



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

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



2024
BEST
OF STORY COUNTY
The Official Community Choice Awards
Ames Tribune
WINNER

ANNUAL REPORT
2024



Inclusion for All

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God's love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ's love. In Psalm 93, we read: "More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore" (4-5).

God's love is a majestic thing, and it moves us to share it in word and deed. The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, across our country and around the world.

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has bolstered the church's ability to share the message of God's love to people who are longing for it. Through your

“More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.”

—Psalm 93:4-5

financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you've helped carry this message of God's majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God's promises, sure of God's love and goodness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

Table of Contents

Annual Meeting Agenda	5
Congregational Meeting Minutes: Annual Meeting, January 28, 2024.....	6
Election 2025	10
Sample Ballot	11
Membership Statistics	12
President’s Letter	13
Lead Pastor’s Letter	14
Interim Associate Pastor’s Letter	15
Board Reports	
Administration & Finance	16
Christian Education & Youth	17
Christian Service, Mission, & Outreach	19
Congregational Life & Care	21
Stewardship	22
Worship, Music & Arts.....	23
Ministry Teams	
Bethesda Community Food Pantry	24
Bethesda Community Clothing Closet.....	25
Bethesda Women’s Ministries	26
Bethesda Tanzania Ministry Team.....	28
Financial Reports	
Balance Sheet as at December 31, 2024	29
Revenue & Expenses 12 Months Ending December 31, 2024	30
2025 Recommended Budget	31
Christian Mission, Service, and Outreach.....	32
Governing Documents References	
Bethesda Lutheran Church Ames Iowa Endowments	33
Legacy Funds	34

Bethesda Lutheran Church
Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda
Sunday, January 26, 2025

- I. Call to Order Chelsey Aisenbrey, President
- II. Opening Devotions and Prayer Bryan Simmons, Lead Pastor
- III. Approval of Agenda Chelsey Aisenbrey
- IV. Approval of Minutes from Annual Meeting (1/28/24) Chelsey Aisenbrey

- V. Presentation of Ballot (Term is 1/26/2025–1/31/2028) Chelsey Aisenbrey
 - President-elect . . . Donna Scherr
 - Council Member-at-Large . . . Sandi Philips (second three-year term)
 - Council Member-at-Large . . . Sara Nelson (second three-year term)
 - Council Member-at-Large . . . Marnette Warth (one year term)
 - Chair of the Christian Service, Mission and Outreach Board - Nominations from the floor
 - Chair of the Administration and Finance Board - Nominations from the floor

- VI. Election

- VII. Old Business
 - a. Lead Pastor report Pastor Bryan Simmons
 - b. Interim Pastor report. Interim Chris Cowan
 - c. President report Chelsey Aisenbrey
 - d. Treasurer report Tony Woodcock
 - e. Board reports

- VIII. New Business
 - a. Presentation and Approval of 2025 Budget Tony Woodcock
 - b. Solar panels. Tony Woodcock & Chris Brakke
 - c. Approval of Five-year Strategic Plan. . . Dennis & Marnette Warth, Pastor Bryan Simmons
 - d. Support of the endowments with legacy planning. Daryle Vegge

- IX. Announcements Chelsey Aisenbrey

- X. Adjournment

- XI. Closing Prayer Mif Grotnes, Incoming President

Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes

January 28, 2024 . . 10:30 am

ATTENDEES: Over 50 members were in attendance, constituting a quorum.

I. **Call to Order** at 10:45am by President Steve Peters.

II. **Opening Devotions** and prayer were led by Pastor Bryan Simmons, using the opening liturgy on back flap of meeting booklet.

III. **Approval of Agenda:** Steve Peters asked for the group to approve the agenda as present. Motion to approve the agenda by Chelsey Aisenbrey, no second needed. Date on budget presented on page 7 in the agenda was 2023, rather than 2024 (a minor correction). No need to reapprove the agenda. Motion carried.

IV. **Approval of Minutes from Annual Meeting, held on January 29, 2023:** Motion to suspend reading of the minutes by Sara Nelson, second by Sandi Philips. Motion carried. Motion to approve 2023 minutes by Kay Nelson, with a small amendment. A change in the time of adjournment was needed, as the time should be AM rather than PM. Motion carried.

V. **Presentation of Ballot:** The term for these positions is from January 28, 2024 until January 31 2027 except for President. The president's position serves 1 year as president-elect, one year as president, and one year as past president.

- President-elect: Mif Grotnes
- Secretary: Larry Otteman
- Council Member at Large: Trace Houge Brakke
- Board Chair Worship, Music, and Arts: Lise McKillop
- Chair of the Administration and Finance Board: Nominations from the floor
- Chair of Stewardship Task Force: Steve Peters asked for nominations from the floor. The length of service for the position is at the discretion of the Council President. No motions from the floor.

VI. **Election: VI.** Those in attendance voted on the nominations as presented. Motion to cast a ballot by Ann Hein, second by Glen Rippke. Motion carried.

VII. **Unfinished Business:**

a. Lead Pastor's report (Pastor Bryan Simmons): Passage of Mark as a guide for the year. Pastor reminded the group that we are in the process of creating a new strategic plan (5-year). Lots of opportunities for input. Should be an exciting year as we formulate the next strategic plan.

b. Associate Pastor report (Pastor Jonathan Dolan): Lot of reasons to be hopeful. Noted the outward focus of Bethesda and the new influx of members. To love and serve all people is the focus of Bethesda – how can we better share this news? One way is to share how we understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ. After the first full year, Pastor Dolan states that the Bethesda congregational has tackled several tough issues, together. This is notable and is not the case in all congregations. We are seeing more families check out our work at Bethesda, which is great! He looks forward to continuing to form relationships with Bethesda members. He also recommended that Bethesda members reach out to your Pastoral team when things happen!

c. President's report (Steve Peters): Steve thanked the congregation for the opportunity to serve as President. He also expressed thanks to Gretchen Mosher, Chris Brakke, and Daryle Vegge for their service on the Congregational Council and for Daryle's service as chair of the Stewardship Task Force. Steve acknowledged all volunteers that make Bethesda Lutheran Church great are extraordinary! Steve recognized the incoming council members and board chairs. He reminded those present of the positions still open: Stewardship Task Force and Administration and Finance Board Chair positions are still open.

d. Treasurer's report (Tony Woodcock): Pages 29-30. Tony informed those present to disregard page 32; instead, he advised all to review the handout that was distributed which included the corrected benevolence payouts. Tony thanked all for their gifts toward Bethesda Lutheran Church. He also thanked Cliff McDonald for his work on financial matters at Bethesda and for his clear explanation of the budget to all members. Highlights in the 2024 budget were reviewed. Revenue and expenses from 2023 were also reviewed. Offering income was very close to meeting 2023 budget line, which was positive news. The actual revenue was boosted by non-offering income and rental income from Prairie Flowers Children's Center. Expense lines for net and actual expenses were reviewed. Some expenses were over the budget, and some were under, however, the total expenses were under \$914,000, and therefore, less than the revenue levels. For these reasons, the 2023 budget was in the positive.

