

the Wellspring

Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water
John 7:38

Published quarterly
Volume 16
Issue 3



We made it to the
final voting round!
See the *back page* for
details on helping us
win 2021 Best in
Story County!

FALL 2021



GATHER all people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ
GROW as disciples through worship, prayer and study of God's Word
GO into the world to share the gospel in word and deed



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





The Way, The Truth and The Life

~ Pastor Bryan Simmons

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

~ John 14:1-7

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

According to the apostle John, this scene takes place at the Last Supper, right after Jesus says to Peter that Peter will deny Jesus three times before the cock crows in the morning. It is a tense moment eased with Jesus’ soothing words, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” It’s a message to the disciples that this is indeed a difficult, impossible to comprehend the time they are currently living in. It won’t make sense in the moment, and it will take time later to understand, even with the Spirit’s help, but tonight, Jesus will be betrayed, handed over to the Jewish authorities who will then seek the State to have Jesus put to death. It will go from Jesus saying, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” to Pilate asking, “What is truth?” before having Jesus flogged and executed on a cross. But, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

Sometimes it is easy to follow the way, the truth, and the life. Our lives can be full of joy and celebration. Often times, it is rather ordinary to follow the way, the truth, and the life, as we set into our routines and the time passes us by, sometimes slow in the moment but always seems too fast when we pick our heads up and look back. Sometimes, though, following the way, the truth, and the life is hard. Life doesn’t always go the way we want it to. It is full of twists and turn that are often unfair and burden our souls with the realities of this mortal life in a world of sin and death. We struggle to understand the point or the purpose, if any, in the moment. Yet through it all, even in the most difficult of times, Jesus reminds us, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.”

It did not make sense to the disciples that the Messiah, the one foretold to restore Israel and bring all nations together under God, would be executed by Rome in utter weakness. But Jesus’ death and resurrection has become the most important moment in the history of time. It helps us to make sense of what can seem at times to be a chaotic world. It may be that there is no grand plan behind whatever we may be going through, but because of the cross and the empty tomb, we can look to God in faith with confident hearts, knowing that God spoke the final word almost 2,000 years ago. We are loved eternally. We are forgiven. We are welcomed into an eternal relationship of undying love with our creator and join in that love with those around us. This has been made sure because of Jesus.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Bryan Simmons

Do not let your hearts
be troubled
and do not be afraid.

~John 14:27~



From **Small** Perspectives . . .

~ **Tony Woodcock** Council President

*even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.*

~ Psalm 139:12

The days of Summer are quickly waning. Much Summer fun has been had. Vacations have been taken, memories made. The State Fair has come and gone and the kids are back in school. It's also been a good summer at Bethesda Lutheran. We've had in-person worship, meetings, and adult forums. We've had outdoor worship, a barbeque cookoff, and Saturday night modern worship is back up and going. While we may lament the end of Summer, we also look forward to the coming Fall: cooler days and nights, Fall sports (ISU Football, anyone?) and at Bethesda Lutheran the return of Sunday school and more adult forums.

Of course, as much as we hoped things would return to normal, alas, the dreaded coronavirus remains, adapting to our countermeasures and still sickening many. While we value in-person worship and activities at Bethesda, your council, along with the pastors and staff, want to be careful about how we conduct in-person activities, which is why we went back to a mask recommendation for all. While it seems like an unfortunate step in the wrong direction, we will continue to monitor the spread in Story County and adjust our policies as necessary.

As the August nights begin to cool, I often find myself outside looking up at the stars. My body relaxes and my

mind slows down and begins to wander through random thoughts and memories. I think of school days when I would study the constellations and look for the planets. I think of nights with my Dad on the farm, when we'd finish up chores in the dark and would gaze up at the Milky Way through the clear Kansas sky. Once in a while my thoughts wander back to Jesus' time and what life in the dark of night would have been like for him and his disciples. I think about the night sky that He looked up at. A darkness that was vast and deep, unimpeded by city lights. A beautiful sky that was filled with billions of stars and the soft glow of the Milky Way. For most of us, there just aren't that many times in our lives where we are so remote that we can look from horizon to horizon and not see a single light. For Jesus, that was likely every night. When I stand alone in the dark and think about Jesus being alone in the dark, it somehow makes his life as a human on earth more real to me and helps bring me closer to him. The same stars that Jesus and his disciples stared up at are the same ones that I look up and see.

