the Wellspring



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

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Adovating for the "Little Ask"

~Chris Cowan, Interim Associate Pastor

Preetings, fellow Bethesda folk! Many of you know me because my husband Arnie and I are members here. Still, briefly, we have been longtime residents of Ames as Arnie uses his many talents as a professor at Iowa State's College of Business. Our three adult children live in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Seattle, Washington; and Springfield, Oregon. We have two rambunctious young cats and one elderly dog.

Some of you will remember that I attended Luther Seminary, served as your pastoral intern, and was ordained in 2014. I then accepted a call to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Ogden, where I served until my retirement in 2021. Since then, I've done supply preaching and am very glad to be able to help Bethesda out during this transition period while we begin the search for a new associate pastor.

When I started seminary in my 50s, I never imagined what God had in store for me. Our God is full of surprises! Many of you also know that during my seminary years, I began to make trips to the Holy Land, first in a seminary class, then as a watercolor instructor in Bethlehem, and then as an Ecumenical Accompanier with the World Council of Churches. In that capacity, I served in the rural West Bank for three months, doing human rights work for the most marginalized of the Palestinian people. In 2014, I was blessed with the opportunity to receive a grant from Luther Seminary to help build a primary school in a politically sensitive area of the West Bank. Although threatened continually by demolition orders, the school is still standing ten years later.

I continue to work for human rights for the Palestinian people living under occupation. I am the chairperson of the Synod Working Group called "Sumud for Justice in Palestine and Israel" ("Sumud Working Group" for short.). In that capacity, I prepare and provide forums

for congregations wanting to learn more about what is happening in West Bank, Israel, and particularly in Gaza. This work has taken on renewed importance since October 7, when Hamas attacked Israel and the current Gaza war began. The International Court of Justice has called the current Israeli war against the Palestinians of Gaza a "plausible genocide" as we have seen nearly 40,000 people killed in Gaza by the continual bombardment.

I also engage in advocacy on behalf of the cause of justice by making trips to visit the offices of our senators and representatives, attending rallies, writing letters and phone calls, and providing educational events of other sorts. The ELCA is urging us to advocate with Congress, the White House, and the State Department for a ceasefire, the release of hostages, and humanitarian aid at scale to meet the immense needs of the Gazan population. These are the "big asks" in our advocacy, but I encourage you to advocate for a "little ask" today. Sometimes, in seeking justice, we can make a difference with a little ask, even when we aren't getting any traction on the big ones. Your voice matters, and together, we can make a difference.

So here is the "little ask." It is only little compared with the big ask of a permanent ceasefire. This ask is of great importance, as it seeks to prevent an epidemic! Currently, the population of Gaza is in dire need of help. They are getting sick because of contaminated water, lack of sewage disposal or trash pickup, and hunger. The World Health Organization recently identified six variant strands of the polio virus in Gazan sewage. This is alarming because over 500,000 children have not received vaccinations during the war. We need to act now to prevent a health crisis.



The World Health Organization is providing vaccines to protect the children of Gaza against polio. Still, the UN reports that they are not able to get the inoculations done due to the extreme danger in Gaza for humanitarian personnel. So we are advocating for "Days of Tranquility," a crucial initiative that can save lives. This short-term truce can make it possible to vaccinate the children at risk and prevent an epidemic of polio in Gaza. "Days of Tranquility" have recently prevented several polio outbreaks during wartime. Most recently, an epidemic was averted in Ukraine when the polio virus was detected in the environment, with only two children becoming paralyzed. What needs to be done is this: we need our senators and congressional representatives to reach out to the Israeli embassy and the US State Department and White House, asking for a pause in the fighting, "Days of Tranquility," to enable the World Health Organization to provide the necessary vaccines in Gaza.

Even if you are unfamiliar with writing to your elected officials, a simple short letter or email in your own words can make a difference for the children of Gaza. (If you are able, email is best.) I encourage each of you to take a few minutes today to write to our Senators and Representative Feenstra, urging them to support the 'Days of Tranquility' initiative. Please pray for peace based on justice for all who live in the land called Holy, the land of Jesus.



To reach Senator Grassley: 35 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510. PHONE: (202) 224-3744. https://www.grassley.senate.gov/contact/questions-and-comments

To reach Senator Ernst: 260 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510. PHONE: (202) 224-3254 https://www.ernst.senate.gov/contact/email-joni



Council Update

~ Chelsey Asienbrey, Council President

reetings to you!

It is hard to believe that summer is almost behind us, and I hope it was full of great memories for you all. With the change of season and the beginning of school, it is a great time to reflect on all that has happened over the summer.

