

# BETHEL MESSENGER

Bethel Lutheran Church

December 2025

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Beloved Children of God,

As Advent begins, I want to share a poem I wrote while contemplating the feelings of what Advent and Christmas are to me.

The cold wind bites, whistling through  
The trees and it carries the song  
Of bells ringing. The stars glitter  
In the black velvet sky and the sound  
Of children chattering and laughing  
dances its way amongst the notes.

Excitement and joy reverberate  
Through the world as candles  
Ignite and voices raise united in  
Singing, rejoicing, and praising  
The coming of the LORD.

The sun rises and creation  
Bathes in the light, the leaves and branches  
Reaching toward the sky, the flowers  
Lifting their faces, the birds caroling,  
The seas roaring, and the animals  
Belting out a chorus of  
Hallelujah!

All of creation recognizes  
The coming of its Creator.  
And we all breathe in deep the wonder  
And the hope of the time, the love and the joy of God  
For us all. For God so love the world  
That he gave his only Son...

So, I leave you with the question - what do Advent and Christmas feel like to you?

May you feel God's loving presence always,  
Pastor Molly B. Wills

# MISSION AND MINISTRIES

## COMMON CUP AND FOOD SHELF

### WEEKEND FOOD PROGRAM

We are once again planning to pack weekend food bags for students in need at the Lester Prairie High School. In addition to packing, we would like to support the program by donating granola bars and protein bars to be included in the bags. (One of these items is placed in every bag that is packed.) If you wish to participate in this ministry, you may leave these items in the basket in the Common Cup Corner.

Currently, about 350 bags are packed weekly for the food program in McLeod County. (Children who qualify receive bags of food, sent home in their backpacks on Fridays, to have for the weekend and long school breaks, discreetly and confidentially.)

If you have any questions about the program, would like to donate, or are interested in volunteering to pack the bags, Jan Smith would enjoy visiting with you.



### EMERGENCY PASTORAL CARE CONTACT

During Pastor Molly's vacation, please contact Pastor Cathy Jones at 763-528-1784, House of Grace, Montrose.

### DRIVING AWAY HUNGER!

**Driving Away Hunger is dedicated to addressing transportation and mobility issues related to food access in our communities.**

Full grocery distributions are available once a month for each household, which can be picked up from the Mobile Outreach Bus. Additionally, you may visit the food shelf in Glencoe or Hutchinson once a week. All sites are open to the public.

The bus will stop at Bethel's parking lot once a month, during the winter, specifically on the first Wednesday of each month, from 2:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. To place an order, you must complete a form online at our website, [www.mcleodemergencyfoodshelf.org](http://www.mcleodemergencyfoodshelf.org), or pick up a physical copy from the church office. To ensure you receive your order by the distribution date, please submit your form by the specified deadline.

Check the schedule on the bulletin board or the front door for distribution dates and deadlines. For updates, follow us on Facebook <http://facebook.com/McLeodFoodShelf>. If you have any questions, please visit our website.



### MCLEOD EMERGENCY FOOD SHELF MOBILE OUTREACH

**NEXT DISTRIBUTION DATE:**

**WEDNESDAY, JAN. 7**

**BETHEL'S PARKING LOT**

**2:30 PM – 4:15 PM**

To **receive** your food box by **JANUARY 7<sup>th</sup>**, place your order by **DECEMBER 10<sup>th</sup>**.

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



## WELCA PIE SOCIAL November 23, 2025



### WELCA ADVENT MISSION PROJECT

Bethel WELCA has partnered with the Lester Prairie School Outreach Program to sponsor three local families this year. During Advent, a Christmas Giving Tree will be set up in the narthex, featuring wish list tags that you can take to purchase the requested items.

