

# the Wellspring

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

Published quarterly  
**Volume 17**  
Issue 4



## Winter 2022



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



# God as One Among Us

~ Pastor Bryan Simmons

*"Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.'"*

~ Luke 2:8-11

Dear family and friends in Christ,

Each year, as the Christmas season comes and goes, we are reminded about the story of Jesus' birth and with it the angels, shepherds, inn keepers, animals, etc. It's a story that becomes so familiar that it is easy to get great comfort from it, like drinking a nice warm cup of hot cocoa on a cold winter's night. It presents for us an escape from this present time, with uncertainty all around us and strife both within our own nation and around the world. We have visions come to mind that this moment, the night Jesus was born, was a perfect, peaceful, night.

The angels remind the shepherds, who are understandably terrified as the sheer glory of God breaks into the humble, mortal world, "Do not be afraid." The birth of the baby Jesus as opposed to the angels in their dazzling, terrifying splendor makes God seem so incredibly approachable. I think that's why people tend to like the Christmas holiday more than any other holiday. (You can be honest, Christmas is likely your favorite holiday, even over Easter!) It is this moment where God is not creating with the mere power of speech and breath, causing great signs and wonders, rolling stones away and breaking the bonds of death itself, but is vulnerable, sweet, understandable, fully present as God and human in this little baby.

We can handle babies. We swaddle them, feed them, burp them, change them, rock them gently, and become enamored by their coos and giggles. It's the God almighty thing that can be a bit much to handle. That's why it's here, with Jesus born in a manger for you and for me, that I think we feel the most warmed by hope. God doesn't come in terrifying power to undo God's creation, but arrives as an infant, joining us in all our frailties and uncertainties in this life. God is with us in this moment in perhaps the most tangible way God will ever be, and we love God for it. This baby has grown to become a miracle-working teacher who was betrayed, crucified, buried, and on the third day raised to new life. But, for now, our attention is on the baby, God with us in the way we understand best, as one among us.

May the meekness of the baby Jesus bring you great comfort and peace this Christmas season. May the love which God shows us in this moment radiate so that you can't help but share that love with one another. May we look at the world and be less afraid, despite its uncertainty and strife, and may we begin to appreciate a little more the depths to which God went for you and me.

Yours in Christ Jesus,  
Pastor Bryan Simmons



# Summary of Congregation **Council Activities**

~ **Larry Otteman** Council President

It continues to be a blessing to serve as President of the Council for 2022. I am proud of all the hard work that the Council members have contributed. Remember, the minutes of the monthly Council meeting are available in the office in print and online by requesting ***Let Your Light Shine*** from the church office ([contact@bethesdaames.org](mailto:contact@bethesdaames.org)).

**August** . . . (a marathon meeting since the Council did not meet in July). Pastor Simmons presented his sabbatical project "Tentmaking for Modern Ministry." His report presents many sources of income for churches beyond pledged support but only a few are feasible at Bethesda. The Council decided to concentrate on increased rental opportunities and possibly leasing unused space. Various Boards and Teams reported. The Food Pantry served 2864 households with over 85,000 pounds of food last year. Saving Suds is distributing nearly \$400 in quarters each week. The Facilities Management Team hosted an open house of the renovated duplex that will serve immigrants and refugees. Both call committees (Youth and Family and Worship Arts) have met by Zoom with candidates. Recommended changes in our constitution and bylaws by the Governing Documents Team were approved and a special congregation meeting set for October 16. The Reconciling in Christ Team announced the invitation to a public concert on September 8 and various other opportunities by Stephanie Dykes, a transgender Lutheran with a gift for singing. We finally adjourned at 9:40 pm.

**September** . . . Council met with Kathy Harris of the Facilities Management Team and Harold Pike and various long- and short-term projects were discussed. One long-term possibility is enlargement of the narthex. Shorter term projects included inspection of the spire as a source of leaks and replacement of the sign on Northwestern Avenue. Pastor Bryan reported on the high level of activity at

the start of the programming year for youth. The call committee for an associate pastor of youth and family remains in an active search. More discussion centered on sources of income by rental and possibly lease of church property with more information forthcoming.

