



Bethel Blaze

May 2026

Sharing Christ's love with a big heart

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

In Person

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

Online:

The 8:30 am 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 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



THE GIFT OF THE GARAGE SALE: REDUCE & REPURPOSE

It's almost here! Maybe you're looking forward to decluttering your home. Maybe you want to share your passion for baking. Maybe you really enjoy the fun and sense of community when you're part of the team making it all happen.

2026 BETHEL GARAGE SALE

Friday, May 15, 7:00 am – 6:00 pm and
Saturday, May 16, 8:00 am – noon
\$10 Bag Sale Saturday 10:00 am – noon

There are several ways to contribute to the 2026 Bethel Garage Sale.

Please donate!

In-kind donation drop-off dates for Bethel members are Monday, May 11 through Wednesday, May 13 from 9:00 am until 7:00 pm each day. In-kind donations in clean, gently used condition are appreciated. Items not accepted include mattresses, TVs, VCRs, outdated electronics, cribs, car seats, exercise equipment, and large, artificial Christmas trees. Donations will not be accepted on Thursday, May 14. Please contact Don Pavek (612-685-3207) for transportation of furniture or larger items for donation.

Please bake!

The Bethel Garage Sale will again feature a bake sale! Please drop off labeled baked goods for the sale on Thursday, May 14 from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm. Individually-wrapped items along with cookies and bars packaged in groups of eight are appreciated.

Please volunteer!

Numerous volunteer opportunities are needed Sunday, May 10 through Saturday, May 16. We are especially looking for cashiers, a lead in the linen area, and a lead in the jewelry area. Please join the fun and sign up using your email invitation on Breeze or at the *Among the Ministries* table on Sunday, May 3. Walk-in volunteers are also welcome!

Our **Bethel Garage Sale Social** will be held Thursday evening, May 14 at the Northfield Golf Club. Details will follow.

We are looking forward to another successful Bethel Garage Sale, and we can't wait to see you there!

GARAGE SALE SET UP

Sunday, May 10—Thursday, May 14
9:00 am – 8:00 pm

BAKE SALE DROP OFF

Thursday, May 14 9:00 am—3:00 pm

FIRESIDE REFLECTIONS

by Pastor Ben



Pastor Ben Schori
(he/him)

pastor.ben@
bethelnorthfield.org
(preferred for non-urgent
communication)

office
507-786-8953

office hours
by appointment
Monday—Thursday

days off
Friday & Saturday

It feels like a lot is going on and coming up, a lot of change. The school and program year is wrapping up, the Bethel garage sale is almost here followed by New Member Sunday, graduation is right around the corner, and then it's summer, which, this year, promises to be filled with a new kind of busy as we work toward Bethel's new Children, Youth, & Family Ministry team make up and programming for next fall. For more on that last one, check out the back page article of this newsletter.

Change is a funny thing. Sometimes it comes as planned, others, unexpectedly. Sometimes it comes too quickly, others, too slow. And the experience of change is never universal. While the same change for some can be experienced overwhelmingly as positive, others are hit more strongly by the negatives. Bethel, like any community, is no different. We are not uniform in our experience of all that has been, is, and will be going on within and outside our congregation.

It can be so easy, so human, to think the way you feel is the way all of us do or should. One of the best ways I've found to combat this reaction to change or lack of change (planned or unexpected, quick or slow) is connecting with people, and not just those like-minded; sharing your thoughts, feelings, and experiences and then listening to theirs with an open mind and heart.

At the end of this month, we will once again celebrate Pentecost, the giving of the Holy Spirit, and shift into the long season after. Amid the changes, may the Spirit lead us and open our minds and hearts to the shifts of the season, the milestone events, and the building up of the familiar and new.

Peace & Blessings,
Pastor Ben

BEFRIENDERS

by Marci Groenewold

About ten years ago, I was lectured about the pointlessness Christian faith. I was told there is no God. Furthermore, the solution to all of life's problems could be answered by a smartphone. May is National Mental Health Awareness month, and I would argue that when it comes to resolving a life issue, talking to a BeFriender might be a better choice than a smartphone.

BeFrienders recognize that "God is Present" in every single conversation. Conversations are confidential and not shared. Since smartphone users can easily "share" or "copy and paste" text, confidentiality is never assured.

BeFrienders walk alongside their friends creating a "caring not curing" relationship. Unlike a quick internet phone search, a BeFriender believes each person has the power to solve their own problems. This struggle is part of the growth required to gain the confidence needed to tackle the next issue.




