

The Church Mouse

June 2026 Volume 26, Issue 6



Hope

"But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that leads to eternal life." Jude 1:20-21, 24-25

I'm writing these words on the evening of Memorial Day and reflecting on the events that I participated in earlier in the day. Our small towns remember the meaning of this day and mark it in remarkable ways. The Legion members growing fewer and older come together to honor their brothers and sisters in arms. In Elgin, the Keystone Chorus offered a few pieces of music and I shared a heartfelt message in a cemetery where over 100 white crosses, small flags of our nation and a large poppy marked the graves of all veterans buried in the town's cemetery. The Roll Call was made of these warriors, the first immigrants from Germany. The names of Civil War veterans were read along with the unit where each served, World War I and II came next, then those who served during the Korean and Vietnam wars. I am grateful there were no new names added to the roll for our most recent conflicts, but that is not the case in all towns on this day. Memorial Day offers us a time to remember the sacrifices made by our service members and for people of faith to be comforted by the hope of eternal life that comes to us through our loving God as expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Jesus is our witness to the life God intends for all people- a life without oppression, a life where people have enough of what is needed as abundance is shared within a community.

During my Memorial Day message I shared a memory from 2012 when I was deployed to Afghanistan and participated in the dignified transfer of our war dead. These short ceremonies are solemn and take place so quickly following a death that a family back home had likely not learned of the death of their loved one as we gathered on the flightline. My prayer is that all of God's people would be treated with such dignity while among the living. Our faith teaches us that we may indeed be hope-filled as God has provided for our ultimate needs. Our faith also calls us to be sources of hope- the hands and feet of Christ- showering God's love upon our neighbors. May we live into this dignified life as we enter into the months of summer.

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We are working with a new program for the newsletter. The old version will no longer be available. It is a work in progress, please be patient with us. The electronic version is much easier to read. We think you would like the email/electronic version much better than the printed one. Please let us know if you are willing to switch to that.

Volunteer opportunity

A summer program "Tigerhawk Meals"

Began June 1st here at Bethel Presbyterian Church

- Volunteers are needed to hand out the sack-type "Grab and Go" lunches to the kids, 11:30 - 12:00 a.m. The meals are packed fresh each day, we start at 10:30, so your time commitment for a day is about one-and-a-half to 2 hours.
- **You may help out as much or as little as your schedule allows.**

Contact Julie Aanes, Mission Team, for more information.



Session Roster Bethel Presbyterian Church 2026

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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, June 7th, 2026, are: gluten free products, flour, sugar, oatmeal, and condiments (salt, pepper, ketchup, mustards, mayo, relish, etc.)

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!



Worship in the Park

West Union Recreation Center

July 5, 2026 at 9:30 a.m..

This ecumenical service includes Bethel Presbyterian and United Methodist churches. The service includes Communion. Undesignated offering will be donated to Open Hands Food Pantry. In case of bad weather the service will be held at the West Union United Methodist church. Join us for a meaningful worship service followed by fellowship.

CELEBRATIONS

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

JUNE 3 Andy & LeAnn Meyer (A)
JUNE 9 Jim and Nancy Davies (A)
JUNE 11 Brooke Kerr
JUNE 15 Don Durscher
JUNE 22 Stephen/Martha Bartenhagen
JUNE 25 Victor/Karen Schmitz (A)
JUNE 29 Mark & Robin Bostrom (A)



Diaconate will meet
June 8th at 9:30.
Stephen Bartenhagen will be hosting.



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

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



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, Rose Marie Knight (Julie Larson's mom), Baby McCoy (recovering at home).

Stoney Brook – Kate Ewing, Kathy Meyer

Good Samaritan Center – Peggi Pape

Eastern Star Decorah – Doyle Gorden

Maple Crest – Tex Heyer

Copper Creek – Sandy Schnor



LAYLEADERS

07 Robin Bostrom
14 Julie Larson
21 LeAnn Popenhagen
28

POWER POINT

07 Dawn Jacobsen
14 Martha Bartenhagen
21 Robin Bostrom
28 Dave Aanes

FELLOWSHIP TREATS

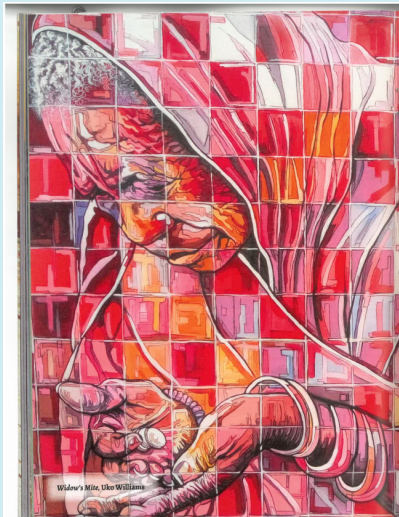
07 Robin Bostrom
14 Lee Johansen
21 Julie Larson
28

COMMUNION

Communion will be served on Sunday, June 7 . Lee Johansen and Mark Bostrom will be servers.

