



# BETHEL MESSENGER

Bethel Lutheran Church Newsletter

July 2023

## From the Vicar's desk

### Psalm 145:8-9 (translation Robert Alter)

**Gracious and merciful is the LORD,  
slow to anger, great in kindness.  
Good is the LORD to all,  
and His mercy is over all His creatures.**

One of my own pet personal paradoxes is that, as someone who was mostly raised in Minnesota, I have never been a big fan of the winter or the cold. Whether this is due to a failure to adapt, or a lack of resilience, or a lingering impact of having spent my first two years of life in sunny, southern Florida, I'm not sure. I do know that as I write this newsletter on the summer solstice, with sun, warmth, and days that last well into the 9 o'clock hour, I find myself in disbelief at the difference between now and February. The summer seems gratuitously beautiful to me (excepting the drought and air pollution, to be sure). The days are almost so nice that it's hard to believe this season is really, finally here.

Sometimes verses like those from Psalm 145, which we'll hear in worship on July 9<sup>th</sup>, can seem awfully gratuitous to me as well. Good is the Lord to ALL – His mercy is over ALL His creatures. Really? God is good to everyone? God's mercy is for all? And yet our scriptures show us again and again that God's grace IS gratuitous – given freely, given broadly, and for all of God's creatures. It so deep and wide that maybe sometimes it's even hard to grasp or accept.

As I continue pondering the theme from this year's Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly – “Embody the Word,” this week I'm wondering what it would be like to really embody this kindness, mercy, and grace of God. What if, like feeling the warmth of a sunbeam on our skin in the long, dazzling days of June, we learned to feel the mercy and grace of God in our bodies? How might this change how we bring God's Word out into the world – how we embody the Word? What does God's grace feel like for your body?

I'd like to take a moment to thank the Mission Assessment Committee, who have been working hard in the past several weeks to assemble Bethel's “ministry site profile” – the paperwork used by the synod to present Bethel to potential candidates for a pastoral call. This team has been working together since January, embodying God's word in faithful service to this church, doing some outstanding work. Thanks also to those who have volunteered to serve on the call committee in the coming months– your willingness to take on this important role is so appreciated.

Finally, however each of us are embodying God's word this summer, I pray that we'll experience the gratuitous kindness and mercy of God, and share it with everyone around us.

Solstice blessings,

Stefan Swanson  
Interim Vicar

# Mission & Ministries

## Call Committee

Per our constitution, C13.05, a CALL COMMITTEE will consist of (8) members: (3) from the council, (3) from the congregation, (1 ) youth member, (1) WELCA member.

We formed a call committee-*waiting for council approval!* Stay tuned for more information coming soon! Pastor Naomi Mahler, Synod Representative, will help us navigate the call for a new pastor! If you have any questions contact Ron Foust, Council President.



## Driving Away Hunger

Designed to reduce transportation and mobility issues associated with food access in our communities. The Mobile Outreach vehicle is stocked with shelf stable pantry items, fresh produce, frozen proteins, grains, dairy, and bakery treats. STOP & SHOP THE BUS at no cost to you! Please bring bags and a cart to carry food. Staff are not permitted to carry food inside residence. Full grocery distributions available (1) one visit per month, per household, across all distribution sites. Produce available weekly. Staff will accommodate anyone not able to safely enter the vehicle for shopping. Questions? Call 320-664-2088. For other locations see the schedule on the bulletin board.



### MEFS Mobile Outreach

#### When:

Thurs., July 13 & 27  
1:30 pm-3:00 pm

#### Where:

Bethel Lutheran  
Church parking lot

## Bethel's Community Garden

Check out our garden! It's growing! We have lots of pumpkins! We also have cucumbers, squash, sweet corn, beans, and tomatoes! We are excited to share the harvest later this summer! If you have any questions or would like to help in any way, contact Emily Koehler at [emily.e.koehler@gmail.com](mailto:emily.e.koehler@gmail.com).



GOD has a MINISTRY for YOU in this CHURCH and a MISSION for YOU in the WORLD.

## Quilting Ministry

Pictured below are the quilt donations from Bethel to the Green Lake Lutheran Ministries Quilt Auction, Friday & Saturday, July 21 & 22. The auction consists of the Live, Silent, and Online Quilt Auctions, and Instant Item Sale.

Our items are named "Golden Notes" (quilt), "Grandma's Love" (baby quilt), "Love Four All" (lap-size quilt), "Green Lake Waves" (quilt), and "Sunny Trio" (a set of six sunflower placemats.)

