



# BETHEL MESSENGER

Bethel Lutheran Church Newsletter

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2024

## FROM PASTOR MOLLY

Hello Beloved Children of God!

This month is the last month of questions and answers from the Lenten questions! Remember as you read I encourage you to think about these questions for yourself. They are great for self-reflection and defining your own relationship with God.

### **Have you ever felt forgotten by God? What did/does that feel like? If that feeling is past, what did it feel like to feel remember by God?**

Yes, there was a point that for years I felt forgotten by God. It didn't necessarily feel negative except at some rough points during those years. For me it felt like I was in a bubble, separate and alone, even when I was surrounded by people, people that cared about me and loved me. I was living and surviving, just getting through the day in order to go to sleep and do it all over again. During the particularly rough parts, it felt crushing. My heart was trampled, and I was completely alone with no one to turn to (or so I felt). At the time, we (my husband, 2 oldest kids, and I) were living in Oklahoma. During those last years there while in the mental/emotional state I was in, feeling forgotten, alone, depressed, I started to feel like the only way to get better was to leave there, that if we just moved back north everything would be better. It didn't matter if it was Iowa where I grew up, Minnesota, Wisconsin, just somewhere north. The feeling was a pressure, a hope, a dream, a wish, a prayer. Eventually we managed to, though up to and at that point there was the ever-hovering question of whether I really would be better once we moved. Interestingly enough, I was. Looking back on it, that pressure I felt, was God calling to me, trying to pull me out of the pit I had sunk into. Moving is certainly not always the answer for everyone or in every situation, but for that it was. God was calling me home for healing, and I listened, in turn I was healed. I realized as time went on, that God had never forgotten me. That instead I had turned my back on God, and I just didn't know how to turn back around and face him again. It was me who forgot for all that it didn't feel like it in the moment. I realized God had been there the whole time, just waiting for me to hear him and respond.

### **How do you find/feel/lean on God in the hard times?**

This is hard, oh so hard, as you can tell from above's answer. It is not always easy to recognize that we've turned our backs on God, that we aren't really leaning on God even when we think we are. I went through the motions of worship, of singing praise, even of journaling. All the things I normally do to find, feel, and lean on God, but in those hard times sometimes it just doesn't feel like enough. That's not an answer most would expect or want to hear, but it's the truth. Having gone through that point in my life, for me at least, the way I have found that is most helpful to lean on and feel God in the hard times so that I don't turn my back on God again is to rage at him. To find a place that I can scream and cry out loud, to write poetry full of pain and anger, to beg and plead, until I feel completely empty. Empty of tears, empty of words, and I can just sit in the silence, listening, and imagine I feel God's arms wrapping around me, hear the words, "I love you. You are mine," whispered in my mind, and I know I'm not alone.

These Lenten questions I ask are hard. I expect my confirmation students to be thinking about them and answer them in their faith statements. As adults, they can sometimes be even harder because of everything we have lived through, they can dredge up painful memories if we let ourselves sit in them. But these questions are important to think on, and though the answers will change as we age and experience good and bad things throughout life, God will always be with us, loving us, and reaching out his hand to us, all we have to do is remember reach back.

Blessings to you all,  
Pastor Molly B. Wills

# MISSION & MINISTRIES

## Driving Away Hunger-MEFS Mobile Outreach

Designed to reduce transportation and mobility issues associated with food access in our communities. The MEFS 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! Please bring bags and a cart to carry food. Staff are not permitted to carry food inside residence. Full grocery distributions available (1) one visit per month, per household, across all distribution sites. Produce available weekly. Staff will accommodate anyone not able to safely enter the vehicle for shopping. Questions? Call 320-664-2088. For other locations see the schedule on the bulletin board. **(MEFS=McLeod Emergency Food Shelf)**



### MEFS Mobile Outreach

When: Thursday

October 10 & 24

2:30 pm-4:00 pm

Where:

Bethel Lutheran Church parking lot



### Quilts!

Quilts for Lutheran World Relief, Mary's Place, and the Marie Sandvik Center were given a blessing on Sunday, September 22. They are now boxed and ready to go! Thank you to Lois Severson for her time and talent!



### School kits!

Forty-five School Kits, assembled on September 22, are now boxed and ready to be sent to Lutheran World Relief to be distributed to school kids in need! Thank you all for your generosity!

### Summer Celebration Bank!

Thank you for depositing \$\$ into the celebration bank! With the help of a \$250 Thrivent Action Team card, we were able to purchase twenty lamps for Green Lake Lutheran Ministries!

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

## Sunday school, Confirmation, & BLTs

Kids K-6th grade join our Sunday School classes after the service! Classes will meet every Sunday during the school year. (3 & 4 yr. old kids are welcome to join and should accompanied by an adult.)