### NOMINATION COMMITTEE SEEKING VOLUNTEERS- OPEN POSITIONS INCLUDE:

#### **Congregation Council:**

Vice-President: 2-year term

Treasurer: 2-year term

Finance Board: 2-year term

Education Board: 2-year term

*The Finance and Education Board members partner with another board member, and only one member needs to attend the monthly council meeting.*

#### **Congregation Committees:**

Endowment: 3-year term/need two

Audit: 3-year term/need one

Nomination: 1-year term/need four

Representatives for ELCA Synod Assembly: June 5-6, 2026/need two

Contact Peggy Wick, Ron Foust, Cathy Houg, Emily Koehler, or Tamie Foust with questions or if you are interested in serving!

### POINSETTIA SIGN-UP

It is time to order poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary. A sign-up sheet is available on the bulletin board. Please make your check payable to Bethel and give your payment to Judy Angvall by Sunday, December 20. The price is \$7.00 for a 4-inch pot and \$13.00 for a 6-inch pot. Thank you for your participation!

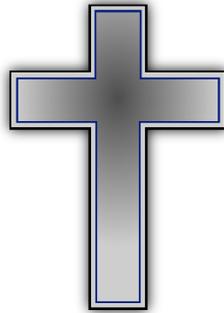
# FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP

BETHEL OFFERS LEARNING OPTIONS TO PROVIDE VARIOUS WAYS TO DEEPEN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

## WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL

Join us weekly for Sunday school classes after worship for children pre-school through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

**The Sunday School Christmas program will be during worship on December 21.** For questions, contact Stacy M., Jan S., or Nicole K.



## INTERGENERATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

**WITH PASTOR MOLLY**

following worship

**All ages are welcome to attend!**

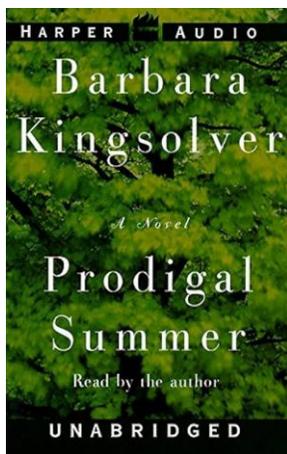
December 7 & 14	January 4 & 11
February 1 & 8	March 8 & 22
April 19	May 3 & 10

## BETHEL BOOK CLUB DECEMBER

***Prodigal Summer* by B. Kingsolver**

A novel set in rural Appalachia that intertwines three distinct stories over a single summer, focusing on the characters' personal relationships and their intricate connections to the natural world.

**Discussions are on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.**



## CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS & BAPTISMS

### BIRTHDAYS

- 1 LuAnn W.
- 2 Amber S.
- 4 Danise K.
- 11 Riley C.
- 18 Jen B.
- 21 Ed E.
- 21 Ron F.
- 26 Sara R.
- 31 Lisa K.

### BAPTISMS

- 1 Brayden M.
- 4 Amy Z.
- 7 Jane L.
- 14 Luke P.
- 15 LuAnn W.
- 22 Abigail C.
- 30 Amber S.
- 31 Lynken M.

## WORSHIP DURING ADVENT

**Way of the Manger within**

**Light of the World**

**6:30 PM on Wednesdays, December 3, 10, & 17**

A D V E N T



## CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP 4:00 PM

*Please share Bethel's Facebook posts about our Advent and Christmas Eve worship services!*

# DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b>  <i>(Pr. vacation)</i>	<b>2</b> <b>6:30p WELCA mtg.</b>	<b>3</b> <b>office hours</b> <b>1p-4p quilting</b> <b>5:45p choir</b> <b>6:30p worship</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> <b>(2 Advent)</b> <b>9a worship</b> <b>10a Sunday school &amp; Intergenerational Sunday school</b>	<b>8</b> <b>office hours</b> <b>5p worship &amp; music mtg.</b> <b>6p council mtg.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <b>office hours</b> <b>1p-4p quilting</b> <b>5:45p choir</b> <b>6:30p worship</b> <b>Annual report deadline</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> <b>(3 Advent)</b> <b>9a worship</b> <b>10a Sunday school &amp; Intergenerational Sunday school</b>	<b>15</b> <b>office hours</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <b>office hours</b> <b>1p-4p quilting</b> <b>5:45p choir</b> <b>6:30p worship</b> <b>7:30p book club</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>  <i>(Pr. vacation)</i>
<b>21</b> <b>(4 Advent)</b> <b>9a worship w/ Sunday school</b> <b>Christmas program</b> <i>(Pr. vacation)</i>	<b>22</b>  <i>(Pr. vacation)</i>	<b>23</b>  <i>(Pr. vacation)</i>	<b>24</b> <b>Christmas Eve</b> <b>4p Christmas Eve candlelight worship</b>	<b>25</b> <b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> <b>(1 Christmas)</b> <b>9a worship</b>	<b>29</b>  <i>(Pr. vacation)</i>	<b>30</b>  <i>(Pr. vacation)</i>	<b>31</b> <b>New Year's Eve</b>  <i>(Pr. vacation)</i>	<i>Jan 1</i> <i>New Year's Day</i>  <i>(Pr. vacation)</i>	<i>Jan 2</i>  <i>(Pr. vacation)</i>	<i>Jan 3</i>

