



BETHEL MESSENGER

Bethel Lutheran Church Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2024

FROM PASTOR MOLLY

Hello beloved Bethel members!

I am very excited to be joining the Bethel family as your new pastor. Since this is my first newsletter and first month at Bethel I thought I should introduce myself. I live in Sartell with my husband, Chris, and three children, Liam(13), Charlotte (11), and Theodore (7).



Before I felt called to go to seminary I worked for 11 years as a public librarian. I used to help people find information, discover new books, and learn how to use various technology, as well as planned and lead young adult programming. It was a lot of fun, but God called me down a different road, so I followed. There are days when I miss being surrounded by books and able to serendipitously find a new read from the collection, but I have discovered that in following God I have been filled with incredible joy and peace.

I love to read, write, draw, paint, and sculpt. My love of art and crafts tends to flow out into DIY projects around the house which occasionally causes my husband some distress. It always works out in the end though! Each of these hobbies makes me feel connected with God.

However, being outside is where I feel closest to God. I love gardening, though I would never claim to be good at it, and hiking. What I love about gardening is digging in the soil and seeing the life teeming underneath the surface. I love seeing the beauty of the insects - for all that I would never want them on me or in my house. The world is full of wonder and beauty to behold in the smallest things, and being outside is the only way to see and discover them.

I am an honest person, and what you see is what you get. I am looking forward to getting to know each of you and building relationships. If you ever have a concern with me or something I said please do not hesitate to come talk with me. The only way for relationships to deepen and grow is to talk with and work through problems or miscommunications together. For me, being in relationship with one another is being in relationship with God. I am excited to find God within all of you!

As I start my time with you I have been contemplating a verse of scripture that I leave you with to meditate on as well.

Blessings to you all,
Pastor Molly B. Wills

"Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God."

Ruth 1: 16

MISSION & MINISTRIES

Driving Away Hunger-MEFS Mobile Outreach

Designed to reduce transportation and mobility issues associated with food access in our communities. The MEFS 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=McLeod Emergency Food Shelf)**



MEFS Mobile Outreach

When: Thursday

FEBRUARY 15

1:30 pm-3:00 pm

Where:

Bethel Lutheran
Church parking lot



(Photo credit Dave Gohl)

Ordination of Molly B. Wills
Sunday, January 7, 2024
Atonement Lutheran Church
St. Cloud, MN



Pr. Dee, Jan, Peggy, Jean, Dave, Pete, Ron, Jan

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

Youth Task Force Social

On January 10, 2024, Bethel hosted a Youth Task Force Event. A Cocoa Bar was the main attraction with cookies, too. A special thanks to the Bethel members who participated and made the event go smoothly. A VERY special thanks to the beloved students of Lester Prairie Middle School and High School. What a grateful and well-behaved group of young people. The future is in good hands.



Pastor Susan giving a brief talk to the students



Pastor Jon and students



Students included some Bethel youth



Lisa visiting with students



Students playing Two Truths and a Lie while enjoying their cocoa



Pastor Susan, Eric, Pastor Josh, Pastor Molly, Mary Lou

FAITH & FELLOWSHIP

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14

Lenten Supper will be served every Wednesday night throughout the Lenten season from 5:00-6:15 pm. If you have interest in helping and or providing meals, contact Diane Horsman.

Ash Wed. menu: pulled pork sandwiches, hotdogs, chips, bars

Lenten worship will follow supper at 6:30 pm.

The Quilters will meet every Tuesday during Lent, beginning on Tuesday, February 13 through March 26, 1:00-4:30 pm.

The Choir will practice at 5:45 pm during Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday.

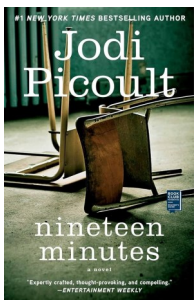
Seeking Lenten worship service volunteers

Pastor Molly wants to get to know the people from the congregation! One way to do this is for her to interview people during the Wednesday night Lenten services or have people speak during the service. She wrote up a set of questions people can choose from to answer in an interview or to speak about for 5-10 minutes. If you are willing to be interviewed or speak please email Pastor Molly (pastor@lpbethel.org) so she can get you on the schedule and send you the questions to look through!

