



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

March 2023 Newsletter

Bethlehem Family and Friends,

I pray that your Lenten season has started well, and that each day as we draw closer to Easter, you find yourself drawing closer to Jesus.

It has been a busy few weeks here as we have begun our Midweek Lenten worship, began our Lenten book read (UnClobber by Colby Martin), began our Living Lent class (enjoying charcoal art the first week, sharing childhood memories the second, and living into what real rest means the third), and began both our Sunday and Wednesday Lenten worship series.

As these things are beginning, some things are ending as well. Both Pastor Kristi and Gabby are transitioning to exciting new job opportunities, which means that we are once again in a season of staff transition. We ask for your prayers for both Pastor Kristi and Gabby as they transition, and for the staff and parishioners that remain here at Bethlehem. We appreciate your patience while we are short staffed and while we figure out who is covering which responsibilities.

The council has also been working on hard on, praying for, and discerning a way forward in organizational structure for how we work together as a congregation. They are bringing to the Annual Meeting on April 21, an exciting plan for how we might view the work we do together, and I pray it will be a way that will provide even more transparency and clarity of how we do what we do, and who to talk to if you want to be more involved.

I recognize that sometimes seasons of transition put us on edge. They have a way of making us question, look back to times when things felt more steady, and can cause us worry. As your pastor, I have been trying hard to take time away to listen to where the Lord is leading us during these change-filled days.

While on a Silent Retreat with the Contemplative Outreach of Northeast Iowa this past Saturday, I learned a song, written by Lyndsey Scott, entitled "The Way Knows the Way". The words are: *"You don't have to know the way, the way knows the way. You don't have to plan the way. Trust the way, feel your way. The way knows, The way knows The way knows the way."* It has a hauntingly beautiful melody, and was for me the reminder that I needed that morning, that we may not know all of the steps that are coming down the road, but we know who journeys with us, and we know that God knows the way. He will lead us if we just listen, and follow. So let us do just that friends. May God bless each one of you as we listen and follow Him together.

Your partner on the journey,

Pastor Amy

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



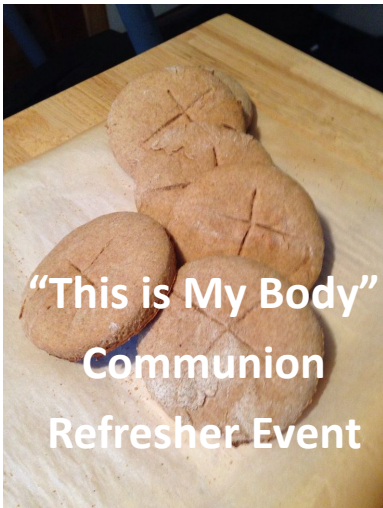
Joyful Times will be visiting Retrieving Freedom, Inc. in Waverly, IA, on Thursday, March 21. Retrieving Freedom is a non-profit that raises and places highly trained Service Dogs for Veterans with disabilities and children with autism, nationwide, at no cost to the clients. We will meet at BLC @ 9:20 AM and leave at 9:30 am. Lunch will be at the Waverly Pizza Ranch.



Join us on Wednesdays during Lent for supper and worship!
Feb 28, Mar 6, 13, 20, we will gather for supper at 5:45 pm,
and worship at 7:00 pm.

To sign up to help with soup supper,
please check out the Welcome Table.

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



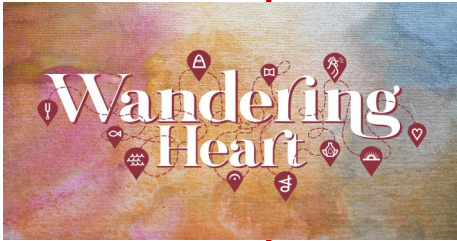
Have you ever wanted to refresh your memory about the traditions and meanings behind why we celebrate communion as we do? Have you wondered about the connections between Seder Meals, Passover, and Communion? Would you like to have a hands on reminder of why we celebrate the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday?

All people of all ages are welcome to join us for a hands-on "This is My Body": Communion Refresher event on Sunday, March 24 and 2:00 pm *

There is no cost; we just ask that you sign up on the welcome table with the number attending so that we have enough materials for everyone! Looking forward to learning with you!

**=Note if you have children who have not yet received First Communion Instruction, this event will contain all the pieces needed for your child to participate in their First Communion at Maundy Thursday worship.*

On Sundays during Lent, our theme is: “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.

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.

**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.”

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 serving 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!

It's time to start thinking about Easter! If you would like to donate money for Easter flowers, here is the information: we have begonias, hyacinths, hydrangeas, and kalanchoes available. **Cost is \$15 per plant.** Questions? Talk to Roberta. Thank you for helping make our Easter worship extra special!



Easter
Memorial
Flowers



It is almost retreat season!

Our next **Confirmation Retreat** will be held at EWALU's Stone Center on **April 12-14**. All youth grades 7-10 are welcome to join us and friends are welcome...just be sure to let you know Pastor Amy know that you want to bring friends!

Save the date for our Annual Women's Retreat! We will be gathering for relaxation and renewal the weekend of **May 4-5**. More info coming soon! Sign up on the Welcome Table!