A question about ASIP, asking whether the money has been spent, as it was in the reserve account. This was a good transition to discussion on the balance sheet. Attendees examined the 2023 budget as compared with the projected 2024 budget. Total assets noted a small increase, totaling \$2.9 million. The mortgage balance is below \$700,000 and because of a better market year with the Endowment, an increase in Endowment funds were noted. Tony asked for questions.

A question was raised about assets – assets shown were not off-set by liabilities. Revaluation of fixed assets – what is this? Cliff explained that we had an audit in 2023. They looked at assets acquired in 2022 and 2023 and because of these, increased the value of the assets. To even out the balance sheet, the offset is classified as revaluation. This is the accounting practice for non-profit organizations. It represents the net worth of the church. A question was raised as to whether the amount should be separated rather than lumped together. The response was that Cliff follows the advice of the auditors. There was a suggestion to improve the clarity of how the number is presented; this will be discussed at a future budget meeting. A question was raised concerning pre-paid expenses, asking for an example of what pre-paid expenses might look like. The response: Money received from the duplex rent is sometimes paid in advance, and when that occurs, it is placed in a reserve account. Motion to receive the treasurers' report from Jim Stewart. Joyce O'Donnell second, Motion carried.

VIII. **New Business:**

a. Discussion of Bethesda Endowments: Pastor Bryan Simmons: Pastor Simmons acknowledged Larry Otteman's work on revising the bylaws and that of the Endowment fund task force. The Endowment was established in 1999. In 2015, management of the fund was transferred to the Story County Community Foundation. Two funds were created – one to facilitate transfer of the existing fund and the other to benefit from tax advantages of Endow Iowa. Both funds have similar annual returns. Story County Community Foundation supports non-profits and has relatively low administrative fees (Bethesda's fee is 1%). The Greater Des Moines Community Foundation has been contracted to manage this fund. When a donation is made to the Endow Iowa Fund, the donator receives a tax credit. Index and long-term growth splits help remove some of market volatility. To promote continued giving to the Endowment, Bethesda needed to use it! Pastor Simmons discussed the many ways that Endowment funds have contributed to improvements in physical Bethesda facilities, to pay down the mortgage debt, and to enhance and strengthen missions that Bethesda supports. The Endowment fund will also contribute to and support youth attending the national ELCA Youth Gathering.

Action was taken at June 2023 meeting to change Bethesda's bylaws. These changes will impact the endowment fund's efficiency and bring it more in line with the contractual agreements currently in place with the Story County Community Foundation.

Recommended changes include the following:

- C5.05.01: Includes and designates both funds in the Bethesda Endowment: General Endowment and Endow Iowa fund.
- 4. Receipts and distributions: Can spend up to 5% of both funds of what was in the fund in the previous year. Designates how funds be used; funds are not to be used for daily operations but rather special projects and long-term debt, as approved by the Congregational Council.
- 5. The Congregation could spent up to 100% of General Endowment based on the recommendation of congregational council. To take this action, approval from 2/3 of Bethesda's voting members at an annual or special congregation meeting would be required. Questions were raised about differences between the point of item 4 and 5. Daryle Vegge addressed these questions. The Endow Iowa fund is a permanent endowment therefore only 5% can be taken out each year. The General Endowment has employed a general practice of taking up to 5% but can up the withdrawal to 100%. Pastor Simmons explained that current bylaws are out of line with other Story County Community Foundation Boards on this point. The point of these changes is to better align the contracts more closely. The Story County Community Foundation Board says that our Board can request up to 100% of General Endowment. The action would require approval from both the Congregational Council and 2/3 of the voting members of Bethesda Lutheran Church. Discussion followed on concerns about the change. A question was raised about whether Bethesda has the appropriate bylaws in place. Specifically, does Bethesda need number 5 (the 100% point) now? Pastor Simmons responded that the item is intended to give the power to the congregation in approving the action of withdrawing 100% of the General Endowment, resulting in requirements more restrictive than those from the Story County Community Foundation, rather than less. Pastor Dolan stated that the 2/3 number is in line with other major congregational decisions, such as calling a pastor, selling our building, or leaving the ELCA.

Pastor Simmons highlighted points of chapter 10 in terms of who can call a special congregational meeting. Notice of meetings shall be given at services of worship and would be promoted. Further, a 2/3 vote is considered a "super majority". Motion to approve changes to the bylaws as presented by Jeanne Stewart, with Henry Gray seconding. Motion carried.

b. Presentation and approval of 2024 budget (Tony Woodcock): Tony reviewed of the 2024 budget. Highlights include projections for offering at \$918,500; The offering revenue projections reflect where Bethesda is at in terms of anticipated offerings and other sources of income. Expenses also reflect some inflation impact – mostly in lawn and snow care. Bethesda has a great staff, warranting a cost-of-living increase in salary. Payroll is a large expense. Further, a lot of large expenses bring the expense total to \$952,985, just \$34,000 less than projected income. The budget situation was the same in 2023, so keeping expenses at or under budget is a key component in finishing the year with a positive balance. The growth transition is currently at \$51,427.

The anticipation is that the 2024 budget will draw on the Growth Transition Fund up to approximately \$34,000, leaving \$29,000 remaining in the fund. Bethesda has attempted to draw on the Growth Transition for the last several years, but have never needed to use the fund, despite presenting the option to dip into the Growth Transition Fund for the last several years. The fund was established to call an associate pastor. Pastor Simmons noted the staff's diligence in sticking to the budget. A question was raised about whether the

Growth Transition Fund shows up in the assets (Response: yes – see page 29 at \$51,427). A suggestion was made to standardize the terminology so that the balance sheet and the budget both include the term “Growth Transition Fund”. A motion to approve the 2024 budget by Dave Anderson, second by Glen Rippke. Motion carried.

XI. The closing prayer was led by new Bethesda Congregational Council President Chelsey Aisenbrey.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen Mosher, Secretary

Election 2025

Here is the slate of nominees for elected positions that Bethesda Council is presenting to the congregation at the January 26, 2025 annual meeting. Nominations from the floor also can be made on the day of the meeting if the nominee is present and has agreed to serve if elected.



Donna Scherr, Council President-elect, three-year term

Donna grew up in Nevada, Iowa, and attended AIB Business College. After college, she worked various office positions, and sold personal lines of insurance before working for the City of Ames. Donna worked as a Legal Services Administrative Assistant for 30 years before retiring in 2005, returning in 2006 to “help out” in the City Clerk’s office and stayed for another 15 years. She led many committees researching projects and programs, always keeping in mind that decisions must be in the interests of all citizens of Ames.

Donna and Marvin Scherr have been members of Bethesda Lutheran Church since 1985 and their daughter was confirmed and married here. Donna has served on many committees and boards of other organizations and as an officer many times. In the past, she has sung in the choir, served as a greeter, and helped with coffee and various things with Scandinavian Coffee.

Donna feels that organizational skills, dependability, and determination to get the job done are skills that make for a positive addition to the church council. She is not afraid to speak up and state her opinion, but is always willing to listen to others. Donna enjoys being involved in helping to make decisions for the good of all. She has enjoyed the past two years on the council and feels ready to take the next step in a leadership role.



