



BETHEL MESSENGER

Bethel Lutheran Church Newsletter

MARCH 2024

FROM PASTOR MOLLY

Hello Beloved Members of Bethel!

I can't believe it has already been a month since I started, time is flying by! Granted, starting right before Lent certainly accelerates the passing of time. I'm hoping, once Easter is over, to take time to do some one-on-ones with as many of you as I can to get to know you all better.

This past month has been wonderful! A number of things happened over February. First, I got to visit and commune with our homebound members. It's hard to be stuck in a place, unable to leave, so if you know our homebound members, I encourage you to visit them once in a while. It will help them continue feeling the love of the body of Christ.

Second, I attended the Youth Task Force Social held at the Harvest Community Church. They decided to make smoothies for the kids which were a big hit but a lot of work. It was a lot of fun talking with the members volunteering, helping get the smoothies poured and ready to go, and then sitting and chatting with the kids. Then the next week, I attended the Youth Task Force committee meeting. It filled me with joy to see the love and devotion not just the adults but also the kids have for their community of Lester Prairie. I look forward to seeing and participating in the wonderful things the Youth Task Force can do with this community.

Last, we had our Ash Wednesday meal and service. It was an honor to lead you all in the Ash Wednesday service and to mark the sign of the cross on your foreheads – a reminder that we are dust and shall return to dust but also a reminder that we were created to enjoy the lives God gave us and that we are deeply loved by our creator in all our broken, battered, sin-filled, human selves. It can be easy to forget to enjoy our lives in the stress of everything life throws at us. The drawings I do for my sermons, but also drawings I do for myself, are a reminder for me that there is beauty in the chaos if we look at the whole picture but also if we look at the individual pieces. Sometimes the best place to find joy is in the small things.

I was sick for our first Lenten service and meal which was a huge disappointment to me. But watching the service online once I was feeling well enough to not just sleep, made me so proud and joy-filled because of everyone stepping up to help, regardless of whether they felt prepared. That was an incredibly beautiful testament to the faith living within our Bethel community. Thank you for being living witnesses to God's love.

Blessings to you all,
Pastor Molly B. Wills

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

MARCH 14

1:30 pm-3:00 pm

Where:

Bethel Lutheran
Church parking lot

Join the fight against hunger in McLeod County!

Stretch your donation during the MEFS March Campaign!

(Every dollar and pound collected from now until April 6th gets multiplied by the Food Fund.)

Bethel Women of the ELCA have provided envelopes for Bethel members to donate money to the McLeod Emergency Food Shelf 2024 March Campaign. (Envelopes were handed out on March 3 and will be handed out again on March 10.) Please write your checks to Bethel Lutheran Church. Bethel will write one check to the McLeod Emergency Food Shelf at the end of the campaign.

Music Notes

The choir anthem "Sim Shalom", which will be sung by the Bethel Choir on March 10, was written by Jennaya Robinson, Artistic Director of the National Lutheran Choir and church musician at the First Lutheran Church in Mission Hills, Kansas. This song is a prayer for peace and is sung by the choir using the Hebrew text. The English translation is: "Grant peace, goodness, and blessing to us and unto Israel, your people." The composer hoped that this melody would be one that singers and listeners could carry with them into their daily lives.

Ten members of the Bethel choir recently attended a Choral Tune-Up in Roseville, conducted by Jennaya Robinson. It was an opportunity to learn new music for worship under her direction with approximately 300 vocalists. This included members of the National Lutheran Choir and choir members from churches across the region. The group studied four pieces of music that could be used in a worship setting throughout the year. Three out of the four composers of the songs were in attendance that day.

The Bethel Choir will share other choral pieces learned at the Tune-Up in the future. (By the way, Pastor Aaron is a member of the NLC and was eager to send greetings to Bethel!)

Save the date: APRIL 14

WELCA Luncheon & Mid-Minnesota Concert Band!

Mark your calendars to join us for a spring luncheon at 11:00 am in the Fellowship Hall followed by the Mid-Minnesota Concert Band in the sanctuary! The Mid-Minnesota Concert Band is a cherished community ensemble that has been making music for decades. Founded in 1977, it stands as one of Minnesota's oldest and most enduring community bands.



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

Installation of 2024 Church Council on February 11



Pictured from left to right:

Pastor Molly Wills

Financial Secretary:

Stacy Meyer

Council President:

Ron Foust

Council Secretary:

Cathy Houg

Treasurer:

Jill Duncan

Finance Board:

Mitch Overbye

Sara Jepsen

Trustee Board:

Dave Gohl

Bryon Weisenburger

Not pictured:

Vice President:

Peggy Wick

Education Board:

Emily Koehler

Pete Hallberg

Thank you all for serving!