The summer started with a bit of a surprise with the resignation of Pastor Jonathan Dolan. His departure left Bethesda with some holes and uncertainty. However, I was incredibly impressed with how many members stepped up to fill in the gaps — especially with Vacation Bible School. Your actions created an enriching, educational experience for our youngest members and helped to strengthen their faith. I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude for your generous contributions — thank you!

Over the summer months, the Bethesda Church Council has discussed how best to proceed with this vacancy. Several scenarios have been discussed, along with careful evaluation of the benefits/drawbacks of each. We haven't taken the decisions lightly and have prayed, referenced the feedback from the strategic plan, and talked to other members. Ultimately, we have decided to call a special congregational meeting with the intention of forming a call committee. Bethesda has many exciting opportunities on the horizon, and after careful evaluation, we felt that having another called Pastor at Bethesda would serve our immediate and future needs. I look forward to seeing you all on August 25th and ask you to consider whether you feel called to serve on this vital committee for Bethesda.

With the fall season quickly approaching, many items are being planned. A small committee is looking at updating the signage in front of Bethesda. The Stewardship Dinner will occur again in October, which is a great time to connect with fellow members. Youth programming will be centered on Wednesday evenings, including a multigenerational worship service. The new Wednesday night programming begins Wednesday, September 11th with dinner for all at 5 pm and worship beginning at 6 pm.

Daily, I'm thankful to be a part of Bethesda and have a chance to serve all of you as the Council President. I encourage you to be an active part of Bethesda. You are a valued member, and I am thankful you are a part of our church family. If you have any questions, ideas, or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

God's blessings to you all!

Chelsey Asienbrey





Get Ready for Rally Weekend

~ Bethesda Staff

Bethesda's Rally Weekend is taking place Sunday, September 8th at 9:30 am! There will be no Saturday service in preparation for our big programming year kick-off. Instead, we are hosting a blended service, bringing in elements from both modern and tranditional services, on the East patio as we all come together as one to worship God, commission our teachers, present Bibles to our three-year-olds and third graders, and gear up for the fun year we have planned for all congregation members!

After worship, there will be activities for all ages; a bounce house, balloon artist, and face painter for our younger youth, lawn games of all sorts for our older youth and adults. We'll be grilling hotdogs and hamburgers out on the North side of the patio after service so come ready to celebrate the programming kick-off! It is sure to be a fun time for all who attend.



Music At Bethesda

~ **Randy and Nancy Ewing,** Co-directors of Music

Chank you to everyone who shared special music with us this summer. What a nice variety we've been able to enjoy each weekend! If you are looking for an opportunity to share your talents, please reach out to Nancy or Randy Ewing, Co-Directors of Music at Bethesda.

We have had some amazing musicians perform at Bethesda throughout this past year. Singer, author and artist Deb Kline offered a wonderful evening of music and art in September. In March, choirs from Ames High School and Waukee Northwest filled our sanctuary with wonderful choral music during their joint concert. At the end of July, Denver Bierman and the CJC Big Band had people dancing in their seats with their jazz arrangements of beloved hymns and praise songs! All three performances were available to members of Bethesda and the entire community free of charge. Please look forward to and plan to attend more of these types of performances in the coming year!

Speaking of amazing performances at Bethesda, the choirs are gearing up for another great year of music! Bethesda Adult Choir will meet this fall from 7-8:15 on Wednesday evenings, beginning on September 11. Occasionally, we will rehearse until 8:30 as we get into the busy season of Advent/Christmas.

The Carillon Choir will kick off the program year with their first rehearsal on Thursday, September 12, beginning at 6:00 pm in the music room. The Carillon Choir has a great time preparing selections for worship and is scheduled to ring once a month during the 9:30 am Sunday worship service.

Bethesda continues to maintain a strong tradition of great music, and we want YOU to be a part of it! As we've said many times, "make a joyful noise unto the Lord!"



Bethesda Focuses on Youth of All Ages

~ Bethesda Staff

As Bethesda Lutheran Church launches a new programming year, our youth will be at the heart of our exciting and engaging activities. We're thrilled about the revival of Living Water, Wednesday services, and the buzz it's generating around our youth programming. The night kicks off with a communal dinner at 5 p.m., followed by a cross-generational worship service at 6 p.m. and SPLASH Children's church activities at 6:45 p.m. The night continues with OASIS Confirmation at 7 p.m. for all middle school youth, and concludes with the dynamic FLOOD High School Youth Group from 8:00 - 9:00 p.m.

