



Welcoming

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Aberdeen, SD

We are a family of God journeying together in faith,
touching lives by welcoming, worshiping, teaching, serving.

The Logic: *Welcoming* is foundational to our faith. It is central to who we are as people and a community of faith. God *welcomes* us in Jesus Christ (Romans 15:7). Jesus sends us to *welcome* others, and teaches us that when we welcome others, we in fact *welcome* Christ (Matthew 25:38). As we welcome one another, we see the image of God in each other. Hospitality is at the heart of our faith and fellowship. We are *Celebrating our Journey* of *welcoming* because God has been at work in vital ways among and through us as people of Bethlehem. All are welcome, because Christ welcomes all!

The Lives: Since our *Strength for the Journey* emphasis and move to the new facility in 1998, we have welcomed 338 new people into this water family through Baptism. 748 people have experienced such a powerful welcome that they formally joined Bethlehem, for a total of 1086. Our membership has gone from 2498 to 3603.

The Gospel has had a dramatic effect on people's lives, as God works with us and through us to welcome people on behalf of Jesus. People have said:

- "All are welcome here. It's a place where faith is practiced as well as taught."
- "I've been welcomed into this family and it is where I get my support and strength to get through the week."
- "Bethlehem offers what God stands for, 'All are welcome.'"
- "I always feel welcome and feel like a great weight has been lifted off each time I worship."
- "At Bethlehem you feel like you belong and you are a part of a mission greater than yourself."
- "I feel God welcoming me as I hear meaningful sermons and inspiring worship. It renews my heart and gives me a sense of peace."

The Leaders: In this journey, God has involved many people in ministry. Our point staff person for the welcoming ministries is Pat Casanova. She focuses her energy both on personally welcoming people into the ministry and equipping the **Welcome Ministry Team:** Kristi Strivens, Brenda Grote, Leila Stange, Pam Janke and Joan Ernst. **Welcome ministers include:** 183 Sunday Morning Greeters, 98 Coffee Servers, 124 people who Provide Sunday Morning Treats, 190 Wednesday Night Supper Helpers, 12 Teams for Funeral Receptions, 4 Kitchen Advisors, 13 Funeral Hosts/Hostesses, 7 Wednesday School Snack Servers, 8 Van Drivers, 7 Wednesday Night Receptionists, 10 people who provide Wednesday School Transportation, 27 families for the Welcome Center, 7 members of the Visual Choir, as well as numerous informal welcome ministers. Every member of Bethlehem is a minister in this exciting journey.

Thanks be to God for the joy of sharing in this journey!



Celebrating our Staff

Director of Welcoming Ministries
Pat Casanova

Pat leads a threefold ministry including:

- + People new to Bethlehem by saying, "Welcome to this community"
- + People of Bethlehem by saying, "Well, come do this ministry"
- + Place of Bethlehem by saying, "Welcome" with a visually-pleasing environment

Pat leads the Welcome Ministry Team: Kristi Strivens, Brenda Grote, Leila Stange, Pam Janke and Joan Ernst and they envision action teams that carry out various ministries including:

- + Welcome Center Team
- + Wednesday Welcome Team
- + Sunday Welcome Team
- + New Member Team
- + Reunion Team
- + Recruitment Team
- + Ministry Scheduling Team
- + Visual Choir

Pat is a vital support for many people of Bethlehem as they fulfill these ministries including: Greeters, Sunday Morning Coffee Servers and Treat Bakers, Receptionists, Funeral Reception Workers and Bakers, New Members, Schedulers, Reminders, Wednesday School Snack Servers and Transportation, Wednesday Supper Helpers, Van Drivers, Welcome Center, Nursery, Visual Choir.

If you are interested in participating in any of the Welcoming Ministries, you may contact Pat at the church office or email her at patcasanova@nvc.net