Wednesday night services available: 2/21, 2/28, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20

February Book Club

Nineteen Minutes by Jodi Picoult

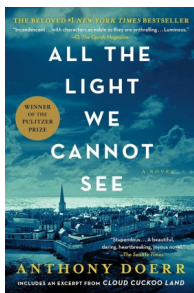


A startling and poignant story about the devastating aftermath of a small-town tragedy.

Discussion date: Wednesday, February 21, 7:30 pm. A copy of the book will be available in Bethel's library.

March Book Club

All the Light You Cannot See by Anthony Doerr



A book about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

Discussion date: Wednesday, March 20, 7:30 pm. A copy of the book will be available in Bethel's library.

Happy Birthday!



- 2/2 Dave H.
- 2/4 Peter H.
- 2/5 Vaydah R.
- 2/7 Carol W.
- 2/9 Judy A.
- 2/12 Elaine O.
- 2/14 Joanna H.
- 2/15 Brian D.
- 2/18 Ramona D.
- 2/21 Mitch O.
- 2/23 Bernie H.
- 2/26 Dan R.

Celebrate your Baptism!



- 2/9 Colton H.
- 2/17 Peter H.
- 2/18 Shirley W.
- 2/18 Emily K.
- 2/22 Iris R.
- 2/22 Sarah G.
- 2/23 Bernie H.
- 2/26 Ramona D.

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 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**.

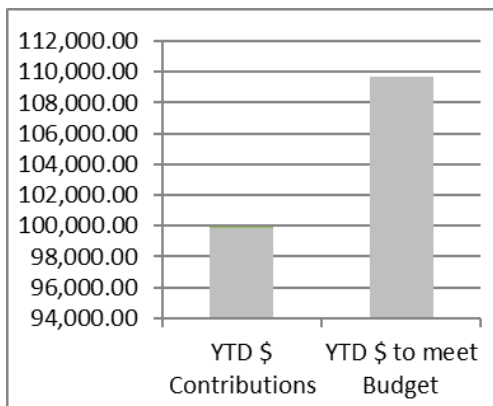
3. Bethel offering envelope

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.

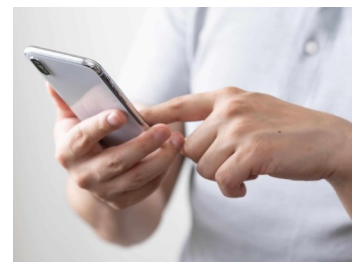
“Noisy” offering

A second “Noisy” offering will be taken on the 4th 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 Dec 2023	
Weekly Av. Attendance	74
\$ Contributions	10,423.40
\$ to meet Budget	9,141.22
\$ Difference	1,282.18
For the Year 2023	
YTD \$ Contributions	99,884.79
YTD \$ to meet Budget	109,694.64
YTD \$ Difference	-9,809.85



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

FEBRUARY 2024

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
				1 (office hours)	2	3 6p Resplandor de Gloria
4 9a worship 10a Sunday school/ confirmation class/ adult education	5 (office hours) Pastor Molly at First Call retreat	6 Pastor Molly at First Call retreat	7 (office hours)	8 (office hours)	9	10 6p Resplandor de Gloria
11 9a worship 10a Sunday school/ adult education	12 (office hours) 6:30p council mtg.	13 1-4:30p quilting	14 Ash Wednesday (office hours) 5-6:15p supper 5:45p choir 6:30 worship Valentine's Day	15 (office hours) 1:30-3p MEFS mobile outreach	16	17 6p Resplandor de Gloria
18 9a praise worship 10a Sunday school/ Confirmation class/ adult education	19 (office closed) President's Day	20 1-4:30p quilting	21 (office hours) 4p worship mtg. 5-6:15p supper 5:45p choir 6:30 worship 7:30p book club discussion	22 (office hours)	23	24 6p Resplandor de Gloria
25 9a worship (noisy offering for campers) 10a Sunday school 10a Bethel Breakfast @ Longhorns newsletter deadline	26 (office hours)	27 1-4:30p quilting	28 (office hours) 5-6:15p supper 5:45p choir 6:30 worship	29 (office hours)	1	2 6p Resplandor de Gloria

