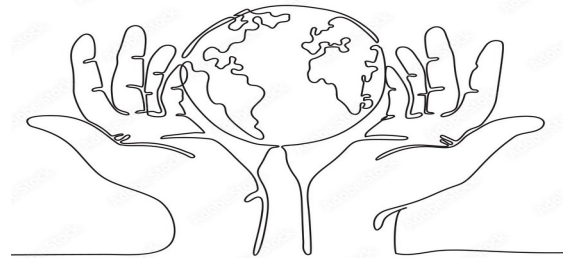


May

The Foundation of Stewardship

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it;
the world, and those who live in it. -Psalm 24:1*

The Bible consistently gives us a countercultural and counterintuitive understanding of the world and ourselves. It's so radical that many of us can't accept it.



The idea is that the world belongs to God, and so does everything *IN* the world. Even *US!* We, who proudly think of ourselves as autonomous, self-directed and self-made, actually belong to God. In other words, we don't own ourselves. We are possessions of the Almighty.

Think about that for just a minute. We don't own the earth, our houses, our cars, our possessions, our animals, our children, or even ourselves. It all belongs to God. We belong to God. We are humble servants, slaves, actually.

The reality that God owns everything, even us, forms the foundation for biblical stewardship. If God owns everything, including us, then we are responsible to God for our wisest and best use of the planet, our possessions, our talents and our lives.

Taking that responsibility seriously, God's people will prayerfully make choices that are in accordance with God's wishes. We will care for ourselves, our neighbors, and the earth. We will strive to love the Lord our God with all our being, and our neighbor as ourselves.

Prayerfully consider, how are you doing?

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Bethany Lutheran Church Planning Council

"A Christ-centered family who serves by sharing God's love and hope with all."

Tuesday, April 16, 2024 - 6:00 PM



Present in Person – Russ Wright, Paul Wick, Sandi Schmidt, Sue Boblit, Shannon McAllister, Sue Metcalf, Denise Kramer Tolzmann, Randy Phillips, Kristin Bensen, and Rev Peter Rosenkvist **Guests Present** – Elizabeth Essick

Devotions – Sue Boblit – *A blessing for a good pause*

Election of council officers – Motion by Randy Phillips to elect the following officers – Russ Wright - President, Paul Wick - Vice President, Sue Boblit - Secretary, Sandi Schmidt - Treasurer. Second by Denise Kramer Tolzmann, no further discussion. Motion passed by voice vote.

Check-in Time – Several spoke to where they had seen or experienced God in the past week.

Agenda – No additions to the agenda were noted. Motion by Sandi Schmidt to approve agenda, second by Sue Metcalf. Motion carried.

Secretary's Report – Motion by Paul Wick to approve both reports as presented (March 19th Meeting and April 2nd Special Meeting). Second by Denise Kramer Tolzmann. Motion carried.

Correspondence – City of Spencer letter to participate in Earth Day Cleanup; Sue Boblit will organize.

Treasurer's Report/Monthly Expenses for March – Sandi Schmidt went through the reports. Motion by Paul Wick to approve, second by Denise Kramer Tolzmann. Motion carried.

Ministry Teams and other reports – Written worship report attached. Report was reviewed by Kristin Bensen. Motion by Randy Phillips to approve, second by Denise Kramer Tolzmann. Motion carried.

Congregational Activity Report – included in packet.

Pastor's Report – Rev Rosenkvist reviewed his written report which is attached. Motion by Kristin Bensen to approve, second by Sandi Schmidt. Motion Carried

Unfinished Business:

Covid Protocol – No changes to protocol currently

North Door Security System – System is up and running. Elizabeth reports that it is working well.

Review and approve Sabbatical Policy – Policy was reviewed; a few suggestions for additions were made. Denise will review and bring policy to May meeting for approval.

Review Strategic Planning Goals – The goals from 3/3/2020 were reviewed. Suggestions were made that we look at one item from each of the goals and work on it going forward. More discussion in May.

Constitution Discussion – Read and reviewed Chapter 11 – Congregational Council, C11.05 - C11.05.04. C11.05.05 - C11.05.09 will be read and reviewed at the May meeting.

New Business:

Review 2023 Audit Report – The written report from the audit committee was read and reviewed. Motion by Denise Tolzmann to approve, second by Sue Metcalf. There were no questions or discussion. Motion carried.

Security Protocols – Discussed what security protocols we should have in place - daily, and on Sunday mornings. We will have further discussion at May meeting.

Call Committee- Sue Metcalf reports that the MSP has been submitted to the Synod. Will wait for response.

