

BETHEL MESSENGER

May 2026 / Bethel Lutheran Church, ELCA

May 3rd- Blessings & Quilts
for 2026 High School
Graduates

Ashlyn R.
Mallorie T.
Olivia R.

Jeremiah 29:1

*For surely I know the plans I
have for you, says the LORD,
plans for your welfare and
not for harm, to give you a
future with hope.*

*Each unique quilt given to
the graduates was crafted
with care by the Bethel
women of the ELCA.*



FROM THE PASTOR

Hello Beloved Bethel members!

This May, we celebrate Pentecost, which occurs 50 days after Easter (including Easter Sunday). The disciples originally gathered to celebrate Pentecost, which is a Jewish festival, also called the Feast of Weeks, and celebrates the wheat harvest. But for us, Christians, Pentecost has become a day in which we rejoice



in the Holy Spirit making her presence known among the disciples after Jesus ascended.

Thinking in terms of the fact that we are both saints and sinners, I want you to read the scripture below, and do a little Visio Divina, looking between the scripture and the photo I took, paying attention to what jumps out at you. What responses, memories, and feelings do the

image and the scripture evoke? How does the image and reading connect with your life? How is the Holy Spirit at work in your life right now? How is she burning away the chaff so that the grain within you might grow and flourish?

Luke 3:15-17

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Love,
Pastor Molly B. Wills

MISSION AND MINISTRIES

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

FARE FOR ALL



Fare for All is coming up on Thursday, May 7, 3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Oak Heights Covenant Church, 1398 S Grade RD SW, Hutchinson. This is a pop-up grocery store in our community that offers quality, nutritious, budget-friendly food packs featuring fresh fruits and vegetables and frozen meats. No pre-orders necessary-just stop by and shop at the monthly event! Visit fareforall.org to learn more.

COMMON CUP FOOD DONATIONS

In May, we will begin collecting applesauce cups and fruit cups to donate to Common Cup Ministry's Weekend Food Program for school children in need within McLeod County. (Donations may be left in the Common Cup Corner basket in the narthex.) Members of Bethel also pack weekend bags for the students at the Lester Prairie school. If you have questions about the program, donating, or are interested in volunteering to pack the bags, Jan Smith would love to visit with you!

MCLEOD EMERGENCY FOOD SHELF MOBILE OUTREACH



Driving Away Hunger aims to address transportation and mobility challenges related to food access in our communities. The Mobile Outreach vehicle is stocked with shelf-stable pantry items, fresh produce, frozen proteins, grains, dairy, and bakery treats. **STOP & SHOP the BUS at no cost to you!**

Orders must be placed before delivery dates. Orders are pre-packed by staff for on-site distribution. A limited number of walk-up portions or "emergency boxes" will be available at each delivery site. *The staff is not permitted to assist with carrying groceries home.*

Full grocery distributions are available once (1x) per month, per household. Check the Mobile Outreach schedule on Bethel's bulletin board or on our front door for distribution dates.

If you have any questions, call 320-864-2088 or email glencoe@mcleodemergencyfoodshelf.org

All sites are OPEN to the PUBLIC! Produce is available weekly. One visit per week across all sites: Hutchinson, Glencoe, and Mobile.

Schedule changes are announced at:

www.mcleodemergencyfoodshelf.org

and www.facebook.com/McLeodFoodShelf. Follow us!

NEXT DISTRIBUTION DATES

Wednesday, May 6 & 20
Bethel's parking lot
2:30 PM

Scan here to place
your next order



SERVING SUNDAY MORNING

We have volunteer sign-up sheets posted on the bulletin board in the narthex, and we'd love for anyone of any age to consider serving on Sunday mornings. There are some wonderful opportunities available, like being a greeter, usher, lector, communion assistant, or candlelighter. You can also help by preparing communion with the altar guild or by making coffee and bringing treats to share! If you have questions, the chairperson's name and number are next to each role. No experience is necessary-someone will gladly show you how! Thank you for considering!

FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP

LEARNING opportunities to DEEPEN YOUR RELATIONSHIP with GOD.

BETHEL BOOK CLUB - MAY

***Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi**, A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen. An unforgettable novel about the power of generosity, the importance of connection, and the quiet miracles that happen when we choose kindness and wonder.

Discussion date: May 20, 7:30 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE – SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 9:00 A.M.

Join us for our annual worship & potluck picnic at the Bergen Church site, Bergen Township! More information will be coming!

IDEAS WANTED!

We want to plan some social activities this summer for our congregation and community! Come talk to Jean H. or email her at jhallberg59@icloud.com to share your big or small ideas! (If you suggest an idea, it doesn't mean you have to lead the activity!)