For more information check the poster in the narthex and on the bulletin board or go to [gllm.org](http://gllm.org).



**GREEN**   
**LAKE** LUTHERAN  
**ministries**

## Happy Birthday!



- 7/3 Dave H.
- 7/4 Jan G.
- 7/16 Julie H.
- 7/18 Beckett S.
- 7/21 Jerry C.
- 7/22 Katie O.
- 7/22 Alex O.
- 7/23 Steve K.
- 7/23 Lennon S.
- 7/24 Victor M.
- 7/25 Corrine B.
- 7/25 Kathy E.
- 7/25 Dawn R.
- 7/28 Peggy W.

## Celebrate your Baptism!

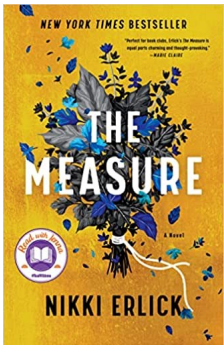


- 7/2 Alayna S.
  - 7/9 Jacob D.
  - 7/13 Dave H.
  - 7/16 Grady M.
  - 7/18 Jameson H.
  - 7/22 Kayla W.
  - 7/24 Sally K.
  - 7/26 Hannah S.
- \*Also, celebrating this month, Julie H. & Jan G.

# Faith & Fellowship

## Bethel Book club

### July: The Measure by Nikki Erlick

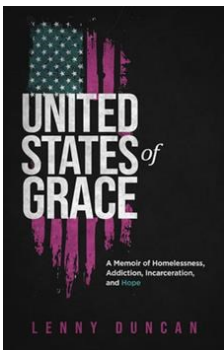


Discussion date: Wed., July 19, 7:30 pm

Enchanting and deeply uplifting, *The Measure* is a sweeping, ambitious, and invigorating story about family, friendship, hope, and destiny that encourages us to live life to the fullest.

### August: United States of Grace by Lenny Duncan

Lenny Duncan brings us a deeply personal story about growing up Black and queer in the U.S. In his characteristically powerful voice he recounts hitchhiking across the country, spending time in solitary confinement, battling for sobriety, and discovering a deep faith, examining pressing issues like poverty, mass incarceration, white supremacy, and LGBTQ inclusion through an intimate portrayal of his life's struggles and joys. *United States of Grace* is a love story about America, revealing the joy and resilience of those places in this country many call "the margins" but that Lenny Duncan has called home. This book makes the bold claim that God is present with us in the most difficult of circumstances, bringing life out of death.



## Fellowship Around the Fire

Wednesday, July 26, & August 23

Join us at 6:30 pm around our beautiful fire pit for hot dogs, chips, and beverages. You are welcome to bring a side dish to share. Vicar Stefan will provide a brief devotion.

## Coffee hour with Vicar Stefan

Monday Coffee Hour at church, 8:30 am-9:30 am, July 10, 17, & 24. We will discuss the sermon from the Sunday prior and then spend some time listening to and reflecting on the Gospel text for the coming Sunday.

## Bethel Women's Retreat!

You are invited to join the fellowship & fun!  
Friday and Saturday  
September 8-10, 2023  
Medayto Lodge,  
Green Lake Bible Camp  
Spicer, MN.

### Registration is now open!

This retreat is open to women of all ages along with their invited friends and relatives. Registration Fee: \$75 per person covers lodging, meals and programming.

Scholarships (full or partial) are available. Contact Jill Duncan at 320-420-6284 or any other WELCA Board member with questions.

Give your registration form and fee to Diane Horsman or mail it to the church office.

The registration deadline is September 1.



# Financial Corner

## 3 convenient ways to give

### 1. Simply Giving

Use *Simply Giving* for making regular offerings—contributions are debited automatically from your checking or savings account. **Simply Giving offers convenience for you and much need donation consistency for our congregation!** No more checks or envelopes! And, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis. Contact the church office for an application or go online at [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org) under Give. Return completed applications to the Financial Secretary church mailbox.

### 2. Text + Give

Give in seconds with a text message. Text giving is fast, easy and versatile. Give in the moment, make your weekly offering or respond to special appeals—all in a matter of seconds. Easy card registration on your phone. Option to make your gifts recurring. To give, text the dollar amount to [866-298-7547](tel:866-298-7547).

