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# Wellspring

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

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## Winter 2020

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



# A Tale of Us

~ Pastor Ryan Arnold

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. - John 1:5*

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

There was food. Plenty of it. Food science had yielded impressive gains. But infrastructure was needed still to get it to those that needed it most.

There was wealth. At least in this land, so very much prosperity. But that wealth was held by fewer and fewer. Leaving more and more on the outside, looking in.

There were healers. The list of the brokenness they could mend grew by the day. But who could afford such extravagance? Fewer and fewer still.

There were medicines. Chemical combinations capable of curing all kinds of ills. But who would receive these healing balms? The makers set their prices, opened their markets, prepared to help anyone who could pay.

There were vaccines. On the way, and soon. Giving great hope to many. But were outgoing rulers sharing all they knew with those soon to replace them? The people staked their lives on that hope. But truth be told they weren't really quite sure.

There were devices. Devices to connect, to play, to amuse. But the handheld toys came with side effects just beginning to be understood. For they were also devices to frustrate, to isolate, to depress.

There were promises. That all men, and women, and children were created equal. That the color of your skin didn't much matter. That you could marry who you loved, without exception. But promises

were broken, and often. How much promise did these promises still hold? The people wondered. Then they wondered some more.

There was darkness. That much was clear. The winter solstice, in so many ways, was weeks away still.

But there too was light. For a star, brighter than any before, illuminated the heavens. Wise men, women and children then followed that star, curious to see where the light led.

They brought with them their food, wealth, healers, medicines, vaccines, devices, promises. They laid them all at the foot of the manger. Near a mere infant wrapped in swaddling clothes. They then prayed. That what they carried with them on this journey be not burden, but blessing. A blessing for all the people, without exception.

These are the best of times, these are the worst of times.

In the midst of so much unsettled still, may we, too, set our sights on the star, beginning our journey anew.





# Winter is coming! Embrace hope!

~ Joyce O'Donnell Council President

Yay! No more negative political ads (for awhile)! I pray now that everyone can listen to each other and work together for the common good.

Now that we are approaching Advent and Christmas, let's do our best to stay positive. Let's turn to the Word made incarnate in this world. Let's vow to try to be humble, gracious, and loving.

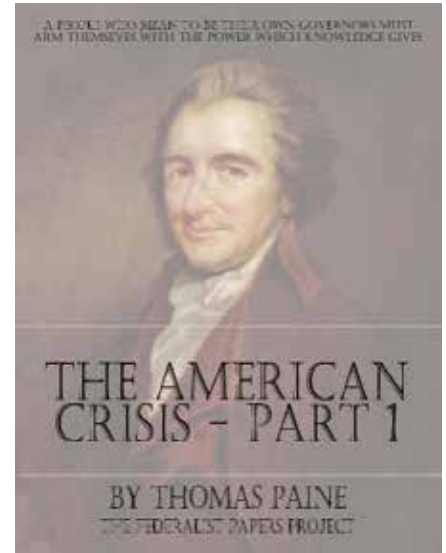
God's work. Our hands. That's the tag line of the ELCA. We are meant to care for each other, to be a tangible sign of God's love here on Earth.

When the time is right, we have a plan for coming together in person within the building. Pastor Ryan regularly checks the Covid-19 data for our area. According to the CDC and Synod guidelines, we are not yet at the point we can open the church to worship. We have deemed it safe for limited activity inside the building. The church council has voted to allow a youth event in the Commons. Miriam Chadima, Youth Engagement Specialist, has reported on that event during online worship.

When it is safe to gather together again, the pastors and the council have approved a plan to gather safely. Sanitation of the worship spaces (sanctuary and Commons), social distancing, mandatory masks, limited singing, etc., will be the rules we will live by. There will also be a limit on the number of people who can participate in in-person worship, of course, so we are able to maintain safe distances.

This nice weather recently has enabled several of us to meet safely together outdoors in parks or backyards. These gatherings are so important to remaining in relationships with each other. I hope you have had the opportunity to spend some time in fellowship with your church brothers and sisters. If you know someone who is alone, please reach out to them. This is a very lonely time for some of us.

In 1776, Thomas Paine, one of America's Founding Fathers, wrote "These are the times that try men's souls." These words, from his essay "The American Crisis", helped inspire those fighting to overthrow the rule of King George and found a new nation.



