

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church

2025 Annual Report

Happy New Year and Gratitude for our Bethel Family!

I am deeply grateful to have served as Council President for the past two years. Working alongside such faithful and dedicated people has strengthened not only my personal faith but also my confidence in our congregation's enduring strength.

The council's 2025 goals were established a year ago and focused on spending, fundraising, communication, fellowship, and senior ministry. These priorities closely followed the previous year's emphasis on fellowship, engagement with ministries, and financial health. The council leaders from each area have provided thoughtful and encouraging reports, reflecting the care and commitment poured into their work.

The Bless Lift Create (BLC) Campaign, launched in 2023, was designed to improve our financial health by restoring cash flow, maintaining and enhancing our physical facilities, and laying a foundation for the next generation. Over the last two years, you have heard regular updates and generously supported our call for continued financial stewardship.

The campaign officially concluded on December 31, 2025, and full details are being shared during today's congregational meeting. While we did not quite reach our \$500,000 goal, we accomplished an extraordinary amount together. We paid off our line of credit (twice), restored our cash flow, and fully funded all designated accounts. Our facilities have seen many needed improvements, including solar panels, repainted and expanded parking areas, a new roof over the discipleship hall, new flooring in part of the fellowship hall, a brightened steeple, updated and expanded septic fields, new water heaters, and significant HVAC upgrades. Yes... the HVACs!

As the new council looks ahead to 2026, the goals remain consistent: meaningful engagement with one another as we advance our mission and maintain strong financial health.

I want to extend heartfelt thanks to Nina Davis and Shawn Garner for their outstanding work in the church office. Please be sure to thank them when you see them. Krystal Cutler's addition as Director of Music has been a true blessing to our music ministries. The Cantata! The children's choir! We eagerly look forward to what lies ahead in 2026.

Council elections in November resulted in an exceptional leadership team for the coming year: Jennifer LaFollette as President, Cherie Lauck as Vice President, Matt Lyman as Secretary, and Lynda Grymala as Treasurer. This team has already come together seamlessly. New council members Shari Fletcher and Rob Cutler bring valuable perspectives to a diverse and dedicated group that also includes Mel Siebert, Rene Hollenbrandse, and LeeAnne Marple. A leader is only as strong as the team beside them, and I have been truly blessed to serve with Cherie, Lynda, and Brian Davies on the Executive Council these past two years. Please continue to pray for your council leaders in 2026 and reach out to them often. Their commitment to doing what is best for Bethel Lutheran Church has never wavered.

The year ahead will bring challenges as we prepare to say goodbye to our beloved Pastor. While we will celebrate Pastor Dave more fully as his departure approaches, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve alongside him these past two years. His steadfast love for this congregation has been a true gift to all of us.

Thank you for your support, trust, and encouragement over the past two years. I look forward to continuing to serve our congregation in the years to come.

With gratitude and hope for the year ahead,
Rachel Carlson, EdD, PA-C
Council President 2024-2025

Annual Pastor's Report 2025

Our Mission Statement

*A community growing deeper in faith and wider in love!
(Ephesians 3: 16-17)*

Some significant events from 2025:

1. Celebrating the service and work of Minister of Music George Donovan, Jr. who stepped down in April.
2. Welcoming Kristal Cutler as our new Minister of Music in May.
3. An expanded partnership with Shenandoah Montessori School, including improvements to the fellowship hall and the education wing hallway.
4. An expanded role for Shawn Garner as our Facility manager which has been a significant help to our ongoing day-to-day operations.
5. Celebrating the internship of Vicar Lynette McSpadden in November.

Nina Davis continues to be a wonderful first face of Bethel as our Office Manager. Her energy, creativity, reliability, and giftedness continue to bless our ministry each day.

As mentioned, **Shawn Garner** has expanded his role to include both our facility manager's duties and to serve as bookkeeper. This has been a tremendous blessing to the overall organizational health and communication.

Kristal Cutler has been a blessing as our new Minister of Music. Her talent and energy continue to build upon the wonderful foundation of inspiring worship that has been here for so long. The Cantata in December was amazing!

Melissa Siebert continues to be a rich blessing as our high school Youth Minister, especially as the seniors have been navigating their college choices, etc.

George Donovan, Sr. (Security), **Edie Donovan** (Parish Nurse), **Matt Meade** and **Lexy Grymala** (Nursery staff), and **Patty White** (Custodian) remain trusted and valued staff members whose work remains integral to our ministry.

I would like to thank my Bethel preachers – **Rev. Heidi David-Young, George Donovan, Jr., Bruce Lothrop, Karen Nguyen, Mel Siebert, Jerry Stollings, and Michelle Young** – for their wonderful gifts and willingness to work with me to provide meaningful and life-giving messages and sermons.

