

BETHESDA LUTHERAN

NEWSLETTER

August 2026

Volume 26 | Number 6



Camping at Buffalo River State Park

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

EVERY TIME, EVERY AGE, EVERY PLACE | ST. OLAF CONFERENCE ON WORSHIP, THEOLOGY, AND THE ARTS

At the end of July, I had the privilege of attending and presenting at the 2026 Conference on Worship, Theology, & the Arts at St. Olaf College (lovingly called CWTA) in Northfield, MN. This continuing education opportunity was a gift to me as your pastor, and I hope that the seeds of the fruit of my learning will be nourished and grow here as we try more “holy experiments” at Bethesda.

During the last year, Bethesda has participated in the pilot project – Wonders of Worship (WOW, as we call it!). This pilot project is part of the Nourishing Vocation Project, a Lily Endowment program through the Lutheran Center at St. Olaf. The CWTA this summer had a particular focus on intergenerational faith formation and worship, and I was fortunate to be asked to present what WOW looked like for us, as well as explain the Double Portion Mentoring Ministry that was inspired, in part, by our experience with WOW.

I was also part of a Ministry Practitioner Panel at the conference with three pastor colleagues (two of whom I attended seminary with!). It was a powerful time of sharing and listening to one another. We shared about our congregations and the communities in which we live and serve, about what is hard right now in ministry, about where God is at work, and about what we think the Church’s response might be to the challenges we face.

The part of CWTA that I am most grateful for is the relationships I was able to cultivate throughout the week. I met amazing, faithful pastors, deacons, and lay leaders from around the country who are “in the same boat” as me – serving their beloved communities with care and hope, grace and frustration, and most of all love. The connections I was able to make are sustaining and nurturing, and the way these colleagues reach out and support one another means so much to me.

CWTA is a conference that grounds its identity in worship, and the worship we participated in was rich, and full, and nourishing to my spirit!

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I was also fortunate to meet Carol Meir, a liturgical musician and composer. Carol was the composer of the liturgy we used last summer during the Season of Creation titled *Peace of the Prairie*. She also has composed a new liturgical setting for the Season of Creation titled *Living Voice of Creation*. In partnership with Rev. Hans Peterson (of Dakota Road, the group that wrote ELW Setting 8), and Rev. Meta Herrick Carson, Carol has crafted this gorgeous new liturgy which we will use starting in September for our annual Season of Creation. I know you'll love it as much as I do.

As we enter the fall (I know, it's still summer... but fall is coming – the crisp morning air these days is a reminder!) I want to remind you, as I have been reminded by this CWTA experience - REST. Take Sabbath time for yourself. Hear God calling you beloved. Taste the goodness of the earth in this harvest time. Let the sunshine fall on your face like raindrops. Watch the clouds. Know in your bones the mysterious paradox of living - you are merely a small part of God's good creation - and YOU, indeed, are PART of God's good creation.

Thank you, beloved Bethesda, for time to rest and learn, to feed my spirit, to hear God's voice again calling me beloved.

Peace,

Pastor Grant



Pastor Grant with liturgical musician and composer Carol Meir at the 2026 CWTA





CONGRATULATIONS ON A SUCCESSFUL FOURTH ANNUAL BETHESDA MUSIC CAMP



A special thank you to leaders (from left to right) Heath Baxter, Rachel Jackson, Brooke Jennison, Sam King and Jillian Jaros.

Music camp was held the week of July 13 and 26 kids participated, including 21 from Bethesda All Stars.



Bethesda Lutheran Church
401 40th Av. S
Moorhead, MN 56560

50-565801



Bethesda Lutheran friends-

Thank you all for your kind donation to the Dorothy Day Food Pantry. Your support to the community + individuals we serve is unmatched, we are grateful.

Steph R.

WWW.BETHESDAMHD.ORG

Bethesda at Buffalo River

A fulfilling weekend for our Bethesda community at Buffalo River State Park... shared meals and lawn chairs, morning coffee and evening communion, s'mores and pies around the campfire, and lots of learning about nature!



ANNUAL OUT OF THE DARKNESS WALK

by Mary Wenaas

This past year, Bethesda was fortunate enough to serve as a host venue for local theatre company Theater B's performance of "Every Brilliant Thing" - a true engagement in art and a discussion on suicide.

We at Bethesda remain committed to being a safe space for healing not only within our church walls, but also among the larger community. We want to invite you to join Team Bethesda Lutheran by participating in this year's American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's **Fargo/Moorhead Area Out of the Darkness Walk** on **September 20, 2026 at Scheels Arena**, starting at 2 p.m.

You are encouraged to bring friends and family to join us. In my experience of participating in the walk, it has been amazing to see just how many people show up to remember those we have lost to suicide, to celebrate life and surviving, and to hope for a better future with less stigma around mental health challenges. It is always comforting to know that we are truly never alone.

