



Bethel Blaze

July 2025

Sharing Christ's love with a big heart

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

In Person

Sunday Mornings:

8:30 am and 10:30 am
May 25—August 31

Online

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

Check our website
for the link!

You can also view a recording
of 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



REMEMBERING WHAT GOD HAS DONE...

As I write this, it was exactly seven years ago this week when the endowment fund committee met for the first time. I can still remember our conversations as we made plans to start an endowment fund and dreamt of what could be possible. The way endowments work is that the principal is kept intact while a portion of the income generated is used annually. Bethel's endowment fund was created to further support the mission and extend the ministry of Bethel, apart from its general operations. A recurring theme in our conversations and a foundational reason for creating an endowment was to have a permanent fund to receive and manage estate gifts. We felt that we had a significant opportunity to promote giving to Bethel through will and estate provisions, and that Bethel members would respond generously to this new way of leaving a legacy.

Chuck Sandstrom and I were two of the seven founding members of the endowment fund committee. The other founding members were Ryan Blumhoefer, Barb Fowler, Lu Lindstrom, Bill Nelson and Randy Peterson. I know Chuck felt passionately about creating the endowment fund and he was excited about how this fund would grow over time and extend the reach of Bethel's ministry, forever. Therefore, it was not a big surprise when we learned from his wife Dianne Kelly that Chuck wanted to direct his bequest for Bethel to the endowment fund. We are so grateful to Chuck for this generous gift!

The endowment fund has now been the beneficiary of two significant estate gifts, first from Don Nelson and more recently from Chuck. These gifts are a significant reason the fund is now over \$800,000, although we have also had several, smaller, current gifts from other donors. I hope all Bethel supporters will consider including a bequest for the endowment fund in your estate plans. Gifts of all sizes matter. They grow over time through careful, long-term investments, and forever sustain future ministry needs.

We've now been through two grant cycles and have awarded grants for numerous projects, like food expenses for the Peruvian dinner, a new octave of handbells, a 9-Square court for our youth, funds for the Bethel Library, and the AV Update for the sanctuary. Our next grant application period will be in the fall, and new for 2026 — we will also have a grant application period in the spring!

It is rewarding to look back over the last seven years, to recognize the creation of the endowment fund and its exciting growth. Prayers of thanksgiving for the impact these gifts will make in our ministry today and tomorrow!

With thanks,

Mari Aylin, *Endowment Fund Committee Chair*



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and Thursday

days off
Friday & Saturday

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

from Pastor Inger

Dear Bethel,

At the very end of May, our Synod gathered under the theme “Remember what God has done. Prepare for what God will do.” While we do this every Sunday as we listen to the Word and receive communion, this theme feels particularly appropriate for this season and our congregation, in the midst of all the changes around us and as we live into a restructure.

Remember what God has done. Sometimes we have a bird’s-eye view: over fifty years ago, God worked through local congregations to create the Northfield Retirement Community, which has provided compassionate, high-quality care to aging adults with a full continuum of living options. Currently, Bethel’s own Bill Nelson has been serving faithfully on the NRC board as chair. A tree planting ceremony was held to mark a new partnership with Vivie (a faith-based company serving seniors throughout the Midwest) that will allow the NRC’s mission to continue and strengthen. Sometimes we have a rooftop view: in the front page article, Mari Aylin describes the work that began seven years ago to establish an endowment for Bethel—work that is now fully bearing fruit. Sometimes, there are signs of Spirit’s movement all around us: even as the photos from last month’s activities and events make me smile, I also remember other moments—hearing about VBS skits, and the congregation singing the Lord’s Prayer.

Prepare for what God will do. Come to worship: be renewed in baptismal waters and nourished for the journey by the body and blood of Christ. Engage God’s word: in worship, Bible studies, or devotions. Pray! Six parishioners gathered for our first Pray Without Ceasing (Bethel’s version of a churchwide effort to stay grounded and centered by Christ as we discern how to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God in these times). I am so encouraged by all the ways I see Bethel parishioners preparing and letting the Spirit move: in your gentleness and kindness and ways you show up for each other (especially as we mourned four members in June), your fierceness advocating for the neighbor, your curiosity and commitment as you host ISAIAH listening sessions, your generosity.

When you feel restless in remembering, see where the Spirit might be nudging you into preparations. When the preparations get overwhelming, make time to remember. The God of peace is with you, even here, even now.