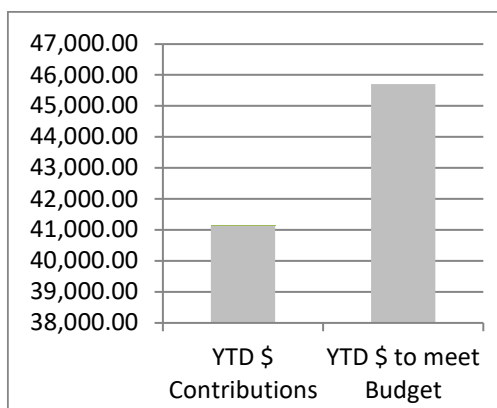
### 3. Bethel offering envelope

Offering envelopes are available—contact the church office if you would like offering envelopes mailed to you. We ask that you completely fill out the front of the envelope, including your assigned envelope number—contact the office if you have forgotten your number, and mail it to Bethel Lutheran Church, PO Box 207, Lester Prairie, MN 55354 or place in the offering plate. Any further questions can be directed to the Financial Secretary, Stacy M. at 320-395-2869 or [finsec@lpbethel.org](mailto:finsec@lpbethel.org).

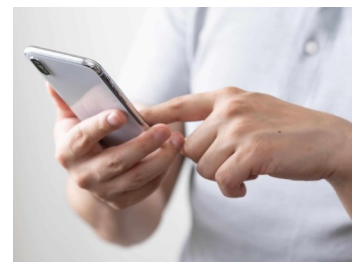
## “Noisy” offering

A second “Noisy offering” will be taken on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month toward our Youth Summer Camperships at Green Lake Bible Camp. On your way out of the sanctuary, drop your loose change into the metal can with a clang! Although paper bills and checks won't have the same “noisy” effect, they will be accepted and appreciated!

For the Month of May 2023	
Weekly Av. Attendance	52
\$ Contributions	7,814.40
\$ to meet Budget	9,141.22
\$ Difference	-1,326.82
For the Year 2023	
YTD \$ Contributions	41,139.49
YTD \$ to meet Budget	45,706.10
YTD \$ Difference	-4,566.61



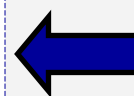
*Simply Giving offers convenience for you and much needed donation consistency for our congregation!*



*To Give text the dollar amount to 866-298-7547*



*Bethel's Financial Update*



# July 2023

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
						1 6p Resplandor de Gloria
2 9a worship w/ baptism	3	4  Independence Day	5 (office open)	6 (office open)	7	8 6p Resplandor de Gloria
9 9a worship w/ organ dedication	10 (office open) 8:30-9:30a coffee w/Stefan 6:30p council meeting	11	12 (office open) 1-4:30p quilting	13 (office open) 1:30-3p mobile outreach-MEFS	14	15 6p Resplandor de Gloria 1-3p Bethel @ Prairie Days Burger Stand
16 9a worship	17 (office open) 8:30-9:30a coffee w/Stefan	18	19 (office open) 4p worship & music mtg.	20 (office open)	21	22 6p Resplandor de Gloria
23 9a worship w/ new members (noisy offering)	24 (office open) 8:30-9:30a coffee w/Stefan	25 newsletter deadline	26 (office open) 1-4:30p quilting 6:30p Fellowship Around the Fire	27 (office open) 1:30-3p mobile outreach-MEFS	28	29 6p Resplandor de Gloria
30 9a worship (outdoor) (Vicar Stefan's last day)						

- **Online Worship:** <https://www.facebook.com/lpbethel/live> or <https://www.lpbethel.org/worship/watch-Sunday-livestream/>
- **Worship CDs:** Contact the church office if you would like a weekly copy sent to you.
- **Bulletin Submissions Deadline:** Wednesday at noon | **Newsletter Deadline:** 25<sup>th</sup> of the month
- **Most up-to-date calendar version:** Go to [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org)
- **Church Directory:** Go to [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org), *Contact Us*, *Member Directory*, then enter the Password. Contact the church office if you need the password to view online. Contact the church office if you would like a hard copy.
- **Seeking volunteers of all ages!** Check out the bulletin board outside the church office. Sign up for a month or be a substitute! No experience necessary! Questions? Contact the chairperson.

