



BETHEL MESSENGER



Bethel Lutheran Church Newsletter

February 2025

FROM PASTOR MOLLY

Hello Beloved Children of God!

At the beginning of Epiphany, on January 12th, I asked you all to talk with other people about the questions: Who is Christ to you? And how does Christ appear in your life? I've been told I ask some really hard questions, but that is a part of my job as a pastor. To make you think about your faith; to give you the chance to speak about your faith without fear of judgment so that you can fully understand your faith, how you live it out, and be able to speak about it with people in and beyond the church world.

Who Christ is to you and how you see Christ appear within your life all depends on your relationship with our Triune God. Maybe Christ is central to your relationship with our Triune God. Maybe, like with me, Christ is an aspect of the Triune God that validates and cements the relationship you have with the Holy Spirit and the Father/Mother. Maybe who Christ is to you is something completely different than those two possibilities. That is for you to figure out.

Here is my answer to who Christ is to me: I have never had a faith shaking experience, but I have had life-altering experiences, some that have shaken my world down to the core and made me feel like I was being ripped apart from the inside out, but God has always been there, and I have never doubted God's love for me and God's presence with me in the horrible and wonderful moments.

God has been my imaginary friend, who is really with me, since I was little. From as far back as I can remember, I will go outside and stand and just listen to the wind blow through the leaves and feel the Holy Spirit dancing in the air. I sing and I know the Holy Spirit lifts my voice up to the heavens, cradling it, singing with me. God speaks to me in my dreams. God listens to me even when I scream with rage at him, and at the rough stuff life throws at me.

I think the biggest difference Jesus and God make in my life is seeing how my relationship with God and my faith in God is different from others and how that has affected the way I approach life. I have never thought God caused bad things to happen to me. God takes my anger, when I'm hurting and don't know how to deal, but the anger has never been because I think God caused the pain. That is simply not the mindset I could ever have, because God is and has always been my closest friend. I think knowing that, gives me support in those really rough times and helps me not sink completely into a despair I can't come out of. God is with me, and God loves me, even when it might feel like the rest of the world is against me. And God coming in human form as Christ Jesus to live and experience all the happiness and harshness of life validates and cements the relationship I have had with God my entire life. I see Christ, God, appearing in my life within the people around me - in my husband, children, parents, siblings, friends, acquaintances, and strangers.

One VERY important thing to remember is that *there is no wrong answer to who Christ is to you, nor to how Christ appears within your life*. Each person will have a different answer because they have a different relationship with God, but no relationship with God is wrong. Above all, God wants to be in relationship with you, so long as you have a relationship with God, whatever, however it might be, that is all that matters!

Blessings to you all!
Pastor Molly B. Wills

MISSION & MINISTRIES

Driving Away Hunger-MEFS Mobile Outreach

Driving Away Hunger is 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, dairy, grains, and bakery treats. STOP & SHOP THE BUS at no cost to you! All sites are open to the public!

Orders must be placed prior to delivery dates and are pre-packed during the winter months. A limited number of walk-up portions will be available at each delivery site. The staff will accommodate anyone not able to safely enter the vehicle for shopping. The staff are not permitted to carry food inside a residence.

Full grocery distributions are available once (1X) per month, per household. One visit per week is allowed across all sites. Schedule changes are announced at www.mcleodemergencyfoodshelf.org and on Facebook @ McLeod Food Shelf. Follow us! Questions? Call 320-864-2088!

SPREAD THE WORD! The BUS comes to Bethel every month!

2025 Council & Committees

Church Council

President: David Gohl

Vice President: Peggy Wick

Treasurer: Jill Duncan

Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer

Council Secretary: Julie Hanson

Finance Board: Mitch Overbye & Sara Jepsen

Education Board: Pete Hallberg & Katie Radtke

Trustee Board: Bryon Weisenburger & Jeff Hanson

Committee Members

Cemetery: Jerry Christenson & Mary Lou Teubert

Mission Endowment: Carolyn Barr, Eric Angvall, Jan Smith, Jean Hallberg, & Lloyd Wortz

Audit: Jeremy Radtke, Nicole Weisenburger, Jenna Pariseau

Nominating: (CH) Peggy Wick, Ron Foust, Cathy Houg, Emily Koehler, & Tamie Foust

Worship: Judy Angvall, Tamie Foust, Jan Smith, Lloyd Wortz, Pastor Wills

Synod Assembly Delegates: Jean & Pete Hallberg



MEFS Mobile Outreach

WINTER SCHEDULE

WHEN: THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 13

1:30 pm-3:00 pm

WHERE:

**Bethel Lutheran
Church parking lot**

**TO ORDER ONLINE &
STAY UP-TO-DATE**



SEEKING VOLUNTEERS!

