



June 2026

Volume 45 Number

Bethlehem Star

A publication of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Grand Marais, MN

On Sunday, June 7th, we will have a celebration service for Bethlehem becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation. On January 25th, 2026, at our Annual Meeting, the congregation voted in our Welcome Statement (found on our website and in this newsletter), to officially make us an RIC church. This means that we are welcoming and affirming to the LGBTAI2S+ (i.e. queer) community to be a part of our church and to have full participation in our congregational life. It also means that we have a commitment to racial justice and equity.

Our Lutheran faith believes in God's grace for all people (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 3:18). We also believe in the importance of confession (1 John 1:19). As your pastor, I am going to confess some historical sins of the church that have affected the Queer Community. The Church, in modern history, has been exclusive and harmful to the queer community. The church has banned gay people from worship, condemning their attractions and loving relationships, advocating for legislation that limits their rights, and more. This condemnation has driven many people away from the church, and has caused a deep hurt.

Becoming an RIC congregation is the *first* step in the important process of reconciliation between God's church and our queer neighbors. And we want to celebrate this step.

The RIC Committee, which has now been made a standing committee of BLC by the Council, is working hard to create a meaningful celebration on June 7th. We will also have a picnic after service (bring a side or dessert to share!) on the church lawn.

Please invite your friends, families, and neighbors to this service. Invite someone you know who is gay to worship with us in a safe and affirming church. And on Sunday, June 7th, go out of your way to welcome with enthusiasm all who worship with us.

Peace in Christ.

Pastor Calvin Konop

WELCOME STATEMENT

Belonging to Christ, Sharing Christ on the North Shore and Beyond. Bethlehem Lutheran Church welcomes all people, learning more about God's grace through supporting those who enter here. We endeavor to treat all people with honesty, dignity, and respect.

As Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34

We celebrate our human diversity, and joyfully encourage full participation in the life of the church, including every race, ethnicity, age, family situation, physical and mental ability, socioeconomic status, citizenship status, religious beliefs, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" - Galatians 3:28.

We look for common ground amidst differences, open to the wisdom that each person brings to our unique individual and collective journey of faith in Christ.

Graduating Seniors Receive Quilts and Blessings



Men's Bible Study
meets in person
(with our Canadian
friends) for a study
& brunch at
Croftville Road Inn



Dave Bartz, Nordic
Electric, hooked up our
new commercial ovens

You're invited to Vacation Bible School at Bethlehem Lutheran Church!



July 13 - 17
9:00am - 12:00pm

Join us for games, snacks, crafts,
worship, Bible study & more! A
week full of fun in community!

Incoming K -5th graders

\$15 per student if registered before 6/30.
\$25 per student if registered after 6/30.
Scholarships available!

**Older youth & adults can sign up to
volunteer to join in on the fun!**

Please contact CYF Director Jess Christenson
with any questions, concerns, volunteer
availability or scholarship requests.

blcyouth@boreal.org - 507-530-2763

Register Now!





Devotions

By Pastor Calvin Konop

*“There is no longer Jew or Greek;
there is no longer slave or free;
there is no longer male and female,
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”*

- Galatians 3:28

As you enter any of the 3 main doors to Bethlehem, you will see a sign with this Bible verse on it. These are words of the Apostle Paul to the churches in Galatia. He wrote to them because he heard that they were separating themselves into 2 groups: those who followed Jewish customary laws (e.g. circumcision, dietary restrictions), and into those who didn't follow those laws. Those who followed the Jewish Law excluded the others from worship.

Through the grace we have in Jesus, we have been made one in God's family. Humans often try to make distinctions between who is welcome and who is not, but Jesus welcomes all of God's children; even the wayward, like the 1 wandering sheep, or the prodigal son, or the lost coin. This month, find peace that God has found you and claimed you through Jesus. Find peace that nothing can separate you, or anyone, from the love of God found in Christ Jesus our Lord.



BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN IS A RECONCILING IN CHRIST CONGREGATION

Celebration on June 7, 2026 at 10:00 am

After a time of faithful discernment, respectful dialogue, intentional education and heartfelt discussions, our congregation, with an almost unanimous vote, has adopted a new Welcome Statement and become a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation. This means we are an open and affirming church to folks who are in the LGBTQIA2S+ community and have a commitment to racial justice and racial equity.

We encourage full participation in the life of our church for all of God's children.

