



*A Message from  
Pastor Kelly Sikstrom ...*

### LET'S TALK ABOUT CHURCH GROWTH...

Recently, a few of us from Bethel Church attended an excellent workshop on rural church ministry. Here were some of the humorous observations that were shared about life in rural churches:

- The word 'potluck' can be found somewhere in your constitution and bylaws.
- More people have milked a cow than been on TikTok.
- You've had a banjo player lead worship.
- The only time people lock their vehicles is during zucchini season, so they don't get stuck with a car full of zucchini.
- The weather is frequently mentioned on the prayer chain.
- People leave their boots at the door and come into the sanctuary in their sock feet.

Bethel Church has a long and blessed history as a rural church, and our more recent history has included a lot of growth in our weekly attendance and ministry engagement. There are several factors that have contributed to this growth that has now resulted in Bethel being a church of 275-300 people most weekends (close to 400 people on our church phone list).

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### **SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP**

**10:30am**

**All are Welcome!**

### **CONTACT US!**

Bethel Church Office (Krysta)  
Tuesday, Wed (am) & Thursday  
office@bethelemc.org  
403-337-2355

Pastor Kelly Sikstrom  
pastorkelly@bethelemc.org

Pastor Chris Neufeld  
pastorchrisc@bethelemc.org

Childrens Ministries (Natalie)  
Tuesdays & Thursdays  
childrensministry@bethelemc.org

Finance (Karen)  
Tuesdays  
finance@bethelemc.org

### **EVENTS CALENDAR**

To view the most up to date  
"Calendar of Events"



**Bethel's  
Monthly Calendar**

**NEW DATE!**

**3rd ANNUAL BETHEL FAMILY**

**SCAVENGER HUNT**

**SUNDAY  
APRIL 7th**

Join us after the church service for a hotdog lunch and a family scavenger hunt.

Families with last names beginning with **A-M** please bring a plate of cookies or squares

Families with last names beginning with **N-Z** please bring a plate of veggies or fruit

## Pastor Kelly's message continued ...

### LET'S TALK ABOUT CHURCH GROWTH CONTINUED...

Some of those growth factors have included things like: our emphasis on ministry to children and teens; rapid growth in Carstairs, Water Valley, and surrounding area; word of mouth; diverse music on Sunday mornings; consistent teaching of Scripture; active ministries for women, men, seniors, small groups, etc; unity among the congregation and leadership of Bethel; people searching for a new church home as God leads them; and (most excitedly), people who are being drawn to Jesus in new ways and searching for hope and faith in God for the first time.

Sometimes we've described ourselves as 'a small little church out in the middle of nowhere' – and in a lot of ways, that is still very accurate. We haven't made any goals or strategies to get bigger, it just seems to be a way that God is moving among us at this time. The values and expectations that come from being a smaller church can still be found and appreciated at Bethel... but, we have also seen that some things have changed and look different than they used to, as the church grows larger.

These are a few of the changes that are typically found in growing churches – and in churches of the size we are now.