- **Online Worship:** <https://www.facebook.com/lpbethel/live>
- **Worship CDs:** Contact the church office if you would like a weekly copy sent to you.
- **Bulletin Submissions Deadline:** Wednesday Noon | **Newsletter Deadline:** 25th of the month
- **Most up-to-date Calendar version:** Go to www.lpbethel.org
- **Church Directory:** Go to www.lpbethel.org, Contact Us, Member Directory, then enter the Password. Contact the church office if you need the password to view the directory online, if you would like a hard copy, and if your contact information changes!
- **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, JANUARY 8, 2023

Council Members Present: President: Ron Foust; Secretary: Cathy Houg; Treasurer: Matt Krull; Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer; Finance Board: Mitch Overbye and Nancy Krull; Education Board: Pete Hallberg and Emily Koehler; Trustee Board: Brian Duncan

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:30 by President Ron Foust followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Council Business:

- A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Emily Koehler to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried. There was no Pastor's Report.

Old Business:

- The Finance Board has begun year-end consultations and will complete them soon.
- A motion was made by Nancy Krull and seconded by Pete Hallberg to accept the 2024 Preliminary Church Budget as presented by the Finance Board. Motion carried.

New Business:

- Installation of new and existing Church Council members will be on Sunday, February 11, 2024, during morning worship service.

Secretary Minutes:

- A **motion** was made by Pete Hallberg and seconded by Brian Duncan to accept December's secretary's report. Motion carried.

Treasurer Reports:

- A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Stacy Meyer to accept December's treasurer's report. Motion carried.

Financial Secretary Report:

- A **motion** was made by Nancy Krull and seconded by Emily Koehler to accept December's financial secretary's report. Motion carried.

Reports:

- **Education Board:**
Sunday School and Adult Forum have resumed after the Christmas break.
- **Finance Board:**
The preliminary budget has been completed for 2024.
- **Trustee Board:**
The building projects have been completed.

Communications:

- Financial Reports are due to Tamie by January 10, 2024.
- Seven Bethel members attended the Ordination Service for Pastor Molly Wills at Atonement Lutheran Church, St. Cloud, MN on January 7, 2024.
- The **Installation Service** for Pastor Molly Wills will be held on January 28, 2024, during the regular 9:00 a.m. worship service with Synod staff assisting.
- The regular **Annual Meeting** will be held on the same Sunday, January 28, 2024, after the worship service, followed by a catered dinner at 11:00 a.m.
- Pastor Molly Wills begins serving Bethel Lutheran on January 24, 2024.
- The Nominating Committee continues their work, trying to find candidates to serve vacant positions.
- Lenten Season begins with Ash Wednesday, on February 14, 2024. Pastor Molly will be coordinating with the worship and music committee.
- Ron Foust read the thank you notes he had received. He also thanked all the outgoing Church Council members: Peggy Wick, Matt Krull, Brian Duncan, Pete Hallberg, Nancy Krull, and Mitch Overbye.
- Resplendor de Gloria has indicated that they would like to change their worship from Saturday evening to Sunday evening. They have given no start date.

A **motion** was made by Brian Duncan and seconded by Pete Hallberg to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with Round Table Prayers.

The next regular Council meeting will be held on Monday, February 12, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Cathy Houg, Council Secretary

Church Humor

- A kindergarten teacher was walking around observing her classroom of children while they were drawing pictures. As she got to one girl working diligently, she asked her about the drawing. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "But, no one knows what God looks like." Without looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."
- A Sunday school teacher began her lesson asking, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?" A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the kindergarten boy. "Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked. "You know, Our Father, who does art in heaven...."

CONTACT US

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DON'T FORGET TO STAY CONNECTED!

www.lpbethel.org

www.facebook.com/lpbethel

PASTOR

Rev. Molly Wills

320-339-8169

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.



Bethel Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 207

Lester Prairie, MN 55354

PLACE
STAMP
HERE