

# **BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH A VISION FOR MISSION**

**DRAFT - FALL 2011**

## **History:**

“The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Bethany” Church was organized on January 29, 1908 and Dr. Robert P. Acsell was called as Bethany’s first pastor. Dr. Acsell served as pastor until he retired in 1935. A new church building and parsonage at 32nd and Gilpin was built in September 1908, and on March 13, 1955, the congregation purchased lots on East Hampden. The first unit of a new church was completed on June 8, 1958 and building expansion was completed in early 1972. On November 15, 1984, a fire destroyed the sanctuary, and on January 5, 1986, groundbreaking took place for the present building.

Bethany has been served by nine Senior Pastors. Pastor Ron Glusenkamp accepted Bethany’s call as Senior Pastor in 2006. Associate Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry was called in 2007. Bethany Lutheran Church now has over 4,000 baptized members.

Throughout its history, Bethany has been sustained by faith, worship and the Holy Spirit. That continues today as we walk in ‘Faith Formation,’ making disciples who are equipped, empowered and unleashed to answer God’s call in the world. Evidence of God’s Spirit among us was seen in our food drives for Metro CareRing 10.10.10 and 9.10.11, our service day ‘Be the Blessing’, Soles for Souls, LFS Thanksgiving baskets and numerous local and global ministries. Together we’ve paid down our debt to a remaining 1.5 million.

As it enters a new chapter in its history, Bethany seeks to continue its vibrant ministry with a vision for the next decade.

## **Core Values:**

Congregational discernment reveals that the dialectic that inspires Lutherans as both saints and sinners, as “now, but not yet” also inspires and enlivens our values as a congregation. This dialectic may suggest that we are a mature congregation able to embrace a variety of values, views and perspectives, delicately and faithfully balancing them in conversation and practice.

We hold the following core values:

- Worship, prayer, study of scripture
- Christian education for all
- Be the body of Christ, an example of Christ’s love embodied
- Faith formation for all
- Align faith formation with worship and music
- Wholeness in body, mind and spirit
- Equipping servants
- Missional outreach to our communities and the world

## **We See Ourselves as:**

- Traditional and confessional in our worship and liturgy and at the same time changing and evolving
- Inclusive, welcoming and accepting and at the same time cliquish and tribal
- Faith filled, Spirit driven and Gospel centric and yet “secular” – but ready for people to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- Community focused and at the same time possessing a wide ranging ministry
- Local and worldwide
- Dynamic, vibrant and alive and at the same time “inhibited”
- Cognizant of the past, and at the same time, able to look forward
- Challenging and engaged and at the same time, “unfulfilled”

## **At Bethany:**

- Faith formation is cradle to grave,
- Gospel and grace are preached,
- Compassion, care and support are offered,
- Spiritual gifts and talents are utilized and
- Baptismal callings are lived out as servants are equipped, empowered and sent for service into the world.

## **Bethany: Mission, Vision, Goals**

### **Bethany: Preamble**

- Bethany Lutheran Church is a Christian community, rooted in the Gospel, acting through the Holy Spirit and focused on sharing God’s grace and love in Jesus Christ with all people.

### **Our Mission (why we exist)**

- Gather people to worship, hear and share
- Prepare them for caring and service
- Energize them to witness and reach out
- Connect them with opportunities and needs
- Enable these actions with staff and resources

### **Our Vision (what we strive for)**

- An ELCA church which is pre-eminent in equipping its members to live and witness as the body of Christ, and
- A Christian leader in caring for and serving others in the Denver area and beyond

### **Our Goals (how we work)**

- Worship Meaningfully in the Lutheran tradition, with a variety of liturgical and musical experiences
- Grow Spiritually in diverse Christian education programs, for all levels of understanding and stages of life
- Serve Purposefully those in need who live in our local, regional and global communities
- Share Fellowship with one another that builds connections and strengthens bonds
- Witness Intentionally to all those who seek God and a welcoming, embracing church