

the Wellspring

Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water
John 7:38

Published quarterly
Volume 19
Issue 4



Winter
2023



GATHER all people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ
GROW as disciples through worship, prayer and study of God's Word
GO into the world to share the gospel in word and deed

Bethesda Lutheran Church
GATHER...GROW...GO

1517 Northwestern Avenue | Ames, Iowa 50010-5299 | 515 . 232 . 6256 | www.BethesdaAmes.org



Rediscovering the Authentic Christ Reveals Your Authentic Self

~ Pastor Jonathan Dolan

We are on the precipice of change right here, right now.

The Church model that was effective for ministry in the '60s, '70s, and '80s is long gone. I mean that we are no longer in the Age of Association. What was that? It was the reality that for a person to feel a sense of belonging to a community, they would have to interact on a weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly basis with the organization. We know, even if we hate to admit it, that in today's society, that is no longer the case. There are so many competing things that draw our attention away from something that we might find meaning in, especially the Church. Does that mean we should abandon everything we have done in the past? Absolutely not!

Nonetheless, we are in something new right now. We are in the Age of Authenticity. People want to experience an organization or a church as authentic. They want to come and be with people who are earnestly themselves. Whose struggles aren't hidden away, never spoken about, only kept in a box on a shelf. Many people want to wade in the muddy muck of the shoreline because that's where people are sometimes. It's okay to be there. If you are there, I want to wade there with you, just like Christ is doing! We don't always get to swim in the crystal-clear blue part of the ocean.

So, let me be a little authentic with you. As a millennial, few things make me angrier than when someone is nice to my face, acts like nothing is wrong, but talks behind my back. I want the authentic you. Not the face mask you are trying to wear. One way people better understand themselves is by taking verified and validated tests like the Meyers-Briggs Personality Test.

Accordingly, my M-B Type is ENFJ. Extrovert – Intuitive – Feeling – Judging – which, according to data collected by the Lutheran Alban Institute, ENFJ is the most common of the 16 Personality Type combinations for pastors.

A person who is an ENFJ is also known as the Protagonist. It is said that ENFJs take great pleasure in leading and guiding others to be the best versions of themselves. Offering assistance, advice, and a listening ear amid life's circumstances. Similarly, ENFJs tend to value authenticity highly, altruism, speaking up when something has happened unjustly to a person or group, and working diligently for the common good of all people. I share this because these truths about ENFJs are true about me.

The Advent Season will soon be upon us. It allows us to recall the story of God choosing to come among us authentically. Now, do not hear me saying that God had not authentically interacted with God's people before. God walked among Adam and Eve in the garden. God worked through Noah and his descendants during the Flood. God called Abraham and Sarah out of Ur to go to the Promised Land. God worked through Joseph. God called Moses and Aaron to lead God's people out of the bondage of slavery into freedom.

God led those people for forty years in the desert by a cloud in the day and a pillar of fire by night. The stories of God interacting authentically with the Chosen People could continue. But you understand my point.



What's so unique about this part of God interacting with humans is that God physically came to be among us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Incarnation of the Word of God, Jesus Christ was born to the Theotokos, the "Mother of God," the Virgin Mary. Instead of working through a human being like the Lord had done with the prophets of old, God, in the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ came physically into our reality. Through Christ, the Lord took on our nature and our lot. A divine choice whereby Jesus Christ's humanness was now susceptible to all of the emotions and feelings of the human form. The Creator of the Universe had deigned to leave the Heavenly Courts to feel, touch, react, love, and care like us, who are the ones created.

"And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of Days has become an infant. Christ, who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. Who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infant's band...taking my flesh, He gives me His Spirit, so Christ [is] bestowing and I [am] receiving."
---- St. Cyril of Alexandria (b. 376 – d. 444) ----

As Bishop Cyril of Alexandria, who presided at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. (which affirmed the Nicene Creed), reminds us, Christ bestows, and we receive. Christ is the gift, and all God desires for us is to receive that holy and precious gift.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther spoke frequently about receiving Christ as a precious gift. Where might we encounter the authentic Christ? Luther often said that the Bible is like "the manager that holds the Christ child." People are depicted kneeling around the manger, but it is out of reverence for the Word of God, Jesus Christ, who lies within. Likewise, we do not worship the Bible. We worship the precious gift of Christ that is revealed in and through the stories of the Bible.