He also wrote, "Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and repulse it. Say not that thousands are gone, turn out your tens of thousands, throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but 'show your faith by your works,' that God may bless you. It matters not where you live, or what rank you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. The far and the near, the home counties and the back, the rich and the poor, will suffer or rejoice alike."

Our common enemy is the coronavirus. Our common action can help us control the spread of the virus. Do your part. Wash your hands. Wear a mask. Stay six feet apart. *Gather in due time. Grow in the meantime. Go with God all the time.*

God bless you all,  
Joyce O'Donnell  
Council President


# Reconciling in Christ Task Force Update

~ Larry Otteman he/his Task Force Chair

**WHAT** The phrase “Reconciling in Christ” is an established term for ELCA communities to use to announce that they publicly and explicitly welcome and affirm individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and/or more (LGBTQIA+). For nearly a year, members of Bethesda Lutheran Church have met to discern if now is the time to take this public step. This is an update of our progress toward that goal.

**WHY TAKE THIS STEP?** We wish to communicate that we as a people of faith have dedicated time, prayers and effort to educate ourselves and to stand against the discrimination that individuals face in regard to gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation. We are committed to provide a safe space for LGBTQIA+ individuals who have experienced exclusion and harm from people who acted in the name of Christianity. We proclaim our stance publicly to help others be courageous in broadening their own sense of what it means to welcome others in.

**PROCESS** We have followed the multiple-step process found in “Building an Inclusive Church.” This includes sharing what calls us to this project, studying whether now is the right time to proceed, and reaching out to lay leaders for their input. At each step, we felt strongly that we should continue. Then physical isolation became the overriding safety mandate and we had to adapt. Zoom discussion groups open to all focused on appropriate terminology and effective allyship and a prayerful and thoughtful response to specific “clobber” biblical passages was led by both pastors. Miriam Chadima led an in-depth study of the same issues in a six-week book study of *UnClobber: Rethinking our Misuse of the Bible on Homosexuality* by Colby Martin.

**NEXT STEPS** Throughout November, members of the task force will explain why they support Bethesda Lutheran becoming a Reconciling in Christ ELCA congregation. A congregation-wide survey will take place to be sure we have understood correctly that now is the right time to take this step and what more should we do to help you understand the issues. Then, a formal vote will take place during our annual meeting in January 2021. Scan the QR code at right with your smart device to go straight to the survey. 



**HOW DO WE CONFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITIES?** We have learned that we must do more than say “all are welcome” even as we hold this out to be true. We must be explicit and detailed. To become a congregation recognized as Reconciling in Christ, we must affirm our support of all people regardless of gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation.

**WHAT DO WE GAIN BY TAKING THIS STEP?** We witness that we are blessed to be a blessing to others. We will join the roster of ELCA Reconciling in Christ congregations that is information available for everyone seeking this type of church home. Go to [www.reconcilingworks.org](http://www.reconcilingworks.org) to learn more about this roster. We know that over 70% of people born after 1980 support same sex marriages and want their children to grow up in a church in which they know that their children will be welcomed and loved no matter how they identify themselves.

**WHAT IS THE STATEMENT OF WELCOME WE WILL BE VOTING ON?** As the task force members continued to meet and learn, we reviewed the welcoming statements of other congregations regarding the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals. We discovered that the same spirit of inclusion prompted churches and communities of faith to recognize their unintentional exclusion of many other groups. Those congregations expanded their welcomes to explicitly embrace many individuals their church or The Church has left behind. The task force recommended to the Church Council that we adopt the same expanded welcoming statement.



## PROPOSED BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH WELCOMING STATEMENT

We invite you to join our community and share in God’s abundant grace knowing that you cannot be separated from the love of God by your age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, physical or mental abilities or faith background

*Thank you for taking time to read about this important next step.*



# Bethesda Youth and Families

~ **Miriam Chadima** Youth Engagement Specialist

## Hello Bethesda Families and Friends!



We have been having a ton of fun in Zoom **SUNDAY SPLASH** so far this programming year! We started out the year with a focus on our **Emotions** as the kids went back to school, whether online, in person, or in a hybrid model. Because of these changes from our normal routines, we had a lot to discuss and were able to learn how to use our emotions for good and to control them when necessary. After learning about Emotions, we moved onto **Pumpkin**-themed lessons over Jesus' parables, where we learned about faith and the Kingdom of Heaven. We also learned a song!

