September 2025



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:

<u>Sunday:</u> 10 am Modern Worship including Communion with service Livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube <u>Sunday School/Adult Education:</u> 9:15am

<u>Third Thursday Worship:</u> 7:00pm 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 <u>following</u>
Jesus, <u>serving</u> the needs of the world and one another, and <u>caring</u> for all of God's Creation. All ARE Welcome.



²⁵When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, 'Then who can be saved?' ²⁶But Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.' – Matthew 19:25-26



Dear friends in Christ,

Here we are in September, which in many ways might be considered the beginning of a new year: the school year and the part of the church calendar when folks return from summer adventures and settle in for the regular rhythms of work, volunteering and everything in between. It can be stressful, to say the least. When I feel the boundaries of obligation and responsibilities feel like they're closing in, I will

Sometimes repeat the words of Christ in Matthew: "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible." Those words were said in response to his disciples, who heard Jesus' words about rich people getting into heaven as being very difficult

because of where we are all called to put our ultimate trust... in God, not possessions.

This fall, we begin with a flurry of activity once more: our God's Work, Our Hands (GWOH) Sunday after worship on September 7th, followed by the installation of our synod's new bishop on the 13th (please rsvp asap), then working our "station" at the Ragnar TC-to-Muskegon Race in Honor, MI from 8am to 4:15pm on the 19th, then partnering with our Northport friends for the **CROP Walk at 1pm** on Sunday, October 5th! All are welcome for these and many other opportunities to gather and serve!

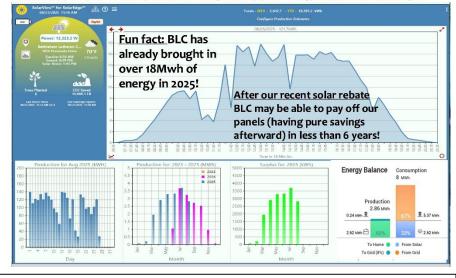
Meanwhile, I encourage us all to breathe deeply, embrace the autumn breeze... and maybe check out these new solar stats to the right!

Shalom & many blessings! - Pr. Paul





Month of August (up til 8/27) - Solar Snapshot: Solar energy for a given day (in this case, 8/26) in kilowatt hours (Kwh). Some perspective: the avg. household uses just under 30Kwh/day and about 11 Megawatt (Mwh) hours/year. BLC uses 7 or 8 times that much and is generating close to 30% of that energy per year with our panels. See also the smaller boxes of (a) daily data, (b) monthly comparisons with 2024, (c) "surplus" electricity sold back to the grid, and (d) our "Energy Balance" thus far in August.



A Word From the President:

September is here, cooler weather is coming.

I love autumn with the changing colors, crisp air and pumpkins and apples galore.

The gardens that were planted in the spring are being harvested. So many delicious home grown items. I am so pleased that our church has been involved with the Faith Reform Church gardens and the harvest is going to Food Rescue. What a wonderful ministry.

Have a wonderful month and enjoy this great time of the year.

Gail

2025 FINANCIAL NEWS

After removing basement project income and expense as well as the solar panel one-time tax rebate, we had the following January – July (YTD) results:

Actual income of \$235,053 exceeded budgeted income of \$211,828 by \$23,225.

Actual expense of \$253,090 exceeded budgeted expense of \$239,773 by \$13,317.

Actual expense of \$253,090 exceeded income of \$235,053 leaving us with a YTD deficit of \$18,037.

BLC partnered with Old Town Playhouse for the musical telling the story of Moses in THE PRINCE OF EGYPT: Thanks to all of those who were involved in our community partnership in any way. There were 4 singers and many volunteers to run concessions. It was so wonderful to see a biblical story come to life with wonderful music and talent on the Milliken stage. Money earned from concessions has been donated to the Youth fund and the Bethlehem food pantry, which has barely been able to keep up with the constant need in our community.

NEW INSERT COMING FOR YOUR DIRECTORY: Be watching your church mailbox. There will soon be an insert of the new members who officially joined in the spring. Please tuck it in the back cover of your directory in case you want/need to contact any of these people.

<u>Pr. Ruth</u>: Our beloved friend in Christ, Pr Ruth Overdier, has some devotions in the September portion of Christ in Our Home. You can read her selections from September 16 – 30.