Youth 7th-10th grade (or unconfirmed) confirmation class will meet every other Sunday (check out the calendar online or talk to Pastor Molly for instances when the dates vary).

Youth 6th-12th grade join our Bethel Lutheran Teens (BLTs) group! Meetings will happen every other Sunday. Come for fun activities that will help our church & wider community and give you a chance to be a part of a faithful group of peers.



## Annual Women's Retreat at Green Lake Bible Camp

On Friday, September 13 through September 15, a wonderful group of ladies spent quality time bonding at Green Lake Lutheran Ministries Medayto Lodge, Spicer, MN. Activities included a pontoon ride, kayaking (Some ladies even went into the water!), walks on the beach, chair yoga, campfires, watercolor, quilting, making bracelets, and a dice game (with White Elephant gifts). Willmar Lutheran Social Services youth director gave a presentation. We also packed hygiene bags for LSS. On Saturday, Pastor Molly came to share her love of painting and kayaked with Danise. We can't forget to mention the delicious snacks and meals! On Sunday morning, we attended a worship service together.



Medayto Lodge



Green Lake



# BAPTISMS, BIRTHDAYS, & BIBLES (& more!)

## Happy Birthday!

9/1 Krissa L.  
9/2 Cassandra M.  
9/3 Michael S.  
9/4 Jacob S.  
9/5 Jean C.  
9/5 Tamie F.  
9/5 Nicole W.  
9/11 Kurt R.  
9/13 Cassidy R.  
9/18 Mallorie T.  
9/20 Neil K.  
9/21 Mary Lou T.  
9/24 Roger F.  
9/25 Patty G.



## Celebrate your 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 Katie R.  
9/26 Marilyn P.  
9/28 Olivia R.



## 3<sup>rd</sup> graders receive Bibles

Third-grade students Etta Helland & Laclynn Sawatzke receive Bibles and a blessing on Sunday, September 29.

## All Saints Sunday November 3, 2024

During worship on November 3, we will name both your loved ones who have gone before us and those baptized since All Saints Day 2023.

Also, there will be an opportunity to light a candle for any loved one you want to remember.

## Happy Birthday!

10/3 Jon K.  
10/4 Jan S.  
10/4 Sarah G.  
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.



## Celebrate your Baptism!

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



## Save the Date: Saturday, October 12 Family Game Night

6:00 pm, Bethel Fellowship Hall  
Bring a snack to share and your favorite game!

# FAITH & FELLOWSHIP



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2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL HARVEST FESTIVAL

# FINANCIAL CORNER

## 4 convenient ways to give

### 1. Simply Giving

Use *Simply Giving* for making regular offerings—contributions are debited automatically from your checking or savings account. **Simply Giving offers convenience for you and much need donation consistency for our congregation!** No more checks or envelopes! And, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis. Contact the church office for an application or go online at [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org) under Give. Return completed applications to the Fin. Sec. church mailbox.

### 2. Text + Give

Give in seconds with a text message. Text giving is fast, easy and versatile. Give in the moment, make your weekly offering or respond to special appeals—all in a matter of seconds. Easy card registration on your phone. Option to make your gifts recurring. To give, text the dollar amount to **866-298-7547**.



### 3. Bethel offering envelope

Offering envelopes are available on the wall in the narthex. We ask that you completely fill out the front of the envelope, *including your assigned envelope number*-contact the office if you have forgotten your number, and mail it to Bethel Lutheran Church, PO Box 207, Lester Prairie, MN 55354 or place in the offering plate. Any further questions can be directed to the Financial Secretary, Stacy Meyer, at 320-395-2869 or [finsec@lpbethel.org](mailto:finsec@lpbethel.org).



### 4. Online Giving

scan here



## Get involved in the Endowment 2024 event!

Sunday, October 6, will kick off the Endowment 2024 campaign with a Temple Talk by the Endowment Committee. Treats and beverages will be served after the worship service. Our goal for this year is \$3,000. On Sunday, October 13, we will give a quick progress update. After the service, Jean Hallberg will lead an Adult Forum on financial stewardship and ways you can give to the Bethel Endowment program. Again, treats and beverages will be served. On Sunday, October 20, we will provide a final progress update. Consider prayerfully giving to the Bethel Endowment fund (use the yellow donation envelopes).



**"Noisy"**  
offering every  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of  
the month

The "Noisy" offering can will be located at the back of the sanctuary for you to drop your loose change into the metal can with a clang! Although paper bills and checks won't have the same "noisy" effect, they will be accepted and appreciated! The proceeds go toward Bethel Youth Summer Camperships for Green Lake Bible Camp.