As much as I'm in awe of God's light we are given in the light from the sun, I'm equally in awe of the darkness. While darkness is often associated with fear and danger from what we cannot see, it is also a source of calm and rest and relaxation. I was curious about "darkness" in the Bible. As you'd expect, most verses that reference "darkness," are the darkness of evil, sin, despair, and danger. But there are a few verses where darkness is not associated with something bad. Exodus 20:21 refers to the darkness where God was: *Then the people stood at a distance, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.* God surrounded by darkness? And leave it to Psalms to turn the tables on darkness. I really like Psalm 139:12 where it says: *even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.* So I say that as the days get shorter and the night sky gets more crisp and clear, look up once in a while at the same night sky that Jesus looked at with his own eyes. Draw yourself closer to him and appreciate all that God has given us.



Photo 144274704 / Night Sky © Dmytro Balkhovitin | Dreamstime.com

Go with God's speed,
Tony Woodcock
Council President

You Are Invited . . . Bring Each Other!

~ **Daryle Vegge** Stewardship Board Chair

For several months now, we have been hearing Temple Talks—Bethesda members giving a short synopsis of how they are expressing their stewardship in ways other than financially. You will continue to hear some of these informative and inspiring stories yet through September.

The capstone of the 2021 Bethesda Stewardship Campaign will be when we host what we simply call **"The Stewardship EVENT!"** This event will be held on Wednesday, September 29, starting at 6:00 pm and ending around 7:30. It will be held at the Ames Golf and Country Club (5752 GWC Avenue) and will include a "picnic style" buffet dinner.



Attendees will be treated to local keynote speaker, Jeff Johnson, ISU Alumni Association President, who will talk about his personal journey with "giving back."

Tickets for the meal and event are \$5 each for adults, no charge for children, and are to be purchased in advance. This will be a fun way to get together and get 2022 off to a flying start. We hope to see you there. For now . . . put September 29 on your calendar. Ticket sales will go live very soon, and all will be notified.



CROP Walk for Hunger: October 10

~ **Rod Fischer** CROP Walk Chair

Last year it was a virtual walk. This year plans are to hold an in-person walk. And, you're invited to participate in the 2021 Ames CROP Hunger Walk!



Although Covid-19 derailed plans for a face-to-face walk in 2020, Ames and Story County residents stepped up and raised \$31,435. We encouraged people to walk last year, but to do it safely

and to walk at a time and location of their own choosing. The amount we raised put us 42nd out of the top 100 nationwide walks sponsored by Church World Service. These seven nonprofits will receive CROP funds in 2021: Bethesda Community Food Pantry, Calvary Food Shelf,

Food at First, Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance, Loaves & Fishes, Mid-Iowa Community Action and ISU student food pantry, SHOP (Students Helping Our Peers).

So, how can you help to fight hunger? Visit www.crophungerwalk.org/amesia and make a donation to the Bethesda CROP Team. Create your own team and solicit donations from family, friends and relatives. Or, show up on walk day for some exercise and make a donation.

The walk begins (and ends) at Brookside Park at **1:30 pm, Sunday, October 10**. The event is held rain or shine, or even snow! A final determination will be made in late September whether the walk will remain in-person or shift to a virtual format depending on local virus conditions as we approach the walk date.

Bethesda 2021-22 Programming

SATURDAY



SPLASH CHILDRENS' CHURCH

following Children's Message @ 5:30
worship, kids gather upstairs until service
ends . . . Pre-K through 5th Grade

CAFÉ BETHESDA @ 5:00pm

1st Saturday of the month
Treats and Fellowship before worship



Youth Ministries (Pre-K-5th Grade Specialist) JOB OPENING

*Do you know someone who would
be perfect for this position?*

\$20/hr . . . 10 hours/week
[bethesdaames.org/
job-opening/splash2021/](https://bethesdaames.org/job-opening/splash2021/)

SUNDAY



SPLASH CHILDRENS' CHURCH

following Children's Message @ 9:30 worship, kids gather
in Crossroads until service ends . . . Pre-K through 5th Grade

VOYAGERS ADULT FORUMS

Sundays @ 10:40am
Check calendar for scheduled forums
bethesdaames.org/connect/calendar/



MONDAY

MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS (MOPS)

Mondays @ 8:00pm



WEDNESDAY

NOURISH MONTHLY

Wednesday @ 6:00pm
bethesdaames.org/connect/calendar/
Supper and Worship



OASIS CONFIRMATION CLASSES

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



FLOOD FELLOWSHIP NIGHTS

Wednesdays @ 7:00pm weekly
High-Schoolers

Our search for Bethesda's Youth Deacon continues in a positive direction!



