

BETHEL MESSENGER

September 2026 / Bethel Lutheran Church, ELCA



FROM THE PASTOR

Hello Beloved Children of God!

This coming November, I will be leading an adult education class where I'll share what I learned at the continuing education class "The Church in a Secular Age" that I took back in May. The big question at the end of that class was: How do we help people hear the word of the living God again when people feel there has been no new word from God? So, I was thinking on that question when I went to the Iona Abbey in Scotland. Something that was done during the services there that I found wonderful was that, during the readings, instead of them all being just from the Bible, they would share poems, memories, or brief stories that people had written during their stays at the Abbey that gave insight into the writer's own relationship with God.

Because of that class and the experiences at Iona Abbey, I've been contemplating how we at Bethel can share God's active presence in the world right now. After talking with the worship committee, I plan to start having in place of one Bible reading, a poem, story, or memory that shares the word of the living God today. This will likely only be once in a while, not every Sunday. My hope is for once a month.

I'd like to invite all of you to consider sharing poems, stories, or memories you've written down that could be read by either yourself or someone else that talk about your relationship with God, or how God has shown up in your life at one point or another. They should not be pages and pages long. Just picture the length of the normal scripture texts that get read during our services.

I realize this is new, and that in general people are not wholly comfortable sharing when God has spoken to them, or when God's presence was deeply felt. I have been so very proud of everyone who has been willing to share their faith journeys during Lent, and that will continue because it gives us all a chance to hear how God has been within people's lives from the very beginning and how that relationship changes, grows, and deepens. What I want to introduce during our regular services is sharing smaller instances of God today. If no one from the congregation has anything, that's ok; I will find things already out there to use, but I'd love to have things shared by those within our community.

If you have any questions, just email me, come talk with me, or text me. If you have something you'd be willing to read or have read by whoever is signed up to be lector, please let me know, and we'll figure out what service to have it in!

Love,
Pastor Molly B. Wills

MISSION AND MINISTRIES

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

SUNDAY SCHOOL PLANNING MEETING

Anyone interested in helping plan/teach Sunday school this year is invited to a planning meeting on **Tuesday, September 1 at 6:30 p.m.** If you are interested but unable to attend the meeting, talk to Katie Radtke or Jan Smith.



SUNDAY SCHOOL INFORMATION

- The first day of Sunday school for children pre-school through 6th grade will be **Sunday, September 27**. Meet downstairs in the Sunday school rooms following worship.
- Bibles will be given to Third graders during worship on **Sunday, September 13**. Following the worship service, a short “Introduction to the Bible” lesson will be offered for these children, and parents are welcome to join. There will also be a time after the lesson to participate in “God’s Work. Our Hands.” activities.
- All children and families are invited to take part in the Harvest Festival on **Sunday, September 20**. This would be a great time to invite friends, neighbors, and their families to enjoy a fun time at Bethel!
- Looking ahead, on **Sunday, October 4**, a representative from Water’s Edge Ministries (formerly Green Lake Ministries) will lead our worship and discuss Bible camp opportunities with both the Sunday school children and adults.

GOD’S WORK. OUR HANDS. Sunday, September 13

We are looking for ways to help a neighbor (anyone) in need. If you have any ideas, please speak to Pastor Molly. We will also have a guest speaker during worship, Bev Bonte, Director of Common Cup Ministries. She is grateful for all the support that Bethel has provided to the organization and will tell us about the amazing undertakings the group has been focusing on. Let’s see if we can have a nice applesauce/fruit cup collection for her to take back! A collection basket is in the “Common Cup Corner” of the narthex.

HARVEST FESTIVAL-SUNDAY, September 20, 2026, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM

Join us as we celebrate the season’s bounty and give thanks for God’s provision! Bethel Lutheran Church will host our annual Community Garden Harvest Festival right after worship, with food, fellowship, and fun for all ages! Invite your family and friends!



HARVEST FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Whether you can help set up, run an activity table, bring a dish, or lend a hand during the event, we’d love to have you! Do you have a favorite harvest tradition or an activity idea? In the past, we’ve had cookie/cupcake decorating, games, fire truck rides, face painting, crafts, and food, but we welcome suggestions! If you would like to volunteer or share ideas, contact Emily Koehler at 605-661-5717 or emily.e.koehler@gmail.com. Let’s make this a wonderful celebration of community and harvest season!

ANOTHER CHANCE TO ORDER A BETHEL T-SHIRT!

If you missed the opportunity to order a Bethel T-shirt last year, we are now compiling another order! Prices will likely be adjusted due to the size of the order. Both long-sleeved and short-sleeved shirts are available. Contact Jean Hallberg at 507-430-2671 to order your T-shirt.

