



Bethesda News

January 2018

Bethesda Lutheran Church: a congregation of S.W.I.M
South West Iowa Ministries, Western Iowa Synod, ELCA
2475 140th 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

Gordon Scott ~ Phone: 712-826-4175

From Marietta

“The Bible is the story of our brokenness and what God is doing about it.”

Many years ago, I heard Pastor Paula Burchill say these words at Silverdale Lutheran Church in Washington state. They changed the way I thought about the Bible. The stories in this precious library of books are our stories, too. They tell tales of the lives of people so much like us - of love, loss, violence, tenderness, greed, generosity, forgiveness and sacrifice. And of a God who is at work in us and among us and all around us, day after day, year after year.

Speaking of years, we have embarked on a new year on the secular calendar, but also on the church calendar. Back on the first Sunday of Advent in December, we began the new church year. This means a new emphasis on a different gospel, the gospel of Mark.

One of the things I so much appreciate about our worship in the Lutheran church is the emphasis on multiple readings from the Bible at each service. We hear words from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the New Testament letters and one of the Gospels. Maybe you've noticed that each church year we focus on one particular gospel. Last year it was Matthew. Now we'll be in Mark until Advent 2018. This is quite a change given the nature of those two gospels.

Remember how Matthew begins? A long, long list of Jesus' genealogy. This establishes several things, but probably most importantly Jesus' connection to Jewish heritage, straight back to Abraham in the Old Testament. Matthew is a highly detailed gospel with lots of information, especially for people teaching others about Jesus. In contrast, Mark is much, much shorter and more direct, sparse even. And it's in a hurry. The word "immediately" appears in Mark 42 times. It's a tight narrative that has a lot to say in a very short space. It was also the first gospel written, sometime around 65 to 73 years after the death of Jesus. Ninety percent of what is written in Mark is found in Matthew. Fifty-five percent of Mark is found in Luke.

Mark's brevity and speed is established with its first sentence: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Right away we know WHO this book is about and we get a sense that something big is happening.

Throughout this book and throughout this year, keep your eyes and ears out for these themes (as outlined by author Mark Allan Powell) in the book of Mark: a very human Jesus; the centrality of the cross; the secrecy around Jesus' identity; and the failures of the disciples.

If you want to know more about why we read what we read during worship each week, and how the passage are chosen, check out www.elca.org/Lectionary. This website is a great resource to understand our church's participation in this way of reading the Bible in worship and how we share these readings each week with many other churches, including the Roman Catholic Church.

Peace

Marietta

Marietta out of town for class

Marietta will be gone to a class in south Texas from Jan. 1-18. The class is required by Wartburg Seminary. Each January, she must spend several weeks taking an intensive class somewhere away from home. This class is about ministry on the border between Texas and Mexico. She will be studying about borderlands issues, immigration and people and also spending time with pastors and churches on the border in Laredo. She is available by phone and email during that time. Phone is 712 890 9882. Email is swiministries@gmail.com.

Visit from Wartburg Seminary Leader Coming Up

Dr. Kris Stache, a professor and vice president at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque will be visiting southwest Iowa on Jan 26-28. She is Marietta's academic advisor and is coming to visit to get to know SWIM and the people of southwest Iowa better. We will be seeking out some Bethesda folks to meet with Kris and talk about ministry in this area and SWIM. Please let Marietta know if you are interested in meeting with Kris.

Christmas at Bethesda



Thank you to everyone who gave poinsettias and to Mike and Sheila Freed for decorating the sanctuary this Christmas. It was beautiful.

Christmas Eve, our church was filled with worshipers for a very special communion service lead by Pastor Marietta. Glorious carol singing filled the sanctuary.

Thank you Bells of Joy, Maeve Bittle and Corey Bix for sharing your talents and providing beautiful special music and Barbara Johnson and Delores Renander for reading the scriptures.



Bethesda WELCA ladies and friends enjoyed a delicious Christmas luncheon at the home of Penny and Kent Setterburg, December 19. After the meal the guests played "I Spy" looking for a list of items hidden in the beautiful Christmas decorations. The ladies enjoyed lots of searching and looking over and over again to find the well-hidden items. It was a delightful afternoon.



VISITING COMMITTEE; Mary Ann Vanderholm and Rogene Sederburg spent an enjoyable day visiting our shut-ins and

bringing them musical Christmas cards from the WELCA. Those that they visited were Delores Renander at the Eiler House, Joan Warner at her home, Judy Johnson at her home and Nita Lind at the Accura Healthcare Center in Stanton. Yvonne Johnson joined us at Doug and Judy's home.

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 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 t.

From the Council...

The new chairlifts are in and working. The old ones are currently in the garage. If you know of someone who could use them, we would be glad to donate them .

The annual meeting will be on January 28, 2018 following the service. Coffee will be held in the fellowship hall following the meeting. There will not be Sunday School on the 28th. Remember to turn in your annual reports.

