

BETHEL MESSENGER

July 2026 / Bethel Lutheran Church, ELCA



FROM THE PASTOR

Hello Beloved Children of God!

I preached on “hesed” twice in June, and I think it’s important for you all to see it written out to help you remember it because this is one of those instances where so much is lost in translation between two languages.

When Jesus says in Matthew 9:13, “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire *mercy*, not *sacrifice*,’” Jesus was quoting God from Hosea 6:6. The word “mercy” Jesus uses is translated as “steadfast love” in Hosea, which is how the Hebrew word “hesed” is usually translated in the Old Testament. It has also been translated as lovingkindness, which you may have seen in our bulletins occasionally because the idea of it has been used in liturgies.

However, “hesed” encompasses so much more than love or mercy or kindness. It’s used to describe how humans should be in relationship with God *and* with one another. Hesed is a deep, active, enduring love that *compels* someone to act on behalf of another in need, regardless of whether it’s deserved. It’s love *in action*, not just an emotion, but something tangible, an unsparing action taken to care for someone else. It’s also covenant loyalty, not just between God and human, but between humans, keeping a promise or commitment even when the other person fails to reciprocate time and time again. And it’s a devotion so profound and extravagant it goes far beyond what’s required by law or obligation.

I love this Hebrew word because it gives so much more meaning to God’s love for us, and God’s expectations and call on us in our relationships with God and one another from the very beginning of creation. So, as you go through the rest of the summer, think about the word “hesed” and pay attention to how you are, or are not, living out hesed for God and each person you meet.

God’s peace be with you all,
Pastor Molly B. Wills

ATTENTION THRIVENT MEMBERS—CAN YOU HELP US?

One of the adult activities during Vacation Bible School will be to complete a service project for people around the world in need of clean water. Each Thrivent member can order and receive one “Water Filter Kit” at no cost each year. These can be ordered online-go to your Thrivent account and choose “Get a Thrivent Cause Kit”. The kit you want to order is the “Water Filter Kit” (not the “Solar Light Build”). Once you order the kit, you will receive it in about a week. Bring the box to church and place it near the Common Cup Corner. We will store it and put the filters together in August. (Each filter will provide clean water for 12 people for 10 years.)

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IS COMING!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Dates:

Sunday, August 2, 9, & 16

Time:

After worship to 12:30 p.m.
(Lunch will be served at noon)

Who is invited?

Bethel members: children,
youth, and adults,
community, friends, and
neighbors

What is it all about?

*Just Like Me: Digging in and
Growing Deep*

It is an inclusive, multi-aged,
Vacation Bible School
that centers on the active
faith lives of children, youth,
and families, and the real-
world context we live in.

We will practice sharing what
we have, finding our
community, and using our
voices for others.

Children, youth, and adults
will meet in small groups for
Bible lessons and hands-on
activities appropriate for each
age group.

Each session will also include
time for all age groups to
gather, sing, share an activity,
eat, and end the day
together.

To Register:

Add your name to the sign-up
sheet in the church narthex or
Contact us at:

bethellutheranlp@gmail.com

All participants, please fill out
a participation form. If you
have questions, ask Katie
Radtke or Jan Smith.

MISSION AND MINISTRIES

"Serving one another demonstrates the grace of God in action."—Oswald Smith

IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE THRIVENT CHOICE PROGRAM

ALL Thrivent members now receive Choice Dollars annually, not just those with certain policy types. Those Dollars are available in FULL at the beginning of each year—**2026 Choice Dollars are available to direct NOW!** All Dollars must be directed by the end of the calendar year, December 31, rather than the former March 31 date. We encourage all Thrivent members to visit your online account SOON and consider directing your Thrivent Choice Dollars to Bethel Lutheran Church! Thank you!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL HELP NEEDED

We are looking for people who are willing to help facilitate Bible story lessons for children, youth, and adults during Vacation Bible School. The lessons will be planned and the materials gathered for you. You may volunteer to teach one lesson once, or you may choose to teach a lesson each day of VBS. We are very flexible! It will also be just fine for two people to work as a team.

