

March 2024



Bethlehem
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Paul Busekist
Traverse City, MI 49686
(231) 947-9880



Website: www.bethlehemtc.org
Email: bethlehem@bethlehemtc.org

Building Hours:

Monday – Thursday, 9am to 2:30pm

Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday, 9am to 2:30pm

Worship Times:

Sunday: 10 am Modern Worship including
Communion with service Livestreamed on
Facebook and YouTube

Sunday School/Adult Education: 9:15am

Third Thursday Worship: 7:00pm

Nursery open during worship service

Follow the STAR to Bethlehem!

Our Mission...

“We journey with God, to serve with love”

Our Vision...

“As a community of believers journeying with God together, we at Bethlehem are called to serve with love by growing a premier youth ministry; enlivening Christian discipleship through lifelong learning, care, and spiritual formation; fostering a vibrant and inspiring worship experience; utilizing our natural setting and location for faithful creation care and outdoor ministry; and opening our doors always to be a “campus at the crossroads” for the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.”



*"¹ O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth...
¹¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it; ¹² let the field exult, and everything
in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy ¹³ before the Lord."
– Psalm 96: 1,11-12a*



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The above bible verse from Psalm 96 might seem a peculiar one to pick for the beginning of Lent, but how often do we celebrate our identity as Christians? In Zach Zehnder's Lenten series called the Red Letter Challenge, he speaks about the inspiration for his project to study the words of Christ in a new way: focusing on the call to "be, forgive, serve, give and go" with Jesus – all the while, celebrating what Jesus calls us to embody (grace, love and joy.) This often seems a stark contrast to what many around us - rightly, at times - say they experience Christians being (sometimes judgmental, somber and stingy.) Zehnder helps us to see the life-giving nature of Christ and Christians, with engaging videos, readings and discussions.

This past week we begin our first Wednesday "hybrid Zoom" discussion of the **Red Letter Challenge, to continue each Wednesday day from 1:30-3pm** in the Youth Room and on Zoom. We have 25 participants from Bethlehem and several more from our partner Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mt. Pleasant. It's exciting, and a wonderful program. If you were unable to purchase a book at the group rate but would still like to join, by all means you are welcome. Check Amazon for book prices and church emails for Zoom login and details.

Though many of us hope to have actualized a key part of our current vision on February 25th (i.e. Creation Care), it is indeed time to begin looking toward a new visioning and mission-statement process at Bethlehem. We began doing just that in the fall of 2019 and in early 2020. Then, Covid. ☹️ But a **new Vision Team leadership has met already this January, and things are looking good.** Co-captains Jodi Kelly and Sherri Helman plan to meet again soon to discuss (1) finding a common resource/s like a book or other materials to begin "pre-reading" and (2) beginning to assemble a team. The hope is to beef up our team and vision building-strategy in the spring and summer, then engage a congregation-level visioning journey this fall. More soon...

On a summer note, we now have three youth/students and two chaperones (myself included) signed up to attend the **National Youth Gathering in New Orleans – July 16 through 20th**. There's also an outside chance we will pick up one more adult leader. We will be teaming up with another youth group and their leaders from Mamrelund Lutheran in Kent City, Michigan. This will allow us to do some unique prep work, relationship-building and collaboration – both before the Gathering and during. We are very excited about all of this!

Finally, we embody this journey together – to the cross and the "open tomb" this Easter. In peace.

–Pr. Paul

PROSE FROM THE PREZ:

I am sure it has happened before but I do not recall an extra congregational meeting at BLC in recent history. And know that it would not have been called unless the council felt it was absolutely necessary. By the time most of you read this STAR the vote will have been taken and a decision made about solar panels for the fellowship roof, and if the answer was "yes" then a decision on how they will be purchased. Wow...I sure did not see this coming when I stepped forward and accepted the position as president of church council. But, all of us must have faith and know that we are always supported by our dear Father in heaven and the other caring members of BLC. Special thanks to Pastor Paul, Norm Fred, Dale Wentzloff, Scott Farley, and Paul Wiemerslage for all of their hours of careful study on this project. Whatever the majority vote is, we need to join together and move forward as one with the decision. Remember Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Please share your kindness with someone during this Lenten season.

