

The Bethesda Beacon

Monthly Newsletter of Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church, Carlton MN

204 5th St. P.O Box 210

Carlton, MN 55718

June 2025



This Month's Beacon

Pastor's Article

Staff & Council

Updates

Financials

Collecting for a Cause//Donation Items

Children, Youth, Family, & Ed.

Baptismal Birthdays

Coffee & Worship Assistant Schedules

Calendar

And More...

Sunday Worship

9:30am

In House and Online

You can also view the Beacon on our website at bethesdacarlton.org

If you would like to have a copy emailed to you, please contact the office at office@bethesdacarlton.org



A Biblical Case for Affirming LGBTQ+ Relationships

(Note: I'm trying out something different this month in this space - hope you enjoy!)

Years ago, I was pretty sure that the Bible denied the possibility of affirming LGBTQ relationships. I thought that I had to choose between affirming these relationships and affirming the centrality and the moral authority of the Bible. Many Christians today, especially in certain denominations (as well as some Lutherans), hold this view. Perhaps you remember a time when most people didn't even really talk or think about LGBTQ relationships.

Here's the thing: I've come to believe something different. I don't think we have to choose.

Now, you may read this and disagree with my conclusions, or maybe you wish I was writing about something else. Some rural churches worry about the division that LGBTQ affirmation could cause. My sense is that this is not the case at Bethesda – every conversation I've ever had here about this topic has been thoughtful and open.

I do believe, though, that it's important to know what the Bible really says, no matter where you find yourself. So here's my (abbreviated) Biblical case for affirming LGBTQ+ relationships:

1. “Men and Boys”: Homosexual Activity in the New Testament World

The most common form of homosexual activity in the first century was a relationship none of us would support today. “Pederasty” involved an adult man having sexual relations with boys aged 12-17. The

Greek philosopher Plato wrote that pederasty was the result of too much lust and too little self-control, and today it's easy to see how wrong it was. Pederasty, though, is a far cry from the committed, loving relationships practiced by many LGBTQ Christians today.

2. “6 Verses”: Why Did Christians in the 20th Century Reject LGBTQ Relationships?

There are, in total, 6 passages in the Bible that non-affirming interpreters use to argue against LGBTQ relationships: Genesis 19:5; Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; and 1 Timothy 1:10. None of them are what Lutherans would consider the theological “center” of scripture. But we also know that faithfully reading the Bible isn't just about counting verses. So, what is going on in these 6 passages? Let's consider the 3 most common.

Genesis 19:5 (“Sodom and Gomorrah”):

This verse is part of a story where a mob tries to assault and rape Lot's guests. Today, even the most non-affirming Biblical interpreters don't think that this verse is about homosexuality. The mob was looking for anyone to abuse. Clearly, abuse is wrong regardless of the gender of the people involved.

Leviticus 18:22 (“Abomination”): This verse is popular among some non-affirming folks who may not have studied scripture closely. The tricky thing is that Leviticus

also forbids other things that Christians do, like eating bacon or wearing clothes with “mixed fabrics”. We all understand that such Levitical laws were made for a certain time and place; they weren’t moral laws for all time. So why would we think that this one verse would be any different? And in the end, according to Paul, Christ has freed us from the legal restrictions of the law.

Romans 1:26-27 (“Unnatural”): These two verses are the primary ones that many honest non-affirming interpreters rely on. Does Paul’s description of “men lying with men” as “unnatural” condemn committed, loving homosexual relationships? To me, it clearly does not.

In short, this passage condemns the reckless, abusive behavior that defined “pederasty” - men sleeping with boys and women sleeping with girls. Reckless behavior surely hasn’t gone out of fashion since then; but let’s be honest - anyone can behave this way! Paul was not pushing LGBTQ Christians into forced, lifelong celibacy; instead, he was urging all readers to embrace the committed, loving relationships that all Christians, whether gay or straight, strive for.

3. Why do many Lutherans and other Christians today biblically affirm LGBTQ relationships?

I’ll keep this one short: Romans 15:7, 2 Corinthians 5:18, Galatians 3:28, and Matthew 22:37-40 are good places to start.

Jesus loved and welcomed many whom society did not, and I believe that embracing and welcoming LGBTQ folks is one of the ways we can follow his example.

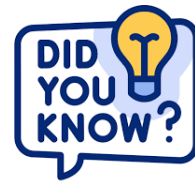
If you disagree with anything I’ve written here, I’d love to know what you think. If you want to go deeper, most of the ideas

here come from the book *God and the Gay Christian* by Matthew Vines (come borrow my copy if you like).

May the peace of Christ be with you and yours this month!