FINANCIAL

Financial information: January – May 2025

Revenue: \$370K
Expenses -420K
Total (-50K)

Financials for the month of May resulted in a POSITIVE balance of \$30K. This reduced the YTD balance from a deficit of \$80K at April 30 to \$50K deficit at May 31. Still a deficit but going in the right direction.



Thank you to the Garage Sale Team for allocating \$2000 to the annual operating budget.

Working together, we can meet our monthly expenses and focus on all of Bethel’s ministries.

Members of the Finance Committee: Barb Fowler (Financial Officer), Heidi McCormick, Lee Runzheimer, Blair Fowler (Trustee), Andrew Jorgenson (Steward), Paula Mathison (President), and Pastor Inger (ex-officio)

EVERY WEEK

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY—THURSDAY 9 AM - 3 PM

SUNDAY		8:30 am	Worship/Livestream
		9:45 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:30 am*	Outdoor Worship (* Summer Schedule through September 1)
		Evening	Bethel Softball July 13 @ Babcock at 6:00 pm playing St. Dominic Johnnys July 20 @ Sechler 2 at 6:00 pm playing Trinity Blue July 27 @ Babcock at 6:00 pm playing Cornerstone
MONDAY		12:00 pm	Bible Text Study @ The Vault (back to our normal time!)
TUESDAY		9:45 am	Staff Meeting
WEDNESDAY		12:15 pm	Pray Without Ceasing A half-hour prayer service to uplift and unite us in this time of significant change.
		6:00 pm	Summer English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes in the Fireside Room
THURSDAY		9:30 am	FaB (Faith and Books) , our women's book group, will begin Sister Joan Chittister's <i>In Search of Belief</i> , on July 3. Our rich discussions occur weekly in the Youth Room. Please email Lana Reich at lanareich@yahoo.com to be added to the FaB email list.
FRIDAY		9:30 am	WoW (Women of the Word) via zoom (beginning July 11)



The Monday Bible study has participants who come every week and others who drop in when their schedules permit. Every time there is laughter and learning.

THIS MONTH

JULY 4	Independence Day—Church Office Closed		<div>Bethel @ Christikon! 9th graders Backpacking Trip July 11-19 8th Graders On Site July 19-26</div>		
JULY 6	9:45 am	Thank You Mimi & Brent! Elevated Coffee Fellowship			
JULY 8	9:00 pm	Mission Quilting			
	2:00 pm	Library	JULY 14	7:00 pm	Creation Care
JULY 9	3:15 pm	Youth Splash Valley Event	JULY 20	1:00 pm	Bethel @ Benedictine Chapel
	4:30 pm	Homes for God’s Children	JULY 22	9:00 am	Mission Quilting
	7:00 pm	Vision Seekers Men gather for fellowship and to take in the Dundas Dukes’ game	JULY 23	2:00 pm	Monthly Movie— <i>Carmen</i> (2021)
JULY 10	6:00 pm	Active Befriender Ministry Support			
	7:00 pm	Finance			

BETHEL BRIGHT LIGHTS



In June, we blessed our high school graduates. Here Ryan Kuyper displays his senior quilt with older brother Darrin '22 and proud grandma Judy.

Our RIC (Reconciling in Christ) Committee made a splash at Pride in the Park! So fun to see Bethel folks out and about spreading love and joy (especially Shea Engle's pink unicorn!)



Our own Evie Bauer and Odin Norvold were all smiles at the Northfield Youth Choir's summer camps (hosted at Bethel); Another week, folks enjoyed the Monthly Movie gathering.



Our high school youth had adventures at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in Montana.

Bethel Trailblazers had their first overnight camp experience at Good Earth Village with Pastor Ben.



NEW WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH MISSION QUILTING!

If you've been interested in helping make mission quilts, but haven't been able to join on Tuesdays, we have new options! Linda Bliese and her helpers have put together quilt top packets with the pieces needed and a colored diagram of how to sew them together. Pick up a packet to take home and put together in your own time; then return the completed top to the church office and take another.

Want to get more confident in sewing a top together first? Lois Cary and Rose Turnacliff are organizing some informal summer sewing days at the church. Bring your own machine and join the fun! Experienced sewers are welcome as well. We hope to expand the participation in the Bethel Mission Quilt ministry. Donations of cotton fabric and used sheets also help!

Thank You!

Join us Sunday, July 6 between services to thank Mimi for her years as office manager, and to thank Brent for his work running the livestream. Congregational Life is hosting an elevated coffee fellowship in their honor.