

# July 2025



**Bethlehem**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



Website: [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)  
Email: [bethlehem@bethlehemtc.org](mailto: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/Third

Thursday: will return in September  
Nursery open during worship service

## Follow the STAR to Bethlehem!

**Our Mission:**

We worship, work and welcome... Sharing God's love and grace with all.

**Our Vision:**

Together, we embody our mission by BOLDLY following Jesus, serving the needs of the world and one another, and caring for all of God's Creation. ALL ARE WELCOME.



Friends in Christ at Bethlehem, this July marks the SECOND year anniversary of the "midpoint" of my 2023 Sabbatical. It was a time for me to put all of the usual work aside, to rest and be refreshed. That was a big deal for me; it changed my life. I am used to words, and filling up empty spaces (as you are, too, I imagine!)...The proverbial (empty) "white space on the page" was foreign to me. Today, this month, same as last July, I encourage you to bask in the empty space on YOUR page...and let it BE. Like this absence of a regular "STARticle," may you find a place for sabbath and a free space for the Holy Spirit to plant a new creation within you (2nd Cor. 5:17), remembering also the psalmist...Even as we lift up our eyes to the "hills" of admiration or joy, or the "valleys" of life's challenges, remember that our help ultimately comes from the Lord – who created us all (Ps. 121), and the very cosmos itself. (Ps. 8)

Shalom. – Pr. Paul

### **A Word From the President:**

I am excited to be elected as president of the church council again. I was president 3 years ago for 1 year. This is my 6th year on the council and I have been in positions of secretary and Fellowship Committee Chairperson in the past. I enjoy being an active member of our church and am so pleased with everything our congregation has accomplished.

I pray to continue to keep moving forward especially with our new vision.

I am grateful for everyone involved in all of the church activities, staff, council members and volunteers.

You are all blessings!

Gail Goldsmith

## **MAY 2025 FINANCIAL NEWS**

May income was \$23,967 compared to budgeted income of \$29,793. We received \$5,826 less than budgeted. Expenses were \$29,694 compared to a budget of \$32,780. We spent \$3,086 less than budgeted. From a cash flow perspective we spent \$5,727 more than we took in. Lower donations was the primary driver of this shortfall in May. Basement Project income and expense is being tracked separately and not included in monthly or YTD totals.

Year to date income was \$156,024 compared to budgeted income of \$152,241. We have received \$3,783 more than budgeted. Expenses were \$182,321 compared to a budget of \$168,042. We spent \$15,279 more than budgeted. For the year, the church has spent \$11,496 more than we have brought in.

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**What IS GRIEVING?** Could it be the loss of a marriage, your home, or community, good health, a dream or something else? The list can go on and on. No matter the loss you have a family here at Bethlehem that loves you, wants to support you, and be here for you! **We meet here on the first Monday of the month from 3:30-4:30 and on the third Monday from 5:30-6:30.** If you have any questions, please contact Peggy B. 231-392-6913.

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**Chair Yoga:** Special Note: the class is taking a few weeks off while Janet, the leader, will be out of the country. Class will return on July 7th. Bethlehem has added another Chair Yoga class per week. You now have two opportunities to attend: Monday and Wednesday at 3:00pm. The cost is \$5 and Janet Weaver will be the instructor. People can attend one or both classes per week. Gail Goldsmith will continue to be the church representative for the Monday class and Cindy Monroe will be the church representative for the Wednesday class. It is a great opportunity to stretch and work on balance issues.

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**Bethlehem's Summer Support at Safe Harbor is in Full Swing!** Thank you to Patty Leibenguth, Kristen Rivard, Kristen's friend Cindy Gokey, Tom & B.J. Christensen, Tina Dohm, Jim Hutchison, Kathie and Mark Bair, Doug and Diane Cunningham, Makena Dohm, Tim and Peggy Goebel, Lincoln Dohm, Sherri Helman, Claire Hutchison and for taking one or more shifts assisting Safe Harbor Guests. The Bethlehem Lutheran "Hot Dog Picnic" at Safe Harbor was a huge success! Our volunteers brought salads, baked beans, and vegetable trays and grilled, served and cleaned up. Great Lakes Potato Chip Company and Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling provided chips and beverages. It was a "first" for Safe Harbor... Harbor...courtesy of Bethlehem! More opportunities the third Tuesday in July, August, and September! Maybe another picnic in September! Tom Rockne Bethlehem Safe Harbor Coordinator, M.231-631-0040 or at tomrockne@gmail.com.

