

A Word of Welcome

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we begin a new program year at Bethel, I want to pause and give thanks: thanks to God for His faithfulness, and thanks to you for the many ways you have shared your time, gifts, and love this past year. Together we have worshiped, learned, served, and welcomed in Christ's name. We have walked with Jesus through joy and sorrow, ordinary Sundays and holy days, laughter at fellowship tables and prayers at hospital bedsides. In all these moments, Christ has been present with us.

One of the great blessings of being the church is that we never walk this journey alone. God gathers us in worship to renew us by His Word and Sacrament, and then sends us out to be His people in the world. Along the way, we encourage one another, strengthen one another, and discover again that we are part of something far greater than ourselves.

This year, we are praying and working toward two hopes in particular. First, that Bethel would continue to be a place of welcome, where new people find a spiritual home, families discover community, and friendships in Christ are formed and strengthened. We long to see more people gathered in worship, learning, and service; not only for the sake of numbers, but because each person matters to God, and each person enriches our shared life.

Second, we are inviting one another to grow in the grace of stewardship. Everything we have is a gift from God, and together we are called to use our time, talents, and resources to support and strengthen the ministry we share. As we look ahead, our generosity will ensure that Bethel remains a place of vibrant worship, warm hospitality, deep learning, and compassionate service. Giving is never just about meeting a budget; it is about joining in God's mission with joy and trust.

I invite you to join wholeheartedly in the life of Bethel this year. Come and sing with us, study with us, serve with us, and share the joy of Christ's love with others. Your presence matters. Your gifts make a difference. And your faith helps shape the witness we offer to the world.

May this year be filled with God's grace and blessing as we walk together, living out our calling as the people of Bethel.

In Christ,
Pastor Jon

Worship – The Heart of Our Life Together

Worship is where we meet God together — lifting our voices in praise, hearing His Word, receiving His grace, and being renewed for the week ahead.

This year, we look forward to:

- Continuing cherished traditions such as the 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at Hale Farm and the Easter Sunday Sunrise Service.
- Embracing our new tradition of outdoor worship under the pavilion, which brought joy and a refreshing spirit on beautiful summer Sundays.



our community.

- Sharing worship more broadly through streaming on Facebook and YouTube, extending Bethel's welcome to those who cannot be with us in person.
- Nurturing a strong music ministry under Hayley's leadership, blending tradition and creativity to enrich our worship.
- Offering opportunities for people of all ages to take part in worship leadership, so that every service reflects the gifts God has given

How You Can Join Us:

- Join the choir or share your musical gifts.
- Serve as a reader, usher, communion assistant, or fellowship host.
- Help with seasonal decorating or worship planning.
- Invite a friend and sit with them in worship.

Welcoming – Hospitality at the Heart

At Bethel, welcoming is not just something we do, it's who we are. Our 5 S's of Welcoming guide us: *See with Christ's Eyes, Say Something Simple, Sit with Them, Show Them Around, Send a Follow-up Note*. These small but powerful acts help make Bethel a place where visitors feel seen, valued, and encouraged to return.

This year, one of our hopes is to grow our church family by extending Christ's love in ways that help more people find a spiritual home at Bethel. Every invitation matters, every smile makes a difference, and every act of kindness opens a door for someone to experience God's grace in community. Our prayer is that new faces will become familiar friends, and that Bethel will continue to be a place where people of all ages can belong, grow, and serve.

We are especially grateful for Richard Jandrey, who faithfully hands out bulletins with a smile nearly every Sunday, and for Norma Russel, who makes sure food and coffee are ready and organizes the fellowship hosts who serve us each week. Their quiet dedication is a gift to us all.

How You Can Join Us:

- Practice the 5 S's of Welcoming each Sunday.
- Greet someone new and invite them to coffee hour.
- Sit with a visitor and make them feel at home.
- Lend a hand with refreshments or cleanup.
- Invite a friend, neighbor, or co-worker to join you for worship.



Learning – Growing Together in Faith

From the youngest child to the most seasoned believer, we are all on a journey of faith. At Bethel, learning is not just about gaining knowledge — it's about growing as disciples of Jesus Christ.

This past year, we completed a year-long Bible study on the TV series *The Chosen*, which gave us fresh ways to see the life and ministry of Jesus. Our **regular Adult Bible Study** continues each Sunday at 8:30 a.m. before worship, providing space for honest conversation and reflection on God's Word.



For children, **Sunday School** takes place after worship for about 20–30 minutes while adults enjoy fellowship time.

Confirmation class meets during that same window, giving students a chance to grow in faith alongside one another. This year, our confirmation students will be learning about the **Apostles' Creed, the Lutheran Confessions, the Lord's Prayer, and the Reformers of Martin Luther's time.**

As we look ahead, our learning opportunities will continue to take many shapes — Bible studies, Sunday School, confirmation, and intergenerational events — but the heart will remain the same: to grow together in God's Word, deepen our understanding of His truth, and encourage one another in following Christ.

How You Can Join Us:

- Join a Bible study and bring your questions.
- Volunteer to help teach or assist in Sunday School.
- Support our confirmation students by serving as a sponsor or prayer partner.
- Try something new — attend a study or class you haven't been part of before.

Serving – The Church Has Left the Building

At Bethel, service is more than something we do — it is part of who we are. We serve because Christ first served us, meeting people where they are with compassion, generosity, and love. In every act of kindness, we find joy in reflecting the heart of Jesus to our neighbors.

This past year, God blessed our Service Ministry in many ways:

- **Adopt a Trail** – caring for local trails as good stewards of creation.
- **Church garden ministry** – producing vegetables for local families and flowers that became beautiful bouquets delivered to brighten lives.



- **Community partnerships** – giving money and resources to individuals and families in need, providing food, rent assistance, school supplies, and gas cards. We have partnered with the **Revere School District**, who regularly reach out to us when needs arise in our community.

- **Golf outing fundraiser** – raising over **\$7,000** this past year to support Bethel's service ministry and its many outreach efforts.

Every one of these efforts, whether large or small, is a way of saying to our neighbors: "You are not alone. God loves you, and so do we."

How You Can Join Us:

- Come along for a monthly service project like Adopt a Trail or Haven of Rest.
- Lend a hand in the garden — planting, watering, harvesting, or delivering.
- Help provide supplies or financial support when community needs arise.
- Support special projects like gift card drives, food pantry collections, or the annual golf outing.

Men's Group

The Men's Group at Bethel is a place for fellowship, laughter, and encouragement in faith. We gather for coffee and breakfast from **7:00–9:00 a.m.** — on warm-weather days under the church pavilion, and on colder or rainy mornings at **Ocelot Coffee**.

Our conversations are wide and lively: anything from tractors to football, from Bible characters to the surprising ways Scripture has shaped our lives. No topic is off limits, and every gathering is a chance to grow in friendship and faith.

The Men's Group also helps organize two favorite community events: the **Sweet Corn Festival** each September and the **Chili Cook-Off** in November. These gatherings not only bring our church family together but also extend Bethel's welcome to neighbors near and far.



Come and enjoy coffee, fellowship, and laughter — and find support and love from other men in our church.

Women's Group

The Women's Group at Bethel is a community of women who gather for fellowship, study, and service, seeking to act boldly in faith and share Christ's love in practical ways. **All women of the congregation are invited to participate.** The group meets **bi-monthly, typically on the last Saturday of every other month (Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct).**

This past year, the Women's Group:

- Donated **10 quilts** to Lutheran World Relief.
- Hosted Bible studies on inspiring "Bible Women" such as Queen Esther, Dorcas, Miriam, and Abigail.
- Enjoyed workshops on quilting and journaling, and a special trip to the **BibleWalk Wax Museum** in Mansfield, OH.
- Helped host the **Jerusalem Marketplace Rally Day** in September.
- Supported ministries locally and globally, including gifts to **ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, WELCA SALT**, and Bethel's own Service Ministry.
- Raised funds through the **Chocolate Sale** and **Lenten Fish Fry**, generating support for future ministry and outreach.



Looking ahead, the Women's Group plans to continue:

- Bi-monthly gatherings with Bible study, fellowship, and service.
- Hosting **1–2 fundraising events** to support church and community projects.
- Offering social opportunities that strengthen friendships and deepen faith.