BeFrienders listen. Their friend leads the conversation and they listen without changing the direction of the conversation; only offering an occasional paraphrase to make sure the friend is genuinely understood. This is different than being led by the bias of an algorithm that is designed to keep you engaged so others can profit from you, or keeps you so absorbed with what you're reading that you literally become addicted to your phone.

A BeFriender is non-judgmental. A BeFriender sees you as you are—a unique and beloved child of God who doesn't care about the number of "likes" you get from a Facebook post or the number of "followers" you have on Instagram. In short, unlike a smartphone, a BeFriender walks beside their friend carefully listening, without fixing or judging, with the understanding God is present in every conversation and their friend is worthy of the time spent with them.

The fundamental BeFriender principles are: "God is Present", "Caring not curing", "Non-judgmental presence", and "Active Listening."
For more information regarding the Bethel's BeFriender Ministry, please contact the Bethel Office.

EVERY WEEK

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 9 AM - 3 PM

SUNDAY		8:30 am	Worship (also available via livestream)
		9:40 am	Coffee Fellowship & Education Opportunities
		10:30 am	Worship
MONDAY		12:00 pm	Bible Text Study @ The Vault
		6:30 pm	Adult/Resonance Bell Choir (through May 18)
TUESDAY		9:45 am	Staff Meeting
WEDNESDAY		7:00 pm	Church Choir Rehearsal (through May 14)
THURSDAY		8:30 am	Men of Bethel
		9:30 am	FaB (Faith and Books), our women's book group, is reading <i>A is for Alabaster</i> by Anna Carter Florence. Our rich discussions are held weekly in the Youth Room. Please email Lana Reich at lanareich@yahoo.com if you would like to be added to the FaB email list.
FRIDAY		9:15 am	WoW (Women of the Word) via zoom

THIS MONTH

MAY 3	12:00 pm	Senior Retreat
MAY 4	5:00 pm	Worship & Arts Action Team
MAY 6	3:30 pm	Last Limitless
	5:30 pm	RIC meeting
	7:00 pm	Final Hang Time
MAY 7	10:45 am	OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans)
	2:00 pm	Bethel Monthly Movie
	4:00 pm	Youth Plant Sale—Setup
	7:00 pm	Bethel Vision Seekers (Fairfield Inn, 114 Second St W, Nfld)
MAY 8	3:15 pm	Youth Plant Sale—Delivery
MAY 9	9:00 am	Youth Plant Sale—Delivery
MAY 12	3:00 pm	Lydia Circle
MAY 13	5:00 pm	Congregational Life
MAY 14	10:30 am	Projects with Purpose
	7:00 pm	Finance
MAY 15 & 16		BETHEL GARAGE SALE (see front page for details)

GARAGE SALE SET UP
 Sunday, May 10—Thursday, May 14
 9:00 am – 8:00 pm

BAKE SALE DROP OFF
 Thursday, May 14 9:00 am—3:00 pm

MAY 17	8:30 am	NEW MEMBER WELCOME Spring Music Festival
	1:00 pm	Bethel @ Benedictine Chapel
MAY 19	12:00 pm	Lydia Circle
	5:00 pm	Personnel
	 6:30 pm	Church Council
MAY 20	4:30 pm	Homes for God's Children
MAY 21	10:00 am	Parkview Fellowship
MAY 24		<i>Summer Worship Schedule & Outdoor Worship Begins</i>
MAY 25		Memorial Day—Church Offices Closed
MAY 26	 9:00 am	Quilting Group
MAY 28	10:30 am	Projects with Purpose

FAITH FORMATION AT BETHEL



A staffed nursery for little ones is available
8:00 am—noon on Sunday mornings (year-round)

Children's Ministry

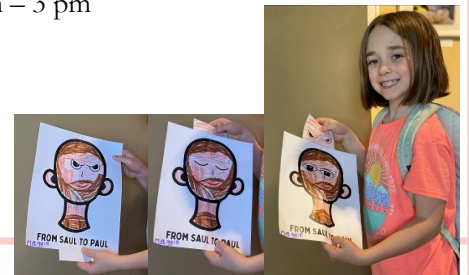
4th graders are wrapping up a Creation Care unit (storm drains! recycling fun!) while other students engage Bible stories like Paul's conversion. Kids also had a chance to color "Thank You"

notes for Kristi Larson. Formal programming takes a break in the summer and resumes September 9. See you on Sundays—and don't forget about camp and VBS!