Dear Church, I invited you, in this Advent Season of waiting for Christ to be born, to open up your Bible. Pick one of the Gospels and read the story of Jesus' birth, life, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection again. If you start on Dec. 1st, reading a chapter a day, you will easily be done by Christmas Eve. After all, Mark is 16 chapters; John 21; Luke 24, and Matthew 28.

Along the way, listen for how Jesus authentically speaks and calls you into this incredible story. Listen for how Christ offers you the precious gift of his authentic self. Thus, when you arrive as your authentic self for worship on Christmas Eve, you will have prepared your heart, mind, body, and soul in such a way that the wonder and astonishment of Jesus Christ's birth may take on a new meaning. But until then, may your waiting be filled with hope, as the most precious gift of all will soon be offered freely to and for you, again.

In humble service of the Triune God,

Pastor Jonathan David Dolan



Bethesda Council Update

~ **Steve Peters**, Council President

Hello Bethesdians!

I hope you are well. Autumn is here, with some of Bethesda's biggest annual events. On October 4 the Stewardship Committee hosted another successful dinner that featured Bill and Deb Fennelly speaking about their own personal giving. Thanks to all of you who attended, and have already returned your pledge forms for next year.

Another successful Scandinavian Coffee brought a huge crowd through the doors of Bethesda on Saturday, Oct. 21. A big thank you to the Women's Ministry team for continuing this amazing tradition. It is Bethesda's biggest annual fundraiser.

Council members have received several inquiries about two items of consideration that have recently been discussed around Bethesda: the desire for a new outdoor digital sign, and the recently scaled down bulletin. The Council has discussed both questions at length in recent meetings. Here is a short report on both topics.

•**Outdoor Digital Sign:** We have a significant memorial gift that was earmarked for an outdoor digital sign. You can see an example of such a sign at the Northminster Presbyterian Church here in Ames. There are two primary considerations relating to Bethesda installing this type of sign. The first is design. Should we utilize the existing sign box and install a digital sign in it? Or should we go for an entirely new sign that would be double sided, positioned at a right angle to the street, allowing it to be read by passersby going in either direction. Whichever option is used, the new installation will have to comply with City signage rules. The second consideration is funding. While the bequest for the sign was certainly generous, it would only cover a fraction of the total cost, which is estimated

to be \$30,000 - \$40,000 or more. The current balance in the fund designated for the sign is \$10,220. Due to the lack of funding available for the project, the Council has decided to table the question until more funds become available.

•**New Church Bulletin Design:** The bulletin was downsized a few months ago. The intent was to reduce the amount of paper used, in order to be better stewards of our natural resources. The change reduced the cost and staff time required to produce the bulletin each week. The primary concern voiced to Council members is that the new layout does not include the order of service. In response the Council has asked that a new design be developed for the bulletin that would include the order of worship. Watch for the new bulletin format coming soon.

Also, we want to commend our incredible Facilities Ministry team for the bright new yellow lines that have been repainted on our parking lot. The job was done expeditiously and very economically. Thank you!

See you in Church!

Steve Peters



Lobo Family Finds Home in Ames

~ **Diane Pierce**, ASIP Co-Chair

BETHESDA IS, ONCE

AGAIN, a welcoming congregation. This time, a family of four from Venezuela. Jose, Yennifer, Tadeo (5), and Ana Paula (2) all survived, by foot, the Darien Gap--the world's most dangerous tropical forest pathway. It combines natural terrain, poisonous creatures, and guerrilla murderers.



The 50 kilometers linking Panama and Columbia is the only Gap that still prevent completion of the Intercontinental Highway from Alaska to the tip of Chile. National church organizations (ELCA, UCC, and Episcopalians) helped the Lobo family prepare to cross into the U.S. legally and assisted with finding sponsors and housing.

The Lobo family arrived on June 9th in Ames at the bus terminal. The family was in temporary housing with an ASIP couple who spoke fluent Spanish. Now, the family is ready to move into a three-bedroom duplex their sponsor found. The family's new residence is about one block from the back of Meeker Elementary, where Tadeo is a kindergartener; he loves school so far, and Head Start is coming to the home once a week to meet with Ana Paula.