How can you serve? Be a...

CHEERFUL GREETER

SCRIPTURE READER

HELPFUL USHER

COMMUNION PREPPER

COMMUNION SERVER

COFFEE MAKER

TREAT BRINGER

No experience necessary!

Sign up in the narthex!

**Questions? Contact the office
or the group chairperson!**



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

Grandparent/Grandchild Valentine Breakfast



When: Saturday, February 15

Where: Bethel's Fellowship Hall

Time: 9:00 am-noon

Cost: FREE

All children ages 5 and older and a grandparent (or special adult) are welcome! **Children must come accompanied by an adult.** You and your grandchildren do not need to be members of Bethel to participate. **Registration is required before the deadline-Monday, February 10.** To register, email jhallberg59@icloud.com or jks_teach@yahoo.com. Contact Jean Hallberg at 507-430-2671 with questions.

Boxes of Sunshine



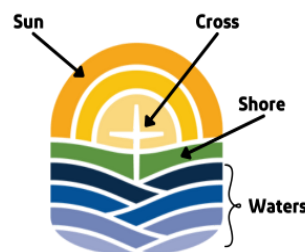
The BLTs will be putting together "Boxes of Sunshine" for the college students of Bethel on February 23. We will be collecting "yellow" items for approximately 6 students. If you would like to contribute, here are some of the items we are looking for: Juicy Fruit gum, lemonade packets, Velveeta Mac and Cheese cups, Slim Jims, small packages of Peanut M&Ms, yellow highlighters, chicken flavored Ramen Noodles, small packages of Fudge Strip cookies, small bags of Lay's Potato Chips, yellow Post-it Notes, boxes of Sour Patch Kids, and any other snacks or treats that have yellow packaging!

Faith That Overflows 2025

Registration for GLLM summer programs is open! By registering early, you will not only reserve your place, but you'll save money too! **The Early Bird Discount ends on February 13, 2025!** Every registration received before then will receive \$65 off each registered program (some restrictions apply.) GLLM scholarships are available for any program including youth camps, and retreat programs. Bethel also has scholarships available, contact Pete Hallberg or Katie Radtke if you are interested. Visit gllm.org for more information and register today! If you have questions, contact the office by phone at 320-796-2181 or email camp@gllm.org.



Bethel's custodian retires after 14 years here at Bethel. God's blessings in your next chapter, Lori!



Explore the Elements of New GLLM Logo

Sun: Represents the outward spiritual growth and the deeper connection to God's abundant grace.

Cross: Christ at the center where love, faith, and community intertwine and all can experience the life-changing love of Jesus Christ.

Shore: Fertile ground where seeds of hope, love, and community are sown and nurtured. It is here at the shore where we are grounded.

Waters: The coming together of unique individuals united to create a mighty force overflowing with life and vitality.

FAITH & FELLOWSHIP



Birthdays

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

Baptism

Birthdays

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



Lent begins Ash Wednesday, March 5

- * Join us for Ash Wednesday, March 5th worship service at 6:30 pm and mid-week Holden Evening Prayer at 6:30 pm on Wednesdays, March 12-April 9.
- * Meals will be served each week from 5:00 pm-6:15 pm. There is a Lenten meal sign-up sheet in the narthex for anyone that wants to take a turn organizing, preparing, and serving a meal for 35-45 people. Thrivent Action grants will cover the meal expenses. You can also sign up to bring bars. Contact Diane Horsman if you have any questions.
- * Watch for the Maundy Thursday Agape Meal soup sign-up sheet!

CHURCH IS NOT AN
ORGANISATION YOU JOIN; IT
IS A FAMILY
WHERE YOU BELONG,
A HOME WHERE YOU ARE
LOVED AND A HOSPITAL WHERE
YOU FIND HEALING.

