



BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BEACON

Fall 2026

810 Third Ave SE, Rochester, MN | (507) 288-6430 | bethellutheran.com | [f @bethelrochester](https://www.facebook.com/bethelrochester)

Dear Bethel Members and Friends:

This fall Bethel will have the opportunity to celebrate the retirement of the mortgage used for a building expansion in 2004. It included our main sanctuary and narthex area. What a great milestone for Bethel!

As a young adult I remember the feeling of paying off the loan for the first car I bought with my own money. It was liberating. I knew those monthly payments gave me the privilege of driving my own car, but it was an obligation among other “bills” I had to pay. When that obligation was complete, I felt like a weight had been lifted. I was suddenly freed to use my hard-earned money for what was less of an obligation and more of a joy.

The realities of being an adult (or “adulting”, as is the slang term) means you will have bills to pay and obligations to honor. While that can sometimes feel like a burden, they also afford us many privileges in life—a place to live, electricity for air conditioning, a car to drive, food to eat. And then there are those places where we are freed to give, not out of obligation, but from a place of gratitude and joy. For me, giving financially to Bethel and the churches that I have been a part of has always felt like a joy and not a burden. It is a priority even before I look at the “bills” I have to pay. When I make a commitment or “pledge”

to give a certain amount in the year ahead, there is joy in knowing my “hard-earned money” is making a difference in Jesus’ name. Giving is not an obligation weighted by duty but inspired by thankfulness. I don’t have to... I get to give!

Each day I pray for you, the members of Bethel, along with my family and friends, and I am reminded of God’s abundant blessings in my life. I can’t help but want to respond to the tangible way I see this at work each day in our life as a congregation. As we approach the fall with the liberating news of a retired mortgage, I hope there is a lightness, a joy, an anticipation of how God will bless financial gifts in the future— gifts dedicated to daily ministry through the Annual Fund, as well as gifts keeping our church home and infrastructure beautiful and well-maintained through Built to Serve. And I hope there is a delight in knowing we are making an impact on future generations who will continue to love Bethel as we do.

**PASTOR
ANJANETTE BANDEL**



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Ways to Give

- Mail us your weekly or monthly
- Text “BETHELGIVES” to 73256
- Visit our website, bethellutheran.org, and click -Give-
- Venmo: @bethel-lutheran-rochester or scan this QR code





Children, Youth, and Family Ministry is hosting the Rally Day Carnival along with a special Meet the Leaders event! Join us as we kick off a new school year at Bethel. Families should plan to attend a worship service and allow time for Meet the Leaders from 10 – 10:30 am. We will have bounce houses, kids activities, a photo booth, and more fun activities starting at 10:30 am in the courtyard! New families are encouraged to attend an orientation meeting in rooms 213/214 to learn more about all of the opportunities for kids and families at Bethel.

Worship INFORMATION

Saturdays - 6 pm (Traditional Liturgy with Holy Communion)

Sundays - 9 am* & 10:30 am
(Traditional Liturgy, Holy Communion on 1st and 3rd Sundays)

- 10:10 am Gate of Life (Contemporary Service with Holy Communion)

* 9 am worship offers a Sign Language Interpreter and is live-streamed on our YouTube channel (RochBethelLutheran)



MORTGAGE RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

Save the date for November 14th and 15th as Bethel will celebrate the retirement of the mortgage that helped make possible the beautiful sanctuary and narthex that we enjoy every time we gather for worship. The celebration will include a special service, burning of the mortgage and themed treats.



HEALTH CABINET UPDATE

Bethel's Health Cabinet continues to play an active role at Bethel. Summer activities have included bird watching, Tuesday bicycling, weekly walking - Holy Strollers, and monthly hiking. HyVee's nutritionist visited on a Sunday morning to demonstrate some healthy snack options.

There is always the opportunity to stop by the office on the third Sunday of the month for your blood pressure check or to bring questions to the parish nurse. We are supporting a speaker for the February Adult Education program from Doc's Recovery. We are always open to suggestions for additional options. Thank you for your support.



