



Bethel Blaze

September 2025

Sharing Christ's love with a big heart

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

In Person

Sunday Mornings

8:15 am and 10:30 am

in the sanctuary

beginning September 7

(8:30 am in the sanctuary &
last 10:30 am outdoor service
on the lawn August 31)

Online

The 8:15 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.

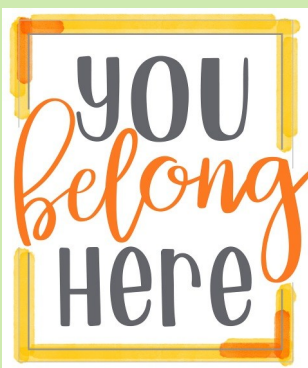
Four opportunities to watch:

Monday 2:00 pm

Tuesday 1:30 pm

Wednesday 7:00 pm

Saturday 7:00 am



SUNDAY SCHOOL REIMAGINED

As is fitting for Lutherans, reformation is an important tool for ministry programs—emboldening us to make adjustments rather than lingering in wishful thinking mode. In Children's Ministry, this helped Brenda Rabbe navigate the turbulent pandemic years by innovating, tweaking, replacing and refreshing repeatedly as our circumstances changed. Now, Brenda and Pastor Ben have combined their insights and observations to develop a fresh approach to Sundays at Bethel. Our hope is that this new approach will better meet our families' needs and help us grow stronger together.

BETWEEN SERVICES

THE NEW:

Kids' Fellowship 9:30—10:15 am
for Grades K—5. This intentional time
of connection will begin with games &
activities with youth involvement (led by
Kristi), a devotional/prayer time (led by
the pastors), and closing praise songs
(Scott & Elga Broughton).
Ages birth—Pre-K are invited to
connection through the Nursery.

The why and the history...

Bethel has long supported a traditional
classroom Sunday School model. However,
we have been seeing a significant fluctuation
in Sunday attendance, even as our
Wednesday afternoon programming
remained strong. We noticed the deep
fellowship bonds that happen organically at
Limitless and hope this will bring that fruit
to Sundays.

DURING THE 10:30 AM SERVICE

THE NEW:

A reimagined children's **Sunday School**
will be offered during the 10:30 am worship
service, with Grades K—5 beginning in
the sanctuary with family. After the Prayer
of the Day, they will go with Kristi Larson
to the Center Pod for a continuation of
worship at a kid appropriate level,
combined with traditional Sunday School
activities. Children rejoin their families prior
to communion. Ages 3—PreK will be in
Room 51 under Juley Jenkinson's leadership.

With the Narrative Lectionary, everyone will
be hearing and learning from the same story
regardless of age!

The why and the history...

While similar to the Kids' Worship offering
begun in 2023, this shift expands the time
the kids have for exploration at their level.
The text will be read from a children's
Bible, followed by music, prayer, crafts and
games.

We hope these changes create deeper connections through fellowship as the body of Christ, and help children experience church as a safe and fun place to dwell. Thank you for your support and faith as we explore fresh waters together.

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 Monday,
Tuesday, Wednesday,
and Thursday

days off
Friday & Saturday

Dear Bethel,

Anniversaries can seem so arbitrary to me. I have appreciated Taylor Swift's use of "eras" – a way of measuring time qualitatively rather quantitatively. When I first became a pastor, firmly committed to the Revised Common Lectionary, I thought I would measure my ministry in completed lectionary cycles (sort of a pastor's equivalent of dog years)... nothing like a pandemic and the Narrative Lectionary to mess with the best-laid plans! Still, I have been surprised by my awareness of my 10th anniversary of ordination (September 18) and have been reflecting a lot on the eras of being a pastor. "5,256,000 minutes. 5,256,00 moments so dear. How do you measure ten years of ministry? In daylights? In sunsets? In midnights? In cups of coffee? In inches, in miles? In laughter, in strife? In truths that she learned? In the times that she cried? In bridges she built, or the ways that she died? (and was brought to life again?)"

Yes, *Rent's* "Seasons of Love" (with my admittedly Lutheran modifications) gets to the heart of it: Measure in love. Or in the lyrics of my ordination hymn, "Unexpected and Mysterious" (ELW #258), measure the ways you have been able "to ponder mystery and await the coming Christ, to embody God's compassion for each fragile human life."

You, Bethel, hold four years of my ministerial journey. I am so grateful for the love you have shown me and the trust you have placed in my leadership. I am awed by the love for neighbor and community that you embody, and humbled to support your efforts. There have certainly been plenty of midnights and cups of coffee. There has been laughter and strife. I am sure that in the years to come, there will be more truths, more tears, more bridges to burn and to build, more dying and more rising. The love of Christ urges us on (2 Corinthians 5:14)... so may love continue to be the purpose and the measure of the ministry we share.

