

**BACCALAUREATE SERVICE AND
133RD COMMENCEMENT**

MAY 10

CLASS OF 2026

**BETHEL
COLLEGE**

ESTABLISHED

1887



WELCOME

Welcome to Bethel College's 133rd Commencement.

Thank you for joining us as we recognize the accomplishments of our latest class of Bethel College graduates. Commencement is one of the most formal and significant ceremonial events of academic life. It represents the culmination of baccalaureate education and the beginning of a new chapter in the lives of our graduates. The splendor of regalia and the ceremony acknowledge the history and traditions of academic achievement.

Today we are pleased to recognize each graduate for their accomplishments. We are thankful for the role relationships have played – and will continue to play – in the lives of these students. We are proud to welcome them as alumni of Bethel College. May they be guided by their faith and confident in their liberal arts education and readiness for employment.

These graduates are special. They have been through a challenging period of time in society. They've persisted, adapted, and stayed on course. I am proud of each one of them. I am proud that they are Threshers! I am confident that they will be successful in their future endeavors.



Jon C. Gering, Ph.D.
President

BACCALAUREATE SERVICE

Sunday, May 10, 2026 | 9:30 a.m.

Worship service with prelude
Bethel College Mennonite Church

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Sunday, May 10, 2026 | 4 p.m.

Memorial Hall

ASL interpretation provided by Boklund Interpreting Services.



MISSION

Bethel College

prepares students for meaningful lives of work and service through faith formation, the liberal arts, and practical experience in career pathways.

VISION

Bethel College

graduates students who increase human flourishing (shalom) in society by owning and enacting their faith, demonstrating compassion for the powerless, engaging in critical thought, and bringing value to the workplace.

VALUES

High standards and expectations

for behavior and performance in all dimensions of campus life

Dialogue

that transforms conflict within communities where there are differences in opinion and understanding

Peace and justice

that seek fair and equitable treatment for all members of society

Vocational discernment

that helps students identify their calling and God's purpose for their professional lives

Holistic wellness

through a balance of mental, physical, and spiritual practices

Creative approaches

for living harmoniously within a constantly changing world and workplace

Community with global consciousness

that cherishes social connectivity, shared endeavors, and intergenerational living

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BACCALAUREATE SERVICE

Theme

Salt and Light of the Earth

Prelude

Woven and Open Road

Greeting

Rev. Joanna Harader, Pastor, Bethel College Mennonite Church

*Welcome, *call to worship & opening prayer*

Timothy Schrag, Class of 2026 graduate

On screen

Worship music / Chamber Singers

How Can I Keep from Singing?

Robert Lowry

arr. Rob Dietz

Theme Scripture reading / Matthew 5: 13-16

Gavin Rogers, Class of 2026 graduate, English

Dulce Erazo-Tejada, Class of 2026 graduate, Spanish

Lilli Reisser, Class of 2026 graduate, German

**Congregational song of response*

You Are Salt for the Earth

Voices Together #297

Worship music / Concert Choir

North

Ryan O'Neal

arr. George Chung

Second Scripture reading / Isaiah 42:1-4

Caleb Koontz, Class of 2026 graduate

Reflections

Quincey McGuffy, Class of 2026 graduate

Delaynie Mayes-Stuart, Class of 2026 graduate

Patricia Huerta, Class of 2026 graduate

^Litany of responses

Caleb Koontz and Timothy Schrag

On screen

**Congregational songs of response*

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Voices Together #130

The Lord Lift You Up

Voices Together #832

Spoken benediction and blessing

Gavin Rogers

Sung benediction / Concert Choir

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

Peter C. Lutkin

Postlude

*All who are able are invited to stand.

^All graduates who are able are invited to stand.