I want to acknowledge the following people who help make our sanctuary look so inviting: **Ron Lauck** (Banners); **Betty Puffinberger, Linda Shortt**, and others (Liturgical arts team); **Vonda Wilt, Lee Braithwaite, David Look, Cherie Lauck**, and others (Altar Guild)

I would also like to recognize the wonderful work of our tech team – **Brian Davies, James Yarrington, Shawn Garner, Cherie Lauck, Anja Hollebrandse, Connie Wirfel, Pamela Arnone, Michelle Young, Mel Siebert, and George Donovan, Jr.**, who upon returning to the area is serving as the tech team leader.

A sincere thank you to departing Council members **Rachel Carlson** and **Brian Davies** for their steadfast leadership. They have served with faithfulness and vision, and I am so very thankful for having been able to work with them both over the past three years, the last two as part of executive council.

We are delighted to welcome two new members to the Council, who were elected at our November 2025 congregational meeting: **Shari Fletcher** and **Rob Cutler**. Along with **Jennifer Lafollette**, they were elected this year and join **Matt Lyman, Mel Siebert, LeeAnne Marple, Cheri Lauck, Lynda Grymala, and Rene Hollebrandse**.

2026 Executive team: Jennifer Lafollette (President), Cherie Lauck (Vice-president), Matt Lyman (Secretary), and Lynda Grymala (Treasurer).

Finally, I offer a sincere and heartfelt **Thank you** for all the ways that you have gone above and beyond to help support Bethel. Your generosity of time, talent, and treasure continues to inspire!

In Christ, Pastor Dave

Music Ministry Annual Report - 2025

The past year has been marked by growth, renewal, and collaboration within the music ministry at Bethel Lutheran Church. Music continues to play a vital role in worship, supporting the message of the word, prayer, and congregational participation throughout the church year. A highlight of the year was the re-starting of the Children's Choir last fall. This renewed ministry brought new energy and joy to our age 3 - 6th grade *Little Lutherans* and provided meaningful faith formation through music. The children participated in both the **Christmas Cantata** and **Christmas in a Barn** service, enriching these beloved services.

Several improvements were made to the current music platform. The platform was reconfigured to improve choir amplification and visibility, allow the organ to be more clearly seen when played, and create space for a broader range of instrumentalists, including guitar, bass, saxophone players, and guest musicians. New moveable platform pieces were created to provide flexibility for different ensembles while also supporting improved sound projection. In addition, the drum cage was expanded, offering more space for percussionists while maintaining appropriate sound balance.

The annual Christmas Cantata was a success, featuring a live orchestra of 14 musicians, 16 choir members, 3 narrators, and the director. This was complemented by a full range of special Advent and Christmas services, each reflecting the season's themes.

Looking ahead, a key focus for the coming year will be the cleaning out and renovation of the current music room, creating a more functional and welcoming space for small ensemble rehearsals, music and music equipment storage, and a dedicated office space for the Music Minister/Director.

The music ministry's work in 2025 was made possible through the dedication of musicians, children and families, sound and technical volunteers, and the continued support of church leadership and the congregation. Kristal Cutler -Minister of Music, Bethel Lutheran Church

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

As we reflect on 2025, the Communications Team is deeply grateful for the dedication and engagement of our congregation.

Council recognizes that people receive information in many different ways, including email, Facebook, in-church announcement slides, the *Bethel Banner*, telephone, mail, meetings, YouTube, and word-of-mouth. In 2025, we will continue strengthening our existing communication tools while exploring new avenues as needed. Our goal is to ensure the congregation is well informed about God's work being carried out through each of you.

Accomplishments

- **Email platform transition:** After careful analysis, we transitioned from Constant Contact to Mailchimp. Mailchimp offers a more user-friendly interface, integrates with e-commerce platforms (such as Square) should Bethel choose to use them in the future, and reduces overall costs. The Communications Team assisted the church office with the migration process.
- **Email performance:** Since April 2025, Bethel has sent 31,041 email communications to 321 subscribers, achieving an average open rate of 56.6%. This far exceeds typical nonprofit benchmarks and reflects strong engagement from our congregation.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to every member of the congregation for your continued involvement and support.

Team Leaders: Mel Siebert and Jennifer LaFollette

2025 MAINTENANCE YEAR IN REIEW

Last year we had a large group of people help with our Spring Cleaning get together. Thank you all and I look forward to another fun Spring Cleaning Day soon, if the snow ever melts.

