February, 2026 Volume 66, Issue 2

The Chimes

Bethany Lutheran Church

Mission Statement

Reaching out in Worship, Fellowship, Learning, and Love - We Are God's People.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is on Wednesday, February 18! There will be a service at both Bethany and Messiah this year. Service times are below. Ashes and Communion will occur at each service. Please see Pastor Misha's article for more information on each service.

Messiah @ 12:00pm
Bethany @ 7:00pm

Mid-Week Lenten Services

Bethany will be hosting Mid-Week Lenten Services this year. These services will be held every Wednesday, starting on February 25 through March 25. A soup supper/meal will kick things off at 6:00pm with the Holden Evening Prayer following at 7:00pm. Bethany will be providing the meal on February 25 & March 18 (a sign-up sheet will be available in the Fellowship Hall); Messiah will be providing the meal on March 4 & March 25; Unity will be providing the meal on March 11. Please see Pastor Misha's article for more information.

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Burlington, Iowa
Phone: (319) 752-3621
www.bethanyburlington.org

Our Staff

Rev. Misha McFarland-Pollock, Pastor
Cory Byrne, Choir Director/Organist
Wendy Bell, Office Administrator
Michelle Huppenbauer, Temporary Financial Secretary
Pam Crable, Custodian

Church Update
February/2026

LSI proudly serves Iowans in all 99 counties through our services of Mental Health, Early Childhood, Foster Care & Adoption, Global Greens, People with Disabilities, and Immigrant & Refugee Community Services. We serve individuals of all ages, from families with newborns navigating the early stages of parenthood, to Refugee and Immigrant elders, as well as children at every stage of development. Our heart beats for the people we serve. We empower families and communities by recognizing and honoring the strengths and gifts of every individual.

Your SUPPORT makes these stories possible...

From Foster Care to the Classroom: A Story of Resilience and Hope

Below is the story of Megan*, a young woman whose journey through foster care led her to a loving, permanent home with the Johnson* family in Sioux City. Now, six years later, Megan is thriving, confidently sharing her story, and living proof of what is possible when a young person is given stability, encouragement, and someone who believes in them.

I entered foster care at just 17 days old. From the very beginning, my life was shaped by change, uncertainty, and trauma. Though I was adopted at age five, the years that followed were filled with strict rules and isolation. By age ten, I was told I was “too much” and was sent away, carrying unhealed wounds I didn’t yet have the words to explain.

I spent the next several years moving through treatment facilities and foster placements. While those years were difficult, they also became a turning point. For the first time, I began to see my own potential. I discovered things I loved, committed myself to school, and watched my grades improve. Education became the one constant in my life, something I could rely on no matter where I was living.

At fourteen, I entered high school and moved into a foster home with people I barely knew. I arrived guarded and afraid to hope, but slowly, I began to open up. I joined cheer, choir, and theater, finding confidence and belonging through school activities. Even after everything I had been through, school never gave up on me, and I refused to give up on myself.

When I was fifteen, I began searching for a permanent home. After countless interviews, visits, and conversations, I met a family in April 2020. In the middle of an incredibly uncertain time, they took a chance on me, and changed my life. What started as a weekend visit turned into the place I finally called home.
They believed in my dream of becoming a teacher. When I nervously asked if I could take college courses during high school, they didn’t hesitate. Their belief in me made all the

difference. Six years later, I am still student teaching at a local elementary school, a dream made possible because someone said, *"Yes, you can do this."*

College wasn't easy. There were tears, late-night phone calls, and moments when I feared losing the home I had waited so long to find. But I never lost their support. Hearing the words *"We are proud of you"* reminded me how far I had come and gave me the strength to keep going.

To foster youth and foster families alike: don't give up. Fight for yourself. Let your voice be heard. Be who you are - the right family will love you for it.

And to my mom and dad: thank you for giving me the chance to be myself and helping me discover who I am. You gave me the opportunity of a lifetime, and I couldn't have done this without you.