In the love and grace of Christ, Pastor Inger

GROUNDS CLEAN UP SUPERHEROES!

by Marci Groenewold

Bethel had a NEED: Crowded plants, overgrown shrubs, and weeds around the building needed to be dug out, pruned, and pulled. There was a VISION: With a little pruning, a lot of weeding, and rearranging of existing plants, it would be beautiful! It required a PLAN: Each side of the church required something different. Plants needed to be dug out and quickly replanted. Shrubs growing next to the building needed to be trimmed back. The parking lot area and islands were weedy too. That little corner by Door 3, well, it needed an entire makeover.










Followed by a big ASK: This plan required a lot of volunteers. Folks young and old signed up, despite knowing that the work (especially in the outdoor heat!) would not be easy. Armed with shovels and pruners, over forty volunteers donned their gloves and worked together. Members young and old, new and long-time, joined forces with master gardeners to tackle what seemed to be an insurmountable task. Within 3 hours the vision became a reality. Sitting together in the CLC, enjoying a meal, we shared a sense of accomplishment and amazement at all we had done. Embracing the "Community Within" our congregation, friendships were made and deepened—and now all are enjoying the renewed grounds. THANK YOU, Bethel Volunteers, for this incredible transformation!



EVERY WEEK

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 9 AM - 3 PM

SUNDAY		8:15 am	Worship/Livestream	
		9:30 am	Coffee Fellowship	Bethel Presents & Bible Deep Dive begins September 21
		10:30 am	Worship in the Sanctuary	
MONDAY		12:00 pm	Bible Study @ the Vault	
TUESDAY		9:45 am	Staff Meeting	
WEDNESDAY *			(* Please note Wednesday programming begins September 10)	
		3:30 pm	Limitless!	
		5:45 pm	Bistro!	Join us in the Christian Life Center (CLC) for a fresh-cooked meal and delightful fellowship. Suggested donation is \$5/person. Kid friendly SunButter or cheese sandwiches are available as alternatives.
		6:15 pm	Ring Forth Bell Choir	
		7:00 pm	Confirmation	
			Church Choir	
		8:05 pm	Brio Bell Choir	
THURSDAY		8:30 am	MoB (Men of Bethel) Beginning on September 18, we will resume our weekly meetings in room 54, just off the center pod. The first two meetings will be checking in with one another and sharing how our summers have gone, how we're doing, what we've been reading, and welcoming any new members who would like to join us. We'll also use those two meetings to plan our fall schedule, so bring your suggestions!	
		9:30 am	FAB (Faith and Books) We complete <i>In Search of Belief</i> on September 4 and begin <i>Somehow: Thoughts on Love</i> by Anne Lamott on September 11. Come join our rich discussions! Please contact Lana Reich at lanareich@yahoo.com to be added to the FaB email list.	

THIS MONTH

SEPT 1	Church Office closed for Labor Day		SEPT 16		12:00 pm	Lydia Circle
SEPT 3	6:00 pm	H.S. Seniors Red Barn Meeting			5:00 pm	Personnel Committee
SEPT 4	10:45 am	OWLs (Older, Wiser Lutherans)			6:30 pm	Council
	2:00 pm	Bethel Monthly Movie	SEPT 17		4:30 pm	Homes for God's Children
SEPT 8		5:00 pm	Worship & Arts Committee	SEPT 18	6:30 pm	Endowment Committee
SEPT 9	9:00 am	Quilting Group	SEPT 21	First Day of Sunday School		
	2:00 pm	Library Committee	SEPT 22		6:30 pm	Resonance Bell Choir
	7:00 pm	Vision Seekers	SEPT 23		9:00 am	Quilting Group
SEPT 11	9:30 am	FAB	SEPT 24		11:00 am	ARLA
	5:45 pm	Befriender Ministry	SEPT 28		12:00 pm	Senior Stepping Stone Retreat #1
	7:00 pm	Finance Committee				
SEPT 14	Rally Day		SEPT 29		6:30 pm	Resonance Bell Choir

FAITH FORMATION AT BETHEL...

Nursery

The nursery is open on Sundays from 8:00 am—noon.

Children's Ministry

Pastor Ben, who has considerable education and experience in Children, Youth, & Family Ministry, will take a leading role in close collaboration with Kristi Larson and Juley Jenkinson for a smooth continuation of Children's Ministry.

Youth Ministry

Class of 2026!

Senior Meeting at the Red Barn –

September 3 – 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Students and Parents are invited to join us for this special event. Kick off your senior year with a little socializing, fun and pizza. If you plan to attend and have not yet RSVPed, please email or text Kristi ASAP!