Pastor Peter – Update on worship services and a few changes to his schedule.

Closing Prayer – Pastor Peter

Next meeting = May 21st, 2024 Devotions – Sue Metcalf

Respectfully Submitted by Sue Boblit, Planning Council Secretary

MINUTES SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE MAY 21, 2024 COUNCIL MEETING.



The afternoon session included the Bishop's Report where Bishop Lorna announced she would not stand (be a part of the voting process) for bishop at the 2025 Synod Assembly. Elections for various committees and delegates to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix were held. There were only two resolutions and both passed. The first was the 2025 Synod Compensation and Care Guidelines which was amended to increase the pulpit supply rate. The second resolution was to adopt the 2024 and 2025 synod budgets. The assembly closed with the installation of the Synod Council and prayer.

Assembly offerings totaling almost \$21,000 will be distributed to two ministries – 1.) Help with registration and transportation expenses of youth going to the National Youth Gathering (75%) and, 2.) the Western Iowa Synod Hog Project (25%) which provides Iowa pork to community pantries in the Western Iowa Synod. The Synod asked for \$450 from each congregation and Bethany's offering was \$513 garnered from Lenten meal offerings.

[NOTE: "Clay County Food for Life" is the local non-profit providing meat to people in need and it works closely with UDMO which distributes the meat. The address for CCFLL is PO Box 126, Spencer IA 51301. If you have any questions, Denise can help.]

A goal for the 2025 Synod Assembly would be to have greater representation from Bethany Lutheran by sending additional delegates – (1) a young adult, age 19-30; and (2) a youth (confirmed 18 and under).

A copy of a special edition of WATERLIFE JOURNAL is available in the narthex (one page synopsis of assembly). The monthly WATERLIFE JOURNAL (an online flip-magazine) is delivered via email from the synod. If you would like to be on that mailing list, please tell Elizabeth in Bethany's office.

Kristin and Denise were Bethany's voting lay delegates. Rostered leaders also attending were Rev. Rosenkvist and Rev. Mechler.



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK ... updates on what the Council is working on.

Good News! The new roof on the Welcome Center is done and no more leaks!

The north door camera has been installed and is working. This comes with new security protocols at Bethany. All doors in the church will remain locked. When you come to the north door, push the button on the camera and Elizabeth will let you in.

The first draft of a new personnel policy at Bethany providing sabbatical leave for rostered ministers was reviewed. This employment benefit has not been offered before at Bethany and was seen as a possible enticement for future ministerial staff. It demonstrates Bethany's commitment to the well-being of staff during continuous service, along with the congregation's desire to also learn and grow through the sabbatical process. If you have any questions, call or write Council Member Denise Tolzmann.

The Council continues to work on strategic long-range planning for Bethany Lutheran. Down the road, we will need congregation participation to get things started – watch for more details.

We are also working on being more intentional in doing all the things the constitution says the council will do.

Christ's peace be with you.

Russ Wright, Council President



SYNOD ASSEMBLY REPORT

DENISE KRAMER TOLZMANN AND KRISTIN BENSON

The Western Iowa Synod is one of 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The Synod Assembly is a combination business meeting/worship/convention/training held annually; this year at three locations in Council Bluffs April 19-20 and over 200 people attended, representing the 115 congregations in Western Iowa.

The theme for this year's assembly was – "Stir Us Up to Be – Brave, Authentic, Free, Disruptive Disciples" – and the theme was depicted with spoons. Watch for utilization of spoons "stirring us up" at Bethany in the days and weeks to come!

Friday afternoon's pre-assembly session was led by Rev. Paul Erbes, a long-time ELCA minister across the country now serving as Vice President of Advancement & Fundraising at Morningside University. The first half of his presentation was on "God's Economy" – the purpose of which is LOVE (love God; love neighbor). Many Biblical references pointed us to being (1) responsible stewards – taking care of stuff; (2) faithful stewards – taking care of God's stuff; and (3) evangelical stewards – taking care of God's plan. The program continued with fundraising in congregations (the core concepts, giving sources, practical tools – many great opportunities for stewardship!).

The Synod's fall 2023 fundraiser for food relief was a barbecue challenge. The winner prepared the evening community meal of smoked pork Friday evening. A three-hour assembly opening and worship followed. Congregational and individual anniversaries were recognized. Notable anniversaries around Spencer include the 75th Anniversary of Drive-In Worship at First Lutheran in Milford (the oldest continuous drive-in worship in the country!). Also, Rev. Peter Morlock (Bethany/Emmetsburg & Lost Island/Ruthven) was recognized for 30 years of rostered Word & Sacrament ministry and Deacon Lynn Egesdal for 10 years of rostered Word & Service ministry.

