

11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Matthew 2:11

Many of our neighbors or friends might be feeling the affects of their New Year's celebration having stayed up until midnight to ring in the new year. I admit never being one to ring in the new year with others at a party or even with my family members in my home. Midnight? I would have been in bed for no fewer that two hours and most likely three! This year will be no different. 2026 WILL arrive and I will wake on January 1st RESTED. I will also mark our Lord's Epiphany on the 6th.

A favorite January 1st memory is the year John, my son, and his classmate, Damien, and I took a train from New London, CT to New York City. Having been forewarned of the unpleasant experience we would likely have ringing in the new year in the city, we opted to see the sights on the 1st . New York City, on the morning of January 1st, is barren. Dead. Desolate. It felt as if we had the city to ourselves which was fine for my small group, but Damien, a local farm kid, remained a bit claustrophobic surrounded by all those tall buildings lining the streets.

I bet you have some special memories of New Years, too, where you allowed yourself to put worries aside and enjoy the moment surrounded by friends. Or maybe you have spent December 31st like me going to bed early but with a smile anticipating the coming of a new year. I want to encourage you to do this more often...to end the day feeling a divinely inspired peace with worries given to our Lord to bear for you and maybe even with a quick smile on your face. Offer a prayer, close your eyes, take deep breaths and sleep. Be assured upon waking in the morning the Holy Spirit will offer you a spiritual embrace. Remember, God is with us. Always.

I look forward to hearing how you ushered in the new year and even the burdens you have been giving to God to bear for you. It's been a joy to journey with you during 2025 and I am excited to see what 2026 will bring the people of Bethel Presbyterian Church.

May the New Year bring you blessings in abundance of love, joy, health, peace and prosperity with some to spare. ~Anna Pereira

In Christ,

Lori

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CELEBRATIONS

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

JAN 2	Bruce Franzen
JAN 3	Stephen Bartenhagen
JAN 14	Landon Johansen
JAN 17	Peggi Pape
JAN 19	Cindy Barness
JAN 23	John Lee Meyer
	Bailey Brandt



The gifts we donated to the family in need. Thank you for your generosity!

The movie *Bad Faith* will be shown again on Wednesday, January 14 at 1:30 p.m. It was very well received by those who attended in December. This is a highly regarded documentary highlighting the history and rise of Christian Nationalism.



The Christmas Eve Service offering
of \$463.00 went to the
Open Hands Food Pantry.



On behalf of the Worship Ministry Team, *Thank You* to all who participated in the planning, preparation, and presentation of the *Christmas Eve in a Barn* worship service. It was a wonderful evening of celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ through hearing the scriptures, singing carols, and sharing God's love with one another by candlelight. The freewill offering was given to the Open Hands Food Pantry in West Union.

What a blessing to see the hands of God continuing to work through our Bethel Presbyterian Church Family!

Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on Earth.



You can find a link on the Facebook page to watch the service.

Thirteen items were sent to Knitting4Peace in December. We thank those who have contributed to this mission project of Bethel Presbyterian Women.



Diaconate will meet at 9:30 on January 12th.

Karen Schmitz is the Host.

The Diaconate will receive their quarterly offering on Sunday, January 11, 2024.

THE BEAUTIFUL POINSETTIAS ADORNING
THE SANCTUARY THIS CHRISTMAS WERE
GIVEN IN LOVING MEMORY OF...

Grace and Doyle Journey, Mary Sue Johnson, & Merlin Dunt
From: Dave and Julie Aanes & Nancy Dunt

Gary Bemiss
From: Nancy Dunt

Janice Dursher, Charles & Viola Bierman, John & Cilia Dursher
From: the Durscher Family

Chuck, Kalen, & Justin Jacobsen
From: Doloris Jacobsen and Family

Lyle Johansen (Lee's Father) & Larry and Rosemary Hulse (Linda's Parents)
From: Lee and Linda Johansen

Les & Fern Kleppe
From: Gregg and Lori Kleppe



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, January 4th, 2026, are canned fruits and vegetables. They would always welcome gluten free items.

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!



Gregg is providing rides as requested and on a week-to-week basis. His number is 563-380-9787.



