

JULY 2021



Bethlehem
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

Parking Lot Communion: 11:00 am

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.”



“May the Lord bless you and keep you...”



Dear Bethlehem brothers and sisters,

July is often a time of summer excitement, sabbath/rest and valuable time with friends and family. After nearly a year and a half of us all trying to figure out what is next and how to deal with life in a global pandemic, I thought I might model that sense of pause and renewal with a very short and thankful message. **I am thankful for your understanding, affirmation and hard work as we have journeyed together during 2020 and 2021, and I am thankful for the renewal time Council has granted me for later this month** (see next page for more details.) When I return, I plan to offer some new thoughts from feedback I have received, and a few ideas of my own as we continue this journey.

It has been a transformative year for all of us, and I believe it's time (after some reflection and renewal this summer!), for us all to hopefully begin visioning and gearing up for a refreshed future together. Below is the scriptural source of a familiar worship benediction. May God be with us all – in many, renewed and various ways!

-Pr. Paul

Numbers 6:24-26

New King James Version

24 “The LORD bless you and keep you;

25 The LORD make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;

26 The LORD [\[a\]](#)lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace.” ’

A Special Note from Council & Personnel: Council apologizes for the lateness in informing the congregation of the upcoming leave for Pastor Paul. He will be gone during the time of July 14- August 3 for a time of Pastoral Renewal, as suggested and approved by Council this spring. After his work keeping our church up and running through COVID and almost solely instituting Live-streaming, Pastor Paul was nearing burnout. Research was done and it was found that many churches within our Synod and throughout the ELCA and beyond, are providing a period of time for Pastors to renew and reflect away from the persistent obligations of the church. This is not a vacation, nor is it a Sabbatical, but a time for intentional reflection and exploration, for drinking again from God's life-giving waters, and for regaining enthusiasm and creativity for ministry. Pastor is three years past the intended summer sabbatical we had hoped to provide him at the seven year mark, and it will take council at least two years to plan and have a grant written for such a time away. So Council felt this was a good way to provide relief quickly. Pastor Paul has done the work to insure all services and pastoral care have ministerial coverage during his renewal time absence. We wish Pastor well and are excited to have a "healthier him" back in early August. If you should have any questions, please contact Council Vice President Mark McPherson at 850-658-1554.

Maureen Bauer, Personnel Chair

Covid Positivity and Sanctuary Seating at Bethlehem – April 22, 2021

History: At the February 2021 Bethlehem Council meeting, a rule to help safely open and guide Bethlehem's sanctuary "maximum seating" capacity was adopted, called "**the 5 and 7 rule**": that if the 14-Day rolling average for Covid positivity dipped below 5% in Grand Traverse County, we would meet to consider re-opening the sanctuary, and if the 14-Day positivity rose back up to 7% or higher we would meet again to reconsider closing. On March 7th, with a 14-Day positivity of less than 5%, BLC re-opened the sanctuary to 60 max seating in the sanctuary, 60 max overflow with audio overflow in the Fellowship Hall and 10 more people in the Gathering Space. Those numbers were adjusted slightly higher for Holy Week and Easter, but within a few days the positivity numbers in GT County had surged to over 14% (twice our self-imposed limit), where it has hovered ever since.

In response, a special Council meeting was held Thursday, April 15th to weigh several options (including going back to virtual-only or holding regular outdoor worship for the spring) and Council *approved the latest recommendation from the New Normal Task Force: continuing worship indoors Sundays at 10am but lowering max capacity in the sanctuary, Fellowship Hall and Gathering space to 40 occupants, 40 occupants, and 10 occupants, respectively.*

Moving Forward: At the regular April Council meeting on 4/20, the rule or "formula" was revisited. We hope to increase those max capacity numbers soon as (1) more GT residents get vaccinated and (2) Covid positivity numbers begin to drop. The new formula follows more of a "7 / 10 / 13" set of triggers, as follows (note: as of 4/22/21, the 14-Day is around 12%).

- By the Thursday prior to Sunday worship, when the 14-Day positivity in Grand Traverse County dips **to 10% or below**, BLC will immediately increase capacity to 60 people in the sanctuary, 60 in Fellowship Hall and 10 in the Gathering Space (130 total in the building).
- When the 14-Day dips to **7% or below** on the Thursday prior to Sunday worship (that lag is to get the word out), BLC increases the max. capacity to 100 occupants in sanctuary, 60 in FH, 10 in GS (170 total in-building)
- If numbers increase, the triggers work in reverse; if the 14-Day increases to **13% or more**, we return to the current 40/40/10 capacity ratio. A surge greater than 13% would require further deliberation.

Thank you always for your understanding, patience and cooperation. We look forward to the day when Covid and seating restrictions / max capacities will be a thing of the past.

- Sincerely and faithfully, Your Bethlehem Church Council

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Traverse City Michigan

"We Journey with God to serve with Love"

MINUTES TO CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING: May 18, 2021

CALLED TO ORDER: Leonard Graff at 6:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER: Jan Stretlien read *CELEBRATING BOLD CHRISTIANS' DAY* By Eleanor Roosevelt.

ROLL CALL: Gail Goldsmith; Phil Anderson, 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.

VISITOR/S OR CONGREGATIONAL COMMENT: none present

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM April 20, 2021: Approved with corrections

REPORTS:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Leonard Graf reports it was nice having 6 weeks off and the church is still standing. Mark McPherson, Vice President acting president while Leonard was gone would like to thank everyone for their work, especially Maureen Bauer and Pastor Paul on their work on the Administrative Assistant and Music Coordinator positions.