Marnette Warth, Council Member-at-Large, one-year term

Marnette Warth grew up in Northwest Iowa and went to Iowa State University. Dennis and Marnette moved back to Ames in 1989 and joined Bethesda in 1994. Marnette retired from McFarland Clinic in 2020. Dennis and Marnette have three grown children living in Colorado, Kansas, and Michigan. Her commitment to Bethesda is evident in her various leadership roles, from teaching Sunday School, serving on boards and the church council, and helping with the food pantry. Recently, she was a co-chair of the strategic plan task force, is serving on the call committee for the associate pastor, and is one of the leaders of OWLS.

Sample Ballot

Leadership Position	Nominee	Term Ends
Church Council		
President-Elect	Donna Scherr	2028
Member-at-Large	Marnette Warth	2026
Member-at-Large		2028
		2028

Membership Statistics

	2024	2023	2022
Average weekend worship attendance in person.	194	974*	423
Average weekend worship attendance online.	192	n/a	n/a
Average Living Water Wednesday attendance	40	n/a	418
Average mid-week Lenten worship attendance	100	112	560
Number of child and youth baptisms	3	9	6
Number of adult baptisms.	0	1	0
Number of new member transfers	18	28	23
Number of adult confirmations.	0	0	0
Number of youth @ First Communion	2	9	3
Number of youth confirmations	5	3	3
Number of marriages.	2	1	2
Number of funerals.	18	19	19
Number of youth registered in Sunday school (3 yrs through 5th grade)	23	12	20
Average Children's Church attendance	10	10	8
Number of youth registered for Vacation Bible School	47	32	19
Number of youth registered for confirmation classes (6th-8th)	16	15	13
Number of family units in the congregation	464	472	478
Number of baptized members	1,144	1,147	1,143
Number of confirmed members	1,000	1,001	1,005
Number individuals transfer out	7	9	7
Number families transfer out.	4	3	7

**Attendance reflects both in-person and online participation.*

Letter From The President

Bethesda members,

I hope your 2025 has started off with comfort and love.

Serving in this role over the past 12 months has been an honor. I've learned things about Bethesda and our impact that I hadn't been exposed to in my 15+ years of membership. The work you all are doing on behalf of God and Bethesda is not just incredible, but also something to be immensely proud of. Please continue to live out your faith in an actionable way, knowing that you are making a significant difference.

The last year has also brought many changes. With any changes, there is a level of bittersweetness to it. As we are in the midst of calling a new Associate Pastor, I'm thankful for all that we've learned and grown as a congregation and how this additional pastor will enable us to carry out our next strategic plan, which was developed in an inclusive way with input from all corners of the congregation. Pastor Bryan, Dennis, and Marnette Warth did a great job of capturing where Bethesda wants to be in the years ahead. The work will continue next year, with the congregation figuring out how we can best implement and support the strategy being set.

Living Water Wednesdays came back this year. Although it has shifted most children's activities away from our traditional services, it has created an energetic and accessible service for our youngest members. I'm regularly humbled at the cross-generational attendance and all of the individuals who take a deep, active interest in our youth. Thank you! There have been more volunteers than I can name that have brought this to reality.

Bethesda's outdoor sign has also been modernized over the past year. Thanks to generous donations, the idea for an electronic sign was realized. It is exciting to see this more inviting, colorful, and real-time entrance to Bethesda.

You all are important members of Bethesda. My favorite aspect of this role is seeing members lean in and support the work of our vibrant faith community. Every single one of you has a unique set of gifts, and I sincerely appreciate and value you for using them to spread God's love.

I'm excited to continue contributing to our mission and look forward to working and worshipping alongside you.

Chelsey Aisenbrey
Council President

Lead Pastor

So they watched [Jesus] and sent spies who pretended to be honest, in order to trap him by what he said and then to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor. So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you are right in what you say and teach, and you show deference to no one but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful for us to pay tribute to Caesar or not?" But he perceived their craftiness and said to them, "Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?" They said, "Caesar's." He said to them, "Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." And they were not able in the presence of the people to trap him by what he said, and being amazed by his answer they became silent." - Luke 2:20-26

Dear Beloved in Christ,

The above story in the Gospel of Luke serves as a constant reminder that, even though we humans have created ways to manage the scarcity of resources we perceive to be on this Earth by monetary policy and trade, it is not really ours. The resources we gain in this life are not really ours. Everything belongs to God, and it is our privilege and honor to use our resources wisely to honor the God who loves us unconditionally. This doesn't just affect the "churchy stuff," but wherever we find ourselves. Bethesda is such a wonderful place that takes this truth seriously as we work together to teach and serve.

It's been an interesting year of transition and growth, particularly for our youth program. I am very proud of the Christian Education and Youth Ministry Board, which has stepped up tremendously as Pastor Jonathan bid us farewell in May. Since then, we pulled off our own VBS for both preschool groups and elementary, garnering plenty of volunteer energy from the congregation. We worshipped as one body on Rally Sunday for our kickoff celebration. We pioneered a new way of providing faith formation for our children by combining Saturday and Sunday Children's Church on Wednesday nights. Our confirmands are receiving a diverse approach to their learning, utilizing learning events, service opportunities, and fellowship time. Our high school group is steady and has a bit of growth, and we have begun reaching out organically to our young adults who are participating at Bethesda. All of this is possible due to the hard work and dedication of volunteers and board members who reenergized Living Water Wednesday. If you haven't had a chance to attend a Living Water Wednesday (the meal and worship are for all ages!), I highly recommend you give it a try.

Our congregation continues to serve. Our Food Pantry, Clothing Closet, and Saving Suds continue to be staples our community can depend on for those in need. Our welcoming and support of our Ukrainian and Venezuelan families and our continued commitment to welcoming all people, including our LGBTQ siblings, is a testament to our understanding that God's love is at the heart of our stewardship. Our desire to stay connected through O.W.L.s, Lunch Bunch, book clubs, cook-offs, bible study groups, and more helps us to grow as we journey together in this life.

I look forward to passing our 5-year strategic plan, which we all have had a chance to weigh in on. This will allow us to continue to work together as one body in Christ, and we will serve together our wonderful God and the wonderful gift of grace we have been given through our Lord, Jesus Christ. May God bless us in this coming year!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Bryan Simmons

Interim Associate Pastor

Dear friends in Christ,

It's hard to write for the annual report, given that I have only been serving as your pastor since the first of August, just now half a year. But of course, I was a member before that time, as well as your intern years ago and your supply preacher in between. So you all pretty much know me, and you extend a kind welcome even though I am still – and will likely be forever – learning names! For that reason, I love the hospitality of “nametag Sunday” – a special day when we all wear nametags to help each other remember names and foster a sense of community. It really does help!

As I reflect on our journey, I am reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul, who wrote, “I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.” (Phil. 1:3-5); “I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world” (Romans 1:8); and “I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor 1:4). Like Paul, I am filled with gratitude for your unwavering faith and commitment to the Gospel. Your past achievements, your faith proclaimed throughout the world, and the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, are a testament to our collective journey. It is good to be a pastor here, where God's grace has been poured out abundantly and where the joy of the Gospel is a continual theme. Indeed, in this place, every weekend, the prayer in the children's sermon begins with, “Dear Jesus, thank you...”, encouraging all of us in the congregation to always express our gratitude to him for all that he has done and continues to do for us.

