



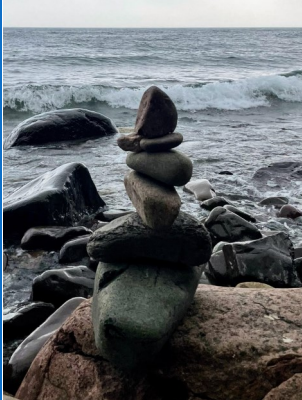
BETHEL MESSENGER

Bethel Lutheran Church Newsletter

January 2024

FROM PASTOR SUSAN ENGHOLM

"Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured out a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it. So Jacob called the place where God had spoken with him Bethel." Genesis 35:14-15



Genesis tells about the time when God gave Jacob the new name, "Israel." To mark the occasion, Jacob/Israel piled stones upon each other to make a pillar and then named the place "Bethel," or "House of God." Stone pillars (sometimes called a "cairn") have been used across generations and cultures. Sometimes the purpose is as simple as a trail marker and other times (as it was in Genesis) its purpose was to mark a significant occasion. No matter the specific use, these stone pillars also signify a kind of gratitude: Gratitude for those who set the trail ahead, gratitude for those who follow, gratitude for God's presence and active hand in our lives.

In this final newsletter article to you, I offer one last prayer practice: Gratitude. When we focus on gratitude, our attention, curiosity, and imagination become more attuned to God's goodness. One way you could try practicing gratitude is by writing it down: at the start – or end – of each day, write down three things for which you are grateful. As you begin the practice, you may feel like you are writing the same things each day. But, with time, you will begin to see more and more things for which to be grateful. Our hearts and minds tune into God's goodness that surrounds us each day.

I am so very grateful for you! I began my time with you in September, thinking that within a matter of weeks I would be on my way. But now, these four months later, I have been embraced by this dear faith community. I am grateful for the ways you have personally welcomed me into your midst and ministry. I am also grateful for the ways you live up to the meaning of your name, "Bethel." You truly are the "house of God," and each one of you radiates the light of Christ. It has been humbling to witness how you live this out in your daily lives and as a community.

As we part ways, I offer my blessings and prayers to you as you continue your ministry together as a congregation, and especially as you welcome and support your new pastor. May you always experience the "blessing to be a blessing" unto others. As we part ways, I offer the same prayer I shared as we began this journey together. May the words be a blessing unto the path ahead:

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In Christ,
Pastor Susan Engholm

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

JANUARY 11

1:30 pm-3:00 pm

Where:

Bethel Lutheran
Church parking lot



WRAPPING DONATED
CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR
LP FAMILIES

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023



WRAPPED
CHRISTMAS GIFTS
READY TO GO



HOLY FAMILY
ORNAMENT
MAKING

BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS!



BINGO FUN



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

Sunday, January 28, 2024

Installation of Pastor Molly Wills, during the worship service, 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 Celebration [catered] Dinner from Longhorn's Burger House will follow the meeting at 11:00 am.



The National Lutheran Choir Tuneup

The choir will attend the National Lutheran Choir Tune-up on January 20 from 9:00 am to noon at Roseville Lutheran Church. The Tune-up will be led by their new Artistic Director, Jennaya Robison, who will teach participants repertoire and vocal techniques to enhance their home church services. Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome to join us! Please RSVP to Emily Koehler or Jan Smith.



Youth Task Force Social

Bethel Lutheran Church will host the monthly [Sept.-May] 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!



Created To Be—Summer Camp 2024

Online registration is open. Online registration is the best, most streamlined way to register for camp and is highly encouraged. Register by February 16, 2024 to secure the early bird discount and get \$50 off each registration. There are programs for youth, families, and adults. Check out all the opportunities in the brochures provided in the narthex. (Bethel has financial support available, see an Education Board member.) *We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to do the good things God created us to do from the beginning. Ephesians 2:10*



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.



FAITH & FELLOWSHIP

Adult Education

Adult Education is offered during coffee hour. Join us for a time of education and conversation! We will have education every Sunday except the last Sunday of the month. The focus will be frequently asked questions about being Lutheran. Speak to Cathy Houg or Mitch Overbye if you have any questions.