We are also seeking people willing to prepare food for meals. Of course, the facilitators and cooks need people to teach and feed, so registering to attend is an important task too! **The "sign-up" to help is in the church narthex.**

SEEKING ALTAR GUILD VOLUNTEERS



Do you have garden flowers you would like to share for the altar? Please let Judy Angvall know when you'd like to bring them!

If you have signed up for communion set-up in the past, please check your schedules and see whether you can sign up for a Sunday or two or three over the summer.

We are also looking for someone to replace Judy as Altar Chairperson. If you are interested, please let her know so she can teach you the process. All are welcome to get involved! Thanks for considering!

BETHEL PRAIRIE DAYS FLOAT

We are looking for volunteers to help plan and create a float for the upcoming Prairie Days parade. Nicole K. and Jan S. have already expressed their interest in being involved, but they need additional help to bring this project to life. If you are interested in joining the team, please reach out to them for more information.

Check out Pastor Molly's art booth during Prairie Days. She is donating half of the proceeds to Bethel! Thank you, Pastor Molly!

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN—TUESDAY, JULY 21, 5:00-6:30 P.M.
(ARRIVE AT 4:45 P.M.)



Our church will be serving a shift at Feed My Starving Children, Chanhassen location, 18732 Lake DR E, Chanhassen, MN 55317. Volunteers may meet at the Chanhassen site or carpool from the church. All ages are welcome to join this meaningful, hands-on way to help children around the world. **Please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the narthex by Sunday, July 6.** Nicole Kleve can answer any questions you may have. Thank you for helping us make a difference!

SOW. GROW. SHARE. REPEAT.



The Bethel Lutheran Community Garden needs YOU! We are looking for volunteers to help us tend this season's garden—whether you have a green thumb or just a willing spirit, there's a place for you here! We need help with planting, weeding, harvesting, and general maintenance. Every hour of help makes a difference in what we can grow and share with our community. No experience is necessary—just show up with your enthusiasm! Email or talk to Emily Koehler if you are interested! emily.e.koehler@gmail.com

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, July 9, 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, 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

We are 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 during the school year.) 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, July 8 & 22
Bethel's parking lot
2:30 PM

Scan here to place
your next order
→



THE QUILT AUCTION AT GREEN LAKE BIBLE CAMP IS COMING SOON



You're going to want to be there! The Quilt Auction has become a beloved tradition. Over the past 41 years, 7,100+ quilts and items have been donated to the Quilt Auction, and over \$2.2 million has been raised to support our summer camp and day camp programming, service opportunities, retreat ministry, and so much more. New this year—Plant Bar and Paint-Your-Own Barn Quilts, Beachfront Concert with Lilly Water's Jazzy Jubilee. The quilt, made by Bethel members, will be auctioned off at the July 24th and 25th Quilt Auction for Water's Edge Ministries (Green Lake Bible Camp). If anyone is interested in going on Friday or Saturday, let Diane Horsman know.

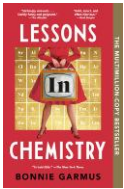
PASTORAL CARE COVERAGE

July 1 through July 6: Rev. Erik Karlson, 507-766-5870, Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Glencoe.

FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP

**"The whole being of any Christian is faith and love.
Faith brings the person to God; love brings the person to people." —Martin Luther**

BETHEL BOOK CLUB – JULY



Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus

In Garmus's debut novel, a frustrated chemist finds herself at the helm of a cooking show that sparks a revolution. Welcome to the 1960's, where a woman's arsenal of tools was often limited to the kitchen—and where Elizabeth Zott is hellbent on overturning the status quo one meal at a time.—*The New York Times* **Discussion date: Wednesday, July 15, 6:30 p.m.**

LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION 32ND ANNUAL BEST BALL TOURNAMENT

FRIDAY, JULY 24—Registration-2:30 p.m., Shotgun Start-3:00 p.m., Price-\$85.00 per golfer (includes golf cart, green fees, meal, prizes, and a donation to LMM), Redwood Falls Golf Club, Redwood Falls, MN. Registration deadline is Monday, July 20th. Registration forms are available from the church office.