Our mission of ‘Gather, Grow, and Go’ is not a solitary journey, but a collective effort. Every time you participate in worship, attend an event, or engage in a ministry or volunteer, you play a crucial role in our mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Your contributions are invaluable and integral to our collective journey. The five-year strategic plan, which has been carefully thought out with input from many of you (and thank you for your input!), points us in some interesting directions that could help our mission. For instance, the idea of purchasing a van will help young people as they attend lock-ins, summer church camp, and other events away from the church. Such a van will also help our elders, some of whom no longer drive and who dearly miss attending worship in person. Your participation and support are what make our mission possible.

As we look to the future, let us do so with hope and optimism. So we thank our God, and I thank you for your partnership in this great work: to love God with all our heart, and mind and soul; to love our neighbors as ourselves; and to go and bear witness to the Good News of the love of God, which has been entrusted to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen! Let us carry on, inspired by our past achievements and hopeful for the future that we will build together.

Christine Cowan
Interim Associate Pastor

Administration and Finance

The Administration and Finance Board is looking for a chairman.

- Votes stacked up thanks to Bethesda members and friends . . . we have been chosen the Best Place of Worship in Story County for the SEVENTH year in a row!

Why does this matter? Because of what we do in Story County and globally—**God’s work. Our hands.** With your helping hands, and donations of goods and funds, we work for:

- Food & Clothing Security
- Immigration & Refugees
- LGBTQIA+
- Race Relations
- Worship of our One True God

Respectfully submitted,
Bethesda Staff



Bethesda Lutheran Church was voted “Best Place to Worship” for the SEVENTH year in a row!



Christian Education and Youth Ministries

This last year has been a busy and exciting time for the Children's Education and Youth (CEY) Board. Most notably, we transitioned from offering SPLASH Children's Church during weekend services to Living Water Wednesdays. The new format required our Board to rethink our organizing structure and purpose in our monthly meetings. As a result, our goal has been to build several ministry teams that collaborate, plan, and facilitate Children's Education and Youth programming and events. Our current ministry teams include:

- Splash Children's Church (ages 3 - grade 5)
- Oasis Confirmation (grades 6 - 8)
- Flood High School Youth Group (grades 9 - 12)
- The River (young adults)
- Gatherings (in coordination with the CLC Board)
- VBS/Camp Experiences
- Community Outreach Events for Families (Trunk or Treat, etc.)

One of our significant achievements this year was the creation of the Children's Church Coordinator position in August. This role went to Elsa Page, who has proven to be a valuable asset, enhancing the Splash program and events for children and families.

The inspiration we draw from the collective effort of our CEY Board, Bethesda staff, CEY Ministry Team members, and volunteers is truly commendable.

Bethesda invites those of all ages to a meal co-planned by the Congregational Life and Care Board and CEY Board and a cross-generational worship service each Wednesday. We often see approximately 60 to 80 people attend the LWW and service. Afterward, approximately 20 to 25 preK-5th grade students attend Splash lessons that focus on an activity in art, music, science, technology, or game-playing (just to name a few) to explore the monthly Bible verse. There are three different age groups, and students rotate through three to four different lessons each month.



In Oasis, our 15 confirmation students enjoy a variety of activities to grow their discipleship this year through our Faith Inkubators program. Seeing the mix of classroom learning, service, and fun has been good! The kids enjoy their time and bond in small groups. In addition, confirmands are also expected to live their faith by becoming involved in services, events, and community organizations. Often, they serve as acolytes, help with meals, read scripture and prayers in service, and volunteer their time in our community.



In Flood, our high school youth group program, that is continually growing, attendees are having fun through games and improv activities, and also building trust and fellowship with one another. This trust is also growing as students get to know each other and Pastor Bryan.



The River is a newly added ministry team formed to remain connected to our Bethesda young adults who are attending college or joining the workforce. It also provides fellowship for young adults who might not have grown up at Bethesda. We attended the Iowa State Welcome Fest for students in the fall and shared Bethesda swag. In October, we ordered pizza and had a bonfire. We plan to reach out to our Bethesda members by sending a care package—a bright reminder of God’s love and our congregation’s in these cold winter months!



As we plan for the exciting events in the next year—the Easter Egg Hunt, School’s Out Celebration, Vacation Bible School, and another year of programming—we have had several important realizations. First, just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a church to raise a Christian. On any given Wednesday, a crowd of approximately 15 volunteers facilitates our programming for all age levels. We are grateful for the many people who have shared their time and energy. Moving forward, we need even more volunteers to become involved—there is a place for all ages and talents. Second, building a coalition of dedicated, passionate volunteers has been essential to a successful CEY program that ensures its sustainability. The insight, feedback, and discussion we have received from families, members, and visitors have been integral to the success of this year’s programming and events.

Your involvement is not just appreciated, it is vital to the growth of Bethesda. Most importantly, those who have served on the CEY Board, our ministry teams, and our programming/events have realized that sharing our faith and God’s message with younger generations brings great joy. Bethesda is full of singing, shouts of excitement, unstoppable giggles, some tough questions, occasionally running children, and above all else, God’s love.

*Let the children come to me; do not stop them,
for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. (Mark 10:14)*

*Kristina Greenfield
Chairperson*

Christian Service, Mission, and Outreach

Saving Suds continues to be an important service to our neighbors in the Ames community. Many families struggle to meet their basic needs, and this ministry, with the support of our community, allows them to have clean clothes and bedding, a simple yet crucial aspect of their lives. Our partnership with St Andrew's Lutheran, which does Saving Suds on the third Thursday, while Bethesda does it on the first Thursday, is a lifeline for these families.



In 2024, **Saving Suds** saw a bit of growth, with 12 Bethesda volunteers and the invaluable support of Lynn and Kim Burnett. We were able to assist 327 families, an increase of 18 from the previous year, and a total of 803 individuals. Our distribution of \$7116.00 in quarters and other supplies, including detergent pods and snacks, was a testament to our expanding reach. We've also made children's books from Raising Readers available, further enriching our services.

In December, we made two videos at the laundromat showing how we greet each client, record data, and give quarters. We interviewed eight clients on camera, and Pastor Bryan made an informative compilation of all 10 videos. The video was shown on the third weekend at Saturday and Sunday services.

Each month, people are lined up patiently waiting as we set up, record data, count quarters, and distribute supplies. We greet many by name as they depend on this every two weeks. Each person expresses so much gratitude. We visit with people as they wait for their wash to complete and again when they're folding piles of clean laundry.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed, whether small or substantial. Your support has been instrumental in the growth of this ministry, as evidenced by the increase in our services this year. We encourage you to consider volunteering in 2025; it's an experience that will open your eyes and warm your heart. If we do not secure at least two volunteers for February, Bethesda will no longer be able to partner with St. Andrews Lutheran Church for this ministry. If you are able to volunteer at least an hour and a half of your time, either from 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM or from 5:15 PM - 7:00 PM, the first Thursday of every month, please consider being the people who let this ministry continue at Bethesda as it is highly utilized within the Ames community.

Diane Pierce leads the **Immigration and Refugee Team**. She coordinates resources for the relocating Venezuelan family here in Ames. Three refugees from Ukraine are housed in the Bethesda duplex, and their parents live with an Ames resident who provides shelter. Other efforts are made to assist asylum seekers in escaping detention by helping with the required legal costs.

