

Bethel Blaze

July 2024

Sharing Christ's love with a big heart

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

In Person

Sunday Mornings:

8:30 am (indoors)

& 10:30 am (outdoors)

June 26th—September 8th

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



DISCERNING AN AV UPDATE FOR BETHEL

As early as 2018, congregational leadership had identified the need to update Bethel's audio/visual systems. Initial explorations were paused as focus shifted with the pandemic and as other needs took priority (including calling and welcoming two new pastors!)

In 2023, the audio/visual update came back to the forefront. The church council authorized Pastor Ben to assemble and lead a task force to look at our needs in earnest. The comprehensive vision is to not just better meet our current needs, but to increase our ministry capabilities for the future by updating the entire building (saving cost and standardizing equipment).



Proposed improvements include:

- Updating the audio system, and installing projectors and screens in the **Sanctuary**. New speakers will greatly improve the audio quality experienced in worship. The projectors and screens will give us the capability for slideshows, images, and videos that will enhance announcements, celebration Sundays, and funerals.
- Updating the ceiling speakers in the **CLC** and **Narthex** area to match the audio quality/output of those replaced in the Sanctuary.
- Updating and fully integrating the AV systems in the **Youth Room, East** and **Center Pods**, improving and streamlining presentation and video capabilities. This will have significant positive impact on our ministries, including Bethel U, Confirmation, Sunday School, Youth, Choir, and beyond.

The task force (Pastor Ben, Kelly Groenewold, Tim Valley, Catherine Engle, and Sam Dwyer) carefully completed their work and reported to council. Now it's time to share their recommendations with you! Please plan on attending one of the info meetings so you can learn more and ask questions.

An audio/visual update is a major capital campaign project, costing \$175,000. Funding possibilities will be discussed at the info meetings, and leadership will gauge the congregation's support.

AV Update Info Meetings

Sunday, July 21

between worship services

Wednesday, July 24

7:00 pm

Additional meetings will be offered in August



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

days off
Friday & Saturday

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

from Pastor Ben Schori

When I started at Bethel, just under a year ago, I had no ambitions to lead a Task Force that would bring forth the possibility of a congregational capital campaign. Trust me when I say it wasn't on my radar at all. But, sometimes, that's how the Spirit works, isn't it? Before I knew it, I was bringing the possibility of updating our audio/visual systems to council and being asked to lead a Task Force exploring it. And now here we are!

I am passionate about this not because I am a techie who absolutely loves speakers, projectors, and screens (oh my!), but because updated technology not only removes barriers to ministry, but supports and enhances it. I want the worship and programming we already have at Bethel to run as envisioned, rather than being strained by complicated technology or glitches. I want Bethel to have the capability to enhance our experiences further—from sharing announcements on screens during the prelude to spotlighting photos of youth trips or loved ones at special services. These principles shaped the AV Task Force's work.

I hope that many of you are able to attend the info meetings later this month, with more opportunities to follow in August. The AV Task Force and Bethel leadership recognizes that the funds needed for this possible project are significant. We would love to share with you why we believe this investment in the technology that supports and enhances our ministries would be worth it, and to listen to your thoughts, questions, and concerns.

So, I didn't plan on helping to lead an exploration of an AV update in my first year at Bethel any more than most of you planned on learning about and discerning one. But, perhaps, sometimes the best laid plans of the Spirit are ones we never thought to lay ourselves.

Peace & Blessings, Pastor Ben

BeFRIENDERS

by Marci Groenewold

"Grandma, do your legs work for crawling?" queried our 3-year-old grandson. My initial thought was of course, my legs work for crawling—what a silly question! Then I stopped to consider why he asked it. I recalled his maternal grandma suffers from hip and knee pain—perhaps her legs no longer work for crawling. As a result, my reaction was no longer one of insult, but one of warm-hearted understanding. This simple example illustrates how various life experiences shape our world perception. Our understanding of others' experiences depends upon the quality of our listening.

Researcher Otto Scharmer identified four levels of listening to another. If we listen only to respond, we aren't really listening at all. The only goal is to be ready with a response. Listening to understand can also be superficial as we gather facts and put them into context. A deeper level of listening is known as emotional listening. It's the listening to the unseen. It is listening to what is being said between the words. It's asking the right questions and allowing time for the answer, thus letting the other person know you truly care and want to understand. This can lead to generative listening—when we are fully prepared to embrace an alternative viewpoint. Generative listening is about turning words into action. A transformational idea or solution, co-created by both of you, can lead to new possibilities for the future.