Hymn leaders: Caleb Koontz, Dr. Russell Adrian

Accompanist: Dr. Christina Liu

Organist: Dr. Will Wiebe-Friesen

Student greeters: Adah Hodge, Benjamin Janzen, Joy Jones, Abigail Koontz, Maddy McGee, Liam Ortman, Jacob Schrag, Ethan Wilcox

Baccalaureate Planning Committee: Caleb Koontz (senior class representative), Dulce Erazo-Tejada, Patricia Huerta, Delaynie Mayes, Quincey McGuffy, Gavin Rogers, Timothy Schrag, Dr. MeShonya Wren-Coleman

CHORAL TEXTS

How Can I Keep From Singing?

Robert Lowry (1816-1899)
arr. Rob Dietz

My life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentation.
I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.

Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing.
It sounds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing?

Although the tempest 'round me roars, I hear the truth it liveth,
And though the darkness 'round me close, songs in the night it giveth.

No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is lord of heav'n and earth, how can I keep from singing?

North

Ryan O'Neal (b. 1983)
arr. George Chung

We will call this place our home,
The dirt in which our roots may grow,
Though the storms will push and pull,
We will call this place our home.

We'll tell our stories on these walls,
Every year, measure how tall,
And just like a work of art,
We'll tell our stories on these wall.

Let the years we're here be kind, be kind,
Let our hearts, like doors, open wide, open wide,
Settle our bones like wood over time, over time,
Give us bread, give us salt, give us wine.

A little broken, a little new,
We are the impact and the glue,
Capable of more than we know,
We call this fixer-upper home.

With each year, our color fades,
Slowly, our paint chips away,
But we will find the strength,
And the nerve it takes,
To repaint and repaint and repaint every day.

CHORAL TEXTS

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

Peter Lutkin (18858-1931)

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord lift his countenance upon you, and give you peace,
The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.
Amen.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

**Processional*

Thresher Brass Quintet
Kyle Unruh '11, trumpet
Evan Koch '14, trumpet
Trae Gehring '22, tuba
Genevieve Rucker '13, horn
Andrew Thiesen '17, trombone

President's Welcome

Jonathan C. Gering '94, Ph.D., President

Invocation

April Amore Powls, Class of 2026 graduate

Welcome from the Board of Directors

Wynn Goering '77, Ph.D., Chair, Board of Directors

***Presentation of the Ralph P. Schrag Distinguished Teaching Award*

Robert Milliman, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty

Commencement Address

"Grand Visions of Small Things"

Peter D. Goerzen '07

Assistant Professor and Chair of Bible and Religion

Presentation of Candidates for Degrees and Honors

Robert Milliman, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty

Christine E. Crouse-Dick, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of Communication Arts

Conferring of Degrees

Jonathan C. Gering, Ph.D., President

Welcome to New Alumni

Joel G. Gaeddert '06,

CEO, Upland Exhibits

B.A. in Natural Sciences & Mathematical Sciences

Closing Prayer

Jaric Raylin Woodley, Class of 2026 graduate

**Recessional*

Thresher Brass Quintet

* Audience members who are able please stand.

**The Ralph P. Schrag Distinguished Teaching Award is presented to a Bethel faculty member in recognition of outstanding classroom contributions and distinguished teaching. The award was endowed by the family of Ralph P. Schrag '37.

Thanks to Hidden Stems Greenhouse for the loan of the live plants on the stage.

PETER D. GOERZEN

Peter Goerzen is assistant professor and chair of the Department of Bible and Religion at Bethel College.

Goerzen joined the department as a faculty member in 2020. He was Bethel campus pastor and an instructor of Bible and religion from 2017-20, and campus pastor and director of church relations from 2014-17.

Goerzen graduated from Bethel in 2007 with a major in computer science and a minor in mathematical sciences. He earned his Master of Divinity in pastoral ministry with emphasis in biblical studies from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., in 2015, and is ABD for a Ph.D. in biblical theology and interpretation from Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo. His dissertation topic is "Defenseless Anabaptist reception of the Divine Warrior in scripture."



Goerzen's areas of academic and professional interest are biblical hermeneutics, peace theology and ethics, homiletical and liturgical studies, faith formation, and Bowen Family Systems Theory.

