



Bethel Blaze

December 2024

Sharing Christ's love with a big heart

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

In Person

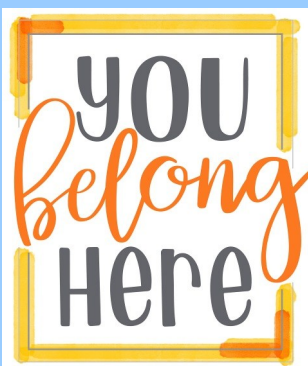
Sunday Mornings:
8:30 am and 10:45 am
in the sanctuary

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



PREPARING THE WAY

HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER

6:30 pm Wednesdays in Advent
(December 4, 11 and 18)

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Sunday, December 15
8:30 and 10:45 am



DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

3:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship
4:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship/Livestream
6:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship *with Holy Communion*

DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS MORNING

10:00 am Christmas Day Worship

DECEMBER 29

9:00 am Cookie Exchange & Coffee Fellowship
10:00 am Worship/Livestream

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
Fridays & Saturday

Dear Bethel,

This time of year, we often think about preparing for Christmas celebrations: putting up certain decorations, baking special foods, sending cards, buying gifts. My mom is insisting on some sort of tree, but I am sure that my normal Christmas decorations won't survive my recalcitrant puppy Paolo. I am going to bring them here and pour myself into preparing the Bethel welcome area.

Spiritually, Advent is a time to prepare ourselves anew to ponder the mysteries of the incarnation, and to prepare for Christ's return. Some years, it feels as easy as stirring together the classic ingredients: a little hope, a generous helping of love, a dash of joy, a sense of peace. Some years, it can feel exhausting even before you begin. Perhaps you have to find yourself trying to prepare in a new setting. Perhaps the hope has been misplaced, the joy is a little stale, or peace is in short supply.

The Advent wreath can help us whether we are celebrating or still searching. Each week as we lift up the themes of hope, love, joy and peace, may it be an invitation to tend a flame or notice a need in your heart, in your home, in our community, or in the world. If you are feeling full, may that awareness center and ground you. If you are feeling low, consider coming to evening prayer on a Wednesday, or the Advent Peace & Healing service (sometimes called a "Blue Christmas" service) December 18 at St. Peter's. Sometimes what you need can be found where two or three are gathered for song and silence. May the Holy Spirit bank your fires and light your searches.

Advent blessings,
Pastor Inger

BeFRIENDERS

by Marci Groenewold

Have you ever been told "Don't worry, everything will be okay" or "I know how you feel" when experiencing a difficult time? For BeFrienders, these statements are referred to as "platitudes." In actuality, no one really knows how you feel or if everything will be ever okay.







The Women of the ELCA publish the Gather magazine as a resource for women's Bible studies and timely articles. In her recent "Receiving Grace" series, author Heidi Haverkamp offers insight into what she refers to as "toxic positivity." Here are some key points: *Living and walking in the light of Christ does not mean the same thing as being happy or positive all the time. It is a Christian practice to acknowledge that life is hard and difficult sometimes. Healing requires, honesty, as well as allowing painful emotions to be heard. While toxic positivity says, "Look on the bright side!" or "Everything happens for a reason, God has a plan" or "Don't be so negative," the Light of Christ says, "With the help and love of God and other people, we can do hard things" and "What you are feeling is worth listening to. Just as Jesus listened to the people he met, Jesus listens to you too."*

*There is no need to feel responsible **FOR** another's feelings by fixing, protecting, rescuing or controlling someone else's feelings. By being responsible **TO** another you can show empathy, listen, encourage, confront and share. You can expect the person to be responsible for themselves and their own actions. You can trust and let go.*

- ✱ Bethel's Lydia Circle meets on the third Tuesday of the month and uses the Gather magazine Bible Studies. All are welcome!
- ✱ Please consider the BeFriender Ministry. Training begins February 6, 2025. Classes will meet at the St. Dominic rectory from 6:30 - 8:30 pm for eight weeks. Ask Marci Groenewold or one of the pastors for more details.

