

## **BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Rev. Molly Wills, Pastor | Jan Smith, Accompanist  
1 Christmas | Sunday, December 28, 2025  
ACS Holy Communion Setting 11

### **WELCOME, WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE!**

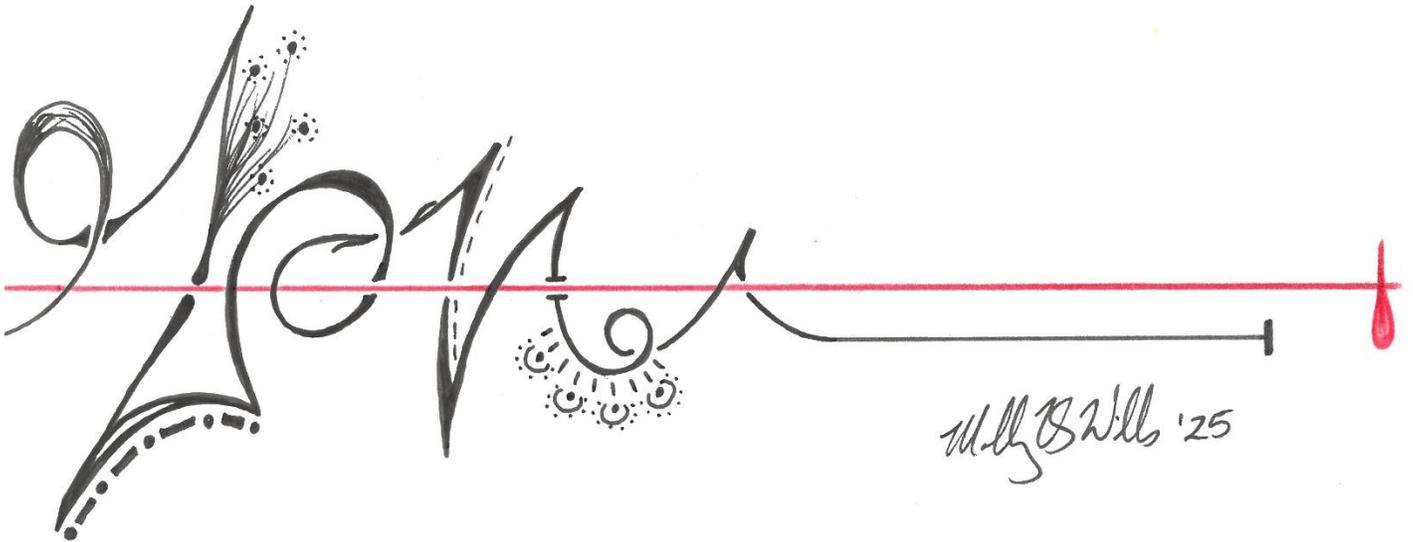
**If you are new to Bethel, here is some helpful information about worship services.**

*We use the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (red hymnal) and the supplement All Creation Sings (purple hymnal), which contain liturgy and hymns. Liturgy pages are at the front of each hymnal, with the page numbers at the bottom and in the bulletin as (red ELW p.) or (purple ACS p.) Hymn pages are in the back two-thirds of the hymnal, with the page numbers at the top and in the bulletin as (red hymnal #) or (purple hymnal #). The songs from the Green Book are in the bulletin as (green binder #). **Hearing assistive devices are available; speak to an usher for assistance.***

### **SPIRIT ART**

**A meditative study of scripture through art.**

**Matthew 11:2-11**



### **GATHERING**

**The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.**

MEDITATION TIME: "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night" arr. by Lani Smith  
"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" arr. by Marianne Kim

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHOIR ANTHEM "Carol of Advent" arr. by Philip R. Dietterich

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Long-expected God, **we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.** God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. + We are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn" (red hymnal #242)

GREETING (purple ACS p. 12)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

KYRIE (purple ACS p. 12)

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (purple ACS p. 12)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

**This morning, we light three candles. The first, a reminder that we are called to wait and stay awake as we wait. The second, a beacon of hope in God's promise of the Messiah baptizing all with the Holy Spirit. The third, a challenge to us to live as John the Baptist and Jesus lived. In our longing and waiting for you, Lord, we can lose sight of those around us, focusing on ourselves and surviving. Open our eyes to those around us and open our hearts to loving them and sharing with them. Amen.**

SONG AFTER THE CANDLE LIGHTING "Christ Be Our Light" (red hymnal #715 vs. 1,2,3)

### **WORD**

**God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus, <sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.]] <sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup> Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." <sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; <sup>6</sup> then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; <sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes. <sup>8</sup> A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. <sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return

and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10 (responsive reading)

<sup>5</sup> Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the LORD their God;

<sup>6</sup> **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps promises forever;**

<sup>7</sup> who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The LORD sets the captive free.