After graduating from Bethel, Goerzen worked as a software developer for Excel Industries, Hesston, 2007-09, while beginning part-time studies at AMBS. In 2009, he became a pastor at Grace Hill Mennonite Church in rural Newton, where he stayed until beginning as campus pastor at Bethel in 2014. Goerzen was ordained for Christian ministry at Grace Hill in 2011, and keeps his credentials active with Western District Conference (WDC) of Mennonite Church USA.

He has been and remains involved in leadership in both WDC and the larger denomination. He currently serves on the AMBS board and is the secretary of the Governance Committee.

Goerzen received Bethel College's Ralph P. Schrag Distinguished Teaching Award in 2022 and, at AMBS, the Marlin E. Miller Award for Excellence in Theological Studies and an Award for Excellence in preaching.

He often preaches and presents locally and regionally and has led a number of seminars at biennial assemblies of MC USA. His articles on "Divine Warrior" and "Nonretaliation" are forthcoming in *The Anabaptist Dictionary of the Bible*, as is his chapter "Walking, Talking, Writing, and Holding Space: Demonstrating the Transformative Potential of Circle Process," with Sheryl Wilson and Christine Crouse-Dick, in *Walking the Talk* (at press). He is the co-author, with Katherine Goerzen, of *Upside-Down Living: Parenting* (MennoMedia, 2018).

Goerzen and his spouse, Katherine, are members of Tabor Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan., where Katherine is a pastor. They live in North Newton and have two children, Sophia and Nathan.

Program notes

When the Bethel bell, which is always rung to mark the beginning of the school year, begins to ring, you will know that the graduates are leaving the Luyken Fine Arts Center to make their way to Memorial Hall. The bell will continue to ring until all the graduates have entered Memorial Hall. As they approach the steps of Memorial Hall, the graduates are invited to touch the threshing stone to symbolize their going out into the world as Threshers.

Photographer Chase Dempsey will be taking photographs of graduates receiving diplomas, as well as other photos. Please visit bethelks.edu/graduation for instructions on how to download or print photos.

During the recessional, the Memorial Hall chimes will ring, and the graduates will recess out of Memorial Hall to meet loved ones on the Green (Schultz Student Center in case of rain).

CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES 2025-26

All degrees granted on May 10, 2026, unless listed with another date. Names of those graduating in absentia will not be read.

Junior Marshals: Mason Bolen, Tiffany Popp

Maira Abrile de Paiva, B.S.**
Campinas, Brazil
Elementary Education† (12/26)

Farah Shehab Ahmed, B.S.
Cairo, Egypt
Business Administration

Cedric E. August, B.A.
Houston, Texas
Art†

Stephanie Ayala Esparza, B.S.
Hesston, Kansas
Elementary Education† (7/26)

Carley Sue Bartell, B.S.***
Hesston, Kansas
Social Work

Jonah Bergeron, B.S.
Dorval, Canada
Business Administration

Narissa Dechone Narsesse Blackwell, B.S.
Houston, Texas
Elementary Education (12/26)

Kennedy Devine Chodak, B.S.N.
Andover, Kansas
Nursing

Nicholas A. Collins, B.A.
Boise, Idaho
Art

Maria Itzelth Cortes-Hernandez, B.S.N.**
Freeman, South Dakota
Nursing

Josué Dario Coy Dick, B.A.***
North Newton, Kansas
Bible and Religion,
Music,
Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies,
Social Work

Torrie Marquise Curry II, B.A.
Houston, Texas
Natural Sciences

Kaitlyn Grace Dawes, B.A.***
Hesston, Kansas
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology,
Psychology

Jack Henry Denton-Cardew, B.S.
Los Angeles, California
Business Administration

Albert Koniba Diarra, B.S.**
Bamako, Mali
Software Development (8/26)

Franklin Gene Driscoll, B.A.***
Peoria, Illinois
English†

Gracia Nicole Duron, B.S.**
Valley Center, Kansas
Social Work

Dulce M. Erazo-Tejada, B.S.N.
Newton, Kansas
Nursing

Jordan Xavier Flowers, B.S.
Frisco, Texas
Business Administration (8/26)

