

Alleluia

BETHESDA LUTHERAN

NEWSLETTER

MAY

Volume 26 | Number 3

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

SUMMER RHYTHM

By Pastor Grant Vanderford

Summer brings a different rhythm to our life, even a sacred rhythm that gives more room for sabbath, for rest. Schedules shift. People travel. Weekends fill with lakes, ballgames, gardens, family gatherings, and that elusive, yet well-earned rest. And all of that is good. But even as the season changes, the life we share together in Christ continues.

Paul reminds us in Galatians 5 that we have been called to freedom—not a freedom that pulls us away from one another, but a freedom that sends us toward one another in love: “Through love become servants to one another.” That is the beautiful, holy paradox of Christian community. In Christ, we are free from having to earn God’s love, and therefore free to bear one another’s burdens, encourage one another, pray for one another, and show up for one another.

Community and care do not stop when the weather gets warmer. Worship does not matter less because the calendar page turns. The fruit of the Spirit—love,

joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—does not grow only during the school year. The Spirit keeps cultivating these gifts among us in every season.

Just as God’s love for us does not start and stop depending on our life situation, our life together as the body of Christ continues through every changing season. Whether your summer is joyful or heavy, restful or chaotic, full of travel or close to home, there is a place for you here at Bethesda. There is grace for you here. There are people who need your presence, and people whose presence will bless you.

So, this summer, keep showing up. Come when you can. Join us on the livestream when you can't be here. Worship. Pray. Sing. Receive the meal of grace. Check in on someone. Let someone check in on you. In Christ, we belong to God—and to one another.

Peace, dear friends,



COUNCIL UPDATES

April's regular council meeting was canceled.

An order of business was raised via e-mail to support a "Pop-Up Book Share" of a sizeable theological/church-related library. The anonymous donor deeply cares about sharing the books - no cost to anyone, but asked that free-will donations be made to the YWCA. Council approved. Additionally, Bethesda's retired pastors were invited to donate unused books from their own libraries; the Synod and other area churches were alerted of the event as well.

Following the event, everything left over was given to a local small business to sell; nothing remains at Bethesda. More than \$150 was raised for the YWCA.

Volunteer Appreciation



PROPERTY UPDATES

The shed was demolished on Saturday, April 25, and it did not want to surrender easily! However, the crew led by Aaron Wenaas and Nancy Lund from the Property Committee conquered.

Installation of the AC unit was also completed at the end of April - and it's much smaller than its predecessor.



BENEFITS OF PRE-PLANNING YOUR MEMORIAL

FROM COST SAVINGS TO PEACE OF MIND, THE ADVANTAGES OF DECIDING NOW

By Adam Huss, Memorial Consultant
at Dakota Monument

Some of the advantages of pre-installing your memorial in the cemetery before you pass are as follows:

- You can design it with the input of your partner and children.
- The loved ones left behind don't have the financial burden of designing and purchasing the memorial.
- It reduces potential family conflict and unnecessary stress in an already difficult time.
- It offers peace of mind that your design wishes are fulfilled.
- You will also save money – the industry sees roughly a 5% material increase year after year.
- *Even picking out the granite color and shape is helpful!*
- Monument-grade granite is sourced from all over the world, including Norway, India, Cambodia, China, and the United States.
- There are 8 different granite colors that are quarried in Minnesota and 4 that are quarried in South Dakota.

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

CHRIST IN OUR HOME DEVOTION

By Terrie Jo Wold

Our office administrator, Jane, has been reminding you to pick up the Christ in our Home devotion booklets. Do you know what they are? Do you know where they are? Do you need to buy them? Christ in our Home is a trusted family devotional that has been around for many years in the Lutheran Church. I grew up with Christ in our Home. As a family we read the short daily devotion most nights of the week around the dinner table. The booklet sat on top of our Bible which sat on top of the dinner plates in our kitchen cupboard. This prompted us to include them when we set the table for our evening meal. We often had lively discussions about the scripture verse & reading, a very fond memory for me.

Did you know they are FREE? Bethesda orders these booklets for YOU! Large print copies are available. You can find them on the table that sits just right of the double doors to the sanctuary.

HELP YOURSELF! Try it out and let us know what you think - it might be more of a blessing in your life than you realize.