**ONLINE WORSHIP:** <http://www.facebook.com/lpbethel/live>

**BULLETIN SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** Wednesdays at noon | **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:** 25<sup>th</sup> of the month

**BETHEL'S CALENDAR:** Go to [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org)

**ONLINE CHURCH DIRECTORY:** Go to [www.lpbethel.org](http://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 of the directory, or if your contact information has changed!

**SEEKING VOLUNTEERS OF ALL AGES!** Check out the bulletin board in the narthex. Sign up or be a substitute! No experience is necessary! For questions, contact the chairperson listed or the office.

## BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES. NOV. 10, 2025

**Council Members Present:** President: Dave Gohl; Secretary: Julie Hanson; Treasurer: Jill Duncan; Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer; Finance Board: Mitch Overbye & Sara Jepsen; Trustee Board: Jeff Hanson & Bryon Weisenburger; Pastor Molly.

**Call To Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Pastor Molly, followed by an opening prayer by Pastor Molly.

**Council Business:** A **motion** to approve the agenda was made by Stacy Meyer and seconded by Bryon Weisenburger.

**Motion carried.**

**Pastor Molly:**

- A correction of the date for the Youth Task Force. We will be hosting the Youth Task Force Social on January 21<sup>st</sup>, not the 14<sup>th</sup>. If anyone is willing to help, please talk to Pastor Molly.
- Attended the Youth Task Force social at Harvest Community Church in October.
- Visited our homebound.
- Talked with our two students who were going to be confirmed about their faith statements and how they wanted to help with the service. Then on Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> they affirmed their baptisms during the service.
- Led Bible studies.
- Attended First Call Cohort meeting in Buffalo.
- Helped with laying out the pattern of a quilt for one of our soon-to-be graduates.
- Led monthly worship.
- Worked on meshing *The Light of the World* liturgy with the *Way of the Manger* liturgy (both by Carol Meier) that follow each trimester of Mary's pregnancy.
- Worked with Jan Smith to figure out a working order of service for December 21<sup>st</sup>, which will be when the Children's program is. The goal is to have the service led by the children.

**Old Business:** No old business to report.

**New Business:**

- Christmas Service is December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 P.M. Newspaper advertising for the Christmas service was discussed. It was decided to forgo the newspaper ad this year. However, to reach out with social media with Facebook and Life in Lester Prairie. In addition, have posters made to advertise Bethel's Christmas church service. A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Stacy Meyer to approve the change in the type of advertising for Bethel's Christmas church service on December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 P.M. **Motion carried.**
- Safety First: The presentation needs to be rescheduled with the Lester Prairie Police Department due to a scheduling conflict.
- Activate nomination committee. Council positions open are Vice-President, Treasurer, one Education board member, one Finance board member, and one Trustee board member.
- Thrivent presentation went well.
- Sara Jepsen is checking on insurance quotes for the church.