Cindy Monroe BLC Council President

Safety and Security Locking the Doors

BLC has started locking the front door during Worship Services for a three month trial. The Safety and Security Committee is asking for volunteers to be in the Gathering Space during services. We would like to ask 1 member of each family to volunteer. There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex. We lock the door 10 minutes after the service begins and unlock the doors as the service ends. The volunteer is there to let latecomers into the church. The volunteer will not miss the service as there is a way to listen to the service or if you have a smart phone you are able to live stream the service. Also you may leave the Gathering Space to go into the sanctuary for communion or you can choose to have communion at the end of service. (The musicians and people working the audio/visual in the choir loft receive communion right after services.) If you have any questions please talk to a Safety and Security Committee member: Gail Goldsmith, Maureen Bauer, Jana Rockne or Jan Stretlien. Thank you for assisting in keeping our members safe.

Lenten Meals: Our Lenten Services will be held on Thursday Evenings at 7:00 p.m-March 7, 14, and 21. There will be Lenten meals prior to the services, at 5:45 in the Fellowship Hall. The Fellowship Committee is planning on having soup suppers. We are asking for volunteers to make soup. We would like 2 pots of soup each week. So if you would like to make soup there are sign up sheets in the Narthex. The Fellowship Committee will be providing bread, crackers, peanut butter and jelly, desserts and beverages. We are also asking for volunteers to help each week with set up and clean up. So please sign up in the Narthex. We can enjoy food and fellowship before our Lenten Services.

Lenten/Holy Week Service Schedule:

March 7 – Taize 1
March 14 – Behold Our Light
March 21 – Holden Evening Prayer, Live Streamed

Holy Week services – all are Live Streamed

March 24 – Palm Sunday service
March 28 – Maundy Thursday service
March 29 – Good Friday
March 30 –Easter Vigil service
March 31 – Easter Sunday 8:00am and 10:00am

Easter Brunch

Sunday, March 31, 2024, 9:00am

The Fellowship Committee will supply beverages.
Please consider donating food to be shared at the meal.

Suggested items: Breakfast casseroles, hardboiled eggs, deviled eggs, quiche, pastries, rolls, bread, muffins, bagels, fruit, yogurt.

A sign-up sheet will be located in the Narthex
All food must pre-cooked.
Ovens will available to keep food warm as needed.

We hope to see you there!



A big thank you to all who have turned in Olesons' slips. On January 14, we received a check from them for \$255.85. Olesons' slips never expire. Please continue to turn in your receipts to Bethlehem. Thanks so much!!!

Contra Dancing by Bayside Travellers Contra dancing is similar to square dancing, and each of their dances feature live music by local folk bands. They will be back with us for dancing on **March 9th**. All are welcome to attend, no partner or experience is necessary! The dances are by donation. For more information or further dates, please reach out to Alanna at alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org

Food Pantry: We will NOT be closing our outdoor pantry for winter this year. We have a new member who ran an outdoor pantry downstate and she has given us lots of ideas of foods that can be stored there during the cold months including: hamburger helper, stuffing mix, dry milk, instant potatoes, cookies, and rice. Also, there is always room for dry goods such as toilet paper, paper towels etc. Please start looking for some of these items when they are on sale and bring your extras to the coat room. Your generosity is so appreciated.

Wednesday Bible Studies:

Adult Bible Study: meets in the Youth Room from 9:30-11:30am, with the Acts of the Apostles..

The Zoom Book and Bible Study: meets on Wednesdays from 1:30-3:00pm but will take a break from the Book of Mark until after Easter while they participate in the Red Letter Challenge.

Adult Education in the Youth Room plus Sunday School - every Sunday at 9:15am

The next Third Thursday service will be a Holden Evening Prayer service on March 21st at 7:00pm. The service will be livestreamed. The BLC Fellowship Committee will be providing a meal at 5:45 p.m. Please come early and share in fellowship and stay for the service.

