

So Long and Welcome

Those of us in the Northern Hemisphere will say so long to summer on September 22nd and if you're like me, you might feel these past few days have been a bit too warm and the cooler, sweater weather of fall will be a welcomed relief. Fall is my favorite time of year when adding a light layer of clothing keeps me comfortable and simply looking out an open window brings close the colors and sounds of the new season all a reminder of God who has gifted us with the incredible show each season offers. Late summer also rings in a new school year and new sports seasons as cross country meets find youth running routes through school grounds, parks and golf courses. Football players are pushing through the dreaded 'two-a-day' practices and volleyballs can be heard bouncing on the gym floor and getting spiked across a net. Families have likely completed school shopping and little ones have gotten on the school bus but there's still time for a weekend get-away before we truly say goodbye to summer. How are you saying so long to one season as you welcome the next?

Labor Day is often a turning point for those of us in the upper Midwest and whether you are retired, still going to work full-time or in a part-time status, let us pause to give thanks for work of all kinds that contribute to our society's success. What would we do without our farmers, factory workers, teachers, bus drivers, plumbers, road workers, doctors, nurses and attorneys? What would we do without our dedicated retail workers, cooks, waitresses, and small business owners? Please take a moment to add those workers to this list who come to your mind. I am including a Prayer of a Day Laborer in my article this month. (It is on page 5 of our newsletter.) Hold this close as we remember to thank workers of all kinds this Labor Day and notice the prayer was written so very long ago- 1746.

I continue to give thanks to our providing God for my time with the folks at Bethel Presbyterian Church. The ministry you share, because of your faithfulness to God, is a blessing to so many. I'm grateful that my time continues as we welcome, together, all that is to come.

Peace, Lori

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Diaconate will meet
September 8th at 9:30.
Sue Updegraff will be hosting.



Open Hands Food Pantry Stats:
The total number of households served in July was 241, made up of 551 individuals. We served 18,261 lbs of food. 55 households received food stamps.



Session took the following action at their 10 August meeting:

- Opened with devotion and prayer led by Mike Schroyer;
- Shared with each other our Joys and Concerns;
- Approved minutes from Session meeting on 13 July 2025;
- Received Treasurer's Reports for July 2025;
- Pastor Lori shared highlights of her classes and social events at Synod School and recommended Session promote other Bethel members attend a future school;
- Pastor Lori shared her thoughts on the class regarding Christian Nationalism and suggested Bethel invite the community to a showing of the film "Bad Faith";
- Pastor Lori reported she would be unavailable 20 to 22 August and has planned with Pastor Mee to cover any emergency needs. She also reported she will be gone from 13 to 18 September and absent from the pulpit on 14 September;
- Session decided to move their September meeting to the first Sunday, 07 September, due to Pastor Lori's planned absence;
- Discussed placement of flags near the main doors in order to focus on the font, table and lectern in the sanctuary;
- Discussed plans for Harvest Home Sunday on 26 October including asking Sarah Updegraff Murray to speak during the potluck meal;
- Heard an update on the TigerHawk Summer Meal Program and learned volunteers have logged nearly 500 hours through the first of August;
- Discussed possible uses for the gazebo in community outreach through little pantries for non-perishable food items, hygiene needs and possibly a lending library of books;
- Heard Women's Bible Study classes at Stoney Brook are going well and encouraged others to attend;
- Heard an update on church's website and plans to make it more user friendly and searchable;
- Heard updates from Building and Grounds on installation of new toilets – minor repairs to the rubber roofing membrane – planned repairs on southwest entryway windows;
- The meeting was closed with prayer led by Rev. Kleppe.





All women of your churches are cordially invited to the
JOHN KNOX PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN FALL WORKSHOP
Saturday, September 20, 2025
at First Presbyterian Church
121 W. Florence Street, Cambria, WI

For the Love of Orphans

*"Religion that God accepts as pure and faultless is this:
to look after orphans and widows in their distress."* ~ James 1:27

Our speaker will be Megan Elmore, founder and director of "For the Love of Orphans," supporting the Mansa Fountain of Blessings Orphan Care Center in Mansa, Zambia, Africa. www.fortheloveoforphans.org

Cash donations will be gratefully accepted. Other needs include decorative pencils, lightweight socks, boxer shorts for boys and underwear for girls (kids sizes M-XL and adult size S).

At this meeting we will also dedicate the Thank Offering, and we will hear suggestions for future JKPW gatherings different start time, having an overnight option, moving to one per year instead of two, etc. Please come prepared to share your thoughts and opinions.

The Cambria church has a wheelchair accessible entrance, a wheelchair accessible parking lot, and a wheelchair accessible restroom. Lunch cost is \$8. To assist the with their planning, **please RSVP by Friday, September 12** by calling or texting 563-419-7371 or email ripleyjb56@gmail.com. (Indicate if you have any dietary restrictions.) Thanks, and we look forward to seeing you!

EXTENDED TABLE OFFERING

The gifts you bring to the Extended Table offering that are received on Communion Sunday are now supporting the Open Hands Food Pantry in West Union.

The extended table offering items requested for Communion Sunday, September 7, 2025, are: surprise us with whatever you want to donate .

Thanks so much for your offerings to support Bethel's mission to reach out in our community!

This is one simple way we can share with those in need. We are called to be generous as God has been overwhelmingly generous to us!



Sewing Circle will meet on Thursday, September 11th and 25th, at 9:30 until 3:00.



Committed to
nurturing faith,
supporting mission,
working for justice,
and building community.

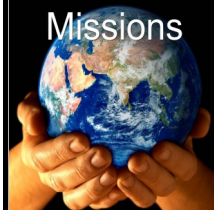
CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to our Bethel family members as they celebrate birthdays and anniversaries this month!

SEPT 4- Christina Bodensteiner
SEPT 9- Mike Schroyer
SEPT 15- Marshall Brandt
Galen & Cindy Ira-Smith (A)
SEPT 21 - Mary Ruroden
SEPT 25 Bill Thom



Missions



Noisy Bucket offering for July was \$43.38.

It will be collected again September 28th.

Thank you for your contributions to this ministry.

Members and friends of Bethel who seek healing and wholeness in their lives are kept in prayer.

Together we are remembering: Cathy Bemiss, Teri Brockway, Don & Janice Durscher, Sarah Updegraff Murray, Kirk Bruso, and baby McCoy

Good Samaritan Center - Peggi Pape

Stoney Brook - Kate Ewing, Kathy Meyer

Eastern Star Decorah - Doyle Gorden

Ossian Care Center -Cindy Barness



LAYLEADERS

- 07 Martha Bartenhagen
- 14 Stephen Bartenhagen
- 21 Greg Kleppe
- 28 Robin Bostrom

POWER POINT

- 07 Karen Schmitz
- 14 Stephen Bartenhagen
- 21 Dawn Jacobsen
- 28 Martha Bartenhagen

FELLOWSHIP TREATS

- 07 Julie Larsen
- 14 Nancy Dunt
- 21 Dolores Jacobsen/
Karen Schmitz
- 28 Robin Bostrom

COMMUNION

Communion will be served on Sunday, September 7. Mike Schroyer and Kris Moser will be servers.



Prayer of a Day Laborer

O God! I am receiving my daily bread by the hard work of my two hands, with which I earn my bread daily and my attire. From early dawn till late sunset day after day the burden of my work causes me to languish and the extreme heat of the sun fatigues me. I have no other way than this much daily labor to sustain my life and the life of my own household: unceasing labor day after day, and the hope that after each night's short sleep I will be able to work next day until night again.

In spite of all, I would not think of grumbling. Instead, with sincere thanksgiving I praise Thy Holy Name for keeping me in good health and vigor till this very day, providing graciously for my daily needs. To rise so early every morning and to go to bed so exhausted every night while earning my daily bread with so much sweat would be in vain, if Thou didst not send Thy blessings on me, O Lord!

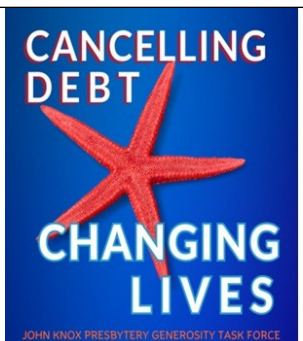
Do not let me stand in idleness, my God; call me and send me to join all Thy hard workers in the vineyard. Do not let me serve Thee carelessly and never let me become a burden to others. Then when the last night of my earthly life will come, give me the good reward I deserve for all my laborious work on earth. Amen.

Anonymous Hungarian Protestant (1746) English translation by Stephen Szabo.

A Book of Reformed Prayers

When God called John Knox Presbytery to begin a ministry to cancel the burden of medical debt for families, we could not have realized it would grow into what it has. Only three years into this ministry we call The Starfish Campaign, the people of John Knox Presbytery have been able to eliminate over \$11 million of medical debt. Even better, there are close to 9,500 families out there who no longer struggle with unpaid medical bills. 9,500!

In 2025, Bethel will again participate in John Knox Presbytery's fundraising efforts, which will begin in September and culminate on Sunday, October 19. Session will discuss matching member donations at their September meeting. Watch for more information in the October ChurchMouse. Together we can make a difference for so many people and live out our commitment as a Matthew 25 church!



Call to Action: Lamenting Increased Militarism on our City Streets

“They shall beat their swords into plowshares... neither shall they learn war anymore.” —Isaiah 2:4

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” —Matthew 5:9

As followers of Jesus Christ and members of the Presbyterian Church (USA), scripture calls us to speak with moral clarity in times of injustice. Today, we lament the increasing militarization of our cities and public spaces—a trend that undermines public trust, deepens racial and economic injustice, and distracts from policies that criminalize poverty, target immigrants and vulnerable populations, and threaten democracy.

In recent years, law enforcement agencies nationwide have increasingly utilized military-grade weapons, advanced surveillance technologies, and patrolled our city streets with marked and unmarked armored vehicles. Under the [first Trump administration](#), this trend reached new and dangerous heights. In June 2020, peaceful protestors in Lafayette Square were violently dispersed with tear gas and riot control tactics, clearing the way for a photo opportunity misappropriating the Christian religion as a justification for authoritarian control. Federal agents were deployed to cities like Portland without the consent of local officials—actions condemned by civil rights organizations, faith leaders, and international observers alike.

While these images drew public outcry in years past, the patterns of state violence have not only continued but evolved in recent months under the current Trump Administration. This misuse of policing is not impartial as it disproportionately targets Black and brown communities. Children and teenagers have become primary targets in federal crackdowns masquerading as public safety efforts. In major cities, [ICE enforcement actions have significantly increased](#). Sweeps targeting immigrant and unhoused communities are being conducted with tactical units, not housing specialists or social workers.

This month, despite violent crime in Washington, D.C. being at a 30-year low—with violent crime down 26%, homicides down 12%, carjackings down 37%, and overall incidents down more than 35% from 2023—[President Trump declared a public safety emergency](#) and invoked a little-used clause of the D.C. Home Rule Act to seize control of the Metropolitan Police Department and deploy 800 National Guard troops under federal authority for 30 days. City leaders, legal experts, and faith communities have denounced this [action as politically motivated](#), unlawful, and an attack on local governance. Nevertheless, President Trump has publicly threatened to expand this strategy to New York City and Chicago, even hinting at the potential use of martial-law-style control.

As people of faith, we affirm that every person is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This sacred truth means that each life carries inherent dignity, worth, and agency, not to be denied by the state or reduced to a security threat. When the state targets our youth and treats Black neighborhoods with hostility, it violates not only human rights but the divine imprint each person bears.

Our Christian faith and Reformed tradition speak clearly in this moment. We must faithfully resist the idolatry of power and bear witness to God's peace. God's vision for peace does not involve militaristic city takeovers, riot shields, or forced sweeps. Proper public safety arises from access to affordable housing, mental health care, community-led safety programs, and accountable, demilitarized law enforcement. The prophet Isaiah envisions a world where tools of war are transformed into tools of growth. Jesus declares that "peacemakers will be called children of God" and teaches that answering violence with more violence and showing overwhelming force are not the ways of Jesus.

The PC(USA) has taken strong, faithful stands. The 224th General Assembly (2020) called for an end to the transfer of military equipment to local police forces and a shift toward nonviolent, community-centered public safety approaches.

As Presbyterians, we must not remain neutral in the face of injustice. We must act with moral clarity in this moment.

1. Tell Congress today to end militarized policing, defund inhumane enforcement, and reject the Administration's unnecessary federal authority to control cities within 30 days.
2. Support local organizing by joining or supporting immigrant justice and housing coalitions.
3. Engage congregations by hosting a discussion, worship service, or prayer vigil on militarization, racial justice, and immigration using PC(USA) resources.

Let us be the peacemakers Jesus calls us to be. Let us resist the machinery of fear and stand for a world rooted in justice, compassion, and hope.



The Peace and Global Witness offering is received each year on the first Sunday in October, which is also the day we celebrate World Communion Sunday and **Christ's peace extended through all creation**. As we come together with thousands of other Presbyterians that day, we are reminded of the strength we have as a worldwide church. Working together, we are assured of Christ's peace and that we can accomplish ministries which seek to reverse injustice and quell conflict around the world.

We celebrate that we are connected, we are loved, and we are not alone. We worship together and are fed from Scripture and at Christ's table of peace. Extending the peace of Christ is part of an active, engaged faith - a witness of what it means for us to be the church, together.

Peace is active, not passive

Peace is doing, not waiting

As we work to share Christ's peace with one another, let's have that peace with those beyond our doors, beyond our communities, and beyond our borders. The Peace and Global Witness Offering provides the tools and resources for us as we join together as active participants at all times, and in all ways.

We are there.

The Peace & Global Witness Offering offers light to those in the shadows and guides us all into the ways of peace. We come together to promote the peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice in our own communities and around the world.



Please give what you can.

IF WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT.

Thank you!

Our VISION—

*Our Vision is for this Body of Christ to be a Community of Faith called... Bethel—A **people** and a place where God is made known!*



KIDS KITS Our sincere thanks is extended to Bethel members, who contributed to our Kids Kits. The school supplies, the fabric and contributions of money were so greatly appreciated. Monies that were contributed were used for the \$2.00 shipping and handling requested by CWS for each Kids Kit sent. We were able to complete 33 totes at Sewing Circle's August 14th meeting. All totes have been shipped to Paron, Arkansas and are distributed from there. Last year 10,110 totes were sent to US states, as well as foreign countries. Again, our thanks for your contributions to this mission project.



Devotionals, Study Bibles and More

A small collection of gently used books has been donated and are available on a table in the library. See something you'd like? It's yours to enjoy! The photos show only a few of the books available. You are welcome to donate to this Free Little Library, too.

"Hope Is A Strategy"

Bethel Presbyterian Church will welcome West Union native **Sarah Updegraff Murray** on Sunday, October 19th. Sarah experienced a devastating accident 16 months ago that changed her life forever. Since that time, she has been leaning on hope, relationships, and blessing to help her gain strength each day and give back to her community. Please join us to hear Sarah's incredible journey and engage in conversation with her.



Thank you all so much for your donations to our family! The money helps to pay for fuel traveling to Rochester each day! We are truly grateful for the support of the community during this trying time.
The Eberling Family

September 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Worship 10:00 w/ the Lord's Supper Fellowship Session Meeting	8 9:30 Diaconate	9	10	11 Sewing Circle 9:30-3	12	13
14 Worship 10:00 Fellowship	15	16	17	18 Women's Bible Study 10:00 Stoney Brook	19	20
21 Worship 10:00 Fellowship	22	23	24	25 Sewing Circle 9:30-3	26	27
28 Worship 10:00 w/ Noisy Bucket Fellowship Clean 12-6	29 Clean furnace room & closet 9-6	30				

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