



*Mission Statement
Sharing God's Love Wherever
We May Be*

**A Member Congregation of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America**

BETHESDA NEWS is a monthly publication of
Bethesda Lutheran Church, Jewell, IA

Bethesda Lutheran Church
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Upcoming Dates

2/10 Mobile Food Pantry
distribution
2/18 6:30 pm Ash
Wednesday Worship with
imposition of ashes
2/25 6:30 pm Lenten
Worship

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**FROM OUR
PASTOR**

What is the Transfiguration of Jesus? To the People of God at Bethesda,

I recommend reading one of the versions of the Transfiguration before reading this article. You can find them in Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:1-13 and Luke 9:28-36. Firstly, we should answer an important question: what does the word "Transfiguration" mean? In the original language of the Gospels, Koine Greek, the word is *μετεμορφώθη* which in the contemporary English alphabet would look and sound like *metemorphōthē*. Just by looking at this word, you might very well be able to deduce that the contemporary English word is metamorphosis. Of course, when you read the Biblical passage (in the New Revised Standard Version - 1989), you do not find the word metamorphosis. Instead, in Matthew and Mark you read, "And he was transfigured before them." Luke states the line, "the appearance of his face changed."

Now, when we think of metamorphosis, we often think of a caterpillar making a cocoon and coming out as a butterfly and broadly speaking a caterpillar undergoes a transformation in the cocoon to become a butterfly. To an extent, that is what happens. Jesus transforms before James, Peter and John, but it is not a completely accurate example of Jesus' Transfiguration. Because Jesus does not change his physical body or his anatomic structure. The translator of the Vulgate or the Latin translation of the Bible (taking from 382-405 AD to do), St. Jerome interprets,

"But let no one think that Jesus put off his Earthly form and outward appearance, or that Jesus lost the reality of His [physical] Body and that He took on a spiritual body...His substance is not made to disappear, but becomes transformed by glory. Without a doubt the Lord was transfigured into the likeness of that glory in which He shall afterwards come into His Kingdom."

Notice how St. Jerome emphasizes that Jesus' substance is unchanged. Instead, we are drawn to how Jesus' dazzling white appearance shows forth his glory and offers James, Peter and John a brief experience of the type of glory that Jesus Christ shall exhibit when he is seated on the throne at the "right hand of God" as the Creed puts it. The Christian Church began celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus, in the late 300s to early 400s AD. Which was at the same time that St. Jerome lived as well as when the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD occurred, where the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed was finished.

To this day, the Church has continued to celebrate this important feast day that shows us as followers of Jesus Christ, that he was truly 100% divine and 100% human. It is often observed on the final Sunday of Epiphany, the Season of Light, helping us to bookend the star's light indicating Christ's birth with the divine light that emanated from Jesus, transfiguring before his disciples on the mountaintop. What would it have been like to have witnessed that glory? We shall find out when Christ calls us to eternal life.

*In humble service of the Triune God,
Pastor Jonathan Dolan*

**Bethesda Lutheran Church - Council Meeting
Minutes - 14 December 2025, 10:45 am**

Present: Jeff Scott, Sheri Muller, Rich Heeren, Jen Nibe, Marcia Wheeler, Pastor Jonathan Dolan, Lisa Peterson, Hans Koehnck, Nicole Ferguson, Sherri Hove

Absent:

The meeting was called to order at 10:52 am by President Jeff Scott. Devotions were led by Pastor Jonathan Dolan.

Approval of the Agenda

Lisa Peterson moved to approve the agenda as amended; Marcia Wheeler seconded, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes of the November Meeting

Rich Heeren moved to approve the minutes as corrected; Lisa Peterson seconded, and the motion passed.

Financial/Treasurer's Report

Sherri Hove gave the Treasurer's Report. As of November 30, the general fund balance was \$15,485.04 and total assets were \$131,190.26.

