



Bethel Blaze

February 2024

Sharing Christ's love with a big heart

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

In Person

Sunday Mornings:
8:30 and 10:45 am

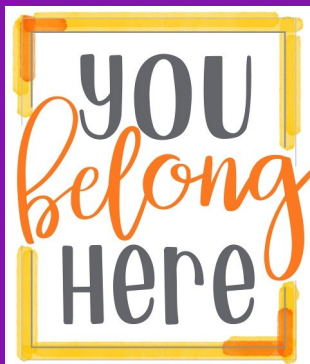
Online

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 IGNITES & EXPANDS MINISTRIES

Thank you, Bethel members, for the creative and inspiring grant requests that were submitted during our recent application period. Although it was difficult to choose, we are pleased to announce that we are awarding \$10,000 in grants to four areas of ministry this year.



Ramirez Family from Peru



A 9-Square Court



Artist, John Sterner

The Welcome Committee will receive money to cover food costs and other expenses for the Peruvian Fundraising Dinner, as well as a direct donation to the Bethel Refugee Fund.

Jill Mahr will receive funds to aid in the purchasing of a fifth octave add-on set of twelve handbells (and cases) which will make it possible to accommodate larger youth ensembles.

Missy Spitzack, Juley Jenkinson and Barb Farmer will receive funding for a "Castle Squares" 9-Square court for Bethel youth.

The Mission and Justice Committee will receive money to commission a work of indigenous art by an indigenous artist to symbolize the support of the Bethel Community for its Land Acknowledgement.

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.

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.

FIRESIDE REFLECTIONS



Pastor Inger Hanson
(she/her)
pastor.inger@
bethelnorthfield.org
(preferred for non-urgent
communication)

office
507-786-8875
cell
307-248-0438

office hours
by appointment Tuesdays,
Wednesdays, and
Thursdays

days off
Monday & Saturday

Dear Bethel,

One Sunday last fall, as a row of St. Olaf students filed into worship, I was nervous. I was excited about how parishioners were connecting to each other in new ways during the Nourishing Vocation moments, but today's theme was hard. Would visitors talk about regrets? Would they ever come back? Our Nourishing Vocation Project fellow reported back that this was the Sunday her friends talked about the most – and that they appreciated the authenticity of a congregation that was willing to talk about regret.

I was reminded of their feedback as I was trying to articulate my own longing for Lent. Why do I look forward to this season of repentance? I'm no masochist – I don't like pain or discomfort for its own sake. I don't like to wallow in guilt. And repentance often entails uncomfortable work: naming regrets, making repairs, turning in new directions. What I am drawn to is the honesty of Lent – that life is messy, and that there are things I and we have done or left undone. I am drawn to the hope of Lent: the surety that because of Christ, crucified and risen, even the messiest things can be different. This Lent, as we think about our vocation as a congregation, each week will look at some of the regrets we hold collectively, following the structure of the prayers of the people. May we be renewed and refreshed in this strange season of honesty and hope.

Lenten blessings,

Pastor Inger

BEFRIENDERS

by Marci Groenewold

During Lent, Bethel's Nourishing Vocation Project team invites us to consider "Regret". Regret elicits feelings of sadness, loss, or missed opportunity. For some of us just thinking about a feeling, let alone feelings of regret can be unsettling. It seems far easier to "just forget about it." Our self-talk may tell us we don't have time to deal with it or perhaps it's not entirely our fault, or since we didn't really mean it- it's not our responsibility. We think maybe, if given enough time, it will just go away. Yet the feelings don't go away and we are still feeling unsettled.

All of us owe something to someone, or vice versa. Perhaps we owe someone money, the truth, an apology- (given or accepted), time, or something else entirely. If nothing else, we owe God who gave us everything. According to Erica Gibson-Even, when Martin Luther explains the ten commandments, Luther's definition of loving my neighbor means "I won't bear false witness *and also* that I defend them and 'put the best construction' on their actions." When we realize we owe something to someone, the relationship changes. There is no longer peace in the relationship.

Considering regrets invites us to name our feelings, properly act on those feelings, and as a result, heal our relationships. BeFriender ministers are trained to listen for unnamed feelings in every conversation. By carefully paraphrasing what they've heard, they can help their "friends" find clarity and understanding as they work toward wholeness and healing.





It's hard to find peace in our lives when we're not settled up. Taking our regrets from "Hindsight to Insight" allows us to experience God's love and grace thus embracing a future filled with hope.

