



The Bethlehem Star

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church
1206 C Avenue
Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Vinton, Iowa 52349
(319) 472-3784

January 2017

www.bethlehemvinton.org

Facebook page: "Bethlehem Lutheran Vinton"

From the Pastor's Desk

In addition to generous offerings from members of our congregation and regularly contributing non-members this last month, we are grateful for unanticipated gifts from outside our membership. Three are particularly notable:

A rather large contribution was made to the General Fund by a former member.

A gift of \$5,000 was received from Robert Hansen of Austin, Texas. A letter written by his son, Douglas, stated, "Bethlehem Lutheran was our family church home from 1965 to 1969, when my father was employed there in Vinton at the Iowa State School for the Blind, first as the Principal, and later as the Superintendent. This contribution is a memorial to Opal Marie Hansen, my father's wife of over 50 years, and a wonderful mother to their 7 children. May God bless you and all the family of believers at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Vinton, Iowa." The council has directed this gift to the Endowment Fund. It is significant and heartwarming that a member for a relatively short time 50 years ago has such appreciation for this congregation that motivated this gift.

Thirdly, we received an invoice for repairs to sidewalks with the balance owed of \$0.00 and the request to "put the money you allotted for repair towards a Christmas charity fund. Merry Christmas." The projected was bid at \$2280. We have no "Christmas Fund" as such, so the council allocated the funds evenly between seven recipients that would directly give assistance to people locally and globally. Since the congregation had no real investment in these gifts that would be made from the congregation (as the money was going to be spent on repairs), the council decided to round up the total amount donated to \$2800 or \$400 to

each. Recipients are noted in the treasurer's report.

We are grateful for these inspirational gifts from those who have no obligation to this congregation. I hope we are moved to our own spirit of generosity by them in support of the church locally and in farther reaches.

~Pastor Urlaub

Meet the congregation:

This month we meet Ray and Trish Lough. Please keep them in your prayers.

~JJ Jorgensen – Parish Assistant

Ray Lough grew up in Vinton and Trish is from St. Louis. They were both raised Catholic, but became Lutheran after they started having kids.

They have had nearly 60 kids (foster and adoptive) over the years, so a strong youth ministry has been important to them. Ray and Trish are both attorneys, although Trish stopped practicing law five years ago so she could teach special education students at Vinton-Shellsburg High School.

Ray has been practicing law for over 30 years. He has a lot of trophies for both wrestling and bowling. He enjoys working in the garage on his collection of cars. Trish is always wishing she had time for more gardening and reading. Their two youngest children, Raina and Natalee, are in 1st and 2nd grade. They also generally have three teenage foster daughters.

Membership Quiz

Entries for the membership quiz is open to anyone, even the children. Prizes will be given to those who come closest to guessing of the 14 new members, how many were baptized? Entries are due 1st week of January.

A thought from Intern Lynn:

As yet another year begins – we are inundated with the message that we must set New Year’s resolutions, and if you are like me you sigh knowing that most of the lofty goals set will never be attained and that can lead to the feeling of burden because we worry about missing the mark once again. So what is the easy solution? Simple -- don’t make any resolutions and erase any chance for failure! But as great as that may seem it also means we limit our growth and our potential – so what do we do?



As Christians we can turn to God and ask in prayer what He would want for our life in the coming year. “His ear is attentive to their prayers.” 1 Peter 3:12

As we come to worship each Sunday we can make it our promise to God to not just recite the words of our liturgy that have become familiar to our ears, but to invest ourselves into really hearing and thinking about the words we are saying. “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things.” Revelation 4:11

Another pursuit for the coming year is to take a hold of Paul’s words “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind” Romans 12:2 Read something you enjoy, engage your imagination. This might be reading or listening to an audio book, pursuing through a magazine to find a new wood working project or a new recipe to try. It might be your bible or a daily devotional. It might even be a children’s book that you read to a little one in your midst.

Whatever you choose, choose something that won’t lead to a burden, but rather is something that is life giving. Prayer, worship and engaging our minds through the written word will infuse your soul and spirit with God’s life giving peace.