Lisa Peterson moved to approve the Treasurer's Report; Rich Heeren seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Special End of Year Financial Transactions
Sherri Hove sent an email to the Council on 29 December 2025 for approval on several end of year financial transactions. Honorariums for the Accompanist of Hearts of Praise (\$500), Director of Hearts of Praise and Tone Chimes (\$1,500), High School Youth Sponsor (\$500), and Office Assistant (\$500). Jen Nibe mentioned that we do not have an accompanist for Hearts of Praise at this time.

Jen Nibe moved to approve the payments for the Director of Hearts of Praise and Tone Chimes (\$1,500), High School Youth Sponsor (\$500), and Office Assistant (\$500); Lisa Peterson seconded, and the motion passed on 30 December 2025 with yes votes from Hans Koehnck, Sheri Muller, Sherri Hove, Marcia Wheeler, and Nicole Ferguson.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Dolan distributed a copy of his pastoral activities for November 2025. Pastor Dolan met with the Board of Education, Board of Deacons, Board of Youth, and Council. He has also emailed the Nominating Committee to call a meeting with them. He attended several activities of the youth including a 7th and 8th grade basketball game and the High School Band and Choir concert. Confirmation attendance has been strong, and attendance for the High School Youth Group has also been strong. The High School Youth went shopping for

the Giving Tree and Roxy Young did a wonderful job organizing the trip. Advent Services have been attended primarily by the Confirmation students with a few others. The High School Youth is having a "Christmas Party" on December 17 and the Confirmation Youth will be caroling at Timberland as well. The Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service with Holy Communion will be held at 6:30 on December 24.

Old Business

Financial Firm

The Council continued the discussion of Weber Accounting contracting with Bethesda for financial services, including payroll, bookkeeping, taxes, and auditing.

Call Committee

The Call Committee met.

New Business

Budget Committee

The Budget Committee and Monetary Committee will meet on January 2. The committee is composed of Sherri Hove, Dan Nibe, and Lisa Peterson.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee has been asked to provide the slate of candidates soon in preparation for the Annual Meeting. Clark and Nicole Vold, Dave Lutjen, and Luanne McGonigle comprise the Nominating Committee.

Report from the Audit Committee: The Audit Committee tabled this discussion until July 2026 and the committee will be elected in September 2026.

Annual Reports

Please remember to get your annual reports to Donna by January 11. She is waiting for reports from the President, Treasurer, Pastor, Call Committee, and the various board chairs.

Board Reports

Education

Jen Nibe reported that the Christmas program went very well. Wednesday kids sessions have been going very well. Attendance has been up to 30 some weeks.

Deacons

Rich Heeren reported that Confirmation is going well. The Confirmation students will be going to Timberland on Wednesday, December 17.

Evangelism/Stewardship

Nicole Ferguson reported that the Giving Tree deadline has been extended until December 21. The Annual Chili Cookoff will be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting on January 25.

(continued on following page)

**Bethesda Lutheran Church - Council Meeting
Minutes - 14 December 2025, 10:45 am
Continued**

Worship

Marcia Wheeler reminded the Council that Christmas Eve Service will be at 6:30 and no Christmas Day service. A Carol and Hymns service will be on December 28. Epiphany Sunday is on January 4.

Trustees

Lisa Peterson reported that Neighbors Heating and Cooling has ordered the part to replace the baseboard heating register in the NE stairwell. The total cost will be \$1,321.45. Neighbors will schedule the installation of the replacement heating register. Lisa will contact Neighbors and ask them to look at the remaining fin tubes to determine whether any additional ones need replacing. There is still a smell in the water after the replacement of the anode rod in the water heater. Patience is needed for the smell to dissipate. The robot vacuum used on the main floor has quit working. A replacement has been ordered.

Youth

Hans Koehnk reported that all of the money raised at the Pumpkin Auction was used for the Giving Tree. The possibility of a mission trip or attendance at the National Youth Gathering in 2027 was discussed. The Iowa Wolves trip on January 4 was also discussed.

The next council meeting will be held on Monday, January 12 at 7:00 pm.

Lisa Peterson moved to adjourn the meeting; Nicole Ferguson seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 12:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sheri Muller



The worship committee met on Jan. 12 at 10:30 am. Janis, Marcia, Ortrude and Pastor Jonathan attended. This was the last meeting for Janis's term. We don't know yet who will replace her. We need 2 people. Marcia will be specially elected for another term.

