



# Bethesda News

December 2017

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Bethesda Lutheran Church: a congregation of S.W.I.M  
South West Iowa Ministries, Western Iowa Synod, ELCA  
2475 140<sup>th</sup> St., Clarinda, IA 51632

<http://swimwebsite.weebly.com>

Worship @ 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School @ 10:00 a.m.

Fellowship Coffee @ 10:00 a.m.

Marietta Nelson Bittle ~ Phone: 712-890-9882 email: [swiministries@gmail.com](mailto:swiministries@gmail.com)

Gordon Scott ~ Phone: 712-826-4175



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## From Marietta ...

This holiday season as you get some more time with family and friends than you may throughout the rest of the year, I want to encourage you to think about stories. Ask the little ones to share their version of the meaning of Christmas. Ask the older ones about their childhoods, Christmases past, their memories of faith, whether it be tied to church or family or both or neither.

For storytelling holds a unique place in our faith tradition. The Bible is full of stories that help us see who God is and who we are. And it does so in beautiful language, especially in John 1:

*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.*

Our Savior Jesus taught primarily through storytelling. The Prodigal Son. The Widow's Mite. The 10 Lepers. The Four Soils. Our faith is shared with our children and with others through storytelling. Our worship services are stories of a sort. Our lives in fact are most often shared with others through our stories. Stories have power. They are ways in which we can knit ourselves, our families, our communities together.

### **Stories are hard-wired in our brains.**

Author and psychiatrist Curt Thompson writes: "The process of reflecting on and telling others your story, and the way you experience others hearing it, actually shapes the story and the very neural networks - those physical networks in your brain - it represents." In other words, we thrive when we listen and tell.

### **Stories help us heal wounds.**

Over and over professionals have searched for quick-fixes and solutions to wounded souls and wounded hearts. Overwhelmingly they've found - whether in a community terrorized by genocide or an individual raised in abuse - that telling the story of the trauma helps people heal.

### **Stories help us find meaning.**

Societies have always used stories to teach young people, to preserve traditions and to pass on history and practices. Today in our fast-paced society we don't always stop to talk or to listen to each other. Let's work on recapturing that.

### **Stories cultivate authenticity**

Pastor and author Frederick Buechner writes: "What we hunger for perhaps more than anything else is to be known in our full humanness, and yet that is often just what we also fear more than anything else. It is important to tell at least from time to time the secret of who we truly and fully are because otherwise we run the risk of losing track of who we truly and fully are and little by little come to accept instead the highly edited version which we put forth in hope that the world will find it more acceptable than the real thing. It is important to tell our secrets too because it makes it easier for other people to tell us a secret or two of their own."

### **Stories help us live.**

The unhurried process of telling and listening invites us into a kind of sacred cadence, a rhythm that can reform our hearts, and even rewire our brains. Science and faith agree – Story is central. Author Joan Didion says we tell stories in order to live. Tell and listen as if your life depended on it.

### **Stories are part of God's plan for us**

Over and over in Scripture, God's rescued people are told to remember. The Israelites are commanded to remember the great rescue from Egypt. The exiles are told to remember God's faithfulness. The disciples are commanded by Jesus at the end of Matthew's gospel to go and tell the story to all nations. Without stories, the Apostle Paul's work to spread the Gospel would have been very different.

Take a few minutes between now and the New Year to hear a story, to share a story, to remember that your story is caught up in the great narrative that God is telling. And in that taking up, God is transforming your story to one of forgiveness and wholeness and restoration.



**The Lydia Circle** will meet at the church in the Upper Room on Thursday, Dec. 21st. at 2:00 p.m. Pastor Marietta will lead the Bible Study. Please bring some snacks to share for lunch.

**The Bethesda Women of the ELCA** will meet at Penny Setterburg's home for a Christmas Luncheon. The time and date will be announced later.

### **Thank You Letters**

Dear Members of Bethesda WELCA,

We are so grateful for your generous donation of \$50.00 to LSI. Because of you, Iowa parents are feeling empowered and children are building bigger, brighter futures.

You were there for Tina when she felt helpless in caring for her daughter, Brea. When Brea was hospitalized for mental health concerns, Tina knew her child needed more support than what she could provide at home. She drove to the nearest LSI office, overwhelmed and in tears.

That night, LSI staff members worked with Tina to find a mental health treatment center that could meet Brea's needs. When Tina thought she was lost and alone LSI was there to walk alongside her, thanks to you.

Brea, now 17, feels supported and encouraged through mental health services. She is making positive choices, eating healthier, and she is now involved in several sports at school. All the while, Tina is confident and in control of caring for her daughter.