-Pastor Seth Wynands

Council Happenings From Your President



*Council meetings are open to all:
They’re held on the 3rd Tuesday of the
month at 5:30.*

*If you would like to be on the agenda
for a specific topic, let Diana Davis
know and/or email*

bethesdalutherancouncil@gmail.com

***Agendas are set by the Sunday before
the Council Meetings.***

The Blessing Box

This remains located in the narthex on the long table with directions. If you think of a question, ideas, or comment you want the council to know, jot it down & drop it in the box. This is checked by me &/or Pastor and will be directed to the right person on the council to answer your question.

Bethesda Staff

Seth Wynands, Pastor

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Office Contact Information

Phone: 218-384-4501

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Cathy Dale, Accompanist

Anna Bong, Custodian

Ronay Frank, Custodian

Current Members of Bethesda

Church Council

Roxane SchmitzPresident

Lynn Beatty Vice President

Diana Davis Secretary

Jeannette KorpelaTreasurer

JoAnn Gustafson

Debby Johnson

Linda Newlon

If you have items that you wish to be addressed by council, contact a member

of the Executive Committee at:

bethesdalutherancouncil@gmail.com

Next Council Meeting will be held

June 17th At 5:30pm

IFCC Service Reminder

Bethesda holds a service at Interfaith Care Center the 2nd Sunday of each month in the Community Room at 2:30 p.m.

All are welcome to join.

Save The Date:

God's Work, Our Hands

Sunday September 14th, 2025

THANK YOU for your donations and to those who helped assemble 31 Baby Kits for Lutheran World Relief.

~2026~

CHURCH WOMEN'S RETREAT

When: Jan. 22-26

Where: LUTHER POINT BIBLE CAMP
GRANTSBURG, WI



Day Camp will be July 20th-24th.
Watch for more details to follow.

Financial Update

Year to Date as of 4/30/25

| | Actual | Budget | Over/(Under) Budget |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------|
| Envelope giving | 31666.00 | 35000.00 | (3334.00) |
| Non-pledged income | 42957.72 | 52583.32 | (9625.60) |
| TOTAL INCOME | 97930.18 | 97333.28 | 596.90 |
| Salaries/Compensation | 31605.87 | 39464.72 | (7858.85) |
| General Office Expenses | 4694.00 | 4485.32 | 208.68 |
| Utilities | 4664.89 | 3957.00 | 707.89 |
| Other Expenses | 421.97 | 1203.32 | 781.35 |
| Benevolence Expenses | 316.66 | 350.00 | (33.34) |
| Evangelism Expenses | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Property Expenses | 571.53 | 1000.04 | (428.51) |
| Social Ministry | 120.00 | 113.32 | 6.68 |
| Worship Expenses | 27.20 | 310.00 | (282.80) |
| CYFM Expenses | 370.82 | 1656.64 | (1285.82) |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | 42792.94 | 52540.36 | (9747.42) |
| Net operating income | 55137.24 | 44792.92 | 10344.32 |

Non-pledged income includes Loose offering, Special Services, Meatball Supper, Sunday School, Interest Income, Etc... Memorial Money is not included in any of the figures above.

SERVICE NOTES:

During the months of June and July there will be joint worship services at Bethesda at 9:30 a.m.

For the month of August joint services will be held at River's Edge at 9:30 a.m.

There will be no services held at Bethesda in August.

The Council is Happy to Announce that Kennady Stadin has been Hired as Our New Accountant/Bookkeeper.

As Mentioned Last Month, Nita Davis of Davis Books & Tax will be Done on May 30th.

Training Our New Secretary, Nalani, is Going Well. Her Start Date was on May 13th. Thank You to Bobbi Selin and Sue Coady for Training Her In!

MEMBER NEWS



June Baptismal Birthdays

Lynn Beatty, Anna Bong, Mary Bryant, Brad Bunge, Rusty Buscko, Susan Coady, Terry Coady, Nicholas Colich, Marvin Durkee, Steve Eklund, Ruthann Goad, JoAnn Gustafson, Paige Johnson, Katelyn Konietzko, Luke Konietzko, Edward Leister, Angela Martini, Brad Matlack, Mary Matlack, Karen Murphy, Richard Nygren, Amanda Radtke, George Saarela, and Sawyer Thorman,

Social Ministry

Hygiene Products for Those in Need:

Shampoo, Toothpaste/Brush, Soap,
Combs, and Other Personal Care
Products

Making Sleeping Mats for the Homeless:

Clean Plastic Shopping Bags.
Mat Makers Use Them to Create 6'x3'
Sleeping Mats for Those in Need.
Drop Plastic Bags off in the Small
Coat Closet in the Narthex.

Sewers Needed

Lutheran World Relief Project
Please consider hemming precut diaper
squares, onesies, sleepers.

Items needed:

Flannel Sheets, Pillowcases, & Other
Materials for Making Diapers and
Receiving Blankets,

ITEMS NEEDED FOR "GOD WORKS OUR HANDS" BY SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2025:

24ct crayons, 1 subject 70 sheet
notebooks (college or wide ruled),

black/blue ball point pens (no gel
pens), blunt scissors, pencil
sharpeners, light weight bath towel
(dark color, 20x40in), hand towels &
wash cloths (dark colors), men's
combs, nail clippers,
Scent-Free Soap (non-antibacterial),
toothbrushes, toothpaste, travel size
shampoo/conditioner/lotion

Donations can be dropped off on the
table in the narthex

Thank You!



Reminder:

Located on the Bulletin Board by the
Office, There is a Sheet for Supply
Requests

**THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO VOLUNTEERED TO
CLEAN UP OUR SECTION OF HWY 210 TO
THOMPSON!**

Collecting for a Cause

Pop tops off aluminum cans: given to
The Ronald McDonald House.

Brown paper grocery bags: given to a
non-profit thrift store.

New greeting cards: given to Interfaith
Care Center, Carlton Place, and
Pineview Apartments for residents to
use.

Cloquet Salvation Army Food Shelf

316 Carlton Ave. Cloquet, MN

218-879-1693

Hours:

Monday 4-6:30 p.m.

Tuesday: 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Please consider donating
nonperishable food items and paper
products. Our Food Shelf collection
box is located near the basement steps.

Thank you!



WELCA QUILTS/BABY BLANKETS

WELCA has used the Astrid Culliton memorial fund to purchase blankets for newly baptized members of Bethesda, Lori Bunge had ordered them, and Wendy Mitchell handled the distribution.

We will also offer embroidered blankets to graduates, shut-ins, and folks at care facilities or in need. Linda Newlon and Debby Johnson will be handling this program—so if you think of anyone, let them know, and we will do our best to get a blanket to them.

CYFED JUNE 2025

The Friday Bible Study is continuing at 11:00 AM in the gathering space. All are welcome to join!

For the months of June, July and August, Breaking Bread Together will be on hold. The group will be going out to eat and all are welcome to join—place to be determined. We will discuss if and when we will have again in the fall.

More to follow!

The new bible study class started on May 1st. We had 11 in attendance. We had a meal, watched a video, followed by a great discussion. All are welcome to attend. The last class will be on

Thursday, May 29th from 5:30 – 7:00
in the fellowship hall.

Wendy discussed a new program called Frolic: “Little Steps, Big Faith.” This program is designed for newborns to 3-year-olds. She will continue to order the newsletter to share with the families.

Frolic: “Little Steps, Big Faith,” is a faith-based exploration program that connects key moments in childhood developmental moments with simple, meaningful experiences in faith.

We look forward to meeting the needs of our littlest congregation members.

The Easter Vigil was held on Saturday, April 19th from 6-8pm. We had 12 families participate filling 300 Easter eggs with candy. These eggs were delivered to 15 families in the Cloquet, Carlton and Wrenshall area. Our youth hid eggs in their yards to be found on Easter morning by the kids. We also had food, crafts, made crosses and a campfire outside where we roasted marshmallows. The evening ended with a candlelight service and prayers sending the drivers off.

We delivered 75 Easter bags and cards on Thursday, April 17th to the IFCC residents. Thank you to Joel, Annabelle, Lauren, and Jackson Soukkala, Sharon Bragge, Linda Newlon, FayLynn Leseman, Ailie and JoAnn Gustafson.

The Multi-Parish Synod Ministry night was held on Wednesday, April 9th from 6- 7:30. Reverend Taryn Montgomery from the Synod was there to share the service with Pastor Seth. The service was followed by a meal and fellowship.

The Agape meal was held on Saturday, April 26th at 5:00. The Confirmands served their families and friends to a meal followed by dessert. The Confirmands also read their faith statements to their family and friends which were prepared by the students with help from their Faith Partners. Confirmation was held on Sunday, April 27th at 8:30. The Confirmands participated in the service. The Confirmands were Nixon Mitchell, Cece Moench, Lucas Radtke, Jaiden Soukkala, and Lauren Soukkala. Kiara Ankrum from River’s Edge was also confirmed.

“Today is the beginning of an incredible journey through life with God at your side. May you be blessed with love and success as you continue forward.” Congratulations!

The Graduation Dinner took place on Saturday May 17th followed by the Ceremony on Sunday, May 18th.

CYFED UPDATES & IMPORTANT DATES:

❗ CYFED WILL NOT BE HAVING
A MEETING IN JUNE **❗**

The Next CYFED Meeting will be
Held on **Tuesday, July 1st @5:30pm**
in the Gathering Space.

All are welcome to join us. We are
always looking for ideas to get our
youth involved. Thank you from the
CYFED Committee: Pastor Seth,
Wendy Mitchell, Linda Newlon, Diana
Davis, and JoAnn Gustafson.

*If you have questions/concerns/ideas
please feel free to contact a committee
member.*



Father's Day is on June 15th
Happy Father's Day to all fathers
and those who fill fatherly roles!



JUNE 2025 SCHEDULE FOR J.A.M./ MESSAGE

There will be **NO** J.A.M./Message for
the summer months starting on
Sunday, June 1st through Sunday,
August 31st



June Coffee Serving Schedule

6/1 Linda's Group
6/8 Deb's Group
6/15 Renae's Group
6/22 Lori's Group
6/29 Jeannette's Group

Greeters/Ushers

6/1 JoAnn & Ailie
6/8 Craig & Roxane Schmitz
6/15 Mary Saarela & Linda Newlon
6/22 Pat Durkee & Debby Johnson
6/29 Terry & Sue Coady

Lector

6/1 Cheryl Ankrum
6/8 Roxane Schmitz
6/15 Ginny Korte-Castle
6/22 Wendy Mitchell
6/29 Randy Schmitz

Acolyte

6/1 Anna
6/8 Ailie
6/15 Mason
6/22 Mason
6/29 Anna

Communion Assistants

6/1 Chris & Wendy Mitchell
6/8 Anna & JoAnn
6/15 Jen & Jason Goad
6/22 Lynn Beatty & Sharon Bragge
6/29 Anna & JoAnn

Counters

6/1 Gene Bryant & JoAnn
6/8 Diana Davis & Lynn Beatty
6/15 Mary Saarela & Linda Newlon
6/22 Chris Mitchell & Bev Mangan
6/29 Gladys Sievert & Lori Bunge



July Coffee Serving Schedule

7/6 Ginny's Group
7/13 Pat's Group
7/20 Cary's Group
7/27 Linda's Group

Greeters/Ushers

7/6 Ailie & JoAnn
7/13 Cheryl Ankrum & Sharon Bragge
7/20 Craig & Roxane Schmitz
7/27 Debby Johnson & Pat Durkee

Lector

7/6 Linda Newlon
7/13 Pat Durkee
7/20 Diana Davis
7/27 Lynn Beatty

Acolyte

7/6 Anna
7/13 Ailie
7/20 Mason
7/27 Anna

Communion Assistants

7/6 Cheryl Ankrum & Lynn Beatty
7/13 Chris & Wendy Mitchell
7/20 Jason & Jen Goad
7/27 Anna & JoAnn

Counters

7/6 Bev Mangan & Linda Newlon
7/13 Chris Mitchell & Mary Saarela
7/20 Gladys Sievert & Diana Davis
7/27 Lori Bunge & Lynn Beatty

CARLTON DAZE

~Pancake Breakfast~

When: Saturday July 26th

Where: Bethesda Lutheran Church

Time: 8:00a-11:00a

Fee: \$8.00 per person

(Children Under 5 Are Free!)

JUNE 2025

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----|--|-----|--|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1 9:30a Worship @Bethesda 10:30a Coffee hour | 2 | 3 9a Making Mats for the Homeless 6p Serenity Seekers | 4 | 5 1p Jam Group-Fellowship Hall | 6 11a Bible Study | 7 |
| 8 9:30a Worship @Bethesda 10:30a Coffee hour 2:30p Service at Interfaith | 9 | 10 9a Making Mats for the Homeless 6p Serenity Seekers | 11 | 12 | 13 11a Bible Study | 14 |
| 15 9:30a Worship @Bethesda 10:30a Coffee hour | 16 | 17 9a Making Mats for the Homeless 4:30p Worship Committee Meeting 5:30p Council Meeting 6p Serenity Seekers | 18 | 19 1p Jam Group-Fellowship Hall 5:30p Ladies of Kaleva | 20 11a Bible Study | 21 |
| 22 8:45a Baptismal Birthdays 9:30a Worship @Bethesda 10:30a Coffee hour | 23 | 24 9a Making Mats for the Homeless 6p Serenity Seekers | 25 | 26 | 27 11a Bible Study | 28 |
| 29 9:30a Worship @ Bethesda 10:30a Coffee hour | 30 | | | | | |

Bethesda Lutheran Church
204 5th Street
P.O. Box 210
Carlton, MN 55718

Sunday Worship
9:30am
*In House
And Online*
*You can also view the Beacon
on our website at
bethesdacarlton.org or if you
would like to have a copy
mailed or emailed to you please
contact the office
@office@bethesdacarlton.org*