The next council meeting will be held on Jan. 10, 2018 at 7 pm.





Thank you to all the people who taught Sunday school this fall and to Christie Vanderholm and Yvonne Johnson for leading the music. Shelly Warner helped children use their creative talents to make a Thanksgiving tree and decorate the Christmas tree.



Christmas Letter from Barbara Palm

Dear Family and Friends,

My 2017 has been a bit of a grief journey without David. As most of you know by now, he died unexpectedly last Dec. 2, 2016 (his grandpa's birthday) while doing his morning prayers. He had a massive heart attack and died instantly. He had dressed himself and was ready for the day. He died in our living room recliner very peacefully.

Matt and his family were doing missionary work in Uganda, Africa, with their 10 children. Ben was in China on business, so we delayed the funeral until Dec. 13th so everyone could get home, and everyone did just that.

I was blessed to be able to go to Africa for 3 weeks in Jan & Feb of 2017. It was healing for me to be with Matt and family during early days after David's death. When Matt and family returned from Africa in Aug and Sept of this year, I was blessed with another adopted grandchild from Uganda, *Ruby*. She is precious and Papa knew she was going to be part of our family. That makes 11 children for Matt & Lovelyn.

Katie & Dusty continue to live in Davenport with their 4 children & that is such a blessing for me.

Andy & Vicki live in the Atlanta, GA area. Chris is close by in Jeneca, SC and Ben & Jann are in Ft Worth, TX.

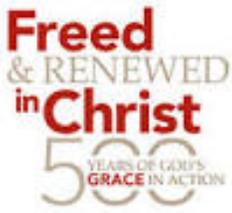
As you can see, I am blessed with these incredible children and grandchildren, plus many family, friends, and pastors that I love.

I wish each of you a blessed Advent & Christmas Season.

Please hold me in your prayers, a journey without David and I will do the same for each of you.

In Christ's love,

Barbara



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

Jan. 7 Gordon Scott
Jan 14 Paula Lawhead
Jan 21 Gordon Scott
Jan 28 Marietta Nelson-Bittle

January Worship assistants

Greeters Dennis Boger & David Jones
Reader Lori Lastine
Communion Asst. Christie Vanderholm
Ushers Chris & Diane Campbell
 Dennis Meier & Daniel Meier
Altar Guild Chris & Diane Campbell

January Birthdays

2 John Smith
3 Kody Erickson
5 Wayne Sederburg
12 Nicole Jimmerson
13 Diane Campbell
14 Dennis Boger
26 Robert Wright
31 Rogene Sederburg

Anniversaries

4 Anna & Fletcher Hopkins

Fellowship Coffee Servers

Jan 7 Mike & Sheila Freed
Jan 14 Todd & Nikki Carlson
Jan 21 Darwin & Miriam Hanson
Jan 28 Chris & Diane Campbell

Upcoming Events

Jan. 10 7:00 p.m. Church council
Jan. 26-28 Dr. Stache from Wartburg visits
Jan. 28 Annual Meeting to follow the service. No Sunday School.
Jan. 26 Feb.newsletter items are due. Send to Yvonne (johnsony@myfmtc.com)





Raising our Voice for Iowa Children and Families – Lutheran Day on the Hill

Families living in poverty. Iowa children in need of a forever family. Former refugees building new lives.

These kinds of issues are rarely the center of attention at the Iowa State Capitol. Let's change that!

Please consider joining Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) and the three Iowa synods of the ELCA for Lutheran Day on the Hill, an annual day of advocacy in Des Moines to uplift the needs of our neighbors. The event will be held on Thursday, February 8. Visit www.LSIowa.org/advocacy next month for event details, online registration, and an online toolkit for your congregation.

If you are new to advocacy, come learn more about the legislative process and your role as a citizen. If you've attended before, join us again. We hope this year's schedule will also allow you more opportunities to connect with legislators. If you would like more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's director of philanthropy and church relations, at 563-676-2065 or Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org.

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 and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Friendly Competition

When the time came to take their U.S. Citizenship Exam, Bhakti and Chhali felt overwhelmed.

Originally from Bhutan, the couple moved to Des Moines from a refugee camp in Nepal. Since then, they have been busy improving their English and settling into their new home. They both worked seven days a week and struggled to find time to study for their exam.

LSI's Refugee Community Services were there to help. LSI provides English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and Bhakti and Chhali studied hard in class to prepare for the writing and reading component of their exam. They supported and competed with each other, pushing themselves to succeed.

Their work paid off, and Bhakti and Chhali recently passed their exam and are now U.S. Citizens.

"We appreciate the help our LSI volunteers gave us on the Citizenship Exam," Bhakti says. "They are so committed to seeing us meet our goals."

Thank you for empowering your Iowa neighbors. We couldn't do this important work without you!