Blessings to one and all!

~Pastoral Intern Lynn Banderob

“A Moment with Martin Luther”



The Apostle’s Creed 2nd Article – Of Redemption

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also true human being, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person. He has purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. He has done all this in order that I may belong to him, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules in eternity. This is most certainly true.

Bible Reading: Luke 23:39-46

Team Christian Faith

Team Christian Faith would like to thank everyone for their poinsettia and Christmas tree donations. It makes the sanctuary very beautiful. We would also like to thank all of the members that have volunteered to serve as assisting ministers, lectors, communion, greeters, ushers, acolytes, choir, and tape ministry throughout the year. Your service is greatly appreciated. May God bless you. Sheila & Brenda

Prayer is a very important part of our Christian life. If you are in need of prayer, please call the church office or Sheila Stickels 472-4581 or Brenda Sutton 929-3961. Our Prayer Team will pray for you.

Living Lutheran Magazine and Adult Bible Study

(Offering insight into commonly used phrases)

At the first of our weekly sessions of Disciple Fast Track we had a good discussion about how we should try our best to look at the big picture when reading a specific bible passage. This thought is primarily in response to how often we see biblical references used to help reinforce a belief or drum up support for a cause. We are now through with the Old Testament and have attained a much deeper understanding of many of the more famous passages found in the Old Testament. For example, 2 weeks ago we took part in a group reading exercise that really brought home what the book of Job was about. Seldom do we take the opportunity to tackle such thought provoking topics as why bad things happen to good people.

"Having the patience of Job" has more meaning to me now. Last week was enlightening to me to gain a broader understanding of Apocalyptic literature. Reading the book of Daniel provided us with great insight into the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar as well as offering a glimpse of the coming Messiah as Daniel interpreted the King's dreams. I am always intrigued with the origins of commonly used phrases and was fascinated to learn that Daniel's interpretations also brought us the phrases "feet of clay" and "handwriting on the wall".

The December edition of Living Lutheran also has an interesting article that offers insight on often used adages. The article titled Adages hits on adages such as: "God helps those who help themselves", "Part of God's Plan", "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you", and "No justice No peace, Know justice Know peace". It is an interesting read that offers some background on the origins of some of these as well as some pretty good reasoning to avoid them in most situations.

**2017 What say you?
Happy New Year!**

~Jon Clingman,
Council President

Team Christian Life

Thank you to all for continuing to support the Benton County Food Pantry. Items you may

want to consider donating for January are soups and crackers, pancake mix and syrup, hot chocolate. They also welcome cash donations so they can go out and purchase various needed items.

Donations collected at Sunday Fellowship hour during the months of January, February, and March will go to the Heat Assistance Program for the Vinton Community. Money will be sent to Vinton Municipal Utilities for them to disperse as community members need.

A very big THANK YOU to all of the Bethlehem members who on December 8 spent time ringing the bell in front of Fareway for the Salvation Army. It was a cold day, but heart warming to get to wish so many people "Merry Christmas" and watch as people shared with their return Christmas greetings and donations of cash. A community project we hope to take part in again next Christmas season.

Also a big THANK YOU to all who participated in the ELCA Good Gifts Christmas Tree Ornament project. Many items were purchased (such as cow, pig, honey bees, school supplies, etc.) and that money will be sent to the ELCA around January 1.

Youth Ministry

Several children from Preschool - 6th grade participated in the children's Christmas service on December 14. The service was called "Stranger in the Straw". Look for more pictures on the bulletin board.



On December 18th, Sunday school service Sunday, the kids made Christmas cards to deliver to the shut-ins in the congregation. Parents please watch the bulletin and e-mails for information on Lutheran Lakeside camp.

Information will become available in February. There is a discount for early registration. We are hoping to send another group of kids this summer!

We're hoping to have an extra fun activity for the Sunday school students this month. Possibly on Sunday, January 29th. Check emails for additional information.

LIGHTS will be on January 4th. LIGHTS is a fellowship group from kids in preschool-5th grade. We meet the first Wednesday of the month from 5:30-6:30 for a lesson and then fun games, crafts, and food.

