



BETHEL MESSENGER

Bethel Lutheran Church Newsletter

DECEMBER 2024

FROM PASTOR MOLLY



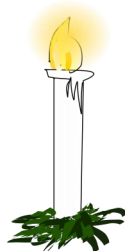
Hello Beloved Children of God!

The Advent season is upon us. And all of us are caught on a spectrum that runs from extreme happiness and excitement for the family gatherings, the cookies, the lights, and the presents, to deep sadness and loss, swamped by memories and thoughts of loved ones unable to be with us, either because of work or of death. Wherever you fall on this spectrum, remember – God loves you, and that is why he became incarnate as Christ Jesus. We celebrate this season, in our joy and sorrow, the fact that God became incarnate for us, to live with us, to experience our excitement and heartbreak with us, to die, and to rise again, to forgive us our sins.

During this season, may each of you feel the love of God embrace you. May you find peace, and wholeness in the healing power of the Holy Spirit. And may you feel joy, whether jubilant or quiet, in the grace poured out upon you in Christ Jesus's birth, life, death, and resurrection.

Blessings upon you all,
Pastor Molly

**“The Word was first,
the Word present to God,
God present to the Word.
The Word was God,
in readiness for God from day one.
Everything was created through him;
nothing—not one thing!—
came into being without him.
What came into existence was Life,
and the Life was Light to live by.
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;
the darkness couldn't put it out.”
(John 1:1-5, *The Message* translation)**



MISSION & MINISTRIES

Driving Away Hunger-MEFS Mobile Outreach

Driving Away Hunger is designed to reduce transportation and mobility issues associated with food access in our communities. The Mobile Outreach vehicle is stocked with shelf-stable pantry items, fresh produce, frozen proteins, dairy, grains, and bakery treats. STOP & SHOP THE BUS at no cost to you! All sites are open to the public!

Orders must be placed prior to delivery dates and are pre-packed during the winter months. A limited number of walk-up portions will be available at each delivery site. The staff will accommodate anyone not able to safely enter the vehicle for shopping. The staff are not permitted to carry food inside a residence. Full grocery distributions are available once (1X) per month, per household. One visit per week is allowed across all sites.

Schedule changes are announced at www.mcleodemergencyfoodshelf.org and on Facebook @ McLeod Food Shelf. Follow us! Questions? Call 320-864-2088!



MEFS Mobile Outreach

WINTER SCHEDULE

WHEN: Thursday,

December 12
1:30 pm-3:00 pm

WHERE:

Bethel Lutheran
Church parking lot

TO ORDER ONLINE &

STAY UP-TO-DATE

SCAN HERE:



WELCA Advent Mission Project

Bethel WELCA has partnered with the Lester Prairie School Outreach Program to sponsor three local families this year. During Advent, our **Christmas Giving Tree** has wish lists (tags) hung on the tree to take and purchase the item listed.

On December 15, following worship, we will celebrate with a "Birthday Party for Jesus." Bring your unwrapped gift to the party; stay for gift wrapping, treats, crafts, and games! All are welcome!

Nominating Committee Seeking Volunteers for 2025:

OPEN POSITIONS TO CONSIDER:

Council (2-year terms)

President
Council Secretary
Financial Secretary
Finance Board
Education Board

Committee Members

Cemetery (2-year term/need one)
Mission Endowment: (3-year term/need two)
Audit: (3-year term/need one)
Nominating: (1-year term/need four)
Synod Assembly Delegates: (1 assembly/one male, one female)

Contact Peggy Wick, Ron Foust, or Brian Duncan if you are interested in serving or would like to be on the committee this year.

November MEFS

Campaign

Bethel members gave
\$640.00 to the

McLeod Emergency
Food Shelf!

Thank you so much for
your generosity toward
those in need!

THANK YOU!

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



THANKSGIVING
PIE SOCIAL
2024

FAITH & FELLOWSHIP



December Birthdays!

- 1 LuAnn W.
- 2 Amber S.
- 11 Riley C.
- 18 Jen B.
- 21 Ed E.
- 21 Ron F.
- 26 Sara R.
- 31 Lisa K.

December Baptisms!

- 4 Amy Z.
- 7 Jane L.
- 14 Luke P.
- 15 LuAnn W.
- 22 Abigail C.
- 25 Nancy K.
- 30 Amber S.

Poinsettia Sign-up

It's time to order poinsettias to adorn our sanctuary. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board. You can designate who you want your poinsettia to be in celebration, honor, or memory of your loved ones. Thank you so much for your participation!

Bathrooms update

The updates on the upstairs bathrooms are complete! We would like to thank the following people for their work: Bryon Weisenburger, Jerry Christenson, Pete Hallberg, David Gohl, Sara Jepsen, Carol Wortz, Jean Christenson, Carolyn Barr, & Cathy Houg. Funding for this project was from an anonymous gift and two Thrivent grants.

Advent 2024



Mid-week Advent services (*Light of the World*) will be on December 4, 11, and 18, beginning at 6:30 pm. The Sunday School children will present their Christmas program during worship on Sunday, December 15. A *Birthdays Party for Jesus* will follow worship downstairs in the Fellowship Hall on December 15. Christmas Eve Candlelight worship service with communion will begin at 4 pm.

NLC Christmas Festival Concert

Join the National Lutheran Choir at the beautiful Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis for the Christmas Festival tradition. This year's program, *Healing: of the Nations*, seeks to bring a beacon of hope to all who open their hearts and listen. Concerts held on December 13 & 14, Tickets and more information at NLC.com.

LEFSE RECIPE

Potato Preparation

Cook 5 lb. of potatoes (Idaho Russets are best)

When cooked, mash and rice. While the potatoes are hot add:

10 T. of melted butter

4 T. half & half

Cool overnight in the refrigerator.

Day of Rolling

When ready to bake add:

2 tsp. of sugar

3 cups (scant) flour

Salt to taste

Mix and roll. Makes approximately 32 balls.



Christmas Treat Bags

Anyone wishing to donate cash toward the Christmas Treat bags, please contact Diane Horsman. These Treat bags will be given to the children on Dec. 15. *The children will present a Christmas program that day during worship.*

Lefse Making

Join the fun of rolling lefse (other jobs are available too) on Sunday, December 8, from noon-4:00 pm, bringing home lefse to enjoy. Let Diane Horsman know if you plan to attend or have any questions.

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 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.



4. Online Giving

scan here



"Noisy" Offering

4th 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.

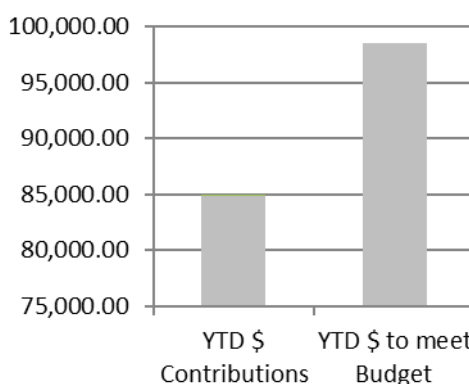
SAVE THE DATE!

Bethel's Annual Congregational meeting: Sunday, January 26, 2025 immediately following worship, with a potluck meal after the meeting. Please plan to attend this important meeting!

REMINDER:

Email Annual Reports to bethellutheranlp@gmail.com by JANUARY 10! (Council Treas., 2025 Budget, WELCA Treas.)

For the Month of Oct 2024	
Weekly Av. Attendance	58
\$ Contributions	6,729.40
\$ to meet Budget	9,853.52
\$ Difference	-3,124.12
For the Year 2024	
YTD \$ Contributions	84,903.45
YTD \$ to meet Budget	98,535.20
YTD \$ Difference	-13,631.75



DECEMBER 2024

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
1 (1 Advent) 9a worship 10:15a Sun. school, <i>The Chosen</i> 4p Resplandor de Gloria	2 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study	3 6:30p WELCA mtg.	4 (office hours) 5:45p choir practice 6:30p Light of the World	5	6	7
8 (2 Advent) 9a worship; 10:15a Sun school, conf., fellowship, <i>The Chosen</i> ; noon- 4p lefse making 4p Resplandor de Gloria	9 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study 6p council mtg.	10	11 (office hours) 12:30p worship & music comm. mtg. 5:45p choir practice 6:30p Light of the World	12 1:30p-3p MEFS Mobile Outreach REMEMBER TO PRE-ORDER!	13 5p wedding rehearsal	14 4p wedding
15 (3 Advent) 9a worship (w/ Sun. school program) 10:15a Birthday Party for Jesus! 4p Resplandor de Gloria	16 (office hours) noon Bible study- bring a sack lunch; *ANNUAL YEAR-END REPORTS DUE & *NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	17	18 (office hours) 5:45p choir practice 6:30p Light of the World 7:30p book club	19	20	21 WINTER BEGINS
22 (4 Advent) 9a worship 10:15a Sun. school, fellowship, <i>The Chosen</i> 4p Resplandor de Gloria	23 NO Bible study	24 4p Christmas Eve Candlelight worship w/HC	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27	28
29 (1 Christmas) 9a worship/noisy offering, 10:15a <i>The Chosen</i> 4p Resplandor de Gloria	30 NO Bible study (Pastor vacation)	31 New Year's Eve	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2	3	4

- **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:** (25th of the month) [*DEC. 16](#)
- **Most up-to-date Calendar version:** Go to www.lpbethel.org
- **Church Directory:** Go to 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.

***REMINDER:** Email Annual Reports to bethellutheranlp@gmail.com by **DECEMBER 16!**
Pastor, Council Pres., Ed. Bd., Fin. Bd, Trustee Bd., & WELCA Pres./ Comm: Worship, Endowment, Cemetery)

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH | COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES | MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2024

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

Call to Order:

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

Council Business:

- A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Mitch Overbye to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.
- In the past month, Pastor Molly attended the Youth Task Force event at St. Peter Lutheran Church. Confirmation class is ongoing. The premarital sessions have been completed. She has been working on the liturgy for a Thanksgiving/Christ the King Sunday on November 24, 2024.

Old Business:

- A **motion** was made by Pete Hallberg and seconded by Peg Wick to have the Finance Board proceed with procuring a debit card for the church through First Community Bank. Tamie Foust will manage the card. Motion carried.
- The updated Church Council Job Descriptions will be sent out to Council members to review for acceptance at the December Council meeting.

New Business:

- A motion was made by Jill Duncan and seconded by Pete Hallberg to set Pastor Molly's housing allowance for the 2025 budget at \$27,335.50. Motion carried.
- A **motion** was made by Mitch Overbye and seconded by Bryon Weisenburger to give \$50.00 in Prairie Bucks to each of the five church employees as a Christmas gift. Motion carried.
- The Finance board will begin year-end consultations and salary discussions for budget purposes.
- A **motion** was made by Bryon Weisenburger and seconded by Stacy Meyer to set the Congregational Annual Meeting for Sunday, January 26, 2025, following worship with a potluck after the meeting. Motion carried.
- Jeff and Peggy Wick summarized the Equipping Congregation meeting held on Nov. 2, 2024, in New London.

Secretary Minutes:

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

Treasurer Reports:

- A **motion** was made by Stacy Meyer and seconded by Peg Wick to zero out the Bergen Monument Fund and put those monies into the Cemetery fund. Motion carried.
- A **motion** was made by Pete Hallberg and seconded by Cathy Houg to accept October's treasurer's report. Motion carried.

Financial Secretary Report:

- A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Jill Duncan to accept October's financial secretary's report. Motion carried.

Reports:

- **Education Board:** Ten Commandment and Lord's Prayer Milestones are coming up. A Birthday for Jesus will be held in December.
- **Finance Board:** The budget discussions have begun. They will talk to the congregation for ideas to replace the janitor who retires at the end of the year.
- **Trustees:** The bathroom updates have been completed. A new faucet is being installed in the basement furnace room. Litzau Snow Removal has been contracted to remove snow this season at \$57/time. The thermostats have been reset and batteries replaced. They continue looking at quotes for redoing the parking lot.

Communications:

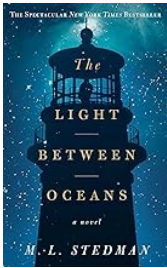
- Endowment grant submissions are due the end of November.
 - The Executive Board will meet after the Nov. meeting to look over membership records.
 - 2025 budget considerations and preliminary proposals should be brought to the Finance Board for the December Council meeting.
 - Annual Meeting End-of-the-Year Reports are due to Tamie Foust by December 15, 2024. Financial Reports are due by January 10, 2025. These include Pr. Molly, Pres., Ed., Fin., Trustee, Treasurer, and the 2025 Budget.
 - Janitor Lori Dolezal is retiring at the end of 2024. The Council is looking for replacement recommendations.
- The meeting closed with Round Table Prayers and the Lord's Prayer at 7:30 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted: Cathy Houg, Council Secretary

Bethel Book Club

December: *The Light Between Oceans*



by M.L. Stedman

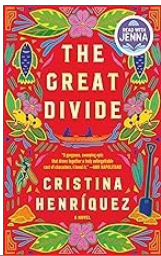
Discussion date: Dec. 18, 7:30 pm

"The miraculous arrival of a child in the life of a barren couple delivers profound love but also seeds of destruction. Moral dilemmas don't come more exquisite than the one around which Australian novelist

Stedman constructs her debut."

—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

January: *The Great Divide: A Novel*



by Cristina Henríquez

Discussion date: Jan. 15, 7:30 pm

A powerful novel about the construction of the Panama Canal, casting light on the unsung people who lived, loved, and labored there.

CONTACT US

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

77 Lincoln AVE N | Lester Prairie, MN
55354 | MAILING ADDRESS: PO Box 207

OFFICE 320-395-2125

bethellutheranlp@gmail.com

PASTOR

Rev. Molly Wills
320-339-8169

pastor@lpbethel.org

DON'T FORGET TO STAY CONNECTED!

www.lpbethel.org

www.facebook.com/lpbethel

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