Evangelisch Lutherische Bethel Kirche
Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church

Spring, 2026

A Message from Pastor Schmidt

What makes someone a stranger to us? At what point does someone stop being a stranger and become a friend? How do you behave with people you don't know? What kind of interaction can you have with someone you've never met? Saying hello or wishing them a good morning? Sending a message on social media? A hug? A kiss? Some would say that's too much: no one goes that far… What kind and level of involvement does God expect from us when He tells us to love our neighbour?

We can do many things for a stranger. Give a piece of bread to someone asking for help at the supermarket entrance. Offer directions to someone who is lost. Give some spare change to someone on the street. Speak a kind and comforting word. Listen to the story of someone who is suffering. Offer good advice. Donate an organ when we die. Speak about our faith and put it into practice… Often, this last one seems the most difficult. But why is that? Why does it sometimes seem easier to give money than to share a conversation? What has more value: giving part of our hard-earned money, or sharing with others what we have received freely? What is simpler? What is more meaningful?

In Luke 10:23–37, we read about a teacher of the Law who asks Jesus, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Notice that the question is already flawed. It's remarkable that we, as sinners, who so often seek answers, are not even capable of asking the right questions. After all, it is not what we do that saves us, but that we are saved by God. So Jesus turns the question back to the teacher of the Law: "What is written in the Law of God?" The man replies, "Love your neighbour as yourself and love God above all." Jesus leads him to this answer and says, "Do this and you will live." But the man, trying to justify himself, asks, "Who is my neighbour?"

Then Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan: A man is attacked and left half dead on the road. A priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan pass by him. Only the Samaritan helps that stranger. Why these characters? Because priests and Levites were people of status and importance in society. And Samaritans, in the eyes of the Jews, were considered the lowest of the low, descendants of their Assyrian enemies, even being called "dogs" by some. And Jesus, using these figures, brings out a powerful truth: it doesn't matter your social position, your background, or your appearance; what matters are the actions that reflect who we are, what we believe, or rather, in whom we believe.

Loving a stranger as ourselves is not easy, and we know it. But God loved strangers! Even though He created us, sin made us strangers, unknown to God (Matthew 7:21–23). Yet God loved us anyway. He made Himself known to us through creation (Psalm 19:4), through His Word (Jeremiah 24:7), through the Holy Spirit on the day of our Baptism, when our eyes are opened (Galatians 3:27), and in the person of Christ, who reveals Himself to the world as the Saviour of humanity. God not only loved us, but in Christ gave His life for us and for our sake. Jesus cared for all of us: sinners, strangers, wounded along the paths of spiritual life.

And now that we have been healed, let us also love our neighbour who does not yet know Christ. Let us seek out the wounded, the weary, and the burdened, and proclaim Jesus the Saviour, so that He may also heal them and one day bring them into eternal life. Amen

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Confirmation

We will have 11 young brothers and sisters being confirmed in this month of May. Due to availability and family schedules, we will have two confirmation dates.

On the 24th of May, 9 people will be confirmed: **Laura, Samantha, Nathalia, Rudy, Wolfgang, Rebeca, Isabel, Isabela and Daniel.**

On the 31st of May, 2 people will be confirmed: **Renison and Hayden.**

Lutheran Women's Missionary League

Our first meeting was held following the Sunday service on April 26, 2026.

Pastor Schmidt led the group through a Bible Study which highlighted the modest contributions of the widow, and we were encouraged to remember that every act of obedience in the name of Christ has value.

In order to help everyone get to know each other, we played a game of **Social Bingo.** Everyone was given a Bingo card and a challenge… complete your Bingo card with names. In place of Bingo numbers, we were given facts. As everyone walked around the group and learned more about each other, we also searched for the person in the group who could claim a Bingo square. It was a great way to get to know each other, and to put faces to names. A huge thank you to everyone who participated and made the game so much fun.

The group created a new version of a tried-and-true testament to the works for the LWML, the mites box. Roseanne brought individual boxes for everyone, and shared so many ways to customize them.

Each box will collect coins and regular contributions, or “mites”, at our homes. It is intended to remind us of God’s blessings in our own lives. It can be used when you are reminded of a blessing in your life or during a time of prayer. Mite box contributions amount to thousands of dollars and are used in the form of mission grants to assist in the sharing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

If you are interested in having your own mite box, we have made extra! You will find them at the *LWML Communication Board*, at the bottom of the stairwell by the servery. While you are there getting one for yourself, grab one for a friend. We will collect our mite box money together later in the fall and it will be submitted to mission work on behalf of our Bethel LWML group.

If you are interested in current mission work, visit Supporting Mission Grants - Lutheran Women’s Missionary League-Canada, Inc.

Some Dates to Note

Zone Prayer Service and Spring Rally
Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 9:30 to Noon
Faith Lutheran Church,
247 Westmount Road E, Kitchener.

All are welcome to join the prayer service, followed by guest speaker Lisa Jackon, Managing Director of Lutheran Laymen’s League (LLL) Canada. Additional details are available on the LWML communication board.

Our next meeting

Sunday, July 12

Join us in the auditorium following our regular church service. We will be led through the ‘Service of the Sacrament’, and will learn how this meal is set up, and the reason behind many of the elements of the service.

Light refreshments and social time will follow. Please, mark your calendars and plan to join us. **Laura & Natacha**

ELDERS Message – Spring 2026

SPRING has sprung - associated with rebirth, renewal and growth as we transition from the dormancy of winter to life. It symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness and warmth over cold, often associated with new beginnings, joy, and increased energy, along with activities like planting, cleaning, and blooming flowers. We have just celebrated Easter, Christ has Risen, he has risen indeed.

We have recently had elections for positions on our church council. We welcome Rick Frey as an Elder. And we thank Paul Dieterle for his many years of service as an Elder. We also welcome Deyse Ribas, Assistant Treasurer and Evelyn Fiedler, Financial Secretary, to the Council.

We will continue to keep our Bethel Family updated in matters relating to the Elders. As mentioned numerous times, please keep the office, the Pastor, or members of Council informed of any and all changes, including address, phone numbers, illness, shut in status. We cannot help if we are not aware of changes in our members’ status.

Rick, Harold & Harry

Groundskeeper Volunteer Needed

Bethel is in need of a volunteer(s) to cut the lawn of the church grounds on a weekly basis. This task would take approximately 1 hour a week and would assist us is deferring the current grounds maintenance expense being incurred. If you have interest please reach out to the office at 519-742-1589 or to Ian Cook at 519-465-6513.

Our annual Spring grounds clean up will take place on Saturday May 23rd. We will start at 9 am and a light lunch will be served once we are finished (clean up usually takes 2 hours). Please join us and lend a hand. Hope to see you there.

Jim

Bethel Seniors

We wish everyone a Happy Spring. Something we have all been waiting for, for a long time after our extreme winter.

"Fruehling" (Spring) was our theme for April's Seniors Meeting. We sang a lot of "Fruehling" songs and were entertained with a couple of solos from Nellie, our Music Director, accompanied by Pastor Davi on the guitar. We will meet next on May 20th.

On June 17th, lunch will be served in our auditorium with a program to follow. We invite our Seniors, and guests, to join us for an afternoon of Christian Fellowship and Kamaraderie. This will be the last meeting before we break for the summer months of July and August.

Harry & Ingrid

Music at Bethel

Our choirs continue their regular rehearsal times: Frauenchor every Thursday at 6:30, followed by Praise Choir at 7:30 (usually three times a month). The Band rehearses as needed as does the Brazilian ensemble. Our Brass will play next on Sunday, May 31. We strive to have special music gracing our weekly Sunday worship services.

The Praise Choir will be singing a sacred music program at Hygate Nursing and Retirement Home on Tuesday, May 12 at 6:30 pm.

There will be a **Circuit Ascension Service** hosted by **Historic St. Paul's** on ***Thursday, May 14 at 7:00 p.m.*** All are encouraged to attend and there will be no rehearsals held that evening here at Bethel. I will be ringing Handbells as a member of the circuit handbell group.

The last Frauenchor rehearsal for the season is Thursday, June 4, and then singing Sunday, June 7, for both the English and German Services that morning.

The big news is that when the ***Frauenchor*** resumes in September we will be switching to Thursday morning rehearsals as now everyone in the present group is retired. With a daytime rehearsal and no night driving, might there be some more ladies in

our congregation or in the German Community who may like to join us? Spread the word and also ask yourself if you too could now join our Frauenchor.

Praise Choir will rehearse until Thursday, June 18, and will sing Sunday, June 21 (which is Father's Day), and then break until September. During the spring and summer we are very blessed to be hosted by various choir members for suppers and cottage outings. Great choir social times ahead!

Nellie Scholtes, Director of Music

Sunday School News

Sunday school is a wonderful way to teach your child/ren about God's love in a simple way. We use stories from the "Sparks" Bible and posterboard pictures from when I went to Sunday school, way back when.

The older kids will read the story out loud from the Bible before doing their leaflets.

All enjoy the crafts! Thanks to Rosie Frey for providing books, craft ideas, and supplies from her travels.

We also appreciate when parents accompany their little ones to class. The younger kids need assistance in cutting and pasting, and also on keeping focused to finish the craft in the time allotted, Many hands make light work!

Bettina Cook

Vacation Bible School

Paul's Adventures in Rome: Paul & the Underground Church

Vacation Bible School will be running from ***July 13th to 16th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.*** Come join us as we learn about Paul's adventures in Rome. Each evening will include music, a Bible story, crafts, games, snacks & more!

Children preschool age and up are encouraged to register. (families are also welcome to attend). We are looking for volunteers to help out. If you can commit to even one evening, we would be grateful for your help.

Registration is now open on the church's website. (www.bethelkitchener.ca) Click the VBS link on the homepage.

Erika

Mission Christmas Bazaar & Silent Auction

Yes, spring has just begun, but we are already thinking ahead to our Bazaar!

Bethel's 52nd Annual Mission Christmas Bazaar will take place on ***Saturday, November 21*** from ***10 am to 1 pm***.

We will also be holding a Silent Auction, with the recipient of the proceeds to be determined.

As many of you begin your spring cleaning, please consider setting aside items for our Attic Treasures table. If you don't wish to store them until the fall, you may simply bring them to the church and leave them on the stage. Please label all items ***"Attic Treasures"***.

Thank you, advance!

Linda Brand

Song of Solomon 2:11-12:

"For behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land"