



NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
VIRGINIA, MN  
55792  
PERMIT NO. 57

## Gethsemane Lutheran Church

901 Fourth Street South  
Virginia, MN 55792  
Phone: 218-741-4961  
Email: [gelc@gelc.info](mailto:gelc@gelc.info)  
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 am to 4 pm

**Rebecca LeMenager**  
*Pastor*  
**Brenda "Bunny" Varani**  
*Parish Secretary*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Come and see us on the web!  
[www.gelc.info](http://www.gelc.info)

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2025

### Gethsemane, Messiah, Our Savior's



Gethsemane Lutheran  
Church  
Virginia, Minnesota  
[www.gelc.info](http://www.gelc.info)

**Mission Statement**  
To draw all people  
to Christ,  
nurture faith, and  
fulfill our calling to serve

**Vision for Gethsemane**  
A vibrant place of  
worship, learning and  
service, where every  
person is passionate  
about their belonging and  
their ministry

**Marks of Discipleship**  
Pray daily  
Study Scriptures diligently  
Worship weekly  
Encourage Faith in Others  
Serve for the sake  
of others  
Give freely

#### Inside this issue:

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Nurturing Faith                | 2 |
| From the Pastor                | 2 |
| Christian Education, L.I.F.T.  | 3 |
| Service in our Congregation    | 4 |
| Service in Community and World | 5 |
| People of Gethsemane           | 6 |
| Congregational Support         | 7 |
| Prayer Wall                    | 7 |
| Vacation Bible School          | 8 |



# Gethsemane Gazette

September, 2025 Volume 47, Issue 9

## Join us for September Worship and Events!

### Installation for Reverend Rebecca LeMenager

Sunday, September 7th, will be a very special day for our church as we welcome our new Pastor. Bishop Amy Odgren will be presiding along with other members of the Synod staff.

Following the service a luncheon will be served in the Fellowship Hall in Pastor Rebecca's honor provided by the Call Committee and the Congregation Council. Please plan on attending to meet and welcome Pastor Rebecca and our guests from the Synod.



### HOW TO CONTACT PASTOR REBECCA

Have a question? Want to meet me or find out more about me? Have a great idea for the church? Know someone in need? Want some additional pastoral support? I welcome and encourage you to contact me in whatever way feels right for you. Here are a few ways:

#### Please Call Me:

Church phone number: 218-741-4961  
Rebecca's cellphone number: 218-290-7314

#### Please Email Me:

Email: [becbec218@gmail.com](mailto:becbec218@gmail.com)

#### Please Stop In At the Church:

Office Hours:  
Tuesdays 3:30pm -5:30pm  
Fridays 9am -11am

\*I will be in the office at other times, but will try to schedule visits, meetings and appointments around office hours so I can be in and available to talk. If these times do not work for you, please call me. I am always happy to meet at another time including evenings and weekends to accommodate your schedule.



## August Angels

Much thanks to the many August Angel helpers who worked behind the scenes, making everything go smoothly!

Thanks to the Boston Youth Group, Tina and Jim Pauling, Clarence Mattson, Dawn Thomas, Mike Touminen, Chuck Bothwell, Joyce Bloomquist, Dana Waldron, Sam Davidson-Teff, Bennet Bloomquist, Sam Michaels, Pam Burgess, Pam Fields, Deb Poderzay, Donna Flannigan, Evie Kinnunen, Eleanor Anshus, Andrea Alto, Ethie Kniivila, Elia Isaacson, Pat Sleeman, Dawn Matschiner, Gail Wieman, and to Bunny who keeps us all in order! Thanks so much!

Sue Swanson, August Angell Coordinator

## All Women of Gethsemane

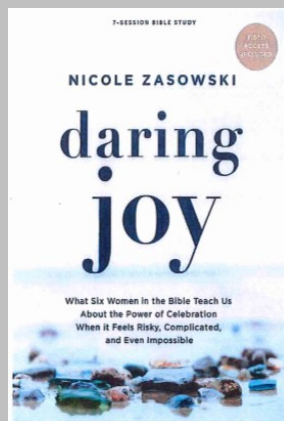
**Thursday, September 25th, at 5:30 pm** in the Youth Room. We are having a casual get together just to “hang out” with other gals, enjoy visiting, relax, and have some laughs.

