

August 2025

Volume 44 Number 8

Bethlehem Star

A PUBLICATION OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, GRAND MARAIS, MN



August

Our church is a part of a pilot program called "The Generosity Project." It is a year long experience where congregations all over northeastern Minnesota are exploring what it means to be generous. Our first session was led by Pastor Taryn Montgomery last fall, and we explored the "Why" of being generous.

These are all intergenerational events, and our goal is to have as many generations together as possible, and to gather as many whole families together, too. Generosity isn't just dollars in the offering plate - it expands far beyond.

Our next gathering was in June, and it happened on a Sunday morning. We talked about "Who" can be generous, and learned about the small child offering his loaves and fishes, which Jesus multiplied. We took our crayons and colored on paper plates - drawing a gift that God gave to us that we can use generously with others.

In July, we met on a Wednesday night. We had a dinner, and after we talked about the "Where" generosity happens. The early church in Acts met in the Temple *and in their homes*. Our church family meets not only in our building, but in our homes, too. We sent home with everyone a list of faith practices that they can use in their homes and with their neighbors.

This month, **on Wednesday, August 20th, from 5:30-7pm** (dinner at 5:30), we'll gather and talk about the "How" of generosity. We'll continue these experiences in September (9/24), October (10/19), and November (11/2), too.

We hope that you can join us as we consider how to respond to God's generosity with generosity of our own - in our church, in our homes, in our community, and throughout the world.

Peace in Christ. Pastor Calvin



Vacation Bible School

God is good- all the time
All the time- God is good





Devotions

By Pastor Calvin Konop

When I was at youth group in High School, we were all encouraged to find a Life Verse for ourselves. This is a verse from the Bible that resonated with us at the time, that we would memorize and recite to ourselves. I chose Philippians 4:8 (NIV):

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

What if we could keep our minds focused on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable? Of course, we can't do that, but whenever I recite this verse to myself, to this day, I use it as a prayer asking God to redirect my mind.

Some people are great at memorizing verses, others struggle with it. But wherever you land on this spectrum, I wanted to give you a helpful acronym for memorizing my life verse. The acronym is: TNRPLA (pronounced: *tuh-NER-plah*). It stands for true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable.

I give you that acronym in as silly as a manner as I'm sure it was received. But as goofy as it is, I just had a former student of mine text me about this verse. He's a junior in college now, and he texted me out of the blue saying, "I was reflecting on TNRPLA today". I hope you, too, can reflect on those words and use them as a prayer of your own.

-Pastor Calvin



RECONCILING *in* CHRIST

A WORD FROM YOUR PASTOR

Our Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Committee has been working hard to accompany our church through the exploration process of what it means to become an RIC Church. At our Annual Meeting, I committed myself to being a broken

record about what it means to be an RIC Church. Our Committee has committed itself to being as available as possible for our congregation.

To be open and available, they are setting up 1 to 1 conversations with congregations members. This is a slow process, and one that they want to take their time doing. As you can imagine, contacting all of our members is a feat in itself - but then scheduling meetings and getting together is an additional layer of complication. If you are contacted by a committee member, I encourage you to meet with them.

One of the other things that we are doing is offering educational opportunities. These are opportunities to hear from a variety of people, to learn more about the LGBTQIA2S+ community and culture, and to learn about our faith and theology. Our next educational opportunity will be on Sunday, August 17th.

At this service, we will be doing an inclusive language service at Church. After church, we'll offer an adult education course on LGBTQIA2S+ terminology and language. What does all of this stuff stand for? What does it mean to "be trans"? What's the difference between sexual orientation and gender expression? We'll cover these questions and more, and create a safe space to ask the questions that you need to ask.

As we continue to explore this process together, I want to encourage us all to be good to each other. Be patient, be kind, and pray for each other. We are all created in the image of God, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, and we all want everyone to know Jesus and experience God's grace.

Peace be with you all. See you on the 17th!

-Pastor Calvin





***...on the
North
Shore
and
Beyond."***

The mission statement of our church is this: *Belonging the Christ, Sharing Christ on the North Shore and Beyond.* In this mission statement we recognize two things: 1) we all belong to Jesus, 2) we want everyone to know Jesus.

Our Livestream ministry is one of the vital ways that we Share Christ with others. Our members are able to join us for worship when they are in the hospital, sick at home, in bad weather, when schedules change, when they can no longer leave their home, or even when they're on vacation. Not only that, but our livestream reaches people beyond the North Shore.

We need some folks who are willing to step forward and help continue to make our livestream possible. The livestream is not as intimidating as it sounds, and we have people that know how to run it that are willing and able to help people learn, and support them as they are doing the livestream. (This is a paid position.)

If you would consider learning more about the livestream, come and talk to me.

Thank you, Bethlehem, for the care and support you offer to each other each and every day. May God richly bless each of you.

