



Bethel Blaze

FEBRUARY 2025

Sharing Christ's love with a big heart

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

In Person

Sunday Mornings:
8:30 am and 10:45 am

Online

The 8:30 service is
livestreamed
on our YouTube channel.

Check our website
for the link!

You can also view the service
at your convenience.

Past services are also
available on Northfield's
public television station
channels 180 & 187

No cable is required.
There are four opportunities
to watch:

Monday 2:00 pm
Tuesday 1:30 pm
Wednesday 7:00 pm
Saturday 7:00 am



ENDOWMENT FUND AWARDS \$15,000 IN GRANTS

Thank you, Bethel members for the creative and inspiring Bethel Endowment grant requests that were submitted during the application period this fall. A total of 15 applications were submitted. After two rounds of difficult review, the committee is pleased to announce the following people and projects will receive grants from the Bethel Endowment Fund in 2024:

Name of Applicant	Description
Dottie Hammer, Pam Santerre	Women's Retreat at Mt. Olivet: "Losses in Life; the Journey Within"
Marci Groenwold, Befriender Ministry	National level Befriender leadership training for two Bethel members
Sarah Marohl, Bethel Library	Books, DVDs, and supplies for the Bethel Library
Catherine Engle	Support a portion of the first phase Bethel AV Update
Jane Runzheimer, Mission and Justice	Payment for bus driver for regular Sunday transport services to/from Benedictine
Holly Schoenbauer, This is Me	Foster youth identity - yearbooks, club and sports photos, and foster youth activities
Karen Mader	Medical Emergency Kit for Bethel

These grants were largely made possible by the generous estate gift from Don Nelson. Additional gifts can be added to Bethel's Endowment Fund at any time. Grant proposals will be accepted again in the fall for the 2025 funding cycle. There will be significantly more funding available for distribution next year, so if you weren't successful this year please consider applying again in 2025.

The Bethel Endowment Fund supports outreach ministries (local or global), education, and general needs at Bethel related to worship, music or church facilities. Endowment grants provide funding for programs and projects that are outside of the scope of Bethel's operating budget and that further the mission of Bethel to Share Christ's Love with a Big Heart.

The Bethel Endowment Committee - Ryan Blumboefer (Chair), Mari Aylin, Steve Engle, Kevin Fink, John Larson, Heidi Muller Peterson, and Rose Turnacliff.



Pastor Ben Schori

(he/him)

pastor.ben@

bethelnorthfield.org
(preferred for non-urgent
communication)

office

507-786-8953

office hours

by appointment Mondays,
Tuesdays, Wednesdays,
and Thursdays

FIRESIDE REFLECTIONS

from Pastor Ben

Imagine, if you will, a family road trip. At the beginning there is excitement at the start of a journey, perhaps, mixed with some anxiety about being prepared. “Did we remember to pack everything?” Then you settle in and enjoy the changing scenery, quality time together, maybe some car games. Then bodies start feeling stiff and restless. You feel cramped and irritable. And finally, you here, from the back seat, the four words that have become a staple of comedic relief: “Are we there yet?”

For me, February can feel like an “Are we there yet?” month. Winter has already been here for two months. The holiday magic of December and New Years is long past. Winter activities and joys have been experienced and, maybe, aren’t as exciting as they were. March is only a month away, though who knows what March in Minnesota will bring any year, but we know there will be at least one more full month of winter with February. “Are we there yet?” Perhaps, this February brings with it other “Are we there yet?” feelings beyond the winter weather. The start of a new presidential administration, congress, and new local elected leaders all working to enact significant changes in different ways to the delight of some and the chagrin of others. The exhaustion of the balancing act between staying true to our ideological beliefs while also striving to bridge the divide. How much longer before we arrive at substantive, long lasting reformation together and for the good of all people and this world we call home? “Are we there yet?”

This February and always, know that you are not alone. We, your Bethel community, joins and surrounds you as we travel on this journey together, trusting that our Emmanuel, “God with us,” Christ Jesus travels with us providing us the “car snacks” of grace we need for the coming miles.