**Secretary Minutes:**

- A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Bryon Weisenburger to approve the previous month's secretary minutes. **Motion carried.**

**Treasurer Report:**

- Discussed keeping the loan in effect at the bank unless a future need should arise. Keeping the loan application active doesn't cost us anything but allows us to access funds quickly if need be. Also, to meet with the finance board about next year's budget. CDs to be renewed in January. A **motion** was made by Stacy Meyer and seconded by Mitch Overbye to approve the treasurer's report. **Motion carried.**

**Financial Secretary Report:**

- A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Julie Hanson to approve the financial report. **Motion carried.**

**Board Reporting:**

- Education: No report given.
- Finance: Budget meeting scheduled for November 18<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 P.M.
- Trustee: Excel audit was completed. Bethel had a good report. The parking lot light was replaced. Dirt work was completed on the east and southeast side of the church. More will need to be done come spring. Discussed putting river rock down on the east side, Purcell Heating and Cooling to do repairs. Elevator is now up to date.
- A new commercial-grade vacuum cleaner was purchased.
- Future purchases were discussed. A new lawn mower, a battery-powered weed trimmer, a new portable keyboard, and a cell phone for the elevator.

Jeff Hanson read/shared a prayer followed by the Lord's Prayer by Dave Gohl

**Respectfully submitted by Secretary Julie Hanson**

**Next scheduled meeting date: Monday December 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 P.M.**

# GIVING PAGE

## 3 WAYS TO MAKE GIVING EASIER!

### 1. **VANCO ONLINE**

Discover the simplicity of giving with Vanco Online, our user-friendly eGiving tool! You can make one-time gifts or set up recurring donations to ensure your support continues. Visit our church website at [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org) and click the “Give” button or scan the QR code to get started.

#### **HOW TO USE VANCO ONLINE:**

- 1. Select Your Funds and Amount**—Choose your fund and click “Donate.” Select your donation amount and frequency, then proceed to payment.
- 2. Enter Payment Method**—Enter your credit card, debit card, or checking account information. You can save your payment information for future donations by creating a free account. (From your Vanco account, you can review your giving history, manage recurring donations, or update payment information.)
- 3. Complete Donation**—Review your gift and click “Submit.”  
How to Have Automatic eGiving Set Up for You: Simply complete an authorization form (forms are on the wall in the Narthex) and place it in the Financial Secretary’s mailbox.

### 2. **TEXT + GIVE**

Donate easily and quickly by texting! Text giving is fast and flexible. You can give right away, set up a weekly donation, or respond to special requests—all in just a few seconds. To register, use your phone; it’s simple! You can also set up recurring donations. To donate, just text the dollar amount to [866-298-7547](tel:866-298-7547).

### 3. **BETHEL OFFERING ENVELOPE**

We encourage you to fill out an envelope and include your assigned envelope number from your church mailbox. You can mail it to Bethel Lutheran Church, PO Box 207, Lester Prairie, MN 55354, or simply place it in the offering plate during service. **If you have any questions, please contact our Financial Secretary, Stacy, at 320-395-2869 or [finsec@lpbethel.org](mailto:finsec@lpbethel.org).**

## SCAN THE QR CODE TO GET STARTED



## NOISY OFFERING

On the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month, look for the tin can! All proceeds support Bethel Youth Camperships for Green Lake Bible Camp.

### **MID NOVEMBER 2025**

**\$ CONTRIBUTIONS:** 6,043.00  
**\$ TO MEET BUDGET:** 10,262.01  
**\$ DIFFERENCE:** -4,219.01  
**WEEKLY AVERAGE ATTENDANCE:** 56

### **FOR THE YEAR 2025**

**YTD \$ CONTRIBUTIONS:** 94,598.19  
**YTD \$ TO MEET BUDGET:** 112,882.11  
**YTD \$ DIFFERENCE:** -18,283.92

**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.

[www.facebook.com/lpbethel](http://www.facebook.com/lpbethel)  
[www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org)

**CONNECTED!**  
**DON'T FORGET TO STAY**

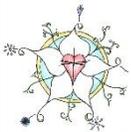
[pastor@lpbethel.org](mailto:pastor@lpbethel.org)  
320-339-8169

**PASTOR**  
**REV. MOLLY WILLS**

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**TAMIE**  
**OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR**

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