Lori Woodcock and Jeanne Stewart lead the **Many Hands Ministry Team** and continue to sew and donate needed products. They sewed and filled Christmas stockings for children for the Bethesda Community Food Pantry.



Bethesda Sew-ers, led by Jeanne Rieck, donated tied blankets to the Ames Schools and gave pillows, bedding, and a bed to a non-English speaking family in need. They continue to meet on Mondays to cut, sew, and assemble blankets.



The **Reconciling In Christ Ministry** is led by Larry Otteman who continues to educate us.

Kim Burnett
Chairperson

Congregational Life and Care

In faith we are called into relationship with God in Christ and with one another as a community of faith.

The CLC Board actively contributed to the congregation's life in 2024, hosting and participating in a diverse range of events.

Our New Member and Hospitality Ministry Team played a pivotal role in our congregation, welcoming four new members and facilitating the Fellowship Groups: Ladies' Lunch Bunch, Friday Wind Down, Game Time, and the monthly Book Club.

We hosted the Chili Cookoff in February and coordinated the Lenten Soup Suppers.

In May, we partnered with the CEYM board for School's Out Sunday to celebrate the end of the program year. We also served cake for the confirmation students and the high school seniors.

The annual BBQ Cookoff and Ice Cream Social in July was a resounding success, with around 60 people enjoying delicious food and delightful company.

At the end of August, we fostered unity within our church community by partnering with the CEYM board to host Rally Weekend. Together, we provided fun food and games to kickstart the Fall events and helped prepare and serve the Living Water Wednesday meals as part of the Church School's move to Wednesday evenings.

October was Pastor Appreciation Month, a time when we could express our deep gratitude to Pastor Bryan and Interim Associate Pastor Chris Cowan for their unwavering dedication and service as our spiritual leaders.

November brought us the Pie Social, a time for fellowship and lots of pie to eat!

Throughout the year, the other ministry teams supported by our board have quietly and faithfully fulfilled their missions:

- Men's and Women's Bible Study
- Cafe Bethesda
- O.W.L.s
- Sunday Coffee Fellowship
- Prayer Chain
- Card Ministry
- Clothing Closet

We welcome any and all who feel called to join us in our missions, either on our board or on one of our many ministry teams.

Blessings to all who serve and are served. Be the Light!

Joyce O'Donnell
Chairperson

Stewardship

The theme for our Stewardship campaign this year was “Because of God’s great mercy” based on the text of 1 Peter 2:9 *“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”* In this message, we are called to be a part of the mission of sharing Christ’s love and mercy. We have the opportunity to do this through the various missions of Bethesda Lutheran Church including our worship ministries, outreach and mission ministries, Christian education ministries and community life ministries.

We began our campaign in August utilizing mailings, bulletin inserts, email messages and temple talks through the month of September to share a call to giving message and invite members to participate in our celebration of giving October 2nd. Thank you to Pastor Bryan, Maynard Hogberg and Tony Woodcock for their help with the Temple talks, helping us to understand more about our various ministries and how our financial giving helps support these missions.

On October 2nd, a celebration of giving was held at the Ames Golf and Country Club with approximately 97 members in attendance. Entertainment was provided in the early evening by the Kaizer Trio followed by a delicious chicken dinner. We are ever so grateful to Randi and Steve Peters for agreeing to be our keynote speakers for the evening and for their generous donation of time and theater tickets from Venue Works as door prizes.

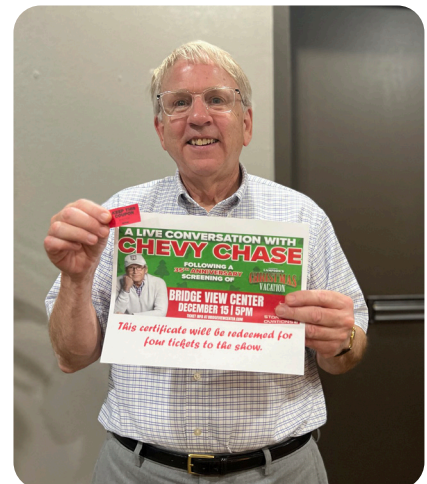
At the close of the year, all were thanked for their pledges

The results of this year’s pledging efforts were:

- 150+ pledges turned in
- \$638,535.00+ pledged

Thank you to all who pledged and who helped to support this stewardship campaign.

*Ellen Janke
Chairperson*



Worship, Music and the Arts

It has been a bustling year for the Worship, Music, and the Arts Board. The heart of our worship beats because of the countless dedicated members. They graciously volunteer to greet, be communion assistants, set up coffee, bake communion bread, run the AV system, play and sing in the enchanting choirs, change the altar cloths, decorate the sanctuary, and others participate in leading worship. Their contributions are invaluable and we are deeply grateful for their service. We've been blessed to have monies donated to WMA, for which we have purchased new Christmas wreaths and decor. A new keyboard has been bought. This year, we are excited to have confirmands serve as acolytes during the service!



Bethesda has been fortunate to have some wonderful choirs come and share their talents. Most recently, we hosted the Luther College Nordic Choir, and their performance was phenomenal. In addition to their concert on Saturday, January 18th, the Nordic Choir also performed at Sunday's Worship service the following day.

We always welcome new volunteers. We're happy to provide training and support until you feel comfortable in your role. Remember, many hands make light work, and we're excited to welcome you into our community!

Lise McKillop
Chairman

Bethesda Community Food Pantry

The Food Pantry served 18,504 individuals in 2024 and distributed 115,830 pounds of food. Most of our food comes from the Food Bank of Iowa with produce coming from the Reiman Gardens Produce Donation Program. We backfill any required items through retail purchases from Fareway – mainly ground beef when needed.

We were the recipients of three major food drives during the year – Lutheran Church of Hope in February, The United Way of Story County in May, and Stonebrook Community Church in August. These food drives are highly worthwhile as they yield large quantities of non-expired items which we normally cannot get from the Food Bank of Iowa.

During the holiday season, we extended our support beyond food by distributing 300 gift cards to previously registered households. These \$30 cards, usable at Fareway for any items except for alcohol, tobacco, or lottery tickets, provided families with the flexibility to meet their unique needs. We also brought joy to 100 young children by distributing Christmas Stockings, sewn and filled by the Bethesda Crafters.

Rod Fischer and Donna Grooms
Co-chairmen

Bethesda Community Clothing Closet

The Clothing Closet has seen an increase in customers this year. In 2024, we served about 2,700 families. The customers can shop once a month for those living in the home. We have customers from the Ames area and other towns in Story County and the surrounding counties.

We have seen an increase in the number of immigrant families, homeless families, and families who have been through fires or other disasters. We have also received an increase in the amount of donations. The big blue cart by the west door is our donation drop-off place. We empty it several times a day.

Gilbert 5th Graders donated about 40 winter coats and other winter items from their December clothing drive. In January, we were gifted the clothes from the lost and found.



Thank you to the 45 volunteers who donate their time to the Clothing Room. Many of the volunteers work several shifts throughout the month, and our customers are very appreciative of our services.