Intentional, patient listening is vital especially as we navigate conversations with those with different life experiences. Undivided attention to the other person is essential. Carefully crafted questions along with thoughtful consideration of the answers are critical as we explore transformational possibilities together.

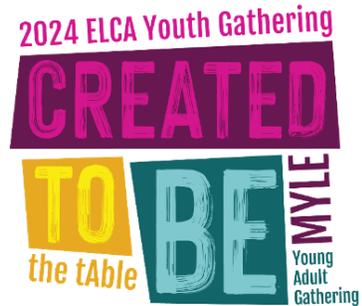
Upcoming Opportunity: Group BeFriender Meeting July 11 @ 3 pm in the Bethel Youth Room

A fundamental BeFriender principle: "God is Present." For more information regarding the BeFriender Ministry at Bethel, please contact Marci Groenewold (507-649-3160) or the Bethel Office (507-786-6674).

FAITH FORMATION IN THE SUMMER

A staffed nursery for little ones is available 8:00 am—noon on Sunday mornings

Our new Nursery Coordinator, Sierra Hansen, will begin mid-summer with a new baby in tow! Our regular nursery staff will keep things running smoothly until Sierra starts.



Summer Events for Middle School Students (including rising 6th graders)

We have some fun planned for you this summer with other local churches! Mark your calendars for the following events and sign up to join us this month!

July 24 – Apple Valley Aquatic Center

We are back to having some fun with St. John's and St. Peter's this month! On July 24 we will be heading to the Apple Valley Aquatic Center. We will meet at Bethel at 3:00 pm and return at 6:30 pm. For more information on what the Aquatic Center has to offer, please go to: <https://www.cityofapplevalley.org/971/Apple-Valley-Family-Aquatic-Center>

All rising 6th graders – 9th graders are welcome to join us. High school students are invited to join us as leaders! We also will need adults to drive (and play). Admission is \$13. There are concessions at the water park or you are welcome to bring snacks in (please no glass containers.) To register for this event please go to: <https://bethelnorthfield.breezechms.com/form/9b68866346>

August 21 – Romans & Christians

Bethel is headed to the BIG EASY!

Every three years, thousands of high school youth and their adult leaders from across the ELCA gather for a week of faith formation known as the ELCA Youth Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives.

This year, a group of Bethel youth will join 20,000 other young people from across the country in New Orleans, Louisiana from July 16th – 21st! Please pray for us and our travels while we learn that we are “Created To Be” (this year’s theme).

We look forward to sharing stories of our travels when we return!

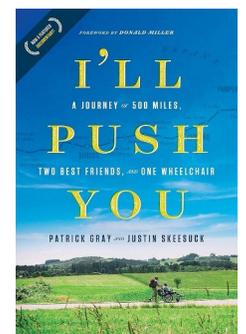
The Christikon trip for our rising 10th graders will be featured in the August newsletter.

IN THE LIBRARY...

I'll Push You

Two best friends, 500 miles, one wheelchair, and the challenge of a lifetime. Friendship takes on new meaning in this true story of Justin and Patrick, born less than two days apart in the same hospital. Best friends their whole lives, they grew up together, went to school together, and were best men at each other's weddings. When Justin was diagnosed with a neuromuscular disease that robbed him of the use of his arms and legs, Patrick was there, helping to feed and care for him in ways he'd never imagined. Determined to live life to the fullest, the friends refused to give into despair or let physical limitations control what was possible for Justin. So when Justin heard about the Camino de Santiago, a 500-mile trek through Spain, he wondered aloud to Patrick whether the two of them could ever do it. Patrick's immediate response was: "I'll push you." *I'll Push You* is the real-life story of this incredible journey.

A travel adventure full of love, humor, and spiritual truth, it exemplifies what every friendship is meant to be and shows what it means to never find yourself alone. You'll discover how love and faith can push past all limits--and make us the best versions of ourselves.



IN THE WORKS

Welcome Area

Our welcome area is coming together! It's a work in progress, but the space is already being engaged in new ways.



Meanwhile, the formal desk is a great addition to our library! Volunteers Judy Sidorf, Rose Turnaciff, Marilyn Kelley, and Darla Dahl have organized it beautifully.



Asber Engle and Nathan Broughton hang out between services in our new window nook.



Sanctuary Art to draw us beyond our Land Acknowledgment Statement

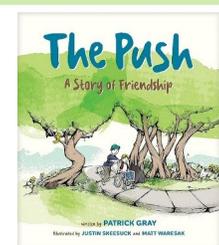
Indigenous artist John Sterner has been sharing his progress on the wood relief piece commissioned for Bethel's sanctuary. It's exciting to see it take shape! Note the themes of water and interconnectedness. Help us see this project through by donating online at <https://bethelnorthfield.breezechms.com/give/online> and selecting the "Indigenous Artwork" fund, or by check with "Indigenous Art" designated in the memo line.