"God's Work, Our Hands" is scheduled for September 8, 2024 and this is the ten-year anniversary. The ELCA's World Hunger program is fifty years old.

The beautiful worship service music was led by a young people's choir. A short clip was posted on Bethany's Facebook page ("All Are Welcome"). Kristin liked the processional and utilization of streamers that seemed to represent the Holy Spirit. Denise enjoyed singing with the over 200 Lutherans worshipping - the sound was almost angelic! The evening's message was delivered by Vicar Paige McGrath from Sioux City – stirring us to recognize that disruption brings new life. She encouraged all to be their brave, authentic self – even if it's disruptive.

Saturday morning's keynote address was light-hearted and honestly delivered by Methodist minister Rev. Debra McKnight, the founding pastor of 'Urban Abbey' in Omaha (theurbanabbey.org). She stirred us to be aware of the Spirit moving and ministering in our communities. She encouraged us to develop a year-round plan of action ("Fail to plan – plan to fail") based on everything happening in community; then thinking about what makes sense to celebrate in worship. "Get over yourself ... Look to the future." "Presence over programs."

continued on page 6



THANK YOU!!

The Bethany Altar Guild extends thanks to these folks who shared an Easter lily in honor or memory of a loved one for our Easter worship service:

- Twila Henning in memory of Mel Henning
- Jill Meyer in memory of Henry Meyer
- Kirk and Sue Andersen in memory of family
- Steve & Shannon McAllister in memory of family
- Kent, Lisa, and Mike Baker in memory of Connie Baker
- Russ and Onalee Wright in memory of loved ones
- Janna Reis in memory of Jim Reis
- Denise Kramer Tolzmann in memory of loved ones
- Jody Vollmer in memory of Jim Vollmer
- Denise Kramer Tolzmann in honor of brothers and sisters in Christ in Tanzania
- Ellen Sorenson in memory of Joel Sorenson
- Steve & Rhonda Salts in memory of our parents.
- Deb Mechler in memory of loved ones

Western Iowa Synodical Women's Organization 36th Annual Convention

Intergenerational Faith



Generation after Generation stands in Awe of your work; each one tells stories of your mighty acts. Psalm 145:4

June 15, 2024
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
300 E Bow Dr
Cherokee IA 51012

For more information, contact:
Diane Ohrtman, 800 W 21st, Carroll, IA 51401 712-210-1107

PRAYER CONCERNS



Listed below are current prayer concerns along with those from over the past month. Prayers have been lifted up for these folks at Bethany and beyond.

If you have a prayer concern or request, please let us know.

Health Concerns:

Darlene Stough, Kirk Andersen, Bess Madsen, Donna Jones, Lyle Youngdahl, Gary Hazelton, Emma Swanson (Greg and Linda Manwarren's niece) Norb Manwarren (Greg Manwarren's brother) Karen Johnson (Janet Keck's sister)

Congratulations & Thanksgiving -



Onalee & Russ Wright on birth of granddaughter Della Renee Johnson (parents are Brianna & Jared)



Sunday Kidz Time with Sara and Linda

These are the last opportunities before the summer break! We invite you to join us for some fun and fellowship after worship!

We will be meeting in the Children's Library upstairs. See you there!!

-  **May 5 - Making Mother's Day crafts!**
-  **May 19 - Special last day games and snack!**





A group of women from Bethany continue to meet for lunch at various restaurants in town. A casual opportunity to visit, get to know one another better, and dine dutch-treat (no need to do dirty dishes!) is enjoyed by all.

See you May 6th at Plaza Mexico!