Our Mission Statement is: *Belonging to Christ, Sharing Christ on the North Shore and Beyond.* For more information, please visit our website: sharingchrist.org.

Our RIC committee is now a standing committee of Bethlehem, and will continue to offer guidance for our congregation on how to be welcoming, and will offer more educational opportunities so that we can learn and grow.

We are announcing this momentous event in our 126th year to all of our past and present parishioners, folks from all of Cook County and beyond. We invite you to come share your faith in Worship, Gospel, Communion and Fellowship on Sunday at 10:00 am and on Wednesdays (during the school year) at 6:00 pm.

We are celebrating becoming an RIC congregation on Sunday June 7th at our Worship Service at 10:00 am, followed by a picnic on the church lawn. We would love to have you celebrate with us!

This celebration is the culmination of the 7 year journey of education, study and discernment by the Reconciling In Christ Committee. We would like to recognize those who have served over the years: Karina Roth, Mark Abrahamson, Christy Buetow, Martha Rosbacka, Lynnea Morse, Pastor Mark Ditmanson, Pastor Jack Busche, Deacon Ben Nikodym, Pastor Calvin Konop, Mike Chmelik, Sue Hennessy, Laurie Spry and our Trinity Lutheran Church friends, Mark Hollabaugh and Jon Moe.

Peace be with you all. Know that God loves you and made you to be exactly who you are!



Join us at the **Church Picnic!**



Jess Christenson, Director

bjcyouth@boreal.org ☎ 507-530-2763

Hey all! It sure does feel like summer has arrived in Grand Marais! I am very busy planning for Vacation Bible School this July. It is really going to be a great time!

If you haven't heard, Mighty Moose our superhero for VBS, has arrived in Grand Marais. Mighty Moose is already looking around town finding ways that we can be superheroes in our own community! Mighty Moose knows that God uses ordinary people in super ways! If you have an incoming K-5th grader, you can register on our website today! I am also looking for volunteers, for lots of different roles, so if you have some availability July 13-17, 9am to noon everyday, please let me know!

We are also hosting a youth bonfire and game night on June 13th at 6pm. Come enjoy a hotdog, time in community and some fun games! All youth grades 6th -12th are welcome to join us! Invite your friends!

Thank you all for your donations of cardboard, your prayers and your work telling folks about VBS.

We already have 12 students registered to attend! What a blessing! Please continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we get closer and closer to VBS!

- Peace, Jess Christenson

Fisherman's Picnic Worship



Bethlehem has been asked to lead worship at Harbor Park on Sunday, August 2nd. We will host this worship in place of worship in our building, so plan to come to Harbor Park for worship that morning (time TBA). Knowing how vital our livestream ministry is, the Fish Pic worship service will be livestreamed in some way, whether on Facebook or YouTube. We will also host Coffee An' at Harbor Park that morning.

The Council is still working out details for a few parts of this service, but we are looking into: how best to livestream, a possible shuttle service from the church to relieve parking congestion, what/how/when to serve Coffee An'.

We'll publish these details as soon as we can! For now, mark your calendars for worship at Harbor Park on Sunday, August 2nd.





Mission of the Month

Reconciling Works

Bethlehem Lutheran is officially a "Reconciling in Christ Partner" congregation. As such, we are committed to:

1. Welcome people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, as well as naming our commitment to racial equity and anti-racism.
2. Be open to calling LGBTQIA2S+ and BIPOC rostered leadership.
3. Allow our church space to be used for LGBTQIA2S+ weddings and blessings.
4. Make a meaningful annual contribution to support the national RIC program.

Our June Mission of the Month is supporting the Reconciling Works organization, which is working to welcome, include, celebrate, and advocate for all of God's beloved people. Please come to celebrate and welcome all on June 7th at a special worship service.

Member Challenge:

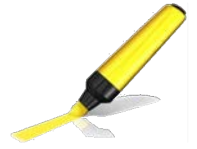
During the month of June, Pride Month, please take some time to learn how to be an ally to the "LGBTQIA2S+" community.

Do you know what "LGBTQIA2S+" means? The letters represent different facets of the community. Each one stands for a gender or sexual identity, with the "+" at the end standing in for the many gender identities that aren't included in this version of the acronym. Understanding the differences between these communities, like recognizing pride flags, might feel confusing at first.