Christ in Our Home

April, May, June
2026



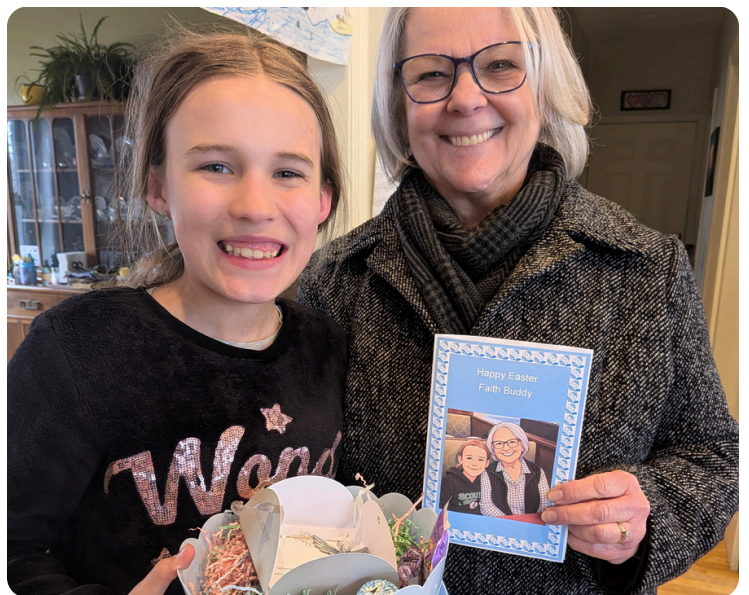
BLC purchases both regular (20) and large (4) print copies of the "Christ in our Home" devotional booklets. They are located on the table just outside of the sanctuary. Please help yourself!

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

DOUBLE PORTION MENTORSHIP PROGRAM CONTINUES

“Double-portion” relationships will continue throughout the summer and hopefully for many more years to come. These pairs attend events, share important moments together, laugh at an inside joke or just sit and visit after church.

If you would like to be connected with another member of the Bethesda community - either as a mentor or mentee - just let someone from the Lifelong Learning Team know: Sharon Bungum Olson, Terrie Jo Wold, and Cindy Larson Casselton



UPDATES FROM THE OUTREACH TEAM

LENT SUPPER OFFERINGS + DONATIONS EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

Overflowing boxes of items collected during our Lenten "Fill the Pews" drive (plus a check for \$1354) were presented to the Moorhead Area School District this month.

The items and funds directly support students experiencing housing insecurity in our community.

"This is an amazing gift and investment in our community's young people, beloved Bethesda people! This makes me 'bust my buttons' proud to be your pastor!" said Pastor Grant.

A special thank you to Bethesda's Outreach and Parish Life committees for organizing the drive and to all those that donated to make this a real success!



Pictured are Pastor Grant, Becky Erickson, and Joel Westby with a representative from the Moorhead Public Schools, along with Bethesda's many boxes of donations!



Thank you to all of the groups for our weekly Wednesday meals, too! What a blessing it is to have a warm plate of food handed to you, and a place to share it with friends.

Thank you for your generous donation of basic need items & funds to homeless services in Moorhead Schools. Many students will benefit from your generosity! We appreciate your support & kindness.

With Gratitude,
Amy Riccio
District Homeless Liaison

ECOFAITH SUMMIT



PLANTING AS AN ACT OF PRAYER

By Jane Johnson

God starts the fire for creation within us, and we can use that passion to act and create change in our small corners of Earth.

Libby Sternhagen Schwenk and I were invited to share our fire for creation at the 2026 EcoFaith Summit of the Upper Midwest in Duluth, MN on Saturday, April 18.

As a member of the 2026 planning committee, Pastor Grant nominated us because of the faith, environmental, soil and climate expertise we share. Libby has a master's degree in environmental conservation science and is currently studying bio-remediation to restore salt damaged soil. At Bethesda, she championed and led the way to establishing Gwen's Garden, the pocket prairie on the southeast side of the church. I'm a retired federal research soil scientist that spent my career seeking ways to protect the planet - honoring God's creation and focusing on feeding people.

Our charge at the Summit was to facilitate one of the breakout sessions. Titled "Planting as an Act of Prayer," our goal was to inspire people toward leadership in their own communities - to focus on our spiritual vow to "strive for justice and peace in all the earth." As Rev. Greg Kaufmann, part of the planning committee said, "Caring for creation is most assuredly part of that promise!"