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**PROTECT OUR CARPET:** spills always happen, but we now have **TWO** consistent ways to deal with them. Thanks to an anonymous donor we now have an actual carpet cleaning machine stored in the maintenance closet. If you cause one or see a spot, please grab the spot cleaner in the squirt container below the sink in the fellowship hall. Just follow the directions on the bottle and we should be able to keep our carpet in good condition. But, if the stain is too big or too resistant, please use the carpet cleaning machine. Thank you!!

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**HOW DO WE CARE AND SERVE?** John 12:26 "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant will also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me".  
**YOU ARE LOVED BY YOUR CHURCH FAMILY.** If you would like to have a visit and you would like to receive Communion, Christian Care Giving is here for you! Please let Peggy Burns at 231-392-6914 know and we will have one of our Care Givers come and see you.

**Baby Pantry Appreciation:** We recently received an email from Sally Hanley, the director of the Baby Pantry that meets in our Fellowship Hall on the second Thursday of each month. Sally thanked those who volunteered and provided various food items. She also mentioned surveys that were given out. Quote from Sally: "In reviewing the results, I noticed that for the first time in a long time, Food was the major family issue, closely followed by Stress, which is usually the top issue. Having our food pantry in place helps us address this emerging need. Fresh produce and protein were also noted as the 2 most appreciated categories of our food pantry section as well. I liked the idea of emphasizing that children are welcome to come to the pantry with you." Thank you all for your donations to the BLC Food Pantry as some of the items are put on a cart where the Baby Pantry families can pick from. Remember diapers, clothing, paper products and cleaning products among the most appreciated items.

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**FOOD PANTRY NEWS** Finally we are seeing glimpses of Summer. Hopefully it will stick around. The food pantry supplies are running low and could certainly use some donations. When shopping for donations, please consider items with protein like peanut butter, canned ravioli or spaghetti, tuna, and chicken. It would help if you can find cans with the pull-tab opening. The items that we do not need any more of are dried beans, peas, and lentils. Right now we have plenty of soaps but can always use feminine care products. We don't have to worry about items in the pantry freezing any more so anything you donate can be used immediately. Thank you all for your continuing generosity and willingness to serve our community. Suzanne and Kathie  
**REMEMBER, YOU CAN GET A THRIVENT GRANT FOR UP TO \$250 FOR FOOD PANTRY ITEMS.**

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**A big thank you to all who have turned in Olesons' slips.** On March 31st, we received a check from Olesons for \$275.60 from receipts turned in. This makes a grand total of \$592.66 for the year 2025. **Olesons' slips never expire.** Please continue to turn in your Olesons receipts to Bethlehem. Thanks so much!!! Also, the area for the Oleson receipts is in the lower cabinets below the mailboxes (under the A-B-Cs...). The cabinet door is marked with the receptacle inside. Unfortunately, we are no longer collecting the receipts from Family Fair.

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**FREE ENTERTAINMENT:** When you just want to do something or take your out-of-town visitors somewhere...