While Yennifer and Jose are learning conversational English with help from a few volunteers, we could use more. You do not have to speak Spanish to teach conversational English; our current helpers can help get you started. We have earbuds that will help with translation communication for anyone helping with the family as soon as we can figure them out.

Yennifer will be taking English classes at a later date, likely within the new year and will need transportation. Contact Diane Pierce with any questions. (515) 509-4326. dcf.pierce@gmail.com.

While the Lobo family is furnishing their new space, they are still in need of three to four dressers and chest freezer. If you, or someone you know, are willing to donate the items the family still needs, contact Diane Pierce (515) 509-4326 dcf.pierce@gmail.com or Russ Melby (515) 460-5041 norskeboy@aol.com.

Many thanks to these members and church organizations:
Anonymous sponsors:

- Pastors Bryan and Johnathon
- Lori and Tony Woodcock
- Pam Sargent
- Amy Schmidt (Pam's daughter)
- Chris Cowen (conversational English)
- Cliff McDonald
- Lynn Anderson
- Duane Huffer
- Kathy Harris (Clothing Closet) and volunteers
- The volunteer quilting ladies
- Bethesda Food Pantry and volunteers
- Those who have donated items or financial gifts (anonymously and otherwise)



Bethesda Lutheran Hosts Trunk-or-Treat

~ **Chelsey Ray**, Council President

On Wednesday, October 25, over 75 trick-or-treaters lined up to participate in our annual Bethesda Lutheran Trunk-or-Treat event! It was a warm, beautiful fall evening. Chelsey and Amanda welcomed each family with a gift bag that included a sticker sheet and thank you postcard detailing Bethesda worship service times and helped register participants for a raffle to win gift cards from Stam Chocolatier, Great Plains Pizza, and Cinemark Movies 12. Monsters, cartoon characters, princesses, superheroes, and many more ran from trunk to trunk, collecting treats.

Trunk-or-Treaters had the opportunity to vote on "Best Trunk" by giving raffle tickets to the people whose trunk themes they enjoyed the most. By the end of the night, a winner emerged. Yamilit Cachan won the Trunk-or-Treat traveling trophy with her trunk's theme of "Spooky Pirates of The Carribean"

the kids were. Bethesda saw a great mix of congregation and community members come out for the event, with many expressing gratitude for the event and even planning on partaking in Bethesda's halloween centered event next year!



Our annual Trunk-or-Treat event is planned by the Children's Education and Youth Board (CEYB) to invite our community to have some fall fun at church! Are you interested in supporting next year's event? Consider creating a trunk, supporting the event planning, volunteering the night of the event, or stopping by to join the party! Any questions may be directed to Pastor Jonathan Dolan or Chelsey Ray. We are excited to see the event continue to grow and bring our community families together for fun and fellowship each fall.



After visiting each of the 12 trunks, expertly decorated by Bethesda congregation members and local businesses, and casting votes for "Best Trunk", costumed kids and adults visited Helen and Becky for a cup of hot chocolate or apple cider.

Trunk-or-Treat was a family affair with the parents just as excited to trunk-or-treat as





Bethesda **Continues Supports** of LGBT+

~**Larry Otteman**, Past Council President

We adopted our welcoming statement in January 2022 with over 90% approval. We specifically welcome everyone regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Bylaws were changed to indicate our willingness to call LGBT+ rostered leaders and perform marriages of LGBT+ people.

This year, in coordination with Ames Pridefest, Bethesda actively participated in a Community Pride Worship. Held at the ISU Memorial Union on October 1, it provided a nonchurch space to celebrate the LGBT+ community in Ames. Special recognition goes to organizers Reverend Jen Hibben who leads the Collegiate Presbyterian Church outreach -the Vine Campus Ministry- and Dr. Susan Harper PhD who is Director of the ISU Center for LGBTQIA+ Student Success.