March's XYZ Potluck & Presentation will be on Friday, March 8th at 12pm noon. While primarily geared toward seniors, the group is open to any adult who would like to attend! XYZ meets monthly September through May for a potluck lunch, followed by a program or presentation. March's presenter is Bethlehem's own Paul Wiemerslage of the Au Sable Institute.

FOR BOOK CLUB MEMBERS AND ANY WHO LOVE TO READ:

The book club will discuss *Mad Honey* by Jodi Piccolt during a pizza dinner meeting at 5:30 on Tues Mar 26. We have not read a novel by this author for some time. There will be copies of the book in the plastic bin outside the front door. Just sign your name on the sheet by the corresponding number of your book. Please contact Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net if you want to participate and cannot come to church in order to give plenty of advance notice so that ZOOM can be set up.

New member acceptance: Peggy Burns and Janet Landis were accepted as members of BLC on Sunday Feb 25. Please be certain to greet them when you see them.

DIRECTORY UPDATE: Yep...we are all still waiting....Unfortunately, the first draft of the directory sent to our fearless team did not measure up to their expectations. Our team spent hours making certain that every member's email and cell phone was correct, and that is NOT what they received in the sample copy. So, there is no tentative date at this time.

Notes from Alanna...

Happy Spring!

March is a busy month! There are so many things happening as we go through Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. We hope you can join us for many of these wonderful meals and services!

XYZ Potlucks continue this month on March 8th with a potluck lunch at 12pm, and a presentation from our very own Paul Wiemerslage about his work at Au Sable Institute! It should be a wonderful afternoon, and adults of all ages are invited to join us for lunch and an amazing presentation.



Movie Night in April...

We have another movie night coming up next month, Saturday April 20th! Movie TBD - let us know your suggestions! Hope to see you there!

-Alanna Steffunick, Ministry Coordinator

"...with that hymn he softly sang, of God's good grace."

The Soldier and the Oak, Elliot Park

Christian Education News March 2024

Easter Sunday 3/31/2024

Worship service 8am

Breakfast 9am: food, fellowship, & fun – for all ages!

Worship service 10am



LENT

Join us for Lent Nights 2/22, 2/29, 3/07, 3/14, & 3/21!

WHEN: Thursday evenings during February & March

WHAT: dinner, worship, special lessons, & crafts

Happy Easter!

"He is not here.
He is risen."



Luke 24:6

-Christian Education Committee

UPCOMING EVENTS

Movie nights, and VBS, and intergenerational events...

OH MY!

So many things in 2024 – join us so you don't miss out!



FINANCIAL NEWS

January income was \$29,711, compared to projected income of \$32,416. We received \$2,704 less than projected. Expenses were \$35,712, compared to a budget of \$36,466. This resulted in spending \$753 less than budgeted. For the month, the church brought in \$6,001 less than we spent.

Year-to-figures are the same as the January figures.

Coffee and Cookies on Sunday: Remember that treats and a hot drink on Sunday are appreciated by all. Please take a moment to sign up to bring cookies or some other tasty treat on the Sunday that works best for you. Or sign up to prepare the coffee. As requested by some of our new members there is a plan in the works to usually have the final Sunday of the month be a time when we join in the Fellowship Hall. We can sit at a table and chat with someone new while we munch on a treat. Already we have some exceptions...this did not occur in February due to the congregational meeting and also will not in March due to the celebration of Easter. So be ready to enjoy that new experience in April!!

Spotlight on Zeke: So many of us enjoy Zeke's talents with religious music, but did you know that he plays other kinds of music at various locations in the Traverse City area? Here is a list of his engagements in the next month that are close to TC:

All Wednesdays in March—Park Place, Minerva's Happy Hour, 4:00pm

Fri, 03/15—Middle Coast 6:00pm

Sat 03/23—Hotel Indigo 6:00pm

Our Care Giving Committee has put up a "Communitas" Board on the wall of our Coat Room! This "BOARD" is needed and helpful for ALL of us! Following is a suggestion of some things YOU and our YOUTH can do to "interact" with the board and other members of our congregation. The purpose of our "Auxilium Communitas" BOARD (Latin for "Community/Congregation Assistance") is to SHARE our gifts, talents, or skills to others that might be in NEED of something like: Gardening, Organizing, Painting, Raking leaves, Shoveling, Household tasks, Carpentry, Manicures, Pedicures, Companionship, Care giving, etc. - This list is Endless! You never know when YOU will be in need of some extra help personally, in your home or yard – let's make this "reciprocal" - All ages are Welcome to Help Service our Congregation!