Are you comfortable with copiers and computers? Would you like to help us with a church history project? We are wanting to digitize all confirmation pictures so that we can have them displayed in digital frames in the Gathering Space. In order to do so, we are looking for someone (or a few people!) who might be willing to help scan all of our current confirmation photos into the copier, and type up a class list in a word document for each class. If this is something you might be willing to help with, please contact the church office at 319-266-3541!

LET'S GET
DIGITAL



Holy Week
Helpers

With Holy Week happening March 24-31, we need help in many forms. From greeters, ushers, readers, decorators and more, there is a job for everyone! If you are willing to help make Holy Week happen this year at Bethlehem, please check out the sign-up sheets that will be on the Welcome Table. Thank you for being willing to help share your gifts!



From The Desk Of
Gabby Greco, Director of Community Engagement

To my dear friends at Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

My time serving as your Director of Community Engagement will come to an end on February 27th. It saddens me to leave this wonderful community as I pursue employment at Hawkeye Community College teaching history courses that aligns with my education and professional aspirations .

I cannot thank you enough for the kindness shown to me here at Bethlehem! I felt overwhelmingly welcomed from my very first day here. Thank you to everyone who volunteered, spread the word, and attended the activities we held at the church. I hope I was able to help the mission of the church by providing spaces where people could feel seen, welcomed, and loved by our community and our God. To my fellow staff members, it felt like we were the true dream team as I worked with you all. The synergy in our meetings had me feeling like we could change the world!

I especially want to thank our fearless leader Pastor Amy - I could not have done this job without you. The dedication you have, not only to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, but to your faith in God, is nothing short of admirable.

This community is too special to leave forever. I would love to join you in faith activities to come. So it is not goodbye forever.

I will miss you all,

Gabby Greco

Dear Roberta, Theresa, BLC Care Team, and the People of Bethlehem Church,

Thank you for your prayers for me last fall as I received a pacemaker. I have kept the notes you sent on my desk since then as a reminder of your concern, care, and thoughtfulness. Your words gave me comfort. Jana and I are so thankful to God for bringing us to your congregation to share with you in our internship year in 2001-02. We cherish you all and continue to keep you in our prayers as well.

God's peace to you in Christ,

Paul Oman





Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am grateful for our partnership in ministry and for the opportunity to be a part of what God is up to at Bethlehem for the past few years. It has been an honor and privilege to serve as Visitation Pastor here and walk alongside those who are experiencing spiritual distress or grief. In case you have not heard, I am ending my time as Visitation Pastor and my last day will be Monday, March 4th, 2024.

I continue to discern how I am called to care for those in grief and spiritual distress beyond the four walls of this church. As my private coaching business has grown, I am transitioning to meet the growing needs of my clients. For now, my family plans to remain members at Bethlehem. Feel free to say hi at coffee hour. However, in order to have appropriate leave-taking and role clarity for the congregation, I will refrain from any pastoral acts or services for the time being.

Goodbyes are always difficult, especially when you are leaving something that is so life-giving and personally rewarding as being your Visitation Pastor. Thankfully, the one thing I have tried to do over the past few years has been to teach God's people that we can draw close to God in our grief. I have also tried to model and show you that all of us are called to ministry as the "priesthood of all believers" in our daily lives. You are not alone on this exciting, surprising, and uncharted path. I will continue to walk with you on the journey as a sister in Christ.

Thank you for being a place of steady accompaniment and belonging for me during my own season of change and uncertainty. You have welcomed my family with generosity and kindness, and I am forever grateful. I will continue to pray for you and the new life that is springing up in this place. May the powerful Spirit of God call you, enlighten you, and keep you as you find your next steps.

In Christ,
Pastor Kristi Grieder

Blessing in the Turning

by Jan Richardson

*You have turned my mourning
into dancing – Psalm 30:11*

May you know
The slow mystery
In which mourning
Becomes a dance
Turning you toward
The gladness
That wants to meet you
In your grief.

May comfort
Come to enfold you,
Not to take away
All sorrow
But to infuse it
With tenderness,
With rest,
With every grace
It has.

May you give yourself
To the rhythms
Of joy,
Even when your steps
Are stumbling,
Even when you are
Most fragile
And faltering.

May you know
The dancing that comes
In the dying,
Moving you in time with
The heart that
Has held you
Always
Even when you
Could not hear
Its beating,
Even when you
Could not bear
Its love.



Daylight Savings will begin on Sunday, March 10! Change your clocks when you go to bed on March 9 so you can join us for worship on Sunday March 10 at 9 am!



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 on our church YouTube page at:

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



Join us on Sunday, April 21, at 10:00 am for our next Congregational Meeting where we will elect new members to council, endowment committee, NewAldaya Board, and EWALU Board. As well as look back on this program year and celebrate how God has been at work within and around us!

BETHLEHEM STAFF

Church phone: 319-266-3541

Pastor Amy Eisenmann-Lead Pastor

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

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Kelly Rodriguez—

Administrative Assistant

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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



GIVING MADE EASY!

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

Holy Week Schedule



**Palm
Sunday**

Worship at 9 am



**Maundy
Thursday**

Worship at 7 pm
with Communion



**Good
Friday**

Worship at 7 pm



**Easter
Sunday**

Sunrise Worship
6:30 am

Easter Breakfast
7:30-8:45 am

Festival Worship
9:00 am

Our Pastor
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Our website:
www.bethlehemcf.org

Our YouTube Channel:
Bethlehem Lutheran CF

Our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/BethlehemCF>

Our Instagram page:
@bethlehemcf