Full sized piece and pattern

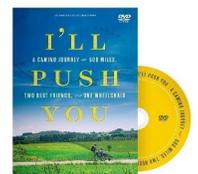


detail of design pattern



The Push, A Story of Friendship

The library also has the children's version of the *I'll Push You* story and the DVD documentary. The documentary is also available to rent through the following streaming platforms: YouTube, Google Play Movies & TV, Apple TV, and Amazon Prime Video.



BETHEL BRIGHT LIGHTS



Bethel's 2024 Graduates! Big hearts come in different sizes. Youth director Kristi Larson and Kyan Rauk share a laugh.



Funeral volunteers like Carol Cole offer comfort and a warm welcome to mourners even when the caterer sends their own servers.



Bethel and St. John's kids came together for a joint VBS: Camp Firelight and at Good Earth Village.

Sisters Johanna and Isla Schori share a chair.



Our youth in Duluth had fun and worked hard on their Serve Boldly trip!

Feed My Starving Children fun!

Boxes packed: 61
Meals: 13,176
Kids fed a daily meal for a year: 36
Cost: \$3,821



GIFTS FROM THE GARAGE SALE

Beyond the bonding and fellowship amongst volunteers and the great deals Bethel’s annual garage sale provides for the community, each year the proceeds help fund an array of ministry efforts. This year was incredible! We raised \$22,866 (after expenses) to allocate. Thank you for donating, organizing or working the sale, and for shopping! A steering committee of Darlene Broughton, Judy Code, Kay Lee Henderson, Juley Jenkinson, Cindy Kreis, Lu Lindstrom, Bonnie Pavek and Kirsten Scott met to review requests and finalize this year’s distribution.

Homes for God’s Children—Ruth’s House & Sarah’s House	\$10,000
Bethel’s Good Samaritan Fund (gas and food cards)	\$2,500
Bethel’s Operating Budget Tithe	\$2,000
Sanctuary Indigenous Art	\$2,000
HealthFinders	\$1,500
Quilting Supplies and Shipping	\$1,500
CAC Food Shelf Diaper Fund	\$1,000
Bethel Funeral Committee (table decorations)	\$400
Refugee Fund (swimming program fee)	\$300
2025 Garage Sale Expense	\$600+



Community Action Center

FINANCIAL NOTES

from Barb Fowler, Treasurer

	May	YTD (as of May 31)
Revenue	\$72,698	\$389,438
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>80,617</u>	<u>409,314</u>
Total	\$ -7,920	\$ -19,876

May monthly expenses exceeded revenues which increased the YTD deficit to nearly \$20,000. Please do all you can to reverse this deficit trend.

You may have noticed that in June Bethel’s parking lots were seal-coated and striped as part of our maintenance plan. This expense of \$16,000 is paid from the Capital Reserve Fund. Each month we “pay ourselves” \$1,750 from the operating budget to build up the Capital Reserve Fund so that there are funds to cover non-annual expenses.

Thank you to the Garage Sale team for including the operating budget in their distribution of funds. This will help cover facilities expenses which are budgeted in operations.

Members of the Finance Committee: Lee Runzheimer, Brian Haefner, Andrew Jorgenson, Heidi McCormick, Lois Stratmoen, Blair Fowler, Trustee, Joel Leer, Steward, Bill Hoekstra, President, Pastor Inger, ex-officio, and Barb Fowler, Finance Officer.



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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!



Coming in August!

We're excited to celebrate another "season of Creation" next month. As in past years, you are encouraged to walk, bike or carpool as an act of worship on the way to worship (of course, no need limit yourself to August if the Spirit so moves you!) This year, your reward is in the connection to and satisfaction of caring for God's world. Each Sunday, our Creation Care team will offer specific actions we can take, and worship will lift up different themes. We are focused on our local Minnesota environs this year:

August 4 — Lakes

August 11 — Prairie & Fields

August 18 — Birds

August 25 — Humans / Northfield ELCA God's Work Our Hands Sunday

God's work.
Our hands.

***one 9:30 am worship** before joint service opportunities
 with St. John's and St. Peter's

Director of Music & Worship Megan Engel is excited to introduce us to "Peace of the Prairie," a newly commissioned liturgy crafted by Minnesota composer, Carol Meier, and St. Olaf alum and ELCA pastor, Meta Herrick Carlson.