Session took the following action at their meeting on 17 May 2026:

- Opened with devotion and prayer led by Lee Johansen;
- Shared with each other our Joys and Concerns;
- Approved minutes from Session's meeting on 19 April 2026;
- Received Treasurer's Report for April 2026;
- Heard updated information on the Ecumenical Worship service on 05 July 2026 with Methodist churches; Pastor Lori will lead the service and Kindred Minds will provide music;
- Heard that Bethel awarded scholarships to Chase Imoehl, Isabella Fuentes, Alice Sass, and Tristan Kuhse in the amount of \$1,000 each;
- Approved a bid from Aaron Grimes Construction in the amount of \$10,500 to make repairs to the exterior windows of the church building;
- Approved Phase 1 of a proposal from ISG, Inc. for structural engineering services to evaluate the bell tower and make recommendations for repair;
- Heard that Pastor Lori will be on vacation from 25 August to September 02 2026 and pulpit supply will be arranged for 30 August;
- The meeting was closed with prayer led by Rev. Kleppe.



Women's Bible Study ~ June 18
Stoney Brook ~ 10:00 am

Lesson 5: The Gift of the Woman Who Was Poor

Main Idea: Joy in Christ is more than happiness; it can change challenging circumstances into faith-filled, even joyous times.

Scripture: Mark 12:41-44 The Widow's Offering
He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

Bethel awarded scholarships to Chase Imoehl, Isabella Fuentes, Alice Sass, and Tristan Kuhse in the amount of \$1,000 each.



June

1	Monday	
2	Tuesday	Worship in the Park Planning 9:30 am Celebration Team 1:00 pm
3	Wednesday	
4	Thursday	
5	Friday	
6	Saturday	
7	Sunday	Worship with Holy Communion 10:00 am Fellowship
8	Monday	Diaconate 9:30
9	Tuesday	
10	Wednesday	
11	Thursday	Sewing Circle 9:30 am Good Samaritan Service 2:00 pm
12	Friday	
13	Saturday	
14	Sunday	Worship 10:00 am Fellowship Session 11:15
15	Monday	
16	Tuesday	
17	Wednesday	
18	Thursday	Bible Study at Stoney Brook 10:00 am
19	Friday	
20	Saturday	
21	Sunday	Worship 10:00 am Fellowship
22	Monday	
23	Tuesday	
24	Wednesday	
25	Thursday	Sewing Circle 9:30 am
26	Friday	
27	Saturday	
28	Sunday	Worship 10:00 am with Noisy Bucket Fellowship
29	Monday	
30	Tuesday	

REPORT OF THE GENEROSITY TASK FORCE TO PRESBYTERY 5-19-2026



The Starfish Campaign, a fundraising ministry to eliminate medical debt, is coming back for a fifth year in 2026. When we started, no one knew what the presbytery's support of this ministry could accomplish. Now we do. In the first four years of this ministry, the churches in our presbytery have cancelled \$15,973,326.21 of medical debt for 14,530 families. The Starfish Campaign is changing lives!

Our mission partner is a non-profit organization called Undue Medical Debt. It's their skill in navigating the medical debt industry that allows every dollar we raise abolish at least \$100 of debt. Did you know that a contribution of only \$20 will likely eliminate the medical debt a family is carrying? And once that debt is gone, credit ratings improve, anxiety and stress vanish and hope returns.

We want to increase the impact of our ministry. That's why we are once again inviting every church in John Knox Presbytery to participate. Even a seemingly small contribution can lead to a remarkable impact. And the good news is: churches don't have to do this alone. The Generosity Task Force stands ready to help. This year's ministry culminates on Sunday, October 18. We will have the 2026 resources (four minutes for mission, four bulletin announcements, three newsletter articles and more) ready and posted to the presbytery's website in August. If there is anything else you need, we will work with you to make it happen.

Going into our fifth year, we know what God is helping us to accomplish. We know what an important ministry the Starfish Campaign is and how it changes the lives of the families we help. Do you Starfish?

Contact us anytime at jkggenerositytaskforce@gmail.com



SPECIAL OFFERINGS

We are the Church,
Together.

Dear Bethel Presbyterian Church,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Thank you! For more than a quarter century, congregations like yours helped shape the lives of children, youth and young adults through your faithful support of the Pentecost Offering, one of the Churchwide Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Since its beginning in 1998, Presbyterians across the church joined together in this shared witness, raising more than \$20 million to nurture young people in faith and prepare leaders for the church and the world.

Today we give thanks for your gifts of \$5,210.23 over the past 23 years.

Your congregation's participation was never simply about a seasonal offering. It was about investing in God's future by helping young people discover their gifts, listen for God's call, and participate in lives of service and discipleship. Because of you, young adults were able to serve through the Young Adult Volunteer program. Youth gathered to explore faith, justice and vocation at Presbyterian Youth Triennium. Children at risk found advocates and support so they can flourish. And in communities across the country, congregations like yours strengthened your ministries with the portion you retained for mission close to home.

Through your generosity, the words of the psalmist have continued to come alive in the church: *"O God, from my youth you have taught me."* (Psalm 71:17)

As the Pentecost Offering concludes its season in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we give thanks for the remarkable legacy you helped build. The impact of your gifts continues in the lives of those who were formed in faith because your congregation said yes to supporting them. The Spirit who moved through this offering is still moving, still calling the church to accompany young people with courage, compassion and hope.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership in this ministry across the years and sincerely hope you will continue supporting these causes through their new home in the Christmas Joy Offering. Your congregation's witness helped shape a generation, strengthened communities, and reminded the whole Church that when we invest in young people, we are investing in the future God is already preparing.

Thank you for the faith you have shared. Thank you for the lives you have helped shape. And thank you for continuing to walk alongside the next generation as together we follow where the Spirit leads.

With gratitude and hope,

Associate Director
Annual Appeals Office
Stewardship and Funds Development



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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!

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