**PRAYING FOR MORE...**  
during Endowment 2024!

# OCTOBER 2024

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
		1	2 (office hours) 1-4:30p quilting 6:30p choir BULLETIN DEADLINE: NOON WEDNESDAYS	3	4	5
6 (Pent 20) 9a worship Endowment kick-off 10a Sunday school, BLTs, fellowship 4p Resplandor de Gloria	7 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study	8	9 (office hours) 1-4:30p quilting 6:30p choir	10 2:30p-4p MEFS Mobile Outreach	11	12 6p Family Game Night
13 (Pent 21) 9a worship 10a Sunday school, confirm., fellowship; Endowment Forum 4p Resplandor de Gloria	14 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study 6p council mtg.	15	16 (office hours) 1-4:30p quilting 2p worship & music committee mtg. 6:30p choir	17	18	19
20 (Pent 22) 9a praise worship Endow. grant explan. 10a Sunday school, BLTs, fellowship 4p Resplandor de Gloria	21 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study	22	23 (office hours) 1-4:30p quilting 6:30p choir	24 2:30p-4p MEFS Mobile Outreach	25 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	26
27 (Reformation & Confirmation) 9a worship/noisy offering; 10a Sunday school, confirm., fellowship 10:30a Bethel BF 4p Resplandor de Gloria	28 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study	29	30 (office hours) 1-4:30p quilting 6:30p choir	31	1 ALL SAINTS DAY	2

- **Online Worship:** <https://www.facebook.com/lpbethel/live>
- **Worship CDs:** Contact the church office if you would like a weekly copy sent to you.
- **Bulletin Submissions Deadline:** Wednesday Noon | **Newsletter Deadline:** 25<sup>th</sup> of the month
- **Most up-to-date Calendar version:** Go to [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org)
- **Church Directory:** Go to [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org), *Contact Us, Member Directory*, then enter the Password. Contact the church office if you need the password to view the directory online, if you would like a hard copy, and if your contact information changes!
- **Seeking volunteers of all ages!** Check out the table in the narthex! Sign up for a month or be a substitute! No experience necessary! Questions? Contact the chairperson listed.

## BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH | COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES | MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2024

**Council Members Present:** President: Ron Foust; Secretary: Cathy Houg; Vice President: Peggy Wick; Treasurer: Jill Duncan; Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer; Finance Board: Mitch Overbye; Education Board: Pete Hallberg and Emily Koehler; Trustee Board: Dave Gohl and Bryon Weisenburger; Pastor Molly Wills

### Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:00 by President Ron Foust followed by an opening prayer led by Pastor Molly.

### Council Business:

- A **motion** was made by Pete Hallberg and seconded by Bryon Weisenburger to accept the agenda with one addition under New Business. Motion carried.
- Pastor Molly reported that she and Terri Helland have met to plan the majority of the BLT activities which will be held every other Sunday following worship. Confirmation Faith Statements are being written. Premarital sessions are being held. Vacation Bible School was completed. The worship committee has discussed worship survey results. "Sundays and Seasons" will be used for the next year. Bulletins will be printed in-house. July outdoor worship was well attended.

### Old Business:

- The Finance Board continues their work on obtaining a church credit card.
- Job description updates are due to President Foust ASAP. The Executive Board and Pastor Molly will be reviewing and completing the updates in September.

### New Business:

- A **motion** was made by Mitch Overbye and seconded by Bryon Weisenburger to pay \$300 to renew our commitment to the Bethel Lutheran Church advertising/marketing banner in the Lester Prairie School gymnasium. Motion carried.

### Secretary Minutes:

- A **motion** was made by Ron Foust and seconded by Mitch Overbye to accept July's secretary's minutes. Motion carried

### Treasurer Reports:

- A **motion** was made by Jill Duncan and seconded by Cathy Houg to change the title of the 11033 Outreach Fund to 11033 Outreach/Community Garden Fund. Motion carried.
- A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Bryon Weisenburger to rent a safety deposit box for Bethel Church at First Community Bank in Lester Prairie. Motion carried. (Jill Duncan will do this.)
- A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Pete Hallberg to accept July's treasurer's report. Motion carried.

### Financial Secretary Report:

- A **motion** was made by Mitch Overbye and seconded by Jill Duncan to accept July's financial secretary's report. Motion carried.

### Reports:

- **Education Board:** Vacation Bible School was a success with positive feedback. Rally Sunday has been set for September 8, 2024. Harvest Festival will be held on September 22, 2024.
- **Finance Board:** Continue working on a credit card for Bethel.
- **Trustees:** Sanding, priming, and painting of the bell tower will begin Wednesday, August 14, 2024. Dave will fix the light fixture in the ladies bathroom. Bryon will spray the weeds in the parking lot. Looking into the future, Peggy and Bryon will find companies to contact and obtain proposals to abate the cracks, weed, etc. for the parking lot.

