fellowship & Outreach	\$9,500

<b>TOTAL Mission Funding Plan</b>	<b>\$355,303</b>
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## **2024 Mission Funding Plan**

Benevolence	\$31,300
Office Supply	\$19,150
Building/Maintenance Total	\$45,600
Staffing Total	\$222,839
Worship & Music	\$5,700
Youth & Education	\$9,850
Fellowship & Outreach	\$9,700

<b>Total Proposed Mission Funding Plan</b>	<b>\$ 344,139</b>
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Notes/Doodle Page:

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

## OPENING LITURGY

### Son of God, Eternal Savior

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

#### **And also with you.**

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

#### **Receive our prayer, O God.**

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

#### **Receive our prayer, O God.**

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

#### **Receive our prayer, O God.**

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

#### **Receive our prayer, O God.**

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

#### **Receive our prayer, O God.**

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

#### **Receive our prayer, O God.**

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

#### **Receive our prayer, O God.**

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

**Amen.**

1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,  
2 As you, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, so may we for oth - ers live.  
3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and Prince of peace;  
4 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,

Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race,  
Free - ly have your gifts been grant - ed; free - ly may your ser - vants give.  
hush the storm of strife and pas - sion, bid its cru - el dis - cords cease.  
Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race:

you our head, who, throned in glo - ry, for your own will ev - er plead:  
Yours the gold and yours the sil - ver, yours the wealth of land and sea;  
By your pa - tient years of toil - ing, by your si - lent hours of pain,  
by your pray - ing, by your will - ing that your peo - ple should be one,

fill us with your love and pit - y, heal our wrong, and help our need.  
we but stew - ards of your boun - ty held in sol - emn trust will be.  
quench our fe - vered thirst of plea - sure, stem our self - ish greed of gain.  
grant, oh, grant our hope's fru - i - tion: here on earth your will be done.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 655

Text: Somerset C. Lowry

Music: IN BABILONE, Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse Boerenlities en Contradansen, 1710;

arr. Julius Röntgen

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Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America