A GLASS MOSAIC EVENT—MONDAY, JULY 27, 6:00 P.M.

A Glass Mosaic event is planned for Bethel women and girls ages 15 and up. We will start with a meal followed by the mosaic project, instructed by Linda Reinert of Mosaics at the Farm. No prior mosaic experience is necessary. All glass is cut and tumbled, ensuring there are no sharp edges. Registration deadline is Wednesday, July 22. Registration is not complete until payment is received. Cost is \$20 per person. For questions, contact Jean Hallberg at 507-430-2671 or email jhallberg59@icloud.com.



HOLY BAPTISM



Bethel welcomed Lettie Rachel into the family of God and the community we share on Sunday, June 14, 2026! Lettie is the daughter of Heather and Peter Heuer. Her Baptismal sponsors are Paul Heuer, Jenna Pariseau, and Crystal Paumen.

HAPPY BAPTISM!

2 Alayna S.
9 Jacob D.
13 Dave H.
16 Grady M.
18 Jameson H.
22 Kayla W.
26 Hannah S.
Julie H.
Janice G.
Carolyn B.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

3 Dave H.
4 Janice G.
16 Julie H.
17 Jaxen M.
18 Beckett S.
21 Jerry C.
22 Katie O.
22 Alex O.
22 Andrew F.
23 Lennon S.
25 Corrine B.
25 Kathy E.
25 Dawn R.
26 Terri H.
28 Peggy W.



"A IS FOR ALABASTER" WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY



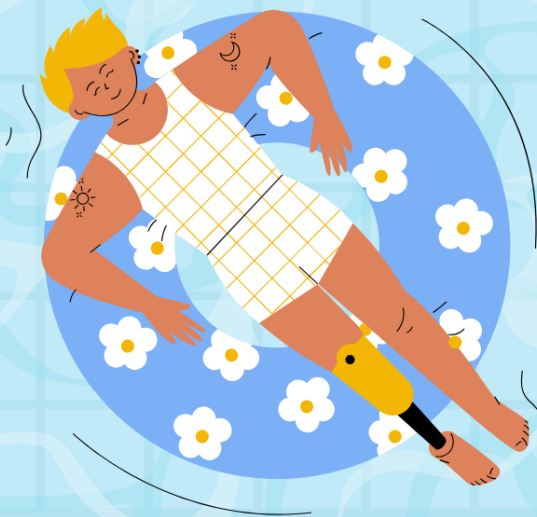
All women are invited and encouraged to attend Bible study on Wednesdays, July 8, 15, & 22, from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the church narthex. The book *A is for Alabaster*, written by Anna Carter Florence, will be used to take us on an engaging tour of the Old and New Testaments with reflections that reveal wisdom from long ago and spark imagination to apply wisdom to our lives today. You are always invited to bring a friend! (If you have questions, please ask Jan Smith.)

POOLSIDE PLATES

**Free meals for any kids
under age 16 in Lester Prairie**

- Food provided by Hollywood Catering
- Meals served at the Picnic Shelter at the 2nd Avenue Park, Lester Prairie
- Serving 12-1pm or until gone!