Session took the following action at their 14 December meeting:

- Opened with devotion by Paul Harvey and prayer led by Stephen Bartenhagen;
- Shared with each other our Joys and Concerns;
- Approved minutes from Session meetings on 09 November 2025;
- Received Treasurer's Report for November 2025;
- Approved an amended budget for 2026;
- Approved transfer request of Marissa Wright-Post from First Presbyterian Church, Manchester;
- Approved holding the annual Congregational meeting on 25 January 2026 (fourth Sunday) noting this is an exception to church by-laws guidelines for holding the meeting on the third Sunday;
- Considered a request to repair stained-glass window stored in the furnace room;
- Toured the furnace room to view the stain-glass window and consider its repair, but tabled a decision pending further information;
- Toured the new sewing circle room and new location for nursery;
- Heard plans for The Longest Night service on 21 December at 5:30 p.m. with the liturgy written by an Elder of Presbyterian Church (USA);
- Reviewed "refrigerator" calendars for 2026 with encouragement to distribute to family, friends, and community members along with an invitation to join us in Worship;
- Approved holding a Session retreat and regular business meeting on 24 January 2026 beginning at 9:00 a.m.;
- Pastor Lori reported on thank you received for gifts given to our adopted PSAS family. They are very grateful for us thinking of them;
- Approved Special Offering dates for 2026 – Blanket Sunday (February 01), OGHS (March 29), World Communion (October 04), Christmas Joy (December 20), and Noisy Bucket (last Sunday of month);
- Approved Diaconate receiving quarterly offerings on 11 January, 12 April, 12 July, and 11 October;
- Heard an update on remodeling of women's bathroom with hopes to have wallboard installed next week. The boiler was not working this morning and we will seek repairs this coming week. Heard an update on installing additional technology in the dining room so we can live-stream broadcast worship services from that location. Pastor Lori thanked the team all they have accomplished this year;
- Appointed Kyle Jacobsen as Treasurer and Stephen Bartenhagen as Clerk of Session for 2026;
- Approved recommendation from Celebration Team to permanently transfer an amount from celebration fund to general fund covering the monetary shortfall in the latter at year-end 2025;
- Heard from Scholarship Team about plans to tweak their scholarship application form regarding recipients' responses;
- Approved Julie Anes filling the final three-year term (Class of 2028) on Session, subject to Congregation approval at the annual meeting;
- The meeting was closed with prayer led by Rev. Kleppe.



ALL annual reports are due in the Church Office no later that January 12th
THAT IS THE DEADLINE

Chairpersons of each team should submit a written report to the church office.

TEAMS with a treasury must include an itemized Financial report.

You may e-mail your report to the church (bethelpresbych@q.com). Your report should be typed.

If you need a copy of last year's annual report, you may get one at the church office.

Annual reports will not be mailed to members unless requested. Reports will be available for everyone attending the annual meeting, on January 26th. Extra copies may be picked up at the church. THANK YOU !!!!



January Blessings!

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 Durscher, Sarah Updegraff Murray, Kirk Bruso, baby McCoy, Rose Marie Knight (Julie Larson's mom) and Mike Schroyer.

Good Samaritan Center - Peggi Pape

Stoney Brook - Kate Ewing, Kathy Meyer

Eastern Star Decorah - Doyle Gorden

Ossian Care Center - Cindy Barness

Maple Crest - Tex Heyer

Copper Creek - Sandy Schnor



LAYLEADERS

04 Stephen Bartenhagen

11

18

25

Power Point

04 Julie Aanes

11 Mark Bostrom

18 Corey Moser

25 Karen Schmitz

FELLOWSHIP TREATS

04 Julie Aanes

11 Lee Johansen

18 Nancy Dunt

25 Annual Meet/Potluck

COMMUNION

Communion will be served
on Sunday January 4.

Dave and Julie Aanes will
be servers.



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

Sewing Circle will meet Thursday
January 8th and 22nd from
9:30—3:00

Marissa Post has transferred her membership from First Presbyterian church in Manchester to Bethel Presbyterian. Please welcome her as a member of our family.