Register your kids for some summer fun and faith formation at [Good Earth Village](#) (if you haven't already)! This year's Northfield Week at GEV (shared with St. John's & St. Peter's) is **June 21-26**. Use the sponsorship code NORTHFIELD26FULL for an additional \$100 campership for full-week programs and NORTHFIELD26HALF for a \$50 campership for half-week and overnight programs.

Vacation Bible School Update: August 3-6, Bethel and St. John's are bringing Good Earth Village's Day Camp program staff to Northfield to lead our kids in a week of fun and faith building. There will be a full day experience at Bethel for elementary kids (completed K-5) from 8:45 am – 3 pm and a morning option for Preschool kids (ages 3-5) at St. John's from 9 –11 am.

Register your elementary age kids on our [Northfield GEV Day Camp Webpage](#) and your preschool age kids using this [FORM](#). Contact Pastor Ben with any questions about Good Earth Village sleepaway camp or Day Camp, and Juley Jenkinson for Preschool VBS questions.



Youth Ministry

Sunday, May 3: Senior Spring Retreat: As graduation nears, seniors and their parents are invited to gather at the church from noon-2:30 pm. We'll reflect on the past year, hear from Pastor Matt Marohl, and give input for the June 7 Senior Sunday worship. Lunch will be provided; please note any dietary needs. If you forgot to register, and would still like to attend, please give Pastor Inger a text or call at (307) 248-0438.

Wednesday, May 6: NC Trip Update Meeting @ 6:30 pm All current 10th - 12th grade students are invited to participate in a life-changing mission trip to a Lutheran camp near Asheville, North Carolina. We will be part of the ongoing disaster recovery efforts in the region, which was severely impacted by Hurricane Helene's historic flooding and landslides in September 2024. **We are considering moving the trip a week earlier (July 19-24 instead of July 26-31)**

so that we can work alongside two other youth groups.

Hangtime End-of-Year BBQ @ 7:00 pm

Friday & Saturday May 8 & 9:
Plant Sale Delivery!



For their service retreat, Bethel 9th graders and their mentors helped the Stratmoen family with yardwork. They were a force!



Over 5 trucks of leaves and branches were hauled away.

SUMMER 2026 YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT COORDINATOR—JESSI LABENSKI!

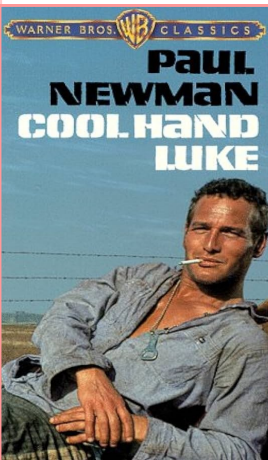
Jessi Labenski (the eldest daughter of Jane Runzheimer and Mark Labenski, and granddaughter of Lee and Kitty Runzheimer), is a Bethel young adult and ELCA candidate for ministry. Jessi participated in many a Bethel trip, and is a former camp counselor for Camp Amnicon and Christikon. After finishing her undergraduate degree at Luther College (Biology and Religion), Jessi completed a year of service through Urban Servant Corps in Denver, CO. She was a family resource advocate at a day center for women, children, trans and non-binary individuals experiences homelessness. Jessi is graduating this spring from Princeton Seminary with her Masters of Divinity, and starting her pastoral internship in the fall.

Jessi will be on staff this summer to plan our Summer Sonshine days for middle school youth, chaperoning trips, work on two young adult events (stay tuned for dates!), and help with the preschool VBS. We may even get to hear her preach! Jessi will start the second week of June.



IN THE LIBRARY...

In *The Anxious Generation*, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt lays out the facts about the epidemic of teen mental illness that hit many countries at the same time. He then investigates the nature of childhood, including why children need play and independent exploration to mature into competent, thriving adults. Haidt shows how the “play-based childhood” began to decline in the 1980s, and how it was finally wiped out by the arrival of the “phone-based childhood” in the early 2010s. He presents more than a dozen mechanisms by which this “great rewiring of childhood” has interfered with children’s social and neurological development, covering everything from sleep deprivation to attention fragmentation, addiction, loneliness, social contagion, social comparison, and perfectionism. He explains why social media damages girls more than boys and why boys have been withdrawing from the real world into the virtual world, with disastrous consequences for themselves, their families, and their societies. Most importantly, Haidt issues a clear call-to-action. He diagnoses the “collective action problems” that trap us, and then proposes four simple rules that might set us free. He describes steps that parents, teachers, schools, tech companies, and governments can take to end the epidemic of mental illness and restore a more humane childhood.