- **Every Wed at 5:30 until the end of July** enjoy classical music from IPR at Little Fleet at the corner of Front and Wellington. You can buy food and drink but you don't have to.
- Hear the NMC Concert Band **Thurs July 3 7:30 pm** at Glen Arbor Township Park on M22 or **Fri July 18 7:30 pm** at Milliken Auditorium
- Encore Winds on **July 4 at noon** at the Traverse City Civic Center
- **"Saturdays in the Park": 7-9** in the Civic Center all summer ( donation bucket available but optional)



**BLC partners with Old Town Playhouse for the musical telling the story of Moses in THE PRINCE OF EGYPT:** Still looking for some volunteers to run concessions at Milliken Auditorium on Aug 22 for the 7:00 show and Aug 23 for the 2:00 show. (The youth will be running the concessions on Thursday, Aug 21 and their youth fund will receive the benefits.) For the other days funds earned can be designated to the charity or cause recommended by the volunteers. Bethlehem's Good Samaritan Fund? Project Feed the Kids? Safe Harbor? Grand Traverse Baby Pantry? Another idea? It's easy to sell items before the show and during intermission. Sign up in the gathering space or contact Cindy Monroe at [cmonroe@chartermi.net](mailto:cmonroe@chartermi.net) or 231 631 0887 if you can help one of those days. You can also sign-up to reserve tickets to see the show. If tickets are purchased in groups of 6 each will cost \$42 for an adult and \$18 for youth under the age of 18.

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**SAVE YOUR PAPER SACKS:** Please check the nooks and crannies of your home for paper sacks. The Baby Pantry fills requests from preschool teachers for their students whose parents cannot make it to the pantry. Paper sacks are the perfect size to place the needed items for each child. Just place your bags on the Care table in the coat room. Thank you!!

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**BOOK CLUB NEWS:** We are hoping to go to the home of Barb Beyer and our date this month is the final Wednesday, July 30 at 5:30. We will be reading "*Caste, The Origins of Our Discontent*" by Isabel Wilkerson. Our back-up location will be BLC fellowship hall. Please contact Cindy Monroe at [cmonroe@chartermi.net](mailto:cmonroe@chartermi.net) if there are any questions. A list to sign up for items for the potluck will be sent to all those who are interested.

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**We are wanting to update the list of people we pray for. If everyone could let us know of any changes, whether it is people who can be taken off, or should be added, we would appreciate it. Please respond by email to [admin@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org).**

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**SUMMER BREAK:** Please note that Sunday School, Sunday's Adult Education along with the two Wednesday Bible Studies will not meet during the summer months. Look for the September start dates in the weekly email, bulletins and the STAR at the end of summer.

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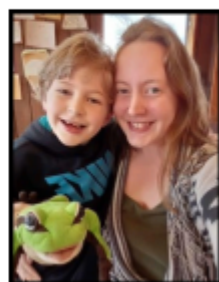
**Norm Fred has helped a previously homeless couple for a few years.** They are proud people and do not like to be given charity but they will accept help in the form of donated cans that they can recycle for money. Please bring in your recyclables in for them. **Leave them in plastic bags by the garage.** These are nice people. There, but for the Grace of our God, go we.



## Notes From Alanna

### It's VBS Month!

Happy Campers VBS, a partnership between BLC and Christ Church, is here at BLC on July 28-30th! We are able to accept up to 32 kids this year and registration is already almost full - only a few spots left!



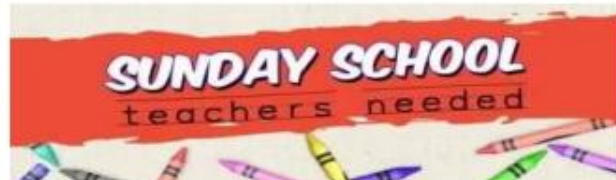
Keep an eye out for sign-up sheets to donate snacks, supplies, and donations for the event. Donating is a great way to be involved, if volunteering isn't something that you're able to do! Donations help pull it all together and make everything possible!

I still have room for volunteers if you are interested! Please reach out and let me know! VBS 2025 is going to be absolutely amazing, and I am so excited for it!

*-Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator*

## Christian Education News July 2025

Camp out with us at VBS this summer!  
July 28-30



Do you hear the voice of Jesus calling you to serve?  
Lessons are easy with very simple scripts –  
Please prayerfully consider this opportunity!!!



Rally Day is Sunday 9/07/2025 – watch for details!!!