Garden plots available for rent!

We're expanding the garden and you're invited to join us! Each plot is approximately 180 sq. ft. and rent is \$20 for the season. Renters will be responsible for the care and upkeep of their plot, harvesting their goods, and helping with clean-up at the end of the season. If you want more details or want to reserve a plot, contact Emily Koehler, Pete Hallberg, or any other member of the Garden Committee.



WELCA Lenten Mission Project: Celebration Bank

Bring your change to worship on Sundays during Lent, drop it in the *Celebration Bank*, and tell us what you are celebrating! It could be a birthday, anniversary, losing a tooth, the "all clear" to start sports again after an injury, or whatever you are celebrating! Our goal is to purchase a goat through the ELCA Good Gifts program for \$50.

Goats can go where other animals can't, surviving in some of the world's most challenging terrain. Goat's milk provides nutrition for children and their families, and goats are quick to reproduce-which means a family can pass this life-saving gift onto others.



HELP GIVE A
LIFE-SAVING GIFT!

FAITH & FELLOWSHIP

Happy Birthday!

- 6 Heather H.
- 8 Victor G.
- 9 Jenna P.
- 14 Katie F.
- 15 Beth S.
- 16 Erin K.
- 17 Pete H.
- 17 Grady M.
- 20 Peg R.
- 21 Carl O.
- 24 Kyla H.
- 26 James K.
- 28 Katie R.
- 31 Bryon W.



Celebrate your Baptism!



- 1 Sara R.
- 3 Judy A.
- 3 Jim M.
- 6 Grace A.
- 11 Cameron B.
- 15 Lisa K.
- 18 Carol W.
- 20 Cathy H.
- 27 Krissa L.
- 27 Evie K.
- 27 Brantley G.

Calling all Bethel Lutheran Teens! (BLTs)



Sunday, March 10th at 10:00 am we will meet in the Fellowship Hall for March Madness Oreo Tasting and Books of the Bible Spoons! Bring your ideas that BLTs could participate in and enjoy throughout the year. If you can't make the event but would like to fill out a survey, you can pick one up on the bulletin board. Questions? Contact Terri Helland terrihelland@gmail.com

Lent schedule

Lenten supper: Mar. 6, 13, 20

5:00-6:15 pm

Holden Evening Prayer: Mar. 6, 13, 20

6:30 pm



Holy Week schedule

Palm Sunday: Mar. 24

9:00 am worship

Maundy Thursday: Mar. 28

6:30 pm worship

Good Friday: Mar. 29

6:30 pm worship

Easter Sunday: Mar. 31

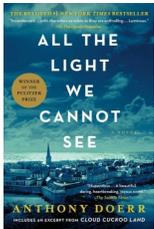
9:00 am worship

Easter Brunch:

10:00 am, hosted by the Bethel Church Council

March Book Club

All the Light You We 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: Wed., March 20, 7:30 pm. A copy of the book will be available in Bethel's library.

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!

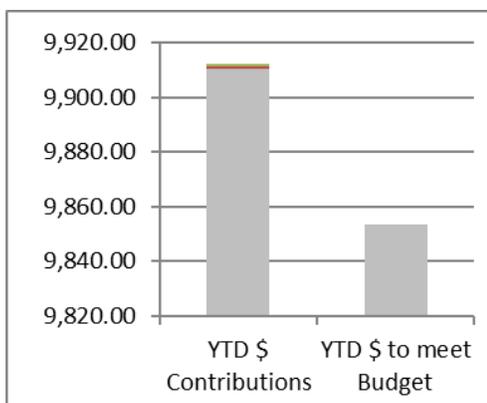
Simply Giving offers convenience for you and much needed donation consistency for our congregation!



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



For the Month of Jan 2024	
Weekly Av. Attendance	50
\$ Contributions	9,910.19
\$ to meet Budget	9,853.52
\$ Difference	56.67
For the Year 2024	
YTD \$ Contributions	9,910.19
YTD \$ to meet Budget	9,853.52
YTD \$ Difference	56.67