**October** . . . Pastor Bryan received a monetary gift from the congregation in recognition of all he has done to lead us as a solo pastor. The Council met with Sharon Axland who leads the Gifts and Memorials Ministry Team with an excellent overview of the process. Pastor Bryan reported the education year is underway with success. He will hold a congregation-wide meeting to discuss his sabbatical project on November 1. Boards and Teams reported highlighting Saving Suds, CROP walk, Scandinavian coffee (the first in person since 2019), the Immigrant and Refugee Ministry Team and the ongoing work of the call committee for youth and family. More details were reviewed on rental space and further thoughts on leasing space. A task force on these issues will be headed by Steve Peters. The value of the endowment and the division of donated versus earnings/losses/management fees prompted a discussion of the philosophy of use of our endowment. Pastor Bryan and Andra will head up a task force on these issues. The 2023 budget process and finding replacements for Council members by a nominating committee will start shortly.

Participating in Council is not a paid task, but it should never be a thankless task. ***Take time to thank the members of Council*** . . . Tony Woodcock (past-president), Larry Otteman (president), Steve Peters (president-elect), Gretchen Mosher (secretary), Andra Reason (treasurer), Chris Brakke, Sandi Philips, Rod Fischer and Sara Nelson (at-large members).

God bless your journey in faith,  
*Larry Otteman* Council President





## Update on the calls for **Associate Pastors of Youth and Family** and **Worship Arts**

The Council recognizes the need to reemphasize Youth and Family Ministry. In a member wide survey in October 2021, this is the highest priority for us as a community of faith. At our congregation meeting on May 22, 2022, we approved the search for a full time Associate Pastor of Youth and Family Ministries. Tony Woodcock (immediate past president) leads that committee which consists of Jolene Baker, Kristina Greenfield, Mary Greenfield, Diane Hinderaker, Lise McKillop, Sara Nelson, Karen Nettleton, and Joyce O'Donnell.

With the assistance of Synod personnel, Reverend Dan Kuckuck and Deacon Jodi Schuman, two candidates met with the call committee via Zoom and the second

candidate has completed an in-person interview. There will likely be more developments before the Wellspring is published.

At that same congregation meeting, we approved Steve Peters (president-elect) to lead the call committee for a full-time Associate Pastor of Worship Arts. Those members are Trace Houge Brakke, Duane Huffer, Jean Nicol Jahren, Mif Grotnes, Norma Sisson, Kathy Slocum, Jeanne Stewart, and Marnette Worth. That committee has met with one candidate via Zoom but did not recommend an in-person interview.

Please keep both committees in your prayers as they strive to find the right people for these positions.

## Update **UPDATE!** from the November 6 Special Congregational **Vote**

**Minutes of the Special Congregation Meeting to Call Pastor Jonathan David Dolan as Associate Pastor of Youth and Family. November 6, 2022. Bethesda Lutheran Church, Ames, Iowa.**

President Larry Otteman called the meeting to order at 2:20 PM. Prior to this, the attendees met Pastor Dolan and his family, reviewed the biography prepared by Pastor Dolan and heard from members of the call committee as well as Pastor Simmons. All questions were answered.

A total of 86 members attended which achieved a quorum of greater than fifty. Larry presented the Compensation and Benefits approved by the Council following Synod guidelines. The motion to: Call Jonathan Dolan as Associate Pastor of Youth and Family of Bethesda Lutheran Church, Ames, Iowa at the level of compensation described and recommended by the Council was seconded by Tony Woodcock.

A hand ballot was completed by all 86 members with the “yes” vote=86 and “no” vote=0 which achieved the requirement of greater than a 2/3 vote. The meeting was adjourned by the president at 2:55 PM.

Pastor Dolan was informed of the vote, and has accepted the call. He is scheduled to arrive with his family the first week of December.





# Reconciling in Christ Ministry Team Update

~ **Larry Otteman** Council President

We were very proud to host **Stephanie Dykes, Ph.D.** for a public concert at Bethesda on September 8. She presented "A Transgender Life. An evening of Song and Story." She participated in worship services on both Saturday and Sunday capping off her stay with a VOYAGERS Adult Forum presentation in the Commons, "Transgender and Lutheran."

In her own words, "My singing is a way to do advocacy for transgender people." In addition to her involvement

in the life of our church, she accepted the gracious hospitality of many members of Bethesda who toured Ames and dined out with her.

Pastor Bryan regularly hears from new members that our public statement of welcome to LGBTQIA individuals is a factor in choosing Bethesda as their faith community. I am proud of our reputation in the Ames and surrounding communities as an inclusive church.