- Pastor Calvin



Liturgy

On Sunday August 17th, we will try a new liturgy format. It is an Expansive Language Liturgy called "*Sighs Too Deep for Words*". It was commissioned by a team of fifteen church leaders from Twin Cities congregations, in response to members' consistent requests for more expansive images in worship.

The 50th anniversary of the ordination of women, the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women of color, and the 10th anniversary of the ordination of LGBTQIA+ leaders in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), as well as the ELCA's newly published social statement entitled *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*, all contributed inspiration to the new liturgy.

Although the structure of the liturgy is traditional and

familiar, the liturgy uses many feminine images throughout the service. We hope you will enjoy it!

Karina Roth,
Musical Director



***Notes from
Kristin
Lindholm -
Congregational
President***

I know it's going to be a good day when I wake up singing "*Hip, Hip, Hippopotamus. Hip, Hip, Hooray! God made all of us!*" What's even better is singing that song with a whole bunch of kids on a summer morning in church every day for a week! (actually, watching Pastor Calvin do the actions was pretty amazing, too).

Participating in VBS was certainly one of the highlights of my summer. The smiles, laughter, energy, light and love emanating throughout the walls of Bethlehem was palpable. Our middle school youth did an outstanding job of loving and leading our children with the excellent guidance of Jess, and the adult volunteers were the glue that kept everyone fed, hydrated and loved. Together we learned the true blessings of God's creation remembering always "*in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one in Christ, and individually we are members of one another*" (Romans 12: 4-5).

We are the church. Hip. Hip. Hooray! God made all of us!



Jessica Christenson

507-530-2763

We had an eventful July with Children, Youth and Families here at Bethlehem! Vacation Bible School was a huge success in so many ways. We had **27 students** registered to attend, **10 youth volunteers** and **at least 12 adult volunteers** who gave up their days to help lead. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Thank you to all of the youth and adult volunteers who gave of their time and energy. Thank you to all the parents and grandparents who brought students and picked them up everyday. Thank you to all of you, for saving cardboard and paper towel tubes. Thank you for praying for our students, volunteers, staff and for me. It is appreciated more than I can convey through this article. We had so many students who were already asking about VBS next year, which is the biggest win we could ask for! Please continue to pray for these students with me, that the seeds of faith and community planted at VBS grow and flourish and enliven their faith. Thank you to the Cook County Schools for the free lunch program. Our students had a free, hot lunch everyday before they were sent home and it is so appreciated!

On a personal note, *thank you for all of your support and well wishes.* It has meant so much to me to come to a church where adults want to be included in CYF ministries! The ways that you are willing to help, donate and support us in so many ways astounds me. The energy, excitement and encouragement that you all provide has been so amazing and life-giving to me. Thank you from me, Jess and thank you from our students who have been so impacted by your generosity and love.

We will be having a youth movie night on July 30th here at Bethlehem. This event is open for anyone going into 6th grade and up. We will be watching *Spider Man: Into the Spider-Verse* and doing a brief devotion based on the movie after it is done. This event will take place from 6-8pm. Please feel free to invite friends!

Thank you all again for everything you are doing in this community. It is amazing to see God at work!

Peace,

Jess Christenson



TINY TEAMWORK

The focused teamwork of ants is astounding! How can we learn from them?

Directions: Answer the clues. Then write the words in order below to complete Proverbs 6:6-8, NIV.

- This 6-legged arthropod can carry 20 times its own weight. _____
- A sleepy, sloth-like and slow-moving person. _____
- Having deep understanding and sound judgment. _____
- A person in charge of military troops. _____
- A person in authority. _____
- The season when daylight hours are longest. _____
- A substance you eat for nutrition. _____
- When farmers reap the rewards of hard work. _____



Go to the _____, you _____;

consider its ways and be _____!

It has no _____, no overseer or _____,

yet it stores its provisions in _____

and gathers its _____ at _____.

Proverbs 6:6-8, NIV



Answers: ant, sluggard, wise, commander, ruler, summer, food, harvest. Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.



Upcoming Building Remodels

Bethlehem's building is a large and aging structure that requires timely maintenance and remodeling to keep it equipped for our many missions.

Besides being the Son of the Carpenter of Creation, Jesus was also raised as a son of a carpenter, Joseph. And, before Jesus began his ministry he worked as a carpenter.

"Isn't this (Jesus) the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" - Mark 6:3

Jesus appreciates the importance of maintaining and remodeling structures for the benefit of their occupants and the mission of his church. Currently we are beginning two remodeling projects and finishing a third project to benefit our church staff with their daily duties and benefit our children, youth, and family ministries.