BeFRIENDERS

by Marci Groenewold

When was the last time you changed your mind about something? This is an interview question asked by Shawn Brook, President of Seed World Group. For him, compromise is required when teammates with different backgrounds and viewpoints, that don’t even necessarily like each other, work together.

As Brooks points out, compromise is not a failure, but rather a way to understand another’s viewpoint thus creating a path forward, and achieving a common goal. This requires the capacity to listen with understanding all the while reflecting on what you think you heard. This traditional communication technique ensures clarity and mutual trust.

Unfortunately, this conversational skill has been largely ignored as of late. Those who are unwilling to compromise their firm opinion don’t realize it blinds them to the nuances of making things happen. By putting up communication walls to shield them from people and ideas they don’t like leaves no room for real conversation.









According to Brooks, you can either be right or you can have things go well. By improving our ability to have meaningful two-way conversations, compromises to reach the finish line are a not failures. It takes wisdom, self-awareness, commitment and bravery to reach a compromise. Skills that can be used to talk **WITH** someone, not **AT** someone are essential.

Listening skills, like the ones described above are just one component of BeFriender Ministry training. Now, more than ever, people who long to be heard need people to just listen to them. BeFriender Ministry training is available to all Bethel members, regardless if you chose to become a BeFriender Minister or not.

Our Winter 8-week Befriender Ministry Training begins Thursday, February 6. Classes meet at the St. Dominic rectory from 6:30-8:30 pm. Please consider becoming a BeFriender Minister.

EVERY WEEK

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 9 AM - 3 PM

SUNDAY		8:30 am	Worship/Livestream
		9:45 am	Coffee Fellowship & Education Hour
		10:45 am	Worship
MONDAY		12:00 pm	Bible Text Study @ The Vault
		6:30 pm	Resonance (Adult Bell Choir)
TUESDAY		9:45 am	Staff Meeting
WEDNESDAY		3:30 pm	Limitless
		5:45 pm	Bistro! Join us for a fresh cooked meal and fellowship. Suggested donation is \$5/person. Kid friendly SunButter or cheese sandwiches are available as alternatives.
		6:15 pm	Ring Forth Bell Choir
		7:00 pm	Confirmation & Hangtime
		8:05 pm	Church Choir Brio Bell Choir
THURSDAY		8:30 am	MoB (Men of Bethel) Join us as we finish viewing <i>Conclave</i> , the fascinating film about the process of electing the Pope. We will then read <i>Bright Valley of Love</i> by Northfield native Edna Hong. Set in Germany, this is a true story about a severely handicapped child, Gunther, who is born during WWI and taken in by Bethel, a Christian community for the physically and mentally impaired. Gunther's future and that of the other residents is threatened when the Nazis take over the country. We welcome new members, and if you want a copy of the book, Keith Homstad has copies
		9:30 am	FaB (Faith and Books) We are reading Rev. Jacqui Lewis' <i>Fierce Love</i> . Join us for rich discussions in the Youth Room. Contact lanareich@yahoo.com to be added to the email list.
FRIDAY		9:30 am	WoW (Women of the Word) Bible study via zoom

THIS MONTH

FEB 1	9:00 am	Senior Quilting Day	FEB 18	12:00 pm	Lydia Circle
	2:30 pm	Pasha Quaas Celebration of Life		2:30 pm	ARLA Movie
FEB 2	8:30 am	Installation of Church Council		5:15 pm	Personnel Committee
FEB 6	10:45 am	OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans)		6:30 pm	Church Council
	7:00 pm	Bethel Vision Seekers @ Contented Cow, Northfield	FEB 19	4:30 pm	Homes for God's Children
FEB 9	9:55 am	Parent-Child Prayer Class 3rd Grade			Congregational Life
FEB 11	9:00 am	Quilting Group		7:00 pm	Church Choir Rehearsals Resume
	 2:00 pm	Grief Support Group	FEB 20	6:30 pm	Mission and Justice
		Library Committee Meeting	FEB 25	 9:00 am	Quilting Group
FEB 16	9:45 am	Good Earth Village Info		2:00 pm	Grief Support Group
	1:00 pm	Bethel @ Benedictine Chapel			

FAITH FORMATION AT BETHEL

**A staffed nursery for little ones is available
8:15 am—noon on Sunday mornings
and Wednesdays 3:15—8:00 pm**

Children's Ministry

Sunday School for 3 year olds—5th Grade

is offered in various classrooms —Please ask if you need help finding yours!