We discussed dates and activities for the upcoming Easter season of worship.

We discussed getting the wood cross set up near the alter before Lent.

Beginning with Ash Wednesday (2/18) Lenten Services and will be held at 6:30 pm Wednesdays using the Holden Evening Prayer with different themes Pastor has selected. Maundy Thursday service on 4/2 will also be 6:30.

Good Friday service with area churches will be at Bethesda but the time might be 7:00. Pastor will check with Rev. Bob who might be preaching. Alter guild will probably replace alter cloths etc for Easter on Saturday.

Easter (4/5) will be 9:00 am with 8-8:45 Easter breakfast before the service. The Dial family will do special music.

There will NOT be suppers before the Lenten services except for the youth meals as usual. Marcia noted that there might be a Seder meal on Wednesday (4/1). She will check with Marilyn.

Janis reserved the park shelter for June 7th outdoor service.

Janis also got readers signed up through May and Donna will email reminders to them.

Janis said she will help us if we need her and volunteer for alter guild in December.

We are so grateful for Janis serving on the Worship Committee these last 2 terms.

Respectfully submitted,
Ortrude

Interim Pastor: Rev. Jonathan Dolan
Deacon roster:
Pat Melchert: 515-451-0389; Richard Heeren: 515-231-2886; Sergio Gomez Roaro: 515-310-2096; Josh Hilfiker: 515-460-3637

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Donna Busch, Admin. Assist.; Lisa Peterson, Custodian; Julie Lutjen, Accompanist; Confirmation Students, Sound and Technical Team

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Congregation Officers:

Jeff Scott, President; Vacant, Vice-Pres. Sherri Hove, Treasurer; Sheri Muller, Secretary

Attendance

Attendance	
01/04	68
01/06	28 – Timberland
01/11	60
01/18	72
01/25	71



Please member to update the church office of any changes to your address, email address, land line, or cell phone numbers.
 Thank you.

Fund Balances to-date: January 26, 2026

Fund Name	2026 Budget (only applies to General Fund)	Needed per week to meet budget-GF	Needed @ 4 weeks to meet budget-GF	Actual received 4 weeks	Disbursements to-date	To-date Transfers from Contingency Fund	Fund Balances
General Fund	\$218,464.96	\$4, 201.25	\$16,805.00	\$10,996.00	\$14,017.45		\$13,149.49
Sunday School	NA	NA	NA	\$47.52	\$212.14		\$7,113.72
Youth & Family	NA	NA	NA	\$159.00	-0-		\$21,068.21
Designated Missions	NA	NA	NA	\$345.00	-0-		\$8,319.65
Undesignated Missions	NA	NA	NA	\$65.00	-0-		\$3,048.40
Discretionary Fund	NA	NA	NA	-0-	-0-		\$685.11
Capital Improvements	NA	NA	NA	\$300.00	-0-		\$8,111.02
Gifts and Memorials	NA	NA	NA	\$1,527.02	\$1,565.65		\$10,743.83
Contingency Fund	NA	NA	NA	-0-	-0-		\$53,848.28
Endowment Fund*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		

*Funds managed offsite

Note: This is for everyone's information and is: General Fund ONLY

General Fund	Income	Transferred from Contingency Fund	Disbursements	Fund Balance at end of month
January Only	NA	-0-	NA	NA
February Only				
March Only				
April Only				
May Only				
June Only				
July Only				
August Only				
September Only				
October Only				
November Only				
December Only-2025	\$21,916.92	-0-	\$21,370.92	\$16,170.94



LOVE CODE BREAKER

Change some of the letters below to reveal this verse!

Change:	C's to L	Z's to H	P's to R
	J's to A	Q's to T	X's to E
	K's to O		

(The other letters stay the same.)