February is Stewardship Month Stewardship Temple Talk Topics:

February 2:

Pastor, Music, Worship, Choir

February 9:

Office Administrator, Trustee

February 16:

Council, Council President

February 23:

WELCA, Cemetery, Community Garden

Upcoming Milestone classes

4th gr. Ten Commandments: February 2
(Come for a blessing on February 9)

6th gr. Stewardship: February 9
(Come for a blessing on February 16)

All classes will meet after worship.

FINANCIAL CORNER

4 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 Fin. Sec. 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 on the wall in the narthex. 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 Meyer, at 320-395-2869 or finsec@lpbethel.org.



4. Online Giving scan QR code



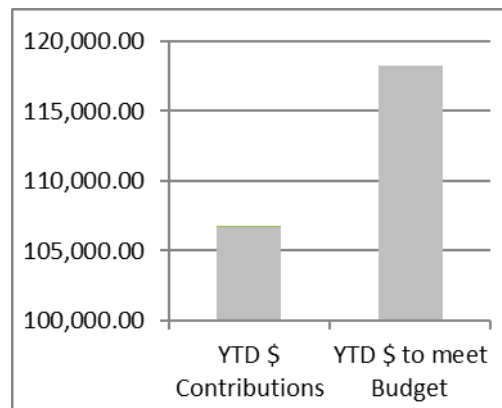
Financial update

For the Month of Dec 2024

Weekly Av. Attendance	64
\$ Contributions	9,930.90
\$ to meet Budget	9,853.52
\$ Difference	77.38

For the Year 2024

YTD \$ Contributions	106,678.02
YTD \$ to meet Budget	118,242.24
YTD \$ Difference	-11,564.22

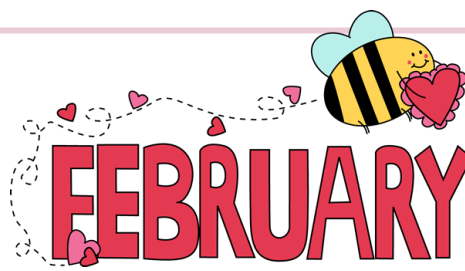


"Noisy" offering

4th Sunday of the month

The "Noisy" offering can will be located just outside of the sanctuary for you to 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! The proceeds go toward Bethel Youth Summer Camperships for Green Lake Bible Camp.





SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
			BULLETIN SUBMISSIONS DUE ON WEDNESDAYS @ NOON			1
2 9a worship 10:15a Sun school, confirmation, 4 th gr. ten Commandments class, The Chosen 4p Resplandor de Gloria	3 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study 6:30p WELCA mtg.	4	5 (office hours) 1p-4:30p Quilting 6:30p choir practice	6	7	8
9 9a worship 10:15a Sun school, 6 th gr. stewardship class, BLTs The Chosen 4p Resplandor de Gloria	10 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study 6p council mtg.	11	12 (office hours) 12:30p worship & music comm. mtg. 6:30p choir practice	13 1:30p-3p MEFS Mobile Outreach REMEMBER TO PRE-ORDER!	14 Valentine's Day	15 9a-noon Valentine Breakfast
16 9a worship 10:15a Sun. school, confirmation 4p Resplandor de Gloria	17 NO Bible study President's Day	18	19 (office hours) 1p-4:30p Quilting 6:30p choir practice 7:30p book club	20	21	22 1p Girl Scout mtg.
23 9a worship w/noisy offering 10:30a Bethel BKF 4p Resplandor de Gloria	24 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study	25 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	26 (office hours) 1p-4:30p Quilting 6:30p choir practice	27	28	1

- **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 table in the narthex! Sign up for a month or be a substitute! No experience necessary! Questions? Contact the chairperson listed.
- **Has your contact information changed? Please, inform the church office of any changes to your contact information to ensure accuracy in the upcoming 2025 Congregational Directory.**

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH | COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES | MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2025

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

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by President Ron Foust followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Council Business:

- A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Mitch Overbye to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.
- Pastor Molly's report was on-line as she is attending a First Call Retreat. During the last month she officiated at a rehearsal and wedding held at Bethel. She attended a Crow River Conference pastor's meeting, the Youth Task Force meeting and social, and the Great River Conference pastors' meeting. She visited the homebound bringing them communion. Advent Services were completed and the Christmas Eve service was well attended.