Upstairs, Downstairs with Many Hands

In preparation for the exciting construction of an elevator in the Faith & Life west wing, some serious reconnoitering was scheduled early morning on August 14. Thanks to over 40 amazing volunteers, the Big Move was a complete success.

The entire Clothing Closet was relocated DOWNSTAIRS next to the Food Pantry in Centennial Hall. They were ready and open for business on Monday, August 16. These two Bethesda resources are now perfectly aligned for our neighbors in need, and operate with the same weekly schedule. In a word, it's perfect!

On that same Saturday, volunteers moved lots of books, instruments, and the entire library of choral music from the Music Room into temporary spaces upstairs. During elevator construction, ensembles will rehearse in the Conference Room, Commons, and Sanctuary. And we'll look forward to rehearsing in our new, very-accessible second-floor Music Room—the former Clothing Closet space.



Clothing Closet Volunteers Needed

We have **openings for all 4 shifts** the 3 days of the week that we open for shopping. Please consider **1.5-2 hours per month** to help our neighbors in need.

Contact Kathy Harris at kmh1951@msn.com or 515-233-3612.





Bethesda Joins in the Work!



Bethesda will be joining many ELCA congregations by performing service activities in place of worship services on Saturday and Sunday, **September 11 and 12**. SIGN-UPS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE WELCOME CENTER! Those first to sign up will get one of the T-shirts we've got on order! We thank ALL Bethesda leaders for each of these opportunities! And ALL who sign-up to serve!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 . . . 5:30pm *(unless otherwise noted)*

- Saving Suds ... one-hour shifts ... 5:30-8:30p ... 6 volunteers—2 per hour (Offsite)
- Plastic "Plarn" weaving—mats for the homeless (Commons)
- Landscaping (East side)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 . . . 9:30am

- Plastic bag mat making (Commons)
- Lutheran World Relief School Kit assembly (Crossroads)
- Story County recycling conversation (Conference Room)
- Bethesda-Beloit Garden project (SW off parking lot)
- Landscaping (West side)



**Sign-up
at the
Welcome
Center!**

Tuesday Mens' Bible Study Opportunity

Bethesda's Men's Bible study group meets on **Tuesdays @ 7:00 am in the Conference Room**. There will be a new book of the Bible starting September 14. During the summer we'll have study and discussion of articles from *The Lutheran* magazine and *Christian Century* magazine will occur. All men of Bethesda are welcome to join the group. Contact Henry Gray at janheng@aol.com or 233-2720 for details.



Bethesda **Member** Features

BJ McGinn has served as the Director of Athletics at Des Moines Area since 2016. During his tenure, McGinn has been responsible for numerous improvements to the Bears' athletic facilities. To read the full article visit tinyurl.com/4vca9bwv.



ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

The NJCAA Athletic Director of the Year is awarded to an NJCAA Athletic Director who best exemplifies the overall purpose of leading their institution, athletic department, student-athletes, and community through positive initiatives and contributions.

Educational Partners in Scholarship (EPIC) Awardees

Ryan Hinderaker
Luther College



Grace Nelson
St. Olaf
College



Isak Werner-Anderson
Luther College

Farewell Marianne Chalstrom!

Marianne moved to Minneapolis in August, but will keep her Bethesda membership and worship remotely. She will also continue to share her faith-filled writings. You can write or contact her at:



Cherrywood Pointe - Bloomington
5001 American Blvd West Apt. 331
Minneapolis, MN 55437
mlchalstrom@yahoo.com

Let us Pray: Heavenly Father, we are sometimes overcome with fear and doubt. We worry what the future will hold. We sometimes forget that we are "to stop complaining and just show up for duty." Help us to trust in you regardless of where the future leads knowing that you will always be at our side. Amen.