Thank you for lifting up your Iowa neighbors. We couldn't do this important work without you!  
With gratitude,

Jason Lee, VP of Philanthropy and Church Relations

### **Dear Friends of Lutheran Lakeside Camp.**

Thank You so much for your generous gift of \$50.00 towards a new stove for camp. Your gift is making a difference in the lives of children. Now more than ever children need outdoor ministries like Lutheran Lakeside Camp. Statistics show that 7% of the nations children spend less than 1 hour a week outside of their own will. Children need to experience the awe of God in nature. Thank you for your partnership in providing this experience for children and families.

Please remember the camp in your prayers as we seek to provide experiences that will open them up to listening for God's call in their lives.

May the Lord continue to bless your congregation. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Shalom,  
Jerry & Carolyn Fritsch  
Executive Directors

**On November 7th the Bethesda WELCA** sent 10 boxes containing 60 school kits to Lutheran World Relief where they in turn will send them to where ever they are needed the most. We hope that we have helped some children go to school and have the supplies that they need.



November 19<sup>th</sup> was an exciting day at Bethesda. Addy Resh was baptized. Addy and Mariska Kirchert received Bibles from the church and had their first communion. We welcomed new members Joni Sunderman, Jolene Wallin and Deb Wagoner. May God bless all of you as you join our church family.



The church was full as Bethesda celebrated the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation

with a special music service Sunday morning, October 29<sup>th</sup>. The Bells of Joy, Bethesda Recorder Consort, adult and children's choir shared music to a church full of worshipers. Favorite Luther hymns were sung and meditations were read. Alisha Buttercase, Maggie Carlson, Reilly King and Sydney Johnson received their Bibles and had their first communion. It was a very special day and we thank all who participated.





A large number of members and friends enjoyed a soup and pie supper serviced by the Property committee before our Thanksgiving service. Thank you to everyone who contributed pies and to Jolene for making the delicious soup. The Thanksgiving service was led by Pastor Marietta and special music was provided by the Bells of Joy and Maeve Bittle.

### **December 17 Acolyte Training**

If you are in third grade or above and would like to serve as an acolyte at Bethesda please plan to attend training during the Sunday School hour. What is an acolyte? It is someone who helps lead worship. This can involve lighting candles, helping with offering plates, holding the pastor's big book ... and other things. We'll walk through the duties of an acolyte and learn a little more about worship. It should take about 45 minutes. **Parents are invited, too!** At the end of the training, we will talk through options for scheduling acolytes for duty.

### **AMMPARO/Guardian Angels Training**

The ELCA's strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection Advocacy (AMMPARO) was envisioned after witnessing the plight of children who are forced to flee their communities because of complex and interrelated reasons, including chronic violence, poverty, environmental displacement and lack of opportunities in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. The Nebraska and Western Iowa synods have partnered to offer a training event for people called to fulfill an important role for these children appearing in court. The training is Jan. 13, 2018, at St. Thomas Lutheran in Omaha. For information and registration: contact Rebecca Sheridan. Her email is [rebecca@nebraskasynod.org](mailto:rebecca@nebraskasynod.org) and phone is 402-896-5311.

### **Western Iowa Synod Leadership Academy 2018**

The WIS annual leadership academy, Leading Change in the Heartland, will be held Feb. 10 from 9:30 to 3 at St. John Lutheran in Carroll. the cost is \$20 per person if registered by Jan. 25; \$30 thereafter.



During Advent, we will be using the melody of *Savior of the Nations, Come* for the Kyrie and Gospel response. This hymn is one of the longest-running hymns in the church and can be traced back to around 380 when it was sung in Latin. Martin Luther translated it into German, probably for Advent in 1523. The text takes us from the manger while assuming the victory of the cross and resurrection. Thus, "Come" refers to Christ's first coming, second coming and coming to us here and now

**Thank you** to everyone who bought Poinsettias to make our church beautiful for Christmas and support our recorder consort.

**Thank you**

A sincere thank you to the congregation for the card and gift certificate to the Wilson Performing Arts center. I found the surprise on the organ following our Reformation Service. I already have plans to use it for a concert in December and look forward to many more.

I am blessed to attend a church that values music and whose members are willing to share their talents.

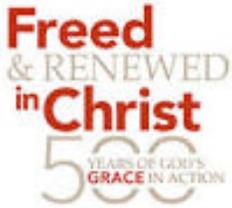
Sincerely,  
Yvonne



**Gifts That Keep on Giving**

Do you have that someone on your gift-giving list that has everything? Have you thought about giving a gift in their honor to one of the many ELCA/Western Iowa Synod projects?