Young in Spirit



Young in Spirit meets on the third Thursday of each month for food, friendship, faith, and fun! We gather at noon for a catered lunch followed by a program at 1 pm. Lunch reservations (\$15) are due by Tuesday before each gathering by calling the church office or Judy Pucci. Attendance at the program only is no charge. We're excited to announce, "The Sing Along Gang," in September, "the Arnold Bradley Band," in October, and Dr. Edward Creagan from Mayo Clinic, in November.



MEN'S MINISTRY

The Bethel Men's Ministry group will gather Wednesday evenings for discussions of the Bible, books, films, and other topics, as well as doing occasional outings and service projects. See Bethel's eNews and social media posts for specific dates and times this fall!

Weekly SCRIPTURE STUDY

An informal study group that helps participants gain deeper appreciation of the scripture texts for upcoming worship services. No preparation or special knowledge is needed. Come as you are and learn more about the Bible! We meet in Room 115 on Wednesdays at 10 am.

EVENING BIBLE STUDY

*September and October -
Faith and Civic Life*

Join Pastor Mandsager and fellow Bethel members for a six-week study of the ELCA's social statement on Faith and Civic Life. Grounded in scripture, this study explores how God acts for the well-being of all through civic life, and how God calls us to be partners in that work. We will reflect on the freedom of expression we have under the U.S. Constitution, particularly the First Amendment. We will examine how religious institutions and government authorities can work together constructively. Finally, we'll look at specific concerns in civic life.

Join us on Wednesdays at 6:40 pm in Room 115, September 16th, 23rd, and 30th, and October 7th, 21st, and 28th. Free participant guidebooks will be available. Please register by emailing Pastor Michael at mandsager@bethellutheran.com by September 9th, so we have an idea of how many guidebooks to print.

EVENING BIBLE STUDY

*November and December -
Together by Grace: Isaiah*

Written over hundreds of years as God's people navigated war, exile, and homecoming, the Book of Isaiah intertwines grief and hope, inviting readers and hearers across the centuries to join in God's lament over a broken world, to receive God's abundant love and overflowing grace, and to respond with joy to God's call to the work of justice and peace. With heart, humor, and hope, author Michael Chan has written tailored Bible study guides for adults looking to study Isaiah in community.

Pastor Mandsager will offer this study in hybrid format, so participants may attend either in person in Room 115 or online. We will meet on Wednesdays at 6:40 pm on November 4th, 11th, and 18th, and December 2nd, 9th, and 16th. Please register by emailing Pastor Michael at mandsager@bethellutheran.com by October 28th to reserve a copy of the participant guide.

ADULT EDUCATION SUNDAY FORUMS *Fall 2026*

Have a cup of coffee, relax, and be inspired at our Adult Education Forums on most Sundays, September through March, at 10:30 am in Room 115. The program starts this year on September 20th with a presentation by Pastor Michael Mandsager on Faith and Civic Life, followed the next week by Pastor Norman Wahl discussion "Joys of Pastor/Politician".

On November 8th, our SE MN Bishop Regina Hassanally will be here to discuss "Disciples of Jesus and Engagement in Civic Life".

A few of the other presenters and topics include Sarah Ruble on "Religion and Law"; Travis Beck with "History of Halloween" and "History of Lent"; Phil Quanbeck on "Lessons in Faith and Spirituality from Egyptian Desert" and Mark Tranvik on "God and Suffering".

Check out our complete Adult Education schedule in a brochure for you to take home. Please add what interests you to your calendar.

You can also watch the forums online at bethellutheran.com under 'Education' and then the 'Adult Education Videos' tab.