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

LSI
LUTHERAN SERVICES IN IOWA
people focused ▪ results driven

FROM THE PASTOR

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.-- 1 Timothy 2:1

We are in the thick of winter. Winter is my favorite season! Bruce and I had a wonderful time cruising on the lower Mississippi after Christmas as a way to relax and recharge my batteries after the hustle and bustle of St. Nicholas Day, Advent, and Christmas festivities. There was so much American history to study both on board the ship and while on shore excursions.

I celebrated my birthday last month on the 24th of January. I had a short yet lovely birthday trip to Chicago. It was restaurant week in Chicago, so Bruce and I had delicious food as part of our celebrations. As we always do, we visited a couple museums and explored hidden gems around the city. Before we could blink, we were back in Burlington, and it was time for Bethany's annual meeting. The following week we get to come together for Messiah's annual meeting. It's that time of year after all!

During the month of February, you will find weekly devotions written by me in both the Burlington Beacon and The Hawkeye. I am also leading a Zoom Bible Study for the WELCA Council of Presidents on Psalm 107:43. Lutheran Day on the Hill is this month as well and I will be in attendance this year as well. All three Iowa bishops as well as pastors, deacons, and lay leaders throughout Iowa attend this year event at the Iowa State Capital.

Ash Wednesday and Lent occur in February as well. We will have two Ash Wednesday services. Noon at Messiah and at 7pm at Bethany. Ashes and communion will occur at both services. The noon service will be around 30 minutes long to accommodate anyone wanting to attend on their lunch break. The 7pm service will be around an hour long. Bruce and I have also been invited to provide ashes and communion to the residents of Klein on Ash Wednesday at 10:30am. It will be a full day indeed!

We will once again have Lenten midweek services. There will be a soup supper/meal prior to the vesper service. We will be singing Holden Evening Prayer. The meals will begin at 6pm and worship begins at 7pm. Lay leaders will provide five-minute homilies each week. Our theme this year is Faith. We will learn about the faith of Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Israelites, and Jesus.

Confirmation students held a Confession and Forgiveness service on January 27th. They planned the entire service themselves and gave me the honor of preaching. Sion and Maverick anointed those in attendance with oil as a sign of Christ's forgiveness. The confirmation students will plan a Healing service in the Spring.

I look forward to worshiping with you all during this holy and sacred time of preparation as we journey towards Easter.

Blessings,

Pastor Misha

Meetings

The meetings for Feb., 2026 that have been scheduled as of the publishing of this newsletter are listed below. Watch your bulletins for any date and time changes, or additional meetings that may be scheduled.

Finance Committee
Thursday, Feb. 12 @ 6:30 p.m.

Executive Committee
Thursday, Feb. 12 @ 6:00 p.m.

Church Life Committee
Sunday, Feb. 8 @ 10:15 a.m.

Property Committee
Monday, Feb. 9 @ 6:30 p.m.

Church Council
Thursday, Feb. 19 @ 6:30 p.m.

Joint Exec. Mtg. @ Messiah
Wednesday, Feb. 4 @ 6:00pm

Joint Council Mtg. @ Bethany
Wednesday, Feb. 11 @ 6:30pm

Church Outreach
Sunday, Feb. 1 @ 10:15 a.m.

Pastor's Book Club @ Bethany
Tuesday, Feb. 10 @ 5:00 p.m.

Lunch Bunch
Wednesday, Feb. 11 @ 12:30 p.m. @ All-Star Maid-Rite Diner

Men's Breakfast
Saturday, Feb. 21 @ 8:00 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE

Because of Federal Privacy laws, if you or a member of your family are hospitalized and would like the Pastor to visit, you must contact the church and let us know.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

January ATTENDANCE

January 4	51
January 11	56
January 18	47
January 25	56

January GIVING

January 4	$1,476.40
January 11	$1,599.00
January 18	$1,281.00
January 25	$1,838.45
Total:	$6,194.85

December VANCO total: $1,530.00

LAY LEADERS

February Usher: Susan Swanson

Communion Assistants

1 – **At Messiah*
8 – Teresa Morehead; Bill Mundt
15 – Mark Rosenberg; Rachel Lindeen
22 – Steve & Sue Rogers

Lector

1 – **At Messiah**
8 – Ron Kastner
15 – Judy Craven
22 – Bill Mundt

Greeters

1 – **At Messiah**
8 – Dan & Julie Wischmeier
15 – Ginny Mesecher
22 – Lynda Johnson

Flowers

1 – **At Messiah**
8 – Open
15 – Michelle & Tiffany Huppenbauer
22 – Bev Sherbondy
Lots of open dates still available for the year!
Please stop on Sunday and choose your special date!

