

The Church Mouse

August 2026 Volume 26, Issue 8



Greetings!

As The Mouse goes out this month, I will have just returned from Synod School held at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake. Over six hundred Presbyterians and (one Lutheran) attended this gathering last year that seems to have a cult following with people coming from all over the United States to worship, learn and fellowship with like-minded people. Tie-dyed shirts will be made, emotional support chickens crocheted or knitted and a therapy cat visited. Worship will be held each day with classes offered during the morning and afternoon hours. I'm sure new friends will have been made and I look forward to sharing a Synod School debrief on the 6th where I highlight what I've learned.

This month's Mouse contains some 'favorites' of our Session members. I benefitted recently when Stephen shared the podcast, 'No Small Endeavor with Lee C. Camp'. The podcast explores the ideas, practices, and public debates that shape human flourishing today. Lee C. Camp shares, "If you care about faith, politics, social justice, science, or the search for meaning, you'll find courageous, practical conversations here." Creating a meaningful life is no small endeavor; let's journey together as followers of Christ.

I pray this finds you thriving in life as you remember God's abiding love is with you.

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Do justice. Love kindness. Walk humbly.

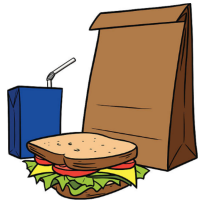
Volunteer opportunity

A summer program "Tigerhawk Meals"

Began June 1st here at Bethel Presbyterian Church and end August 21st.

- Volunteers are needed to hand out the sack-type "Grab and Go" lunches to the kids, 11:30 - 12:00. 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.



Synod School Debrief

Join Lori for a time of fellowship on Thursday, August 6th at 10:00 AM as she shares highlights from her time at Synod School, a ministry of Lakes and Prairies Synod, the last week of July at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake. She will have attended the following classes and activities:

- Global Crisis, Complex Causes-Navigating a World in Flux** (Offered by a retired Foreign Services Officer) This class is for folks curious about international affairs and U.S. foreign policy. Perspectives of emerging 'middle powers' will be included.
- PW Bible Study: United in Christ.** 1 Corinthians will be the focus for the 2026-2027 study whose author will help participants better understand the setting for Paul's letter, the divisions and lack of love that betrayed the gospel, and, ultimately, the gifts given to us by God.
- Congregational Revitaliation- Helping Healthy Systems Grow.** Discussions in this class will challenge the traditional church model and test-fit possible options for renewal.
- Evening Worship** will be led by Cece Armstrong, Co-Moderator of the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and **morning convocation** will be led by William Yoo, Associate Professor of American Religious and Cultural History at Columbia Theological Seminary.

This is Pastor Lori's second year attending this time of learning, fellowship and worship. With over 600 others it is a spirit-filled experience. The topics for each day's sermon, offered by CeCe Armstrong, a recent Co-Moderator of the General Assembly PC(USA) follows- You'll notice a birdy theme!

Learning from the Birds
Love in Between the Oppressed and the Powerful- Hen Lessons
Love in Between Patriotism and Faithfulness- Eagle Lessons
Love in Between the Mundane and the Dream- Sparrow Lessons
Love in Between Crises and Peace-Dove Lessons
Love in Between the Mountaintop and the Valley-Swallow Lessons

Join Lori on the 6th to learn more about Synod School.

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 are: Gluten free foods, puddings, jello, and any garden items you might have. The pantry doesn't have access to fresh produce while Waterloo is reconstructing their program.
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!

THANK YOU for helping to make our "Worship in the Park" church service on July 5th such a meaningful experience for the community. Everyone pitched in to make it a wonderful time of fellowship together. It is a busy weekend (and weather is always a factor), but we were pleased with a great turn out. 80+ communion cups were served. Also, a generous \$414.90 was collected for the Open Hands Food Pantry and NFV Care Closet.

A special Thanks goes to Pastor Lori for all of her leadership with the ecumenical worship service. It was especially nice to have the opportunity to officially welcome Pastor Thom Bryant and his family to our faith community. (Nothing like jumping right in!) Together they made a great team!

Thank You for supporting the efforts of our churches to work together for outreach ministries such as this!

We are all one community - Friends in Christ!
From your Planning Team

CELEBRATIONS

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

AUGUST 2 Joy Miller
AUGUST 9 Lee Johansen
AUGUST 10 Lucas Bostrom
AUGUST 11 Dawn Jacobsen
Lois Franzen
AUGUST 13 Doyle Gorden
AUGUST 19 Nancy Dunt
AUGUST 20 Kirk Bruso
AUGUST 23 Randy Ruroden
Rev. Ron Wilson
AUGUST 24 Jodi Granger
AUGUST 25 Scott & Joleen Garvin (A)
AUGUST 28 Nancy Franzen
AUGUST 30 Dave Aanes





Diaconate will meet
August 10th at 9:30.
Nancy Dunt will be hosting.

"Diaconate received their quarterly offering following worship on Sunday, July 12th and raised \$258.00. We appreciate your generous support of our mission within Bethel Church."