MUSIC OPPORTUNITIES

at Bethel



Bethel Members are invited to participate in the Bethel Music Programs that will be back in full swing this coming September 2026. It's not necessary to be able to read music to participate in the various choirs and handbell ensembles. Let's dust off those high school instruments and vocal cords to make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Selections are rehearsed far enough in advance to allow participants in vocal ensembles to be absent when needed, and to accommodate busy schedules. Below are the ensembles that we offer. We also encourage those of you willing to sing solos and/or play an instrument at various times throughout the year to contact Brock Besse. For a more in-depth description of the below groups, please visit our website, or contact Brock directly at (507) 288-6430, ext. 3106 or besse@bethellutheran.com.

Chancel Choir | High School Students - Adults: Rehearse Wednesdays beginning, September 9th, 7 - 8:30 pm in the sanctuary | Sing each weekend throughout the year

Men's Quartet | Select group of 4 lower voices: Rehearse Wednesdays beginning September 9th, 8:30 - 9 pm in the sanctuary | Sing once a month at assigned service(s)

Blessings Women's Choir | High School Students - Adults: Rehearse Thursdays beginning September 17th, 5:45 - 6:30 pm in the chapel | Sing once a month at 9 & 10:30 am services

Sing for Joy Men's Choir | High School Students - Adults: Rehearse Thursdays beginning September 17th, 5 - 5:45 pm in the chapel | Sing once a month at 9 & 10:30 am services

Choristers Choir | Grades 1 - 5: Rehearse Wednesdays beginning September 16th, 5:45 - 6:15 pm in the chapel | Sing once a month at assigned service(s)

Cherub Choir | Ages 3 - Kindergarten: Rehearse Wednesdays beginning September 16th, 5:45 pm - 6:15 pm in Room 100 | Sing once a month at assigned service(s)

Youth Orffestra | Grades 2 - 6: Rehearse Wednesdays beginning September 16th, 6:15 pm - 6:45 pm in Room 100 | Play at select service(s) as selections are ready throughout the season

Bethel Brass | High School Students - Adults: Rehearse Wednesdays beginning September 9th,

5:30 - 6:15 pm in the sanctuary | Play monthly at 9 & 10:30 am services

Bethel Ensemble (formerly Orchestra) | High School Students - Adults: Rehearse Wednesdays beginning September 16th, 6:15 - 7 pm in the sanctuary | Play monthly at 9 & 10:30 am services

Bethel Ringers | High School Students - Adults: Rehearse Thursdays beginning September 17th, 7:15 - 8 pm in the sanctuary | Ring monthly at 9 & 10:30 am services

Gate of Life Singers & Band | All Vocalists & Instrumentalists: Meet each Sunday throughout the year at 9 am to rehearse weekly selections and lead worship at 10:10 am in the chapel



COLUMBARIUM & MEMORIAL GARDEN UPDATE

The Columbarium and Memorial Garden sit on the East side of the church beneath the stained glass cross you see in the sanctuary.

There are six columbaria with twenty-five niches in each unit. There are two benches to sit and reflect. A "Peace be with You" plaque is on display in front of the Memorial Garden. A street light shines at night overlooking the Columbaria & Memorial Garden. Additionally, there is beautiful landscaping with rose bushes, hostas, and small trees. Each niche holds 1 or 2 sets of ashes.

A double niche sells for

\$2,000, and a single niche sells for \$1,400. Ashes can be buried in the memorial garden for \$600 a person.



Built to Serve

UPDATE COMING SOON!



The Built to Serve effort is fast approaching with information coming to members in September and October!

Built to Serve is a three-year plan that focuses on our church properties maintenance and improvement projects as well as supporting our mission project in Puerto Rico. The mission partnership with Iglesia Luterana del Divino Salvador church is an ongoing effort where Bethel members were there in 2024 to create a hospitality house for people in transition. The Built to Serve effort will help with improvements to their church over this three-year period.

A Built to Serve booklet will be made available to members to help with the overall plan objectives and a better understanding of Bethel's efforts with the program in late August, early September. Copies of the booklet will be available at the church office and Narthex-watch for the announcements. More information is available at bethellutheran.com/builttoserve.