Kids' Worship Option for K—5 at 10:45 am service

After the children's homily, children may join Brenda in the Center Pod for kid-accessible parts of worship and lesson-enriching games or crafts. Rejoin worship for communion.

Upcoming Dates:

February 9 — Parent-Child Prayer Class for Third Graders

March 5 — Ash Wednesday Family Service @ 5:15 pm



Special Prayer Class in Sunday School

Third Graders and Guardians, join Brenda Sunday morning, February 9

from 9:55-10:30 am in Room 44 to explore prayer. What is it? How do we do it?

Why do we do it?

Brenda Rabbe (she/her)

Director of Children's Ministries

507-786-8878

childrensministry

@bethelnorthfield.org

Youth Ministry

Seniors and Quilters! Our final quilting day will be on **Saturday, February 1 from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm.**

If you have not yet turned in your quilting packet please reach out to Kristi.

6th – 9th grade students – February 5 is the designated “snow day” for J term. Even if we don't need to utilize the snow day, there will be no Confirmation programming that evening. Hangtime, Bistro and bells will continue as planned. Confirmation and 6th Grade Connections start back up with normal classes at 7 pm on **February 12.**

Youth Sunday will be on **February 23.**

Kristi Larson (she/her)

Director of Youth Ministries

651-230-6057 (cell/text)

youth@bethelnorthfield.org

IN THE LIBRARY...

LIFE GETS BETTER



*The Unexpected Pleasures
of Growing Older*

Wendy Lustbader

***Life Gets Better: The Unexpected Pleasures of Growing Older* by Wendy Lustbader**

It may seem too good to be true, but Wendy Lustbader is convinced that our later years are much better than those of our youth. As a social worker and university professor she shares from personal interviews evidence that being a teenager and young adult may not be the glory years after all.

As our bodies age and our focus moves away from self and onto others there seems to be a newfound purpose for living. Lustbader says, "While self-interested pursuits tend to exhaust us over time, contributions to the lives of others tie us into reliable sources of energy. When we know we are making a difference in someone else's life, the body's humiliations matter much less."

The beauty of this book is that even if you only read the introduction or a few chapters, you can find great hope and understanding for the future. Don't miss the chapters on self-knowledge, relationships, generosity, and the passage of time. The last third of the book focuses on the last third of life,

when we reflect on how we grew when we were young and during midlife. As we age we may decide to let go of old hurts, find new empathy and build relationships that we were previously not able to see as possible.

RIC CELEBRATION SUNDAY ON FEBRUARY 9

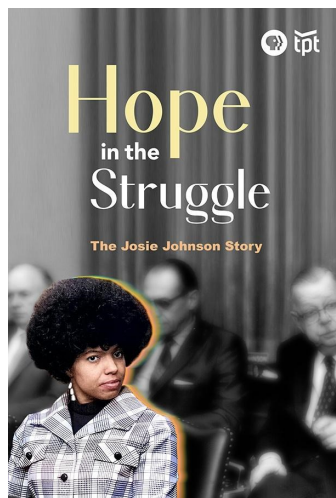
Bethel is beginning an annual tradition of celebrating our anniversary of becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Church. Many congregations celebrate their RIC commitment on the last Sunday in January, but as that day programming is reserved for our Annual Meeting, the committee selected a Sunday closer to our anniversary date. Bethel celebrated becoming a RIC church community on February 14, 2021 in a drive through outdoor event (due to the CoVid Pandemic). Even the 20 below wind chill weather didn't diminish the joyous horn honking, cookies, rainbow flags and yard signs. We chose to publicly welcome people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. Bethel no longer wanted our congregation to marginalize the LGBTQIA+ Community.