-Marianne Cook Chalstrom



2022 Sabbatical Preparation

~ Pastor Bryan Simmons

I cannot believe it has already been six years since I arrived here at Bethesda! Time has flown by and we have accomplished much. But there is more to do and to prepare for in the future landscape of Christianity in America which Bethesda will be a part of. The Bethesda Employee Handbook allows for pastors to apply for sabbatical after every six years of service, recognizing the importance this change in rhythm can be for both pastor and congregation. I am grateful to the Council for granting this opportunity this coming January through March to be able to take some time, recharge, and refocus, exploring the possibility of preparing our congregation for a new era of Christendom in America in the generation to come.

Central to my sabbatical will be an exploration of how churches are beginning to find additional streams of

income, recognizing that offerings may not be adequate for big visions of ministry and mission. Our calling as Christians is not to maintain church membership for income, but to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. I intend to focus this sabbatical on discovering this new trend, one which some churches have practiced for centuries (the Catholic Church and real estate, for example), exploring churches and church organizations that are successfully doing this, and exploring ways Bethesda could get involved in this way. Below is my process plan.

1. Identify churches with alternative income streams (Hope Lutheran's book store, Castle Church Brewery, Mount Olivet Psychological Services, SAME Café, etc.)
2. Identify publications to read on alternative income sources for churches
3. Narrow focus to at least seven organizations to study
4. Select at least seven publications to study
5. Integrate findings into a report on the benefits and potential drawbacks of alternative income streams for churches.
6. Interview non-Bethesda community leaders in Ames
7. Incorporate into report ideas Bethesda could participate in to gain a secondary income stream to enhance overall ministry and missions.
8. Attend varied worship services throughout sabbatical.
9. Rest, refresh, and refocus.

I am looking forward to combining my "old life" of business with my current calling. It will be exciting to see what I discover along the way. During this time of sabbatical, I will be away from the day-to-day happenings at Bethesda. I will miss it, but look forward to coming back and shaping Bethesda to make an even great impact in new and innovative ways in our own community and around the globe. May God bless us all in our common mission to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Feel free to ask me any questions you may have or any ministries you think I should look into.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Bryan



BETHESDA SENIORS

Young @ Heart

FELLOWSHIP

Thursday, September 16
2:00–3:30 pm
Bethesda Commons

Come gather for some fabulously "mature" fellowship, light food fare, and fun!

Please SIGN UP at the Welcome Center



ELCA/AMMPARO Welcoming Network

On August 17, Bethesda's Church Council voted unanimously to endorse Bethesda becoming an 'Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities' (AMMPARO) Welcoming Congregation. AMMPARO is a holistic, whole church commitment by the ELCA, as a church in the world, to accompany children today and in the future.

Over the next several months our Bethesda ASIP Ministry Team will be leading opportunities to learn about immigration—including Moments for Temple Talks during worship services, additional congregation-wide and small group Voyagers sessions. If feedback is positive, then Bethesda will vote to affirm Council's endorsement at our January 2022 Semi-annual meeting.

You can become part of a group to discern if this is the time for Bethesda to join the **ELCA - (AMMPARO) Welcoming Network** to help people seeking refuge and asylum. Contact Diane Pierce at dcf.pierce@gmail.com or Larry Otteman at larryaotteman@gmail.com if you are interested in participating.

Ames Sanctuary Interfaith Partners

ASIP was a huge participant in achieving the asylum of human rights advocate, Lída, and Francisco (her 6 year old son) from Mexico to Ames in July. Many, what can be called miracles, happened all along the way to get her here. If you would like to contribute, please make checks payable to ASIP, with Lída written on the memo line.



ASIP is a ministry team of Bethesda, led by Diane Pierce. Please reach out to her at dcf.pierce@gmail.com.

"To remain indifferent to the challenges we face is indefensible. If the goal is noble, whether or not it is realized within our lifetime is largely irrelevant. What we must do therefore is to strive and persevere and never give up." ~ Dalai Lama



The Wellspring magazine is published quarterly by Bethesda Lutheran Church, a Congregation of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Saturdays @ 5:30 pm | Sundays @ 9:30 am

Wednesdays @ 6pm monthly

Livestreamed at www.bethesdaames.org and Facebook [BethesdaAmes](https://www.facebook.com/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 Lisa Ailshie at 232-6256 or contact@BethesdaAmes.org with requests/comments regarding this magazine, or to submit an article for the Winter issue (deadline Nov. 5).