We meet on the 4th Thursday of each month. No commitments, just bring yourself and your own beverage. Please come. - we'll have a fun time! Hope to see you there!

## Tuesday Night Women's Bible Study

Joy can feel risky. When you've experienced pain of any kind, it can feel easier not to dream than to be disappointed, or not to hope than to be left heartbroken. If you ever feel like it's safer not to embrace joy at all than to hold something that might break, you're not alone.

**Please join us on Tuesday, September 16th at 5:00 (please note the time change!)** as we study this 7 session Bible Study, "Daring Joy" by Nicole Zasowski. The book can be purchased for only \$19.99 and **we welcome YOU** to join us! Please call the church office with any questions. Hope to see you there!



## Office Closed

The church office will be closed on Monday, September 1st in observance of Labor Day.

Enjoy the holiday and we will be back on Tuesday, September 2nd.



## From the Pastor

### NEW BEGINNINGS

*“Behold I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” Isaiah 43:19*

I don't know what it is about September. Even though I have not been in school (even seminary) for decades now, there is still something about this time of year that feels like a fresh start. Perhaps it is all those early school years with the new crayons with their sharp, unbroken points and scratchy new school clothes. But for me this time of year always felt like a time to pause, assess and plan for the upcoming year.

I think this is true for us in the church as well. As we consider a new program year, and as I come in as your pastor, this is a time for us to pause, assess and consider what new directions God is calling us as a church and as individuals. Are there things we need to let go of, so our hands are ready to receive new blessings from God? Are there new ways God might be calling us to serve our community?

I hope that you will come talk to me about what excites you and fills you spiritually. How can the church and me, as your pastor, support you and your family as you grow in your love of Christ and neighbor? Are there new ways you might consider getting involved or perhaps you don't even know how you might do that but are willing to find out? I would love for us to talk. And as we enter this new chapter of life for Gethsemane Lutheran Church, I am so excited to see where Christ is calling us to go and to be and I hope you are too!

Blessings,  
Pastor Rebecca

## PASTOR REBECCA WILL BE OUT OF THE OFFICE

### Laurentian Conference Text Study Group – Mon., Sept 8

I will be in Cook all day but easily interruptible. Please call me on my cell phone if you have a pastoral need.

### Fall Theological Conference – Sun. Sept 14 - Tues. Sept 16

I will be in Cohasset from Sunday evening through Tuesday morning but available by phone and email. Please contact me if you have a pastoral emergency.

## Prayer Wall

### In your daily prayers, pray God's blessings for:

- ♦ The innocents suffering in the war in Israel/Palestine; those displaced from their homes in Gaza; those suffering in Ukraine, Lebanon, and Sudan. We pray for those in need of strength and healing: Tina Pauling, Jennifer Anshus, Judy Mazzeo, and Lillian Ferkins.

### We continue to pray for;

- ♦ Judy Bennick, Ruth Koski, and Fran Shimmin.
- ♦ All members who are homebound, in nursing homes, or assisted living.

## Visits to the Home Bound & in Care Facilities

Would you or a loved one appreciate a visit from the pastor? Please make sure you (or they) are on our list; we don't always know who would like a visit. Do you have a family member, friend or neighbor who is in a care facility or homebound but does not have a church family? Please let Pastor Rebecca know. Please remember that due to HIPPA regulations, the only way the church or pastor knows you are in the hospital or have moved to a care facility is if you let us know. Thank you for keeping the church updated and informed!

## Council Highlights

Happy September Everyone, it's hard to believe we're planning for fall, the summer certainly has gone fast. Pastor Marion came to our August meeting and reviewed her year at Gethsemane with us. Her last day at our church was Sunday, August 17th.

Pastor Rebecca's start date will be September 1st, her Installation date is September 7th. Bishop Amy Odgren and staff from the Synod will be conducting this special worship service. After the church service we have planned lunch in the Fellowship Hall to welcome Pastor Rebecca.