" L
 C K V X Q Z X C K P D Y K U P

 G K D W I Q Z J C C Y K U P

 Z X J P Q J N D W I Q Z J C C

 Y K U P S K U C J N D W I Q Z

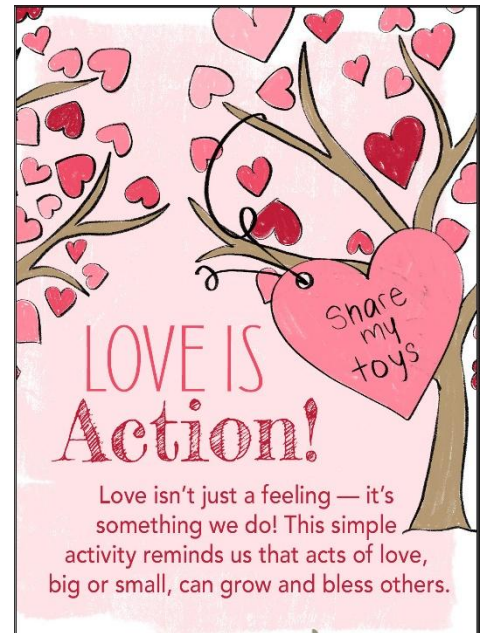
 J C C Y K U P M T N D J N D

 W I Q Z J C C Y K U P

 S Q P X N G Q Z "

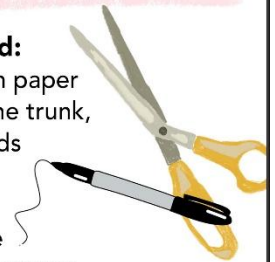
Mark 12:30

Answer: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your strength."



What you need:

- Construction paper (brown for the trunk, pinks and reds for hearts)
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Markers or crayons



What you do:

1. Cut a large tree trunk and branches out of brown paper and glue it onto a sheet of paper or poster board.
2. Use colorful paper to cut several hearts — these will be your "leaves."
3. On each heart, write loving actions like "share my toys," "pray for others," or "help clean up."
4. Glue the hearts onto the branches to create a full, love-filled tree.
5. Hang it somewhere visible as a reminder to put love into action every day!



Community Matters!

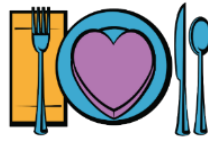
THANK YOU

Words can't express the gratitude, outpouring of support and thanks to our Bethesda family who have shown to us on the loss of our husband and father, Ron. Thanks for all the visits, cards, calls and food you have given to us. Thanks to Pastor Jonathan for his support and leading the service. Thanks to the ladies who helped with the lunch in anyway and to Julie Lutjen for her music and singing. Thanks to the ushers and those who helped with the video and sound during the service. We are so very fortunate to have special angels at Bethesda. We couldn't have gone through this without your support. It means a lot to our family. Thanks again. All is greatly appreciated.

Linda, Marcia and Mark Wheeler

Tuesday Together Time

TUESDAY



TOGETHER TIME

The South Hamilton Community is invited to "Tuesday Together Time" each Tuesday at noon held in Bethesda Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall. Bring a potluck dish to share with others. All tableware is provided. Don't have food prepared, please come! There is always plenty and, if you desire, a container is provided for you to put a little donation in to go toward Global Good Gifts. Donations are growing again; total at this time is \$561.00.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON TUESDAY? DO YOU NEED A LITTLE FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY? JOIN US - THERE'S A PLACE READY AND WAITING FOR YOU! Prize winners in January: Kris Koehn, John Greenfield, Nancy Johnson, Larry Barquist, Sharon Teig, Julia Johnson, Nancy Jewell, Lisa Peterson, Jim Peterson, Karen Culpepper, Sue Lund

The Lunch Wagon - Jewell Residents



- **Do you need assistance with meals?**
- **Do you live in Jewell?**
- **Are you homebound?**
- **Are you recovering at home?**
- If you answered yes to any of these questions, you can contact:**
- Susan Lund at 515-290-3000 or Sarah Freeman at 515-291-1528**
- **Lunches will be delivered Monday through Friday between 11:30 to 12:15.**
- **The cost of the lunch is \$5.00 per meal.**
- **Lunches will be prepared in Jewell by:**
- **JEWELL MARKET: Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs and**
- **THE MALIBU: Fri.**
- **Lunches will NOT be delivered on holidays.**



Proud Partner of Food Bank of Iowa

The Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry is open each Monday of the month from 5:00 to 6:30 pm. Additionally, the Lord's Cupboard is open the *first Monday* of each month from 1:00 to 2:00 pm. If you know someone in need of food assistance, please let them know of the availability of The Lord's Cupboard. If you have questions, please talk with Karla Alanis Palomo (515) 310-0151 or the church office.

