

BETHESDA LUTHERAN

NEWSLETTER

June 2026

Volume 26 | Number 4



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY

By Pastor Grant Vanderford

At Bethesda, we believe that every person is gifted by God for the sake of God's work in the world. The Apostle Paul reminds us again and again - in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 - that we are all members of the Body of Christ. No one is unnecessary. No one is without purpose. No one is called to do everything. But all of us are called, gifted, and gathered together in Christ.

That is why we are excited to invite the congregation to spend some time reflecting on spiritual gifts. Through the Spiritual Gifts Assessment provided by Women of the ELCA (WELCA), we will have an opportunity to prayerfully consider the ways God has uniquely shaped each of us for ministry, service, encouragement, leadership, generosity, mercy, teaching, hospitality, and so much more.

Your Church Council members did the assessment and spent an hour of our May meeting reflecting upon and dipping our toes into the spiritual gifts we all have and how they are being used by God as leaders at Bethesda. We plan to continue this conversation over the next several months and to use it as we look forward to leadership needs and strategic planning.

During worship in July, the whole congregation will have the opportunity do the WELCA Spiritual Gifts Assessment together and discover ways the Holy Spirit is calling us to be the Body of Christ as a congregation.

Spiritual gifts are not about proving our worth or finding one more thing to add to an already full calendar. They are about discovering how the Spirit is already at work in us and among us. They help us ask: *How has God gifted me? How might my gifts bless my neighbor? How can we, together, build up the Body of Christ?*

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Paul tells the church that “there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.” Some of us are hands. Some are feet. Some are hearts. Some are voices. Some are steady shoulders. Some are open doors. All of us belong. And when each part is honored and encouraged, the whole Body grows stronger in love.

At Bethesda, our ministry of healing and reconciliation depends on the Spirit’s gifts being shared through the people of God. So we invite you to take part, to be curious, to pray, and to wonder how God may be calling you to use your gifts for the sake of Christ’s church and the world God so deeply loves.

Grace and peace be yours, beloved ones.



Celebrating the baptism of our newest member of our congregation, baby Katheryn Keene-Robinson



COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

MAY 11, 2026

OPENING DEVOTION:

Pastor Grant led the Council through a Spiritual Gifts Inventory exercise.

MOTIONS PASSED:

- Reports submitted from March, due to no meeting being held in April. (Sharon/Matthew/approved)
- Secretary's Report - no additions or corrections. (Aaron/Matthew/approved)
- Pastor's written report delivered to council. (Nancy/Aaron/approved)
- Ministry Team reports
 - **Parish Life:** VBS will be Aug 3-6. Music Camp will be July 13-16, with food trucks and the Metro Gnomes are to perform. Fundraiser Supper will be Oct. 2; intended goal/program not determined
 - **Worship & Music:** Celebration Fundraiser will be the afternoon of May 31. One quote has been returned for refurbishment of handbells; a second is expected. Pianos to be tuned.
 - **Outreach:** The materials drive for the Moorhead Schools homeless program was successful; the schools sent a thank you note. Serving of a monthly meal at Churches United (Micah's Mission) was reviewed; this is moving forward in a positive, confident way.
 - **Property:** The shed was demolished. A new A/C unit was installed in the shed's location, providing cooling to the kitchen. Church Cleanup Day was May 16.
 - **Stewardship:** No meeting held since last council meeting. Stewardship can be involved with new member class, currently intended for June 14.
 - **Lifelong Learning:** Shelly Carlson, Moorhead Mayor, spoke during the April Adult Forum about the diversity of Moorhead and being good neighbors to other religions. Final training for Double Portion was the same evening as the campfire worship, May 20. Confirmation will start that same day.

- BAS will join Music Camp to celebrate their 20th anniversary. Open communication has been going well.
- **Cemetery:** New directors have been identified and named to the board; additional directors are still needed, particularly those who are members of Bethesda.

Motion to approve ministry team reports en masse (Joel/Aaron/approved).

OLD BUSINESS:

The total projected quote is \$11,100 for the organ work, plus the cost of electrical; as an expense greater than \$10k, a congregational approval will be needed to be put before the congregation. The expense can be a target for Music fundraising; it will need to be communicated in the lead up to that fundraiser.

Motion: to apply \$2,500 of the dedicated worship & music funds toward this expected repair cost as a seed amount in advance of the music fundraiser. (Nancy/Heath/approved).