RED GERANIUMS FOR PENTECOST

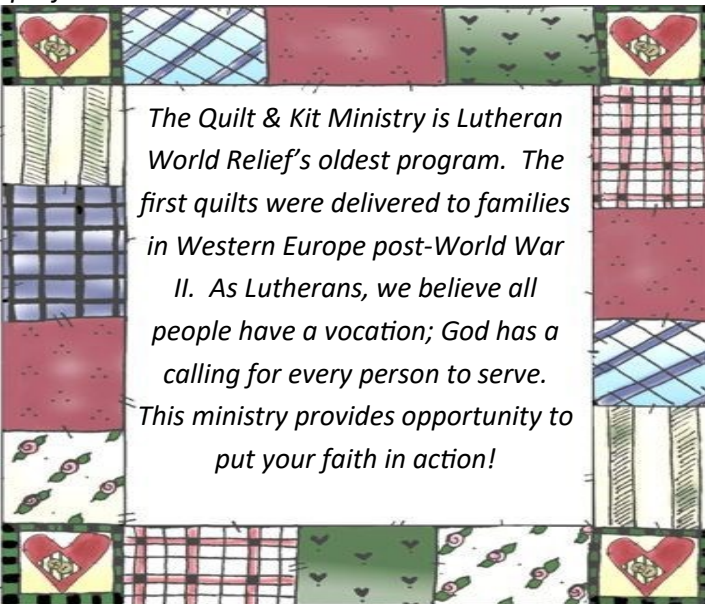
We invite you to share a geranium to decorate the sanctuary on Pentecost Sunday, May 19th. You may take them home after the service that day. The cost is \$5.00 each. See the sign-up sheet at the Welcome Center by May 13th. *We would also like to extend an invitation to bring and share ANY flowers you love in shades of reds, oranges, yellows and golds to decorate for our Pentecost celebration.*

Women of Bethany

FUN & FELLOWSHIP

Share your love and show support for others in need by helping tie quilts and assemble mission kits for Lutheran World Relief at our next gathering of Fun and Fellowship! All are welcome to join these efforts. Come to the dining room downstairs at 9 am on Thursday, May 11. Many hands will make light work.

BLESSING OF QUILTS & KITS *The annual shipment of kits and quilts for Lutheran World Relief is May 18th, so we will be blessing the items on May 12th. Thanks, ladies, for all your loving work on this project!*



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



Each worship service and activity at Bethany Lutheran Church comes together through the work of many people. There are numerous opportunities for volunteers to assist and we encourage and welcome your help. Look at the Welcome Center for a list of areas where you, too, can be servants of God.

-Bethany Worship Planning Team



BETHANY
LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA

Prayers for the Call Process

Pray...

Gracious gifting God, we are reminded of your gifts in and for all the children of the church. Call on our gifts now, use us, in service of your whole church. As we work to call a new pastor to our congregation, may your Holy Spirit lead us to discern the gifts we seek and see those gifts clearly in the candidates you are sending to us. In our communications, interviews and meetings with them, may we find ourselves once again who we surely are in Christ Jesus, stewards of your many gifts. Amen.

May Birthdays & Worship Notes

Wish these members and friends at Bethany a happy birthday in May! If you have a birthday in May and it is not on the list, please let us know! Likewise, if you prefer that we do not share your birthdate, give us a call.

- May 1 ----- Gary Halverson
- May 2 ----- Joanne Schar
- May 5 ----- Karen Halvorson
- Casey Vanderpool
- Jacob Lawson
- May 6 ----- Owen Storley
- May 7 ----- Elliot Barrick
- May 9 ----- Kenneth Wright
- Sarah Thu
- May 11 ----- Arya Studer
- May 12 ----- Debra Brodersen
- May 14 ----- Sydney Sundall
- May 15 ----- Michael Baker
- May 17 ----- Dianne Wallwey
- Elissa Barrick
- Lilly Harrington
- May 18 ----- Jalyce Storley
- Aubrie Davis
- May 20 ----- Ann Frink
- Kaitlynn Levisay
- May 22 ----- Joni Waldstein
- May 23 ----- Val Curry
- May 25 ----- Cheyenne Manwarren
- May 26 ----- Kim Wilson
- Rich Gores
- May 27 ----- Adam Labernik
- John Labernik
- May 28 ----- Lyle Youngdahl
- May 29 ----- Dennis Peterson
- Pat Cowell
- Madison DeVlaeminck
- Jordan Dirks
- Ian Youngdahl
- May 30 ----- Madison Davis

Listed below are the lectionary readings for services in May along with volunteers who are helping this month. Worship onsite, via livestream online (times indicated below), or catch a rebroadcast aired on SMU Channel 2 on Tuesdays at 5 pm or Wednesdays at 10 am.

MAY 5 – 9 AM - EASTER 6

Scriptures: Acts 10:44-48, Psalm 98
1 John 5:1-6, Mark 15:21-39 and John 3:16-17

Greeter: Russ & Onalee Wright; Reader: _____;
Communion servers: 1) Onalee Wright, 2) Jody Vollmer,
3) _____, 4) _____
Ushers: Russ Wright Fellowship: J & F Hiemstra

MAY 12 – 9 AM – EASTER 7 (MOTHER’S DAY)

Scriptures: Acts 1:15-17, 21-26, Psalm 1
1 John 5:9-13, John 20:19-23

Greeter: Janna Reis; Reader: Mary Marske
Communion servers: 1) Onalee Wright, 2) Twila Henning,
3) Lois Becker, 4) _____
Ushers: Russ Wright Fellowship: S & D Witt

MAY 19 – 9 AM - PENTECOST DAY

WEAR RED TO CHURCH TODAY!