Reach out to me to join Team Bethesda Lutheran (at msandness007@hotmail.com or 701-320-2007) and to meet up at the walk. I'll be wearing a light blue Bethesda shirt that says "You are loved just as you are."

To join the team or donate online to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, visit afspwalks.donordrive.com and search for "Bethesda."

To learn more about the Out of the Darkness Walk, go to afspwalks.donordrive.com/Fargo

Suicide and mental health challenges likely touch all of us and we don't want anyone to be or feel alone. Please reach out to any of your Soul Shop Team members or call 988 if you need support:

Mary Wenaas | 701-320-2007
Tammy Costin | 218-790-0400
Pastor Grant | 218-849-0907



In case you are curious about why we at Bethesda and your Soul Shop-trained members choose to continue to be a space of healing, here is some data from a 2024 national research study conducted by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention & the Trevor Project.

MENTAL HEALTH OF LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES

- **48,824** Americans died by suicide in 2024 - making it the 10th leading cause of death
 - 2nd leading cause of death for ages 15-34
 - 4th leading cause of death for ages 35-44
 - 5th leading cause of death for ages 45-54
- **37%** of people who died by suicide were 55+
- **39%** of LGBTQ+ young people considered attempting suicide in the past year
- **14%** of transgender and nonbinary young people attempted suicide in the last year.

Together
TO SAVE
Lives

afsp.org/walk



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention



BLOOD DRIVE

at Bethesda

Have you been impacted by blood donation? Do you have a story that you'd like to share as we get closer to our next blood drive? Reach out to share your experiences or to sign up for a donation time.

Before December 9, here's a quick reference for donors who give frequently:

- 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's last drive, there is not quite enough time to make a Power Red donation between now and December 9. So, hold off on donating until December or do a whole blood in the meantime!

Appointments can also be made online now!

**WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 9
3 - 6:30 P.M.**

**SIGN UP AT
BETHESDAMHD.ORG
/EVENTS**

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

REMEMBERING SHERRY THROUGH GALLONS OF DONATIONS

By Jane Johnson

My eldest sister Sherry battled Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma for many years. When in active treatment, she needed regular blood donations. I wanted to do something - *anything* to help. Although I could not directly donate to her (we shared the same blood type), I began to regularly donate first in her honor and now in her memory.

Currently at 65 pints donated, I'm working toward earning my nine-gallon pin. The Red Cross lets donors know where their donation is used - and I learned that after meeting local needs, it may end up across the country. One time I was notified that my donation went to the trauma hospital where my daughter-in-law works. The feedback makes the human connection.

I've visited donation sites of all sorts - including church fellowship halls, university ballrooms, an armory, party rooms and even a cask room for wine. When I was still in Morris, I'd often see friends and neighbors who also regularly donate. I've registered to donate this December at Bethesda, where I know I'll once again be donating along with folks I know. Across time and space, the common thread remains: the desire to make a difference one pint at a time. It's truly the gift that keeps on giving.

If you are able, I encourage you to give what you can - someone's life is depending on it. Besides, I guarantee you will make more, and it is a legitimate excuse to have a cookie or treat.

ROCKS WANTED!



Please bring fist-size or larger rocks to the SW corner of the Bethesda courtyard area.

We will be painting them during God's Work Our Hands Sunday on September 13, then using them to complete Gwen's Garden and to add to the new native garden at Evergreen Cemetery.

SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

NOISY OFFERING



NEXT DATE: AUGUST 9

THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH
9:30 AM IN THE LOUNGE

Women's Bible Study

AUGUST 18
SEPTEMBER 15
OCTOBER 20
NOVEMBER 17



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

LET'S PUT TOGETHER 100 SCHOOL SUPPLY KITS!

ITEMS NEEDED BEFORE SEPTEMBER

***SEE BULLETIN OR WEBSITE
FOR UPDATED TOTALS**

NOTEBOOKS (70 sheet spiral)
CRAYONS (16 or 24 count)
SCISSORS (blunt tip)
PENS (black or blue ballpoint)
PENCIL SHARPENERS
RULERS (30 centimeter)
ERASERS (2½ inch)



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

A recent call went out asking Bethesda members to contribute to a prayer shawl ministry... a couple of folks indicated they are willing to help with delivering, and others donated actual shawls! So, we are ready to distribute when requests are made. *Thank you, everyone!*

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER

ONLINE



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS NEEDED!

[BETHESDAMHD.ORG/WORSHIP](https://bethesdamhd.org/worship)

*Afternoon of fun
& fellowship*

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

When: Fourth Tuesday of the month

Time: 1-4 p.m.

August 25
September 22
October 27



 **LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**
GOD'S WORK.
OUR HANDS.

**SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 13**
FOLLOWING
WORSHIP

**ASSEMBLY OF
SCHOOL
SUPPLY KITS**



BETHESDA

AT FARGO-MOORHEAD PRIDE

PRIDE IN THE PARK

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8
11 AM TO 4 PM
AT THE RAINBOW TENT!