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH COMMUNITY GARDEN

Garden plots are available for community rental for the 2026 season! Everyone is welcome to grow fresh produce, build community connections, and connect with nature. Each plot is approximately 500 sq. ft. A \$20 donation is recommended for each plot, and water access is provided. Contact 320-295-2125 or scan the QR code to reserve a plot.



HAPPY BAPTISM!

- 2 Vaydah R.
- 3 Charles S.
- 8 Bryon W.
- 17 Jeff R.
- 19 Logan M.
- 24 Diane H.
- 25 Pete H.
- 27 Oliver A.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 7 Tony S.
- 10 Sara J.
- 15 Felicity G.
- 17 Grace A.
- 19 Georgia G.
- 21 Kayla W.
- 25 Roger M.
- 28 Lois S.



WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL
*Join us downstairs
after worship! The last day
of Sunday school is May 24.*

**INTERGENERATIONAL
SUNDAY SCHOOL**
with Pastor Molly
Everyone is welcome!
May 3 & 10

SAVE THE DATE!
Women's Retreat
September 11-13, at the
Medayto Lodge on Green
Lake in Spicer.

MAY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<i>*Bulletin submission deadline: noon Wednesdays (Email Pr. Molly for May 3rd & 10th)</i>		1	2
3 (5 Easter) 9a worship w/ graduate blessing/giving of quilts 10a Sunday school & IG Sunday school	4 (office hours)	5	6 (office hours) 11:30a Bible study 1p-4p quilting 6:30p choir	7	8	9
10 (6 Easter) 9a worship 10a Sunday school & last IG Sunday school	11(office hours) 5 p.m. worship & music mtg. 6p council mtg.	12	13 (office hours) 1:30a Bible study 1p-4p quilting 6:30p choir	14 6:30p WELCA mtg.	15	16
17 (7 Easter) 9a praise worship Pr. Heather Culuris 10a Sunday school	18(office hours)	19	20(office hours) 11:30a Bible study 1p-4p quilting 6:30p last choir 7:30p book club	21	22	23
24 (Pentecost) 9a worship 10a last day of Sunday school	25 (Memorial Day)	26	27(office hours) <i>*Newsletter deadline</i> 11:30a Bible study 1p-4p quilting	28	29	30
31 (Holy Trinity) 9a worship Pr. LaDonna Ekern						

Bulletin Submission Deadline: Wednesday Noon | **Newsletter Deadline:** 25th of the month

Online Worship: <http://www.facebook.com/lpbethel/live>

Online Calendar: www.lpbethel.org

Church Directory: www.lpbethel.org Contact us, Member Directory, then enter the password. Contact the church office if you need the password to view the directory, if you want a hard copy of the directory (some copies are available in the narthex), or if your contact information has changed.

Seeking Volunteers of All Ages: Opportunities to serve on Sunday mornings available! Check out the bulletin board in the narthex. Sign up or be a substitute! No experience is necessary! If you have any questions, contact the chairperson listed on the sign-up sheet or the church office.

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, APRIL 13, 2026

Council Members Present: President: Dave Gohl, Vice President: Jean Hallberg, Secretary: Julie Hanson, Treasurer: Jill Duncan, Finance Secretary: Stacy Meyer, Finance Board: Peggy Wick, Education Board: Katie Radtke, Trustee Board: Jeff Hanson and Bryon Weisenburger and Pastor Molly.

Call To Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:04 P.M by President Dave Gohl, followed with opening prayer by Pastor Molly.

Council Business:

A **motion** was made by Jean Hallberg and seconded by Jill Duncan to approve the agenda. **Motion carried**
Pastor Molly:

- Visited our homebound.
- Hosted the Crow River Council meeting. We had around 12 pastors attend, which was great!
- Led Wednesday Lenten services.
- Gave out Bibles to 3rd graders on Palm Sunday.
- Led Holy Week services (Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter).
- Started writing a bi-weekly "Bethel Happenings & Celebrations" to hang in the bathrooms to give people a little bit of information on Lutheranism, as well as current things happening within our church.
- Taught First Communion class. We'll be celebrating with the two children who will be taking it on April 26th
- Led monthly worship meeting – We will be having a Graduate Blessing on May 3rd.

New Business:

1. Prins Bank Update: There are questions/concerns to discuss with the new bank.
2. Social Events: Discussed options for summer activities to network with other community people. Examples given were an ice cream social and outdoor games. Keeping the activities simple and low-cost.
3. Crow River Conference handout: Southwestern MN Synod Annual report for 2025 was shared, relating to facts and figures with synod numbers of congregations. A suggestion was made to put this information in with Bethel's annual report for 2026.