Kathy Harris
Chairperson

Bethesda Women's Ministries

BOARD MEMBERS:

President Lindsay Peters
 Vice President Jo Hutchins
 Secretary Gretchen Mosher
 Treasurer Janice Ballantyne
 Members at Large Carolyn Ahlstrom, Darlene Wolters



SCANDINAVIAN COFFEE: In 2024, Our annual Scandinavian Coffee event's total income was \$11,774.04, expenses of \$1,876.80 for a gross profit of \$9,906.24. Below is a breakdown of the recipients in the benevolence fund and the amount they each received.

RECIPIENT	AMOUNT	CATEGORY
The Bridge Home	\$1,000.00	Community Related Ministry
Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance	\$2,500.00	Community Related Ministry
YSS	\$250.00	Community Related Ministry
AMOS	\$200.00	Community Related Ministry
Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Support (ACCESS)	\$500.00	Community Related Ministry
Bethesda - Venezuelan Family	\$1,500.00	Bethesda Ministry
Bethesda - Tanzanian Ministry	\$200.00	Bethesda Ministry
Bethesda - \$aving Suds	\$1,200.00	Bethesda Ministry
Bethesda Food Pantry	\$1,500.00	Bethesda Ministry
ELCA World Hunger	\$100.00	ELCA Ministry
Lutheran Services in Iowa	\$100.00	ELCA Ministry
Boy Scout Troop #140	\$200.00	Bethesda Charter Troop
TOTAL	\$9,250.00	

QUILTS: Volunteers work every Monday afternoon to assemble and sew quilts and blankets.

CLOTHING CLOSET: Volunteers work in shifts each month to provide hundreds of families with free clothing. The Clothing Closet is open at the same time as the Food Pantry to better serve the families.

CAFÉ BETHESDA: is the first saturday each month before Saturday worship - please join us to volunteer to host.

BETHESDA WOMEN FINANCIAL REPORT 2024			
	Beginning Balance		\$4,003.42
INCOME			
	Scandinavian Coffee	\$11,774 .04	
	Funerals and Anniversary	\$500.00	
	Gather and Cream Tea Offerings	\$596 .59	
	Soup Supper	\$336.00	
	ThankOffering 2024	\$411.50	
	Interest Income	\$2.83	
	TOTAL		\$13,620.96
EXPENSES			
	Scandinavian Coffee	\$1,867.80	
	Cream Tea	\$61.20	
	Benevolent Funding 2023 - Katie's Fund	\$500.00	
	Benevolent Funding 2024	9,250.00	
	Subscriptions	\$24.00	
	Cluster Offering	\$50.00	
	LWR Shipping of Quilts	\$350.00	
	ELCA Good Gifts (Christmas)	\$125.00	
	WELCA - Where it is needed most	\$100.00	
	Staff gift cards	\$100.00	
	Women of the ELCA - 50% Gathering offering from 2023	\$148.50.	
	Women of the ELCA - 50% Gathering Offering from 2024	\$283.00	
	ThankOffering for 2023	\$148.50	
	ThankOffering for 2024	\$411.50	
	TOTAL		\$13,292.73
	Ending Balance		\$4,331.65

Lindsay Peters
Chairperson

Bethesda Tanzania Ministry Team

The Tanzania ministry team continues to provide scholarships for Shighatini students pursuing advanced education in healthcare and has added a scholarship for an industrial electrical technician this year.

Last year, our scholarship recipient was Vida Nathaniel Silla. Vida has started her second year of studies in the Nursing and Midwifery program at Macheme Health Training Institute. This is a 3-year program, and the ministry team has committed to supporting her throughout this program. This program costs about \$1500 per year, including her tuition, books, room and board, and uniforms. We also supplied a laptop to aid in her studies. Vida is grateful for Bethesda's support, and we are excited to help her continue her education.

Winn Vasco Sadik is our newest scholarship recipient, recommended by the Milk Processing Committee. Winn will study to be an Industrial Electrical Technician and return to Shighatini to work at the milk processing plant once his two-year program at Don Bosco Training Institute in Dodoma concludes.

Rotary officials in Tanzania are reviewing the milk processing plant Rotary development grant, and we expect approval soon. The grant money will be used to purchase milk processing equipment and supplies for the facility. Once the new equipment is installed, several local and government agencies will inspect the equipment and facilities to ensure the plant meets all food and safety standards before operations can begin.

In addition to providing scholarships for older youth, BTMT also provides uniforms for school-aged children as children need to have a uniform to attend school in Tanzania. These uniforms cost about \$16, and many families cannot afford them, so their children do not attend school. If the child does have a uniform, it has most likely been passed down from child to child, and the uniforms are in rough shape.

The first time we collected donations was in 2017, and we sent \$1200 to the Shighatini Women's Group. This group of women identified the neediest children, measured them, and sewed about 100 uniforms in one month. They are an amazing group of women, and we want to stress that they are the ones doing all the work in this partnership. In January of this year, we wired money for the 4th time to this group. We sent another \$1200 in November so more uniforms could be made for the school term starting in January. One hundred children received parts of an entire uniform before the school year began in July. We can safely estimate that the Shighatini parish has helped at least 400 children, with varying beliefs from Christian to Muslim and those practicing traditional beliefs, attend school in Shighatini. The uniforms will likely be passed down, so we will likely aid many more children in the future with the purchase of these uniforms.

The Bethesda Tanzania Ministry Team was saddened to learn about Bishop Sendoro's passing. Bishop Chediel Elinaza Sendoro was the first bishop of the Mwanga Diocese in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). He was ordained in 2006 and served as bishop from 2016 until his death in a car accident on September 9, 2024. Bishop Sendoro was a strong supporter of the companion relationships program. A new Bishop of the Mwanga Diocese will be selected on March 10, 2025, at the Mwanga Diocese meetings.

The Bethesda Tanzania Ministry team has begun the process of bringing two more Shighatini parishioners to Bethesda. We hope this can happen in 2025 or early 2026. The Shighatini parish has already selected two people to visit Ames. The first is Reverend George Martin Mfinanga, the pastor of Shighatini parish. Harrison Miraji Mwamtemi, who doesn't speak English very well, will be Reverend Martin's second visitor and translator. Pastor Martin and Harrison already have passports and need to obtain visas. Depending on their visas and airline tickets, they want to visit you in August or September 2025.

Glen Rippke
Chairperson

BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Balance Sheet as at December 31, 2024