Caleb Christian Garber, B.A.***
Newton, Kansas
Biology† (12/26)

Madison Eliza Gonzales, B.S.
Irving, Texas
Health and Human Performance

Daniel De Jesus Gonzalez-Arevalo, B.A.***
Newton, Kansas
Communication Arts,
Psychology

Abigail Elise Grittman, B.S.
Shawnee, Kansas
Health and Human Performance

Jesse Scott Hancock Jr., B.S.
Wichita, Kansas
Business Administration (12/26)

Angel De Jesus Hernandez Hernandez, B.S.**
Freeman, South Dakota
Software Development (8/26)

Samuel Hernandez Medina Jr., B.S.
Liberal, Kansas
Elementary Education†

Simon Oscar Hodge, B.S.
Newton, Kansas
Social Work

Patricia Huerta, B.A.**
McPherson, Kansas
Natural Sciences

Sadie Hart Jensen, B.A.
Lake Tapps, Washington
Communication Arts

Olivia Nicole Keen, B.S.N.**
Wichita, Kansas
Nursing

Emma Brigid Killingsworth, B.S.*
Georgetown, Texas
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Petr Kollar, B.S.
Teplice, Czech Republic
Business Administration

Caleb Scott Koontz, B.S.***
Newton, Kansas
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Kazimir Jacobus Kromwijk, B.A.**
Dordrecht, Netherlands
Psychology (12/25)

Lisa Marie Legros, B.S.N.
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Nursing

Louisa Lehmann, B.A.**
Wegberg, Germany
English (12/25)

Yuretzi Soledad Licea, B.A.
Newton, Kansas
Art

Beth Lloyd, B.S.**
Manchester, England
Health and Human Performance (7/26)

Trevon Dionte Madison, B.A.
Detroit, Michigan
Communication Arts (12/25)

Adrian Jose Martinez, B.S.
Hollister, California
Health and Human Performance† (12/26)

Allyson Johanna Masem, B.S.*
Newton, Kansas
Elementary Education†

Jennifer Elisa Mayen-Aragon, B.S.N.
Wichita, Kansas
Nursing

Delaynie Adisson Mayes-Stuart, B.A.*
Hesston, Kansas
Business Administration,
Psychology (8/26)

Quincey Dell McGuffy, B.S.
Hahnville, Louisiana
Business Administration

Emily Paige Medbury, B.S.**
Bel Aire, Kansas
Social Work

Landree Vaughn Merriman, B.S.
Springtown, Texas
Health and Human Performance

Annalise Rebekah Miller, B.A.***
Goessel, Kansas
Biology

Alexia Dawn Moore, B.S.N.*
Wichita, Kansas
Nursing

Kai William Norris, B.A.
Cordova, Tennessee
Psychology

Cameron Rhea Offerle, B.S.
Offerle, Kansas
Social Work (12/26)

Heydi V. Ortez-Mezquita, B.S.N.
Dodge City, Kansas
Nursing

Daniel Luis Perilli, B.S.
San Candido, Italy
Business Administration (12/25)

Emilee Rose Ya-Li Phoon, B.A.*
Bennington, Kansas
English† (12/26)

April Amore Powls, B.A.***
Garnett, Kansas
Art†

Lilli Sophie Reisser, B.A.***
Enger, Germany
Psychology

Donovan Matthew Ringenbach, B.S.
Norfolk, Virginia
Business Administration

Gavin Carl Rogers, B.S.
Pleasant Hill, Missouri
Business Administration

Zachariah Sebastian Rowden, B.A.*
Newton, Kansas
Psychology (12/25)

Kate Elizabeth Rowland, B.S.**
Sterling, Kansas
Business Administration

Rodrigo Sanchez Hurtado, B.S.
La Paz, Bolivia
Business Administration

Janet Marie Sanner, B.S.N.
Parker, Colorado
Nursing

Brayden Michael Schilling, B.S.
Hesston, Kansas
Business Administration

Kathryn Ann-Gaeddert Schmidt, B.A.
Hesston, Kansas
Biology (8/26)