Quilt Packets – If you are not able to join us at the Red Barn, please pick up your quilt packet at church!

Senior Retreat – September 28 noon - 2:00 pm
(Students Only)

Confirmation

10th Grade Orientation – September 10 - 7:00 pm

Parents and 10th grade students, come learn about the last two months of the journey to Confirmation.

6-9th Grade Confirmation Orientation –

September 17 – 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Students and parents, please join us to learn about this year in Confirmation and 6th Grade Connections and pick up a schedule! Confirmation (7th – 9th grade) meets every Wednesday from 7:00 - 8:00 pm.

6th Grade Connections meets every other Wednesday.

If you have not yet registered for 6th Grade Connections or Confirmation you can find the link on the Bethel website!

Looking Ahead... First Hangtime – October 1 - 7:00 pm

Pizza! Games! Snacks! Bethel Ball! Hangtime meets every Wednesday from 7:00 – 8:00 pm in the youth room and all 10th – 12th grade students (10th Graders join us mid October after Confirmation), including friends are welcome!

Not receiving Kristi's weekly emails? Contact her at youth@bethelnorthfield.org or 651.230.6057.

Expanded Kids' Options During Bistro

Our Bistro meal is for the whole family—and that includes fun spaces just for kids! Thanks to the leadership of Juley Jenkinson, while adults enjoy fellowship, children are welcome to choose from the following:

- **Art Room (K-5)** – A creative space with a featured project each week, plus the freedom to make their own designs.
- **Games & Activities in the Center Pod (K-5)** – A place for active play and large group games.
- **Nursery (Children Pre-K and younger)** – A safe and caring environment for our youngest ones.
- **Stay with Parents** – Children are always welcome to remain in the CLC with their family.

Please remember that the **Youth Room** is reserved for middle school and high school students.



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Associate Pastor
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pastor.ben@bethelnorthfield.org



Juley Jenkinson (she/her)
Nursery Coordinator
507-786-8973



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

OPPORTUNITIES

OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans) September 4!

OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans) will resume on Thursday, September 4, from 10:45-11:45 am in Room 61. OWLs is an opportunity to gather for fellowship and growing in faith as we read scripture and discuss what it means for our lives today.

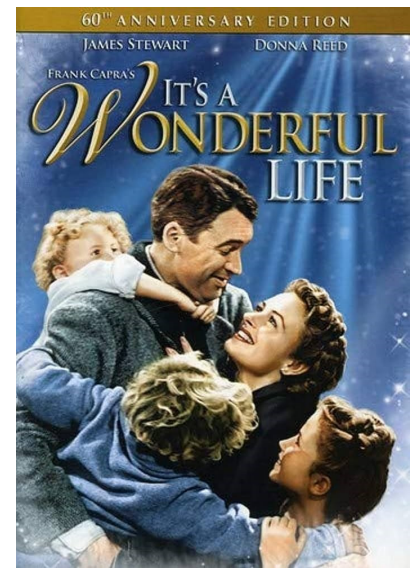
This year in OWLs, we will turn our attention to some of the classic figures of the Old Testament. Perhaps you may have learned something about these characters as children. But what might we discover if we look at these stories now as older, wiser Lutherans? How do these classic stories relate to the stories of our lives and the story of Jesus and his love?

Come along for our first gathering of OWLs on September 4 as we read and discuss together the story of Samson.

MONTHLY MOVIE

The Bethel monthly movie for September and October will be the classic film *It's a Wonderful Life* starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed. Dividing the film into two parts will allow more time for discussion and the opportunity to connect the film with the story of our own lives and the story of Scripture. This film raises some interesting questions for discussion:

- Have you had dreams that went unfulfilled because “real life” got in the way? Have you had regrets? Did you have dreams you accomplished?
- Has desperation or despair made you think it would be better if you had never been born? Have you ever thought about suicide?
- Can you think of times when you have made a difference, or others have made a difference for you? Have you experienced an angel in your life? What do angels look like? How does the media portray angels?



Join us on Thursday, September 4 at 2 pm to watch and discuss the first part of this classic together!

Rally Sunday is September 14! Build Your Own Oatmeal & Yogurt Breakfast

Reconnect between services over a “build your own” breakfast in the CLC sponsored by the Congregational Life committee. Forge new friendships by signing up for ACTSS!

ACTSS: Adults Coming Together for Soup and Socializing

Join in fellowship and a simple soup supper three times a year with a small groups of 4-8 people. Registration forms are in the narthex; sign up by Rally Sunday in order to participate.