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		6:30 pm	Resonance (Adult Bell Choir)
		12:00 pm	Bible Text Study @ The Vault
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
		6:30 pm	Advent Evening Prayer on December 4, 11 and 18
		7:00 pm	Confirmation & Hangtime
			Church Choir
		8:05 pm	Brio Bell Choir
THURSDAY		8:30 am	MoB (Men of Bethel) Rev. Gene Broughton is leading our study of Bonhoeffer's <i>The Cost of Discipleship</i> . Bonhoeffer believed discipleship is not just about personal spiritual growth, but also about the formation of a community of believers who live out their faith together.
		9:30 am	FaB (Faith and Books) We will begin reading and discussing Rev. Jacqui Lewis' <i>Fierce Love</i> on December 5. Please join us for rich discussions in the Youth Room. Contact lanareich@yahoo.com to be added to the FaB email list.

THIS MONTH

DEC 1	<i>Alternative Giving Fair in East Narthex</i>	DEC 16	7:00 pm "Sing Boldly" @ Contented Cow
	9:45 am TORCH Packaging	DEC 17	1:00 pm Lydia Circle
DEC 5	10:45 pm OWLs (Older, Wiser Lutherans)		6:30 pm Church Council
	7:00 pm Vision Seekers @ Tanzewald	DEC 18	4:00 pm Advent Peace & Healing (Blue Christmas) Service @ St. Peter's
DEC 8	<i>Alternative Giving Fair in East Narthex</i>		4:30 pm Homes for God's Children Caroling
DEC 10	9:00 am Quilting Group	DEC 22	9:30 am Ramirez Family Celebration
DEC 11	12:30 pm Mission & Justice	DEC 24	3:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship
	4:30 pm Congregational Life		4:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship / livestream
	6:30 pm Circle of Saints blessing for 6th graders as part of Advent Evening Prayer		6:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship with Holy Communion
DEC 12	5:00 pm Personnel Committee	DEC 25	10:00 am Christmas Day Worship / livestream
	7:00 pm Finance Committee	DEC 29	9:00 am Cookie Exchange
DEC 15	<i>Alternative Giving Fair in East Narthex</i>		10:00 am Worship / livestream
	morning Children's Christmas Program & Reception		
	1:00 pm Benedictine Chapel		

FAITH FORMATION AT BETHEL...

Nursery

Our Sunday mornings are packed full of exciting projects, meaningful stories, crazy games, silly songs, tasty snacks, and fantastic friendships! On Wednesdays, little ones can play in the nursery while parents take advantage of volunteer opportunities like singing in the choir, helping with Bistro, or being a small group leader for confirmation.

8:15 am — noon on Sunday mornings

3:15 — 8:00 pm on Wednesdays

Pray-ground

The Pray-ground is available in the northwest corner of the sanctuary. This is a designated place where young children can experience worship through age-appropriate materials like themed activities and children's Bibles. Such a space helps children bridge from the nursery to being part of the Sunday assembly. We encourage parents to sit close by, and for children to rejoin their families before communion.

Children & Youth Ministry

We're teaming up with Congregational Life to offer

Caroling and Cocoa Wednesday, December 18

All ages welcome to join us as we spread joy to our neighbors at the Benedictine and Northfield Retirement Center with Christmas caroling, followed by Hot Cocoa Fellowship in Bethel's Christian Life Center at 5:15 pm.

The details:

1. Limitless attendees and chaperones will carol at the NRC from 4:45-5:15 pm
2. Youth and Adults (& non-Limitless kids) will carol at the Benedictine from 4:30-5:00 pm
3. All will meet for Hot Cocoa Fellowship after caroling.
4. Bistro begins at 5:45 pm

National Honor Society kids can receive volunteer credit for this!



**Northfield
Retirement Community**
Innovation. Choice. Tradition.



Benedictine
LIVING COMMUNITY | **NORTHFIELD**



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

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

OPPORTUNITIES

A New (Old) Song...