New Business

- **New Member Class:** Several individuals and families intend to join. June 14 has been tentatively selected for the new member Sunday. Input from Parish Life is needed to confirm. There will be a potluck that day following the service.
- **Graduating Class:** There are four members graduating from high school. May 31 will be graduation Sunday.
- **Sanctuary Technology:** The presenting computer is essentially non-functional; a replacement is needed. The iPad for online viewing is also outdated. The Property Committee tasked with identifying any new equipment needed and providing a recommendation to the Council.

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COUNCIL MEETING | CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

- Dept. of Homeland Security non-profit security grant: A significant government grant is available which could provide for security upgrades to the building. Assistance will be / is needed for completion of an application; persons within the church with experience in grant writing would be helpful.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- Vision 2030 Task Force / Strategic Planning: Marty Ohren will lead the Task Force. At least one member has consented to be part of the ‘anniversary’ planning, work has not yet begun.
- Major Gifts and Donation Policy: This policy is in development by Stewardship and the Treasurer. Goal is to have this ready in June.
- Pastor Sabbatical Policy: Exec Committee will seek an update from the Mutual Ministry team in June.
- Membership Audit: To be engaged by the Stewardship team in Summer/Fall 2026.
- Constitution Review: Ad hoc committee, led by Joel Westby and including Jane & Grant, has begun the process and have established project milestones for completing the work.

Adjourn with Lord’s Prayer. Motion to adjourn. (Drew/Aaron/approved)

APRIL 2026

	MTD			YTD		
	Actual	Budget	over Budget	Actual	Budget	over Budget
Total Income	\$35,653	\$24,367	\$11,286	\$103,740	\$98,667	\$5,073
Total Expenses	\$23,686	\$24,810	(\$1,124)	\$102,429	\$102,680	(\$251)
Net Income	\$11,967	(\$443)	\$12,410	\$1,311	(\$4,013)	\$5,324

BLESSING OF THE GRADUATES

Four high school graduates were presented with quilts provided by the Bethesda Quilt Ministry Team on Sunday, May 31. These young people were then blessed for their journeys out into the world as adults.

Pictured below (from left to right) are **Quinn Henschke, Navaeh Addai, and Carson Olschlager**. (Bethesda also has one more senior who was unable to attend, **Haley Holmquist**.)

Members **Andrew Sternhagen-Schwenk and Alex Benson-Tuff** also recently completed advanced degrees - congratulations and blessings to them as well!



PROPERTY UPDATES

Building on Faith Projects

- Reviewed two bids
 - Will be sending out additional questions on some of the items
 - Will not proceed with door updates unless we can get a Homeland Department grant for security
 - Sign Updates - awaiting quotes
- Old shed removed, and a new AC condenser and unit have been installed in the kitchen

Church Clean-Up was Saturday May 16

- Outside work included branch-trimming, pressure-washing the patio, adding fresh mulch, cleaning up the garden, cleaning the gutters and drains on the roof
- Indoor tasks included vacuuming pew seats, washing pew seats with carpet cleaner, dusting, and window cleaning (on the outside and inside)



Thank you everyone for a productive day! Especially baby Katheryn - it's a lot of work being so cute!

SPRING CLEAN UP





Independent School District 152

1313 30th Ave. S., Moorhead, MN 56560

Phone: 218-284-3300

www.isd152.org

Fax: 218-284-3333

May 11, 2026

Dear Bethesda Lutheran Church,

On behalf of the School Board and Moorhead Area Public Schools, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the significant impact your \$1,354.00 monetary donation to support the District's Homeless Youth has had on students and staff. Your generosity has not only provided essential resources but also uplifted the spirits of our school community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brandon M. Lunak
Superintendent of Schools

BIBBLE QUIZ

SONS

Jesus taught us to call God "Father" (Matthew 6:7)... So God is the one who defines for us what is true fatherhood.

Here are the names of some biblical fathers and sons. *Can you match them?*

(Answers on the last page)

FATHERS

1	Zechariah
2	David
3	Abraham
4	Adam
5	Jesse
6	Elkanah
7	Joash
8	Solomon
9	Noah
10	Haran

SONS

A	Rehoboam
B	Cain
C	Lot
D	Solomon
E	David
F	John the Baptist
G	Gideon
H	Isaac
I	Samuel
J	Shem, Ham, & Japeth

QUILT SALE

The BLC Quilting Ministry Team is deeply grateful for the overwhelming response to the quilt sale! At least 70 quilts were made since last October, and

25 quilts were sold during the two weeks in May, plus \$400 in donations were sent to Lutheran World Relief to use for shipping and handling!