It is the glory
of God to
conceal a
matter; to
search out a
matter is the
glory of kings.

-PROVERBS 25:2

Planting a seed is an act of hope in the future of life reborn. Planting "fireseeds" is hope that others will answer the call to embrace creation care. During our session we sought to exemplify how land stewardship and community eco-engagement are acts of prayer.

Like a planted seed, we can steward with good soil, water, light and nutrients, but we do not make the seed sprout and grow. It takes God to make those spiritual seeds grow.

Libby and I brought our stories of developing urban native pollinator gardens and lessons of soil health in agroecosystems. In the breakout, we had attendees brainstorm their own "spiritual seeds" for creation care. One of the attendees mentioned

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Libby Sternhagen Schwenk and Jane Johnson attending the 2026 EcoFaith Summit

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shifting from laundry detergent with dyes and fragrances to more eco-friendly options. Another mentioned planting raised gardens at a senior living center, providing a space for growing flowers and vegetables, while also offering social benefits for the residents. Another spoke of regenerative agriculture, a holistic land-management approach that goes beyond sustainability to actively restore and improve ecosystem health.

As a case study, Libby talked through the steps she used to coordinate and plant 'Gwen's Garden' at Bethesda. Participants then worked in small groups to discuss how to plant, nurture and bring these seeds to bloom in their own areas. The ten minutes or so they had was only enough to start the process.

We truly hope our attendees left feeling inspired and empowered to reframe their daily engagement with the natural world using eyes of a good and faithful steward.

“Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand . . . With it he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’ ”

-ISAIAH 6: 6-8

CREATION CARE AT BETHESDA

One of Bethesda's many characteristics that made me feel this could be my church home was that Creation Care was observed.

I wonder what actions that we as Bethesda can be even better at as stewards of God's beautiful creation. The planned update of replacing windows is a great start toward reducing energy for heating and cooling!

One of the sessions I attended presented on renewable energy - like installing solar panels. Is that something that would make sense at Bethesda? We observe "Creation Care" in September. Prayers of the people often include petitions to care and pray for creation. As a church we do recycling, and established a pocket prairie.

I challenge us as a community of faith to ponder what else can be done as creation care? What are your ideas?

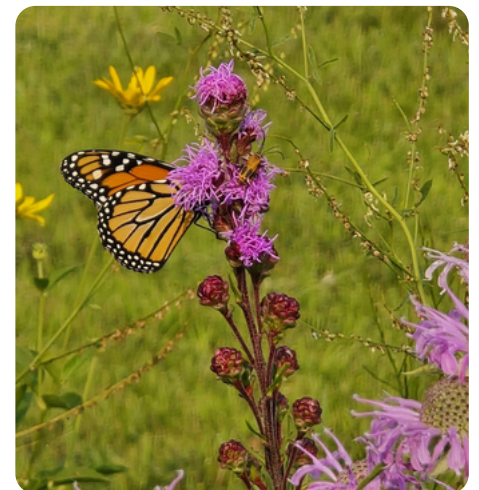
Learn more about the summit at ecofaithnetwork.org - and maybe the Bethesda team can double in 2027.

