



BETHLEHEM STAR

Everyday Disciples

In the years after the deaths of the original apostles, the early church grew largely through the ministry of non-pastors.

Excited about what they had found in Jesus, they just naturally wanted to talk about it with family, neighbors, and friends. They met daily at least at first. They shared meals – both regular meals and the Eucharist. Ordination didn't begin as a practice until the 3rd Century, so that wasn't a criteria for serving communion or baptizing.

Ordinary everyday Christians cared for the sick. They shared what they had to make sure the poor among them had what they needed. Deacons were ordinary Christians appointed to make sure the distribution of food to the poor was equitable. They prayed with and for each other. They gathered and listened as someone read the letters from Paul and once they were written, the gospels. They probably discussed them together.

Gradually, a more organized and hierarchical structure developed, but at least for the first couple of centuries ministry was considered the task of all those in the church. Sociologist Rodney Stark has extensively studied the rapid expansion of Christianity in the first two centuries. He attributes it to the example set by those early Christians of community and their willingness to care for others and share the message of God's reign in their everyday lives – sometimes even at risk to themselves.

It was probably similar out here in the middle of the country when immigrants from the east coast and Europe settled here and established the first churches. One pastor served multiple churches, so most of the actual ministry was done by the members of the church. It was ministry done in their everyday lives.

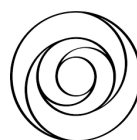
For too long in the more recent history of the church, the popular image was that church was a place you go to connect with God...a place where the pastor and maybe staff create experiences and programs for people. The disconnect for church leaders has always been...then what? Part of why church has lost its relevance for so many people is that it has failed to connect with their everyday lives. It failed to point to God's work through the church in the world outside church walls.

In the early church, everyday life and church were completely interwoven. And that's because people could not just tell themselves, that's the pastor's job. Or that's the outreach team's job. They took care of each other and helped each other grow in faith because they knew it was their job. They shared their experience of Christ with those in their households, workplaces, and shops with people they knew. It was an organic evangelism that grew out of their interconnectedness. Through their ministry, the church experienced explosive growth.

I think God is pushing the Church back in that direction. Small rural churches are already on the forefront of that shift and we're joining in. I look forward to this shift. I don't know if it will lead to any numerical growth, but I believe it is a great opportunity for all of us to become better everyday disciples.

In Christ,

Pastor Kris



I'm not going to lie, I've struggled since President Trump took office and our Nebraska Legislature has returned to session. Now, don't stop reading because you think this is going to be political. I was raised Republican, but politics was never a big thing for me. It has gotten to be a big thing to me since so much legislation is now aimed at hurting others instead of lifting them up. I'm not perfect by any means, but I really try to mirror my life around God's commandments and Jesus' life. Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." I really believe that if we truly feel loved by God and love God in return, then we can love others as well. There are some beliefs I support that I'm told are wrong, but until I get to heaven and ask God about them, I'm going to just love. I start by educating myself on topics independent of any news source or reading on social media, etc. Instead, I read a variety of books, talk to people who are living that experience, and praying. As I seek God to speak to me in the silence and solitude of my mind, heart, and spirit, all I sense is the warmth of God's love not judgment or frustration.

It's important to ask God questions during our prayer life. These are the questions I prayed recently for a week and at the end of the week, I felt a strong sense of gratitude come over me:

- In the last 24 hours, what gave you joy? Sorrow?
- Who in your life (past or present) has given you a taste of God's love?
- What activities in your life seem to draw you to God? What activities in your life seem to pull you away from God?
- When or where are you most likely to be aware of God's presence? When or where are you least aware of God's presence?
- In the last day or two, when or where were you most aware of the presence of God in your life?

I pray that we as a church can be a loving presence to those who most need to sense it especially during February, the love month.

Worship is at 10:30 am Sundays, in person or online on either YouTube or Facebook. Links to the bulletin and YouTube channel and Facebook page can be found on our website:

<https://www.bethlehemdavey.org/worship-in-person-and-online>

Calendar

Feb 2	10:30 am—Worship with Holy Communion Pastor Kris leading and preaching
February 9	10:30 am—Worship Daryl Bohac leading and preaching
February 16	10:30—Worship with Holy Communion Pastor Kris
February 23	10:30 am—Worship Mike Unverferth



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Church Website—[bethlehemdavey.org](https://www.bethlehemdavey.org)

[Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Davey](#)

Council president—Charilie Brown—402-525-0040

Council members—Virg Unverferth, Corey Carlson,
Linda Sestak, Jerri Daugherty

February Helpers

Lector—Annie/Curtis

Usher—Curtis

Communion Asst.—open

Altar Setup—Linda

Cleaning—Linda

Coffee—Virg