This amount of money will cover the cost to ship 41 quilts this month AND the anticipated cost for the next shipment in the fall. The remaining proceeds will be used to cover expenses, which is primarily buying batting and sheets for quilt backs.

Lutheran World Relief distributes quilts to every US state plus to many countries around the world. Your generosity is truly a blessing both near and far!

Also, keep a mental note that quilts can be purchased at any time of the year - just talk to the quilting team or Jane in the office.



RECIPE FOR RASPBERRY RICE

From the kitchen of Kristen Ohren

Ingredients:

1 C. white rice
3 C. milk
1 C. sugar
1 8 oz container Cool Whip

For the topping:

2 pkg. frozen raspberries (thawed)
2 T corn starch

Directions:

Cook rice according to the package directions (about 25 minutes).

Add milk & sugar; cook slow for 25 minutes (maybe longer) until milk is gone.

Let cool & add Cool Whip.

For topping:

Mix raspberries & corn starch together. Cook for 4 minutes.

Let cool until thick, & put on top of rice.



Bethesda at Buffalo River

PACK A PICNIC LUNCH, SUNSCREEN, BUG SPRAY AND UMBRELLA!
IT'S GOING TO BE A FUN WEEKEND - RAIN OR SHINE!

By Mary Wenaas

For the last 6 years, I have had numerous conversations over coffee hour about camping and nature memories and adventures. This got me thinking about wanting to enjoy nature with our friends and family of Bethesda!

We are inviting all nature-lovers, seasoned campers and new-to-nature buddies to spend time at Buffalo River State Park on Friday, July 31 through August 2. This will be a pick-your-own adventure weekend where you can choose to camp for the weekend, to come for a day trip of hiking, or to just come for an evening of roasted hot dogs, s'mores and campfire worship with Grant on Saturday, August 1.

The Wenaas family will act as Bethesda hosts for the weekend at site #1E. We will be the meeting place for yard games, organizing kickball, being a place to sit around and shoot the breeze or if you want to gather with others to go on a hike with fellow nature lovers. Buffalo River State Park has a large parking lot near the old swimming hole and a newly updated bathhouse with handicap-accessible features, so no one has to use a pit toilet or porta-potty.

If you or a church committee feel passionate about this event and want to plan/lead an activity, please reach out to Pastor Grant as he can help make connections to make it happen (i.e. - pollinator walk, play guitar at campfire, expert star gazer, teaching others to fish, host a coffee & cookies at a designated park picnic table, etc).

Any other questions or if you have interest in camping, reach out to Mary Wenaas ASAP (701-320-2007). A limited number of campsites are available.

Buffalo River State Park
565 155th Street South
Glyndon, MN 56547
218-498-2124

Visit dnr.state.mn.us and search "Buffalo River" for more info about the park!

Park hours: Daily from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m.

Daily vehicle pass: \$7/day

You can also check out a State Park Pass from the Moorhead Library that covers the vehicle entrance fee!



Thanks to Sara Thorn for the great view of the campfire worship in May!

BLOOD DRIVE

The next Bethesda Blood Drive is scheduled for Wednesday, December 9 from 3-6:30 p.m.

Appointments can be scheduled online now or reach out to Mary Wenaas, who can sign up for you!

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 9 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 9 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 9. So, they can hold off on donating until December or do a whole blood in the meantime!
- [Sign up for an appointment here.](#)



Music Ministry Celebration

Thank you for supporting Bethesda's music ministry! Approximately \$4,800 was raised at the music event on May 31 to fund repair of the organ (and other instruments). Combined with the \$2,500 allocated by the council at May's meeting, \$7,300 has been funded, which represents about three-quarters of the quoted cost of the organ repair.

The concert was attended by over 50 folks on Sunday afternoon. Attendees were treated to four pieces performed by the Bethesda Bell Choir, a piano solo by Selah Vanderford, an original composition on guitar by Andrew Sternhagen-Schwenk, a duet sung by Rachel Jackson & Jillian Jaros accompanied by Heath Baxter on piano, a wind quartet featuring Shannon Vanderford, Mary and Nolan Wenaas, and Sue Reinhart, and the Bethesda Choir finished out the concert with five choral pieces.



WELCOME

New Member

Potluck lunch

June 14 2026

10:45 a.m.

Fellowship Hall



SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

NOISY OFFERING



NEXT DATE: JUNE 14



Register now!

BETHESDA MUSIC CAMP

JULY 13-16

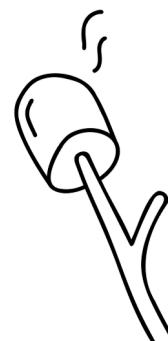
1-4:30 P.M. DAILY

BETHESDAMHD.ORG/MUSICCAMP

JOIN BETHESDA FOR A DAY,
AN EVENING, OR THE WHOLE
WEEKEND AT BUFFALO
RIVER STATE PARK!

FRIDAY,
JULY 31
THRU
SUNDAY,
AUGUST 2

CONTACT
MARY
WENAAS
WITH
QUESTIONS



kids + adults of
all ages welcome

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

light meal
provided

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



SAVE THE DATE

BETHESDA AT
FARGO-MOORHEAD PRIDE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8
PRIDE IN THE PARK

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9
PRIDE PARADE



IN LOVING MEMORY OF

LOIS JOHNSON

AUGUST 26, 1941 — MAY 14, 2026



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

& YOUTHWORKS DOROTHY DAY

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

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!

LOOKING AHEAD

FUTURE ADULT FORUM

HONORING
OUR
NEIGHBOR'S
FAITH

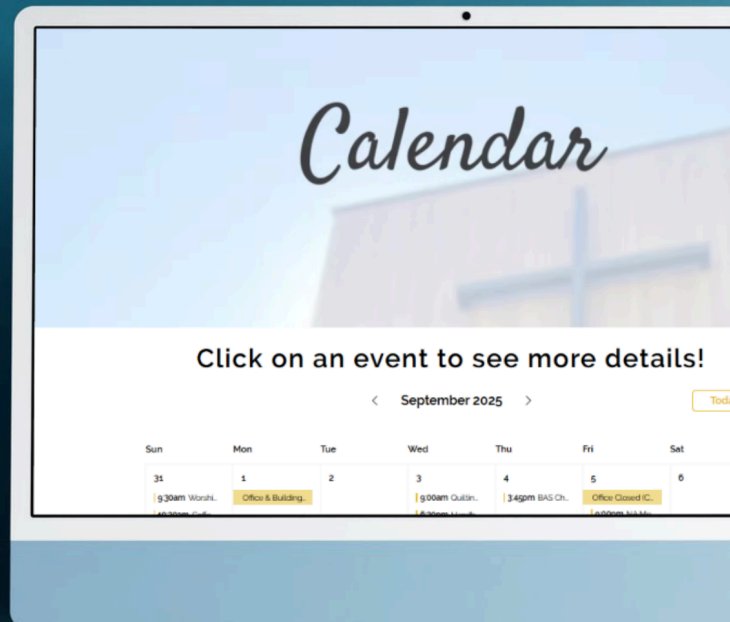


REVISED EDITION

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)

Remember to check out the calendar!

bethesdamhd.org/calendar



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

Pr. Grant Vanderford
Jane Johnson
Tyler Pyle
Jillian Jaros
Tammy Costin
Billi Jo Townsend

Pastor
Office Administrator
Pianist
Choir & Handbell Director
Health Ministry
Financials

CONTACT

401 40th Avenue South
Moorhead, MN 56560
218.236.1420

contact@bethesdamhd.org
www.bethesdamhd.org

OFFICERS

Marty Ohren
Aaron Wenaas
Drew Robinson
Nancy Lund

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer



ANSWERS

- 1 (Zechariah) = F (John the Baptist)
- 2 (David) = D (Solomon)
- 3 (Abraham) = H (Isaac)
- 4 (Adam) = B (Cain)
- 5 (Jesse) = E (David)
- 6 (Elkanah) = I (Samuel)
- 7 (Joash) = G (Gideon)
- 8 (Solomon) = A (Rehoboam)
- 9 (Noah) = J (Shem, Ham, & Japeth)
- 10 (Haran) = C (Lot)

Luke 1:57-63
1 Kings 2:12
Genesis 21:2-5
Genesis 4:1
1 Samuel 17:12-14
1 Samuel 1:1
Judges 6:29
1 Kings 14:21
Genesis 6:10
Genesis 11:27