Missionary Support

1 – Open
8 – Open
15 – Open
22 – Open
New sign-up sheet is available!
Please stop on Sunday and choose your special date!

Altar Guild

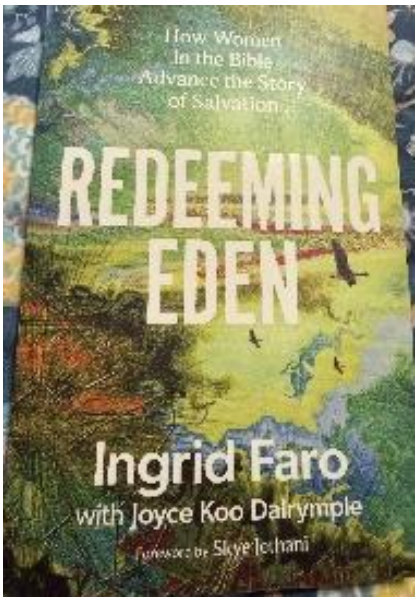
Michelle Huppenbauer
Tiffany Huppenbauer

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch is a group get-together that meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month for lunch! This month's Lunch Bunch will be on Wednesday, February 11 @ 12:30pm @ All-Star Maid-Rite Diner in West Burlington. Any and all are welcome! To sign up, if you have questions, or need transportation arrangements, please contact Dave Nuebel at 319-237-6933.

Pastor's Book Club

Pastor's Book Club will be meeting next on Tuesday, February 10 at 5:00pm at Bethany! All are welcome to join us! This month we are reading "Redeeming Eden" By Ingrid Faro!



2026 Annual Meeting Highlights

The 2026 Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, January 25. Here are a few highlights from that meeting…

- Council Nominees, Mike Hopp; Vicki Stoller; Dirk Zaiser; Tom Bonar, were unanimously voted to serve 2nd, 3-year terms.
- Michelle Huppenbauer was nominated and elected to serve a 2-year term.
- Tiffany & Michelle Huppenbauer were accepted as Bethany's delegates to the Synod Assembly in May.
- Mike shared that the Council will be working on goals and members were invited to share their ideas.
- The 2026 Budget was passed.

After the meeting was adjourned, the Council had a short meeting to elect Officers for the year of 2026.

2026 Council Officers

Mike Hopp – President

Bev Sherbondy – Vice President

Dan Wischmeier – Treasurer

Pam Taylor – Secretary

Congratulations to all of our 2026 elected Council members & officers and our Synod Assembly delegates!

Bethany Lutheran Church
Minutes of the Church Council Regular Meeting
December 18, 2025

Present: Pastor Misha, Mike Hopp - President, Pam Taylor-Secretary, Dirk Zaiser-Treasurer, Dan Wischmeier, Tiffany Huppenbauer, Bill Mundt, Bev Sherbondy- Vice President **Absent:** Mitchell Huston, Tom Bonar, Vicki Stoller, Dave Neubel, and Julie Chubb.

The meeting was called to order by the President at 6:33. Pastor read a devotion.

Minutes Pam motioned, Dan W seconded to approve 11.19.25 minutes with verbal correction that Pastor was not present in Nov as she was at Continuing Ed. **Motion carried.**

Pastor's Report Written report provided with no further verbal additions or discussions.

Financials - Mike H reviewed certain line items within the Income and Expense statement and highlighted Checking Account Balances as of 11/30/25. The expenses are pretty close to what we budgeted in expenses, however, income is lagging. Mike will check with Michelle on the $304 in parsonage maintenance to see what that expense was and if that amount is to be credited back to the parsonage maintenance account.
The Scholarship Fund and General Fund balances totaled $902,662. We can discuss how Bethany might use some General Funds after establishing a budget for next year.

