

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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.

Sunday, December 31, 2023

First Sunday of Christmas

Rev. Susan Engholm, Interim Pastor

Jan Smith, Accompanist

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Prelude

"The Manger Medley" arr. by Fred Bock

"Lo, How a Rose" arr. by Lani Smith

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" arr. by Lani Smith

Jan Smith, Organ & Emily Koehler, Piano

Welcome and Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

Amid the troubles and fears of this world, let us confess our sin and welcome
God's forgiveness, grace, and love. *Silence for Reflection*

Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus.

Forgive our lack of faith and trust.

Your Son was born in the poverty of a stable.

Forgive our neglect of the poor.

The shepherds left their flocks and went to Bethlehem.

Forgive our selfishness and complacency.

With great joy the angels proclaimed, "Do not fear. For I bring you good news
of great joy. Today is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." In ☩ Jesus, who is
Savior, Christ, and Lord, our sins are forgiven. May you know the peace which
the angels sang from the heavens. Indeed, God's forgiveness is good news of
great joy! Amen.

Gathering Carol "Your Little Ones, Dear Lord" ELW #286

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who is Savior and Lord, the love of God, and
the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray: **Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word
who became flesh and lives among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all we
do; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and
the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Carol of Praise "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" ELW #288

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

Readings (printed on the back) The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Children's Message

Gospel Acclamation "The First Noel" ELW #300 (verse 1)

Gospel Reading The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day "In His Temple Now Behold Him" ELW #417

Nicene Creed (ELW p. 104)

Prayers of Intercession Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Peace The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering "Still, Still, Still" Austrian Carol

Offering Carol "Angels, from the Realms of Glory" ELW #275

Offertory Prayer

God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer (ELW p. 112)

Communion

Communion Hymn "The Bells of Christmas" ELW #298

Post Communion Prayer

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, and the everlasting peace of Jesus who is Savior, Christ, and Lord. Almighty God, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Carol "O Lord, Now Let Your Servant" ELW #313

Dismissal Go in peace. Serve our Savior, Christ, and Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude "Angels from the Realms of Glory" arr. by Anna Laura Page

WELCOME

Bethel Lutheran Church—December 31, 2023—First Sunday of Christmas

OUR 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.

QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS? Please contact the church office at 320-395-2125 at bethellutheranlp@gmail.com. For emergency pastoral care needs, please contact the church office first, and if nobody answers, call Interim Pastor Susan Engholm at 320-293-1811. Bulletin submissions due: Wednesdays at noon.

Newsletter deadline: 25th of the month. **GivePlus Text 866-298-7547**

SIMPLY GIVING offers convenience for you and much needed consistency for Bethel! Try it this summer! If you have questions contact Stacy Meyer, Financial Secretary, at finsec@lpbethel.org.

TODAY

- Noisy offering: Support Bethel Youth Camperships-on your way out of the sanctuary, drop your loose change into the metal can with a clang! Although paper bills & checks won't have the same "noisy" effect, they will be accepted & appreciated!
- Hearing assist devices are available: speak to an usher for assistance
- Pastor Susan's last day: A farewell reception will follow the worship service.
Thank you, Pastor Susan, for your service as our Pastor! God's blessings to you!

MONDAY (NEW YEAR'S DAY-OFFICE CLOSED)

WEDNESDAY (1/3/24)

- WELCA MEETING: 7:30 PM

SATURDAY (1/6/24-EPIPHANY)

SUNDAY (1/7/24-BAPTISM OF OUR LORD)

- Worship at 9:00 AM (Pastor Donna Olson)
- Sunday school and Adult Education resume following worship. (No Confirmation class in January. Classes will resume 2/4/24.)

Ordination of Molly Wills: Sunday, January 7, 2024, at noon, Atonement Lutheran Church, 1144 29th AVE N, St. Cloud, MN 56303. There will be a get together with refreshments following the service. Pastor Molly will begin at Bethel on 1/24/24.

Bethel to host the Youth Task Force Social on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. This is an opportunity for area youth to get to know supportive adults in the community. Students will arrive at 12:45 pm to enjoy a Hot Chocolate Bar and activities. If you are willing to help with this event contact Mary Lou Teubert. All are welcome!

The choir will attend the National Lutheran Choir Tune-up on the 20th of January from 9:00 am to noon at Roseville Lutheran Church. Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome to join us! Please RSVP to Emily Koehler or Jan Smith.

Year-end giving: The Church Endowment Fund is an excellent place to give your year-end gift, the gift that keeps on giving, expanding Bethel's outreach abilities. The yellow Endowment Fund envelope assures your gift goes to the intended fund. Please make checks out to Bethel Endowment Fund and place your envelope in the Endowment Committee's mailbox. Thank you in advance!

SAVE THE DATE-Sunday, January 28, 2024-The Installation of Pastor Molly Wills with Synod Minister Heather Culuris giving the sermon that day. Bethel's Annual Congregational meeting will immediately follow the worship service. Please make every attempt to attend this important meeting for our congregation. A catered dinner from Longhorn's Burger House will follow the meeting at 11:00 am.

January Book Club: *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah-Unpredictable. Unforgiving. Untamed. For a family in crisis, the ultimate test of survival.

Discussion date: Wednesday, January 17 at 7:30 pm.

Who wants to go camping? The dates are set for the 2024 Bethel Camp out-Friday, June 21-Sunday, June 23, at Baylor Regional Park near Norwood Young America. Believe it or not, it's time to think about making reservations! Speak to Brian or Jill Duncan if you want to camp or if you have any questions.

NOTE: Please contact the office if your Contact Information changes!

REPORTS DUE: Annual Financial Reports are due no later than January 10, 2024. All other annual reports are due now.