

Bethel Lutheran Church

Rev. Molly Wills, Pastor | Jan Smith, Accompanist
Epiphany of Our Lord | Sunday, January 11, 2026
ACS Holy Communion Setting 12

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 2:1-12



Gathering

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

MEDITATION TIME “The First Noel” and “What Child is This?” arr. by Robert W. Thygeron

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP SONG “God Welcomes All” (purple hymnal #978, sing 2x)

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters. **Amen.**

Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely. Mighty God, lover of justice, **you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in + Jesus’ name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG “Shine, Jesus, Shine” (red hymnal #671)

GREETING (purple ACS p. 30)

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. 31)

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (purple ACS p. 31)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our 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 60:1-6

¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ² For darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples, but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. ³ Nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together; they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses’ arms. ⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you; the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring

gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD. The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 (responsive reading)

¹ Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the king's son;

² **that he may rule your people righteously and the poor with justice;**

³ that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

⁴ **Let him defend the needy among the people, rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**

⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another.

⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon the mown field, like showers that water the earth.**

⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish; and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

¹⁰ **May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute, and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.**

¹¹ May all kings bow down before him, and all the nations do him service.

¹² **For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress, the oppressed, and those who have no helper.**

¹³ He has compassion on the lowly and poor, and preserves the lives of the needy.

¹⁴ **From oppression and violence, he redeems their lives, and precious is their blood in his sight.**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 3:1-12

¹ This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you gentiles,

² for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me

for you ³ and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the

mystery of Christ. ⁵ In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:

⁶ that is, the gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ⁷ Of this gospel I have become a

servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring

to the gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ ⁹ and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰ so that

through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was in accordance with the

eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have access in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (purple ACS p. 33)

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12 The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ” ⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

CHILDREN’S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY “When a Star Is Shining” (purple hymnal #915)

APOSTLES’ CREED (purple ACS p. 17-18)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION Merciful God, **receive 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 “In the Bleak Midwinter” (red hymnal #294, verse 3)

OFFERING PRAYER

God of majesty, we return to you a portion of what you have entrusted 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 Savior and Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING (purple ACS p. 36)

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. 36)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (purple ACS p. 37)

O God triune...The earth is full of your glory. **The earth is full of your glory.**

O God triune...The earth is full of your glory. **The earth is full of your glory.**

We praise you...The earth is full of your glory. **The earth is full of your glory.**
O triune God...The earth is full of your glory. **The earth is full of your glory.**
Amen, and amen. **Amen, and amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (purple ACS p. 39)

COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG (purple ACS p. 40) **Lamb of God...**

SONG DURING COMMUNION "The First Noel" (red hymnal #300)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Sending

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

BLESSING

May God's face + shine upon you and bring you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG "This Little Light of Mine" (red hymnal #677)

DISMISSAL Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy. **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE "We Three Kings" arr. by Marty Parks

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NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS: Is 49:1-7; Ps 40:1-11; 1 Cor 1:1-9; Jn 1:29-42



This week at Bethel

Sunday, January 11, 2026 (Epiphany)

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

Monday, January 12

- Worship & Music meeting: 5:00 p.m.
- Council meeting: 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 13

- WELCA meeting: 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 14

- Bible study: 11:30 a.m.
- Quilting: 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
- Choir practice: 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, January 15

- Women's Bible study (*Women in the Bible*): 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, January 18

- Worship: 9:00 a.m.
- Sunday school: following worship
- Bethel Breakfast: 10:30 a.m., Longhorn's Burger House, LP

QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS? Contact the church office at 320-395-2125 or 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.

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

WEBSITE: www.lpbethel.org | **FACEBOOK:** www.facebook.com/lpbethel

BULLETIN SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Wednesday at noon

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 25th of the month

VANCO GIVING: Scan the QR code or visit 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**



DECEMBER 2025

\$ Contributions:	11,939.58
\$ To Meet Budget:	10,262.01
\$ Difference:	1,677.57
Weekly Average Attendance:	64

FOR THE YEAR 2025

YTD \$ Contributions:	109,292.77
YTD \$ To Meet Budget:	123,144.12
YTD \$ Difference:	-13,851.35

Announcements and Upcoming Events

- **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 for our collected donation! 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!
- **“WOMEN IN THE BIBLE”- A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN IN JANUARY!**
All women are invited and encouraged to attend Bible study on Thursdays, January 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.
- **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.
- **NOMINATION COMMITTEE SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR 2026 ELECTION:** Open positions: **Congregation Council:** Vice-President, *one* Finance Board member, and *one* Education Board member (all 2-year terms). *Board members are paired up, and only one needs to attend the monthly council meeting.* **Congregation Committees:** Endowment- 3-year term/*need one*; Audit- 3-year term/*need one*; Representatives for ELCA Synod Assembly- June 5-6, 2026/*one male/one female*. If you are interested in volunteering or have questions, contact Peggy Wick, Ron Foust, Cathy Houg, Emily Koehler, or Tamie Foust.
- **SAVE THE DATE:** Bethel’s Annual Congregational meeting will be on Sunday, January 25, immediately following the worship service. Please make every attempt to attend this important meeting for our congregation.
- **LENTEN FAITH STORIES:** Please listen to the Holy Spirit, and consider signing up on the narthex board to share your faith story/journey. This year, our Wednesday night readings will focus on food and how food and faith connect us to God. As written in *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*: “Created life is God’s love made tastable and given for the good of another. The mundane act of eating is thus a daily invitation to move responsibly and gratefully within this given life. It is a summons to commune with the divine Life that is presupposed and made manifest in every bite.” Some questions to contemplate are new to connect with the readings, but that does not mean you must follow them or even talk about food. It is simply another way to think about your relationship with God. For more information, please check the sign-up sheet. For questions, speak to Pastor Molly or send her an email (pastor@lpbethel.org).

Thank you to those serving today!

GREETER:

ALTAR GUILD: Helland family

CANDLELIGHTER: Helland family

COMMUNION ASSISTANT: Adderley Helland

USHER:

LECTOR: Ron Foust

COFFEE:

TREATS: Mona Dobrava

Serving next Sunday, January 18

GREETER:

ALTAR GUILD:

CANDLELIGHTER:

COMMUNION ASSISTANT: Cathy Houg

USHER: Cathy Houg and Carolyn Barr

LECTOR: Cathy Houg

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!*