Are you grieving something from a death or something else? It could be any kind of loss, and it hurts. We have a place for you here at Bethlehem on the 3rd Monday of the month from 6:00 to 7:00 in the library. If you have any questions please contact Peggy Burns at 231 392-6913.

Bethlehem volunteers prepared and served over 300 meals to individuals experiencing homelessness at Safe Harbor shelter in Traverse City on January 27, 28, and 30. We also provided an evening snack, guest interaction, a musical interlude on Tuesday night (Thank you Zeke), and assisted with check-in, medications, and more. Approx. 60 Bethlehem members participated in the meals, snacks, and other interactions. Kitchen leaders were vital and special thanks go to Cindy Monroe, Tina Dohm, and B.J. Christensen. Financial support came from the Bethlehem Mission Endowment Fund, Thrivent Financial and the congregation. We had many first time participants and as the shelter looks to expand its annual calendar, we hope to be ready to extend continued service- always remembering Christ's words "Feed My Sheep"... Please see the photos and thank you messages in the Gathering Space.

Global Links - Lutheran Church - Malaysia - Orang Asli People -2024

Carolyn Mann explains. She visited there in 1998



The ELCA works in partnership with the Lutheran Church in Malaysia (LCM) to support the Orang Asli people. The Rev. Daniel Mualip is head pastor for the Orang Asli congregations of LCM. These are the indigenous people of West Malaysia. Many have been relocated by the government in settlements, which has separated them from the land they once inhabited and their traditional way of life.

They live in a region of jungles and mountains which often keep them from resources they need to build strong livelihoods. Pastor Mualip is excited to use ELCA gifts to find new ways to develop leadership within the community. The gifts will grow their capacity for ministry and reach more people with the gospel.

MARCH BIBLE STUDY: "Rivers: Springs of life and hope" Fresh water. Most of life on our planet depends on it and the story of God's saving work flows alongside it - through stories of biblical rivers that offer a vision of flourishing creation. Together we'll journey from the rivers in Eden to the prophetic springs in the desert and from Jesus' baptism at the river Jordan to the crystalline river of life in Revelation. We'll discover how rivers are sites of healing, restoration, identity and imagination. Contact Nancy Ammann 946-8433 if interested in joining us.

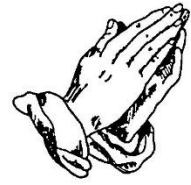
SPRING GATHERING IN APRIL: We will be having a synod-wide gathering here at Bethlehem in April! We are excited to be able to host this event. Watch for further information so you can attend and find out HOW you can help. This is open to ALL women. Come and join us!

You were in His prayers: *"Then Jesus went about a stone's throw away from them. He knelt down and prayed. (Luke 22:41) The final prayer of Jesus was about you. His final pain was for you. His final passion was for you. When He spoke to His Father, you were in His prayers. On the eve of the cross, Jesus made His decision. He would rather go to hell for you than go to heaven without you.*

(written by Max Lucado "And the Angels Were Silent")

EASTER BLESSINGS TO YOU ALL

Health Concerns*



The Power of Prayer

*Richard Fernholz, Nancy Smith, Tom & Lee Miller,
Margie Whitney, Judy Fenton, Julie Lapeer, Milt & Carol Bowes,
Lynn Hoyt, Tom Woodworth, Ron Hellenga,
John Stretlien, Harper Wiemerslage,
Russ Luttinen, Sherry, Leroy Schlagel,
Roy & Marilyn Dumond, Sean Rivard,
Brenda Denoyer and the Denoyer Family,
Patti McCracken, Sharon Vanmeter, Dale Thiel,
Margaret Hutchison, Carol Collins, Julie,
Patience Lambert, Dale Leider, David Suby,
Jennifer Mowers, Debbie Knopf, Ron Hellenga,
Gail Goldsmith, Jim Rumbach, Kathi Ivany,
John Block, Dan Deutsch, Joann Stepka,
Earl Manuel, Jack McCracken*