### Happy Fourth of July!



-Christian Education Committee



The ELCA **Young Adults in Global Mission** program (YAGM) invites ELCA young adults ages 21-35 into a transformative, year-long journey in international service. As they offer themselves in service, ELCA young adults are shaped by the witness of our global neighbors. They share in the journeys of companion churches and organizations in one of our many country programs. Current YAGM programs include: Argentina/Uruguay, Cambodia, Central Europe, Mexico, Senegal and United Kingdom.

The **International Leaders Program** accompanies the ELCA's global companion churches and institutions to equip leaders for mission and ministry in a global context. For 35 years the program has provided transformative leadership development experiences to current and future leaders of the Lutheran communion worldwide.



### **WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM - JULY 2025**

**"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. It will  
continue to enjoy prosperity, peace and freedom.  
Have a blessed July 4th!"**



**SUMMER BIBLE STUDY:** We will have our summer Bible Study at the home of Carl and Suzanne Lehto on Thursday, August 7th at NOON. (If there are any changes in location, watch the bulletin for further information.) Please bring a dish to pass. Meat and beverages will be provided. Also bring a chair and your Bible. Our study will be taken from the Gather magazine for the months of July and August. You can go to Gather Magazine Bible Studies 2025 on your computer to copy both lessons. The study was written by Rev. Dr. Brooke Peterson.\*The lessons focus on relationships. We will be studying the story of Naomi and Ruth to see what helps us stay in relationships with others when we face seasons of grief; and the story of Queen Esther and her uncle Mordecai to help us find out how vulnerability, trust and power of faithful friendships help us grow. It's always a great time of fun, fellowship and good food. We hope to see you there.

\*Our very own!

## Health Concerns\*



# The Power of Prayer

*Mary Woodring, Jerry Hill,  
Richard Fernholz, Tom & Lee,  
Judy Fenton, Julie Lapeer, Milt & Carol Bowes,  
Lynn, Ron Hellenga, Cindy Hitesman,  
John Stretlien, Harper Wiemerslage,  
Leroy, Roy Dumond, Dale & Cheryl,  
Patti, Sharon, Julie, Steve, Christine, Sherry,  
Debbie Knopf, Suzanne Lehto,  
Jim Rumbach, John Block,  
Marianne, Norm Fred,  
Kyle, Cameron, Ben*

**Meadow Valley:** Milt & Carol Bowes

**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.

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### Prayer Requests:

- Prayer Chain:** Please contact Jan Stretlien at [jstretlien@gmail.com](mailto:jstretlien@gmail.com) or 231-947-3265
- Prayers read from the altar:** Please call the Administrative Assistant in the church office 231-947-9880 or email [admin@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org)

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Are you checking for the latest BLC updates at: [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)?

You saw Norm and others take the photos...be sure you see them at [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)!

Good News...and great news...at [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://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](http://bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes)**



# BLC Contacts

## **Church Office**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Pastor Paul Busekist                           | <a href="mailto:paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org">paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org</a>         |
| Admin. Asst., Barbara Oster                    | <a href="mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org">admin@bethlehemtc.org</a>                         |
| Bookkeeper, Phil Anderson                      | <a href="mailto:bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org">bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org</a>               |
| Anthony Bero, Music Director                   | <a href="mailto:bero.tony@gmail.com">bero.tony@gmail.com</a>                             |
| Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator | <a href="mailto:Alanna.Steffunick@bethlehemtc.org">Alanna.Steffunick@bethlehemtc.org</a> |
| Website  | <a href="http://www.bethlehemtc.org">www.bethlehemtc.org</a>                             |