Scriptures: Acts 2:1-21, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
Rom 8:22-27, John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

Greeters: _____; Reader: _____
Communion servers: 1) Onalee Wright, 2) Twila Henning,
3) Jody Vollmer, 4) _____
Ushers: _____ Fellowship: Schiefelbein Burns

May 26 – 9 am - Holy Trinity Sunday

Scriptures: Isa 6:1-8, Psalm 29
Rom 8:12-17, John 3:1-17

Greeters: _____; Reader: _____
Communion servers: 1) Onalee Wright, 2) _____,
3) _____ 4) _____
Ushers: _____ Fellowship: C Heiter & M Hugen

**Happy Birthday
Brothers & Sisters in Christ!!**



“A Christ-Centered Family Who Serves by Sharing God’s Love & Hope With All”

Handy ‘clip & save’ box with contact data and other useful information



Bethany Lutheran Church - ELCA
15 W. 14th St. Spencer, IA 51301
Phone: (712) 262-2327
www.bethluthspencer.com

FIND US ON FACEBOOK:

Bethany Lutheran Church,
Spencer IA-ELCA

YOU TUBE:

Bethany Lutheran Church
Spencer, IA

STAFF:

Intentional Interim

Pastor Peter Rosenkvist
bethany@bethluthspencer.com

Director of Worship and Music:

Elina Leander Ozolins
sveiks@mediacombb.net

Secretary:

Elizabeth Essick
bethany@bethluthspencer.com

Custodian:

Bob Hartzell

CHURCH COUNCIL:

Russ Wright, President
Paul Wick, Vice-President
Sue Boblit, Secretary
Sandi Schmidt, Treasurer
Council members-at-large:
Shannon McAllister
Kristin Bensen
Denise Kramer Tolzmann
Sue Metcalf
Randy Phillips

The racing green leather couch in the pastor’s study, of my childhood, was wonderful to sit on. I played with Hot Wheels there. I sometimes sat on it waiting for my father to finish his head usher duties or council meetings with Pastor Ralph.

Dad was permitted to climb stairs to the sacristy. I wasn’t. I was too young. The steps were steep. Nearly 90 degrees. It was a Vincent Van Gogh type of room (just big enough for a cot and chair, plus a tiny window). I would be allowed to enter the sacristy after my Confirmation Day. Until then the green couch befriended me. No T.V. No Wi-fi. This was between 1963 to 1971.

That sacristy had an interesting history. During one chapter of life an organist would sleep in the sacristy. His other job was being our church janitor and playwright. Once he did a one man show about Vincent Van Gogh on Off-Broadway. I think the sacristy inspired him more than the Dutch paintings.

I admit, I once snooped around the pastor’s study. Not my finest moment. I checked out the pastor’s closet. The robes were all black. I tried one on. Checked myself out in his mirror. Dad reprimanded me as a father ought. Said to me, “One day you’ll have your own office.” And a green couch, I asked? He made no promises. Before dad died he heard me preach once; the Sunday after ordination. He told me I needed to study more and in the meantime to purchase some good sermons. Study them, he meant.

Dad never saw me in a pastor’s study. I could tell him: people who have no restraint do snoop on the pastor's things. Many church offices and parsonages are neglected. I’ve known cold winters with a space heater, where even cross ventilation was nonexistent. That has not been the case in either Bethlehem or Bethany. One pastor room I was given (years back) existed in a church basement. It had no windows. The furniture was left over garage sale items that never sold. Two chairs and a steal table. It was hoped the pastor would leave. The pastor did. And no pastor to this day has taken a call there. The pastor’s study is certainly a reflection of the congregation and not just the pastor.

I know pastors can get derailed or distracted from study time. To preach faithfully, and to administer the sacraments purposely, caringly, and to teach classes well, takes study and prayer time. May call committees remember to discuss hospitality and study time with candidates. After installation be sure to check out your pastor’s office. Like phones, and doors, appointments work in two directions as well. You may always make an appointment to see your pastor. Don’t wait or assume the pastor will call on you.

After my confirmation day the pastor moved on as did his green couch. Upon my retirement I’ll get my leather chair. Maybe racing green. Maybe.

– Peace, *Pastor Peter*