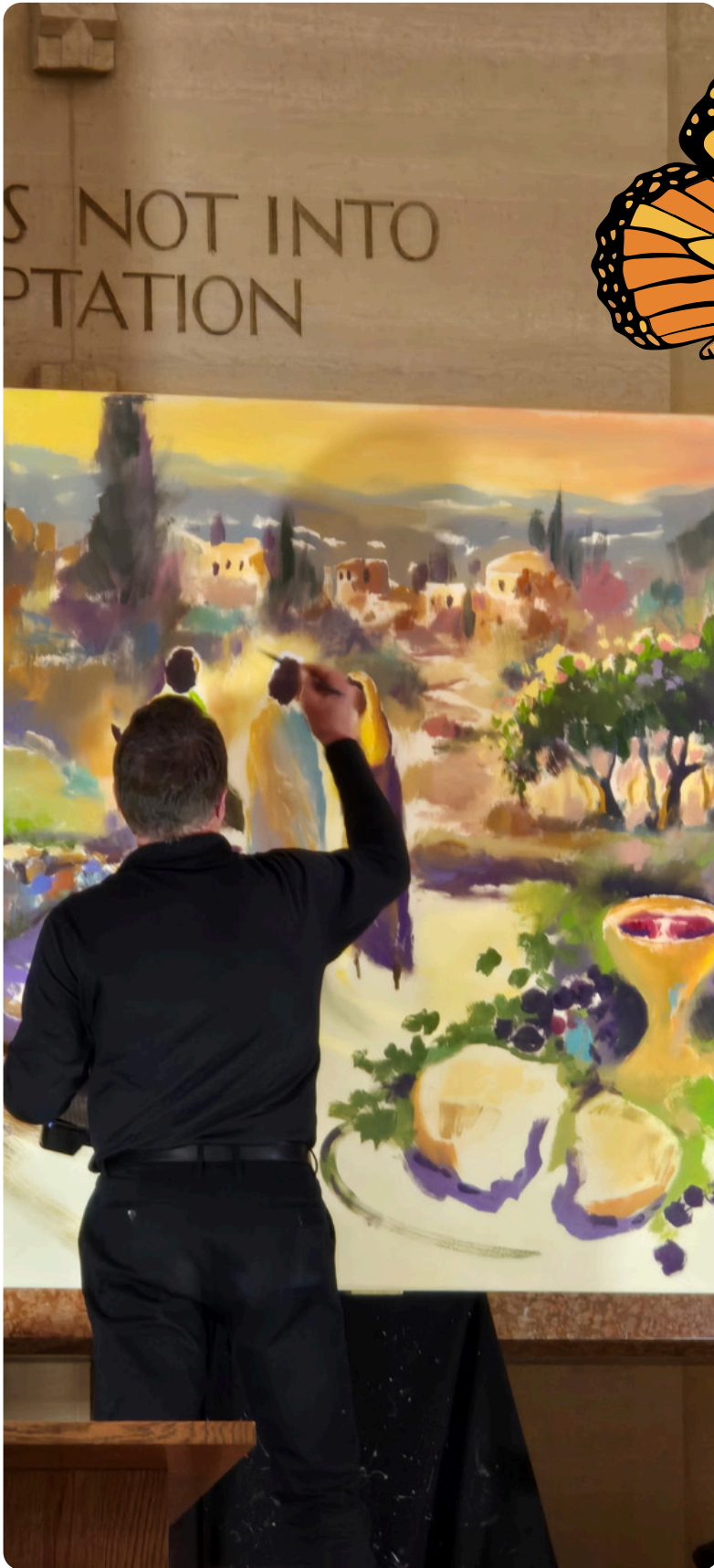


EcoFaith opening worship



Libby presenting during our session



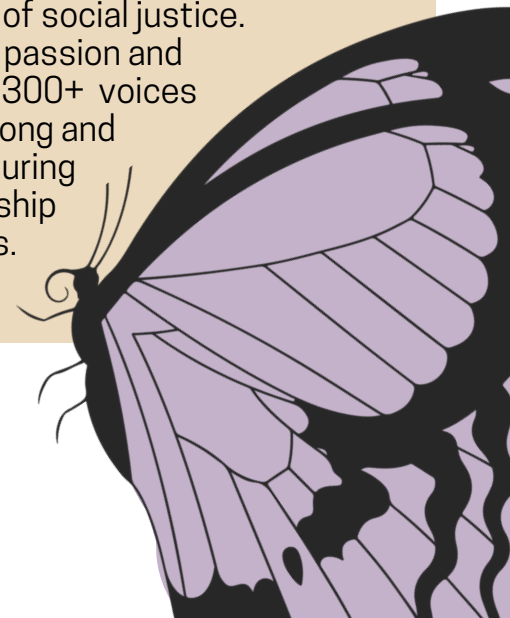


OBSERVATIONS FROM THE ECOFAITH SUMMIT

By Jane Johnson

- The lunch was offered in compostable containers.
- Volunteers helped sort the garbage into trash, compost, food waste, and recyclables.
- There was a diverse range of partners sharing information on climate and social justice.
- The ages of attendees ranged from two to eighty.
- The eighty-year-old activist since the 1970s, shared righteous anger at the state of things today.
- Positive and hopeful energy but an underlying frustration, concern and anger about the social, environmental and economic injustices that are running rampant.
- Letter writing to state and federal legislators on topics related to protecting water, land and in support of social justice.
- The joy, passion and hope of 300+ voices raised song and prayer during the worship services.