Our speaker at Bethel Presents on this special Sunday will be Jennifer Christiason, RN BSN from Cedar Falls, IA. Jennifer works for the Unity Point Health (UPH) System at Allen Women's Health and also as a Clinic Nurse at UPH's inaugural LGBTQIA+ Clinic in Cedar Valley of Iowa. She and her husband, Kyle, a Medical Doctor, have spoken to numerous groups interested in advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging in healthcare, schools, businesses, faith and community settings. Jennifer participated in the Harvard Medical School's "Advancing Excellence in Sexual and Gender Minority Health Education." Together they are proud parents of two adult children.



We invite you to celebrate with us and learn from Christiason, so that together we can authentically live into our welcome statement and grow in understanding. You are also invited to consider joining Bethel's RIC Committee!

Rosemarie Lewis, *chair*



ARLA FILM — "HOPE IN THE STRUGGLE" FEBRUARY 18

Join us for the first film in a several-month film festival on **Tuesday, February 18** in the Bethel Youth Room at 3 pm.

(Notice the time change from our usual morning meetings.)

"Hope in the Struggle: The Josie Johnson Story"

reminds us there is always hope for positive change, and it will spark ideas for how we can continue to be advocates for equality and justice for all people.

Discussion and snacks follow the film, and our time together will be done by 4:30.

Bring friends and family with you. Everyone is welcome.

REGISTER NOW—WOMEN'S RETREAT

Lenten Stories of Loss and Life

To all Bethel Women: Mark your calendars for **Thursday, March 13, 2025** for a day retreat (9 am to 4 pm) at Mt. Olivet Retreat Center. The topic is Loss - the big (death of a loved-one) as well as small losses (death of a dream, a home, physicality).

Mt. Olivet is a safe space for you to share your stories and listen to what the Lenten season has to say about loss.

The Mt. Olivet Retreat Center provides plenty of snacks, a delicious lunch, and a peaceful environment for rest and renewal. Registration will start the first week in February and the cost is reduced to \$20.00, due to a generous grant from the Endowment Fund. For more information, contact Dottie Hammer, djhammer.81@gmail.com or Pam Santerre pamrsanterre@gmail.com

BETHEL BRIGHT LIGHTS

Mission & Justice hosted an amazing ministry fair on January 12. Kristi made our younger Bethel members a special M&M themed passport that encouraged students to visit, interact, and get a stamp at each of the nine booths. The kids said they enjoyed how each of the booths were so different and also highlighted the care of animals at Creation Care and colorful rainbows at RIC. Of course, there was an M & M themed prize. How many booths did YOU visit?



MISSION AND JUSTICE

HOMES FOR GOD'S CHILDREN




In the last 3 years, Homes for God's Children has provided appliances for the new CAC Housing Units and Millcrest, provided money and volunteer time to Habitat for Humanity, and supported Ruth's House in its ministry.

HOW LONG IS THE HOMES FOR GOD'S CHILDREN INITIATIVE AND WHY DID IT START?

MISSION AND JUSTICE

CREATION CARE




Creation Care has pioneered many earth-conscious projects at Bethel including our roof top solar panels, a rain garden and speakers on the environment.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS BETHEL DOES TO ELIMINATE WASTE?

MISSION AND JUSTICE

ALTERNATIVE GIVING FAIR




The AGF happens each holiday season and provides an opportunity for Bethel members to donate to a global organization to honor a loved one instead of a traditional Christmas gift.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF PAST GIFTS? HOW DOES THE GIVING HAPPEN?



The children in our Wednesday afternoon Limitless program especially enjoy learning from the older youth who help with the activities.



9th graders and their mentors enjoyed an afternoon of bowling and bonding.