Committee Reports

Church Life - Bill reported there was nothing new to report. However, the committee is looking for a reader on Christmas Eve and readers on December 28th (a minimum of 2 people are needed).

Church Outreach - Bev provided a written report.

- The committee postponed reaching out until January to shut-ins.
- There was no update on Bethany providing a meal at First Methodist church on Tuesdays when the "Bridges Out of Poverty" participants meet.

Finance - A written report was provided by Michelle.

- The Finance committee did meet to work on the 2026 budget. It was presented to the council and reviewed. A special council meeting may be called Dec 29th or 30th to review and approve the finalized 2026 budget before January.

Property - Bev S. provided a written report.

- Property committee members volunteered to remove snow for the Ward family. Pastor and Mike will continue to monitor the family needs.

Dirk Z. motioned, Bev S. seconded to accept the standing committees' reports. **Motion carried.**

Old Business

- Printer Contract - waiting to hear back from the company as to their status in taking us back under contract should we later determine the contract is once again to our advantage financially.
- Church Use Policy - Dan W motioned, Bev S seconded to approve the Church Use policy as presented last month for review.
- Parsonage Utilities - property committee is working on some matters at the house that would improve efficiencies.
- Personnel Handbook - The handbook has been drafted. It is being reviewed by Todd Chelf. Printer Contract - Michelle and Wendy have almost completed comparison of the printer expenses related to the contract. A decision should be made at the next meeting.

New Business

Ukrainian Rent Support - Bev checked into finding a way to assure that Bethany's donations to SEI Community Action would go to the Ukrainians for rent support. She had yet received a definitive answer. The discussion on Bethany sending funds to support rent was tabled.

Bill Ward, Jr - Advent meal funds on the 10th were voted to go to the Ward family for food. Interest in additional support to the family from the Endowment was shared. No motion was made until Mike and Pastor visit further with the son/family regarding needs and also to see if they had reached out to the Area Agency on Aging with success.

CD Rollover - The CD came due in late November. It rolled over to another 3 months at the same rate. This will now come due late Feb. 2026.

Mitchell Huston - Pam motioned, Bev S. seconded to excuse Mitchell from his responsibility as a council member and move forward to replace him pending the constitution allows for this process. **Motion carried.** The pastor will reach out to Mitchell.

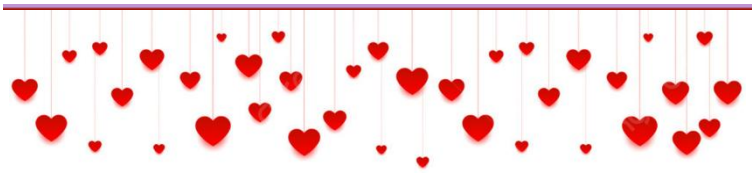
Adjourn

Mike H motioned, Dirk Z seconded to adjourn at 7:39 pm. **Motion carried**.

Next Regular Meeting: January 21st, Wednesday, @ 6:30pm

Respectfully submitted, Pam Taylor, Secretary

Announcements



Joint Service at Messiah on Sunday, February 1. Worship will start at 10:30am.

Ash Wednesday Services are on Wednesday, February 18. Bethany's service is at 7:00pm and Messiah's service is at Noon. More information is detailed in Pastor Misha's article.

Mid-Week Lent Services are hosted by Bethany this year starting on Wednesday, February 25, every Wednesday through March. Soup Supper Meal starts at 6pm and Holden Evening Prayer follows at 7pm. Bethany has February 25 & March 18 for meals and a sign-up sheet will be available soon in the Fellowship Hall. Messiah provides the meal for March 4 & 25 and Unity will provide for March 1.

The office will be closed on Monday, February 16.

Pastor's Book Club will meet on Tuesday, February 10 @ 5:00pm. This month we are reading "Redeeming Eden" By Ingrid Faro.