CROW RIVER CONFERENCE WOMEN OF THE ELCA FALL GATHERING-Sat., Sept. 26

“Here I Am, Send Me” with special guest Pastor Tom Evenson. The Reservation fee is \$12 per person, payable by check to Women of the ELCA and to be given to Jill Duncan, PO Box 745, Lester Prairie, MN 55354, by **Monday, September 14**.

CHOIR PRACTICE BEGINS WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Wednesdays from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Anyone is welcome to join the choir! Questions? Ask Emily K.

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, September 10, 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 (MEFS) MOBILE OUTREACH



NEXT DISTRIBUTION DATES

Wednesday
September 2 & 23
Bethel's parking lot
2:30 PM

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!

Scan here to place
your next order
➔



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2026—Just Like Me—digging in and growing deep



I WONDER...I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE...I NEED MY PEOPLE

See more VBS fun on display in the church narthex!

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

WOMEN'S RETREAT AT WATER'S EDGE—Friday-Sunday, September 11-13, 2026

Join us for an enjoyable weekend at Medayto Lodge, Green Lake Bible Camp, Spicer, MN! Check out the display in the narthex to get an idea of what it's all about! The **registration deadline is September 1**. Place your registration form and payment in the envelope on the retreat display at church or mail your form and payment to Jill Duncan, PO Box 745, Lester Prairie, MN 55354. Scholarship money is available.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Women's Bible study will meet again on Thursday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. on **September 17 & 24 and October 1**. All women are invited and encouraged to attend and bring a friend as well. The group will focus on topics in the book *A is for Alabaster* by Anna Carter Florence. All materials and resources are provided, and no prior participation is required. If you have questions, ask Jan Smith.

BETHEL BOOK CLUB—SEPTEMBER

Sharks in the Time of Saviors by Kawai Strong Washburn

Published in 2020, *Sharks in the Time of Saviors* tells the story of a Hawaiian family whose youngest son, Nainoa, has special healing powers. Malia and Augie Flores look to their favorite son to deliver the family from poverty. Still, his mysterious healing gift is imperfect, and he becomes increasingly burdened by his failures, the high expectations of him, and the pressure he puts on himself to save everyone.

WE ARE BRINGING BACK THE CHOSEN THIS FALL

Season 5, episodes 1-8, will be shown at Bethel on Sunday evenings at 6:30 p.m. **beginning September 13**. This has become a beloved series for those who have participated in the past, 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 now available in our church library for anyone to borrow and view at home! (You could binge-watch and be all caught up before Season 5 begins!) 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 as well.

HAPPY BAPTISM!

9/2 Andria C.
9/9 Linda D.
9/17 Mike R.
9/22 Jean C.
9/24 Carl O.
9/24 Alex O.
9/26 Marilyn P.
9/26 Katie R.
9/28 Olivia R.
Tyler S.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

9/2 Cassandra M.
9/3 Michael S.
9/4 Molly W.
9/4 Jacob S.
9/5 Jean C.
9/5 Tamie F.
9/5 Nicole K.
9/11 Kurt R.
9/13 Cassidy R.
9/18 Mallorie T.
9/20 Neil K.
9/21 Mary Lou T.
9/21 Mia S.
9/23 Michele Dorholt
9/24 Roger F.
9/25 Patty G.
9/27 Tyler S.



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.

SEPTEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 6:30p Sunday school planning meeting (retreat deadline)	2 (office (bulletin submissions due noon on Wednesdays) 2:30p MEFS bus; 6:30p WELCA mtg.	3	4	5
6 9a worship	7 (office hrs.)	8	9 (office hrs.) 11:30a Bible study 1p-4p quilt 6:30-7:30p choir practice begins	10 (Fare for All)	11 (Women's Retreat at Water's Edge 11-13)	12
13 GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS. 9a worship (3 rd grade Bibles) 10a First Bible class; GWOH activities; 6:30p <i>The Chosen</i>	14 (eve. office hrs.) 5p worship & music mtg. 6p council mtg.	15	16 (office hrs.) 11:30a Bible study; 1p-4p quilt; 6:30p choir practice; 7:30p book club discussion	17 9a-10a Women's Bible study	18	19
20 9a praise worship 10:30a-12:30p: Harvest Festival; 6:30p <i>The Chosen</i>	21 (pastor working from home)	22	23 (office hrs.) 11:30a Bible study 1p-4p quilt 2:30p MEFS bus 6:30p choir practice	24 9a-10a Women's Bible study	25 (newsletter deadline)	26 (Crow River conference gathering WELCA)
27 9a worship 10a Confirmation & Sunday School classes begin; 6:30p <i>The Chosen</i> Pastor @ Fall Theological Conference	28 <i>Pastor @ Fall Theological Conference</i>	29 <i>Pastor @ Fall Theological Conf</i>	30 (office hrs.) 11:30a Bible study 1p-4p quilt 6:30p choir practice	1	2	3