<sup>8</sup> **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.**

<sup>9</sup> The LORD cares for the stranger; the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

<sup>10</sup> **The LORD shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup> You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (purple ACS p. 14)

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11 The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>2</sup> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.” <sup>7</sup> As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ <sup>11</sup> “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN’S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY “There Is a Longing in Our Hearts” (purple hymnal #1078)

NICENE CREED (purple ACS p. 16)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

PEACE The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

### **MEAL**

**God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.**

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

**Lord of abundance, we return to you a portion of what you have given to us. Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches, but on you, who richly provides for us. Multiply what we have gathered to bless all who are suffering and in need, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING (purple ACS p. 20)

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

PREFACE

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (purple ACS p. 20)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (purple ACS p. 21)

Holy God, you alone are holy,...with every breath. **We praise you, O God.**

Generations rejoice in your faithfulness...into the future. **We rejoice in you, O God.**

We give you thanks...with us now. **We thank you, O God.** In the night...proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

We pray for the gift of your Spirit...without end. **Amen.**

LORD’S PRAYER (purple ACS p. 24)

COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG (purple ACS p. 25)

SONG DURING COMMUNION “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” (red hymnal #254)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

### **SENDING**

**God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.**

BLESSING

May God who comes among us, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG “He Came Down” (red hymnal #253)

DISMISSAL Go in peace. Keep awake. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE “Prepare the Royal Highway” with “All Glory Laud and Honor” arr. by Curt Oliver

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**NEXT SUNDAY’S READINGS:** Lk 1:26-28; Lk 1:38-45; Matt 1:18-25

## **BETHEL'S 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.

## **THIS WEEK AT BETHEL**

### **Sunday, December 14 (3 Advent)**

- Worship: 9:00 a.m.
- Christmas program practice: following worship
- Intergenerational Sunday school: following worship

### **Tuesday, December 16**

- Lefse making: 1:00 p.m. in the church basement

### **Wednesday, December 17**

- Choir practice: 5:45 p.m.
- *Way of the Manger/Light of the World*-Advent worship service: 6:30 p.m.
- Book Club discussion: 7:30 p.m.

### **Sunday, December 21 (4 Advent)**

- Worship: 9:00 a.m. with *Rehearsal for Christmas Eve* presented by Bethel children & youth

**QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS?** Contact the church office at 320-395-2125 or [bethellutheranlp@gmail.com](mailto:bethellutheranlp@gmail.com). If you need emergency pastoral care, please call Pastor Molly Wills at 320-339-8169 or email her at [pastor@lpbethel.org](mailto:pastor@lpbethel.org).

**\*\*EMERGENCY PASTOR\*\*:** **Pastor Molly will be on vacation Dec. 20-23, and Dec. 29-Jan. 2.**

**During this time, contact Pastor Cathy Jones at 763-528-1784, House of Grace, Montrose.**

**ADDRESS:** 77 Lincoln AVE N, Lester Prairie, MN 55354, (Mailing USPS: PO Box 207)

**WEBSITE:** [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org) | **FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/lpbethel](http://www.facebook.com/lpbethel)

**BULLETIN SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** Wednesday at noon

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:** 25<sup>th</sup> of the month

**VANCO GIVING:** Scan the QR code or visit [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org)

under the "Give" section, or complete an application and submit it to the church office.

**TEXT GIVING:** To give, text dollar amount to **866-298-7547**



### **NOVEMBER 2025**

\$ Contributions:	8,798.00
\$ To Meet Budget:	10,262.01
<b>\$ Difference:</b>	<b>-1,464.01</b>
Weekly Average Attendance:	58

### **FOR THE YEAR 2025**

YTD \$ Contributions:	97,353.19
YTD \$ To Meet Budget:	112,882.11
<b>YTD \$ Difference:</b>	<b>-15,528.92</b>