Special thanks to the Maintenance Team -

Betty Puffinberger, Brandi Hudson, Brian Davies, Carl Griffis, Cliff Crowder, Connie Wirfel, Dave Young, Dustie Fisher, Gene Honnick, George Donovan, Jerry Fisher, Jerry Jr Fisher, John Frederickson, John Hudson, John McAllister, John Tilelli, Ken Grymala, Matt Lyman, Mel Siebert, Rene Hollebrandse, Ron Lauck, Shawn Garner, Will Sigler

- New HVAC unit installed in the Underground
- Kitchen Stove Serviced and Pilot Light Issue Resolved
- Keypad Lock Installed to allow access without distributing keys
- Installed Water Meter to track water usage for church septic system
- Ice Machine replaced
- Replaced tile in Fellowship Hall, Kitchen Pantry, and hallway with vinyl flooring
- Repaired plywood under-flooring in Pantry
- Installed utility sink in classroom for Shenandoah Montessori School
- Relocated Sunday School classrooms
- Reserve Septic Field plot established, New Septic Permit acquired
- Fire Suppression System Inspected and Upgraded to new codes
- Lift Inspections completed
- Fire alarm system inspected, second phone line added
- Steeple power washing complete
- Parking lot lines repainted
- Cleaned and repaired chairs in Fellowship Hall
- Installed 2 new full height toilets in Lower Bethel bathrooms
- Replaced 3 mixer valves, 1 recirculation pump, for hot water in Hallway bathrooms
- New HVAC installed in Mission Hallway
- Installed new mailbox, old one would not stay closed
- Replaced/Repaired all emergency lights
- Conversion to LED lights started
- Replacement of ceiling tiles started
- Shampoo carpet in Fellowship Hall
- Replaced old water valves in Lower Bethel bathrooms
- Full HVAC inspection with contractor

Thank you all, Shawn

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Bethel Lutheran Church	Year End Report			
	2025 Actual	2025 MSP	YTD %	2026 MSP
Income				
40000 · INCOME				
41000 · TITHES & OFFERINGS				
41100 · Operating Budget-electronic	\$ 93,584			
41110 · Operating Budget-cash	\$ 13,477			
41111 · Operating Budget-checks	\$ 248,048			
Total 41000 · TITHES & OFFERINGS	\$ 355,109	\$ 384,500	92%	\$ 351,036
42000 · FACILITY USE INCOME				
42300 · Other Facility Rent	\$ 23,850			
42000 · FACILITY USE INCOME - Other	\$ 7,500			
Total 42000 · FACILITY USE INCOME	\$ 31,350	\$ 30,000	105%	\$ 33,400
43000 · OTHER INCOME				
43100 · Interest Income	\$ 802			
43200 · Misc. Non-Designated	\$ 83			
43300 · BLC Income	\$ 15,764			
Total 43000 · OTHER INCOME	\$ 16,649	\$ 2,400		\$ 2,900
Total 40000 · INCOME	\$ 403,107	\$ 416,900	97%	\$ 387,336
Expense				
60000 · MINISTRY SPENDING				
61000 · UP DIMENSION				
Total 61000 · UP DIMENSION	\$ 31,940	\$ 43,113	74%	\$ 9,730
62000 · IN DIMENSION				
Total 62000 · IN DIMENSION	\$ 4,715	\$ 2,400	196%	\$ 2,500
63000 · OUT DIMENSION				
Total 63000 · OUT DIMENSION	\$ 1,650	\$ -		\$ -
65000 · MINISTRY SUPPORT				
Total 65010 · Administration	\$ 12,375	\$ 10,100	123%	\$ 11,580
Total 65030 · Communications	\$ 2,857	\$ 2,267	126%	\$ 2,400
Total 65040 · Finance & Insurance	\$ 18,226	\$ 20,500	89%	\$ 15,221
Total 65050 · Hospitality	\$ 100	\$ -		\$ 600
Total 65060 · Human Resource	\$ 341	\$ 1,500	23%	\$ -
Total 65070 · Safety and Security	\$ 1,121	\$ 1,000	112%	\$ 3,100
Total 65075 · Admin Staff Salaries, Taxes & B	\$ 58,955	\$ 70,743	83%	\$ 109,541
Total 65080 · Pastoral Staff	\$ 146,140	\$ 146,605	100%	\$ 140,331
Total 65200 · Staff Benefits	\$ 7,195	\$ -		\$ -
Total 65300 · Synod/Church Wide Support	\$ 7,000	\$ 12,000	58%	\$ 7,200
Total 65400 · Utilities	\$ 29,324	\$ 38,000	77%	\$ 46,344
Total 65500 · Facility and Property	\$ 48,259	\$ 40,500	119%	\$ 13,800
Total 65998a · Other Spending Ministry Suppor	\$ 2,229	\$ -		\$ -
Total 71000 · Mortgage Loan Expense & LOC Rep	\$ 40,985	\$ 37,234	110%	\$ 37,236
Total 65000 · MINISTRY SUPPORT	\$ 375,107	\$ 380,449	99%	\$ 387,353
Total Expense	\$ 413,412	\$ 425,962	97%	\$ 399,583
Net Income	\$ (10,305)	\$ (9,062)		\$ (12,247)

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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