Old Business:

- The Finance Board has completed year-end consultations and budgetary salary discussions for all employees.

New Business:

- The 2025 budget proposal was presented by the Finance Board. A **motion** was made by Emily Koehler and seconded by Dave Gohl to increase the CenterPoint Gas line item to \$3000. Motion carried.
- LuAnn Weisenburger and Julie Hanson will be the janitors for 2025, with each working every other month. A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Mitch Overbye to hire them as contract employees at a salary of \$62.50 per week. Motion carried.
- A **motion** was made by Pete Hallberg and seconded by Sara Jepsen to recommend the Endowment Report including approved grants and financials be presented at the Annual Meeting. Motion carried.
- The Audit Committee- Jenna Pariseau, Jeremy Radtke, and Nicole Kleve along with the Finance Board was requested to complete the 2024 Audit by the next Council meeting on February 10, 2025.
- Installation of new and current Church Council members will be on February 9, 2025, during the worship service.

Secretary Minutes:

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

Treasurer Reports:

- A **motion** was made by Emily Koehler and seconded by Bryon Weisenburger to accept December's treasurer's report. Motion carried.

Financial Secretary Report:

- A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Peggy Wick to accept December's financial secretary's report. Motion carried.

Reports:

• **Education Board:**

A second Sunday School teacher has volunteered to teach a 4th through 6th grade class every other Sunday alternating with Confirmation class. The second graders completed the God's Grace milestone class on January 12, 2025. They will be recognized during worship service on January 19, 2025.

• **Finance Board:**

The preliminary budget has been completed for 2025 and was earlier recommended by the Council to be presented at the 2025 Annual Meeting. Janitorial service for 2025 has been procured and accepted by the Council.

• **Trustees:**

With the general consensus of the Council that we go forward with the project, a **motion** was made by Pete Hallberg and seconded by Peg Wick to add "redoing the parking lot" to the Annual Meeting's agenda for discussion and possibly a vote. Motion carried. The thermostats will be set at a constant 68 degrees during which time the Trustees will assess the impact that has on energy expense. The keyboard used for Contemporary Worship is being examined to correct the feedback issues.

Communications:

- On Sunday, January 19, 2025, Pastor Susan Engholm will be pulpit supply for Pastor Molly.
- The Nominating Committee is still working to find members to fill 2 of the vacancies
- Tamie Foust has signed all the documents needed to activate the Church's debit card.
- The Annual Meeting Booklet is being finalized for the **Annual Meeting**, which will be held after worship on **January 26, 2025**. A potluck will follow.
- President Foust thanked outgoing Council members: Cathy Houg, Stacy Meyer, Sara Jepsen, Bryon Weisenburger, and Emily Koehler.

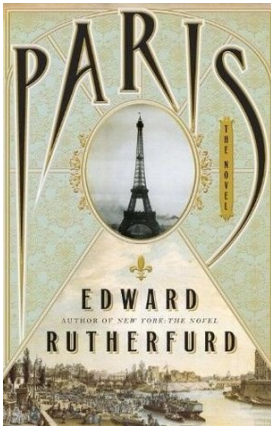
The meeting closed with Round Table Prayers.

The next regular Council meeting will be held on Monday, February 10, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Cathy Houg, Council Secretary

BETHEL BOOK CLUB

February **Paris** by Edward Rutherfurd



From the grand master of the historical novel comes a dazzling epic portrait of Paris that leaps through centuries as it weaves the tales of families whose fates are forever entwined with the City of Light. As he did so brilliantly in *London: The Novel*, Edward Rutherfurd brings to life the most magical city in the world: Paris. This

breathtaking multigenerational saga takes readers on a journey through thousands of years of glorious Parisian history.

Discussion date: February 19, 7:30 pm

CONTACT US

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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PASTOR

Rev. Molly Wills
320-339-8169

pastor@lpbethel.org

DON'T FORGET TO STAY CONNECTED!

www.lpbethel.org

www.facebook.com/lpbethel

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