In addition to all of our youth programming, this year, we're also making a concerted effort to connect with college-aged youth who may be seeking a church home while studying at Iowa State University. Recognizing the importance of this outreach, a dedicated College Ministries Team has been formed by a few congregation members. Their focus is to invite individuals ages 18-22 to discover Bethesda and, if they wish, become a part of the Bethesda community.

There is undeniably a lot of positive energy surrounding this new endeavor and the first step for Bethesda making our presence known to students is participating in Iowa State's WelcomeFest on August 28th; letting people know we are an option for them to continue to explore their faith in college with an RIC congregation. At Bethesda Lutheran Church's booth we'll have general information about our church and service times, fun promotional items to students, like stress balls, candy, magnets, phone chargers, mugs and pens, as well as easy things they could involve themselves in as their time allows. In keeping with our Living Water theme, the College Ministries Team has elected to call this program The River. The River is flowing and fluid. It can be loud and rushing and it can be slow and quiet. You can watch from the bank or jump right in. It is fast and it can be slow. Jesus was at the River and the water in lots of way; he preached beside the river and John the Baptist beckoned people to the river to be baptised and to get on board with Jesus.

As Bethesda strives to build all youth programming further, we are hopeful to create a friendly, warm, and welcoming enviornment for those just beginning their faith journey, just visiting a church different from their own, or individuals who want to find a place to continually worship while they are away from home.













Update on Godlisten Msuya

~ Glenn Kappelman, Tanzania Ministries Team

In 2003, Bethesda signed a covenant agreement with the Shighatini Parish in Tanzania that is upheld to this day. In 2006, Godlisten Msuya was our first recipient. As Bethesda continues to provide scholarships for a few individuals in Tanzania to attend medical school, we wanted to give an update on Goldlisten Msuya, and his family since receiving his medical degree.



Godlisten attended school for three years to become a Clinical Officer (Physician's Assistant). After graduation, Godlisten worked as a Clinical Officer at the Shighatini Health Center for seven years. He then left to further his education at medical school. His medical degree is in mental health, but with all his experience as a Clinical Officer, he can truly provide holistic care.



Godlisten often travels to different districts to inform others of psychoeducational resources to enhance the overall social wellbeing of the community. In addition, Godlisten also does home visits for mental health and says it has been helpful in addressing issues at the family level.



Godlisten and two colleagues have established MP (mental-physical) Health Laboratory Services, a vital initiative with the primary goal being to ensure that even members of low-income families have access to group and one-on-one therapy, engaging activities, and other forms of mental health treatment. This mission is crucial, especially considering that 85% of depressed individuals from poor communities lack access to treatment, as reported by WHO. MP Health, which opened in 2023, aims to address these issues and has already served over 2,500 patients.





Work Permits and ELL Classes

~ **Diance Pierce,** ASIP

In the last Wellspring article, we celebrated Jose and Yennyfer's wedding, a powerful testament to their unwavering resilience. Despite the challenges of their journey from Venezuela to the US, they found joy in their union, especially with Russ Melby as the officiating pastor and the special arrangements at Bethesda Lutheran Church.

Jose and Yennifer also received their work permits. Jose got a job at Walmart, where he was initially on probation. He successfully advanced and now works 40 hours a week. In his first month of work, Jose received the "Employee of the Month" pin. He is already working towards moving up within Walmart. Jose is eligible for English support through Walmart in addition to the Memorial Lutheran English lessons. Having received his learner's permit for driving, he is eagerly preparing for his DOT exam.

Yennyfer hopes to qualify for ELL language instruction through DMACC. She knows that learning English is the best way to succeed! She is studying her Driver's Manual and hopes to pass her written driving test soon.

Tadeo attended two Vacation Bible School programs this summer: Memorial Lutheran's and Bethesda's. At Bethesda's VBS, Karsten Battles, who speaks fluent Spanish, helped Tadeo navigate and, more importantly, understand what was going on We thank him for donating his time to help Tadeo feel welcome and loved. Tadeo loved him! Tadeo will be starting 1st grade this fall at Meeker Elementary School. He is doing well with his English skills. Ana Paula will attend Head Start this year at the Northwood Preschool Center.

The family is very distraught over widespread violence in Venezuela resulting from the recent presidential election results. Countries throughout Latin America are challenging its validity. Many more families may be forced to leave the country as conditions deteriorate. They ask for our prayers for their family.