## **Church Council**

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Gail Goldsmith, President           | <a href="mailto:president.council@bethlehemtc.org">president.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>                           |
| Maureen Bauer, Vice President       | <a href="mailto:vicepresident.council@bethlehemtc.org">vicepresident.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>                   |
| Nancy Pflasterer, Secretary         | <a href="mailto:secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org">secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>                           |
| Dave Peppler, Treasurer             | <a href="mailto:treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org">treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>                           |
| Jim Monroe, Financial Sec.          | <a href="mailto:financialsecretary.council@bethlehemtc.org">financialsecretary.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>         |
| Peggy Burns, Christian Care Giving  | <a href="mailto:christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org">christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>   |
| Tina Dohm, Christian Ed.            | <a href="mailto:christianeducation.committee@bethlehemtc.org">christianeducation.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>     |
| , Fellowship                        | <a href="mailto:fellowship.committee@bethlehemtc.org">fellowship.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                     |
| , Membership/Evangelism             | <a href="mailto:membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org">membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a> |
| Doug Cunningham, Property           | <a href="mailto:property.committee@bethlehemtc.org">property.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                         |
| Maureen Bauer, Personnel            | <a href="mailto:personnel.committee@bethlehemtc.org">personnel.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                       |
| Jana Rockne, Safety & Security      |  |
| Bethany Uhl, Stewardship            | <a href="mailto:stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org">stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                   |
| Denice Bossardet, Worship and Music | <a href="mailto:worshipmusic.committee@bethlehemtc.org">worshipmusic.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                 |
| Tina Dohm, Youth/Y2A                | <a href="mailto:youth.committee@bethlehemtc.org">youth.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                               |
| Pastor Paul Busekist                | <a href="mailto:paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org">paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org</a>                                   |

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                                       |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| 29                        | 30                                       | 1   | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5   |
|                           |  | Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work Group<br>11:45am - Staff Meeting<br>7:15pm - OTP Choir Rehearsal   | 11:30am - Music Rehearsal  | CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED<br>5:30pm - ACA                             | HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY<br>6pm - Parking Lot Fundraiser                         | 6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group<br>8pm - AA |
| 6                         | 7  | Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work Group<br>1pm - Friendship Bible Study<br>6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed Meeting<br>6:30pm - Executive Comm. (Zoom)<br>7:15pm - OTP Choir Rehearsal | 11:30am - Music Rehearsal<br>3pm - Chair Yoga                              | 9am - Baby Pantry Setup<br>10am - Baby Pantry-FH<br>5:30pm - ACA | 11   | 12  |
| 10am - Worship Service(S) | 3pm - Chair Yoga<br>3:30pm - Grief Group |   |  |  |  | 6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group<br>8pm - AA |
| 13                        | 14                                       | Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work Group<br>6:30pm - Council Meeting - Library<br>7:15pm - OTP Choir Rehearsal  | 11:30am - Music Rehearsal<br>3pm - Chair Yoga                              | 5:30pm - ACA   | STAR articles due today<br>10am - Sew Peaceful<br>1pm - Lent to SG - Library | 19  |
| 10am - Worship Service(S) | 1pm - Finance Cmte.<br>3pm - Chair Yoga  |   |  |  |  | 6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group<br>8pm - AA |
| 20                        | 21                                       | Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work Group<br>7:15pm - OTP Choir Rehearsal  | 11:30am - Music Rehearsal<br>3pm - Chair Yoga                              | 5:30pm - ACA   | 25   | 26  |
| 10am - Worship Service(S) | 3pm - Chair Yoga<br>5:30pm - Grief Group |   |  |  |  | 6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group<br>8pm - AA |
| 27                        | 28                                       | Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work Group<br>7:15pm - OTP Choir Rehearsal  | 11:30am - Music Rehearsal<br>3pm - Chair Yoga<br>5:30pm - Book/Supper Club | 10am - EPS Maintenance<br>5:30pm - ACA                           | 1  | 2   |
| 10am - Worship Service(S) | VBS 9:00am-1:00pm<br>3pm - Chair Yoga    |   |  |  |  |   |



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Questions??? Please contact Alanna Steffunick-Boomer at 231-947-9880 or  
[alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org) Make checks payable to BLC...put "Star Ad" on envelope.

Lots of cool information inside  
Pr Paul's Page  
Council President's notes  
Council officers and committee liaisons  
Grief Group  
Book Club News  
Prince of Egypt at OTP  
Chair Yoga  
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ELCA Global Links  
Women of Bethlehem 2025  
The Power of Prayer



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