- **Relationships** – In a smaller church you will often know everyone's name, you know their family, you know where they work, you even know what vehicle they drive. Visitors are clearly recognized in a smaller church. For better or worse, people are more aware of each other and more involved in each other's lives. As a church grows, it becomes more difficult to know everyone's name or to personally greet every visitor. You might not know a lot about some of the people who you sit beside or see attending church services regularly. This can be a difficult change. As the church grows larger you may not know EVERYONE, so instead, deeper relationships are formed within smaller communities of the church – through your small group, or women's ministry events, or seniors fellowship and prayer times, or youth nights, or serving on a worship team or in children's ministry, or men's campfire nights, or by having kids on the same sports team. In a larger church, you become part of a 'community of communities' – as people find relationships within smaller groups of the church where they are known in deeper and more personal ways.
- **Diversity** – In a smaller church, it is fairly common to see people meeting together who have a lot in common with each other – similar ages and stages of life, similar livelihoods and vocations, similar church backgrounds, similar values (ex. parenting, education of children, politics, what to wear to church, style of worship music, etc). As a church grows with more people, there will also be more diversity. You may meet people from different church backgrounds (or even, no church background), or people with unique careers and jobs, or people who may have different points of view on certain topics. This can also be difficult to adjust to. The early church was diverse too – a lot of the church issues we read about in the New Testament were related to very diverse people being drawn together as Christ's body ('There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.' - Galatians 3:28). Diversity can become a strength of the church, when Christ is central. Church unity is based on Christ alone. If we try to make it about other things, it will eventually crumble and falter (or become self-serving and closed off toward others who don't 'fit' our expectations). There are several essential and core doctrines that we must hold in common as believers as well, and these bring a blessed unity to the body of Christ, but there are also many other (secondary) doctrinal issues and views that we may see differently, and these need to be held on to with grace and charity.
- **Ministry Service and Leadership** – In a smaller church, it would be quite normal to see a specific individual or family serving in ministry and leadership in an extremely committed and invested way – you might have one family that leads the Sunday School ministry every week, or one couple who serves coffee every Sunday, or the same people leading the music every week, or the same people on Council year-after-year. Praise God for those who have given their time and gifts to serve with high commitment and enthusiasm like this. But, as the church grows, it starts to become too much for one person/ one couple/ one family to manage and oversee these larger areas of ministry and responsibility, no matter how gifted they might be. The leadership model needs to change. This is when a shift toward 'ministry teams' needs to happen. This is a really crucial step for a church to make in order to meet the needs of a growing body of believers.

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## Pastor Kelly's message continued ...

### LET'S TALK ABOUT CHURCH GROWTH CONTINUED ...

In a larger church, you need a gifted team of people who can serve and lead various areas of ministry – youth ministry, children's ministry, hospitality ministry, trustees ministry, women's ministry, worship ministry, etc. These ministry teams still require leadership and oversight by an individual or a 'lead team' of some sort, but the ministry roles and responsibilities are spread out and shared among a team of gifted and committed people. It works so well and is such a blessing to see.

The wonderful thing to remember is that God uses churches of every shape and size. God can do great things in a small church or larger church, rural church or city church, Canadian church or church in another part of the world. We might have personal preferences or a size and style of church we are more used to, but one size of church isn't better or worse than any other.

As we navigate growth at Bethel, we want to be gracious toward one another – growth is exciting in many ways, but it can be difficult in some ways too. We love to see people drawn to Christ through the ministry and community of Bethel Church, but we also recognize that there may be a sense of loss in how things used to be. Change can be good, but it is often hard too – no matter what size of church you are.

As you pray for Bethel Church:

- Pray that we could keep Christ central in all things
- Pray that we would all take the initiative to meet new people, hear their stories, welcome others well, and join our lives together in fellowship – we don't want anyone to fall through the cracks
- Pray for people to find places to serve on ministry teams as we recognize more needs and people to minister to
- Pray for our Council, Ministry Leaders, and staff as they try to plan and adapt to the realities of being a 300-person church
- Pray that God would be glorified in this very special season in the life of Bethel Church – He has been so good and is always faithful to us.

## BYG News

### BYG SCHEDULE



**FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 6:30pm - BYG NIGHT**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 12:30pm - BYG SENIOR HIGH**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 4:30pm - BYG JAM**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 6:30pm -**

**EXTRA TALENT SHOW REHEARSAL TIME**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 6:30pm - BYG TALENT SHOW!!**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 6:30pm - BYG NIGHT**



### **BETHEL EMC WEBSITE**

- Sundays Livestream Link
- Sermon Archives
- Calendar of Events
- Ministries
- Giving Information
- Weekly Bulletins
- Resources & Schedules

**[www.bethelmc.org](http://www.bethelmc.org)**

### **QUESTIONS?**

Email Pastor Chris at: [pastorchris@bethelemc.org](mailto:pastorchris@bethelemc.org)

Call: 403-337-2355 or text: 403-796-8890 during office hours.



## Facility Bookings



We are incredibly blessed that Bethel Church is such a beautiful and functional facility for us to use day to day! The facility is used for many different functions and events throughout the week (bible studies, special events, meetings, small groups, worship, concerts, private bookings, youth, etc). **If you would like to reserve a specific room or date to use the facility, please contact Krysta at the Church Office via email or phone.** We do need to check to make sure that the date/time and area that you would like to use is available - to prevent any overlap or double bookings. As well, there is a "**Facilities Use Form**" that must be completed for all private bookings. Thank you so much, we appreciate your cooperation!

## Mens Ministry



*Mark your  
calendars and  
join us!*



**APRIL 19 - GAMES NIGHT**

For men and teen guys!

7:00 p.m. at Bethel. Please bring your favorite game to play, plus a snack to share. Enjoy games, food, and a devotional time in scripture. See you there!



**MEN'S COFFEE & CONNECTION**

**APRIL 9th**

at Tim Horton's in Carstairs.

9:00-10:30 a.m.

## Right Now Media



**RightNow Media is a free online video resource available to our entire church body. You can find small group bible study material, video devotionals, leadership conferences, and much more!**

Contact the Bethel Church office to receive your invitation to get started! How does it work? We send you the invitation via email, and all you have to do is accept the invitation and then you're good to set up your account!

## Rivers Edge Camp

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

RIVERS EDGE AGM  
APRIL 6TH

WORK PARTY  
AT THE CAMP  
JUNE 8TH

MORE DETAILS  
TO COME!



**2024 SUMMER CAMPING SEASON**

**Registration Open.**

<https://riversedgecamp.org/summer-camps/>

See the website for prices.

## Seniors Prayer Fellowship



### BETHEL SENIORS' PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

**Friday April 19th, 2:30 – 4:00 at the Church**

**We will have a devotion and special time of prayer.**

**We'll also share in a short time of singing, and fellowship time with refreshments. More details coming soon!**

**For any questions, contact John Silcox, Bruce Lynn or Neil Carleton.**

## Visitors & Newcomers

### WELCOME TO BETHEL CHURCH!

**Are you new to Bethel, just visiting, or new to the community?**

**Here are a few Bethel areas that may be of interest and information for you!**

**Children's SUNDAY SCHOOL ...** if you would like more information on our Childrens Sunday School classes, please let us know! Natalie Killam heads up our Children's Ministry and she'd love to chat with you!

**There are "VISITOR CARDS"** in the pockets of the sanctuary chairs. Please feel free to fill one out when you're at the church and place it in the VISITOR BOX (on the foyer table). We'd love to know more about you!

**There are also teal colored "VISITOR FOLDERS"** on the front table in the foyer. Please help yourself to one! The folder is filled with information about Bethel, to help you get to know us!

**COFFEE FELLOWSHIP** time follows every service in the café area! Feel free to wander over to the area (East side), and enjoy a cup of coffee and a time of fellowship with new faces!

If you are a new, regular attender to Bethel and would like to be included on Bethel's "Prayer and Information" email list; the Congregation Phone List; Right Now Media; and have a mailbox in the foyer – please let Krysta at the Church Office know, and she would be happy to arrange all of that for you!



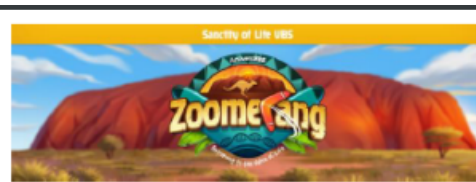
# Sunday School News

## PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

May 26 to June 23

If you have an upcoming preschooler (2.5-3yrs) who will be joining our preschool class in the fall, you are welcome to come and join our preschool Sunday school class.

Parents are welcome to stay.



VBS @ West Zion  
July 8-12, 2024

WE ARE HOSTING VBS THIS YEAR! HOW CAN YOU HELP?

### CENTRE LEADERS (one Adult for Each Centre)

- Bible Station (1 Elementary and 1 Preschool)
- Games Station
- Preschool Science Station
- Crafts Station (1 Elementary and 1 Preschool)

### CENTRE HELPERS

- Bible Station (1 helper)
- Snack Station (1 helper)
- Crew Leaders/Assistants (20 helpers)
- Registration (2 helpers for Monday)
- Nursery (2-3 helpers)

### DECORATING COMMITTEE

- Help to create the Land Down Under at West Zion!



Please contact Natalie Killam if you are willing to help or have questions.