BBQ Cook-Off Aids Mary Greeley Medical Center

~Tess Hanson, Director of Marketing and Communications

On the night of Sunday, August 11th, a crowd of hungry congregation members gathered in the commons for Bethesda's annual Barbecue cook-off. The air was filled with anticipation as three contestants – Tony Woodcock, Pastor Bryan Simmons, and Scott Smyth – were eager to show off their barbecue creations, all dreaming of first place. The winning dish was determined by loose cash donations that benefited the Mary Greeley Medical Center's Compassion Fund, which assists patients with medical-related needs such as prescriptions, medical and safety equipment, lodging, limited transportation, and more.

Each contestant prepared a dish they thought could champion the cook-off, adding a diverse range of flavors to the event. Bryan Simmons, inspired by his recent trip to New Orleans, presented "Voodoo Chicken," chicken wings with a Cajun-inspired flare; Tony Woodcock presented pulled pork with a side of macaroni and cheese, and Scott Smyth rounded out the barbecue selection with brisket.

After an opening prayer from Interim Associate Pastor Chris Cowan, attendees were free to sample the meat creations as many times as they pleased. Lines formed in front of each contestant's stations as they doled out helpings of their cook-off entries. As donations came rolling in from attendees enjoying their food, Scott Smyth's brisket came out on top, with Pastor Bryan taking second place while Tony rounded out third. The friendly competition, fueled by the community's support, raised over \$700 for the Mary Greeley Medical Center's Compassion Fund, making a significant impact on those in need.









2024 ELCA National Youth Gathering Recap

~Bryan Simmons, Lead Pastor

who participated in the ELCA Youth Gathering this past July! The Gathering has its roots in over 100 years of history, with teens getting together to learn how their internal faith impacts the external world. Joining with 16,000 other youth, The Gathering is the largest event in the ELCA across any age group. It engages teens with worship, dynamic speakers, service-learning, and the chance to explore a community different from their own.

St. Andrew's joined with Bethesda this year as we traveled with six youth and four adult leaders. The youth who attended were Noah Hinderaker, Luke Simmons, Evan Smyth, Ben Waddle, Carter Woodcock, and Erik Rice

from St. Andrew's. I want to thank the adult leaders Diane Hinderaker, Tricia Simmions, and Trent Rice from St. Andrews, who donated their time to guide these youth with me.

Our group had a fantastic time exploring the vibrant city of New Orleans, immersing themselves in its rich history and culture. They had the unique opportunity to visit Vue

Orleans, a 360°view museum of the city atop the Four Seasons hotel, savor the culinary delight of beignets at Café du Monde, and delve into the intriguing world of Voodoo at a local museum. They also took the chance to explore the WWII Museum in downtown New Orleans, adding a touch of history to their journey.

The Gathering's central theme was "Created to Be," and explored the theme through 5 topics: Created to Be... Brave, Authentic, Free, Disruptive, and Disciples." Each night of the Gathering was a "mass gathering," where all 16,000 attendees filled the Smoothie King Center

(New Orleans' NBA arena) where these topics were explored through worship, testimonials, singing, performers such as The Afters, Blessing Offor, and Blanca, and keynote speakers such as Dr. Michael Chan, Austin Channing Brown, Dr. Jacqueline Bussie, Rebekah Bruesehoff, and Pastor Sally Azar.

Our group heard themes of God's love and support through the help of others amidst adversity, that our work in this world as Christians involves challenging the systems of oppression that proclaim a different kingdom than the one God proclaims, that we are loved for who we are, that being a disciple of Christ means that we are imperfect administers of God's perfect love.

We had the opportunity to explore what the ELCA is up to as a collective body of churches united for good in this world, including learning about ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran World Relief,

Church World Service, Sumud (formerly Peace not Walls), Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration Services), ELCA Worship, and much more!

I am already looking forward to 2027 when the Gathering will be held in my hometown of Minneapolis! The anticipation for this future event is palpable, and I am sure it will be an unforgettable experience for all. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all who have supported our youth financially on this trip and the Bethesda Endowment, which contributed significantly to the costs of this trip. If you bump into one of our attendees, please ask them about their trip experience, too!





Women's Ministry to Host Cream Tea

~Lindsay Peters, Women's Ministries



Bethesda Women's Ministry is hosting a Cream Tea on September 28th, 2024 from 9:30-11:30 in the Commons. Wear your favorite Tea-party/ Kentucky Durby- hat or fascinator and join us for a short informative presentation followed by Tea, scones, fellowship and crafting! Bring your daughters, mothers, sisters, friends, neighbors and join us! Also join us for Scandinavian Coffee Saturday, October 26th from 7:00 am - 3:00 pm.

Coming Soon to a Church Near You!