The collage includes a newspaper clipping from the Ames Tribune dated 11/10/22, 10:25 AM. The headline reads: "Transgender singer from Seattle to perform at Bethesda Lutheran Church in Ames". The byline is "Ronna Faaborg Ames Tribune" and the publication date is "Published 3:27 p.m. CT Sept. 6, 2022". The article text includes: "Seattle-based baritone singer Stephanie Dykes uses her voice as an advocate for transgender change." "The now 64-year-old Dykes was in high school when she discovered her voice and began performing. Dykes, who was born male, transitioned to female in 2018. Despite her appearance change, her voice remained a rich baritone." "Dykes' singing career has made her a vocal pioneer, and she's one of the few women to sing in churches and choruses." "My singing is a way to do advocacy for transgender people," she said. "Before the COVID-19 pandemic, she performed with the Seattle chorus." "Until I was asked for that solo and got it, I really hadn't thought of that song being a transgender advocacy song. But as I studied the words more, I thought, 'Yeah, this really resonates with me,'" Dykes said. "Many things on the journey through life, she said. It's become one of the things I'm proud of." "Ames on Thursday."

Accompanying the text are a Transgender flag, a rainbow flag, and a photograph of Stephanie Dykes performing at a piano in a church setting.



## Activities of the Immigrant & Refugee Team

~ **Larry Otteman** Council President

It's been a busy three months for Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance (AIRA) welcoming around 22 Ukrainians to Ames. Two of the families have been/are hosted by Bethesda families. Some financial support has been given for air travel as well as a small monthly stipend until government funding arrives.



The welcoming committee of AIRA has also given assistance with the paperwork required and worked with tutors and classes to bring their English to a level that they

can start the job search. We believe two have or will soon start a job and one other is awaiting results of interviews.

Two families will be moving into their own housing in November: A benevolent resident of Ames is renting one of the families a furnished house. Another rental property has been furnished by members of First Methodist Church for a couple who will soon be employed.

Members of the Bethesda Immigrant and Refugee Ministry Team include Anne Almquist, Ann Hein, Russ Melby, Larry Otteman and Diane Pierce. More help is needed for this ministry—prayerfully consider joining.

## Saving Suds Helps Our Neighbors Keep Clean

~ **Kim Burnett** Christian Service, Mission, and Outreach Board Chair

Here is a bare bones glimpse of the data—March through October, 2022 . . . the Bethesda arm of the Saving Suds Ministry helped **152 families** representing **431 individuals**. We distributed **\$2,848.50** and **tons of detergent pods, dryer sheets and snacks**.

When our volunteers end a monthly shift, they paint a vivid picture of the personal impact this effort has on a laundromat full of our Story County neighbors. Laundry is incredibly expensive (there are some machines that take \$10 to wash one load) today. With a large family, and certainly with children, it is a never-ending task.

Social media frequently includes a question about when is the "free" day at Squeaky Clean Laundromat. FYI, Bethesda covers the first Thursday of each month. Then St. Andrew's takes the third Thursday.

We've had 11 volunteers over those eight months—but certainly do need more. A couple of months we haven't had anyone sign-up to volunteer, and we resort to a last-minute email blast or personal phone calls to previous volunteers. You can access the sign-up sheet at [tinyurl.com/3a7hshej](https://tinyurl.com/3a7hshej).

Please consider a monetary gift to the Saving Suds Ministry—a check to Bethesda Lutheran Church with "Saving Suds" in the memo line will do it. Or give a bit of your time on the first Thursday. The shifts are short, and are designed for two volunteers at a time.







# Stewardship 2022

~ **Daryle Vegge** Stewardship Board Chair

*"Every Man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you."*

Deuteronomy 16:17

*"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion,  
for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7*

Above are only a couple of the many Bible verses that address how we as good stewards manage the gifts that have been given us. Many tell of how we are directed to take care of our Earth and our fellow man and to promote the glory of God.

This year's Stewardship campaign was based on Matthew 25: 34-46 (*read it*) and the movie, "Pay it Forward." Both regarding how we take care of others around us . . . in the name of Jesus.

We introduced Stewardship via several Temple Talks through the year, all about the agencies that Bethesda supports to carry out God's mission here on earth. In all, Bethesda supports about two dozen such agencies.