Even though Pastor Rebecca has not officially started, she has been meeting with Pastors Liz (Our Saviors), and Laura (Messiah), to plan and organize this years LIFT schedule for our joint youth and Confirmation program.

Pam and Donna are getting ready for Sunday School and with the Fellowship Team are planning Rally Sunday, September 14th. There will be kid's activities and a picnic lunch for everyone.

Sheila discussed the current Generosity project of collecting items for the Foster Care Project. Bruce also gave us the monthly financial report.

## Giving through the Vanco App

Gethsemane offers several ways to contribute to spreading God's Word. One of them is through the Vanco app called “Vanco Mobile.” Download the Vanco app from your App Store on your mobile device. If you're new to Vanco, you'll need to create a free account. Once set up, logging in and making electronic donations will take only a few minutes.

For more information, please contact Vanco at 800-675-7430 or visit their website at [www.vanco.com/vm](http://www.vanco.com/vm).

Thank you for using Vanco. We hope this simplifies your giving. If you encounter any difficulties, please reach out to Vanco or the church office.

## QR Code for Giving at Gethsemane:

When you are reading our monthly newsletter or the Sunday morning bulletin, you will see our QR giving code.

Simply take out your phone, scan the code, put in your password, select how much you want to give for the month, and press done. It's as easy as that and takes less than a minute!



Our second year of the combined Vacation Bible School (with Our Saviors and Messiah), was completed on August 13th. Again, it was very successful with about thirty kids attending. Everyone really had a great time, a number of kids were sad to see it end. A big thank you to our volunteers: Deb Poderzay, Bennet Bloomquist, Pam Fields, Donna Flannigan, Lauri Harvey, Sue Swanson, Abi Schiller, and Pastor Rebecca.

The Council members will have an (in church retreat), Saturday, October 4th, to plan future goals.

Peace, Mary Horan Council President

## Weekly Giving

August giving has continued at a lower summer level. Giving has averaged \$3,249 per week so far this month. This is \$965 per week less than what is needed to meet budgeted expenses. Enjoy the rest of your summer. Fall is just around the corner.

Bruce Kniivila, Treasurer







**Look who’s celebrating their Anniversary for the Month of September, enjoy your Special Day!**

- 9/2: Linda and Ray Erickson, Andy and Nicki Johnson
- 9/8: Brad and Gina Anderson
- 9/8: Dave and Denise Ramfjord
- 9/10: Derek and Marjia Jorgenson
- 9/10: Andrew and Kayla Meinzer
- 9/12: Eric and Jennifer Krenz
- 9/14: Melanie and Ryan Peterson
- 9/17: Danielle and Matt Seppi Jr.
- 9/17: Abby and Kyle Toivari
- 9/26: William Norton and Molly Pemmaraju
- 9/28: Hannah and Sam Davidson-Teff



**Celebrating the Anniversary of your Baptism**

- 9/1: Jeff Peterson
- 9/3: Pam Burgess
- 9/7: Connor Saxhaug
- 9/10: Vienna Zeidler
- 9/12: Martin Hudson
- 9/13: Harry Lamppa
- 9/14: Sarah Randall
- 9/17: Klara Roberts
- 9/18: Betty Laakso, Tyson Wilson, Clayton Zeidler
- 9/20: Brenna Tiedeman
- 9/22: Kristine Anderson, Jack Florey
- 9/23: Nicholas Monacelli
- 9/25: Bennet Bloomquist
- 9/26: Sue Hiltunen
- 9/27: John Rosewall
- 9/28: Emmi Aluni, Miia Johnson
- 9/?: Mary Sterling

**\*\*If we have left you out, we need your help to know!  
Call the office to update your information\*\***

**Memorial Gifts received during the month of August**

**In Memory of:** Gretchen Johnson  
**From:** Nancy Joas

**DONT STOW AWAY THOSE BEACH CLOTHES! RALLY SUNDAY IS SEPT. 14th with a beach theme.**

Sign up for Sunday school, have a picnic lunch and play games. Adults and kids alike are welcome! Wear your craziest beach clothes and have some fun!



**BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS: SUNDAY, SEPT. 14**

As a new school year begins, we want our kids to carry the love and care of their church with them as they head back to school. Please have your child bring their backpack to church on Sunday, September 14. We will bless their bags and pray for them. Bring your iPad, computer, totes and even your lunch box if you wish. Start the school year out right! If you are a teacher, para or administrator, please bring your work bag to church too as we will be praying for you as well!

**Trevor Ranisate**, will be going to the ELCA world hunger leadership Gathering in Columbus Ohio. Sept 18-21 as a representative from the NEMN synod. He will talk to the congregation in worship on Sunday, Sept 14, right before he goes (and we will pray for him).

**BIBLES FOR OUR CHILDREN & YOUTH**

Has your child received a “Spark Bible” (given to our Sunday School age children) or a “Collaborate Bible” (given to our confirmands)? If your child has not, please call the church office or contact Pastor Rebecca so we can ensure your child has a Bible of their own to read at home!

**Faith Builders (Preschool - grade 6)**

Can’t wait to see you S. School kids with the start of the new year. Join us as we begin our Sunday School program on September 21st. Hope to see you all there.

Blessings, Pam and Donna



**Fall L.I.F.T. Schedule**

- September 17
- September 24
- October 1
- October 8
- October 22
- October 29

Living in Faith Together, the shared faith formation program between Gethsemane, Our Savior’s, and Messiah, resumes **September 17<sup>th</sup> at Messiah Lutheran Church!!**

Our Junior High youth group is now open to students in **grades 3-6!** Confirmation continues as a two year program for youth in **grades 7 & 8, with a few 9<sup>th</sup> grade students** joining us, and the Senior High youth group is for those who have **affirmed their baptisms - 12<sup>th</sup> grade!**

This year, we have added sessions that are open to everyone in the church! The first week of each unit will be open to the whole church (children & adults) - see the newsletter blurb titled “All Church L.I.F.T.” for more details, but for now, mark your calendars: **The Fall “All Church” session will be on September 17th.** This interactive session kicks off our fall theme of Generosity (and the ELCA’s Generosity Project) led by Pastor Taryn Montgomery, NEMN Synod Minister for Discipleship & Christian Community

Registration is LIVE - even if you registered last year, we need you to fill out a registration form!

Register Here: <https://forms.gle/aHRqdEyDcBypU69w8> OR us QR code

**L.I.F.T. Wednesday Evening Schedule**

6:00-6:30pm Dinner (All are welcome!)

6:30-6:45pm Worship with Holy Communion

6:45-7:50pm Youth Group & Confirmation

7:50-8:00pm Closing and Announcements





## Acolyte Training: Sunday, Sept 21 After Church

All youth in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up are invited to acolyte. There will be an informational and training session on Sun., Sept. 21 directly following worship. We will talk about why we light the candles in worship, what we wear, where we sit and other pieces about this important part of the worship service. If your child would like to acolyte and has not had a training, please plan to attend or talk with Pastor Rebecca to set up another time. Also, **the sign up sheet (September through the end of December 2025) is now up** on the Children & Youth Bulletin Board (at the end of the hall outside the Youth Room), please sign up!

## Sermon Notes: Not just for Confirmands anymore!

Did you know that our confirmands are asked to complete sermon notes? But if this tool helps our youth, why aren't we making them available for everyone? Now we are! Sermon note sheets are available on the table going into worship. There is also a basket to turn in your completed sheets. The following Sunday, your sheet will be available to pick up with comments from Pastor Rebecca.

## Mark Your Calendar! Upcoming Dates in October!

### Sunday, October 12: Music Appreciation Sunday

We will thank our choir and church musicians for sharing their gift of music ministry with this church and our community.

### Wednesday, October 15: NO L.I.F.T. due to MEA

### Sunday, Oct 12: Youth Preaching Cohort

The NEMN Synod is offering a session at Church of the Good Shepherd in Duluth from 2:00-5:30 pm for youth interested in preaching. It is open to all youth grades 9-12. If this is something you are interested in, please talk with Pastor Rebecca about how to register and have the church pay the fee for you to attend.