The Lord's Cupboard's location: Jewell, PO Box 330, 439 Main Street, Jewell 50130-0330.
Phone: 515-827-5148

Are you interested in volunteering your time with the Lord's Cupboard? More volunteers are needed and we would be very glad to accept your help. Please contact Karla @ 515-310-0151; or Sue @ 515-290-3000; or leave a message at the church office for a return call @ 515-827-5148.

Volunteers are always needed and the help is greatly appreciated.

The next Mobile Food Truck is scheduled for February 10th.

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 LSIowa.org and Facebook.com/LSI.Iowa.

Your gift changes the lives of thousands of people across Iowa.
Lutheran Services in Iowa, P.O. Box 848, 106 16th St. SW
 Waverly, IA 50677

As we step into a new year, we want to pause and simply say thank you. Your prayers, generosity, and faithful partnership have made a meaningful difference through LSI. Because of your support, lives are being changed, hope is being restored, and communities across Iowa are being strengthened. We are deeply grateful for your commitment to this shared mission.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities this new year holds and the impact we can continue to have together. With your ongoing support, LSI will keep responding to needs, advocating for our neighbors, and living out Christ’s love in tangible ways. We truly look forward to what God will do in the year ahead, together.

If you have any questions, please reply to this email or reach out to Andrea Maschka, LSI’s Chief Development Officer at Andrea.Maschka@LSIowa.org

We are so grateful for your partnership in sharing our mission!

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

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



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

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

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

When I was fifteen, I began searching for a permanent home. After countless interviews, visits, and conversations, I met a family in April 2020. In the middle of an incredibly uncertain time, they took a chance on me, and changed my life. What started as a weekend visit turned into the place I finally called home.

They believed in my dream of becoming a teacher. When I nervously asked if I could take college courses during high school, they didn’t hesitate. Their belief in me made all the difference. Six years later, I am still student teaching at a local elementary school, a dream made possible because someone said, “Yes, you can do this.”

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

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

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

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

2026 Bethesda Lutheran Church Directory

Interim Pastor: Rev. Jonathan Dolan
Administrative Assistant: Donna Busch (p.t.)
Custodian: Lisa Peterson (p.t.)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President Wade Miller
Vice-President Jeff Scott
Secretary Jen Nibe
Treasurer Sherri Hove

Financial Secretary Traci Miller
Assistant Financial Sec Jackie Reiter

Head Usher Larry Sharer
Assistant Head Usher Jerry Sharer

Organist/Pianist Julie Lutjen
Director: Wednesday Kids Jen Nibe
Director Tone Chimes & Hearts of Praise Janis Heeren

Synod Delegates Donna Busch

Riverside Delegates _____

Bethany Manor Delegates Eudene Lund
 Sue Lund

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Adam Muller
 Amber Widick
 Donna Sharer
 Marilyn Schlafke
 _____ vacant
 _____ vacant

BOARD OF DEACONS -

Pat Melchert
 Josh Hilfiker
 Rich Heeren
 Eudene Lund

BOARD OF EDUCATION -

Amy Barquist
 Ursula Dial
 Heather Thelen
 _____ vacant

BOARD OF EVANGELISM & STEWARDSHIP-

Nicole Ferguson
 Susan Lund
 Lily Scott
 Luanne McGonigle
 _____ vacant

BOARD OF TRUSTEES -

Nic Johnson
 Nancy Tjaden
 Lisa Peterson
 Mike Hill

BOARD OF WORSHIP -

Ortrude Dial
Marcia Wheeler - Chair
 _____ vacant
 _____ vacant

BOARD OF Youth -

Julie Grove
 Hans Koehnck
 Roxie Young