The Stewardship weekend commitment is planned for October 10th and 11th for members

to share their financial commitment for the Annual fund and the Built to Serve with yearly, monthly or weekly giving opportunities during the three-year plan. WATCH for the flyer and pledge card that will be mailed to you in September.

An appreciation for Bethel members will also be shared with cheesecake after the October 10th, Saturday night service, and pancakes Sunday morning from 8:30 – 10:30 am.

We are a very blessed congregation in sharing our time, talent and treasures with God and his mission here at Bethel!

-Bethel Stewardship Team



Bethel Volunteer Guidebook



Are you looking for ways to use your gifts and talents at Bethel? Bethel has many opportunities for all ages to volunteer throughout the year. Volunteers are always welcomed and it's a great way to meet new people!

Check out the Volunteer Guidebook found at the Welcome Center, the church office, or online at bethellutheran.com/servingministries. For more information about volunteering at Bethel, contact Sheri Kallembach, Member Coordinator at kallembach@bethellutheran.com

New MEMBER ORIENTATION 101 CLASSES

Do you know someone looking for a church home? If so, invite them to attend our monthly New Member Orientation 101 Class. The classes will begin on Thursday, September 17th at 5 pm via Zoom.

The one-hour class will include what it means to be a member of Bethel Lutheran Church, information on various ministries at Bethel and enjoying fellowship together. Attendance is required for all those interested in becoming a Bethel member. To register for the class, please visit our website at: bethellutheran.com/join or contact Sheri Kallembach, Member Coordinator at kallembach@bethellutheran.com.

Food for Kidz

Saturday, NOV. 7TH, 2026

Ages 5-105 are welcome to join us! Some jobs can be done sitting down if needed.

Please join us for a day of packing meals and making memories. Meals will be shared with our neighbors in need, both locally and internationally. This is a great volunteer activity to kick off a busy holiday season. Shifts are only 2 hours in length; watch for a signup in early October.

Our goal this year is to pack 180,000 meals. This is a lofty goal, but it is reflective of the number of families dealing with hunger and food insecurity. We raised \$11,000 from Lenten donations. That's a fantastic start! Donations are still being accepted through Bethel's website.



2026 BETHEL CHRISTMAS *Tea Team* EVENTS



The Christmas Tea team invites to you participate in the 2026 Chari-Tea and Christmas Tea. The theme this year is :

"Away in a Manger"



The Chari-Tea allows you to give a donation (cash or check) for our charities. Donations of \$25 or greater receive a special thank you gift while supplies last. The Christmas Tea team will be in the narthex on November 14th-15th and November 21st-22nd to receive donations and sell tickets to the Christmas Tea.

The Bethel Christmas Tea is on December 5th, 2026. The Christmas tea event includes entertainment, vendors, and cookie sales, and beautifully decorated tables with a delicious tea to enjoy with friends and family just for \$25.

The charities that will benefit from Christmas Tea and the Chari-Tea are: Can Do Canines, Red Drop Resources, Community Food Response, Childhood Cancer Community, Habitat for Humanity. Our goal is to raise \$5,000. Watch for more information as we get closer to the events. Checks for the Chari-Tea and Christmas Tea tickets should be made out to Bethel Tea Team. Please direct questions to the co-chairs Kathy Gustafson (krgustafson35@gmail.com) and Bianca DeLone (bdelone64@gmail.com).



**FRIDAY,
OCTOBER 9TH
7:30 AM - 2 PM
BAG SALE:
2:15 - 4 PM**

Save the date for our annual Rummage Sale! Coffee, cinnamon rolls, cookies, bars, and a BBQ lunch for purchase. We accept furniture in good condition, fall/winter clothing, books, etc. Please do not bring computers, TVs, curtain rods/blinds, lighting or plumbing fixtures, microwaves or out of season clothing.