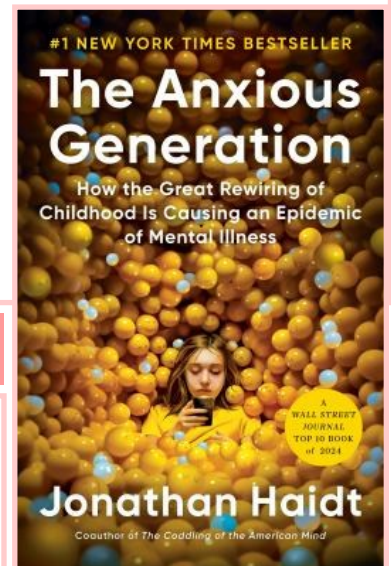


action problems” that trap us, and then proposes four simple rules that might set us free. He describes steps that parents, teachers, schools, tech companies, and governments can take to end the epidemic of mental illness and restore a more humane childhood.

MONTHLY MOVIE

Thursday, May 7—2 pm

Join us as we watch the classic film, *Cool Hand Luke*, a 1967 prison drama starring Paul Newman and George Kennedy.



BETHEL BRIGHT LIGHTS



Scenes from Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday...



... and Eastertide joy in Projects with Purpose, TORCH packaging, fellowship while making senior quilts, the informal Alleluia 5k, and in music!



FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT...

Dear Bethel,

What a thrill that spring is really here, and we are beginning to look ahead toward summer activities. I always look forward to this change of seasons, but I also feel a bit of sadness since I don't get to see everyone in our Bethel community as often in the summer as many of us take vacations, go to lake cabins, and take a break from the routine of the school year and the regular programming at Bethel. Then I remember that I can look forward to outdoor worship, and I smile again.

Be sure to join us for worship this summer when you are in town, whether indoors at the 8:30 a.m. service or outdoors at 10:30 a.m. Our Bethel community needs everyone, and that is always obvious to me when we are absent from one another. Don't forget about Bethel during your busy summer! AND – even though our school year routine is absent in the summer, be sure to still invite friends and acquaintances to come and worship with us. Invite them to “come and see.”

I am thankful for each person in our Bethel community. May you have a summer that is refreshing, renewing, and fun.

Together with you in Christ,

Paula



FINANCIAL NOTES

from Barb Fowler, Financial Officer

Financial information:
Jan. – March 2026

Revenue: \$176,443
 Expenses -234,946
Total (\$ 58,504)

Thank you for your generosity for our special offerings. The Easter offering totaled \$7,530 and the March Food Drive totaled \$12,240. Many will be blessed with your offering. The first quarter totals for the Operating Fund need our attention. Please help as you are able.

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



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Return Service Requested



CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILY UPDATE

An update from the Children, Youth, & Family (CYF) Advisory Board and the Personnel Committee:

Over two recent retreats, the CYF board spent significant time reflecting on our current needs and recent ministry models. Rather than simply carrying on with recent models, we could reimagine where the pastors fit best (in terms of skills and experience, as well as program logistics and theology). Confirmation, as an affirmation of the sacrament of baptism, has always had pastoral involvement. We are excited to deepen the pastoral leadership in this area, with Pastor Ben directing the program (drawing on his skills, passions, and experience). This move places us in a unique place of possibility as Bethel moves forward to staff our CYF ministries: hiring a full-time CYF Director to guide faith formation (before and after the confirmation years), or hiring a part-time Children's Ministry Director and a part-time Youth Ministry Director. Job descriptions for both scenarios are being developed. Our hope is to then form a search committee and explore both staffing solutions simultaneously, expanding the candidate pool and allowing us to find the best possible person/people for the important work of ministering to our children, youth, and families. Please reach out if you have any questions!

We expect to begin interviewing in the early summer and to be welcoming our new staff person/people by August 1, before the program year is underway.

CYF Advisory Board: Wanda Larsen (chair), Scott Broughton, Kiara Jorgenson, Maren Matson, Jennie Moburg, Dayna Norvold, Anna Lisa Rustad, Kaitlin Thompson, Juley Jenkinson, Pastor Ben Schori, Asher Engle and Greta Marohl (youth representatives).

Personnel: Connie Nelson (chair), Paula Mathison (ex-officio as council president), Pastor Inger Hanson (ex-officio as senior pastor), Bo Aylin, Tricia Lancaster, Wanda Larsen, Eduardo Pazos, and Pat Stahly.