## MARCH 2021



Traverse City, MI 49686 (231) 947-9880

Website: <a href="https://www.bethlehemtc.org">www.bethlehemtc.org</a> Email: bethlehem@bethlehemtc.org

Building Hours: (Currently closed due to Covid 19)

Monday - Thursday, 9am to 3pm

Office Hours: (Currently closed due to Covid 19)

Monday - Thursday, 9am to 3pm



#### **Worship Times:**

(In-person worship currently postponed; offering "virtual worship" due to Covid-19)

Saturday: Sunday:

5 pm Celebrate! Worship 8:30 am To di fon I Worship 9:45 am Ed catio Hour

11 am Modern Worship

Communion at all services

## 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."



## "The Trinity is simply our best available effort at speaking the unspeakable. God in God's essence is unknowable."

- Belden Lane, The Great Conversation: Nature and the Care of the Soul

Friends, we are now well on our way into Lent, as we journey with Christ toward Easter Sunday. I invite you to unpack Belden Lane's book and my (made-up) word "Faithscapes" with me during our journey each Wednesday evening, and perhaps plant a seed for one more "new" word: "Wondifferent." Why? Because we are moving toward a new things at Bethlehem: renewed ways of being connected, and new perspectives for a blessed new normal: in person and otherwise. Creative, <u>won</u>derful, and perhaps a little <u>different</u>. I can't wait to see what is in store with BLC this Easter season. See our Lent schedule below.

Looking forward to seeing you in the sanctuary, and for all that lies ahead!

-Pr. Paul

## Wed, February 24th (Week / Faithscape #1 - Desert, Dune and Mountain (Scarcity and the highlands of the spirit)

- "Table for 12": In-sanctuary Communion at 11:15-11:30 (up 12 people) and 5:15-5:30 (up to 12 people) - register here.
- Virtual Fellowship via Zoom at 6:30pm (click here for link)
- Virtual Worship for Lent at 7pm on Youtube and Facebook (Links below)

Wed, March 3rd (Week / Faithscape #2 - Countryside and Prairie (The Openness of the familiar and inviting)

"Table for 12" (11:15 and 5:15), Virtual Fellowship (6:30pm) & Worship (7pm)

Wed, March 10th (Week / Faithscape #3 - City and Township (The streets we walk, the structures that define...)

"Table for 12" (11:15 and 5:15), Virtual Fellowship (6:30pm) & Worship (7pm)

Wed, March 17th (Week / Faithscape #4 - Spiritual Valley and Canyon

"Table for 12" (11:15 and 5:15), Virtual Fellowship (6:30pm) & Worship (7pm)

Wed, March 24th (Week / Faithscape #5 - Seashore and Lakeshore (Returning to the place/s Christ calls us)

"Table for 12" (11:15 and 5:15), Virtual Fellowship (6:30pm) & Worship (7pm)

Info and Schedule of Easter 2021 COMING SOON!

#### Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Traverse City Michigan

"We Journey with God to serve with Love"

Minutes from Church Council Meeting: January 19, 2021

CALLED TO ORDER: Leonard Graf at 6:03 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER: Pastor Paul Busekist

ROLL CALL: Gail Goldsmith; Maureen Bauer, Pastor Paul Busekist, Nancy Downer, Gail Goldsmith, Leonard Graf, Laura Hahn, Mark McPherson, Cindy Monroe, Jim Monroe, Jan Stretlien, Paul Wiemerslage all present. Phil Anderson excused absent.

VISITOR/S OR CONGREGATIONAL COMMENT: Annie Slabaugh, Director Y2A on Zoom; Kate Holtfreter, New Normal Work Group; wished to address the upcoming Congregational Meeting and concerns of having an In-Person Meeting as the COVID numbers are increasing. If people are present they should be able to cast their vote, such as parking lot, to have a runner to have them sign in and cast their ballot. Annie would run Zoom, but is not comfortable being in a room with very many people. Barbara Oster was also present to go over getting volunteers for Sign In and Contact Tracing, Runner to the parking lot and someone to take temperatures. She is also not comfortable in the room with many people. Leonard reported a call this week from Barbara Wright that previous council discussed a sabbatical for Pastor Paul. This will be on next month's agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: The agenda was approved

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM December 15, 2020 the minutes approved with no changes.

#### REPORTS:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Leonard reported that Carl Lehto had been hospitalized with some heart issues, he had some tests and is home now, feeling better.