~Donna Scherr

B ethesda Lutheran Church is going digital! With the help of several gifts, the Memoral & Gifts Team has the money to install a new video sign on our front lawn. The new sign will be easy to see from both directions and will be able to be quicly updated with Bethesda happenings. The sign is anticipated to be installed mid-September. A big thank you to all donors who supported this project and to the church council for their support.



Save the Date for Bethesda's Stewardship Event

~Ellen Janke, Stewardship Chair



The Stewardship team has secured the Ames Golf and Country Club for the annual stewardship event, for Wednesday, October 2, 5:30 - 8:00PM. Keeping with the past schedules, we will have a social hour from 5:30 to 6:30 and begin seating at 6:30 for dinner. We are currently reaching out to keynote speakers for our big event. More details will be available in the coming months.



Join an Ad Hoc Facilities Team

The facilities chair has recently resigned. We appreciate and recognize all the work Kathy Harris, and her team have put into the church building over the years. As we move forward, we hope to develop an ad hoc team of individuals who would be willing to dedicate their time and talents to Bethesda Lutheran Church. Let Pastor Bryan (bsimmons@BethesdaAmes.org) know if you are interested in joining an ad hoc facilities team!

Grieving a loss?

Join us at GriefShare.

Sundays Aug. 25 - Nov. 24 in the Conference Room.

Call the church office or contact kslocum@prodigy.net or swansonrp@gmail.com for more information.



Youth Registration!

Register your child for Bethesda's Wednesday night programming, beginning September 11th, today!







Scan the appropriate QR code to register.



Congregational Meeting Aug. 25th

There will be a special congregational meeting after worship on Sunday August 25th in the Commons to discuss calling a new associate pastor.





Bethesda Lutheran Church invites you to participate in our annual Trunk-or-Treat event Wednesday, October 30, from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at 1517 Northwestern Ave.

Register to decorate your trunk



https://tinyurl.com/BethesdaTrunkorTreat



<u>August 2024 – Navigating Transitions: From Summer to Fall,</u> from Struggle to Strength

Though the longer days of summer, BBQs, and running through sprinklers are coming to an end, cool evenings at the football stadium, beautiful color-changing leaves, and spending the school day with friends are upon us. As Iowans prepare for the multicolored season of autumn, LSI is here to help you navigate the changing of the seasons.

Transitions can be a difficult time for anyone, and LSI provides services to ease the process of change.

Our Immigrant and Refugee Community Services help new arrivals to the U.S. resettle and start a life in Iowa. Our Host Homes program helps adults living with disabilities transition to greater independence through a mentor-mentee relationship. Our Early Childhood Services prepare parents expecting a child for a healthy birth and provide support as children transition from milestone to milestone. Our foster parents provide safe, loving homes for children moving through the foster system as they await adoption.

Whether we're helping someone through a difficult life transition in therapy or teaching former refugees English and cultural competency skills, at LSI we're there every step of the way. If you need support during a transition in your life, visit LSIowa.org to learn more about our services.

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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Saturdays @ 5:30 pm | Sundays @ 9:30 am Livestreamed at www.bethesdaames.org and Facebook BethesdaAmes

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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 Winter issue (deadline TBD).

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

Bethesda Lutheran Church

1517 Northwestern Avenue Ames, Iowa 50010

www.BethesdaAmes.org

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Welcome to Bethesda Lutheran Church, a community committed to radical inclusion, racial equity abundant grace knowing that we cannot be separated from the love of God by—well—anything!

WORSHIP

SATURDAYS @ 5:30pm Modern

SUNDAYS @ 9:30am Traditional

Livestreamed at: facebook.com/ BethesdaAmes,

WEDNESDAY STARTING SEPT. 11

DINNER

Wednesdays @ 5:00 pm weekly All are welcome!

NEXTGEN WORSHIP

Wednesdays @ 6:00 pm weekly A service for all ages

SPLASH CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Wednesdays @ 6:45 pm weekly Pre-K through 5th Grade

OASIS CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Wednesdays @ 7:00 pm weekly 6th through 8th Grade

FLOOD FELLOWSHIP NIGHTS

Wednesdays @ 8:00 pm weekly 9th through 12th grade









BACKPACK BLESSING

August 24th/25th... 5:30 pm/9:30 am

School aged-children will have their backpacks blessed at Saturday and Sunday services.

RALLY WEEKEND

September 8... 10:30 am

Join us after worship for food, fellowship, and games as we kick off our programming year!

SAVE the DATES

Café Bethesda... 5:30 pm The first Saturday of the month. Enjoy food and fellowship before worship.



Scandinavian Coffee Oct. 26th 9:00 am - 2:00 pm



Trunk -or- Treat Oct. 30th 6:00-8:00 pm