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, 7:30 pm

Ordination of Molly B. 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 Wednesday, January 24, 2024.

"THE AMAZING STORY OF CHRISTMAS"



Happy Birthday!



- 1/3 Shirley W.
- 1/10 Arla H.
Lloyd W.
Oliver A.
- 1/15 Tom G.
- 1/19 Emily K.
Cheryl S.
- 1/20 Jean H.
Logan M.
- 1/23 Cathy H.
Alexa L.
- 1/24 Evie K.
- 1/28 John S.
- 1/30 Emillie F.

Celebrate your Baptism!



- 1/1 Tom G.
- 1/6 Ron F.
- 1/12 Dean S.
- 1/17 Sam R.
- 1/21 Lloyd W.
- 1/22 Connor R.
- 1/24 Lachlynn S.
- 1/26 Riley C.
- 1/28 Dave A.
- 1/30 Emillie F.
- 1/31 Jean H.
Max P.



SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM
DECEMBER 17, 2023

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 needed 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](tel:866-298-7547).

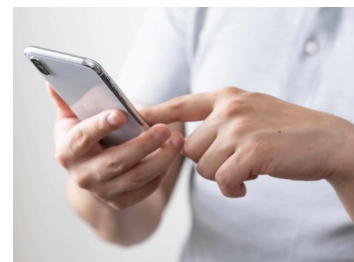
3. Bethel offering envelope

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.

“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!

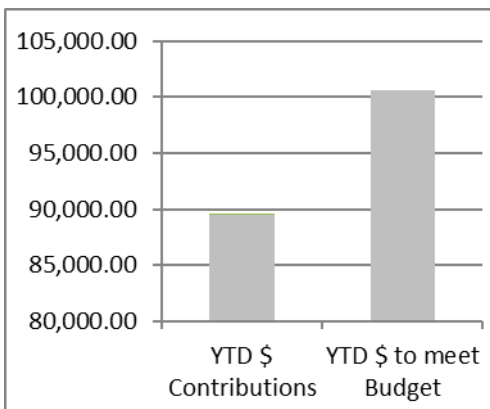
Simply Giving offers convenience for you and much needed donation consistency for our congregation!



To GIVE Text the dollar amount to 866-298-7547



<u>For the Month of Nov 2023</u>	
Weekly Av. Attendance	56
\$ Contributions	8,318.40
\$ to meet Budget	9,141.22
\$ Difference	-822.82
<u>For the Year 2023</u>	
YTD \$ Contributions	89,461.39
YTD \$ to meet Budget	100,553.42
YTD \$ Difference	-11,092.03



Bethel's
Financial
Update

JANUARY 2024

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
	1 (office closed) NEW YEAR'S DAY	2	3 (office hours) 6:30 choir 7:30p WELCA mtg.	4 (office hours)	5	6 (Epiphany) 6p Resplandor de Gloria
7 (Baptism of our Lord) 9a worship (Pr. Donna Olson) 10a Sunday school/ adult education Noon Ordination of M.W. (Atonement Lu, St. Cloud)	8 (office hours) 6:30p council mtg.	9	10 (office hours) 12:45-1:40p Youth Task Force Social 6:30p choir annual financial reports due	11 (office hours) 1:30-3p MEFS mobile outreach	12	13 6p Resplandor de Gloria
14 (2 Epiphany) 9a worship (Pr. Bill Nelsen) 10a Sunday school/ adult education	15 (office closed) MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	16	17 (office hours) 6:30p choir 7:30p book club discussion	18 (office hours) 12:30p worship & music mtg.	19	20 9a NLC tuneup (Roseville Lutheran) 6p Resplandor de Gloria
21 (3 Epiphany) 9a praise worship (Pr. Bill Nelsen) 10a Sunday school/ adult education	22 (office hours)	23	24 (office hours) 1-4:30p quilting 6:30p choir	25 (office hours) newsletter deadline	26	27 6p Resplandor de Gloria
28 (4 Epiphany) 9a worship w/ Installation of Pastor Molly Wills (noisy offering for campers) 10a annual meeting 11a celebration dinner	29 (office hours)	30	31 (office hours) 6:30p choir	1 (office hours)	2	3 6p Resplandor de Gloria