Bethel's Financial Update

MARCH 2024

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
					1	2 6p Resplandor de Gloria
3 9a worship 10a Sunday school/ confirmation class/ adult education	4 (office hours)	5 1-4:30p quilting 6:30p WELCA mtg.	6 (office hours) 5-6:15p supper 5:45p choir 6:30p worship	7 (office hours)	8	9 6p Resplandor de Gloria
10 9a worship 10a Sunday school/ adult education/BLT March Madness event/DST begins	11 (office hours) 6:30p council mtg.	12 1-4:30p quilting	13 (office hours) 4p worship mtg. 5-6:15p supper 5:45p choir 6:30p worship	14 (office hours) 1:30-3p MEFS mobile outreach	15	16 6p Resplandor de Gloria
17 9a praise worship 10a Sunday school/ confirmation class/ adult education (St. Patrick's Day)	18 (office hours)	19 1-4:30p quilting	20 (office hours) 5-6:15p supper 5:45p choir 6:30p worship 7:30p book club discussion	21 (office hours)	22	23 6p Resplandor de Gloria
24 (Palm Sunday) 9a worship (noisy offering) 10a Sunday school/ adult education 31 (Easter) 9a worship 10a brunch	25 (office hours) newsletter deadline	26 1-4:30p quilting	27 (office hours)	28 (office hours) (Maundy Thursday) 6:30p worship	29 (Good Friday) 6:30p worship	30 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, FEBRUARY 12, 2023

Council Members Present: Vice President: Peggy Wick; Secretary: Cathy Houg; Treasurer: Jill Duncan; Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer; Finance Board: Mitch Overbye and Sara Jepsen; Education Board: Pete Hallberg and Emily Koehler; Trustee Board: Dave Gohl and Bryon Weisenburger; Pastor Molly Wills

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:00 by Vice President Peggy Wick followed by a prayer led by Pastor Molly Wills.

Council Business:

- A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Mitch Overbye to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.
- Pastor Wills reported that since she began, she has attended a first-call retreat and visited two home bound members. Confirmation has restarted. She requested that the Council members consider volunteering to share a faith statement for Wednesday Lenten services.

Old Business:

The Finance Board has completed employee year-end consultations.

New Business:

- Vice President Wick welcomed newly elected Council Members: Peggy Wick, Jill Duncan, Sara Jepsen, Mitch Overbye, Pete Hallberg, and Dave Gohl. She also welcomed Pastor Molly Wills to the Council.
- The Audit Committee (Carol Wertz, Jenna Pariseau, and Jeremy Radtke) have completed the 2023 review.
- A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Emily Koehler to change the Church Council meeting start time to 6:00 p.m. Motion carried.
- The Council was asked to begin thinking about options for a Stewardship Campaign. Discussion followed.

Secretary Minutes:

A **motion** was made by Stacy Meyer and seconded by Bryon Weisenburger to accept January's secretary's report. Motion carried.

Treasurer Reports:

A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Pete Hallberg to accept January's treasurer's report. Motion carried.

Financial Secretary Report:

A **motion** was made by Emily Koehler and seconded by Sara Jepsen to accept January's financial secretary's report. Motion carried.

Reports:

Education Board: Pete Hallberg has been taking the lead on updating the Child and Youth Protection Policy. He will be working with Tamie Foust and Pastor Molly.

Finance Board: The 2024 Budget was approved at the Congregational Annual Meeting. Mitch Overbye and the Trustees will be looking at live-stream options for our worship services to correct streaming problems that occur. The Finance Board will be examining the Earned Sick and Safe Time Law and its implications for Bethel.

Trustees: The old church laptop computer has been recycled. Fire Service Inspections will be conducted monthly as required. The Trustees will be working with the WELCA group to replace the kitchen stove. There was concern that last year a few new people missed Easter Sunday service because they were unaware of the 8:00 a.m. start time. Options to correct this problem were discussed. A **motion** was made by Stacy Meyer and seconded by Sara Jepsen to begin Easter Sunday worship service at **9:00 a.m.** followed by Easter Brunch. Motion carried.

Communications:

- Pastor Molly will be on vacation Apr. 2 –7, 2024. Pastor Bill Nelsen will provide pulpit supply on Sun., Apr. 7.
- Lenten Services begin on Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024.
- It is time to purge the Council's three-ring binders. Reports from the last 2-3 years should be kept.
- The sign up sheet for Easter Brunch food items will be available to Council members at the March meeting. Ron Foust will chair the serving of this event.
- WELCA will be sending a representative to the monthly Church Council meetings.
- Vice President Peggy Wick shared a thank you to the members of the Call Committee: Jean Hallberg, Stacy Meyer, Peggy Wick, Cathy Houg, Conner Meyer, Max Peterson, LuAnn Weisenburger, Jan Smith, and Julie Hanson.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer at 7:19 p.m.

The next regular Council meeting will be held on Monday, March 11, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Cathy Houg, Council Secretary

DST BEGINS MARCH 10



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