Confirmation has also looked quite different as we have met mostly virtually as well. We have begun a new video-based curriculum and are learning about the Old Testament and the lessons, themes, and history of our Bible. We have also had a fun meeting at Moore Memorial Park in August to get to know each other at a safe, socially-distanced pizza and games night! We also completed a service event by providing set up and tear down for this year's successful **Trunk-or-Treat!** In December we will be serving guests at Food at First in our first community outreach event of the year!

Finally, our Family Fun Days events have been a blast this fall! We have enjoyed a Tie Dye Science Fair, a 5K & Family Walk at Ada Hayden, and Trunk-or-Treat! In November, we enjoyed a livestreamed Family Fun Days event (in our own homes) where we watched two Peanuts films while enjoying a packaged Snoopy-inspired feast!

In December, we are so excited to announce that we will be hosting a multi-church, **Car Scavenger Relay!** We will put out more details soon, but this is our biggest socially-distanced event yet, and we are so looking forward to having you join us!

Thank you all for your support for our youth and for our family events and programs. I hope to see you at one of our events soon!

Blessings,  
~ *Miriam Chadima*



September 20, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am writing to extend my deep appreciation for the beautiful sending service, gifts of the “Bethesda blue” flower and cross, and many heartfelt cards and individual gifts. I felt the same care and generosity extended during my internship experience in my sending.

It has been a beautiful year of learning and growing together, and that is thanks to the way you embraced the gifts I had to offer and wholeheartedly provided words of affirmation, encouragement, and challenge. I could not have imagined a more supportive and welcoming congregation. Thank you for the ways you join in God’s work in the world and spread the good news of freedom in Christ to all.

I wanted to express my thanks with the same wholeheartedness, and kept putting off writing this, as the words that would come didn’t seem sufficient. They still don’t, but what I have to offer is my gratitude for Bethesda taking the leap of faith to have an intern this past year and going all in on supporting and affirming me in my learning. You will always be a part of the great cloud of witnesses that surround me. Each person we meet leaves an imprint, and we are never the same. Bethesda has left a God-breathed mark on me.

I will keep you all up to date when I have details to share about call and ordination. I am eager for this next step and also attentive to the work of the Holy Spirit to lead me and a future congregation into a relationship that is a positive and generative as my time with you has been.

“The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;  
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.”  
—Numbers 6:24–26 NKJV

In God’s Peace,  
Sonja



# BETHESDA WOMEN

*As this time of separation continues, let's remember to pray for each other, and when you find yourself wondering how someone is doing - reach out with a phone call, text, or send a quick little note in the mail. Love one another. Have a Blessed, Safe, and Happy Thanksgiving!*



**B**ethesda Women's Board is meeting *every two months* via Zoom. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, December 1st, 6:30 pm. If you have any topics you'd like to have discussed at the Board Meeting, please contact any Board Member.

- Tuesday, December 1
- Tuesday, January 26
- NEW TERM: February 1



**Scandinavian Coffee** is a virtual event this year. **So far we have raised \$4,765.**

Thank you to everyone who has been able to support Bethesda Women! The board will be discussing and distributing funds to some of our

benevolent recipients by the end of the year. This will be discussed and decided at the December Board Meeting. We are not doing the formal application process this year, since it's different with asking for donations without an event. If you have any input in regards to this process, please contact any board member.

**Zoom Prayer Circle** is usually on the fourth Thursday of every month. However, due to the holidays, November and December will be one week early. Logon after 9:30 am to visit, Gather Bible Study begins at 10 am.

- Thursday, November 19
- Thursday, December 17
- Thursday, January 28

If you'd like to be on the reminder email to receive the Zoom link, or you need a copy of the *Gather* magazine (Bethesda Women have extra copies) please contact Karla Mortensen for contactless dropoff or pickup.



## ELECTIONS

A new term will begin February 1, 2021. Elections will take place in January. Details on how this will be accomplished are forthcoming. It will likely be a combination of electronic voting and paper ballots that can be mailed. Would you like to be on the board? Would you like to nominate someone to be on the board? We currently need a treasurer (Barb Conis resigned) and one can be appointed before the new term. So if you love Excel and writing checks, please consider helping Bethesda Women!