On October 5, approximately 80 Bethesda members attended our "kickoff" event held at the Ames Golf and Country Club. After a social and dinner, attendees were treated to an inspirational talk by philanthropist, Michael Londra, who told of his support and involvement in an NGO that has served the people of



Haiti, helping them to overcome the many setbacks that have come their way. That evening 33 pledges were turned in to get a head start on our "pledge" campaign.

Pledge forms have been made available at church, to be filled out and

returned. Members not returning pledge cards have received a mailing requesting that pledges be returned by October 23. I hope that all of you have been diligent in doing so. Your generosity will determine to what extent Bethesda is able to carry on God's work—locally, nationally, and internationally.

Results as of this writing (October 23) are 52 pledges received for a total of \$267,000) so you can see that we still have a ways to go!!

An added aspect of this year's stewardship campaign is the "Time and Talent" sheets. These are available at the Welcome Center. This is a great way for you to get involved in the "workings" of Bethesda. Pick up a form, fill it out with areas that interest you for service, and then turn into the church office.





# Bread for the World Ministry Team Activities

~ **Larry Otteman** Bread for the World Story County Team

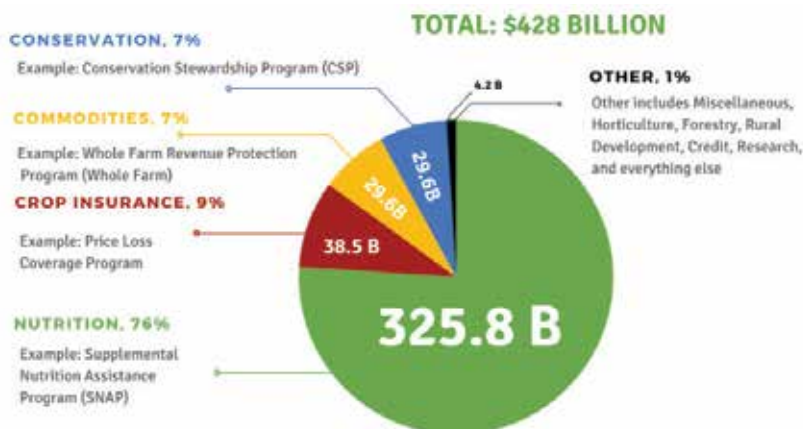
This remains an active team of people from within and outside Bethesda. As the highlight of the last quarter, we were honored to host a Bread “Listening Session” carried out at the Ames Public Library on September 19. Over 20 people attended, many not active Bread members.

The Bread staff, Zach Schmidt and Sergio Mata-Cisneros presented an overview of the Farm Bill with its many components or titles (12 total). Then smaller groups discussed what was important to them.

All the information was recorded and will be part of the planning process to lobby for specific parts of the Farm Bill. See below for a very informative pie chart. The 2023 Farm Bill will be the focus of the annual Offering of Letters.

More information can be found at [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)

**Farm Bill Projected Funding, in Billions, 2019-2023**



## OUR OWN COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry has been very busy over the spring, summer, and fall. Starting in March, visitors to the Food Pantry doubled compared to during COVID and at the same time, food at the Food Bank of Iowa became limited and more expensive. We have been working hard to keep our shelves stocked and are spending about four times what we were spending a year ago.

We are sourcing food from the Food Bank of Iowa, Fareway and Sam's Club. We will once again offer holiday gift cards to Fareway for each household that visits the Food Pantry during November and December—each household will receive one gift card for \$30.00 during the holiday season. We are currently serving an average of 70 households per week.

~ **Donna Grooms**

*Bethesda Food Pantry Co-Chair*

### The 2018 Farm Bill, by Title

<b>Title 1, Commodity Programs.</b> Supports major commodity crops: wheat, corn, soybeans, rice, and sugar.
<b>Title 2, Conservation.</b> Encourages environmental stewardship of farmlands.
<b>Title 3, Trade.</b> Supports U.S. agricultural exports and international food assistance.
<b>Title 4, Nutrition.</b> Provides nutrition assistance, mainly through SNAP.
<b>Title 5, Credit.</b> Makes loans to farmers and ranchers.
<b>Title 6, Rural Development.</b> Supports rural businesses and community development.
<b>Title 7, Research, Extension, and Related Matters.</b> Supports agricultural research and extension programs.
<b>Title 8, Forestry.</b> Supports forestry management programs.
<b>Title 9, Energy.</b> Encourages development of renewable farm and community energy systems.
<b>Title 10, Horticulture.</b> Supports the production of specialty crops, USDA-certified organic foods, and locally produced foods.
<b>Title 11, Crop Insurance.</b> Provides federal crop insurance.
<b>Title 12, Miscellaneous.</b> Includes support for livestock and poultry production, food waste reduction, and support for socially disadvantaged farmers.