- L: Lesbian G: Gay B: Bisexual
 T: Transgender Q: Queer/Questioning I: Intersex
 A: Asexual/Aromantic 2S: Two-Spirit
 +: Non-binary, Pansexual, Demisexual, Genderfluid, Agender

MAY HIGHLIGHTS

BY KRISTIN LINDHOLM



A few highlights from last month at Bethlehem:

- Scholarships were awarded to Ruby Gulstrand, Sofi Boen, and Parker Backstrom from the Mission Endowment Fund/Committee at the Cook County Senior Awards Banquet.
- Beautiful memorial services were held for Ed Bolstad and Bruce Johnson.
- A tentative plan is in place for Sunday morning volunteer recruitment and sign-ups.
- Quilts were given to our graduates - it was a beautiful service!



thrivent[®] Choice Dollars[®]

Thrivent Choice program has been **upgraded!** Here's a brief run down:

- Now ALL Thrivent members receive Choice Dollars
- Choice Dollars are now available at the start of the year, meaning you are available to direct your funds now.
- Members can direct anytime through Dec. 31, no longer having to direct funds by March 31.

Bethlehem is a designated organization for receiving Choice Dollars and we are grateful for member's directing their available funds to our church. If you are a member or would like to get more information, please contact your representative or the website: Thrivent.com.





Pastor Bill's Retirement Party

Pastor Bill Beckstrand has officially retired from ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church in Hovland. The celebration of this event will take place Sunday June 28th. Worship, at 9:00 am, will include the music of Bill Beckstrand and with a potluck meal after the service. Pastor Mark Ditmanson will preside at Communion.

Pastor Bill is looking for people to participate in a "pick up choir" for this event. If you would like to join, please contact him at 218-370-9369 or wabeckstrand@gmail.com. There will be a brief rehearsal sometime the week before June 28th.

Our heartfelt wishes to Pastor Bill for a wonderful retirement and may you enjoy this next life journey. May your days be filled with joy, relaxation and unlimited weekends!

Mighty Moose Needs Volunteers!



YBS

July 13-17

Contact Jess:

507-530-2763

bleyouth@boreal.org

Youth Bonfire & Game Night June 13th 6:00 pm



**All youth, grades
6 to 12, are
welcome.
Invite your
Friends!**



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	1	2 8:30am Staff meeting	3 8:00am Church in Society Meeting 12:30pm Text Study	4 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	5 Clarity Hearing Appts	6 11:00am Joan Bieber's Memorial Service
7 RIC Celebration 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Worship 11:00am Church Picnic 2:00pm Jacobsen's Celebration for Martina	8 6:30pm Executive Committee meeting	9 8:30am Staff meeting	10 12:30pm Text Study	11 8:00am Monthly Council Reports due to office 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 9:30am BLCW Circle & Bible Study	12 12:00pm Monthly Reports distributed to Council members	13 10:00am Schliep Baby Shower 6:00pm Youth Bonfire, Games & Food! 
14 10:00am Worship	15 8:00am Deadline for changes to Council agenda and reports 6:30pm Church Council Meeting	16 8:30am Staff meeting 6:30pm Worship Planning Meeting	17 12:30pm Text Study	18 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	19 Juneteenth Clarity Hearing Appts	20
21 Father's Day 8:40am Choir practice 10:00am Worship 2:00pm Care Center Worship Service	22 Newsletter articles due	23 8:30am Staff meeting	24 12:30pm Text Study	25 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	26	27
28 10:00am Contemporary Worship 10:00am Pastor Bill Beckstrand's Retirement Potluck at Trinity Lutheran, Hovland	29 5:30pm Spirit of the Wilderness meeting in library	30 8:30am Staff meeting	1 8:00am Church in Society 12:30pm Text Study	2 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	3 Office is closed Clarity Hearing Appts.	4 Independence Day

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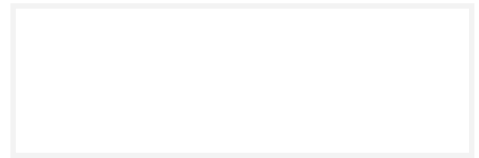
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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www.sharingchrist.org



Belonging to Christ,

*Sharing Christ on the
North Shore and beyond.*



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**RECONCILING IN CHRIST
SUNDAY 2026**

**Celebrating Diversity
as God's Children**

Please join us for the celebration! Invite your friends!

CHURCH
picnic

Sunday June 7th

Following worship

**Bring a side, a salad,
or a dessert to share**

*Hot dogs & Hamburgers
will be provided*