## Looking Ahead:

**SEIA SWO 33rd Annual Convention** postponed until 2021

**Women of the ELCA Triennial**, Phoenix, AZ August 5-8, 2021.

## Women's Board

- President . . . . . Karla Mortensen
- Vice President . . . . . Lindsay Peters
- Secretary . . . . . Gretchen Mosher
- Treasurer . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
- Members-at-Large . . . . . Carolyn Ahlstrom, Jo Hutchins

# Food Pantry **Hasn't Missed** a Scheduled Day

~ **Rod Fischer** Food Pantry Co-Chair

Two recent changes at the Food Pantry have gone smoothly during these pandemic times. In September the pantry moved to a 3-day a week schedule, eliminating Monday morning. Curbside service which began when the pandemic hit in March will continue as the weather begins to change. Pantry volunteers will hand out a clipboard with a sheet of paper indicating food items currently available. The guest will make their choices and a volunteer will pick up the sheet and return it to the pantry for the order to be filled. Once the order is filled a volunteer delivers the food to the guest's vehicle.

Since the reduction in the number of days the pantry has been open we have seen an increase in our numbers. We are serving about 215 families per month. This compares to about 180 from the beginning of Covid-19 in March through the end of summer. However, prior to the pandemic we were serving about 250 families per month. So, numbers are up but not to pre-Covid-19 levels. Eliminating Mondays really had no impact on the numbers of visitors. The majority of people visit the pantry on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

This holiday season we're handing out \$50 Fareway gift cards and have purchased 300 to date. We have a diverse clientele and we want them to be able to purchase the food they want for holiday celebrations as opposed to us assuming what they would like. The gift cards cannot be used to purchase alcohol, tobacco or lottery tickets. An Extension calendar will be distributed to each guest and the Day for Girls Ministry Team will create holiday stockings for distribution to our guests.



## Bethesda **Bountiful Pie Exchange**

**Monday, Nov. 23** . . . 8-10am Drop-off / 4-6pm Pick-up



In lieu of gathering for our annual Pie Social, we've got an alternately perfect pie plan! **Drop-off/Pick-up Day is Monday, Nov. 23.** Drive-up to the circle between 8-10:00 am and DROP OFF your home baked pie(s). Please use a disposable pie pan(s), and include your recipe (or at least a list of any allergen ingredients). We'll give you a numbered ticket(s). Then, between 4-6:00 pm drive-up with your ticket, and we'll present you with another Bethesda-baked pie(s)! Sign-up at <https://bethesdaames.org/upcoming-events/>.





# Bethesda **Members** in the News

## Guest column: Healthiest Ames redirects energy during COVID-19 pandemic

**Stephanie Downs and Cheryl Langston** Guest contributors

Published 9:44 a.m. CT Oct. 14, 2020



Visit the Ames Tribune to view the rest of this article, at <https://tinyurl.com/y2fglj3c>

As co-leaders of Healthiest Ames, a non-profit, volunteer group with the goal of maximizing the health of Ames residents, our organization has grappled with how to promote our objectives throughout this complicated and unusual year.

Our mission for community-wide health focuses on four main areas: encouraging physical activity, promoting healthy food choices, improving awareness of an individual's health conditions, and improving community connectedness.

However, the arrival of COVID-19 has created challenges no one could have anticipated. Like many others, we regrouped, assessed the greatest needs, and redirected our energy to those areas we could have the biggest impact.

Visit the Ames Community School District to view the rest of this article, at <https://tinyurl.com/yxg9xd2g>

The Ames Community School District is pleased to announce Dr. Kathryn Arnold as the new Emergency Management Coordinator. In this position, she will organize and manage many of the COVID-related logistics across the District throughout the school year.

Arnold most recently served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Missouri St. Louis, teaching online courses in numerous topics. Prior to that, she was an Education and Policy Consultant at Boca Raton Regional Hospital.

As a PhD prepared nurse, Arnold understands the clinical needs of school nurses and staff including PPE options and requirements. She has over 18 years of experience creating, managing and implementing policies and procedures, ensuring they met regulatory requirements. Arnold has extensively worked with teams focused on disaster preparedness and response to emergency incidents.

Arnold holds a Master of Science & PhD in Nursing from Florida

## Dr. Kathi Arnold named new Emergency Management Coordinator

August 5, 2020





## Recommended Reading from the Church Library

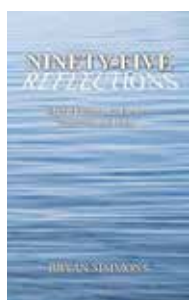
The tribute to author, Rachel Held Evans (1981-2019) "Apostle to outsiders" by Elizabeth Eisenstadt Evans

in the June 2019 *Christian Century* inspired me to reread *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*, and *Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving and Finding the Church*, for a second time and I think any of you reading this would find them worth your time.



