

## Bethel Lutheran Church

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

### 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.

### 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 2:13-23*



## *Gathering*

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

MEDITATION TIME “The First Noel” and “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” arr. by Robert W. Thygerson, “Manger Songs” arr. by Lloyd Larson

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP SONG “The Bells of Christmas” (red hymnal 298, verse 1)

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Abiding Comforter. **Amen.**

Reconciling God, **we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; and we have not always embraced your message of peace.**

**We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, division, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in causing others pain; our reluctance to embody your good news.**

**Overcome our failures and reluctance, be born in us today, and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.**

God’s grace upon grace flows over us all and + Christ’s presence redeems the whole creation. Through God’s abundant mercy, love, and salvation our sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad! **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG “Love Has Come” (red hymnal 292)

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

**O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## *Word*

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

FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-9

<sup>7</sup> I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. <sup>8</sup> For he said, “Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully,” and he became their savior <sup>9</sup> in all their distress. It was no messenger or

angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

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

PSALM: Psalm 148 (responsive reading)

<sup>1</sup> Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

<sup>2</sup> **Praise the LORD, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

<sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD, sun and moon; sing praise, all you shining stars.

<sup>4</sup> **Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.**

<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, who commanded, and they were created,

<sup>6</sup> **who made them stand fast forever and ever, giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;

<sup>8</sup> **fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

<sup>9</sup> mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;

<sup>10</sup> **wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds;**

<sup>11</sup> sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;

<sup>12</sup> **young men and maidens, old and young together.**

<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup> **The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 4:12-19

<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup> If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. <sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. <sup>16</sup> Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. <sup>17</sup> For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup> And "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" <sup>19</sup> Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust their lives to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (purple ACS p. 14)

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-23 The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>13</sup> Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the

prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi.<sup>17</sup> Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:<sup>18</sup> “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said,<sup>20</sup> “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.”<sup>21</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.<sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee.<sup>23</sup> There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.” The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

#### CHILDREN’S SERMON

#### SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY “What Child Is This” (red hymnal #296)

NICENE CREED (purple ACS p. 16)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION Hear us O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

#### *Meal*

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

OFFERING “In the Bleak Midwinter” (red hymnal 294, verse 3)

#### 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 "Your Little Ones, Dear Lord" (red hymnal 286)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*Sending*

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

BLESSING

May the triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, + bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" (red hymnal 288)

DISMISSAL Glory to God in the highest! **And peace to God's people on earth!**  
Embody God's redeeming grace. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE "Bring a Torch Jeanette, Isabella" arr. by Marty Parks

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NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS: Sirach 24:1-12; Wisdom 10:15-21; Ephesians 1:3-14; Jn 1:1-18

*This week at Bethel*

**Sunday, December 28 (1 Christmas)**

- Worship: 9:00 a.m.

**Wednesday, December 31 (New Year's Eve), office closed**

**Sunday, January 4 (2 Christmas)**

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

**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. 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**



**MID DECEMBER 2025**

\$ Contributions:	4,335.19
\$ To Meet Budget:	10,262.01
<b>\$ Difference:</b>	<b>-5,926.82</b>
Weekly Average Attendance:	60

**FOR THE YEAR 2025**

YTD \$ Contributions:	101,688.38
YTD \$ To Meet Budget:	123,144.12
<b>YTD \$ Difference:</b>	<b>-21,455.74</b>

## Announcements and Upcoming Events

- **QUILTING RESUMES JANUARY 7:** The quilting group will resume meeting on Wednesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Anyone is welcome to join us!
- **WOMEN IN THE BIBLE: A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN IN JANUARY!**  
All women are invited and encouraged to attend Bible study on Thursdays, January 8, 15, 22, and 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Each session will take a personal look into the life of one of the Bible's most faithful women. The God to whom they were so committed is the same God who continues to mold and use ordinary people like us today. What can we learn from them? If you have any questions, please ask Jan Smith. (John MacArthur's book, *Twelve Extraordinary Women: How God Shaped Women of the Bible and What He Wants to Do with You*, will be used as a resource and guide.)
- **THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS TO THE WEEKEND FOOD PROGRAM!**  
Twenty-two boxes of granola/protein bars were collected and delivered from Bethel to Common Cup Ministries in December! In addition, with the help of a Thrivent Action Team grant written by a Bethel member, nine cases of protein bars and seven cases of granola bars were purchased and added to our collected donations! WOW! Our plan for 2026 is to continue collecting granola and protein bars. Each month, a team from Bethel will also continue to pack the Weekend School bags for our local school.
- **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.
- **YOUTH TASK FORCE SOCIAL:** Bethel will host the 7th-12th-grade youth of Lester Prairie High School on Wednesday, January 21, from 12:40 p.m. to 1:40 p.m. We're looking for volunteers to set up, serve hot cocoa, and get to know the youth of our community! Volunteers, please arrive by 11:30 a.m. to start setting up and stay after to help break down and clean up. If you'd like to help, please let Pastor Molly know.
- **SAVE THE DATE!** Our Annual Congregational Meeting is set for Sunday, January 25, following the worship service. Please make every effort to attend this important meeting.

*Thank you to those serving today!*

**GREETER:** Jill & Brian Duncan

**ALTAR GUILD:** Judy Angvall

**CANDLELIGHTER:**

**COMMUNION ASSISTANT:**

**USHER:** Ron Foust

**LECTOR:** Bryon Weisenburger

**COFFEE:** Ron Foust

*Serving next Sunday, January 4, 2026*

**GREETER:**

**ALTAR GUILD:** Helland family

**CANDLELIGHTER:**

**COMMUNION ASSISTANT:** Adderley Helland

**USHER:** Helland family

**LECTOR:** Etta Helland

**COFFEE:**

**TREATS:**

*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 at 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!*

### **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)