**JUNE 10TH
JULY 15TH
AUGUST 19TH**



SPONSORED BY:

- Bethel Lutheran Church of Lester Prairie Endowment Grant
- Lester Prairie Youth Task Force
- Lester Prairie Lions
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Lester Prairie
- St. Paul's Sandwich Ministry- Lester Prairie

Any questions please contact:
Terri Helland- terrihelland@gmail.com

JULY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		(pastor cont. ed. trip 7/1 through 7/6)	1 (Bulletin deadline noon Wednesdays) No Bible study 6:30p WELCA mtg.	2	3	4 Independence Day
5 9a worship (Rev. Donna Ekern)	6	7 (office hrs.)	8 (office hrs.) 11:30a Bible study; noon Poolside Plts; 1p-4p quilt; 2:30p MEFS bus; 7:30p Women's Bible study	9	10	11
12 9a worship	13 (eve. office hrs.) 5p worship & music mtg. 6p council mtg.	14	15 (office hrs.) 11:30 a.m. Bible study 1p-4p quilt 6:30p book club discussion 7:30p Women's Bible study	16	17 Prairie Days	18 Prairie Days
19 9a outdoor praise worship- bring your chair	20 (office hrs.)	21 4:45p Bethel goes to Feed My Starving Children	22 (office hrs.) 1p-4p quilt 2:30p MEFS outreach bus 7:30p Women's Bible study	23	24	25 (newsletter deadline)
26 9a worship	27 (office hrs.) 6p Women's Mosaic & Meal event	28	29 (office hrs.)	30	31	1

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 To access the Directory, click Contact us, Member Directory, and enter the password. If you need the password to view the directory, would like a hard copy (some copies are available in the narthex), or if your contact information has changed, please contact the church office.

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, JUNE 8, 2026

Council Members Present: President: Dave Gohl, Secretary: Julie Hanson, Treasurer: Jill Duncan, Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer, Finance Board: Sara Jepsen, Education Board: Katie Radtke and Jan Smith, Trustee Board: Jeff Hanson, and Pastor Molly.

Call To Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:03 P.M. by President Pastor Molly (Dave Gohl arrived late), followed by an opening prayer by Pastor Molly.

Council Business: A motion was made by Jan Smith and seconded by Sara Jepsen to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Pastor Molly:

- Attended a continuing education event at Bethlehem Lutheran in St. Cloud called The Church in a Secular Age. It was incredibly fascinating and great to attend.
- Attended a women's clergy luncheon.
- Attended the Youth Task Force committee meeting.
- Attending the last Youth Task Force Social of this year at St. Paul's Lutheran.
- Led weekly Bible Study.
- Attended the Youth Task Force Social at St. Peter's Lutheran.
- Updated the bi-weekly "Bethel Happenings & Celebrations" hanging in the bathrooms.
- Continued working on the confirmation schedule for the fall.
- Created the bulletin for and led Iris Rognli's funeral at the Maresh Funeral Home in Silver Lake.
- Verified Bethel will be hosting the Crow River Conference Annual meeting on Feb. 21st at 2 pm. We will need volunteers to make snacks (cookies, bars, coffee, water, etc.) and serve.
- Attended Synod Assembly online June 5 & 6. Rev. Joseph Yoo led some fun and interesting Bible studies.
- Started planning Lettie's baptism for June 14th.
- Led monthly worship meeting – some reminders: Bergen Worship will be June 28, 10:00 A.M. Bring lawn chairs/Blankets & food to share! Outdoor services at Bethel will be on July 19 & August 16. Bring lawn chairs/blankets!
- I will be taking a Continuing Education trip (June 23–July 5) to the Iona community in Scotland. It will be time spent exploring creative, participative, and playful ways to worship, led by the Wild Goose Resource Group – Jane Bentley, Iain McLarty & Jo Love. I'm hoping to bring back some fun and interesting ideas for worship.