Bistro 2025-2026

A team has come together to shepherd Bistro this year. Huge thanks to Chad Jenkinson, who will be our Sysco liaison for meal planning, prep task identification, and food delivery, and to Marci Groenewold, who will use her organizational prowess to recruit volunteers through Breeze.

A rotating meal supervisor will direct the prep, serving, and clean up for each week's volunteers. We are excited for this new approach to leading this important fellowship ministry.



BETHEL BRIGHT LIGHTS



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION IN MN

ARLA (Anti-Racism Learning & Advocacy)

and Age-Friendly Northfield have teamed up to host an informational talk with Rep. Kristi Pursell on Wednesday, September 24, from 11 am to noon in the Bethel Sanctuary about the state of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Minnesota. The presentation will be followed by a time for questions. Sen. Bill Lleske is also invited but has not yet replied.

IN THE LIBRARY...

When everything we've been clinging to falls apart,
how do we know what to keep and what to let go

of? *I Guess I Haven't Learned That Yet*,

is a clear-eyed look at where we go from here and how to transform our lives along the way.

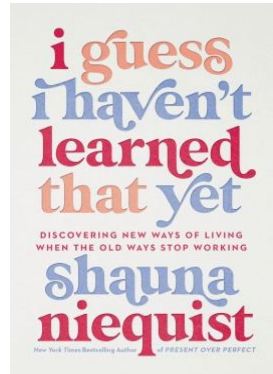
Just after her fortieth birthday, author Shauna Niequist found herself in a season of chaos, change, and loss unlike anything she'd ever faced. She discovered that many of the beliefs and practices that she usually turned to were no longer serving her. After her old strategies failed her, she realized she required new ones: courage, curiosity, and compassion. Her way through was more about questions than answers, more about forgiveness than force, more about tenderness than trying hard.

Niequist chronicles her life-changing move from the Midwest to Manhattan, the power of unlearning what is no longer helpful, and accepting the unknowns that come with midlife, heartbreak, and chronic pain.

With her characteristic candor and grace, Niequist writes about her experience learning how to:

- Discover new ways of living when the old ways stop working
- Embrace the challenges and delights of releasing our expectations for how we thought our lives would look
- Trust God's goodness in a deeper, more profound way

Follow Niequist as she endeavors to understand grief, to reshape her faith, and to practice courage when it feels impossible.



SAVE THE DATE!

Save the Date for Bethel's Autumn Blood Drive on Sunday,



November 9 from 8:30 am -1:30 pm . Whole blood donors need 8 weeks to replenish their supply before donating again and double red donors need 16 weeks spacing between donations of packed red cells. Please plan ahead and save the date as blood products have a limited shelf life and are always needed. Thank you.

FINANCIAL NOTES

Financial information:

	July 2025	YTD as of 7/31/25
Revenue:	\$ 74,507	\$507,816
Expenses	- 75,819	-576,172
Total	\$ (1,312)	\$(68,355)

The good news is that the July YTD deficit grew by only \$1,312 in a month that typically provides much lower revenues. The bad news is that our YTD deficit sits at \$68,355. We have five months to make that up plus cover our monthly expenses.

It is going to take all of us to meet our expenses. Bethel's ministries benefit all of us as well as others in our community and beyond. Please give generously.

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)





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!



Share
Christ's
Love with a
BIG HEART

HOMES FOR GOD'S CHILDREN

As you are aware, the Ukrainians have carried out a heroic defense of their country, but in the process, have suffered greatly. Many villages have endured significant damage. As the war (hopefully) is brought to an end, Ukraine will face an enormous task of rebuilding. The dilemma for small villages is that infrastructure and larger cities tend to be prioritized in the reconstruction.

The Homes for God's Children Committee has been in contact with Alight, formerly the American Refugee Committee, which is a well-known and reliable international aid organization based in Minneapolis. The committee has proposed funding an effort to repair houses and businesses in a small village in Ukraine. Alight is willing to and eager to carry out such a project as the managing partner. However, Alight has stated that to be efficient and effective, a minimum of \$50,000 will be needed.

Alight has surveyed villages in the Kharkiv region and has selected Zolochiv which is northwest of Kharkiv. If they can receive at least part of the funds over the next two months, they will be able to initiate repairs before winter comes. At this point, the Homes for God's Children Committee has received a pledge of \$28,000 towards the Ukraine project.

The committee met with the church council to fully inform them of its efforts. While excited about this opportunity, the council stressed the budget challenges facing the congregation. The committee has decided to cap the collection of further donations to \$22,000, which with the amount already secured, will meet the amount needed by Alight. The church council endorsed the project with the cap on contributions.

More information for the congregation will be forthcoming via the Blaze and a Bethel Presents program between services September 28.