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, AUGUST 10, 2026

Council Members Present: President: Dave Gohl, Vice President: Jean Hallberg, Secretary: Julie Hanson, Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer, Finance Board: Sara Jepsen, Education Board: Katie Radtke and Jan Smith, Trustee Board: Jeff Hanson, and Pr. Molly.
Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:02 P.M. by President Dave Gohl, followed by an opening prayer by Pastor
Council Business: A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Julie Hanson to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**
Pastor Molly:

- Attended Poolside Plates and helped with cleanup.
- Had a vending booth at Lester Prairie Days – donated half the proceeds to Bethel. I also had a prayer screen Jeff Hanson made for me, and I invited anyone passing by to write on a strip of cloth and tie it to the screen. I have since put the prayer screen out by the garden cart as an invitation for all who pass by to write down a prayer.
- Met a Hispanic man coming to check the garden cart while I was putting up the prayer screen. I gave him a tour of the garden and showed him which were the sharing gardens. I told him he could always sign up for a garden plot next year, which he showed interest in. Then suggested to Emily that she post information on the cart about how to sign up for a plot next year, hopefully to connect with more people.
- Led weekly Bible Study.
- Updated the bi-weekly “Bethel Happenings & Celebrations” hanging in the bathrooms.
- Attended the first two Sundays of Bethel's VBS.
- Attended a first call cohort meeting.
- Attempted to do a visitation.
- Led monthly worship.
- God's Work, Our Hands September 13th.

New Business:

1. Thrivent November 8th – A representative from Thrivent was asked to come back to talk about new products after Sunday service.
2. Jan Smith, new portable organ: Jan presented a proposal for a new portable organ, Arius YPD 184R keyboard. A **motion** was made by Jean Hallberg and seconded by Jeff Hanson to use funds from the music account, Endowment account, and undesignated Memorial account to purchase the organ. **Motion carried.**
3. Bethel's sign by County Rd. 1 needs to be refurbished: Jean Hallberg and Jeff Hanson have volunteered to clean the sign using an anti-fungal agent, primer, and paint. For the record, a motion was made by Jan Smith and seconded by Jeff Hanson to approve the cleaning of the sign. **Motion carried.**
4. Campership Funds: It was agreed upon to use these funds with discretion (scholarship funds – financial need) and use them for the Women's retreat.

Old Business:

1. Garden shed: Emily Koehler is shopping for a new garden shed. This would be secured with a special lock/digital code for security.
2. Compensation date: Dates discussed were 9-27-26 or 10-11-26, starting with a small group.

Secretary Minutes:

- A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Stacy Meyer to approve the previous month's secretary minutes. **Motion carried.**

Financial Secretary Report:

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

Treasurer's Report:

- Sara Jepsen reported for Jill Duncan. Building maintenance, office supplies, and lawn mowing are over budget. On July 20th, the bank completed a cash management platform and online banking system that suits Bethel's needs. It was agreed upon to close the line of credit. This frees up the two CDs. A **motion** was made by Jean Hallberg and seconded by Jan Smith to approve the Treasurer's report. **Motion carried.**

Board Reporting:

1. Education: Katie Radtke stated flyers are ready for advertising the need for Sunday school teachers. They are also looking at teaching as a team. Bibles will be handed out September 13th. 30 people attended the last two VBS days. On August 9th, during VBS, sixty water filters were assembled.
2. Finance: Sara Jepsen reported she met an economic board member (Paul Christensen). The property is zoned as residential and, of course, is an asset. He mentioned that the lot size could fit six to eight patio homes if Bethel so desires to sell the property. This subject was tabled for the moment.
3. Trustees: Jeff Hanson reported that the solar portion of the Bethel signage has been repaired. Doorbell works. Removed two huge wasp nests near the church entrance and had to wash the windows and entrance doors due to the location of one. Received one quote from Triple Q and several air conditioning options for the church. Due to the church's current heating system and building design, installing proper air conditioning is very expensive, even with several options. Discussed making a checklist (job description) for those mowing the lawn. A thank-you card was completed and delivered to Holasek Greenhouse for their generous contribution of soil for the raised garden beds.

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: Mon, September 14, Time 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.**

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.

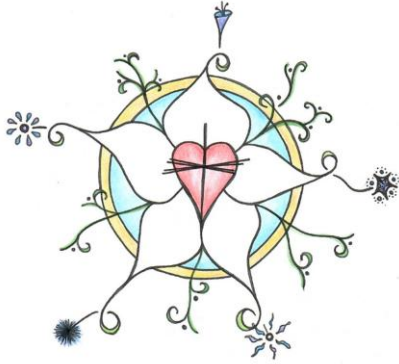


"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

2 Corinthians 9:11

Scan here
to give.





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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PLACE
STAMP
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Recipient Name
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