Old Business:

1. Building insurance: Tabled until next month.
2. Common Cup: April 20th at noon, Hunters Ridge Community Church, Hutchinson.
3. Council Retreat: To meet and discuss actions/goals for the coming year.
4. Easter Breakfast: 95 people were served. Received \$265.00 in goodwill donations. All went well. A Thrivent grant was used.

Secretary Minutes:

Addition: Under New Business for March 9th audit report, this report is for 2025.

- A **motion** was made by Bryan Weisenburger and seconded by Jean Hallberg to approve the previous month's secretary minutes. **Motion carried.**

Treasurer Report:

- A **motion** was made by Peggy Wick and seconded by Julie Hanson to approve the previous month's treasurer's report. **Motion carried.**

Financial Secretary Report:

- A **motion** was made by Jean Hallberg and seconded by Jeff Hanson to approve the previous month's financial secretary's report. **Motion carried.**

Board Reporting:

1. Education: Katie Radtke shared Milestone itinerary from 2024 from Jan Smith and would like to use. Plans underway to start VBS. Discussed having VBS on a Saturday or Sunday after church instead of 3 days.
2. Finance: None to report.
3. Trustees: New paper towel dispensers were installed in the upstairs bathrooms. The small paper towel dispensers were installed in the downstairs bathrooms. Changing table is repaired in the downstairs women's bathroom. A new shelf was installed in the women's bathroom to hold the tissue box & air freshener. Summit Fire was in and inspected the fire extinguishers. One fire extinguisher was replaced. Michael's Utility has to install a new gas meter. It was recommended to move the meter outside. Need to get quotes from plumber(s) for the relocation. Discussed moving the camera for the online video services. Toro mower in need of repair. The mower needs a new valve cover gasket, battery, air filters, and blades. Jeff Hanson is doing this repair. Still looking for a replacement lawn mower. The refrigerator in the kitchen is being monitored. It is not holding a consistent temperature. Bryon Weisenburger is checking into a doorbell/camera system,

A **motion** was made by Bryon Weisenburger and seconded by Jeff Hanson to close the meeting. **Motion carried**

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer and Closing Benediction by President Dave Gohl

Respectfully submitted, by Secretary Julie Hanson. Next scheduled meeting date: Monday, May 11th, 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 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: 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, 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.**

BETHEL WISH LIST

The council has compiled a list of items for our church and congregation, including both wishes and needs.

Riding lawn mower:
pre-owned-\$2,000 to \$4,000/new-\$13,000 to \$18,000

Paper shredder: \$35 to \$485

Security camera system: \$1,200 to \$5,000

Doorbell for the [locked] front door: \$600 to \$1,000

Battery-operated weed whip: *Thank you for your donation!*

Two restroom paper towel dispensers: *Thank you for your donation!*

Please remember that any donations towards these items should be in addition to your regular giving that helps maintain our budget. Your support is greatly appreciated, and donations can be made anonymously. For more information, feel free to contact any Executive Board member.



Thank you one and all for sharing your resources with Bethel in March! Together you gave \$10,535! Keep on giving generously!



SCAN THE QR CODE
TO GET STARTED

AGAPE MEAL, MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2026



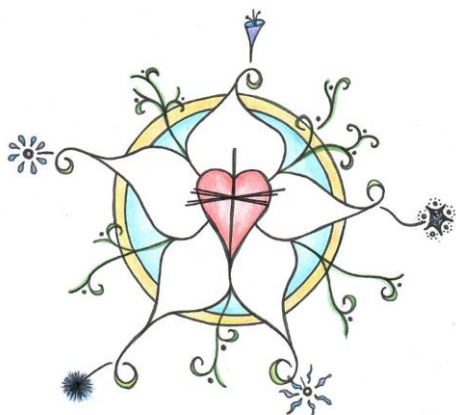
A big thank you to everyone who joined us for our Agape Meal this year! The word “Agape” is Greek and means selfless, unconditional love, representing the love of God for all of us. This meal is all about bringing us together, creating a warm sense of unity, belonging, and spiritual connection among our community of believers.



Thank you to everyone who made the delicious soups, baked unleavened bread, served the meal, and stayed to clean up! We also thank those who helped with the altar setup during Holy Week and donated flowers and pictures to beautify our entry and sanctuary on Easter Sunday! Your help was greatly appreciated!

-Worship & Music Committee





CONTACT US

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Pastor Molly Wills

320-339-8169

pastor@lpbethel.org

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

77 Lincoln Ave. N. | P.O. Box 207

Lester Prairie, MN 55354

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Recipient Name

Street Address

City, ST ZIP Code