The Memorial Union was filled with people from many churches and religious communities in Ames as well as ISU students. It was very much a worship service with songs, a call to gather, a children's message (reading of And Tango Makes Three) and a reflection by Reverend A.J. Galazen from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames. In addition to Christian communion with bread and grape juice, there were Spirit Stations including the Ritual of Release, Anointing, Blessing, Candle Lighting led by Pastor Bryan Simmons and Oracle Card Messages. We celebrate our commitment and outreach to the Ames and ISU LGBT+ community as a ministry of this church.



Bethesda **Christmas Festival** 2023

~ **Randy & Nancy Ewing** , Co-Directors of Worship & Music

Are you looking for a relaxing and fun afternoon full of Christmas music, Christmas Cookies, Christmas Crafts, and Christmas Photos? Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and join us for the 2023 Bethesda Christmas Festival, which will take place on Sunday, December 17, from 3-5 p.m. Preparations are underway for this year's reimagined festival full of fellowship and fun!

Participate in the cookie exchange, the children's corner, make a craft, and have your individual or group photo taken in a festive setting, all while enjoying a variety of Christmas music offered by our choirs, praise band, and children as well as talented individuals who wish to share! Mark your calendars and join us in the Commons and Crossroads on December 17. Plan to stay for the entire event or come and go as it fits your schedule. Regardless of age, there's something for everyone! We hope you will come and celebrate the reason for the season!





Inspired Hearts Inspire Action

~ Stewardship Ministry Team

The view at the Ames Golf & Country Club was beautiful but it couldn't match the warmth of the fellowship inside. More than 100 Bethesda members gathered for the third annual Celebration of Giving event on October 4.

The event capped Bethesda's Stewardship ministry team's pledge campaign with the theme, Inspired Hearts Inspire Action. Keynote speakers were ISU Cyclone women's basketball Coach Bill Fennelly and his wife Deb, both longtime members of Bethesda. They shared their motivation for giving back to the Ames community, a practice they've followed since moving here 28 years ago. Introducing them was another Bethesda member, Jocelyn Kovarik, who played for Coach Fennelly in 2008 and 2009.

Numerous pledges were offered that evening, with names entered in a drawing for three donated door prizes. The lucky recipients were: Mark and Elaine Edwards, 2 Cyclone tee-shirts and tickets to a women's basketball game at Hilton; Donna Elvick, \$50 gift certificate at Provisions restaurant; and Donna Scherr, 2 tickets to an event at the Des Moines Civic Center and a \$100 bill.

The Stewardship ministry team thanks everyone at Bethesda for their contributions of time, talent and finances. As we learned in this year's temple talks about various programs that benefit from Bethesda support, we all are part of God's work within the congregation, community, synod and world. Thank you!





Scandinavian Coffee & Craft Fair

~ **Lindsay Peters**, Bethesda Women Board



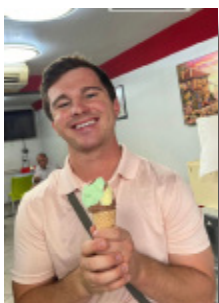
Congratulations Bethesda! The 67th Annual Scandinavian Coffee and Craft Fair is complete! We did it! A big **THANK YOU** for supporting this event and making this year another great success! This event has evolved over the years, and we are continuing to make changes as we go to keep this event sustainable. This event relies heavily on a strong volunteer base. It takes a village to plan, recruit volunteers, order supplies, bake, grocery shop, decorate, promote, and run a fundraiser of this scale. I am so proud to be a part of this event and share it with the entire Ames community. For 67 years this tradition has been carried on by the Bethesda Women's Ministry and supported by the Bethesda congregation. I hope the momentum of this event continues to build and create a sense of pride for all of those involved.



Braden's YAGM Year Update

~ **Tess Hanson**, Director of Marketing and Communications

Braden Hayes set out to spend a year in Jerusalem and The West Bank. With the first two weeks of his international journey stationed in Israel, he and his cohort familiarized themselves with their volunteer sites. They got accustomed to the Israeli culture, including sensitive situations they may encounter over the coming months. As Braden departed his cohort to begin his journey assisting at the Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah, tensions in the Middle East began to rise. As weeks passed, it was determined unsafe for the volunteers to remain in the area, and all volunteers were to return to The United States, meaning Braden's year in Jerusalem was cut short. While the journey wasn't quite what was expected, we're thankful Braden, along with all other volunteers, have returned home unharmed and eager to continue their global missions under different circumstances.