### Communications:

- Constitution and Bylaw updates by Executive Board and Pastor Molly this fall.
- Pastor Molly is on vacation August 13-23. Pulpit supply will be Pastor Susan on August 18. Pastor Susan will be "On Call" for emergencies.

The meeting closed with Round Table Prayers and the Lord's Prayer.

**The next regular Council meeting will be held on Monday, September 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted: Cathy Houg, Council Secretary



# BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH | COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES | MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

**Council Members Present:** President: Ron Foust; Vice President: Peggy Wick; Secretary: Cathy Houg; Treasurer: Jill Duncan; Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer; Finance Board: Mitch Overbye and Sara Jepsen; Education Board: Pete Hallberg and Emily Koehler; Trustee Board: Bryon Weisenburger and Dave Gohl  
Special Guests: Jean Hallberg and Carolyn Barr

## **Call to Order:**

- The meeting was called to order at 6:00 by President Ron Foust followed by an opening prayer led by Pastor Molly Wills.

## **Council Business:**

- A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Pete Hallberg to approve the agenda as presented with one additional item under new business. Motion carried.
- Pastor Molly reported that in the last month an Outdoor Worship was held on August 25, 2024. She has visited shut-ins, has had a premarital counseling session, and has met with other clergy. The confirmands are working on faith statements. The Youth Task Force is looking at hosting options and dates for hosting. The Synod Youth Gathering will be held in Willmar in November.

## **Old Business:**

- The Finance Board has nearly completed the acquisition of a credit card for Bethel.
- The Job Description Review will be held by the Executive Board following September's Council Meeting.

## **New Business:**

- Landscaping and bathroom updates and options were discussed.
- Carolyn Barr and Jean Hallberg reported on the plans for the Endowment 2024 presentations. Sunday, October 6, 2024, will be the kick-off of the campaign with a temple talk by the members of the Endowment Committee explaining information about the Endowment Fund. The following Sunday, October 13, 2024, the Endowment Thermometer will be shown as an instrument to track and encourage giving. Jean Hallberg will lead a session during Sunday School time giving more information and answering questions. Treats will be served following worship on both of these Sundays (6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>). On Sunday, October 20, 2024, the Endowment Committee will explain grant submissions. The committee was encouraged by the Council to send out a mailing to church members explaining the campaign.

## **Secretary Minutes:**

- A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Ron Foust to accept August's secretary's report. Motion carried.

## **Treasurer Reports:**

- A **motion** was made by Pete Hallberg and seconded by Dave Gohl to accept August's treasurer's report. Motion carried.

## **Financial Secretary Report:**

- A **motion** was made by Sara Jepsen and seconded by Pete Hallberg to accept August's financial secretary's report. Motion carried.

## **Reports:**

### • **Education Board:**

Sunday School has begun. First Bible Class will be held for third graders followed by the receiving of their Bibles. Bethel Lutheran Teens (BLTs) will be meeting every other week following worship. Two young people will be confirmed on October 27, 2024.

### • **Finance Board:**

The Church Council was encouraged to think about upcoming needs (projects and equipment) for the coming year as the Finance Board will begin setting a budget for 2025.

## **Trustees:**

- The Trustees have begun securing quotes for snow removal. They are looking into the possibility of redoing the parking lot next year.

## **Communications:**

- The Executive Board and Pastor Wills will be updating the Bethel Constitution and Bylaws this fall.
- Harvest Festival will be held on September 22, 2024.
- The Stewardship Committee has begun meeting as they plan their 2024/2025 Campaign.

The meeting closed with Round Table Prayers and the Lord's Prayer.

**The next regular Council meeting will be held on Monday, October 14, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted: Cathy Houg, Council Secretary

## Bethel Lutheran Choir

The Bethel choir practices every Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Please join us at any time! Contact Emily Koehler if you have any questions. 605-661-5717 or [emily.e.koehler@gmail.com](mailto:emily.e.koehler@gmail.com)



## National Lutheran Choir

Join the NLC for the 39<sup>th</sup> season, *Healing: A Sacred Story*, to explore five dimensions of wholeness and wellness and to see featured collaborations with guest artists such as Cantus, Brian Newhouse, and more. "We are called to practice acts of healing in this world.", said Artistic Director Jennaya Robinson, "Choral music is the vehicle through which all people can find a sense of belonging and enliven their faith." Season passes, tickets, and more are available at [NLCA.com](http://NLCA.com).

## CONTACT US

### Bethel Lutheran Church

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DON'T FORGET TO STAY CONNECTED!

[www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org)  
[www.facebook.com/lpbethel](https://www.facebook.com/lpbethel)

### PASTOR

Rev. Molly Wills  
320-339-8169  
[pastor@lpbethel.org](mailto: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  
P.O. Box 207  
Lester Prairie, MN 55354

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE