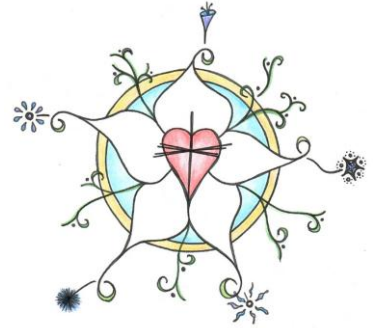


BETHEL MESSENGER

October 2026 / Bethel Lutheran Church, ELCA

FROM THE PASTOR



Hello, beloved children of God!

I am in a contemplative mood, which always means a poem is at hand. So here is a poem for the fall, for you to contemplate as I have contemplated in the writing of it, as I think on the world we live in right now, and listen to the wind blowing elegant through the trees.

As the leaves change colors, and the wind
Blows colder, the Spirit whispers through creation,
God's love and delight in the world.

As the days grow shorter, and creatures turn towards
Slumber, the Spirit murmurs a lullaby. And we, the people
Of God's creation, molded and shaped in God's image,
are called to sing along.

A song of quiet.
A song of tranquility.
A song of peace.
A song of unity.

For very truly I tell you,
it is in working together,
loving and caring for one another,
that we survive the hardships, pain,
and suffering that life within this
awesome and chaotic creation brings
our way.

That is one of the blessings
God has bestowed on us –
The gift of other human beings
To lean on, work with, grow with, and thrive with.

We are blessed and beloved by God,
Through and with one another.

Love,
Pastor Molly B. Wills

MISSION AND MINISTRIES

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

BETHEL COMMUNITY GARDEN HARVEST FESTIVAL—Sunday, September 20, 2026



**WOMEN'S RETREAT
SEPTEMBER 11-13, 2026
MEDAYTO HOUSE
WATER'S EDGE MINISTRIES**



THE DICE GAME



CHAIR YOGA WITH LAURA



**GOD'S WORK.
OUR HANDS.
SEPTEMBER 13, 2026**

PEW CLEANING CREW



GARDEN CLEAN UP CREW



**GARDEN SHED ASSEMBLY
CREW**



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, October 8, 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.

CAN YOU HELP?

The Warm Coat Distribution is sponsored by Common Cup Ministries in October. Help is needed to collect new or gently used coats and winter gear for children through adults—all sizes. Special needs include waterproof mittens and gloves, heavy coats that are clean and washable. (Coats should not have the name of an employer or individual on them.) Donations may be placed in the Common Cup Corner at church on or before Sunday, October 11.

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 (MEFS) MOBILE OUTREACH

Due to the rising cost of fuel and other operating expenses, as well as a decrease in program usage, the McLeod Food Shelf has made the decision to discontinue the current Mobile Outreach program model after December 2026. The current Mobile Outreach program will continue to make monthly stops until then. By December 2026, a new plan is expected to be in place to help address any gaps in food access across the county. The McLeod Food Shelf remains committed to ensuring that everyone in McLeod County has access to nutritious food. If you have questions, need assistance between Mobile Outreach stops, or would like help finding alternative ways to access food, please call 320-864-2088.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER SIGN UP



A sign-up sheet for anyone interested in volunteering to teach Sunday School on a specific Sunday or Sundays is posted in the narthex. **Please prayerfully consider this invitation to share your love for the Lord with our congregation's children.** You may volunteer individually or as a team. We will help you by providing lessons and materials. (Jan Smith or Katie Radtke would be delighted to answer your questions and offer words of encouragement and gratitude.)

ENDOWMENT SUNDAY IS COMING SOON!

The Endowment Fund Committee will present during worship on Sunday, October 18. Refreshments will be served following the worship service. A free-will donation to support our Endowment Fund is welcome!

ALL SAINTS DAY—SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1



During our worship service, you will have the opportunity to honor and remember beloved family members and friends who have passed away by lighting a candle in their memory. Additionally, we will recognize loved ones who have passed away in the past year since All Saints' Day 2025; watch for a sign-up sheet in the narthex for you to write down their names. We will be taking a second offering that day to support the Bethel Cemetery Fund. **DLS TIME ENDS—SET YOUR CLOCKS BACK 1 HOUR SATURDAY NIGHT!**

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—OCTOBER

Everything is Tuberculosis by John Green

In 2019, author John Green met Henry Reider, a young tuberculosis patient at Lakka Government Hospital in Sierra Leone. John became fast friends with Henry, a boy with spindly legs and a big, goofy smile. In the years since that first visit to Lakka, Green has become a vocal advocate for increased access to treatment and wider awareness of the healthcare inequities that allow this curable, preventable infectious disease to also be the deadliest, killing over a million people a year. In *Everything is Tuberculosis*, John tells Henry's story, woven through with scientific and social histories of how tuberculosis has shaped our world—and how our choices will shape the future of tuberculosis.

MOSAIC JEWELRY MAKING EVENT

Tuesday, Oct. 27. Meal at 6:00 p.m.; class at 6:30 p.m. Lester Prairie Community Center, 37 Juniper St. N. Join us to create jewelry under the instruction of Linda Reinhart, owner of Mosaics at the Farm. Make a pendant with a necklace chain or a keychain ring. All tools and supplies will be provided, and no mosaic experience is required. Open to women and girls 16+. Cost is \$30, and registration is limited to 50 participants. Registration is not complete until payment is made. Contact Jean Hallberg at 507-430-2671 or email jhallberg59@icloud.com to register. Write checks to Bethel WELCA.

THE CHOSEN

The Chosen Season 5 will be shown at Bethel on Sunday evenings at 6:30 p.m. through November 15 (possibly 11/22). This has become a beloved series, and we invite everyone to join in viewing these stories of Jesus from the Gospels. You may contact Jill D. with questions. *The Chosen* DVDs from Seasons 1-4 are available in our church library for anyone to borrow and view at home! In addition, the stories are available in print form (novels), and a guidebook/workbook is also available for each season. Please sign these resources out and return them within a month so we can maintain a complete set and others can use them.

BETHEL BREAKFAST

Join other Bethel members, once a month, for breakfast at Longhorn's Burger House in Lester Prairie. Next Date: Sunday, October 18, after the worship service.

HAPPY BAPTISM!

10/2 Tamie F.
10/4 Kaelyn S.
10/5 Nicole K.
10/7 Mark D.
10/10 Cassandra M.
10/14 Beckett S.
10/15 Alek H.
10/15 Myles A.
10/18 Mary Lou T.
10/20 Jacob S.
10/26 Mallorie T.
10/29 Drake P.
David G.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

10/3 Jon K.
10/4 Jan S.
10/7 Luke P.
10/8 Alayna S.
10/10 Connor R.
10/11 Cameron B.
10/12 Abigail C.
10/17 Roxanne S.
10/19 David G.
10/20 Jane L.
10/22 Eric A.
10/28 Alexander W.



CONFIRMATION DAY

God saved us through
the water of rebirth and
renewal by the Holy
Spirit. Titus 3:4-5

Grady M. | Jaxen M.
McCoy H.

*Have been instructed in
the Word of God and in
the faith of the Christian
Church. They will affirm
the promises of baptism
on Sunday, October 25.*

REFORMATION SUNDAY

October 25, 2026

We remember Martin
Luther, who taught that
salvation is about what
God did for us through
Jesus, not what we do.

OCTOBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			(bulletin submissions due by noon Wednesdays)	1 9-10a Women's Bible study 6:30p WELCA mtg. (pastor from home)	2	3
4 9a worship (no communion) Paul Hanson, Water's Edge Director 10a Sunday school w/camp talk for all ages! 6:30p <i>The Chosen</i>	5 (office open)	6	7 (office open) 11:30a Bible study; 1p-4p quilt; 2:30p MEFS Outreach bus; 6:30-7:30p choir practice	8 (Fare for All) (pastor work from home)	9	10 9a-5p Council Retreat
11 9a worship 10a Sunday school & confirmation class; 6:30p <i>The Chosen</i> (coat deadline)	12 (afternoon office open) 5p worship & music mtg. 6p council mtg.	13	14 (pastor vaca 14 th -19 th) No Bible study 1p-4p quilt; 6:30p choir practice	15	16	17
18 9a praise worship w/endowment fund talk (no communion) 10a Sunday school; 10:30a Bethel Breakfast 6:30p <i>The Chosen</i>	19	20 (pastor working from home)	21 (office open) 11:30a Bible study 1p-4p quilt 6:30p choir practice 7:30p book club discussion	22 (pastor attending 1 st call mtg.)	23	24
25 Reformation/Confirmation Day 9a worship; 10a Sunday School & Confirmation reception 6:30p <i>The Chosen</i> (newsletter deadline)	26 (office open)	27 (6p meal & 6:30p Mosaic jewelry class @ City Hall)	28 (office open) 11:30a Bible study 1p-4p quilt 6:30p choir practice	29 (pastor work from home)	30	31

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.
REMINDER TO FALL BACK ONE HOUR: DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS NOVEMBER 1

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

Council Members Present: Pres.: Dave Gohl, VP: Jean Hallberg, Sec.: Julie Hanson, Treas.: Jill Duncan, Fin. Board: Sara Jepsen, Ed. Board: Katie Radtke and Jan Smith, Trustee Board: Jeff Hanson, and Pr. Molly. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:05 P.M. by Pres. Dave Gohl, followed by an opening prayer by Pr. Molly. **Council Business:** A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen, seconded by Jean Hallberg, to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.** **Pastor Molly:** There is a need for new candle holders at the price of \$210.00. A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Jean Hallberg to use funds from the Thrivent account with the agreement from the Finance Board. **Motion carried.**

Pastor's Report:

- Attended the last Poolside Plates & helped with cleanup.
- Spoke with Carrie, a MEFS contact, when she stopped by Bethel. She asked if the church would be willing to install a refrigerated food locker on our property so people could stop by 24/7 to pick up food rather than coming on a specific day & time. She said some people don't use the food truck because they are embarrassed about needing it. I said I thought the congregation would be more than willing but would check. She would likely need to do fundraising in LP.
- Led weekly Bible Study.
- Updated the Bi-weekly "Bethel Happenings & Celebrations" hanging in the bathrooms. I've decided to update them every 4 weeks because of feedback that not everyone was able to read everything on them before taking them down.
- Attended first call cohort meeting.
- Gave out 3rd grade Bibles.
- Because Bev Bonte was able to speak on Sept. 13th & Emily Koehler asked to do the sermon on Sept. 20th (I am not going to say no to someone being nudged by the Holy Spirit). I have time for the sake of my mental health and emotional support.
 - * Attend the Crow River Conference pastors meeting. * Attempt to attend the Glencoe Ministerial meeting, but they ended up changing the day an hour before the meeting was supposed to start. I didn't get a chance to see the email change until I had already arrived. * Attend the Great River pastors' conference meeting. * Attend some pastors' Bible studies.
- Attended Youth Task Force committee meeting, and Bethel was asked to host twice this year. The first time is Nov. 18th, 12:40-1:40 P.M. We'll need volunteers to help organize food & drinks. Thinking about hot apple cider & cookies. I'll be having kids write down things that they are thankful for and can add to our prayers on Sundays. If anyone has a Thrivent Action Team Community Impact Card or can apply for one, please contact Pastor Molly. May 19th is the second one. I have some ideas and will be talking with people about them.
- Found fabric for our senior quilts.
- Helped start building the new garden shed.
- Led monthly worship meeting.
- Got out my Bible camp & VBS CDs and put them on some blank CDs for Sunday school use.
- **Special welcome to Paul Hanson from Waters Edge Ministries:** He is director of hospitality for guests & retreats. He will be providing pulpit supply 10-4-26. Campaigning for Oct. & Nov. was discussed to get information out on how to proceed/continue to support Waters Edge. A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Jean Hallberg to vote to commit to a campaign. **Motion carried.**

New Business:

1. Computer for workroom: The existing computer needs to be replaced. Discussed laptop versus desktop. The cost is approximately \$1000.00 - \$1250.00, labor included for installation and installation of programs. There is \$1000.00 in the computer fund. A vote will be done by email.
2. Turn Bethel's payroll over to a service: Discussed having an outside service such as Paychex to do payroll. Express package is \$39.00 a month plus an additional \$2.60 per employee. Additional questions need to be asked about generated reports and/or additional cost related to the reports. Peggy Wick to report back in Oct.
3. Common Cup Ministry: Jan Smith reported that most churches give a yearly donation to Common Cup Ministry. The biggest strain on their budget is currently the diaper distribution program. Discussion to have Bethel as the Diaper Distribution location in Lester Prairie once or twice a month.
4. Tickets for Lester Prairie Fire Dept. Pork Chop Dinner for council retreat: All agreed to the pork chop dinner.

Old Business:

1. Portable organ: Jan Smith is still waiting for the arrival call.

Secretary Minutes: A **motion** was made by Jill Duncan and seconded by Jan Smith to approve the previous month's secretary minutes. **Motion carried.** **Financial Secretary Report:** Reported by Jill Duncan. A **motion** was made by Jill Duncan and seconded by Peggy Wick to approve the previous month's financial secretary's report. **Motion carried.** **Treasurer Report:** A **motion** was made by Julie Hanson and seconded by Jean Hallberg to approve the Treasurer's report. **Motion carried.**

Board Reporting: 1. **Education:** Different curriculum made for small churches. Music- Pastor Molly has made camp song CDs available, and plans will be made to use the colored handbells and include the children in some choir songs during the year. There is a sign-up sheet for teaching Sunday school. 2. **Finance:** Nothing to report. 3. **Trustee:** Proper signage is up for fire extinguisher locations. Priced out a cleaning solution called D2 (\$70.00- \$100.00 for 1 gallon), which will clean the Bethel sign by County Road. God's work. Our hands. Sunday: Downstairs windows & screens got washed. Pew woodwork got oiled. Downstairs chapel curtains got washed. Recommended for next year that the event happens on a weekend that doesn't conflict with Women's Retreat. **Note from the custodian:** When removing the garbage, please replace the garbage bag liner. A replacement liner hangs over the garbage can. If there is not a liner, they can be found under the kitchenette sink. A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Jan Smith 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, October 12th, 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 below 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.**

A GREENER APPROACH TO GIVING

Electronic giving has a positive impact on the environment and ranks high on any list of actions an individual can take to improve the environment. As you consider the payment method you use to make your regular offering, we hope that you will think about the unique connection between financial stewardship and environmental stewardship.

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)

Items donated so far—doorbell, 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.

Scan here
to give.



Thank you for your continued generosity and partnership in our mission!

CONTACT US

Bethel Lutheran Church
77 Lincoln Ave. N. | P.O. Box 207
Lester Prairie, MN 55354
320-395-2125
bethellutheranlp@gmail.com
www.lpbethel.org
www.facebook.com/lpbethel
Pastor Molly Wills
320-339-8169
pastor@lpbethel.org



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.

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