New Business:

1. Synod Assembly offering: Discussion to contribute \$1.00 per baptized member in our church to the Synod. At this time, \$168.00 would be taken from Thrivent Choice dollars. A **motion** was made by Jill Duncan and seconded by Stacy Meyer to approve the transaction. **Motion carried.**
2. Synod Assembly Report: Constitution is updated. Compensation guidelines are updated and approved.
3. Lester Prairie Days: July 17 & 18. Pr. Molly will have a vending table. She asked for a "prayer screen" to be made and cloth strips to write individual prayers to put on the screen. Discussion was/is to have smaller raised garden beds built and sold at Lester Prairie Days.
4. Lawn Mower: Bethel is still in need of a lawn mower. An opportunity for a good used Toro commercial zero-turn mower was presented. (2 1/2 yrs old, 323 hours, \$6000.00). The Council agreed to pass on the mower due to a lack of funds. Need to look at the budget and do some fundraising.
5. Vacation Bible Study: Dave Gohl is looking into banners to be made for advertising VBS, which will be held on the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Sundays in August.

Old Business:

1. PrinsBank: Bethel is still in the process of getting accounts and sub-user permissions with an EIN. A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Jan Smith to switch to EIN banking. **Motion carried.**

Secretary Minutes: A **motion** was made by Stacy Meyer and seconded by Jan Smith to approve the previous month's secretary minutes. **Motion carried.**

Treasurer's Report: Three CDs are up for renewal in July. Suggestions were made and agreed upon to alternate their renewal dates. A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Jan Smith to alternate the CD renewal dates. **Motion carried.**

Financial Secretary Report: A **motion** was made by Stacy Meyer and seconded by Jan Smith to approve the previous month's financial secretary's report. **Motion carried**

Board Reporting:

1. Education: Jan Smith is researching VBS intergenerational curriculum for children, youth & adults. Bring friends! Meals will be provided. Would like to use Thrivent grants if available.
2. Finance: Bethel has a new insurance company that provides more coverage and has saved the church money. There will be more Stevie's in the bulletin.
3. Trustees: It was recommended that the camera be moved to different angles during online church services. A box was made to hold the camera at a new location, but the remote didn't communicate with it. The camera is now back in its original place. New spot lamps (bulbs) were replaced in the workroom, and the raised garden beds were completed on May 31. Thank you to ALL who helped with the whole process. **Note from the custodian:** Please replace the garbage bag in the Narthex after taking out the trash to avoid a bigger mess. There is always an extra bag on the side of the can. Parents and kids, please put away all toys in the children's room after the service so custodians can clean the room. Make sure all lights are off, and all necessary doors are closed. Thank You.

A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen 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, July 13, 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**

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.

1. **Riding lawn mower:**
pre-owned (\$2,000-\$4,000/new-\$13,000-\$18,000)
2. **Security camera system:** (\$1,200-\$5,000)
3. **Doorbell for the [locked] front door:**
(\$600-\$1,000)

*Items donated so far—
paper shredder, battery-operated weed whip, and two restroom paper towel dispensers*

Please keep in mind that any donations for these items should be in addition to your regular contributions that help us maintain our budget. Your support is greatly appreciated, and donations can be made anonymously. For more information, please feel free to contact any member of the Executive Board.



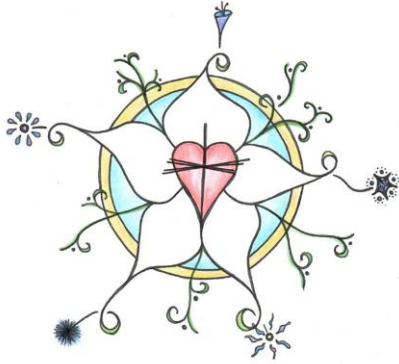
Stewie's Report

Offering and expense totals naturally fluctuate each month, and both directly impact our bottom line. Our giving was up substantially in May, and expenses were lighter, but in June our expenses exceeded our income, erasing our positive checkbook balance and requiring us to borrow from savings to meet our obligations.

Overall, our financial picture has improved nicely since the first of the year. We are always thankful for your financial gifts, but we also ask you to consider how you could increase your giving to the work of our church. Together we are planting the seeds of God's Good News for all and trusting Him to bring growth and an abundant harvest.

Scan here
to get
started.





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.

CONTACT US

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Pastor Molly Wills

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BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Recipient Name

Street Address

City, ST ZIP Code