A PASTORAL MESSAGE FROM ELCA REGION 3 BISHOPS

from January 28, 2025

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27

As ELCA bishops in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota we serve in contexts that stretch from the badlands to the prairies, from fertile farmlands and forests to urban centers. Though the contexts are diverse, God's mandates for how we are to live are the same.

In recent days, the heightened rhetoric of violence and newly enacted Executive Orders compel us to remind people of faith of God's fundamental blessing of all human life. In the language of the Bible, we say that all people are made in the image of God. Every person - without exception - has inherent dignity and value because all people are made in God's own image. Human dignity and value come from God. People of faith throughout our region, and indeed this world, are compelled to speak and act toward others in ways that honor the image in which we all are made. All people and groups deserve to be treated with dignity and respect in our common speech and in our public and private interactions. If we wonder what such dignity and respect look like, Jesus made it simple with a teaching known as "the Golden Rule," "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Matthew 7:12)

The apostle Paul wrote in the book of Galatians, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23) These are the traits that guide our interactions with all our neighbors and inform our conduct in daily life. These are the characteristics that embolden us even as we work for justice and peace.

Across this region we are grateful for the many people of good will who are working to increase dialogue, seek the common good, and treat our neighbors, near and far, as those who bear the image of God. We are with you in prayer as, together, we seek to live lives worthy of this ancient admonition from God's word, "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 19:18)

In Christ,

Bishop Constanze Hagmaier, South Dakota Synod - ELCA
 Bishop Patricia Lull, Saint Paul Area Synod - ELCA
 Bishop Jen Nagel, Minneapolis Area Synod - ELCA
 Bishop Dee Pederson, Southwestern Minnesota Synod - ELCA
 Bishop Bill Tesch, Northwestern Minnesota Synod - ELCA

Bishop Regina Hassanally, Southeastern Minnesota Synod - ELCA
 Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth, Eastern North Dakota Synod - ELCA
 Bishop Amy Odgren, Northeastern Minnesota Synod - ELCA
 Bishop Craig A. Schweitzer, Western North Dakota Synod - ELCA

FINANCIAL NOTES

from Barb Fowler, Finance Officer

Financial information:

	Dec. 31, 2024 year-to-date
Revenue	\$ 947,977
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>948,122</u>
Total	\$ (145)

Thank you to all who contributed financially to our successful year. We ended the year with a small deficit of \$145.

You will recall that our budget was \$969,250 so both revenue and expenses were under budget by \$21K. While we try to be as conservative as possible, we also want to grow our ministry. We want our pastors, staff, and committees to explore new programs, reach out to the community, and to try new ways for us to learn. Often there is expense associated with these activities. Please continue to be generous with your offerings dedicated to this important work.

Members of the Finance Committee: Barb Fowler (Finance Officer), Andrew Jorgenson, Heidi McCormick, Lee Runzheimer, Lois Stratmoen, Blair Fowler (Trustee), as well as the President and Steward and Pastor Inger, ex-officio.



Bethel Lutheran Church
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www.facebook.com/bethellutheran

Email: bethel@bethelnorthfield.org



Return Service Requested



YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

We celebrate all people as children of God.

We unconditionally welcome diversity of age, race, citizenship, ethnicity, cultural identity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, education, relationship status, family structure, and life challenges.

Your diversity and uniqueness are valued.

Your questions and your doubts have a home here.

You, your spouse, partner, children, family, and friends are welcome to be full participants in the life of our church.



HOMES FOR GOD'S CHILDREN 2025

CAC Crisis Housing

The CAC has units it uses as emergency, short term housing for those who are suddenly homeless. When more permanent housing is found, the CAC invites the individuals to take some of the household items with them (linens, pillows, cleaning materials and the like) since they have absolutely nothing to stock their new housing with. To aid the CAC, the Homes for God's Children Committee has decided that the project for 2025 will be to obtain and restock some of the crisis units with these items as they turn over.

Please visit the display in the narthex if you would consider signing up to volunteer with the restocking. We will be notifying the congregation when the need for more materials arises as well as what materials are need or if we need financial support.



Community Action Center