Donations may be brought on Wednesday, October 7th from 4 - 8 pm or on Thursday, October 8th from 8 am - 4 pm to Bethel Hall using the loading dock door or south door of the church. Bring furniture and books to the Narthex (south door).

Thank you in advance for your support of this wonderful event. All monies go to help support charities and non profit organizations.



Sunday Morning Education

Sunday School - Age 3 by 9/1/26 – 4th Grade

- 9 am – Kids Connection
(large group lesson and related stations)
- 10:30 am – Side by Side
(worship and Sunday School related stations)

L.I.F.T. - 5th and 6th Grade, 9 and 10:30 am

Through the Gate - 7th – 12th Grade, 10:10 - 11:30 am

FIRE (CONFIRMATION MINISTRY)

Parent & Student Kickoff Night - September 23rd,
6 pm in the Sanctuary.

Confirmation begins September 30th 6-7:15 pm
with pizza from 5:15-6 pm.

New this year! After class, youth are invited to
stay until 8 pm for a fun hangout! Play games,
enjoy snacks, and spend time with friends.

ELEVATE (7TH-12TH GRADE)

9th grade Affirmation of Baptism

- Sunday, October 25th, 1:30 pm
- Rehearsal on Saturday, October 24th, 9 am

NEW! Through the Gate

- Sundays | 10:10 – 11:30 am

Weekly gathering beginning by worshipping
at the Gate of Life, followed by gathering to
reflect on the message and connect with
one another as we explore how God's Word
shapes our lives. We'll build friendships, grow
in faith, encourage one another, and discover
what it means to follow Jesus.



Wednesday pizza nights are back starting September 23rd. For \$3, you get a slice
of pizza, fruit, carrots, a cookie, and lemonade. Additional pieces are \$2 each. It's the
best deal in town!

First Communion

FOR 5TH GRADERS

First Communion Instruction

- 5th graders attend both
sessions with an adult
 - Session 1 – November 8th, 1:30 pm
 - Session 2 – November 10th, 6:30 pm

First Communion Celebration

- November 14th and 15th
during all worship services

CONNECT - GROW - SERVE

Finding Youth events and volunteer
opportunities is easier than
EVER! Scan the QR Code
or visit our website under
Children Youth and Family
to explore upcoming events,
register, stay connected and
grow in faith together.



Save the Date!



October 24th, 3 - 5 pm in Bethel's
parking lot. Everyone is invited to join
in the fun by decorating your vehicle
to hand out treats!



Moms and the
Message meets on
the 4th Monday of
the month at 6 pm
for food, Bible
discussion, prayer

and friendship. This is for moms with school-age
kids. We meet in homes. Contact Kelly Jones
(302-291-6142) if you are interested. Information
is also shared through a private Facebook group
you can join: Moms & the Message Bible Study
Bethel Lutheran Church.



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Worship AT A GLANCE

For more information on events, please visit
www.bethellutheran.com/calendar-events

- **Rally Weekend** September 12th & 13th
- **Commitment Weekend** October 10th & 11th
- **Reformation Weekend (wear red)** October 24th & 25th
- **All Saints Weekend** October 31st & November 1st
- **Thanksgiving Eve Worship** November 25th | 7 pm



The Thanksgiving Dinner Team is bringing back **Bethel's Annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner** this year! Make sure to check our e-news for updates. If you would like to join the Thanksgiving Dinner Team, please contact Art Larson (larsonart@charter.net).

Keep Us UP TO DATE!



- Please contact us with any address or email changes, or if you will temporarily be away for a time.
- Let us know if you are members of another church or do not wish to remain a member of Bethel.
- If you would like to receive this Beacon newsletter via email rather than mailed to you, please let us know.

Contact Sheri Kallembach at
kallembach@bethellutheran.com
or call the church office

(507) 288-6430

with any of the above updates.

If you would like to be added to our weekly eNews (on Thursdays),

please **email us at**

info@bethellutheran.com



@bethelrochester



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