### Sunday, October 26: Confirmation Sunday

On Reformation Sunday, we will rejoice with our Confirmands as they affirm their baptismal promises through the Rite of Confirmation. Those being confirmed: Ada Boe, Garrett Reid, Grant Reid and Genevieve Zeidler.

## Generosity Team

Welcome to our edition of "Gethsemane Gifts!" Each month we will recognize the gifts of generosity that we have experienced from our very own Gethsemane Family. We will focus on one member of our church who has experienced a time of support, love, and/or generosity from other members of our church.

### This month please welcome – Boston Youth Group

The Boston Mission Trip group is so grateful for our amazing Gethsemane congregation!! Without all of the generous support, this life changing, faith building trip would not have been possible! Everyone's participation of our fundraisers, donations, prayers and words of encouragement have been so amazing! There has been a few times throughout the summer that others have expressed how blessed we are to have the church family we do and we agree!!

### Miia-

This trip will never be forgotten, I made so many memories and learned so much. The highlight of this trip was getting closer to God. One thing that stuck out to me was the amount of donations and help we got from the congregation. We could not have done it without them.

### Greta-

This trip was amazing. It opened my eyes in so many ways and strengthened my faith. The highlight was getting closer with God and the people I was with all week! I'm especially thankful for the church family whose donations and encouragement made it all happen.

### Lennon-

The Boston 2025 trip made a world of difference in my faith journey, as well as my everyday life. My relationship with God has grown an enormous amount. I can also say that I couldn't have asked for a better group of people to spend the week with. I am forever grateful for the donations from the people of the church that made the trip possible.

### Hallie-

I learned countless lessons and made countless memories, it was truly an amazing trip that I'll cherish forever. It was very eye opening and the type of experience that you couldn't recreate anywhere else. I'm extremely thankful for everyone who helped make it possible, including everyone who went with me. I have so much love for every person that participated in the Boston 2025 faith journey mission trip.

## L.I.F.T. BEGINS SEPT 17: 6-8pm at MESSIAH LUTHERAN

Things to note about LIFT:

- ~Open to all children and Youth grades 3<sup>rd</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>
- ~Registration is open! Please use the QR code or google form link in this newsletter and upcoming bulletin inserts to register your children or youth for L.I.F.T. L.I.F.T. Families, you should receive a letter soon via email and regular mail. If you do not get a letter, by September 10, please contact the church office.
- ~NEW THIS YEAR: ALL CHURCH EVENT  
Please see in this newsletter and upcoming bulletin inserts about an All Church L.I.F.T. event that everyone is invited to be a part of on September 17. You do not have to have kids in L.I.F.T. to come to this event.
- ~More information about L.I.F.T. is available on the flyers on the children and youth Bulletin Board, in this newsletter or please call the church office to talk with Pastor Rebecca.

## Foster Care Closet

What would you need if you had to leave your home in the middle of the night?

The Generosity Team was asked to provide answers to this question, and we all had different perspectives. However, there are children in our community who lack the privilege of taking anything. To address this issue, the Generosity Team, in collaboration with St. Louis County Foster Program, will be establishing a Foster Care Closet in Gethsemane. To support these children, we are requesting your assistance in creating special bags that we can distribute to our area foster care families when they receive new placements.

As you clean your home, attend local rummage sales, or browse through Marketplace, please keep an eye out for these items: (new or gently used) smaller suitcases, duffle bags, child-size blankets and pillows, travel pillows, socks, underwear, children's plates and cups, and children's clothes and pajamas (newborn through size 6). All donations can be brought to the church office during the months of August and September. We kindly encourage you to share this initiative with your family and friends.

Matthew 25:35-36

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothes me, I was sick and you looked after me*



## 6th Annual Iron Range Rotary Chili Cook Off

Save the Date! Thursday, Sept. 18th at the Iron Trail Motors Event Center.

Doors and Bar Open at 4pm. Chili tasting begins at 5 pm. There is a \$10 Entrance Fee.

Join us for some FUN; DRAWINGS; DOOR PRIZES.



## Food Truck Festival Saturday, Sept, 20th, 12 pm - 6 pm

Downtown Virginia , MN on Historic Chestnut Street  
Four Blocks of Food Trucks!  
Live Music - All Day!  
Kids Activities!