PASTOR'S REPORT: 1.) Pastor Paul reported the can project has been suspended due to one of the participants taking advantage of the situation. 2.) A grant had been applied for and received to put a food kiosk outdoors. However due to the recent situation with the cans this will have to be thought through of how it would work as it would be the honor system. If it does not work, the money should be sent back.

FINACIAL SERCRETARY REPORT: 1.) The Financial Committee is concerned with the lower pledge dollars for 2021, compared to 2020 by nearly \$75,000. 2.) While the pandemic certainly contributes to this drop, it is significant. BLC broke even from the cash flow perspective in 2020 primarily by lowering expenses. 3.) In December ELCA contributions were below what would be expected to meet the monthly budget. An analysis of the pledged contributions indicated that we received 98% of the 2020 pledges and that most of the contributions shortfalls can be attributed to a reduction in non-pledge contributions received in 2020.

CONSENT CALENDAR: COMMITTEE REPORTS: The committee reports are: Financial Secretary's report, Financial and Executive Committee report, Christian Care Report; Jan Stretlien reported that Marilyn Skay passed away this week. Christian Education Report, Membership and Evangelism, Personnel Report, Property Report, Stewardship Report, Worship and Music, Youth/Y2A Report, Fellowship Report, Visions Report, Endowment Fund Report (Quarterly) and Sustaining Endowment Memorial Fund Report (Quarterly). All reports submitted were accepted as submitted.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Winter Congregational meeting: Mark McPherson made the motion for the winter congregational meeting scheduled for January 24, 2021 be canceled. Maureen Bauer seconded the motion, the motion carried.
- B. Criteria for opening in-person worship services: Cindy Monroe made the motion that once there is a 14 day rolling average of the positivity rate of COVID-19 of 5% or less in Grand Traverse County, the Church Council will look at opening the church for in-person worship at the next scheduled council meeting. Seconded by Mark McPherson, the motion carried. James Monroe continues to watch the Positivity Rate and charts the results.
- C. Update on WiFi installation: NetSmart is on the docket for this week. Pastor purchased the equipment needed. Leonard made sure the services and equipment were tax free as the church is tax exempt, saving quite a bit of money. Pastor is asking the Men's Group on Tuesday to help put up wiring, then NetSmart can put in the rest of the updates.
- D. Update on Live Streaming: Leonard completed the application for the Sustaining Endowment Memorial Fund and was approved for up to \$3000.00. Pastor will get together with Pastor Jonathan Reed from Sutton's Bay and they will set up the sound board and computer to be able to get the Live Stream Started within the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2021.
- E. Face Mask non-compliance: Cindy Monroe made the motion that anyone in the building must wear a mask covering their nose and mouth, unless they are the only person in the room, actively eating or drinking then social distancing of at least 6 feet must be in place, or those leading worship or leading singing for services. All others must wear masks. Seconded by Jan Stretlien. Motion carried.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Approval of Quote for stump removal: 2 quotes were received, for stump removal, the Council approved of the \$150.00 quote, and there were no objections.
- B. Sacred Ground participation. Paul Wiemerslage explained the grant for \$1500.00 to provide a healthy habitat for pollinators and native plants. The grant comes from the National Wildlife Federation Great Lakes Regional Center in partnership with the Au Sable Institute. Leonard Graf made the motion to apply for the grant, Nancy Downer seconded the motion, the motion carried. Leonard will complete the application.
- Electronic Meeting amendment will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

#### VISITOR OR CONGREGATIONAL COMMENT: see above

GOOD TO THE ORDER: A time for general/undocumented comments by each Council Member if so desired.

LORD'S PRAYER: was said by all.

ADJOURNMENT: Leonard Graf adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Goldsmith, Council Secretary

#### ABRIDGED WITH ANNIE: A SUMMARY OF YOUTH EVENTS FOR MARCH...

Hello there, Bethlehem! As I am writing this article for you all I am basking in the sunlight on an almost 40 degree day! Could it be that spring has sprung? I don't know about you, but the wonderful warm weather is a perfect reminder to me that God is good but also helps remind me in the Season of Lent that we should be preparing for Christ Rising again!



#### MARCH HAPPENINGS ...

**Lent Nights** will happen this month **virtually** on **Wednesday March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> starting at 7PM both on <b>Facebook** and **YouTube**. We will also be having **Virtual Fellowship** on **Zoom** right before at 6:30PM. The link can be found on our website as well as in the weekly emails we send but you can also reach out to me or Pastor Paul for a link! We hope to see you there!