Lunch Bunch will meet on Wednesday, February 11 @ 12:30pm @ All-Star Maid-Rite Diner. If you would like to sign up or have any questions or need transportation arrangement, please call Dave Nuebel at 319-237-6933.

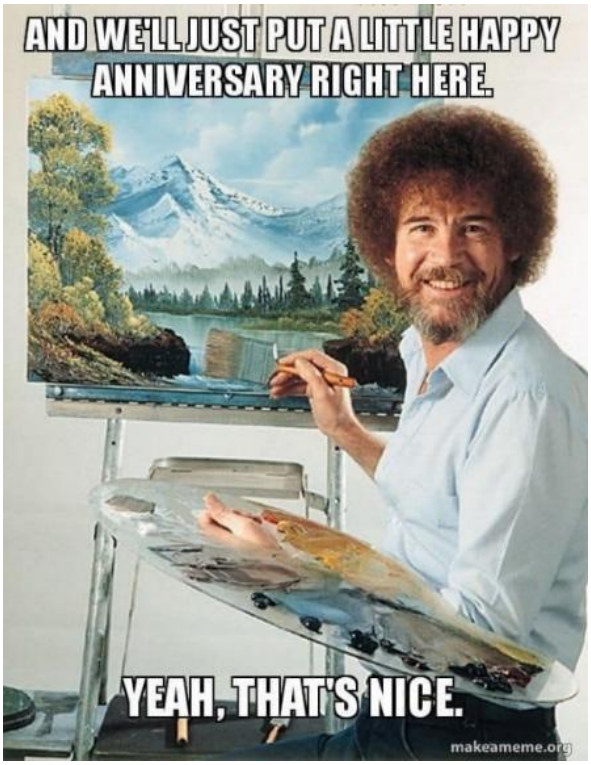
Outreach Donations for February: Any & all canned goods!

February Anniversaries

9 – Larry & Marlys McClurg
14 – Jim & Barb Morris; Matthew & Shannon Oetken
20 – Robert & Doreen Roy

February BIRTHDAYS

9 – Christine Timberlake
12 – Sharon Adam
18 – Sharon Eisenmayer
20 – Norma Bock; Judy Craven
21 – Mackenzie Morris
22 – Theresa Ryner
28 – Genieve Hingst; Lori Rosenberg



February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 4th Sunday after Epiphany-*Joint Service @ Messiah* **10:30 am Worship** 10:55 am Hope Service	2 Retired School Personnel Mtg. @ Noon	3 	4 Joint Exec. Mtg. @ 6:30pm @ Messiah	5 Bible Study @ 9:30am @ Messiah	6 Nurses Mtg. @ 9:30am	7
8 5th Sunday after Epiphany 9:00 a.m. Worship **10:15 a.m. Church Life** 10:55 am Hope Service	9 Property mtg. @ 6:30pm	10 Pastor's Book Club @ 5pm @ Bethany	11 *Lunch Bunch @ 12:30pm @ All-Star Maid-Rite Diner* Joint Council Mtg. @ 6:30pm @ Bethany	12 Bible Study @ 9:30am @ Messiah Exec. Comm mtg @ 6:00pm Finance Mtg. @ 6:30pm	13	14
15 Transfiguration of Our Lord 9:00 am Worship 10:55 am Hope Service	16 	17	18 Ash Wednesday Services Messiah @ Noon Bethany @ 7:00pm	19 Bible Study @ 9:30am @ Messiah Council Mtg. @ 6:30pm	20 Chimes Deadline	21 8:00am Men's Breakfast
22 1st Sunday in Lent 9:00 am Worship 10:55 am Hope Service	23	24	25 Mid-Week Lent Services @ Bethany 6:00pm – Meal 7:00pm – Holden Evening Prayer *Meal provided by: Bethany*	26 Bible Study @ 9:30am @ Messiah	27 	28
					Office Hours Mon.-Wed.-Fri.: 9:00am-1:00pm Tues. & Thurs.: 1:30pm-4:30pm	Paraments: Green: 1, 8 White: 15 Purple: 22