<u>What IS GRIEVING?</u> 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! <u>We meet here on the first and third Mondays of the month from 3:30-4:30. The group will not meet on Labor Day</u>. If you have any questions, please contact Peggy Burns 231-392-6913.

<u>Chair Yoga</u>: Chair yoga is back at 3:00 on Mondays and Wednesdays to Bethlehem. Cost is still \$5. Invite your friends. It is a great stretching exercise and we work on balance issues.

Bethlehem Completing a Summer of Support at Safe Harbor

As Safe Harbor launched its first ever summer operations to support to the homeless community, Bethlehem was in the forefront. Bethlehem volunteers provided help with check-in, medications, guest assistance, and morning coffee each third Tuesday/Wednesday May through August- with one more night to come in September. In addition, Bethlehem initiated, hosted and staffed two Bethlehem Hot Dog Picnics for Safe Harbor guests on June 25 and August 27. Bethlehem has committed to four nights of food service at Safe Harbor this coming January. Our kitchen leaders Cindy Monroe, B.J. Christensen, and Tina Dohm have been joined by the Bair-Goebel Team in preparing meals and reaching out with care. Join us!

Tom Rockne, Bethlehem Safe Harbor Volunteer Coordinator, M.231.631.0040

<u>Let's Play Bunco</u> Cheryl Wegener is going to lead us in playing Bunco after church on Sunday, September 14th. If you don't know how to play, that is okay, Cheryl will teach us. Please sign up in the Narthex if you would like to play. Bring a snack item to share with the group. There will be sandwich items and beverages provided. Come have Fun and Fellowship!

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS!! SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7....COME AND JOIN US!! On Sunday, September 7, we will gather following worship to continue our work on our Mission and Vision Ministries! Our work together has brought us three areas of interest: Social Ministry and Outreach, Creation Care, and New Life Together. The input we have received from you, the congregation, has led us to this point...it is time to put our goals into action! We will gather immediately following worship for lite refreshments in the Fellowship Hall, hear a few directions,

congregation, has led us to this point...it is time to put our goals into action! We will gather immediately following worship for lite refreshments in the Fellowship Hall, hear a few directions, and then break into the three teams in order to get organized and begin our work together. We plan to have our work concluded by 12:30 p.m. Please let us know of your plans by signing up on the sign up sheet posted in the narthex. This will help us plan for refreshments, handouts, and work space. No need to feel like an "expert" or to have been involved in all of the work thus far...All are Welcome!!! We hope you will join in the day! Our Hands are Ready to Do God's Work!!!!

Fellowship Chair Person Needed: Since Gail Goldsmith has taken on the role of President of the BLC Council she is not able to continue as the chair person for the Fellowship Committee. There is a wonderful group of people on the committee, so there is great help in the kitchen. The primary responsibility are planning and shopping for dinners, such as Third Thursday meals before service, Advent and Lenten Dinners, Easter Brunch pot luck and Shrove Tuesday pancake supper. There are other church activities such as game days after church, community activities such as arranging Pit Spitters games. These are just some ideas that we have done in the past. Some years we have had more and some years less. This person does not need to attend Council meetings, just write up a short summary of monthly Fellowship activities for the council meeting. Please talk to Gail Goldsmith with any questions or interests.

<u>Garden News:</u> Thanks to all who have been involved in the garden in any way. Now it's time for the fun part...harvesting. There is a group that gathers the ripe veggies every Tuesday. It doesn't have to be just Bethlehem's gardens. You can help with anyone's garden!

<u>IMPORTANT NOTI</u>CE: The Fellowship Hall floor will be stripped. It will take three days – Wednesday, September 3rd through Friday, September 5th. Please do not walk into the Fellowship Hall on any of those days. Plans for the future will be the kitchen, then the two restrooms.

FOOD PANTRY: With summer in full swing, it is important to remember that there are still hungry community members amongst us. When I checked the pantry on arriving to church last Sunday I found it was almost completely empty. The storage room where we keep the food to restock was also almost completely empty. I urge each and every one of you to bring just one non-perishable item to donate to the food pantry the next time you come to church. If every member brings one item to donate, we can quickly restock our supplies. The need never ends and we are counting on you to step up to the plate to support community members in need. Thanks for your support, Suzanne and Kathie

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.

The Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas will be installed as bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod on Saturday, September 13, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids (2700 Fulton Street E). Worship will include a volunteer choir and a reception will follow. Childcare will be available. All are welcome to attend! You're invited to wear something red if desired. You must RSVP by using the link below:

https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=-B7-Cl32jUe7-uxYFy4aZXyWFJ2lzbVPqnz9An0hTUBUQkxNWTE3SDU2NktWSEE1OFdTSlhCU0c4VC4u&route=shorturl

<u>Walkers and support staff needed!</u> There are two ways Bethlehem can help our friends at Stony Lake Lutheran camp ministry and those who struggle with hunger this fall (the CROP Walk.) First, on Friday, September 19th, Pastor Paul is assembling of team of 12 or more volunteers to support the Honor, MI transfer point for the Ragnar Michigan Team Running Race from TC to Muskegon. Volunteers will be tasked with making sure the relay running team partners are ready to transfer the "baton" and have necessary support and water at the ready. The only job requirements for volunteers are a good sense of humor and ability to work a 4, 6 or 8 hour shift, somewhere between 8am to 4:15 that day. More details forthcoming. The Ragnar is a fundraiser, but our "ask" is just for people's time to support those running!

<u>The second mission opportunity</u> will be finding a handful of people to participate in the Northport team for the CROP Walk held this October 5th at 1pm. Talk to Pastor Paul if you are interested. We have spoken with James Thatcher who coordinates the Northport team, and he is excited to have us join. This second opportunity is a fundraiser, where CROP Walkers can raise funds on behalf of BLC to contribute to the Northport effort. For more information on hunger awareness and CROP Walk ministries, visit Northport CROP Hunger Walk https://share.google/AiLSnK93ZUO34imWk OR https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks

XYZ is resuming on Friday, September 26th! Please note that this is a different date than our normal second Friday, to accommodate other church activities. We will enjoy a delicious potluck lunch at 12pm, followed by a presentation by Jack Lankford, president and founder of Evergreen Community Group. Evergreen is a 501c3 nonprofit that specializes in social events for adults of any age to encourage community building. Their mission is to be a beacon of warmth, connection, and support for those feeling isolated or lonely in Northern Michigan. Their goal is to create a welcoming space where individuals can find solace, community, and an uplifting presence. XYZ stands for EXtra Years of Zest, and while originally intended to be primarily for seniors, adults of any age are encouraged to attend! The presentations would be enjoyable and informative for anyone. We hope to see you there!

BOOK CLUB NEWS: The book club meeting on Sept 10 at 5:30 will meet at the home of Betsy Morley. The book will be *This Is Your Life, Harriet Chance!* By Jonathan Evison. The book should be available on Hoopla or Libby. This book is described as: part love story, part poignant exploration of the mother-daughter relationship... nothing is what it seems in this tale of acceptance, reexamination, and forgiveness. Contact Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net for any details.

<u>Please note that Sunday School, Sunday's Adult Education will begin their classes on Sunday, September 14th – both at 9:15am. The Wednesday Zoom Bible Study will begin on September 17th at 1:30pm with a study of Esther The Hidden Hand of God</u>

Notes From Alanna

Bethlehem's Youth in Action!

Hello, Bethlehem youth families! The weather is hinting at fall, and I am so excited for it! Last year around this time, I put together a Youth in Action email showing all of the cool things our kids did over the summer, and what they were looking forward to in the new school year. I've heard that a lot of people really enjoyed seeing all of the things the kids had been up to, so I'd love to do that again!



I would love to share pictures, details, etc. of whatever your kids were up to this summer that they are proud / excited about! Back-to-school pictures and plans for the upcoming school year (sports, music, classes, activities, etc.) are great too! Anything you want to share, I am happy to put in. No specific guidelines for this and no specific due date - I would like to send an email out by the end of September at the latest, so just let me know if your kiddo wants to be included! Looking forward to hearing from you all!

-Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator



Christian Ed, Y2A, Council, & Vision Team members will be recognized during the service on Sunday 9/21 – please join us & get to know these fun folks!







Sunday 9/07 during the service
Pastor Paul will have a special Children's Message
Kids (and kids at heart!)
bring your backpacks (or any special bag)
ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US!!!