Artist Rev. Paul Oman enhanced the Summit worship through a live painting of the Easter story and the Road to Emmaus. He began the painting during the morning worship and had it finished by the end of the day.



EARTH DAY CREATION CARE

Led by Libby Sternhagen Schwenk, a team of 15 adults and kids spent an afternoon picking up trash around Belsly's pond. Collectively we contributed 30 people hours, fully made our way around one of the three ponds and collected 12 bags of garbage.



Join us for Spring Cleanup at
Bethesda (all ages welcome)

Saturday May 16th
9:00 am

Contact Aaron Wenaas for Details
701-740-0433
aaron.wenaas@gmail.com

SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

NOISY OFFERING

NEXT DATE: MAY 10

SUMMER EVENING

Campfire Worship

Date & Time

WEDNESDAY
MAY 20
6 PM

Location

BETHESDA
COURTYARD

Featuring

HOT DOGS
& SMORES

Bethesda Lutheran

MUSIC MINISTRY CELEBRATION

Sunday, May 31
at 4 p.m.

Congratulations

Senior Recognition

May 31, 2026

Seniors (high school and college)
Please RSVP church office by May 17th if
you will be able to attend,
218-236-1420 or
janej@bethesdamhd.org



Bethesda + Silver Linings

Open Knitting & Crocheting Afternoon

Gather with residents to help them make a project, work on your own, or just visit

Monthly on the third Thursday
4 p.m.
Silver Linings
3350 3rd Ave NW
Moorhead

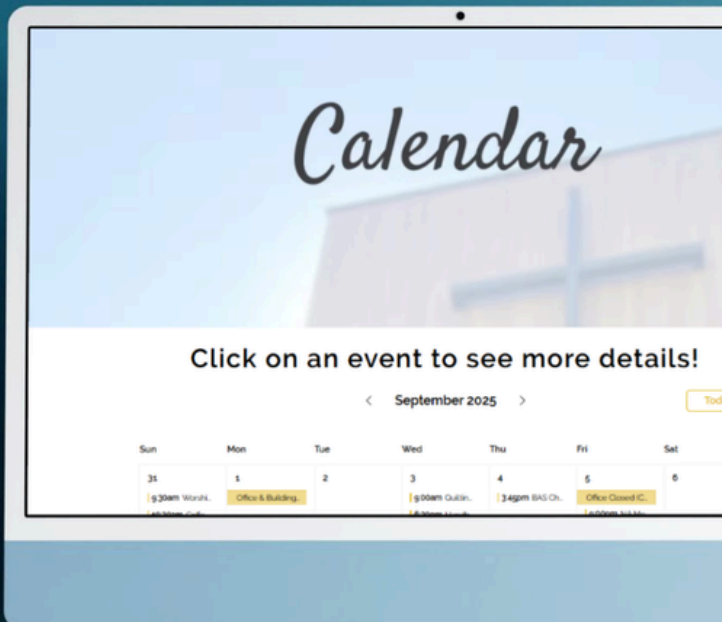
All yarn enthusiasts welcome

JUNE 14 NEW MEMBER SUNDAY

WITH POTLUCK
AFTER WORSHIP

All events are on the calendar!

bethesdamhd.org/calendar



LOOKING AHEAD

FUTURE ADULT FORUM

HONORING
OUR
NEIGHBOR'S
FAITH



REVISED EDITION

THE OFFICE WILL BE PLACING AN ORDER WITH AUGSBURG FORTRESS FOR THIS BOOK BY ROBERT FARLE (NO NEED TO SIGN UP OR PUT YOUR NAME DOWN YET... ADDITIONAL DETAILS COMING SOON)



**SIGN UP TO
VOLUNTEER**

ONLINE

**WORSHIP
ASSISTANTS
NEEDED!**

BETHESDAMHD.ORG/WORSHIP



Save the Date!