# Bethel Lutheran Church–Council Meeting Minutes-Monday, June 12, 2023

**Council Members Present:** President: Ron Foust; Secretary: Cathy Houg; Treasurer: Matt Krull; Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer; Finance Board: Mitch Overbye and Sara Jepsen; Education Board: Pete Hallberg and Emily Koehler; Trustee Board: Bryon Weisenburger; Vicar Stefan Swanson **Guests from MSP Committee:** Jeff Hanson, Lloyd Wortz, Jan Smith, and Mary Lou Teubert **Special Guest:** Pastor Naomi Mahler, Synod office consultant

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by President Ron Foust at 6:30 p.m. Vicar Swanson opened the meeting with prayer.

## Council Business:

- 1) A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Pete Hallberg to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried.
- 2) Vicar Swanson reported that, in the last month, the final report of the Mission Assessment/Ministry Site Profile Committee was presented (May 21, 2023). Three-fourths of the confirmation interviews have been completed. Worship at the Bergen site was well attended and a success. A baptism was celebrated for Eleanor Merlin Govig. Vicar attended both the SW MN Synod Assembly and a first-call meeting. Pete Hallberg and Jan Smith also attended the Synod Assembly. Vicar Stefan is working with the Education Committee to find Vacation Bible School material.

## Old Business:

- 1) There is no progress yet on the Audit Committee job description.
- 2) The Mission Assessment/Site Profile Committee shared that the Mission Site Profile (MSP) has been entered into the Synod web site less some names/contact information, and budget/salary range information. The committee will be meeting on June 19, 2023, to finalize the MSP with added information. The final MSP will become available on the Synod website enabling pastoral candidates, interested in serving at Bethel, an opportunity to review the document. This process will enhance and enable the Call Committee to begin the interviewing process.

STEPS: \*MSP to be finalized, entered in the Synod website by Wednesday, June 21, 2023.

\*Council will review the final MSP and vote on approval by Monday, June 28, 2023.

\*Council to review the Call Committee members and vote to approve them by July 1, 2023.

\*Pastor Naomi Mahler will meet with the Call Committee after July 1, 2023, to begin laying out the strategy/interviewing process.

## New Business:

- 1) A **motion** was made by Emily Koehler and seconded by Pete Hallberg to accept the following people into church membership: David Gohl, Janice Gohl, Katlin Fosdick, Katie Radtke, John Staub, Alayna Staub. Motion carried.
- 2) Eight confirmed members are needed for the Call Committee: 3 from the Church Council, 3 from the church at large, 1 from WELCA, and 1 youth. Pastor Naomi Mahler from the Synod office discussed the process of calling a new pastor which included providing prospective candidates a copy of our completed Mission Site Profile, solidifying a list of questions to be answered by the candidates, and holding interviews: one-on-one and by ZOOM. She is available whenever she is needed as a support person during this process.

**Secretary Minutes:** A **motion** was made by Ron Foust and seconded by Mitch Overbye to accept May's secretary's report. Motion carried.

**Treasurer Reports:** A **motion** was made by Bryon Weisenburger and seconded by Pete Hallberg to accept May's treasurer's report. Motion carried.

**Financial Secretary Report:** A **motion** was made by Mitch Overbye and seconded by Sara Jepsen to accept May's financial secretary's report. Motion carried.

## Reports:

- 1) **Education Board:** Intergenerational Vacation Bible School will be held August 14-17, 2023.
- 2) **Finance Board:** The Finance Board is reviewing the office equipment contract.
- 3) **Trustees:** The trustees are investigating options for sandblasting and repainting the cross/bell tower.

## Communications:

- 1) Kingdom Roofing is in contact with our insurance company regarding roof and siding repair.
- 2) The new organ will be installed on Friday, June 16, 2023.
- 3) Pastor Donna has been contacted as a supply pastor for August 6, and August 20.

The meeting closed with Round Table Prayers and the Lord's Prayer.

**The next regular Council meeting will be held on Monday, July 10, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted: Cathy Houg, Council Secretary



## Contact us

### **Bethel Lutheran Church**

77 Lincoln AVE N  
PO Box 207  
Lester Prairie, MN 55354

### **Office**

320-395-2125  
[bethellutheranlp@gmail.com](mailto:bethellutheranlp@gmail.com)

### **Interim Vicar Stefan Swanson**

320-434-7113  
[pastor@lpbethel.org](mailto:pastor@lpbethel.org)

## Mission Statement

Vibrantly open to the spirit, Bethel Lutheran Church seeks to serve God and its neighbors by joyfully living into the good news of Jesus Christ.

**Visit us on the web! [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org)  
[www.facebook.com/lpbethel](https://www.facebook.com/lpbethel)**

Bethel Lutheran Church  
P.O. Box 207  
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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE