



BETHEL MESSENGER

Bethel Lutheran Church Newsletter

January 2025

FROM PASTOR MOLLY

Hello Beloved Children of God!

As a new year begins, not just a calendar year, but also my second year called as your pastor, I can't help but think about Bethel, the Holy Spirit working wonders, and the relationships I have seen grow, strengthen, and be tested between each of you and between you and God.

As the pastor, I get to see the big picture view of all the doings of Bethel, and I can say it is spectacular, and I have thoroughly enjoyed participating in all of it! From the *outreach* of attending the Youth Task Force Social at other churches, running the burger stand at Lester Prairie Days, handing out ice cream at National Night out & youth attending National Night Out, monthly breakfasts at Longhorn's, making quilts to send to those in need, providing financial aid for food and/or shelter from the Pastoral Emergency Fund, to *inviting people in* from the community for the Youth Task Force Social, Game Nights, Bible studies, Vacation Bible School, Harvest Festival, WELCA's women's retreat, giving handmade quilts to our graduating seniors, lefse-making, hosting the McLeod County Food Shelf once a month, and offering free, fresh veggies from our community garden to any who want them. The Holy Spirit truly moves through you all from the little bitty children to the elders and what wonders she has wrought and continues to create!

Church is about the relationships we grow and strengthen between one another with, in, and through God. We are all bound together as the body of Christ. We are all bodily a temple of God, the Holy Spirit dwelling within each of us. So, the main point of church, the reason people gathered back in the times of the Bible and continue to gather now, is to be in relationship with God with one another. It's to worship and commune with God *together*, to *share* in the sacraments, to *remind* ourselves of God's new covenant; and through worshiping God and taking the sacraments together, we strengthen our relationship with God so that when we're alone, feeling lost in the wilderness, whether mental or physical, that relationship will not break. We will know, have faith, and trust that God is with us in that wilderness, that we are never truly alone.

Bethel is an incredible place to experience God, to have our boundaries pushed by one another, to ask questions, to wonder, and to grow in faith, in our relationship with God, with each other. So, as this new year begins with you, I encourage you to think about your personal relationship with God, think about whether it has grown over the past year or not, and where it could use some encouragement and growth during this new year. And remember I am here for support and guidance in your relationship with God if you need and/or want it.

Many blessings to you and yours in this new year!
Pastor Molly B. Wills

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,

January 16

1:30 pm-3:00 pm

WHERE:

Bethel Lutheran Church parking lot

[TO ORDER ONLINE &](#)

[STAY UP-TO-DATE](#)

[SCAN HERE:](#)



Nominating Committee Seeking Volunteers

Open positions in 2025:

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: (one male and one female for one assembly in June)

Contact Peggy Wick, Ron Foust, or Brian Duncan if you are interested in serving in 2025!

Say YES to CONNECT!

Sunday morning volunteers are needed to greet visitors, read the scripture, usher, prepare communion (altar guild), make coffee, and bring & serve treats. Watch for the new sign-up sheets.



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

WELCA Advent Mission Project- Christmas Giving Tree

Thank you for donating Christmas gifts to three local families through the Lester Prairie School Outreach program!

Common Cup Ministry

We are exploring ways to partner with Common Cup Ministry. The mission of Common Cup Ministry is to gather and share spiritual and financial resources of area churches into one "Common Cup" so that we may minister to those in need. This picture was taken recently while packing weekend food bags for local students in need. Look for more information about ways Bethel will be supporting Common Cup Ministries.

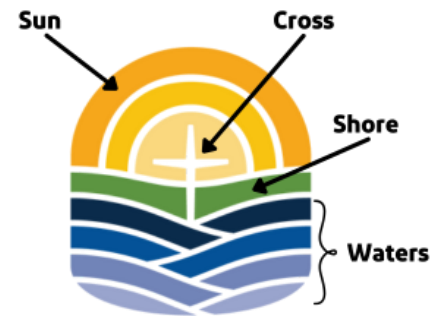


Faith That Overflows 2025

Registration for GLLM summer programs is open! By registering early, you will not only reserve your place, but you'll save money too! **The Early Bird Discount ends on February 13, 2025!** Every registration received before then will receive \$65 off each registered program (some restrictions apply.) GLLM scholarships are available for any program including youth camps, and retreat programs. Bethel also has scholarships available, contact Emily Koehler or Pete Hallberg if you are interested. Visit gllm.org for more information and register today! If you have questions, contact the office by phone at 320-796-2181 or email camp@gllm.org.

Bethel's Annual Congregational meeting: Sunday, January 26, 2025

The meeting will begin immediately following worship, with a potluck meal after the meeting. Please plan to attend this important meeting!



Explore the Elements of New GLLM Logo

- **Sun:** Represents the outward spiritual growth and the deeper connection to God's abundant grace.
- **Cross:** Christ at the center where love, faith, and community intertwine and all can experience the life-changing love of Jesus Christ.
- **Shore:** Fertile ground where seeds of hope, love, and community are sown and nurtured. It is here at the shore where we are grounded.
- **Waters:** The coming together of unique individuals united to create a mighty force overflowing with life and vitality.

FAITH & FELLOWSHIP



January Birthdays

3 Shirley W.
10 Arla H.
10 Lloyd W.
10 Oliver A.
15 Tom G.
19 Emily K.
19 Cheryl S.
20 Jean H.
20 Logan M
23 Cathy H.
24 Evie K.
28 John S.
30 Emillie F.

January Baptism Birthdays

1 Tom G.
6 Ron F.
12 Dean S.
17 Sam R.
21 Lloyd W.
22 Connor R.
24 Lachlynn S.
26 Riley C.
28 Dave A.
30 Emillie F.
31 Jean H.
31 Max P.

Rachel Kurtz in concert with the SW MN Synod youth band Sponsored by River of Hope Lutheran Church

When: Wednesday, January 29

Where: Hutchinson Event Center, 1005 MN 15, Hutchinson (River of Hope Lutheran Church rents space at the Event Center.)

Time: 5:45 pm-6:16 pm: pizza will be served

RSVP by January 27 to

pastor@riverofhopehutchinson.org

6:30 pm-7:45 pm: Rachel Kurtz concert w/the SW MN Synod youth band

Cost: There is no charge for admission.

*We don't want any church to not come because of finances. However, River of Hope welcomes any church that can contribute any size of donation. Checks should be written to River of Hope.

Youth Task Force Social

Bethel will be hosting the Youth Task Force Social on Wednesday, January 15. Students will be here between 12:40 pm-1:40 pm. Volunteers are needed to come early to set up card making supplies on the tables, pop popcorn, etc. Volunteers are also needed to sit at each table to help the students. If you would like to volunteer, contact Pastor Molly or Terri Helland.

Upcoming Milestone classes ✝

God's Grace (2nd graders):

January 12

There will be a blessing during worship on January 19.

Ten Commandments (4th graders):

February 2

There will be a blessing during worship on February 9.

Stewardship (6th graders):

February 9

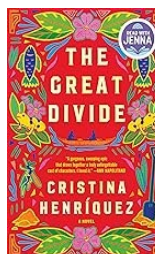
There will be a blessing during worship on February 16.

The classes will be held after worship.

Bethel Book Club: January The Great Divide: A Novel

by Cristina Henriquez

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. Check Bethel's library for a copy.

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**.

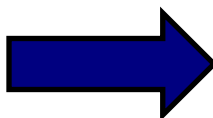


3. Bethel offering envelope

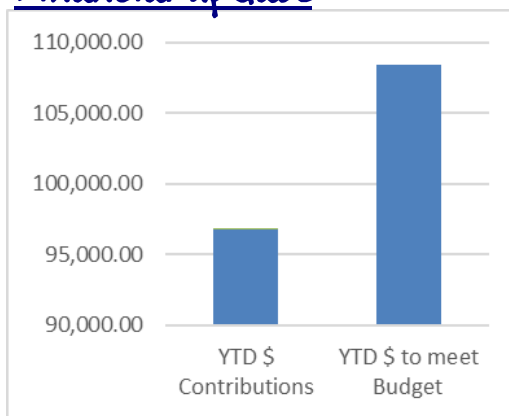
Offering envelopes are available on the wall in the narthex. We ask that you completely fill out the front of the envelope, including your assigned envelope number—contact the office if you have forgotten your number, and mail it to Bethel Lutheran Church, PO Box 207, Lester Prairie, MN 55354 or place 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 QR code



Financial update



For the Month of Nov 2024	
Weekly Av. Attendance	67
\$ Contributions	11,843.67
\$ to meet Budget	9,853.52
\$ Difference	1,990.15
For the Year 2024	
YTD \$ Contributions	96,747.12
YTD \$ to meet Budget	108,388.72
YTD \$ Difference	-11,641.60



"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.



JANUARY 2025

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
			1 BULLETIN SUBMISSIONS DUE ON WEDNESDAYS @ NOON New Year's Day	2	3	4
5 9a worship 10:15a Sun school, conf, fellowship, The Chosen 4p Resplandor de Gloria	6 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study Epiphany	7 6:30p WELCA mtg.	8 (office hours) 12:30p worship & music comm. mtg. 1p-4:30p Quilting 6:30p choir practice	9	10 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTS DUE	11
12 9a worship 10:15a Sun school, God's Grace class, conf, fellowship, The Chosen 4p Resplandor de Gloria	13 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study 5:30p ret. party for Lori Dolezal 6p council mtg.	14	15 (office hours) 12:40p-1:40p YTF Social @ Bethel 6:30p choir practice 7:30p book club	16 1:30p-3p MEFS Mobile Outreach REMEMBER TO PRE-ORDER!	17	18 1p Girl Scout mtg.
19 9a worship (Pastor Engholm) 10:15a Sun. school, BLTs, The Chosen 10:30a Bethel BKF 4p Resplandor de Gloria	20 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study Martin Luther King Jr. Day	21	22 (office hours) 1p-4:30p Quilting 6:30p choir practice	23	24	25 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
26 9a worship w/ noisy offering-followed by annual meeting. & potluck 4p Resplandor de Gloria	27 (office hours) 1:30p Bible study	28	29 (office hours) 1p-4:30p Quilting 6:30p choir practice Chinese New Year	30	31	1

- **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)
- **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.

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH | COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES | MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024

Council Members Present: President: Ron Foust; Secretary: Cathy Houg; Treasurer: Jill Duncan; Financial Secretary: Stacy Meyer; Finance Board: Mitch Overbye; Education Board: Emily Koehler; Trustee Board: Dave Gohl; Pastor Molly Wills

Call to Order:

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

Council Business:

1) A **motion** was made by Dave Gohl and seconded by Cathy Houg to approve the agenda as presented with one addition under new business. Motion carried.

2) Pastor Molly reported that in the last month she attended a First Call meeting focused on church finance and a pastoral Bible Study. Christ the King Sunday and Thanksgiving worship was combined. Advent Services have begun. Confirmation is ongoing and the confirmands will participate in the worship service on December 15. There will be a wedding at Bethel on December 14, 2024. Bethel is hosting a Youth Task Force Event on January 15, 2025. The youth will be making cards to send to new people in the community and shut-ins.

Old Business:

1) A **motion** was made by Emily Koehler and seconded by Stacy Meyer to accept the updated Church Council Job Descriptions. Motion carried.

2) The Finance Board has begun employee year-end consultations and salary discussions for budget purposes.

New Business:

1) A **motion** was made by Dave Gohl and seconded by Jill Duncan to allow a Daisy Girl Scout troop to use our church for their monthly meetings beginning December 21, 2024. Dave Gohl will be meeting with the leader to finalize arrangements and will provide a Property Use Document and Usage/Hold Harmless Agreement for her to sign. Motion carried.

2) The Finance Board is developing a 2025 Budget Proposal. A **motion** was made by Emily Koehler and seconded by Mitch Overbye to remove Pastor Aaron G. Holmgren and add Pastor Molly Wills as a signer on the Pastoral Emergency Fund Document. Motion carried.

3) A **motion** was made by Emily Koehler and seconded by Stacy Meyer to move \$1000 from the Thrivent Choice Funds to the Pastoral Emergency Fund. Motion carried.

4) It was recommended by the Council that the 2025 budget reflect a \$500 increase in our giving to SWMN ELCA Mission Support.

Secretary Minutes: A **motion** was made by Ron Foust and seconded by Stacy Meyer to accept November's secretary's report. Motion carried.

Treasurer Reports: A **motion** was made by Cathy Houg and seconded by Emily Koehler to accept November's treasurer's report. Motion carried.

Financial Secretary Report: A **motion** was made by Mitch Overbye and seconded by Emily Koehler to accept November's financial secretary's report. Motion carried.

Reports:

1) **Education Board:** The first Lord's Prayer class has been completed. The Christmas program will be on December 15, 2024, during worship service. The Education Board is discussing the option of dividing the Sunday School into two groups, in which case a second teacher will be needed.

2) **Finance Board:** The finance board is developing a 2025 budget proposal. They are conducting employee reviews and looking for a replacement for our custodian who is retiring at the end of December 2024.

3) **Trustees:** The bathroom updates have been completed. A new faucet has been installed in the furnace room. A light fixture was repaired in the basement. They are looking for one more bid to redo the parking lot.

Communications:

1) Annual Meeting reports are due to Tamie by December 16, 2024. Financial Reports are due by January 10, 2025.

2) Janitor Lori Dolezal retires at the end of this year. A **motion** was made by Jill Duncan and seconded by Emily Koehler to give Lori \$250.00 and flowers as an acknowledgment of her years of service. Motion carried. She will be invited to the January 13, 2025, Church Council Meeting.

3) Pulpit Supply: Pastor Donna Olsen on Sunday, December 29, 2024. Pastor Susan Engholm on Sunday, January 19, 2025. Pastor Molly will be on vacation Dec. 25-Jan 1 and Jan 18-21.

4) The Nominating Committee is working to fill vacancies.

5) Bethel Annual Congregational Meeting will be January 26, 2025, right after worship followed by a potluck lunch.

6) Jan Smith is Bethel Lutheran's representative to Common Cup Ministries.

7) The Stewardship Committee is planning a Stewardship Campaign for February 2025. In addition to filling out pledge cards, there will be temple talks focusing on various activities and opportunities within our church.

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

The next regular Council meeting will be held on Monday, January 13, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Cathy Houg, Council Secretary



HAPPY NEW YEAR

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

ECCLESIASTES 3:11



CONTACT US

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PASTOR

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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