Sewing Circle will meet on
Thursday August 13th and August 27th 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, John Falb and Ken Popenhagen.

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

02 LeAnn Popenhagen
09 Stephen Bartenhagen
16 Gregg Kleppe
23 Julie Aanes
30 Robin Bostrom

POWER POINT

02 Corey Moser
09 Karen Schmitz
16 Stephen Bartenhagen
23 Dawn Jaconsen
30 Martha Bartenhagen

FELLOWSHIP TREATS

02 Corey/Kris/Diann
09 Ann Samek
16 Lee Johansen
23 Julie Aanes
30 Robin Bostrom

COMMUNION

Communion will be served on Sunday, August 9th . Lee Johansen and Karen Schmitz will be servers.



Session did not meet in July. Their next meeting will be August 9th.



Women's Bible Study
The Woman Who Was Bent Over
Thursday, August 16 10:00 AM

Main Idea: As followers of Christ, we are to serve with a compassionate and healing spirit and be part of setting people free.

Scripture: Luke 13:10-17

Think About: Christians believe that their core identity is found in Jesus Christ. What does this

mean to you?



Noisy Bucket offering for July was \$93.88. It will be collected again August 30th. Thank you for your contributions to this ministry.



Your generosity makes a difference in the lives of others...

"I want your donors to know what a huge difference their action makes in ordinary lives such as mine." --Peter

Living with diabetes for over thirty years, Peter was diagnosed with colon cancer. The treatment saved his life but the medical bills piled up. In his thank-you letter to our mission partner, Undue Medical Debt, he shares his gratitude for the difference cancelling his debt has made. Every dollar donated to the Starfish Campaign will remove at least \$100 of medical debt for a family...and the impact is amazing!

The Starfish Campaign returns this fall!

Learning Together

We thank the Church and Society Team from the West Union United Methodist Church for the invitation to join them for a book study during the month of July. Our time together was spent discussing *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy* by Philip S. Gorski and Samuel L. Perry. "The concept of white Christian nationalism encompasses the many ways bigotry, prejudice, xenophobia, patriarchy, and racism show up in Christian guise." (From the Foreword by Jemar Tisby.) Those gathered represented the Fayette, Fredericksburg and West Union United Methodist Churches and Bethel Presbyterian.



Our Session members were invited to share a favorite book, tv show, movie or podcast that they would recommend to others. You might enjoy some of their recommendations or perhaps have a smile come to your face as you read some of their responses.

Lori shared Jon Hassler, who was 'Writer-in-Residence' at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN, is a favorite author. His fictional stories set in small-town Minnesota are a light and engaging read frequently with characters struggling with transition in their lives or searching for a central purpose. Many major characters are Catholic (or lapsed Catholics) so faith is mentioned throughout these stories. Staggerford was Lori's introduction to Hassler's work.

Mark recommends 'The Chosen' available on Amazon Prime. This video series is about the life of Christ and is well written. Reviews of this series are quite positive. Maybe you would like to view The Chosen at Bethel with others!

Dawn takes us back a few years sharing 'Little House on the Prairie' is a favorite tv show and 'Pretty Woman' a favorite movie. I bet most of us have spent time watching (and rewatching) both.

Linda subscribes to a daily email called 'Devoted Grandma.' This free email gives tips about how to relate to grandchildren in all phases of their growing lives and how important it is to keep working at staying connected. Let Linda know if you subscribe to Devoted Grandma.

Julie follows mc.phd on Instagram. Dr. MaryCatherin Mc Donald, who calls herself a 'Joymonger,' shares a small joy that she has noticed or experienced throughout the day as she encourages others to look for small joys, too. Julie also follows 'thetinyjoyproject' on Instagram. The content creator, Jasmine Wilder, says, "I write tiny joys that make people carrying big feelings exhale."



KIDS KITS

previously known as School Kits

Again this year the Sewing Circle and the Mission Team will be making and filling Kids Kits for Church World Service. If you choose not to shop for the supplies; you may make a monetary donation to PW to help with shipping and handling costs. Our sincere thanks for your support of this mission project.

Items need to be here by **September 6.**
We will be putting them together on September 10.

Needed items for one Kits:

Box of 12 colored pencils
Two-pocket folder
Glue stick
1 pair of Blunt-tipped scissors
3 - 70-page wide ruled spiral-bound notebook
30 cm/12" ruler
Hand-held pencil sharpener
Large pink eraser
6 new, unsharpened pencils
Box of 24 crayons
Optional: Pencil pouch

Donations will be accepted no later than September 6.

Please only buy the items that have been listed. Make no add-ons or substitution as they cannot be used for these kits.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 10 Worship Fellowship	3	4	5	6 Synod School Debrief 10:00	7	8
9 10 Worship w/ the Lord's Supper Fellowship Session Meets	10 9:30 Diaconate	11	12	13 9:30 Sewing Circle	14	15
16 10 Worship Fellowship	17	18	19	20 10:00 Bible Study at Stoney Brooke	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

10 Worship Fellowship				9:30 Sewing Circle		
30 10 Worship W/Noisy Bucket Fellowship	31					

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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