On Nov 2, Kim and Lynn Burnett gave out \$600.00 at Squeaky Clean Laundromat for Saving Suds. They served 26 families with 87 people who used 150 soap pods. Kim and Lynn check each persons' washers to see that they are loaded with laundry before they supply them with quarters. Kim and Lynn say it is incredible how fast the soap pods, snacks, and money go!

Continued thanks to Pam Sargent, who generously supplies the Tide pods. Please continue to donate to this ministry, as these people are so patient and grateful!

Donations to Saving Suds can be made online or by making a check out to Bethesda Lutheran Church, designating it for Saving Suds on the memo line, and dropping it off in the church office.

Donate today!



Friday, Dec. 8
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Torrent Brewing Company
504 Burnett Ave



The Wellspring magazine is published quarterly
by Bethesda Lutheran Church,
a Congregation of the
Southeastern Iowa Synod,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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We invite you to join our community, which is committed to inclusion, racial equity and anti-racism. We share in God's abundant grace knowing that we cannot be separated from the love of God by our age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, physical or mental abilities or faith background.

For more information on our inclusivity visit:
<https://www.reconcilingworks.org/RIC/>

NOTE: please contact Tess Hanson at 232-6256 or contact@BethesdaAmes.org with requests / comments, or to submit an article for the Spring issue (deadline TBD).

All submissions to Bethesda Lutheran Church's *The Wellspring* magazine are subject to editing for clarity, space, and content.

Artwork credit for this month's *Wellspring* cover photo:
Adobe Stock: 1000_F_298973756_04hnNaLqZiBBxAWB7FtwPGSSuF60DM0



December 2023, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter

Merry Christmas from LSI!



At LSI, we recognize that the holiday season can be a challenging time for many, especially for the populations we serve throughout the year.

We know parents who feel hopeless, with few resources to raise their young children. We know adults with disabilities who feel voiceless, with no support system or connection to their community. We know immigrants and refugees working to become U.S. citizens, with little community support or help along the way. We know teens who are aging out of foster care, fearing they will never have a forever home.

In the spirit of giving, the spirit of love, and the spirit of working together, let us stand with them and lift them up this Christmas season. As we reflect on the past year, we thank you — our generous supporters and community partners — for stepping up to give and help the people LSI is privileged to serve. We are grateful for your contribution in bringing the light of Christ to your neighbors who rely on these essential services.

LSI wishes you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

LSI's annual matching gift campaign is currently active, and those making a new or increased financial gift can double their impact through the end of the year. If you would like to learn more about how you can support Iowa children and families, contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Senior Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission:

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

Attend Upcoming O.W.L.s Gatherings

O.W.L.s



Are you a mature member of our congregation looking to get more involved in events at Bethesda? Older Wisers Lutherans (O.W.L.s) meets the second Thursday of each month. Look for sign up sheets at the welcome center and announcements in The Current and Living Current for information regarding topics for the monthly gatherings. If you are interested in presenting to O.W.L.s, contact Marnette at mwarth15@icloud.com or Dennis Warth at dwarth56@icloud.com.

Splash Children's Church Needs Volunteers

Children's Church is in need of individuals to educate the next generation on the Word of God. Children's Church is after the Children's Message during Worship service and is for Pre-K through 5th Grade. If you would like to volunteer to teach Children's Church, contact Pastor Jonathan Dolan (jdolan@bethesdaames.org) or call the church office at 515-232-6256.



Bethesda Lutheran Church

1517 Northwestern Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50010

www.BethesdaAmes.org

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage

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Permit No. 137

Tidings of Great Joy ...for Everyone!

Friday, December 8

Beer & Carols (Torrent Brewing Co @ 504 Burnett)..... 6:30 pm



Saturday, December 17

Christmas Festival 3:00 pm

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight **Worship** 4:00* pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight **Worship** 9:00 pm



* LIVESTREAMED

Worship

SATURDAY @ 5:30 pm (modern)

SUNDAY @ 9:30 am (traditional)



Children's Church

BOTH services after Children's Message