

Bethesda Shighatini

A growing relationship— About the Bethesda-Shighatini Covenant

When something is important, you enter into a contract, oath or covenant. God made an agreement with Abraham to care for his descendants and make them a great nation. Likewise, the congregations of Bethesda Lutheran and Shighatini Lutheran have an agreement that governs their important relationship.



The formal covenant between Bethesda and Shighatini was approved by Bethesda's Church Council in April 2003 and signed by the pastors of both congregations in August 2003. The agreement formalized a connection between the two congregations that actually began three years earlier when the Shighatini parish celebrated its 100th anniversary as the oldest congregation in the Pare Diocese in Tanzania.

Bethesda's match is one of the oldest in the ELCA's Southeast Iowa Synod. Of the 151 congregations in the synod, 27 now have companionship congregations in the Pare Diocese and 20 others are considering establishing a match.

Pare Diocese Bishop Msangi visited Iowa in 1998. The following year, Southeast Iowa Synod Bishop Hougen visited Tanzania. Since that time, 23 Bethesda representatives have visited Shighatini and three Shighatini members have visited Ames.

And the covenant continues: The next exchange will be held March 26 to April 16, 2007, when Shighatini Pastor Walter Msangi and his wife Christine visit Iowa.

What's the Bethesda-Shighatini covenant really say?

Here's the agreement, boiled down to six simple statements (plus the kicker, "We do all this to the glory of God!"):

- Let's learn more about each other, about how we live and work.
- Let's help each other by exchanging information and suggestions for learning.
- Let's foster person-to-person relationships as the foundation of our partnership in mission.
- Let's pray for each other at every opportunity, including regular worship services.
- Let's invite each other to participate in future faith community activities.
- Let's encourage visits by members of Shighatini and Bethesda whenever possible.

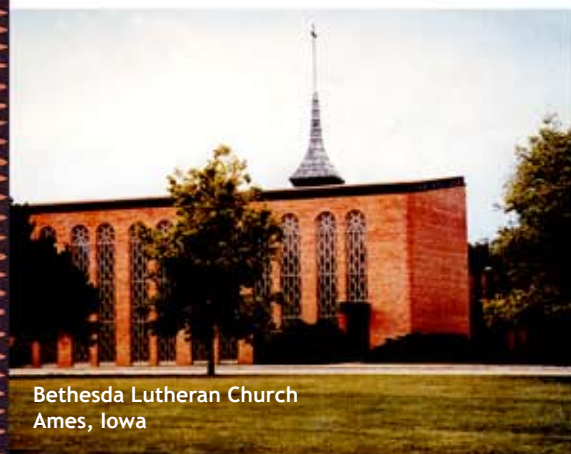
What's the vision of the covenant?

The vision of the Bethesda-Shighatini covenant can be summarized:

- To strengthen one another for life and mission within the body of Christ
- To offer us the privilege of participating in the life of another church through prayer, study, communication and exchange
- To open our eyes to the global challenge that Christ offers us today and call us to deepen our commitment and discipleship

What does the Bethesda-Shighatini covenant mean to you?

Please consider how you might grow in your relationship with our Shighatini brothers and sisters.



Bethesda Lutheran Church
Ames, Iowa