While we are going to be **opening up the sanctuary on March 7**th we will still be having our **Children's Messages** on **Zoom every other Thursday**. We log on at **6PM** and have a little **fellowship time** before starting the children's message at **6:15ish**. All Children's Messages will be recorded for both virtual and in person worship but reach out to me directly if you have not been getting the links and would like your youth to join in on the fun.

Due to the Lenten Season we will **not** be having **BLUES**, **Junior High Night** or **High School Night**. We'll pick the fun back up in April, so stay tuned for that! Until then, I encourage everyone to log on for the Lent Fellowship and Worship.

As some of the Youth Families will know, Living Water Ministries has made the very tough decision to postpone this year's CHARGE and the National Youth Gathering to 2022. While I'm disappointed that we will go another year without this gathering I can't wait for what we will experience in 2022!

Be sure to mark your calendars for all these fun events!

As we begin the season of Lent, I ask that you keep everyone at Bethlehem in your prayers. Although things are looking up and the sun is shining there is still a lot of uncertainty and unknowns swirling all around us. I ask that you keep Bethlehem's youth and their families in your prayers as we navigate these next few weeks with hope and faith.

Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Cheerfully in Christ,

Annie Slabaugh

Director of Youth and Outreach, Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Traverse City

#### Our Safe Harbor Ministry

Twenty five members of our congregations ably carried out BLC's ministry to persons experiencing homelessness in early February. Those listed below were the preparers of three evening meals or the donators of snacks served at the Safe Harbor Emergency Shelter to about 50 overnight guests. The volunteers in the kitchen had very little direct contact with the guests except when they received their trays through a slot in the plexiglass shield over the serving window. Our service posed little to risk of Covid spread, but it denied important personal contact with the guests, thwarting ways to make them more welcome in the community. But a hot meal speaks volumes stronger than words. Our ministry was also supported by volunteers from the community who served as evening and morning hosts and by paid personnel from Goodwill who directly supervised the guests. Our period of service coincided with the arrival of single-digit overnight temperatures that led to an increase in the number of persons seeking shelter by about 20% over previous weeks.

The fact that the Safe Harbor Emergency Shelter has continued to safely minister to those in need in our community during the Covid-19 epidemic is witness of God's power to inspire the creative, prayerful, and effective planning and labor of volunteers from the 20 churches that comprise the leadership of the Safe Harbor program. To date only a single guest has been diagnosed with the virus. That person has been housed in isolation at the Goodwill Inn.

These are the BLC volunteers:

Sue Allen, Matt Branch, BJ Christensen, Tina Dohm, Karen Elkins, Monica Graf, Martin Graf, Laura Hahn, Dan Hahn, Jim Hinds, Kate Holtfreter, Margaret Hutchison, Jim Hutchison, Suzanne Lehto, Carl Lehto, Carolyn Mann, Cindy Monroe, Jim Monroe, Shannon Nemeth, Barbara Oster, Dave Peppler, Peg Peppler, Tom Rockne, Betty Rutila, Renae Wells

I am writing this to inform you that the Can Collection For The Needy (CCFN) project was a complete success with a twist. The CCFN grew out of our earlier project to help the youth of our church.

The project supplied 3 people in our community with a job and funds to help them maintain themselves during the Covid-19 epidemic. But one of those people began to abuse it and steal the cans, and thus the money, for his sole use. The others decided that it would be best to simply stop the project. That person has not left town and the collection box will be reconstructed for their use and the collection will continue when the ground is not frozen.

During this "off" time, please continue to bring in your recyclable cans and bottles to these people to use to make money and continue to be contributing members of our community.

You can leave them by the garage door in the back of the parking lot.

I get Thank You notes for them telling me how much they appreciate our help.

Thank you and God Bless you.

Norm Fred

Sorry for the erroneous information given to the office for the bulletin for the last Sunday of Feb. The BLC book club continues to meet the 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm via ZOOM and made a last minute change in this month's book selection. On Mar. 23 we will discuss the book "Carnegie's Maid" by Marie Benedict. In this historical novel based on fact you can decide for yourself if a simple maid was the catalyst for Carnegie to become such an amazing philanthropist. Check the big box outside the front doors of church to see if there is a library book left for you to borrow. Even if you have not read the book you are welcome to join our discussion. If you are not on the contact list just send your email address to Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net so you can receive the ZOOM invite.