Marty Haugen's *Holden Evening Prayer* is the simple vespers service Bethel uses every Wednesday evening in Advent when we gather for a half-hour of song and silence. It is beloved around the world.



Now this beloved service has inspired a NEW work for concert band: *Holden Village Vespers*. **Come to a special Bethel presents between services on Sunday December 8** to hear from our own Claire Larson, band director at Kenyon-Wanamingo High School (Wanamingo was Marty Haugen's childhood home!) and Shirley Maier, composer, about how this piece came to be.



And then experience it yourself!

**The premiere of *Holden Village Vespers* will be
7 pm on Monday, December 9
at the Kenyon-Wanamingo High School Concert
400 6th St, Kenyon, MN 55946**

Christmas Cards

This year, help us send **Christmas greetings to our neighbors in residential care facilities here in Northfield** like Three Links, Northfield Retirement Center, Laura Baker Services, Valley View

Assisted Living, Ruth's House and Sarah's House. Our goal this year is to send **400 cards**, written by Bethel members, to reach people who need a thoughtful Christmas message.

Cards and envelopes are available just outside the CLC. Sample messages are provided if that is helpful. Please sign the cards with **just your first name**. Return completed cards to the "mailbox" near the cards outside the CLC. We need your cards by **December 12** so they can be delivered to the residents by **December 15**.

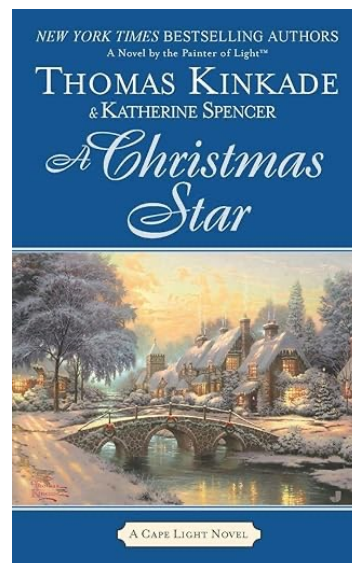
Thank you for thinking of people often forgotten this time of the year!



IN THE LIBRARY...

A Christmas light shines bright amid the darkest winter in this novel in Thomas Kinkade and Katherine Spencer's Cape Light series.

With Christmas only a few weeks away, Sam and Jessica Morgan look forward to celebrating the joyous day together. But when they're awakened by the smoke alarm during one quiet night, they barely make it outside before their beloved house is engulfed in flames. Meanwhile, single mom Julie Newton and her seven-year-old daughter appear on Jack Sawyer's doorstep, thanks to bad weather, a broken-down car, and a dead cell phone battery. And though Jack, still mourning the loss of his wife, feels none of the holiday spirit, he can't turn them away. As Sam and Jessica become perpetual guests in others' homes, trying to piece their future back together, and Jack finds his frozen heart melting day by day, it soon becomes clearer than ever that miracles can happen even in the humblest of settings.



BETHEL BRIGHT LIGHTS

Pastor Inger was so touched by all the support for the Guild's production of My Fair Lady. The backstage walls are full of Bethel names—a testament of this congregation sharing their theatrical gifts with the community. A special adaption of "Get Me to the Church on Time" helped remind folk of the end of Daylight Savings time.



"Aikoyaka" claimed its spot in the sanctuary and in our hearts!

A huge thank you to all those who donated time and treasure to this major project. Especially grateful for those who shared their talents (logistics and muscle!) behind the scenes: Karna Hauck, Kirsten Scott, Blair Fowler, Chris Bussmann, Marv Farmer, and Bill Hoekstra. John Sterner's months of creative work culminated in a very involved, careful installation.

Bishop Hassansally joined us on All Saints to formally dedicate the piece. The project was even featured in the Northfield News!



We love hearing our children sing!

Children's Music Leader Abby Atzinger and youth percussionists Eric Radtke and Isaac Schleif led special music that celebrated the animals that are part of God's story.



Bethel, St. John's and St. Peter's came together for a special Thanksgiving Eve worship service and pie fellowship. Adults love to sing, too—look at that mass choir!



CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING: ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Please join in celebrating the ELCA World Hunger 50th Anniversary with your gifts! Mission & Justice selected this important ministry partner to receive our “beyond the budget” Christmas Special Offering. Online giving to the Christmas Special Offering will be available starting Monday, December 2.

ELCA World Hunger testifies to the hope and commitment of God’s promise of a time when we will hunger and thirst no more. The program not only provides food but works with drought and creative water initiatives such as wells, water access, and irrigation systems. God’s Global Barnyard provides a variety of animals and farming initiatives to nourish lives and generate income. Presently, ELCA World Hunger works alongside communities and agencies in 86 countries, including the United States. Together, we work and serve to help break the cycle of hunger and poverty—for good!



ALTERNATIVE GIVING FAIR

The 16th annual Bethel Alternative Giving Fair (AGF) is underway in Bethel’s East Narthex and runs through Sunday, December 15. Starting from a \$3 donation to a much larger gift, you can make a real difference!

What is an alternative gift? An alternative gift is humanitarian support given in honor of a friend or family member. They are gifts of peace and justice, gifts that are sustainable and build security. These alternative gifts multiply and grow, sometimes exponentially, and offer hope and new life to people facing grave crises and needs. They challenge the trivial in our modern culture. These are authentic gifts that people really use and cherish.

This year we have chosen relevant projects that are tended by authentic and reliable, low-overhead organizations, many of which are grassroots and “on the ground.” Stop by and pick up your 2024 Bethel Alternative Giving Fair booklet. Select one or more projects that are meaningful and priced right for your family and for your designated receiver. You can also pick up inserts explaining the gift and the purpose of your giving.



FINANCIAL NOTES

from Barb Fowler, Financial Officer

Financial information:

	October	YTD
Revenue	\$ 117,192	\$ 776,804
Expenses	106,557	799,732
Total	\$ 10,635	\$ (22,928)

Great news for October revenue! Income received exceeded the monthly goal by \$36K. This allowed us to cover October expenses plus reduce the deficit by \$10,635. Thank you.

Budgeted annual revenue of \$969K less Oct. 31 YTD actual income of \$777K equals \$192K needed to meet budget or \$96K for each of Nov. and Dec. As you are reading this, we are awaiting the results of November. I hope you are as excited as I am to see where we are at. We will let you know the amount needed during December to meet our annual expenses and end the year in a positive balance. Thank you for your commitment to Bethel.



Bethel Lutheran Church
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Northfield, MN 55057

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Phone: 507-786-6674

Web: www.bethelnorthfield.org

www.facebook.com/bethellutheran

Email: bethel@bethelnorthfield.org

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Return Service Requested



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

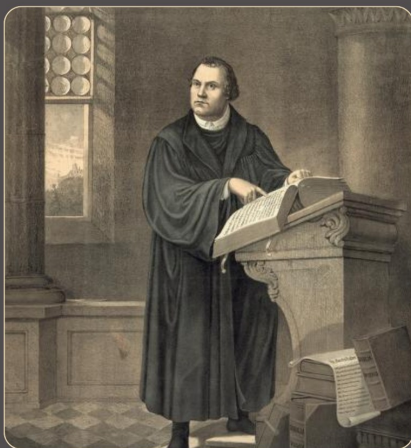
We celebrate all people as children of God. We unconditionally welcome diversity of age, race, citizenship, ethnicity, cultural identity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, education, relationship status, family structure, and life challenges. Your diversity and uniqueness are valued. Your 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!



Share
Christ's
Love with a
BIG HEART

SAVE THE DATES!



SIN(G) BOLDLY!
AT THE CONTENTED COW

Monday, December 16, 2024: Christmas Carols and Advent Anthems

The doors to the pub shall open each night at 7pm. Sinners and saints of all ages are welcome to join in the fellowship and fun!

Please be sure to mark your calendars —

Budget Meeting

Sunday, January 19th

9:45 am in the sanctuary

Our treasurer will present the proposed budget for 2024.

Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 26th

9:45 am in the sanctuary

As a congregation, we will receive 2024 reports
and look together at the year ahead.