- **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 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, DECEMBER 11, 2023

Council Members Present: President: Ron Foust; Vice President: Peggy Wick; Secretary: Cathy Houg; Treasurer: Matt Krull; Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer; Finance Board: Nancy Krull; Education Board: Pete Hallberg and Emily Koehler; Trustee Board: Brian Duncan and Bryon Weisenburger; Interim Pastor Susan Engholm

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Ron Foust followed by prayer led by Pastor Engholm.

Council Business:

- A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Nancy Krull to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.
- Pastor Engholm reported that she made three communion visits this month. Monday Morning Bible Study continues. Thanksgiving Eve Service was held followed by a pie reception sponsored by WELCA. Midweek Advent services have started with a new liturgy. The fall session of confirmation has concluded and will resume on February 4, 2024, after the new pastor arrives. Pastor Susan's last Sunday is December 31, 2023.

Old Business:

- There was no old business

New Business:

- A **motion** was made by Nancy Krull and seconded by Bryon Weisenburger to accept the Helland family-Tyler, Terri, McCoy, Adderley, and Etta as new members. Motion carried.
- The Finance Board has begun employee year-end consultations.
- The Finance Board has begun developing the 2024 preliminary Church Budget.
- Staff transitions include the following: Pastor Susan will serve as interim Pastor through December 31, 2023, and will be available for emergencies until Pastor Molly Wills begins on January 24, 2024. Pastor Susan will also attend and help facilitate the Youth Task event at Bethel on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. Pastor Donna Olsen will provide pulpit supply on January 7, 2024. Pastor William Nelsen will provide pulpit supply on January 14 and 21, 2024. Pastor Molly Wills will begin serving on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. A **motion** was made by Matt Krull and seconded by Cathy Houg to approved a base salary of \$53,325.63 for Pastor Wills. Motion carried. The Installation Service for Molly Wills will be on January 28, 2024, with Pastor Heather Culuris, Synod staff, officiating followed by Bethel's Annual Meeting. A **motion** was made by Matt Krull and seconded by Stacy Meyer to have a meal catered by Longhorn's after the Annual Meeting. Motion carried.

Secretary Minutes:

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

Treasurer Reports:

- A **motion** was made by Nancy Krull and seconded by Bryon Weisenburger to accept November's treasurer's report. Motion carried.

Financial Secretary Report:

- A **motion** was made by Nancy Krull and seconded by Pete Hallberg to accept November's financial secretary's report. Motion carried.

Reports:

Education Board:

- The Education Board is working on Child Protection and Background Check guidelines, along with the Church Secretary, Tamie Foust.

Finance Board:

- The Finance Board is working on the preliminary 2024 budget and employee year-end consultations.

Trustees:

- The carpets have been cleaned, the ceiling in the sanctuary has been repaired, and the siding and roofing have been completed.

Communications:

- Annual Meeting Reports are due to Tamie Foust by December 15, 2023. Financial Reports are due to Tamie Foust by January 10, 2024.
- An Ordination Service for Molly Wills will be held at noon at Atonement Lutheran Church, St. Cloud, MN, on January 7, 2024.
- The Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2024, after worship.

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

The next regular Council meeting will be held on Monday, January 8, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Cathy Houg, Council Secretary

Reminders

- ⇒ Please contact the office whenever your contact information changes. bethellutheranlp@gmail.com
- ⇒ Annual Financial reports are due no later than January 10, 2024. bethellutheranlp@gmail.com



CONTACT US

Bethel Lutheran Church

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

OFFICE: 320-395-2125

bethellutheranlp@gmail.com

Visit us on the web! www.lpbethel.org

www.facebook.com/lpbethel

Pastoral Emergency Contact:

Pastor Susan Engholm
320-293-1811

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