#### HONORING GOD'S CREATION

Since 2019 we have been enjoying Bethlehem's "Honoring God's Creation" column so ably organized by Judy Strickland. The time has come that Judy has decided to step down. So that we may continue with this excellent information, this is a request for contributions from the congregation. You can do as a one time submission or you can step in to organize the column. Topics can include gardening, recycling or saving the planet. This is a great way to take care of your BLC family. Please contact Barbara Oster at admin@bethlehemtc.org if you would like to participate.

A big thank you to those who have turned in Oleson's receipts. For 2020, we received a total of \$545.66. Please continue saving your Oleson's receipts for Bethlehem. Please drop them off in the bin under the mailbox counter. Thanks.



Help us decorate our church for Easter! We are suggesting a \$10 donation to help cover the cost of our Easter flowers. Instead of contacting the church office, please call Kate Holtfreter at 231-590-3946 before March 21st to order a plant and say who it is in honor of, in celebration of, etc. You will then send Kate a check for \$10.00 made out to Bethlehem Lutheran Church (or BLC) and write Easter flowers in the memo line.

Congratulations to Julia Acker (daughter of Brian and Laura) who will be representing Grand Traverse Academy in this year's Grand Traverse Regional Spelling Bee.



#### Way to go, Julia!!!

February income came in at \$27,991 compared to a budget of \$31,015 resulting in a shortage of income against budget of \$3,024. On the expense side we came in at \$29,337 compared to a budget of \$31,280 resulting in spending \$1,943 under budget. From a purely budget perspective the shortfall was \$1,081. From a cash flow perspective, income of \$27,991 did not cover expense of \$29,337 leaving us short \$1,346 for the month.

Year to date income came in at \$53,355 compared to a budget of \$63,409 resulting in a shortage of income against budget of \$10,055. On the expense side we came in at \$56,664 compared to a budget of \$62,520 resulting in spending \$5,857 under budget. From a purely budget perspective the shortfall was \$4,198. From a cash flow perspective, income of \$53,355 did not cover expense of \$56,664 leaving us short \$3,309 year to date.

### Christian Education News March 2021



#### Packet lessons & BLUES:

Although we are not
having in-person Sunday School yet,
the Christian Education Committee
is mailing materials
for at-home Sunday School lessons!
If you would like to receive a March packet
for your child(ren),
please contact Nancy Ammann.

Bethlehem Lutheran Upper Elementary Students
(BLUES)
is a special Youth Group for children in 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade
that meets approximately every month,
in-person or virtually, depending on the activities.
Please contact Annie Slabaugh for details.

We are fervently praying
each and every day
for our precious
Sunday School children
and their families!
May God bless all of you
with safety and good health
until we can meet again!!
Jesus loves you VERY much,
and
so do we!!!





Happy St. Patrick's Day!



-Christian Education Committee



#### Africa - Agricultural Training in a Pandemic: How an International Ministry Created Opportunities

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck last year, lockdowns stranded some travelers en route to their destinations, including a group of four students from Sierra Leone who were headed to the **Asian Rural Institute (ARI)** in Japan but got stuck in Ghana. Fortunately, John Yeboah, an ARI graduate in Ghana, stepped up to the plate, welcoming the students, helping them find housing and adapting ARI's agricultural training program so the group could study from their new location.

Based in **Japa**n, ARI is a program supported by **ELCA Global Miss**ion that trains grassroots leaders to more effectively serve those who are poor, hungry and marginalized in their communities. Training focuses on sustainable agriculture through integrated organic farming techniques, community building and servant leadership. The ELCA provides support to the program through scholarships funded through ELCA World Hunger.

"Passing on the ARI training, being resilient and creative in times of crisis, taking initiative, giving hope and practical experience are exactly the goals of ARI," said Kathy Froede, Ecumenical Relations for ARI. "Usually, it is with their community members. However, this situation has shown it can be done anywhere with anyone."

Source: Living Lutheran, December, 2020

#### **ELCA Global Mission Policy - Across the World**

One billion of our neighbors — that's one in seven people in our world today — live in poverty. As members of the ELCA, we are called to respond. Working through Lutheran connections in the United States and around the world, we start by listening to the needs of our neighbors and getting their ideas to help break the cycle of hunger and poverty. Then we partner with them to make their dreams and hopes a reality. From health clinics to microloans, water wells to animal husbandry, food pantries to soup kitchens, we work together to support innovative solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty.

Each effort strives for justice, peace and change in the world, and draws its strength and effectiveness from working in partnership with others who share a common vision of serving and loving our neighbor and restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus Christ's name.