**BETHESDA
MUSIC CAMP**

**JULY 13-16
1-4:30 P.M. DAILY**

FOR KIDS ENTERING PRE-K THRU
6TH GRADE IN THE FALL
◆ REGISTRATION COMING SOON ◆

*kids + adults of
all ages welcome*

**VACATION
BIBLE
SCHOOL**

*light meal
provided*

**AUGUST 3-6
5:30-7:30 P.M.**



May prayer prompt "Holy Spirit"

Pray that the Holy Spirit
will fill our hearts with
fire giving us the
boldness and courage to
live out our lives in Faith.

*Afternoon of fun
& fellowship*

Where: The Linden (1500 7th St S, Moorhead)

When: Fourth Tuesday of the month

Time: 1-4 p.m.

*Come enjoy visiting
& friendships!*



OUTREACH

DOWN HOME

We are collecting **wall decorations & lamps** for Down Home. **Bring items by Sunday, May 17.** After that, feel free to check out the wish list on their website!

YOUTHWORKS & DOROTHY DAY

The need at **local food pantries** is constant. Please continue to bring non-perishable food items to support these programs. (i.e. canned vegetables, soup, beans, boxed cereal, pasta)

CHURCHES UNITED MICAHA'S MISSION

Volunteers **set up & serve the evening meal** on the fourth Monday of every month from 5-7 p.m. Contact the office or talk to Sandy Retzlaff or Joel Westby for more info!

THANK YOU!

By Mary Wenaas

Thank you again to everyone who signed up and participated in our 5th blood drive held at Bethesda!

The results are in - and we had **18 participants** who donated **14 units of blood** and **1 unit of plasma**! As a bonus, ice cream was enjoyed by all - with special toppings picked by Mara.

Per request of several people, we have already scheduled our next Bethesda Blood Drive for **Wednesday, December 9 from 3-6:30 p.m.** Appointments can be scheduled online now or reach out to me, and I can sign you up for a time. (I am happy to report that we already have three appointments scheduled!)

Donors are welcome to give elsewhere before December 9, but for a quick reference:

- Whole blood donors can give on or before Wednesday, October 14 and be eligible to give again at the December 9th drive.
- Power Red Donors would need to donate a Power Red on or before Wednesday, August 19 to be eligible to give again at the December 9th drive.
- If a donor gave a Power Red donation on April 30 here at Bethesda, there is not quite enough time to make a Power Red donation between now and December 9th. So, they can hold off on donating until December or do a whole blood in the meantime.
- [Sign up for an appointment here.](#)



...and an extra special thanks to Mary and Mara Wenaas for organizing this event!



NEXT BLOOD DRIVE
WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 9 *at Bethesda*

HOLY WEEK AT BETHESDA



EASTER: HE IS RISEN INDEED!





SPRING QUILT DISPLAY

The quilts on display in the sanctuary from May 3-10 are available for purchase at \$50 each. The proceeds will be used to buy more materials and to support shipping to Lutheran World Relief. Checks should be made out to Bethesda Lutheran Church with "Quilting" in the memo line. *Please take your selected quilt home with you before May 13.*

According to Lutheran World Relief it costs \$4 to transport, process, store, and deliver one quilt. Support for shipping can be made by check to Bethesda with "LWR" in the memo line or by mailing directly to Lutheran World Relief at PO Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21297.



PARMESAN CHICKEN & POTATOES

From the kitchen of Lynn Tkachuk

375°
35-40 minutes

Ingredients:

- ½ c dried bread crumbs
- 3 Tbsp parmesan cheese
- 2 Tbsp dry parsley
- ½ tsp salt
- dash garlic powder
- dash pepper
- 2 to 3 lbs chicken pieces
- ¼ c milk
- 4 medium potatoes, pared and sliced in strips
- 2 Tbsp melted margarine

Directions:

Combine bread crumbs, parmesan, parsley, salt, garlic powder and pepper in a shallow bowl.

Dip chicken pieces in milk, then in crumb mixture. Lay on jelly roll pan in a single layer. Spread the potato strips on the pan in a single layer as well.

Drizzle potatoes with melted margarine.
Bake & enjoy!

We have openings in our 4 day/week morning preschool room for the fall! For more information, Call us at (701) 212-6637 or email: kari.penas@bethesdaallstars.com



CHURCH STAFF

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Jillian Jaros
Tammy Costin
Billi Jo Townsend

Pastor
Office Administrator
Pianist
Choir & Handbell Director
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Secretary
Treasurer