The first project is our business office. I am embarrassed this has taken so long. The initial plans and approval for this project were before the COVID pandemic and the retirement of Pastor Mark. A big problem with the current business office is inadequate and poorly positioned electrical outlets and lighting. We also need a second office workstation so that more than one person can log into the computers. However, the biggest need with the business office is the lack of adequate and high enough counter space for laying out and assembling worship bulletins, funeral bulletins, newsletters, church letters, council materials, educational materials, sheet music, etc. We will strategically update our electrical outlets and lighting switches and reframe our door to make the office handicap accessible. When these tasks are complete, we will repair and repaint the walls. We will also be installing new cabinets, counters, and shelving in the business office.

The other project is in our youth area. The impetus for this project began with 2 water leaks in our kitchen above the youth room. Opening the ceiling up to identify and repair these leaks has left us with 2 large holes in the youth room ceiling. Since repairs need to be made, we explored other modifications to improve the youth area at the same time. The youth area is an L-shaped room with limited flexibility. It is the remnants of a much larger room that got chopped up into smaller

pieces when the elevator was installed. It was decided by council to remove the non-load bearing curved partition wall separating the elevator hallway with the youth room. This more open space will give greater flexibility for youth activities and will make access to the church patio more open both visually and accessibility-wise. A suspended ceiling will replace the sheetrock popcorn ceiling to make future problems in the kitchen easily identifiable and repairable. After demolition, the walls will be repaired and freshly painted. A sliding barn door will be installed separating the youth area from the main hallway for certain youth gatherings while maintaining accessibility to the elevator. New laminate flooring will be laid down and the suspended ceiling will be put up with new LED lighting.

The third project is patching the small wall hole in the NW corner of the fellowship hall and the large ceiling hole in the stairway leading up to the kitchen. I am again embarrassed it has taken so long to get these repaired. They are leftover tasks from putting the new fellowship roof on in July 2020. The problem is we cannot patch these 2 holes until we reroute our bathroom fans' exhaust out the sidewall where these 2 holes are located. We have not been able to find an HVAC person willing to do this work. We are now going to do it ourselves provided we can borrow some scaffolding so this work can be performed safely.

We will be calling on Bethlehem volunteers to help us with many of the tasks for these projects. We will need help moving out of the business office and the youth room. We will need help setting up temporary locations for the essential office equipment we cannot go without: printer, paper folder, computers, broadband equipment, and file cabinets. If anyone has some scaffolding we can borrow please let us know. We will need help with demolition. We will need help putting everything back together which include framing, sheet-rocking, painting, installing a suspended ceiling, installing cabinets and counters, installing new flooring, and installing new handicap accessible doors. Our timetable for these projects is to begin demolition in August and have everything completed before confirmation classes begin in October. If you are willing to help in some way, please contact the office.

If you hear that someone has been helping with any of these projects, please take the time to thank them for their work.

Your brother in Christ,

Mike Chmelik (he/him/his)

Church Property Team Leader

WOMEN'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2025

at Wilderness Canoe Base on the Gunflint Trail, Grand Marais, MN



- Guided day-trips into the BWCAW
- Swimming, singing, saunas
- Hiking, solitude and reflection
- First and Last Word
- Campfires, crafts, coffee
- Meals and lodging
- Paddling in the Voyageur Canoe
- Overnight canoe trips available



Join us for our longest-standing retreat, where we will celebrate our 2025 theme **"Spirit of Creation."** Tap into the spirit of creation, whether it is interacting with nature, seeking moments of solitude or participating in a creative activity. Experience the beauty and tranquility of the Boundary Waters while connecting with other adventurous women in a serene and inspiring environment. This group of women explores, creates, and socializes together, and spends significant time enjoying the company of one another throughout the weekend. Whether you have been to Wilderness Canoe Base many times or never at all, this is a great opportunity to join an incredible community of wilderness women!

Canoe trips are available, too.

Registration and information

<https://lakewapo.org/programs/womens-wilderness-adventure/>

Email the Wilderness office:

jeanneh@campwapo.org

Dear Congregation of Bethlehem,

You are so thoughtful! Thank you so much for the card! It was so much fun to read through your names and remember my time up there! I'm so grateful that I got to do my internship with you, and I hope I'll get to see you all sooner than later. I'm overdue for a boundary waters trip and would love to stop by on a Sunday morning when I do! Blessings on your ongoing ministries, and thanks again!

Blessings, Ben Nikodym

St. Luke Lutheran Church, 108 S. Pine St.,
Campbell Hill, IL 62916

SACRED SPACE . . . SACRED SOUND . . .

A LOOK AT THE LIMINAL PLACES BETWEEN
THE SACRED AND THE ORDINARY . . .

Trinity Lutheran Church Summer Series

4957 East Hwy 61 - Hovland

Wednesday August 13th 6:30 pm

Where the Sacred Stirs: The Illumination of Imagination in Space, Sound, and Creation

Presentation by Pastor Brian Johnson

In this session we will think about how the faithful move between tent and temple, and how holy space sparks faith in those who gather there. Drawing on both words and images, Brian will invite us to reflect more deeply on the creative Spirit. Some local musicians might also surprise us with a bit of J.S. Bach! Pie and ice cream will finish up the evening.