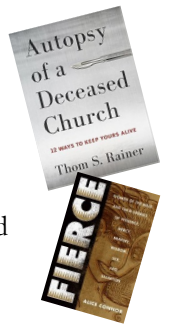
Upcoming opportunity: BeFriender Group Meeting- March 19, 2024

A fundamental BeFriender principle: "Active Listening". For more information regarding the BeFriender Ministry at Bethel, please contact Marci Groenewold (507-649-3160), Knight Stanley (612-877-0893), Myrna Luehmann (507-951-7112), Karen Mader (507-301-4368) or the Bethel Office (507-786-6674).

EVERY WEEK

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 9 AM - 3 PM

SUNDAY		8:30 am	Worship (livestream)
		9:45 am	Coffee Fellowship/Bethel Presents/Faith Flow/Bible Deep Dive
		10:45 am	Worship in the Sanctuary
MONDAY		6:30 pm	Adult/Resonance Bell Choir
TUESDAY		9:45 am	Staff Meeting
WEDNESDAY		3:30 pm	Limitless
		5:45 pm	BISTRO!
		6:15 pm	Ring Forth Bell Choir
		7:00 pm	Confirmation
		7:00 pm	Church Choir Rehearsal
		8:05 pm	Brio Bell Choir <i>(Starts 1/10)</i>
THURSDAY		8:30 am	MOB (Men of Bethel) will be reading and discussing <i>Autopsy of a Deceased Church</i> by Thom S. Rainer, addressing the causes of decline in church membership, and more importantly, giving 12 ways to keep your church alive.
		9:30 am	FAB (Faith and Books) will continue discussing the book, <i>Fierce: Women of the Bible and Their Stories of Violence, Mercy, Bravery, Wisdom, Sex, and Salvation.</i> , led by Pastor Ben. Join us in the Youth Room for rich discussions.
		2:00 pm	Grief Support Group



THIS MONTH

FEB 1	10:45 am	OWLS (Older, Wiser Lutherans)	FEB 13	9:00 am	Quilting Group 
	4:00 pm	Grief Support Group		6:30 pm	Church Council Meeting
	5:00 pm	Personnel Committee Meeting		6:30 pm	Endowment Committee Meeting
	7:00 pm	Bethel Vision Seekers at the Contented Cow.	FEB 14	ASH WEDNESDAY -- <i>Services at 11:00 am, 5:15 pm & 7:00 pm</i>	
FEB 4	5:00 pm	Peruvian Dinner Fundraiser		12:30 am	Mission & Justice Meeting
FEB 8	4:00 pm	Grief Support Group		5:15 pm	Congregational Life Committee
	6:30 pm	RIC Team Meeting	FEB 21	4:30 pm	Homes for God's Children
	7:00 pm	Finance Committee Meeting	FEB 27	9:00 am	Quilting Group 
FEB 11	8:30 am	Transfiguration Sunday	FEB 28	11:30 am	<i>Lenten Midday Worship</i>
		Installation of Church Council		12:00 pm	<i>Soup Lunch</i>
	9:30 am	Special Coffee Hour Honoring Juley Jenkinson & Janice Lehmkuhl		5:45 pm	<i>Soup Supper</i>
FEB 12	5:00 pm	Worship & Arts Committee		6:30 pm	<i>Joyous Light Lenten Evening Prayer</i>

FAITH FORMATION AT BETHEL...

A Shining Light — Juley Jenkinson!

For the past 13 years, Juley has served Bethel as Director of Early Childhood Ministry. We offer her our heart-felt thanks as she moves on to the Media Center at Spring Creek Elementary. She has certainly been a bright light to us and we will miss her deeply on staff. She's not leaving Bethel, however, so her joyful presence and her special touch in other areas of the church will continue.



The consummate host, Juley shared her birthday with the whole congregation in the CLC.



Dying rice for one of her creative and fun activities for the nursery.

Juley's big heart has made the nursery a fun and welcoming place.

(Please know that the regular nursery staff remains in place and the nursery hours will not change.)

What's New in Children's Ministry?

Upcoming Dates:

February 7 – Chimes begins for Limitless 3rd Graders 4:45PM
February 14 – Limitless Ash Wednesday Service 5:15PM

Brenda Rabbe (she/her)
Director of Children's Ministries
507-786-8878
childrensministry@bethelnorthfield



Arguing or Being Heard?