	ASSETS	Current Year December 31, 2024	Previous Year December 31, 2023
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash in Banks		\$ 384,185	\$ 410,657
Accounts Receivable		\$ 1,600	\$ 1,600
Prepaid Expense		\$ -	\$ 1,566
Endowment Funds Committed to Projects		\$ 28,899	\$ -
Total Current Assets		\$ 414,684	\$ 413,823
 PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT			
Land		\$ 44,400	\$ 44,400
Building		\$ 2,102,753	\$ 2,102,753
Furniture & Equipment		\$ 2,060,179	\$ 1,980,179
Duplex House & Land		\$ 74,190	\$ 74,190
Total Fixed Assets		\$ 4,281,522	\$ 4,201,522
Less: Accumulated Depreciation		\$ 2,384,242	\$ 2,384,242
Net Property & Equipment		\$ 1,897,280	\$ 1,817,280
 OTHER ASSETS			
Beneficial interest in the endowment funds of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines		\$ 792,000	\$ 617,102
Total Assets		\$ 3,103,964	\$ 2,848,205
 LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS			
LIABILITIES			
Mortgage Payable		\$ 653,129	\$ 699,522
Deferred Revenue - Prepaid Pledges		\$ 42,177	\$ 11,412
Total Payables: Suppliers & Payroll		\$ 19,519	\$ -
Total Liabilities		\$ 714,825	\$ 710,934
 NET ASSETS			
Undesignated/Restricted	Note 1	\$ 139,261	\$ 172,387
Temporarily Restricted (Memorials & Gifts)		\$ 14,440	\$ 43,477
Operating Fund (Cash)		\$ 230,484	\$ 194,793
Total Cash in Banks		\$ 384,185	\$ 410,657
Designated by Council (Endowment Fund)		\$ 792,000	\$ 617,102
Revaluation of Fixed Assets		\$ 1,212,954	\$ 1,109,512
Total Net Assets		\$ 2,389,139	\$ 2,137,271
Total Liabilities & Net Assets		\$ 3,103,964	\$ 2,848,205
 Note 1			
UNDESIGNATED FUNDS/RESTRICTED			
Christian Service & Mission Funds (Tanzania Fund)		\$ 8,389	\$ 8,389
Christian Service & Mission Funds: (Food Pantry)		\$ 48,396	\$ 62,039
Growth Transition Fund		\$ 51,427	\$ 51,427
ASIP & AIRA Funds		\$ 31,049	\$ 50,532
Total Undesignated Funds/Restricted		\$ 139,261	\$ 172,387

BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Revenue & Expense 12-Months December 31, 2024

	December 31, 2024	2024	%
INCOME:	Actual	Budget	of Budget
Offering Income	\$ 889,051	\$ 892,000	100%
Other Receipts	\$ 36,168	\$ 26,500	136%
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 925,219	\$ 918,500	101%
EXPENSES:	2024 "Net" Expenses	2024 Budget	
Christian Education and Youth	\$ 14,934	\$ 11,300	132%
Christian Service, Mission	\$ 80,616	\$ 84,295	94%
Congregational Life and Care	\$ 624	\$ 1,400	45%
Stewardship	\$ 7,105	\$ 7,940	89%
Worship, Music & Arts	\$ 3,966	\$ 12,000	33%
Administrative Support	\$ 98,093	\$ 109,790	89%
Facilities Management	\$ 126,822	\$ 140,800	90%
Mortgage Payments	\$ 65,460	\$ 65,400	100%
Personnel	\$ 535,060	\$ 540,060	99%
Total Expenses	\$ 912,480	\$ 952,985	96%
Net Congregation Cash Inflow (Outflow)	\$ 12,739	\$ (34,485)	
Tanzania Mission: Receipts	\$ 4,800	\$ -	
Tanzania Mission: Spending	\$ (4,800)	\$ -	
Tanzania Reserve Funds Inflow (Outflow)	\$ -	\$ -	
5% Endowment Funds Received from 2023 Balance	\$ 36,094	\$ -	
Funds Received from Congregation for Youth Trip	\$ 8,321	\$ -	
Endowment Funds Spent to-date:	\$ (73,314)	\$ -	
Campaign Funds Inflow (Outflow)	\$ (28,899)	\$ -	
<i>Note 1</i>			
ASIP & ARIA Funds Received from Congregation	\$ 77,157	\$ -	
ASIP & ARIA Funds Spent	\$ (46,108)	\$ -	
Net Cash Inflow (Outflow)	\$ 31,049	\$ -	
Food Pantry Cash Receipts	\$ 57,965	\$ -	
Food Pantry Food Expense	\$ (71,607)	\$ -	
Food Panty Net Cash Inflow (Outflow)	\$ (13,642)	\$ -	
Memorials & Gifts Receipts	\$ 18,764	\$ -	
Memorials & Gifts Expense	\$ (38,590)	\$ -	
Memorials & Gifts Net Cash Inflow (Outflow)	\$ (19,826)	\$ -	
Net Cash (Outflow)	\$ (18,579)	\$ (34,485)	<i>Note 2</i>

Note 1: \$28,899. Expected from 2024 Endowment Funds.

Note 2: \$29,032. of Growth Fund to offset, balance from Operating Fund.
\$5,453. from 2023 Surplus carry-over.

BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Congregation Recommended Budget for 2025

		2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget
Income:					
Offering Receipts:					
	Offering Income	\$ 858,382	\$ 876,761	\$ 873,237	\$ 880,000
	Loose Offerings	\$ 3,961	\$ 4,582	\$ 6,439	\$ 4,000
	Festival Offerings	\$ 7,452	\$ 8,050	\$ 9,375	\$ 8,000
	Total Offerings	\$ 869,795	\$ 889,393	\$ 889,051	\$ 892,000
Non-Offering Receipts:					
	Facility Use Income	\$ 10,690	\$ 22,312	\$ 20,199	\$ 22,500
	Interest Income	\$ 1,610	\$ 5,320	\$ 14,572	\$ 12,000
	Miscellaneous Income	\$ 47,406	\$ 3,252	\$ 1,397	\$ 1,000
	Total Non-Offering Receipts	\$ 59,706	\$ 30,884	\$ 36,168	\$ 35,500
	Grand Total Income:	\$ 929,501	\$ 920,277	\$ 925,219	\$ 927,500
Expenses:					
	Christian Education and Youth	\$ 13,586	\$ 12,731	\$ 14,934	\$ 12,950
	Christian Service, Mission	\$ 77,390	\$ 62,270	\$ 60,616	\$ 65,196
	Congregational Life and Care	\$ 3,058	\$ 1,592	\$ 624	\$ 2,900
	Stewardship	\$ 9,208	\$ 7,411	\$ 7,105	\$ 7,940
	Worship, Music & Arts	\$ 19,134	\$ 9,087	\$ 3,966	\$ 11,100
	Administrative Support	\$ 94,750	\$ 103,133	\$ 98,093	\$ 99,700
	Facilities Management	\$ 137,534	\$ 131,472	\$ 126,622	\$ 145,300
	Mortgage: Principal & Interest	\$ 82,014	\$ 65,460	\$ 65,460	\$ 65,400
	Personnel	\$ 478,710	\$ 521,668	\$ 535,060	\$ 556,659
	Total Budgeted Expenses	\$ 915,384	\$ 914,824	\$ 912,480	\$ 967,145
	Net Increase (Decrease) in General Fund	\$ 14,117	\$ 5,453	\$ 12,739	\$ (39,645)
Funds used to balance the Budget					
	<i>2024 Surplus</i>				\$ 12,739
	<i>Growth Transtion Fund</i>				\$ 26,906
	Total				\$ 39,645
OTHER CONGREGATION ACTIVITIES					
	<i>Food Pantry Cash Receipts</i>	\$ 45,591	\$ 51,147	\$ 57,965	
	<i>Food Pantry Food Expense</i>	\$ (56,515)	\$ (61,544)	\$ (71,607)	
	Net Cash Inflow (Outflow)	\$ (10,924)	\$ (10,397)	\$ (13,642)	
	<i>Memorials & Gifts Cash Receipts</i>	\$ 17,892	\$ 18,687	\$ 18,764	
	<i>Memorials & Gifts Cash Payments</i>	\$ (11,374)	\$ -	\$ (38,590)	
	Net Cash Inflow (Outflow)	\$ 6,518	\$ 18,687	\$ (19,826)	
	<i>Tanzania Mission Cash Receipts</i>	\$ 1,130	\$ 5,960	\$ 4,800	
	<i>Tanzania Mission Cash Payments</i>	\$ (25,555)	\$ (7,097)	\$ (4,800)	
	Net Cash Inflow (Outflow)	\$ (24,425)	\$ (1,137)	\$ -	
	<i>Ames Sanctuary & Interfaith Partners Donations</i>		\$ 57,052	\$ 64,983	
	<i>Ames Sanctuary & Interfaith Partners Spent</i>		\$ (18,393)	\$ (43,653)	
	Net Cash Inflow (Outflow)	\$ -	\$ 38,659	\$ 21,330	
	<i>Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance Donations</i>		\$ 20,032	\$ 12,174	
	<i>Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance Spent</i>		\$ (8,158)	\$ (2,455)	
	Net Cash Inflow (Outflow)	\$ -	\$ 11,874	\$ 9,719	