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

Artwork credit for an element in this month's *Wellspring* cover photo:
 Photo 157362806 / Children Drawing © Tom Wang | Dreamstime.com



SCANDINAVIAN COFFEE

With the rise of the Delta variant at the time when a decision needed to be made, the Women's Board has decided to have a **Swedish Meatball Grab & Go Lunch**. **Saturday, October 9th, 11am** till gone, meals will be \$10 (cash only) and include meatballs, mashed potatoes, gravy, rye bread, butter, and Spritz cookies. All food will be prepared by masked volunteers in the church kitchen. Coffee to go will be a free will donation. There will be no Gift Shoppe or Bake Shoppe this year.



CAFÉ BETHESDA 2.0

Bethesda Women will be hosting Café Bethesda 2.0 on the first Saturday of each month. We are doing a Charcuterie Board style food offering. All food will be finger foods—no silverware required. Free-will donations will go to Bethesda Women to support our Benevolent Donations.



Meat, Cheese Cubes or Small Slices, Crackers, Fruit, Veggies, Nuts, Pickles, Olives, Sweets, Coffee—regular and decaf, Fresh Cream or Half & Half, Lemonade Mix, Bag of Ice, Box of quart or sandwich size ziploc bags (to send perishable items home with people), Help Set Up or Clean

Up. Sign-ups to donate food or time will be available online and at Saturday Night Worship. Bethesda Women will provide the tablecloth, plates, napkins, frilly toothpicks, and cups.

GATHER PRAYER CIRCLE

As of the writing of this article, we are able to meet at church, masks recommended. We meet to visit and discuss the Bible Study in the *Gather* Magazine for the current month. 9:30 Coffee & Snacks, 10 am-11am Discussion.

- September 23
- October 28
- November 18
- December – no meeting

BEYOND BETHESDA

- September 10-11, 2021 — WELCA Southeastern Iowa Synodical Women's Organization, 33rd Annual Convention, Cedar Rapids
- Week of September 18, 2023 — The 12th Triennial Convention and Gathering, Phoenix, Arizona

WOMEN'S BOARD

Monthly meetings are the 4th Tuesday of the month. All are welcome to attend or submit input. ***We still need a Treasurer!*** If you like crunching numbers, please contact a Board Member for more information.

- President – Karla Mortensen
- VP – Lindsay Peters
- Secretary – Gretchen Mosher
- **Treasurer** –
- Members-at-Large – Carolyn Ahlstrom, Jo Hutchins

Bread for the World

is a Collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Five members met with Congressman Randy Feenstra via Zoom on August 12, 2021. They asked for his support for H.R. 4693, Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021. He was happy to give his support and emphasized his long-standing commitment to legislative solutions to end hunger and support early childhood nutrition. This bill is part of Bread's years-long focus on improving global nutrition made even more challenging due to the devastation of COVID-19. The bill significantly increases the effectiveness of various U.S. programs and gives nutrition a high priority for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).



Julia Lundstrum joins staff as Worship Production Coordinator

Julia comes to Bethesda as a 3rd-year undergrad student at ISU. She majors in Data Science and Mathematics with Applications in Computer Science. Julia works parttime for the ISU Department of Music & Theatre as an IT technician. She also has a research assistantship in data analysis. Julia also holds a strong background in theater tech, having worked on over 2-dozen productions. She is fluent in lighting, sound, camera operation and video editing. **If YOU are interested in helping with Worship Production**—operating the slideshow, or operating the cameras for livestream—please introduce yourself to Julia after worship!

Bethesda Lutheran Church
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www.BethesdaAmes.org

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VOTE Bethesda for Best of Story County

Bethesda was nominated to qualify for the voting round
"Best" in TWO categories this year!

Best Place to Worship
and
Best Wedding Venue

Voting opens **Sunday, September 5**
running through **Saturday, September 25**

We'll share the link by email as soon as we receive it from the Ames Tribune.
Then, please vote, and tell your friends and family to vote!
This could be the **FOURTH** year in a row for Bethesda.

Thank you!