Mission of the Month AUGUST MEMBER CHALLENGE:



The August Mission of the Month will be to support the programming at **North Point (NP)**.

North Point is **Celebrating 5 years of Bringing Hope and Support to Teens in Cook County!** Brad Shannon, Executive Director, and Brooke Shannon, Co-Director, are so grateful for the opportunity to walk with students, offering spaces, programs and experiences where teens feel safe, known, and unconditionally loved. North Point averages 65-70 students weekly and over 360 check-ins each month.

More than a program, NP is a philosophy that hope shows up when people who care show up. “We are so thankful to be able to do the things we do because of the generosity of people who care about teens and believe that what we do matters,” shared Brad.

For the month of August we are asking for your financial contribution through our Mission of the Month to be directed to North Point. Currently they have been given a challenge gift. A wonderful opportunity to have the impact of your gift doubled! This gift will **match contributions give locally up to \$15,000** through the end of August.

Secondly, all donations will go towards meeting their program budget for the year. **Your contributions go directly to teens!** Though this may seem like a large number, everything at NP is provided to teens either free of charge or heavily subsidized. With that said, if this matching gift is met by the end of August, it will go a long way towards meeting North Point’s program needs for the year.

Your contribution may be given through Bethlehem (marked “Mission of the Month-North Point) or directly to North Point (P.O. Box 71, Grand Marais, MN 55604).

Thank you for the positive impact you make in teens lives as community leaders and employers and for considering North Point.

Some opportunities offered at North Point:

- Coffee Shop + Study
- Drop-in Youth Group
- Weekly Lunches
- School Events
- Golf League
- Summer Experiences
- Retreats
- Support + Mentoring

The first day of school is quickly approaching! Help support local students as they return to the classroom by ensuring they have the necessary tools for successful year of learning. The HUB is once again collaborating with Bethlehem Lutheran Church to help Cook County students start the year off on the right track. Please consider helping ensure all kids have what they need to learn and succeed this school year to reach their full potential.

How can you help? Help spread the word! Purchase supplies and bring to Bethlehem, or make a financial donation to purchase supplies. (Mark on your donation: “School Supply MOM”.)

Collection period: NOW through September 1, 2025.

Bethlehem will bless these supplies before we get them to the HUB.





August 2025



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

					1 Overnight group	2
3 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Worship	4	5 8:30am Staff meeting	6 8:00am Church in Society Zoom mtg 12:30pm Text Study	7 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	8 Clarity Hearing Appts	9
10 10:00am Worship	11 6:30pm Executive Committee meeting	12 8:30am Staff meeting	13 12:30pm Text Study 2:00pm TGP Planning meeting	14 8:00am Monthly Council Reports due to office 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	15 12:00pm Monthly Reports distributed to Council members	16
17 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Worship 2:00pm Care Center Worship Service	18 8:00am Deadline for changes to Council agenda and reports 6:30pm Church Council Meeting	19 8:30am Staff meeting 6:30pm Worship Planning Meeting	20 12:30pm Text Study 5:30pm Meal 6:30pm The Generosity Project Gathering	21 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	22 Clarity Hearing Appts Newsletter articles due	23
24 10:00am Contemporary Worship 11:15am Church Picnic 	25	26 8:30am Staff meeting	27 12:30pm Text Study	28 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	29	30 11:00 am Memorial Service for Nancy Lindquist 
31 10:00am Worship	1 Holiday 	Fall Activities start in October Wednesday meals and Worship Confirmation and Sunday School				

5655877

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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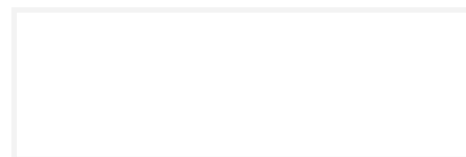
Belonging to Christ,

Sharing Christ on the

North Shore and beyond.



Evangelical
Lutheran
Church in America



11am August 24th

**Bring a side dish, salad or
dessert to share. Bethlehem
will provide main course.**

**Served by Hospitality Team #2
Kathy Johnson, lead 218-387-9650
Call Kathy to lend a hand.**



Pictured: Shirley Soderholm, Joan Ege, Susan Bragstad, Cathi Williams, Martha Rosbacka, Cindy Muus and Sue Anderson. Photographer: Joy Oberg

Members of the Esther Circle met for lunch at Naniboujou at the end of June to give Shirley Soderholm a proper send off as she and Chuck head to their new home in Crosby, MN. We will miss them both but, hopefully, with technology, Shirley, and anyone else who would like to join us for circle, will be able to log in this Fall! Gods Richest Blessings to you both,

The Esther Circle / BLCW