A small group could share the article and discuss either or both books in a relatively short time.

Another book worth rereading is Pastor Bryan's, *Ninety-Five Reflections: Martin Luther's 95 Theses Yesterday and Today*.



These books can inspire you to have new conversations about Christian faith and to share your own faith journey with others.

Be informed! Read and Serve Others!  
~ Jan Gray



**Are you having trouble receiving Bethesda's emails?** We've posted an article on our website that addresses this issue. You can enable your email on your computer to safely allow (or "whitelist") the BethesdaAmes.org domain to reach you. From our homepage [www.bethesdaames.org](http://www.bethesdaames.org) click on the "Resources" tab, and then click on the image printed above (Email Whitelist Guide). Then click the button with your type of Email. Still have questions? Contact Linda Fevold at [lfevold@bethesdaames.org](mailto:lfevold@bethesdaames.org).

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[www.BethesdaAmes.org](http://www.BethesdaAmes.org)

### WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 9:30  
Livestreamed at [www.bethesdaames.org](http://www.bethesdaames.org)

**Lead Pastor Bryan Simmons**  
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**NOTE:** please contact Lisa Ailshie at 232-6256 or [contact@BethesdaAmes.org](mailto:contact@BethesdaAmes.org) with requests/comments regarding this magazine, or to submit an article for the Spring issue (deadline February 4, 2021)

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:  
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## **December 2020, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story**

### **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! This year has been challenging for all of us, and we are grateful for the lowans who have stepped up just for the sake of giving and helping LSI in 2020. Thank you for bringing the light of Christ to your neighbors who rely on these important services!

At LSI, we know many people experiencing deep darkness. We know parents who feel hopeless, with little 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 foster care, who fear they will never have a forever family to love them.

The holidays can be an especially difficult time for our neighbors who are so often overlooked in our society. In the spirit of giving, the spirit of love, and the spirit of working together, let us stand with them and lift them up this Christmas season. If you would like to learn more about how you can support Iowa children and families, contact Deb Whitford, LSI’s director of philanthropy and church relations, at 563.676.2065 or [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org). LSI is also available to provide a customized virtual shared ministry opportunity for your congregation. If you would like to share the message of LSI with your community, please contact our Waverly office at 319.352.2630 to get started.

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).*

### **Continuum of Care**

As she prepared to celebrate her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Sam was also preparing to age out of foster care. She had lived with her foster mom, Marty, for years and Marty wanted to ensure Sam had a smooth transition into adulthood. That’s when they signed up for LSI’s Host Homes program.

Provided through LSI’s Services for People with Disabilities, Host Homes provides personalized care for lowans with disabilities who find greater success living in a private family home instead of a busier community living environment with roommates. Individuals are carefully matched with a Host Homes mentor and live with them in their home, where they can build strong relationships and become better engaged with their communities.

Marty became a Host Homes mentor so Sam could continue living in her home and receive the same care and support she was used to. Sam is thriving and Marty gets to continue walking alongside her as she builds a bright future full of independence. They work on Sam’s goals every day, including cooking and planning meals. Marty especially loves fishing and going on picnics with Sam and as a Host Homes mentor, she can continue serving as a foster parent to other Iowa teens.

**Bethesda Lutheran Church**  
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# Join Bethesda so many ways this December!

- Wednesday, December 16 .....  6:30 pm  
**Root Beer & Carols Drive-In** Watch on-screen, listen on car radio, SING!
- Saturday, December 19 .....  2:00 pm  
**Car-Relay Scavenger Hunt** \*Sign-up: \$5.00 per car
- Thursday, December 24 .....  1:00 pm  
**Christmas Eve Worship** a Livestream event, then available on-demand
- Thursday, December 24 ..... 5:00 pm  
**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship** a Drive-In event
- Thursday, December 24 .....  9:00 pm  
**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship** a Drive-In event
- Sunday, December 27 .....  9:30 am  
**Lessons & Carols Worship** a Livestream event

\* Sign-up at [bethesdaames.org/upcoming-events](http://bethesdaames.org/upcoming-events)