Christian Service, Mission & Outreach

December 31, 2024

	2025 BUDGET	2025 BUDGET %	Actual Dec.31, 2024
SE Iowa Synod Mission Support - Iowa City	\$ 35,363	55.0%	\$ 35,362
Benevolence Discretionary Fund - per Council	\$ 1,286	2.0%	\$ -
<i>ELCA PARTNERS</i>			\$ -
Bethesda/Tanzania Ministry	\$ 4,501	7.0%	\$ 3,690
Iowa Lutheran Camp - EWALU	\$ 1,929	3.0%	\$ 1,929
Iowa Lutheran Camp - Lakeside	\$ 1,929	3.0%	\$ 1,929
Lutheran Services of Iowa - Ames & Waverly	\$ 1,929	3.0%	\$ 161
Reconciling Works	\$ 1,286	2.0%	
<i>LOCAL & ECUMENICAL PARTNERS</i>			\$ -
Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance	\$ 321	0.5%	\$ 250
Lutheran Sanctuary Interfaith Partners	\$ 321	0.5%	\$ -
AMOS	\$ 1,286	2.0%	\$ 1,286
Bethany Life	\$ 643	1.0%	\$ 643
Center for Creative Justice - Ames	\$ 643	1.0%	\$ 643
Friendship Ark Homes - Ames	\$ 1,286	2.0%	\$ 1,286
Good Neighbor Emergency	\$ 1,929	3.0%	\$ 1,929
Hope in Christ Backpacks	\$ 643	1.0%	\$ 643
Martha's House of Hope	\$ 1,286	2.0%	\$ 1,286
NAACP	\$ 1,286	2.0%	\$ -
The Bridge Home - Ames	\$ 1,929	2.0%	\$ 1,929
Wings of Refuge	\$ 643	1.0%	\$ 643
Youth Service (YSS)	\$ 643	1.0%	\$ 643
Pastors Discretionary Fund	\$ 3,215	5.0%	\$ 2,532
<i>Local Outreach Fund (csm d-102)</i>	\$ 900	1.4%	\$ 3,832
TOTAL	\$ 65,197	100%	\$ 60,616
TOTAL OFFERINGS	\$ 892,000		\$ 889,051
% of Offerings	7%		7%

Bethesda Lutheran Church Ames Iowa Endowments

A wonderful way to secure the future and mission of our church.....and build a Legacy.

Bethesda Lutheran Church Ames Iowa Endow Iowa Fund (116154)

- 1/2/2025 Balance = \$70,103
- Spendable in 2025 = \$3,505
- \$2,806 was used in 2024
- An “Endow Iowa” fund –donations are eligible to receive a 25% Iowa Tax Credit

Bethesda Lutheran Church Ames Iowa Endowment (116590)

- 1/2/2025 Balance = \$733,003
- Spendable in 2025 = \$36,650
- \$33,237 was used in 2024

How Were the 2024 Proceeds Used?

- ELCA National Youth Gathering
- ELCA College Scholarships
- New Sound System
- Electronic Door Locks

Some Prior Uses

- Duplex Renovation
- Debt Reduction
- Tanzania processing plant

For more information about these endowments, contact the church office

Legacy Funds

Why a Legacy Fund?

- Plan ahead, determine which causes you want to support at end of life
- Leave a Legacy – keep supporting causes/organizations that you did while alive
- It is easy to create one
- No money is required to go into the fund while you are still alive

How to start a Legacy Fund?

- Create a name for your fund
- Determine how you will fund your Legacy Fund
- List where you want your funds to go upon your passing
- Let SCCF know if you prefer to be anonymous or not
- If married, when do funds get dispersed? At passing of one spouse or after both passed
- With this information, talk to your SCCF representative who will then draft a Fund Agreement which will be given back to you to amend or approve.
- Once approved all parties will sign the fund to put it into the records.
- Notify your attorney/estate planner to let them know of your Legacy Fund

Additional Information

- When distributing proceeds from the Legacy Fund, the first 10% goes to the Story County Community Foundation Grants Endowment. These funds all eventually make it back into the community.
- Distribution of funds to organizations can be expressed in finite \$\$ or in a % of the whole fund
- Distributed funds must go to charitable organizations – typically 501(c)3's
- Distributed funds can go directly to an organization or to an endowment held by that organization.
- You can amend your fund at any time for free by working with your SCCF representative.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Confident in God's generosity and gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us praise God and give thanks ...

God, we praise you and give you thanks.

You are good, and your mercy endures forever.

You gave us a garden with good food to eat.

We praise you for food that nourishes us.

You rescued your people from slavery.

We praise you for freedom.

You gave us prophets to correct, rebuke and encourage us.

We bless you for your justice and mercy.

You gave us your Son, Jesus, to love, redeem and save us.

We praise you for his death and resurrection.

You gave us your Holy Spirit to be our Advocate and Comforter.

We bless you for the gifts of every tribe and nation.

Strengthen your church with every spiritual gift

and commission us again to be your servant people.

Multiply in us the fruit of the spirit:

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

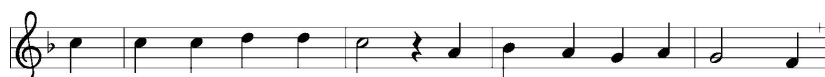
Send us in your love and mercy,

that the world may know you and praise you.

Now Thank We All Our God



1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voice - es,
2 Oh, may this boun - teous God through all our life be near us,
3 All praise and thanks to God the Fa - ther now be giv - en,



who won - drous things has done, in whom this world re - joic - es;
with ev - er joy - ful hearts and bless - ed peace to cheer us,
the Son, and Spir - it blest, who reign in high - est heav - en,



who, from our moth - ers' arms, has blest us on our way
and keep us all in grace, and guide us when per - plexed,
the one e - ter - nal God, whom earth and heav'n a - dore;



with count - less gifts of love, and still is ours to - day.
and free us from all harm in this world and the next.
for thus it was, is now, and shall be ev - er - more.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 840

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586-1649; tr. Cathering Winkworth, 1827-1878

Music: NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, Johann Crüger, 1598-1662

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you are the giver of every good gift. Bless us with all that we need for ministry in your name, that we might be a blessing to others. In the name of the one who broke bread and fed the multitudes, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA.



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