LYO students were busy with service projects in December. They decided to adopt a family for Christmas and had fun shopping for and wrapping gifts. They also endured really cold

weather to ring the bell at Fareway for Salvation Army.



Vision Process Update Where is God Leading Us?

The vision group has been working hard to plot a course for the next few months leading into spring.

We are thankful for those that have participated in the initial small group events that looked for your feedback to

four questions. Your answers and insights to those four questions have helped us to get the "big picture" of what the congregation's perceptions and thoughts are regarding Bethlehem Lutheran Church and where God might be leading us.

"Bethlehem Lutheran Church is a faithful, welcoming and generous congregation that finds vitality in its children and youth and in its strong active leadership. We are committed to feeding the hungry in all ways – mind, body and spirit – through ministries within the church and community. We feel called to continue to search

for ways to grow our community outreach and share God's message of love in creative ways."

The next phase of this process has already started and will continue through January and this is to determine who we are and who God might have us become. To do this we are asking for your input into two questions:

1. What are the ministries we are currently doing?
2. Are there any new or expanded ministries we are being called by God to do?

Please take the time during fellowship hour to have conversations with one another around these questions and write your answers on the provided "Post-it Notes" and place them on the large board in Augustana Hall.

All of this information will help in guiding us to pen a ministry purpose statement that will reflect our understanding of our calling and ministry and will help guide discussions regarding the future needs of those ministries and how to best use our physical space to carry out God's mission.

Thank you in advance for your participation – your opinions, thoughts and insights are truly important and valuable.

Food for Thought Small Group



Food for Thought Small Group meets monthly, on the third Thursday evening of the month. The members may carpool from the church or meet at the assigned restaurant. Fellowship and

informal book discussion begins at 6:30 p.m. and continues during the meal. This activity is open to anyone wishing to join the fun.

Our schedule for the upcoming months:

January 19: The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow by Joyce Magnin: Pizza Ranch/Vinton

February 16: The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom: Crooked Antler/Van Horne

March 16: Water from My Heart by Charles Martin: Inn II, bring your own dinner.

We would love to have new members join us. If you have questions call Linda Wallace (472-5638).

Volunteer Disaster Certification

American Red Cross Disaster Action Team (DAT) training sponsored by the Vinton Area Ministerial Association will be held on Tuesday, January 10, 2017, with required advance work to be done individually on a computer. The online portion is an interactive video, questions and learning tools and consists of required segments:

- Disaster Cycle Services
- Recover Services
- Casework & Recover Planning Fundamentals
- Direct Client Assistance Fundamentals

And recommended:

- Shelter Fundamentals
- CAS 2.0 Training

The online portion takes about 4 to 8 hours and must be completed by January 1, 2017. The workshop will be 12:00 to 5:00 PM at the Vinton Presbyterian Church.

This training will qualify persons to do disaster response with the Red Cross in Benton and/or other counties. Please notify our church office if you are interested or for more information. Actual registration is done online individually. See the bulletin board for more information as well.

Thank You Bethlehem!

Words cannot express our heartfelt thanks to our Bethlehem family. Prayers, food, cards, hugs, comforting words are so appreciated. We were overwhelmed by the many people who stopped at our get together for John – many from Bethlehem. Thanks to Pastor Urlaub and Intern Lynn for their comforting words and prayers. Some of our memorial money will go to the Vinton Food Bank. Blessings and thanks to all of you; our church family.

Sheila, Ross, Rachel, Jody,
McKenzie, Tristan and
Hunter Stickels

Prayers:

for health & healing: Ray Lough, Helen Burmeister, and Sue Hughes as she deals with the declining health of her mother.

Finding Calm

Nine-year-old JD lost track of how many days he was removed from school. He would throw things in the classroom, or rip up his papers. Almost every day, he was separated from his classmates and taken to the “Intervention Room,” an empty classroom

where children have the opportunity to calm down and refocus.

But nothing worked.