#### **WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM - MARCH 2021**



#### NATIONAL QUILTING DAY

March 20, 2021 is National Quilting Day. A little history: quilting is a practice that goes back thousands of years and at one point in history was a necessary skill for people to have in order to produce the blankets they needed. Now quilting is mainly a hobby for most people but it still deserves recognition. National Quilting Day was first established back in 1991 at the National Quilting Association annual show held in Lincoln, Nebraska. Here's a little trivia for you:

\*\*Quilting goes back to Ancient Egypt - probably 5400 years ago

\*\*The word 'quilt' comes from Latin word 'Culcita' meaning stuffed sack or bag

\*\*Medieval knights used quilted pads under their armor to protect against chafing and to prevent the armor from rusting from sweat

\*\*The earliest American quilt made is from 1704

\*\*During the 19th century it was customary for girls to make quilts to show off to their new husbands

\*\*There are three types: Plain Quilts, Applique Quilts and Patchwork Quilts

\*\*Patchwork quilts became popular in areas that only had leftover fabrics to quilt

\*\*The most expensive historic quilt ever sold was a Civil War Era quilt

selling for \$254,000 in 1991

\*\*The average quilter is 63 years old

We have several quilters here at Bethlehem. Please take a moment to greet these women to let them know how much we appreciate all the work they do.

We are blessed to have them!



a closing thought:

It is such comfort to drop the trials of life into God's hands and know He is going to take care of them.

## Parking Lot Communion Yes – it was cold!







Table for 12









### **Health Concerns\***



## The Power of Prayer

Richard Fernholz, Nancy Smith, Tom Miller, Margie Whitney,
Ellie Tacke, Priscilla Thompson, Julie LaPeer,
Marleen Baesch, Alvin Kober, Lynn Hoyt, Thad Hellenga,
Jan Waisanen, Molly Eastman, Harper Wiemerslage,
Ben Farley, Jennifer Mowers, John Stretlien,
Roy & Marilyn Dumond, Shawn Rivard, Brenda Denoyer,
Betty Evans, Patti McCracken and Jeffrey Hentschel

Homebound: Marleen Baesch

**Traverse Manor:** Margie Whitney, Marinan Bradford

Boardman Lake Glens: Inge Thomas, Bill & Dee Springer

Samaritas (Acme): Priscilla Thompson

<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.

BLC's PRAYER CHAIN is always seeking partners in prayer.

More volunteers are needed for this crucial ministry.

For more information or to set the Prayer Chain in motion,
call Jan Stretlien @ 947-3265 or email jstretlien@gmail.com

\*If you would like your name, or the name of a loved one, to appear on this list which appears here and in the weekly bulletin, please call the church office at 947-9880.

Are you checking for the latest BLC updates at:  $\underline{www.bethlehemtc.org}?$ 

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...

### **BLC Contacts**

#### PLEASE NOTE SEVERAL ADDRESS UPDATES

**Church Office** 

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

Admin. Asst. Sharon Weller <u>admin@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Admin. Aide Barbara Oster admin@bethlehemtc.org

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

Sharon Weller, Music Director <u>sharon.weller@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Annie Slabaugh, Youth & Outreach Director annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org

Website <u>www.bethlehemtc.org</u>

**Church Council** 

Gail Goldsmith, Secretary

Leonard Graf, President Email address in process

Mark McPherson, Vice President Email address in process

, Treasurer <u>treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Jim Monroe, Financial Sec. <u>financialsecretary.council@bethlehemtc.org</u>

Jan Stretlien, Christian Care Giving <a href="mailto:christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org">christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>

Email address in process

, Christian Ed. christianeducation@bethlehemtc.org

Laura Hahn, Fellowship Email address in process

Cindy Monroe, Membership/Evangelism membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org

, Property (Phil Anderson) Not on Council) property.committee@bethlehemtc.org

Maureen Bauer, Personnel Email address in process

Mark McPherson, Stewardship stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org

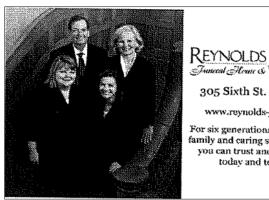
Nancy Downer, Worship and Music worship.committee@bethlehemtc.org

Paul Wiemerslage, 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).



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# WELCOME BACK to all who feel comfortable!!!©

Shalom, and do not be afraid.



www.bethlehemtc.org

1050 Peninsula Drive Traverse City, MI 49686

Bethlehem Lutheran Church (ELCA)