Session Meeting Dates

January 24 Retreat

*February 15

*March 15

April 12

*May 17

June 14

July 12

August 9

September 13

October 11

November 8

December 13



*these Sundays are not on the normal 2nd Sunday of the month

Congregational Meeting



The Annual Congregational Meeting of Bethel Presbyterian Church will take place immediately following worship on Sunday, January 25, 2026. Following the meeting we will gather in the dining room for fellowship and a potluck. If you are able bring a hot dish, a salad, or dessert to share.

Our VISION—

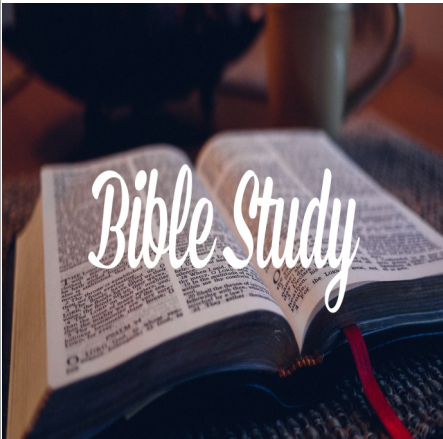
*Our Vision is for this Body of Christ to be a Community of Faith called...
Bethel—A people and a place where God is made known!*

WINTER WEATHER

Winter is officially here which means we have entered that time of year when weather conditions can make for tricky travel. We plan to hold in-person worship services unless there is inclement weather. If it becomes necessary to cancel due to snow or ice, we will use the following to notify members that church has been canceled:

- KWWL and KCRG TV stations will post the cancellation
- Email notice will be sent to members from the Clerk of Session, Stephen Bartenhagen.

If your email has changed or you wish to be added to the list for email notification, please send your email to sbartenhagen@alpinecom.net so he can update the emailing list and you will receive the cancellation notice.



Women's Bible Study

Thursday January 15, at 10:00 am Stoney Brook

Our topic: Water Justice

Main Idea: Water is so essential, and its presence and absence so impactful, that both Scripture and contemporary events reflect its multi dimensional effects on human life.

A sneak peek: Forever Chemicals: The Threat of PFAs in our water. 12 min piece available on YouTube CBS Sunday Morning



Mark your calendar:

Ash Wednesday

February 18.

Worship Matters: The Epiphany of our Lord

Greek: "manifestation," "appearance"

The festival on January 6 celebrating the manifestation of Christ to the world, recalling the visit of the magi (Matthew 2:1-12).

The date of January 6 coincided with the winter solstice in the eastern part of the Mediterranean world, where this festival was first observed in the third century. This observance pre-date the December 25 observances by a century.

The number of magi is not known; the fact of the three gifts (Matthew 2:11) may account for the idea of three magi. They may have been sages who specialized in astronomy, perhaps Zoroastrian priests from Persia (present day Iran). That they were Gentiles, not Jews, is why the Epiphany festival celebrates the revelation of Jesus as the Christ to the whole world.

The gift of gold was valuable, a gift fit for a king. Frankincense was a type of incense used in worship, symbolizing prayers rising to God. Myrrh was a fragrant resin used in oil for anointing and to prepare a body for burial (John 19:39).

The color of the day for paraments in the sanctuary is white. The Nicene Creed would be shared. Christmas decorations normally remain in the worship space for this liturgy. Figures of the magi may be added to the creche. In some congregations, the magi are brought forward to the creche at the beginning of worship.

Additionally, The Baptism of Our Lord is celebrated on the first Sunday after the Epiphany.

Source: Worship Wordbook: A Practical Guide for Parish Worship, pg. 75. Published by Augsburg Fortress



January 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1	2	3
4 Worship 10:00 w/the Lord's Supper Fellowship	5	6	7 Blood Drive 12:30—5:30 Holy Name Church	8 9:30 Sewing Circle	9	10
11 Worship 10:00w/ Diaconate offer Fellowship	12 9:30 Diaconate	13	14 Movie Bad Faith 1:30 p.m.	15 Bible Study Stoney Brook 10:00 a.m.	16	17
18 Worship 10:00 Fellowship	19	20	21	22 9:30 Sewing Circle	23	24 Session Retreat 9:00 a.m.
25 Worship 10:00 w/Noisy Bucket Congregational Meeting Potluck	26	27	28	29	30	31

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