CIVIC PLAZA
DOWNTOWN FARGO

PRIDE PARADE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9
STARTS AT 2 PM

BEGINS IN MOORHEAD
& GOES THROUGH
DOWNTOWN FARGO

SPAGHETTI SUPPER

SECOND ANNUAL ITALIAN MEAL & RAFFLE
PROCEEDS SUPPORT COMMUNITY OUTREACH

FRIDAY OCTOBER 2 • 5:00-7:00 PM

TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT BETHESDAMHD.ORG
BY CALLING 218.236.1420 OR AT THE DOOR
\$20/ADULT AND \$10/CHILD

TO-GO ORDERS AVAILABLE
\$5 RAFFLE TICKETS AT THE EVENT

BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH
401 40TH AVE S, MOORHEAD



RECIPE FOR CRAB APPLE PICKLES

*From Mrs. Agnes Baker
(BLC 1880-1980 Cookbook)*

Size: 1 gallon

Time: 2 hours

Temp: Lowest tempature

Ingredients:

5 lbs. crab apples

3 ¾ lbs sugar

Stick cinnamon

Whole cloves

Vinegar

Directions:

*Remove flower end of each apple
and replace with a clove.*

*Place a layer of apples in a one gallon
jar, then a layer of sugar,
broken cinnamon sticks,
and repeat to fill the jar.*

*When full, pour one scant quart of
vinegar down the side of the jar.
Bake very slowly over two hours.
Don't baste or disturb. When cool, juice
will cover the apples. Place paper over
the top. Keep in a cool place.*

OUTREACH

& YOUTHWORKS DOROTHY DAY

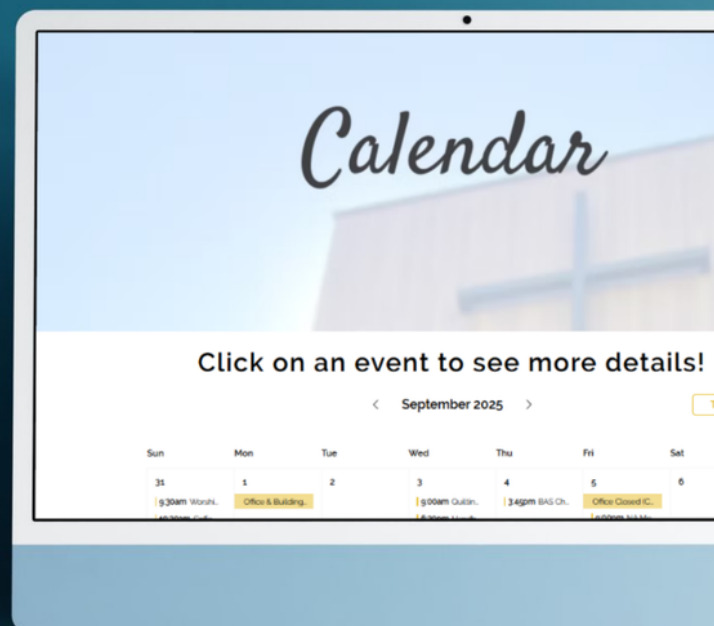
The need at local missions is constant.
Please continue to **bring non-perishable
food items** to support these programs.
(i.e. canned vegetables, soup, beans,
boxed cereal, pasta, etc.)

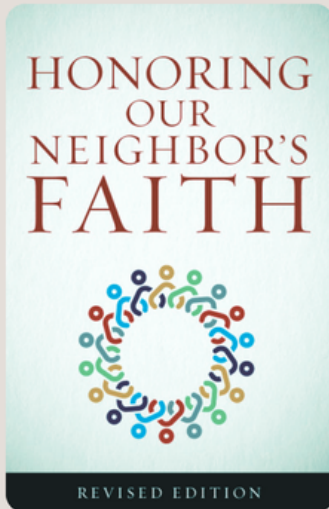
CHURCHES UNITED MICAHA'S MISSION

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!

*Remember to check
out the calendar!*

bethesdamhd.org/calendar





COMING SOON! **ADULT FORUMS**

JOIN US FOR A FOUR-PART SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS FOLLOWING WORSHIP THIS FALL BASED ON THE BOOK, "**HONORING OUR NEIGHBOR'S FAITH: A LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVE ON FAITH TRADITIONS IN AMERICA (REVISED EDITION)**" BY ROBERT FARLEE

NOW THROUGH AUGUST 3, SIGN UP IN THE OFFICE TO BE PART OF THE GROUP BOOK ORDER (\$20 EACH) OR FEEL FREE TO FIND YOUR OWN COPY!

-NEED NOT READ THE BOOK TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FORUMS-

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

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contact@bethesdamhd.org
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OFFICERS

Marty Ohren
Aaron Wenaas
Drew Robinson
Nancy Lund

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer



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