Why? Why? Why? This resounding chorus can become an obnoxious drone in the background of life, especially with children. Sometimes people view these inquiries as impertinent, rude, and disrespectful. Being questioned when you are in a position of authority is simply not allowed in some circles. I wonder, does engaging in these conversations with kids reduce your amount of authority, or does it create bonds of respect and trust? If an adult takes the time to share some of their thinking, thus teaching process to the child, does it also help the child feel heard and validated? Kids don't always need to have things their way, but they do consistently need to be seen and heard. What if sharing parts of our hearts, our thinking, has nothing to do with the adult needing to justify their decision, but instead is driven by seeking relationship. Children don't stay children forever. I wonder what our engagement as authority figures is modelling for their future behavior.

Be blessed. We're in this together.

Youth Ministry

Confirmation: J-term was a big success! Thank you to all the families who made the January schedule work. We are back to our schedule of 7:00-8:00 pm in your usual rooms.

Sixth Graders! You will meet February 7 and 21! See you then!

(continued on page 5)

Kristi Larson (she/her)
Director of Youth Ministries
651-230-6057 (cell/text)
youth@bethelnorthfield.org



(Youth continued)

There will be **no traditional Wednesday night programming** (Hangtime, Confirmation or Sixth Grade Connections) on February 14, Ash Wednesday. Please attend worship with your family.

Youth Sunday is February 25! Reach out to Kristi if you are interested in ushering, reading or serving communion!

Are you interested in helping with the **March Food Drive**? Reach out to Kristi! We need ideas for a theme, people to write and perform skits and more!

Calling all quilters! Our final senior quilt day is March 16, from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. We need helpers of ALL abilities (even those who don't sew!) Please reach out to Kristi if you would like to join us!

Sixth and Seventh Grade – mark your calendars for March 10, from noon – 2:30 pm for the Lord's Prayer Retreat held at church! A registration will go out this month.



ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

February 14

11:00am

5:15 pm

7:00 pm /Livestream



Beginning February 21:

LENTEN MIDDAY WORSHIP

11:30 am

SOUP LUNCH 12:00 pm

SOUP SUPPER 5:15 pm

LENTEN EVENING PRAYER

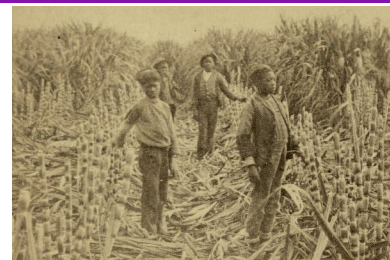
6:30 pm

BURN BRIGHTLY...

ARLA (Anti-Racism Learning & Advocacy)

ARLA's February gathering will take place on Zoom, Tuesday, Feb. 20, from 9:30-10:30, when we discuss the podcasts, *The Land of Our Fathers, episode 5, parts 1 and 2*. Please google the title and listen to the podcasts in advance and then join us for discussion.

If you have questions or would like to be added to the ARLA email list, please contact Connie DeGrote at cgdegrote@gmail.com or Paula Mathison at pamathiso@yahoo.com.



Bethel Presents... Living Out Our Call to Mission & Justice

When and how have you felt called by God to do a particular work or ministry or to serve others in some way? Who or what motivated you? How have you felt called differently over the course of your life? These are some of the questions we'll address to a mix of Bethel panel members as well as contemplate for ourselves. We are a community of people with wide-ranging gifts and callings! Come join us to learn some new things from one another **February 25, 9:45 am**.

Holden Village Registration is now open for summer 2024! Northfielders from all three ELCA congregations are planning to visit August 4-9. You may choose to arrive early or stay later. Registrations and travel arrangements must be made individually (there is no group registration), but the planning and the excitement can be shared! If you're interested in joining in, contact Pastor Inger. Register at www.holdenvillage.org

JANUARY IN REVIEW

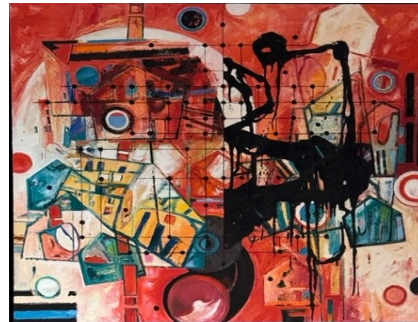


Limitless Kids!



Pastor Ben had an attentive group at FAB discussing the book: *Fierce: Women of the Bible and Their Stories of Violence, Mercy, Bravery, Wisdom, Sex, and Salvation.*

Quilters, hard at work on the quilts for the high school seniors at graduation.