## Mother of Eagles

~ Diane Hinderaker

We are so fortunate to have as part of our Bethesda family an historic organization for youth/young adults that is providing an opportunity for them to learn to serve and evaluate their abilities while growing and learning. Established in the 1960's, Bethesda was the original charter organization for Boy Scouts of America Troop 140 and has continued to this date. The troop is part of the family at Bethesda. The Troop was dormant for some years until Chuck Biskner, with five Scouts, started the troop up again in 1986. The Troop is a partner with Bethesda in teaching and leading youth in lofty pursuits, character building and adventure.

Troop 140 is visible at Bethesda helping with Scandinavian Coffee, food pantry assistance, fall and spring cleanup, National Scouts Day at church, and a variety of other service projects around the church. There have been many families from Ames troops that have been Bethesda members and earned the highest rank of Eagle Scout while a member of the church. Stop and read the plaque on the wall in the commons for Troop 140 Eagle Scouts and see the list. Thank you to the Bethesda's Women's Ministry team who has supported Scouts from multiple Troops who are crafting Eagle Scout projects here at Bethesda from benches, pavers, and walkways to landscaping projects. Great to partner with you for the betterment of the church and its grounds!

Most recently, CONGRATULATIONS to two of Bethesda's own young adults that have recently earned their Eagle Scout Rank with BSA Troop 140. These young men are deserving and have worked so hard for 12 years towards this distinction. Both of their Eagle Scout projects



benefitted Bethesda's property with hours of planning, preparation and hard work. I know this because I am their mother and have watched it all happen! **We are so proud of our sons, Ryan and David Hinderaker.** We have participated in countless den and troop meetings, Pinewood Derbies (we have built 15 Pinewood Derby cars!), popcorn selling, camp outs, cook outs, service projects, scout summer camps, trips to faraway lands and worked on a total of over 50 merit badges in a 14-year period. It has been a wonder to watch these boys turn into men before my very eyes. With the tireless care, guidance, and support from our wonderful volunteer leaders of Troop 140 and God's presence in their lives, my sons are stepping into who they are meant to be. The opportunities given to them to lead others, assess their own confidence and skills, and be tenacious in their pursuit of their own goals is miraculous to behold. They have tested their character while creating faith in themselves and living out their faith in the world. Their Eagle Court of Honor was held on October 16, 2022, to honor their achievements.

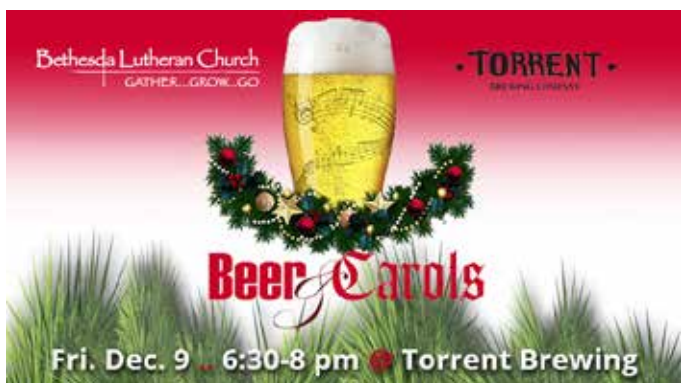
Keep this partnership with Scouts in your thoughts and prayers that it may continue to bless all youth and the community for decades to come!





## Saturday Worship Participant Opportunities

There are still a few openings for greeters and communion helpers for the Saturday services through 2022, and new slots have been added for 2023. Anyone can volunteer, and training can be provided for those who are new to helping. Claim your dates for volunteering by following the Sign Up Genius link here: [tinyurl.com/3975rfyu](https://tinyurl.com/3975rfyu) or with the QR code below.