French Manor South: Brenda Denoyer **Orchard Creek:** Margie Whitney

Evergreen Cottage: Milt & Carol Bowes

Boardman Lake Glens: Inge Thomas

Hospital Visits: Please let the church office know if you are going into the hospital for a scheduled procedure or an emergency so Pastor Paul can visit you.

Prayer Requests:

- Prayer Chain:** Please contact Jan Stretlien at jstretlien@gmail.com or 231-947-3265
 - Prayers read from the altar:** Please call the Administrative Assistant in the church office 231-947-9880
-

Are you checking for the latest BLC updates at: www.bethlehemtc.org?

You saw Norm and others take the photos...be sure you see them at www.bethlehemtc.org!

Good News...and great news...at www.bethlehemtc.org...

Looking for a link to last month's full Council minutes?
Type this address/url into your web browser to get the latest approved minutes from Council (or call the office for a copy:

bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes

BLC Contacts

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Pastor Paul Busekist	paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org

If you have an interest in serving on any of the above Committees,
Please contact the Committee Chairperson(s).

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27	28	29	1	2
9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service(S) 11:15am - Worship and Music 12:30pm - Confirmation Class at	1pm - Finance Cmte.	Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 10:45am - Staff Meeting 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Red Letter Bible	5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten service	12pm - XYZ	9am - Council 7pm - Contra Dance - Bayside
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Traditional Worship	1pm - Finance Cmte.	Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 12:30pm - WELCA Board (Library) 1pm - Friendship Bible Study 6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed Meeting 6:30pm - Executive Comite.(CR) 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Red Letter Bible	9am - Baby Pantry Setup 10am - Baby Pantry-FH 1pm - Rebecca Anna Circle - 2pm - TADL Book Mobile 5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten Service	STAR articles due today 10am - Sew Pieceful 1pm - Lehto SG - Library	9am - Council 7pm - Contra Dance - Bayside
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Traditional Worship	1pm - Finance Cmte.	Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 12:30pm - WELCA Board (Library) 1pm - Friendship Bible Study 6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed Meeting 6:30pm - Executive Comite.(CR) 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Red Letter Bible	9am - Baby Pantry Setup 10am - Baby Pantry-FH 1pm - Rebecca Anna Circle - 2pm - TADL Book Mobile 5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten Service	STAR articles due today 10am - Sew Pieceful 1pm - Lehto SG - Library	9am - Council 7pm - Contra Dance - Bayside
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service(S) 12:30pm - Confirmation Class	6pm - Grief Group (Library)	Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 12pm - Sarah Circle - Library 6:30pm - Council Meeting - 7pm - Lautner SG @ at the home	9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Red Letter Bible	5:30pm - ACA 6pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten service	5:30pm - ACA 6pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten service	9am - Council 7pm - Contra Dance - Bayside
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
PALM SUNDAY 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service(S)	6pm - Grief Group (Library)	Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 5:30pm - Book/Supper Club 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Re-sked to Thurs - 1pm - Johnson SG (Offsite) 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study	5:30pm - ACA 6pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten service	GOOD FRIDAY 7pm - Good Friday service	7pm - Easter Vigil
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
EASTER SUNDAY 8am - Traditional Easter Service 9am - Easter Breakfast 10am - Traditional Easter Service	6pm - Grief Group (Library)	Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 5:30pm - Book/Supper Club 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Re-sked to Thurs - 1pm - Johnson SG (Offsite) 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study	5:30pm - ACA 6pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten service	GOOD FRIDAY 7pm - Good Friday service	7pm - Easter Vigil



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please contact the office. 231-947-9880 or admin@bethlehemtc.org



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