### **THANK YOU TO THOSE SERVING TODAY!**

**GREETER:** Jill & Brian Duncan

**ALTAR DUTY:** Weisenburger family

**ALTAR CANDLELIGHTER:**

**COMMUNION ASSISTANT:** Jaxen McBride

**USHER:** Ron Foust

**LECTOR:** Bryon Weisenburger

**COFFEE:** Ron Foust

**TREATS:** Mona Dobrava

### **SERVING NEXT SUNDAY, DEC. 21**

**GREETER:** Brayden McBride, Jill & Brian Duncan

**ALTAR DUTY:** (no communion)

**ALTAR CANDLELIGHTER:** Bethel youth

**ADVENT CANDLELIGHTER:** Govig family

**COMMUNION ASSISTANT:** (no communion)

**USHER:** Jaxen McBride & Ron Foust

**LECTOR:** Bethel youth

**COFFEE:** Ron Foust

**TREATS:** Dana, Cheryl, Diane, Julie, Judy

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

- **ADVENT 2025:** Please share Bethel's Facebook post about our mid-week Advent worship service on December 17 at 6:30 p.m., and our Candlelight Christmas Eve service at 4:00 p.m. We want others to know they are invited and welcome to join us. During worship on Sunday, December 21, the Bethel children and youth will present *Rehearsal for Christmas Eve*.
- **LEFSE MAKING:** Tuesday, December 16, at 1:00 p.m. in the church basement. Contact Julie or Jeff Hanson, Judy Angvall, or Diane Horsman if you are interested!
- **NO QUILTING UNTIL THE NEW YEAR:** The quilting group will resume on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Anyone is welcome to join us on Wednesdays!
- **FOOD BAG ITEM COLLECTION:** We are collecting **granola bars and protein bars** to donate to Common Cup Ministry's Weekend Food Program for school children in need. Donations may be left in the Common Cup Corner in the narthex.
- **ANNUAL REPORT REMINDER:** *Council Treasurer, 2026 Budget, and WELCA Treasurer:* please email your financial reports by **January 10**.
- **NOMINATION COMMITTEE SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR 2026:** Open positions include **Congregation Council:** Vice-President, Finance Board, and Education Board (all 2-year terms). *The Finance and Education Board members partner with another board member, and only one member at a time needs to attend the monthly council meeting.*  
**Congregation Committees:** Endowment Committee 3-year terms/*need two*; Audit 3-year term/*need one*; Nominations Committee 1-year terms/*need four*; Representatives for ELCA Synod Assembly, June 5-6, 2026/*ideally one male and one female*. Contact Peggy Wick, Ron Foust, Cathy Houg, Emily Koehler, or Tamie Foust with questions or if you're interested in volunteering.

### **CHURCH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**President:** (2 yr. term) David Gohl  
952-358-0201; [david.g.m.gohl@gmail.com](mailto:david.g.m.gohl@gmail.com)  
**Vice-President:** (1 yr. term) Peggy Wick  
612-499-0186; [sully72828@gmail.com](mailto:sully72828@gmail.com)  
**Council Secretary:** (2 yr. term) Julie Hanson  
320-485-7870 or 612-396-8038; [j3hanson@tds.net](mailto:j3hanson@tds.net)  
**Treasurer:** (1 yr. term) Jill Duncan  
320-420-6284; [treasurer@lpbethel.org](mailto:treasurer@lpbethel.org)  
**Financial Secretary:** (2 yr. term) Stacy Meyer  
320-620-1040; [finsec@lpbethel.org](mailto:finsec@lpbethel.org)

### **CHURCH COUNCIL BOARD MEMBERS**

**Trustee Board:** (1 yr. term) Jeff Hanson  
320-485-7870 or 612-396-8374; [j3hanson@tds.net](mailto:j3hanson@tds.net)  
**Trustee Board:** (2 yr. term) Bryon Weisenburger  
320-282-4747; [bryonw@usa.com](mailto:bryonw@usa.com)  
**Finance Board:** (1 yr. term) Mitch Overbye  
952-237-3320; [moverbye8@yahoo.com](mailto:moverbye8@yahoo.com)  
**Finance Board:** (2 yr. term) Sara Jepsen  
605-760-0685; [candsjepsen@gmail.com](mailto:candsjepsen@gmail.com)  
**Education Board:** (1 yr. term) Pete Hallberg  
507-430-8609; [phallberg58@icloud.com](mailto:phallberg58@icloud.com)  
**Education Board:** (2 yr. term) Katie Radtke  
952-215-6878; [gemini.radtke@gmail.com](mailto:gemini.radtke@gmail.com)

## **WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP**

**You can serve with family, friends, or on your own—no experience is necessary!**

A **Greeter** welcomes every member and guest who enters the church through the front door. This role involves making introductions, assisting those with full hands, providing directions, extending invitations, and sharing a warm smile. For questions, please call Ron Foust at 612-201-2351.

An **Usher** greets people at the sanctuary door, lights the candles before the service, distributes bulletins, informs parents about our nursery, collects offerings, guides individuals to communion, answers questions as they arise, and provides a welcoming and helpful presence for both members and guests! For questions, please call the office at 320-395-2125.

A **Lector** is responsible for reading scripture lessons during worship services. Occasionally, you may also be asked to assist with other parts of the service, such as reading prayers or liturgy. For questions, please call Cathy Houg at 320-282-2152.

A **Worship Assistant** helps the pastor during the service, primarily assisting with communion and baptisms. For questions, please call Pastor Molly at 320-339-8169.

**The Altar Guild** prepares the sanctuary for worship by arranging the sacraments, filling candles, and changing altar cloths. For questions, please call Judy Angvall at 612-501-3233.

Sign up to **Light the Altar Candles** before the worship service. During the Advent season, there are opportunities to light candles for the Advent wreath each week. For questions, please call Pastor Molly at 320-339-8169.

**All sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board in the narthex, outside the sanctuary.**

**Other ways to participate:** You could provide special music, offer flowers to decorate the sanctuary, deliver a children's message, or join the Worship & Music Committee. Contact the office if you need more information.

**We welcome volunteers of all ages and look forward to your involvement!  
Together, we can fulfill our mission and ministry!**