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### WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Saturdays @ 5:30 pm | Sundays @ 9:30 am  
Livestreamed at [www.bethesdaames.org](http://www.bethesdaames.org)  
and Facebook [BethesdaAmes](https://www.facebook.com/BethesdaAmes)

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Assistant Custodian  
**Curtis Malone**



*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 Johnson at 232-6256 or [contact@BethesdaAmes.org](mailto:contact@BethesdaAmes.org) with requests / comments, or to submit an article for the Spring issue (deadline February 2).

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:  
[AdobeStock.com](https://www.adobe.com/stock)





# Congregational Life & Care @ Bethesda

~ **Joyce O'Donnell** Board Chair

In faith, we are called into relationship—with God in Christ and with one another as a community of faith.

This Fall has been a busy one for Bethesda and for the Congregational Life and Care (CLC) Board. At the end of August, we helped with RALLY WEEKEND by providing fun snacks. In September we furnished cookies, lemonade and coffee for the STEPHANIE DYKES CONCERT. In October, we hosted the BOARD & MINISTRY FAIR and helped with the PET BLESSING. October was PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH. Many people were generous in showing Pastor Bryan how much we value all he does for us as our lead pastor. Monthly we help Mark Weber prepare and serve the NOURISH meal.

Our ministry teams have been busy, too. In this *Wellspring*, I'd like to highlight the work of one of our ministries: **OLDER. WISER LUTHERANS. (O.W.L.s)**. Every month, usually the second Thursday, this group for adults aged 60+, (formerly "Young at Heart") hosts a time to get together and socialize, have snacks, and sometimes play a fun game or hear an interesting speaker. In September, we played a really fun game called "Who Am I?" where we wore sticky notes on our foreheads and had to ask questions to figure out who we were. In October, Pastor Bryan led a meaningful Bible Study, "Created in the Image of God."

On November 17, Mark Kapplemann, son of Mary and Pastor Glen Kapplemann, will speak about his military experience. December will bring a Christmas celebration with Louis Banitt leading us in Christmas carols. We will also have a white elephant gift exchange. You can wrap up something from your house that you no longer love to enhance the life of a lucky recipient. If you'd rather buy something to share, please don't spend more than \$5. In January, Tim Grandon, of Grandon Funeral Home, will answer our questions about funerals.

Our NEW MEMBER MINISTRY TEAM is welcoming new members! Watch the new member bulletin board (located near the main floor bathrooms) for their pictures.

Some of our ministry teams are still looking for help from people with servants' hearts. CAFÉ BETHESDA is looking for

hosts for next year. You can use Sign Up Genius at: [tinyurl.com/3975rfyu](https://www.tinyurl.com/3975rfyu).

FOOD FOR THE SOUL MEAL MINISTRY is led by Anne Hogberg. This team needs people who want to help prepare food on an as-needed basis for those who are ill, who've just had a baby, are grieving, or anyone who just needs a hot, nutritious meal.

FUNERAL and WEDDING volunteers are encouraged to get on the call list to help when needed. Darlene Schmidt oversees this ministry. PRAYER SHAWL KNITTERS/ CROCHETERS are also wanted for this prayer-filled ministry.

Do you know we currently have only ONE person who SENDS CARDS to those who are ill, grieving, or celebrating a milestone? Steve Walsh would be so glad for help!



The NEW MEMBER MINISTRY TEAM would love to have more caring and friendly members. Shelly Meinhard leads this team. They welcome new members, help new members get involved so they feel like they are part of our Bethesda family, and they plan new member events to help them meet other Bethesda members.

If you are interested in sharing your gifts with any of these ministries or by joining the CLC board, please contact me at [jdodonn@icloud.com](mailto:jdodonn@icloud.com). You can also contact me if you have any questions or would like more information about serving Christ by serving your fellow members and guests.





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# Tidings of Great Joy

**Thursday, December 8**

**Blue Christmas Worship** (healing & comfort) . . . . . 5:30 pm



**Friday, December 9**

**Beer & Carols** (Torrent Brewing Co @ 504 Burnett) . . . . . 6:30 pm



**Saturday/Sunday, December 17/18**

**Pop Up Christmas Program** . . . . . 5:30 pm/9:30 am



**Saturday, December 24**

Christmas Eve Candlelight **Worship** . . . . . 1:00 pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight **Worship** . . . . . 4:00\* pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight **Worship** . . . . . 9:00 pm



\* LIVESTREAMED

**Sunday, December 25**

Christmas Day **Worship** (lessons & carols) . . . . . 10:00 am