Do you need more tax deductions for the year? Think about making a tax deductible gift that will help those in need here at home and around the world. Some of the projects are: ELCA World Hunger, ELCA Malaria Campaign, Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran Services of Iowa, ELCA Good Gifts, and the Western Iowa Well Project. If you would like more information, you can check [www.ELCA.org/hunger](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger), [www.ELCA.org/malaria](http://www.ELCA.org/malaria), [www.ELCA.org/goodgifts](http://www.ELCA.org/goodgifts) on the web.



**Morning Worship @ 9:00 A.M.**  
**Sunday School @ 10:15 A. M.**  
**Fellowship Coffee @ 10:00 A.M.**  
**Communion first and last Sunday of the month**

### **Preaching Schedule at Bethesda**

Dec 3 Marietta Nelson-Bittle  
Dec 10 Gordon Scott  
Dec 17 Marietta Nelson-Bittle  
Dec 24 Gordon Scott  
Dec 31 Marietta Nelson-Bittle

### **Worship assistants in December**

Greeters  
Reader Stanley Johnson  
Communion Asst. Shelly Warner  
Ushers Stanley & Barbara Johnson  
Darwin Hanson  
Altar Guild Sheila & Mike Freed

### **Fellowship Coffee Servers**

Dec. 3 Shelly Warner  
Dec. 10 Steve & Phyllis Carlson  
Dec. 17 Dennis Boger & Dave Jones  
Dec. 24 Church Council  
Dec. 31 Mike & Sandy Carlson

### **December Birthdays**

8 Deb Nelson  
12 Colby Carlson  
13 Joni Sunderman  
14 Connie Freed  
14 Nita Lind  
19 Sandy Carlson  
23 Barbara Johnson  
27 Chris Campbell  
27 Joan Setterburg  
28 Cole Buttercase  
29 Laura Kirchert

### **Anniversaries**

3 Alex & Anna Campbell  
11 Doug & Judy Johnson



9:00 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP WITH PASTOR GORDON  
No Sunday School

7:00 P.M. CANDELLIGHT SERVICE WITH PASTOR MARIETTA

### *Upcoming Events*

Dec. 6 SWIM council meets at Tabor  
Dec. 13 7:00 p.m. Church council  
Dec. 17 10:00 a.m. Acolyte class for older Sunday School class  
Dec. 21 2:00 p.m. Lydia Circle Upper Room at Bethesda  
Dec. 24 9:00 a.m. Morning worship. No Sunday School  
Dec. 24 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service  
Dec. 24 Jan. newsletter items are due. Send to Yvonne ([johnsony@myfmtc.com](mailto:johnsony@myfmtc.com))  
Jan. 28, 2018 Annual Meeting to follow the service. No Sunday School.



## Merry Christmas from LSI!

*“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” — John 1:5*

As Christmas approaches, we give thanks to you! Every day, as a ministry partner of LSI, you help bring the light of Christ to others.

At LSI, we know many people experiencing deep darkness. We know parents who feel hopeless, with little to no resources to raise their young children. We know adults with disabilities who feel voiceless, with no support system or connection to their community. We know teens who are aging out of the foster care system, who fear they will never belong to anyone or have a family to love them.

LSI’s work is Christmas work, shining love, compassion, and light in places of darkness, despair, abuse, neglect, addiction, and loneliness. We could not do this important work without you, and we are so grateful.

Wishing you a blessed and merry Christmas from LSI!

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

### **A Voice for Change**

Morgan struggled with anger management before coming to LSI’s Bremwood Residential Treatment Center in Waverly. When she was in stressful situations, she tried to escape her emotions by running away. But she can remember the exact moment she knew she wanted to make a change.

“One day at Bremwood, another resident lashed out at a staff. I was just sitting there thinking this is not the life I want to live,” Morgan says. “This is not me. This is not who I want to be.” She worked hard to practice her coping skills and soon graduated out of Bremwood. But Morgan wanted to do more to give back and help others.

Morgan, now 19, is going to college for Agricultural Business. She recently took her first international trip to Haiti to study local farming, and she’s already saving money to take a similar trip to Brazil next year.

Morgan turned to LSI once again – but this time, not for herself. Instead, to help others in need: youth just like her who need support, a listening ear and words of encouragement. LSI and Woodhaven Shelter had been there for Morgan during some of her darkest times. Now, she wants to be there for those who need it.

She is now employed as a Youth Associate in LSI’s Woodhaven Shelter! When a new resident comes through the doors, Morgan is there to show them that no matter the odds, they can make a better life for themselves. She is there to help other youth find their path to hope, healing and wholeness.