Global Links



Participants in the 2025 Lutheran World Federation Council meeting gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme "Be My Witnesses." Photo: Albin Hillert/LWF

The **Lutheran World Federation** Council meeting took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, June 11-16 and was attended by **ELCA Global Mission** staff. At the meeting, council members adopted new public statements, decided the location of the 14th LWF Assembly and worshiped at local congregations. The LWF council also approved the full membership of four new churches into the Lutheran World Federation: the Lutheran Church in Cambodia, the Gereja Niha Keriso Protestan Church in Indonesia, the Manipur Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Bodo Evangelical Lutheran Church.



WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM - SEPTEMBER 2025

FOR SEPTEMBER: TRANSITION, CHANGE, NEW BEGINNINGS, FINDING PURPOSE.

NEVER GIVE UP!



CIRCLES STARTING UP: Rebecca/Anna Circle will meet on Thursday, September 11th at 1PM. Sarah Circle will meet on Tuesday, September 16th at Noon. Both circles meet at church. The Bible study is taken from the *Gather* Magazine. If you are interested in joining us for this fellowship, please contact Nancy Ammann 946-8433.

WELCA FALL RETREAT: This year's fall retreat will be held at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Battle Creek on September 26-27. Times are 7:00 to 8:30 on Friday evening and 9:30 to 3:00 on Saturday. There will be speakers, service opportunities, food, fun and fellowship. The outreach this year is Women's Co-op in Battle Creek who offer GED classes, work experience, job readiness and many other services to prepare women for a successful life. An 'in-hand' offering will be taken for kitchen items for that group. There will also be a quilt raffle to raise money for scholarships for women. If you are interested in attending, please contact Nancy Ammann 946-8433 as soon as possible so we can reserve rooms at the Courtyard by Mariott. We will car pool down on Friday afternoon. Please join us!

Greetings, friends at Bethlehem:

This message is being sent with great excitement to you - the "many ministers of Bethlehem" - as an update for our continued work in new Mission and Vision together. We give thanks for the input and assistance of the congregation who have collectively completed our Mission and Vision Statements (below). Now it is time to put our words into action. We are excited to be at this stage...looking forward to moving ahead together!

We Worship, Work

and Welcome... haring God's love

On Sunday, September 7, we will join the many ELCA congregations working on ministries we share with "God's Work, Our Hands" (i.e. "GWOH") Sunday. This year our work at BLC will be gathering for updated information and moving into teams as we begin planning and organizing for our next phase. If you have not been too involved with the process up until now, no worries! Come and join in! There will be great information shared to help you determine where it is you would like to be involved. All are welcome!

The day's agenda looks like this:

Worship at 10:00 a.m. followed by a brief fellowship gathering in the Fellowship Hall. There will be light refreshments as we hear a few general announcements giving guidance to our day. Following that, each person will move into one of the three various spaces to join a team of interest to them. The various teams include: *Social Ministry and Outreach, New Life Together, and Creation Care*. Many of you already indicated which team you feel called to join - and some have picked multiple! (See the attached "Summary of Vision" sheet/s on separate colored pieces of paper if you already identified an interest area on May 18th.) But for the sake of our time on September 7th, we ask that you pick the core team that interests you most and attend that meeting (as all three groups will meet at the same time). We are planning that core team conversations will conclude by 12:30 p.m. so that folks can get on with their day.

Between now and September 7th, we ask that you place your name on the sign-up sheet found in the narthex of the church (even if your name is on a "core team" list.) **This will help us to better plan for refreshments, handouts, space, etc., on the 7th.** There is nothing else you will need to do other than to come with an open and willing heart on Sunday, September 7.

Throughout the Mission/Vision process, we have held three congregation conversations, one retreat, and a ministry fair to help our congregants give input and become better informed as to the direction the congregation is desiring to move. **Now we are ready to talk with participants, get organized, invite leaders to come forward, and get started!** This is a very exciting time for Bethlehem and a new chapter in our life together. So please join us and pray also for our ministry at Bethlehem! Pray for guidance as to how you may be involved. There are many tasks in which we can participate...one of those is being fervent in prayer!

God is Good, All the time! All the Time, God is Good!!!! Hope to see you on September 7th!

Your Vision Team

Kathie Bair, Craig Bauer, Tim Goebel, Jana Rockne, Kelly Thomson, Pastor Paul, and Sherri Helman

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.

To see electronic copies of all these documents, visit www.bethlehemtc.org/GWOHSunday

Health Concerns*

The Power of Prayer



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

Meadow Valley: Milt & Carol Bowes
G. T. Pavilions: Shelley Miller

<u>Hospital Visits</u>: 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 or email admin@bethlehemtc.org

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

Church Office

Pastor Paul Busekist <u>paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Admin. Asst., Barbara Oster <u>admin@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Bookkeeper, Phil Anderson <u>bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Anthony Bero, Music Director bero.tony@gmail.com

Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator <u>Alanna.Steffunick@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Website www.bethlehemtc.org

Church Council

Gail Goldsmith, President <u>president.council@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Maureen Bauer, Vice President <u>vicepresident.council@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Nancy Pflasterer, Secretary <u>secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Dave Peppler, Treasurer treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org

Jim Monroe, Financial Sec. financial secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org

Peggy Burns, Christian Care Giving christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org

Tina Dohm, Christian Ed. christianeducation.committee@bethlehemtc.org

, Fellowship fellowship.committee@bethlehemtc.org

John Halstead, Membership/Evangelism membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org

Doug Cunningham, Property <u>property.committee@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Maureen Bauer, Personnel personnel.committee@bethlehemtc.org

Jana Rockne, Safety & Security

Bethany Uhl, Stewardship stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org

Denice Bossardet, Worship and Music worshipmusic.committee@bethlehemtc.org

Tina Dohm, Youth/Y2A youth.committee@bethlehemtc.org

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).

13 * 6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group 9am - AAUW 8pm - AA 8pm - AA 8pm - AA 8pm - AA 12 26 19 00 12pm - Luncheon-Milton Bowes 11am - Funeral-Milton Bowes fpm - Lehlo SG - Library STAR articles due today F 10am - Sew Pieceful 12pm - XYZ 18 7pm - Third Thursday - Holden 5:45pm - Third Thursday Meal 1pm - Rebecca Anna Circle -9am - Baby Pantry Satup 10am - Baby Pantry-FH 4 5:30pm - ACA 5:30pm - ACA 5:30pm - ACA 5:30pm - ACA 10 24 Fellowship Hall Floor Stripping 5.30pm - Book/Supper Club 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 11:30am - Music Rehearsal Med 3pm - Chair Yoga 3pm - Chair Yoga 3pm - Chair Yoga 3pm - Chair Yoga 30 6:30pm - Council Meeting - Library 6:30pm - Executive Comte.(Zoom) 6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed Meeting 1pm - Friendship Bible Study 12pm - Sarah Circle - Library 9am - Property Work Group 9am - Property Work Group 9am - Property Work Group Sam - Property Work Group 9am - Property Work Group Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - LWR Quillers (FH) 9am - LWR Quillers (FH) 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - LWR Quitters (FH) 10:45am - Staff Meeting 15 22 58 Church Office Closed 10am - Finance Cmte. 3:30pm - Grief Group Mon 3pm - Chair Yoga 3pm - Chair Yoga 3pm - Chair Yoga 3pm - Chair Yoga 2:30pm - Choir 2:30pm - Choir 2:30pm - Choir 2:30pm - Choir Labor Day 28 10am - Traditional Worship Service 2pm - Youth Discipleship Class 10am - Baptism - Ava Wenzel 12:30pm - Youth Discipleship 10am - Worship Service(S) 10am - Worship Service(S) 10am - Worship Service(S) 9:15am - Sunday School 9:15am - Sunday School 9:15am - Sunday School God's Work Our Hands 11:15am - Vision Event 11:30am - Bunco Party

BLC - Non assigned mig. space Conference Room, Entire BLC Event Held Outside of BLC Fellowship Hall, Gathering Space, Lower Room 3, Lower Room 3, Lower Room 3, Nursery Room 1, Nursery Room 1, Nursery Room 1, Nursery Room New York

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
Bunco Party
God's Work, Our Hands Sunday
Garden News
New Bishop Installation
Crop Walks
XYZ
Safe Harbor Volunteer Opportunities

Safe Harbor Volunteer Opportunities Notes from Alanna Christian Education News Financial News ELCA Global Links Women of Bethlehem 2025 The Power of Prayer Church Calendar



www.bethlehemtc.org

Bethlehem Lutheran Church (ELCA) 1050 Peninsula Drive Traverse City, MI 49686