Wendell Arneson's art has been on display during January, and the exhibit has been changing every week! He also switched out the piece hanging behind the front desk.



In the Nursery, learning to take care of God's creatures.



LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE

Fifty Years of ELCA World Hunger Ministry

“For 50 years we have joined together as Lutherans to address root causes of hunger and poverty around the world through ELCA World Hunger.” This statement is part of a recent report summarizing an emphasis on this ministry in the year of 2024.

In 1974, Lutheran leaders from three national Lutheran churches (The American Lutheran Church, The Lutheran Church in America, and the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church) met to consider how to address the increasing impact of hunger and poverty around the world. The result was a new cooperative ministry, “World Hunger Appeals.” On January 1, 1988, the ALC, LCA, and AELC (Association of Evangelical Lutheran Church) merged to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). A new title, ELCA World Hunger, was chosen for this ministry. Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran World Federation continued as partners and recipients of funds raised.

Each Synod, led by the Bishop and staff, was encouraged to establish a Hunger Team with four areas of focus:

- Local relief and development
- Domestic and global relief
- Education to raise awareness of conditions and causes of hunger and more
- Advocacy to help shape state and national policies to benefit the hungry and more

Hunger teams are dedicated to those goals in cooperation with other faith-based organizations such as Bread for the World, Habitat for Humanity, Church World Service, Lutheran Disaster Response and Lutheran Partners in Global Mission. Two Bethel members, Dottie Hammer and Clark Cary, have served on the S.E. MN Synod’s Hunger Team since it was established in 1988.

Bethel Lutheran Church continues to be a partner in this critical and challenging ministry. Coupled with ELCA HUNGER is LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE. Both have received several special offerings over the years and are a line item in our benevolence budget. In addition, many individual members make on-going gifts and the Alternative Giving Fair contributes a portion of funds that are raised.

Recent gifts to ELCA World Hunger:	2020: \$8,599	Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Relief: 2022: \$12,255
	2021: \$5740	
	2022: \$4885	

2023 gifts are not yet reported from the Synod. The Bethel Mission and Justice Committee hopes to recommend a 2024 financial goal to this mission.

Hunger and poverty are complex issues! We celebrate the fact that ELCA World Hunger gifts are at work in 60 countries and are available to all U.S. states. We walk alongside our companion churches and partners as they identify unique needs.

“Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” I John 3:18

FINANCIAL NOTES from Barb Fowler

December 31, 2023 Financial Report

Thank you to all who attended the Budget Meeting. We appreciate your interest. 2023 didn’t end quite the way we would have liked, but we are so thankful for the outstanding offering total for November and December of \$243,000, bringing the deficit down from \$79K to \$17K.

YTD totals Dec. 31, 2023

Revenue	\$931,275
Expenses	\$948,283
Total	(\$17,008)

Now we are looking forward to 2024. The total budget for 2024 is \$969,250, which is 4% higher than 2023. The good news is that we have two full-time pastors, a vibrant, idea-filled community, and we are growing! Our future is bright.



Bethel Lutheran Church
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Return Service Requested



Bethel Lutheran Church
Shares Christ's Love with a Big Heart

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.

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!



THANK YOU!

Fifteen months ago, Chelsey Headrick introduced me to the programs I would be using to publish the *Weekly* and the *Blaze*. In her gentle, enthusiastic and caring way, she started me out as Bethel's Communications Manager. I am so grateful to her for all of her guidance and loving support in those early weeks.

Since that time, I've come to make this position my own and thoroughly loved creating the newsletters. Being located at the front desk provided an opportunity for me to meet and visit with so many of you, gain insight into the congregation as well as a deeper understanding of just what a remarkable place Bethel is. Your warmth, your encouragement and gracious support of me, as I learned my way, has been palpable and has meant so much to me. I give a special thank you to Kathy Eckstam-Ames who has been a treasure in helping me proofread the newsletters.

I am sad to leave my place on the staff, but Bethel has become our church home (Kurt's and mine), so I'm really not going anywhere. I thank all of you for making me feel welcome here, in this role. Please know that while my position is ending, *communications* will continue. Pastor Inger will be creating the *Blaze*, Pastor Ben will be handling the *Weekly*, and they will keep you informed of what's happening at Bethel.

As for me, I return to retirement with an immensely grateful heart. I've learned so much, grown so much, and been blessed so much by this experience.

My deepest thanks,
 Janice Lehmkuhl