One day, JD became so angry that he accidentally broke a window in the Intervention Room. That’s when JD’s dad, Jerry, turned to LSI. With his team of LSI therapists and caseworkers, JD has found an interesting way to control his anger: his rock collection. He’s always had a love of gathering “cool, unique-looking” rocks, and AriAnna, his LSI therapist, has incorporated that into their sessions together. She asked JD to pick out his favorite rock. He quickly found one he said “represented his anger.” It was a small stone, covered with red lines. JD connected to the rock because the lines “looked like the anger pumping through his veins,” AriAnna says.

“Rocks can be used as great relaxation tools, and he spent a lot of time pouring over the rocks I had in my office,” AriAnna said. AriAnna knew JD had found something special. She let him keep the rock, and JD regularly uses it to redirect his anger. “I bring my rocks to school and show people, and when I hold them in my hand and breathe, it calms me down,” JD says.

Jerry says LSI’s help has been life-changing for JD. “He’s making better choices now. I’m really proud of him.” he says. This year, JD has been removed from class only once, and for only 15 minutes. “He has a different identity at school now,” AriAnna says. “He’s creative and insightful. Now, he knows what he sees in himself, and he wants to share that with others.”

Thanks to your generous support of LSI, JD was given the tools and resources he needed to cope with his anger and be a happy, healthy kid again. We are so grateful for you!

“The Spirit of LSI”

<http://lsiowa.org/spirit/#gabriel>, LSI

Flowers in January: Please remember to stop by and sign up for flowers for Sunday service. The flower chart is located next to the bathrooms.

<i>Bethlehem Lutheran Church</i>					
<i>Consolidated Fund Activity Report for November 2016</i>					
Account Name	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	Transfers/ Journal Entries	Ending Balance
Building Fund	43,063.47	1,723.50	0.00	2,504.78	47,291.75
Cap Campaign Fd	0.02	0.00	0.00	(0.02)	0.00
Equip Replace Fd	3,019.99	0.00	0.00	100.00	3,119.99
General Fund B	(1.34)	2,993.00	0.00	(2,993.00)	(1.34)
General Fund A	(401.93)	26,961.66	18,532.71	(311.76)	7,715.26
LYO Fund	2,773.89	421.00	0.00	0.00	3,194.89
Memorial Fund	9,578.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,578.63
Property Fund	27,714.88	0.00	0.00	400.00	28,114.88
Sun. School Fund	4,294.72	41.60	0.00	0.00	4,336.32

US Bank mortgage balance as of October 10, 2016: \$0.00!!!!!!

From the Treasurer.....

As you can see from the financial report above, November was a very positive month for giving at Bethlehem. Total giving to General Funds A & B totaled just shy of \$30,000! If December giving finishes out as it has the past couple of years, as one of the higher giving months, looks like we will finish out 2016 on a very positive note regarding the General Fund.

*****THANK YOU TO ALL THAT CONTINUE TO GIVE ANY AND ALL GIFTS TO THE GENERAL FUND.**

As Pastor noted in his comments, the concrete and labor that was done at the entrances to the Church was donated. The estimate for total work was around \$2,250. The Council voted to add to that some and 7 organizations will receive donations of \$400 each. The organizations and gifts are as follows...

- Bishop’s Emergency Fund-used at the discretion of the bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod to help pastors and other rostered leaders in particular financial need.
- Forward Together Campaign for the SEIA Synod designated for Hunger/Poverty.
- Vinton Area Ministerial Association to aid persons, most often with food, fuel, medicine, etc.
- E.C.H.O. Ministries “Sweet Dreams” appeal where local youths will be provided a twin bed with bedding and a Bible book (each is \$160).
- Angel Tree-a local Christmas gift program for children and youths.
- Benton County Food Pantry
- Good Gifts project of the ELCA for global missions. This gift will provide:
\$125—sheep, \$125—microloan, \$30—vaccinations for a child, \$30—support a young adult in global mission for a day, \$38—train an evangelist, \$20—Honey bees, \$12—water jugs, \$10—mosquito net, \$10—fruit-tree seedling

As always, please don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions!

~Ryan McClintock, Treasurer