**SUNDAY  
APRIL 7TH**

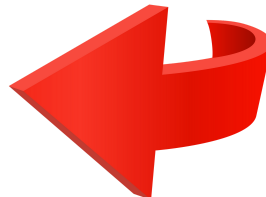
## 3rd ANNUAL BETHEL FAMILY



Join us after the church service for a hotdog lunch and a family scavenger hunt.

Families with last names beginning with A-M— please bring a plate of cookies or squares

Families with last names beginning with N-Z please bring a plate of veggies or fruit



*Everyone is welcome!  
Join us for some  
family fun!*

## Upcoming Events



# ATHLETES IN ACTION SOCCER CAMP

**TINY LAFLEUR FIELD**  
Scarlett Ranch Blvd  
Carstairs AB

**JULY 15-19**  
9AM-3PM

- ☑ Skills & ball techniques
- ☑ Footwork exercises
- ☑ Strategy & teamwork exercises
- ☑ Fun games & trial matches

Register at [westzion.com/registrations](https://westzion.com/registrations)

\$70/kid | FOR KIDS  
AGES 6-12

Registration Closes  
July 1

FACILITATED BY  
WEST ZION  
MENNONITE CHURCH  
403.337.2020  
[westzionoffice@gmail.com](mailto:westzionoffice@gmail.com)



# Didsbury SPRING Market

May 4  
10-4

Over 80 Vendors

Baking \* Crafts \* Gifts  
Jewelry & More!

**ZION CHURCH**  
CORNER OF HWY 582 & 20TH AVE.



## Womens Ministry

# AWKWARD INTO AWESOME:

Taking discomfort and  
fear out of evangelism

**BETHEL CHURCH**  
NEW DATE APRIL 5  
7:00-9:00 PM  
6:30 DOORS OPEN

SPEAKER  
KATHY MORALES  
CNBC TEAM LEADER

NO RSVP NEEDED

For more info contact:  
Rachel Reid 403-312-9360



MOUNTAIN VIEW

# CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S BREAKFAST

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024, 9:30-11:30 AM  
REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH GYM, 1500 - 23 STREET, DIDSBURY

Speaker: CAROL ANN KIRIAKA

Feature: CHRYSTAL & MARY  
Didsbury Home Hardware  
"PLANNING & PLANTING YOUR FLOWERS"

Music: LAURIE & DAVE SUMMERS

TICKETS \$7 PER PERSON  
TO RESERVE, CALL COLLEEN (403-586-1898) OR VICKY (403-335-3500).  
BRING A FRIEND ... SHE'LL THANK YOU!



## Womens Ministry

ALL LADIES ARE INVITED TO:

COFFEE AND  
CONVERSATION

BETHEL CAFE

APRIL 4TH 9:30-11:30

DEVOTIONAL • FELLOWSHIP • SNACKS • CHILDCARE



*fellowship. fun. encouragement. growth & rest*

BETHEL LADIES' RETREAT

save  
the  
date

RIVERS EDGE RETREAT CENTRE  
NOVEMBER 8-10, 2024

CONTACT RACHEL REID IF YOU CAN HELP OUT.  
MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK! 403-312-9360

## 'OVERFLOWING' ALBERTA WOMENS CONFERENCE

Kathy Morales, our guest speaker from Ladies Retreat 2023 and Team Leader of the Canadian National Baptist Convention (CNBC) has invited the women of Bethel to attend Overflowing, a women's conference intended to inspire, encourage, and equip women to overflow with Jesus in their personal circles of influence.

This one-day conference will feature dynamic keynote speakers, engaging breakout sessions, worship, lunch, and time to connect with other women of the faith.

We'll dive deep into discovering what it means to live a life overflowing.

The conference is taking place on April 27 in Red Deer at Home Church.

More details and tickets can be found at:  
<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/overflowing-alberta-tickets-776393603167?aff=oddtcreator>

Or use the QR code provided on the invitation (to the right).



CNBC INVITES YOU TO:

*OVERFLOWING ALBERTA*  
WOMENS CONFERENCE

27.APRIL.2024  
9 AM - 4 PM  
HOME CHURCH • RED DEER



FOR TICKETS VISIT:  
CNBC.CA/WOMEN/OVERFLOWING  
EARLY BIRD PRICE ENDS MARCH 4