Bethany Schrag, B.S.***
Valley Center, Kansas
Elementary Education†

Timothy Daniel Schrag, B.A.***
Newton, Kansas
Bible and Religion,
Communication Arts

Aleah Danielle Shaw, B.S.N.*
Salina, Kansas
Nursing

Colin Vaughn Smith, B.S.
Pleasant Hill, Missouri
Business Administration (7/26)

Isaiah Smith, B.A.**
Great Bend, Kansas
History and Political Science,
Social Work

Celesta Teijema, B.S.***
Schagerbrug, Netherlands
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Daniela Weber-Gonzalez, B.A.

Juarez, Mexico
Psychology (8/26)

Julie Lynn Wilhite, B.S.N.

Haven, Kansas
Nursing

Daysharia Wilkes, B.S.

St. Louis, Missouri
Elementary Education† (7/26)

Jaric Raylin Woodley, B.S.

Houston, Texas
Health and Human Performance (7/26)

Charis Marie Yager, B.A.***

Derby, Kansas
Psychology

Carmelo Anthony Yakubu, B.S.

Houston, Texas
Business Administration (8/26)

Caryn Aylane Yoder, B.S.***

Hesston, Kansas
Elementary Education†

GPA honors for graduates are indicated by (an) asterisk(s) behind their degree and by the color of their cords.

*Cum Laude: 3.500-3.649 G.P.A. | Cords: Gray

**Magna Cum Laude: 3.650-3.799 G.P.A. | Cords: Maroon and Gray

***Summa Cum Laude: 3.800-4.0 G.P.A. | Cords: Maroon, Gray and White

†Teacher Education

B.A. Bachelor of Arts

B.S. Bachelor of Science

B.S.N. Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Degree honors for spring and summer graduates are listed as of program print date and may be subject to change depending on final cumulative G.P.A.

ACADEMIC REGALIA

The ceremonial gowns worn in the academic process speak by their shape and color of both the breadth and the historic dignity of intellectual pursuits. Their design derives from that of the gowns of the clerics who were the teachers and students in the first universities, founded in the Middle Ages. The gown is a symbol of the democracy of scholarship, since it covers any clothing indicating other rank or status.

The doctor's gown is ankle-length, with wide lapels of velvet and full, bell-shaped sleeves marked with three bars or chevrons of velvet. The color of the gown is usually black, but some American universities have adopted gowns of a color appropriate for each school. The master's gown is black with sleeves that are squared at the end. Individuals with bachelor's degrees wear a black gown that has long, pointed sleeves.

The gown also tells the academic history of the scholar who wears it. The lining of the hood displays the heraldic colors of the university that granted the degree, whereas the border of the hood and the chevrons on the gown announce the scholar's field of study—white, for example, stands for history, scarlet for theology, pink for music, drab for business administration, etc.

The cap has its own traditions. The first right of a freed Roman slave was the privilege of wearing a cap, so the academic cap is the sign of the freedom of scholarship. Although the flat square cap or mortarboard is most usual, the doctoral cap is an octagonal tam of velvet.

The tassel is used in commencement ceremonies both for differentiation and unifying purposes. The graduation tassel, attached to a mortarboard for a college or university, represents belonging to a particular class that has completed its goals. Tassels on the cap most often are the color or colors of the particular institution; in the case of Bethel College, the tassel is maroon. At commencement, graduates wear the tassel on the right side, moving it to the left when their degree is conferred. Faculty participating in academic ceremonies wear the tassel to the left throughout the proceedings.

Bachelor's degree candidates may have a stole provided by their major department to indicate their field of study. The following are represented in the Bethel College commencement: light blue for education; pink for music; gold for math; apricot for nursing; and citron for social work.

Nursing students inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International honor society receive purple and white honor cords.

SCAN HERE
COMMENCEMENT PHOTOS



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COLLEGE

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67117-1716
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