PASTOR'S REPORT: 1.) Pastor Paul discussed what to do to have coverage when he takes his Renewal Time in July. He would like to discuss his plan at the June Council meeting, he is putting out feelers to area pastors, etc. 2.) He would like to train a volunteer (Cindy) to cover the 3 Thursdays of his absence, arranging music mostly. 3.) He will be taking some time off from June 20th through the 26. That would only be weekdays starting Sunday afternoon. 4.) He is also planning on taking some time off soon to see his sister only for a couple of days. 5.) Rebecca the new Administrative Assistant started on May 18th and it went well. 6.) He discussed strategies on COVID: A. Masking vs singing ...one is easier to enforce. B. Best 2 out of 3 strategies (ventilation, distancing, masking). C. Outside worship would be good but prohibitive with Live 'Stream logistics. D. Gradual is ok. D. CDC does not require us to open the flood gates quickly and "mask off" is a lot easier when just 2 or 3 are gathered.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT: Jim Monroe reported the recent short fall on the budget tends to be from the unpledged income, in 2018 there was a shortfall and the congregation was asked to give and they came through. The PPP loan should be used up after June and the application for forgiveness can be completed. This would change the budget to add as income.

CONSENT CALENDAR: COMMITTEE REPORTS: The committee reports are:

Financial Secretary's report; Financial and Executive Committee report; Christian Care Report; Membership and Evangelism, Cindy Monroe reports there were 12 visitors recently and she will be planning a New Members Class soon. She would like the new Administrative Assistant to make new name tags and the church needs new welcome packets with half size folders and BLC pens. Personnel Report; Property Report, Phil Anderson reported a couple of people are willing to replace the top panes of the sign on Garfield Ave so it can be read easier. There will be no cost to the church. 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 and on file.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Update on Sacred Ground: update from Gail Goldsmith and Paul Wiemerslage, we are moving ahead with the planting of 1000 native plants and mulching on June 5th. There is a message going out in the Worship Folders for 2 weeks, May 23rd and May 30th with a sign-up sheet when people come into church. We need help to get this planted, there will be water and snacks donated for those helping.
- B. Update on Open Door Grant: Paul Wiemerslage: Pastor Paul made the motion to pare down the request to \$1000 to go for the Food Kiosk, Ice Cream Social. Paul Wiemerslage seconded the motion and the motion carried. Discussion Fellowship Committee and Membership/Evangelism Committee leaders have volunteered to work on the Ice Cream Social and encouraging community to attend.
- C. Update on Pastoral Renewal; Maureen Bauer reports, Pastor will be taking 3 consecutive weeks in July to recharge. Coverage needs to be found while Pastor is gone. Maureen Bauer brought up Synod sermon could be used, and have volunteers to cover some of the services. Also to have Women of ELCA to possibly cover one week. Possibly the Men of ELCA cover one week.
- D. Update on sabbatical for Pastor; Mark McPherson reports it will take time to plan for the Sabbatical, so we are looking at 2023. There are funds through the Lilly Grant to help with coverage. A committee was created of Mark McPherson, Cindy Monroe and Maureen Bauer to make the application for the Lilly Grant.
- E. Update on the Trapp Grant: Leonard Graf is taking charge of the Food Kiosk, we may use a corner of a room to store food. Leonard is looking for a weather proof cabinet or fix a cabinet he has to make is weather proof. Cindy Monroe said she and Jim could help to keep it filled, but would like another couple to help with this task.
- F. In-Person Worship, COVID changes, second service: Pastor Paul made the motion to require masks in the sanctuary, allowing singing during the service. This will be addressed again at the June Council meeting. Nancy Downer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mark McPherson amended the motion to allow the Fellowship Hall to be a no mask zone and as of June 3rd to watch the trends for the Positivity Rate in Grand Traverse County. If the 14 day rolling average is below 4% masks may be optional for vaccinated people in the Sanctuary. Cindy Monroe seconded the amended motion and the amended motion carried. Discussion: there was much discussion on this motion and it was also decided to continue contact tracing, but to no longer take temperatures. There will be discussion in August about the possibility of a second service starting in September.

- G. Nominating Committee; Jan Stretlien contacted 32 people about being on the council, there were 2 people who said they would be on the council and 1 person as a possibility. There are three openings on the council.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Staff gift: Maureen Bauer made the motion to purchase 3 gift cards at the total cost of \$300 as Thank You to the staff, Administrative Aid, Youth and Outreach Director and the Bookkeeper for all of their work over the last 14 month of COVID. Paul Wiemerslage seconded the motion, the motion carried.

- B. Media Tech position, Pastor Paul made the motion to have the Personnel Committee to make up a job description for a Media Tech position to work 4-5 hours per week on Sunday at \$15 per hour. Mark McPherson seconded her motion, the motion carried.
- C. Christian Education Time: this item is tabled until discussion can be made with Christian Education. Discussion was to have 2 services 9:00 and 11:00 with Sunday School during one of them. To possibly have traditional and modern services every other Sunday so the teachers can enjoy both types of service.
- D. Other groups using space: Maureen Bauer made the motion to have other groups be able to use the church as long as they follow the rules of the Sanctuary, masks, social distance and file use forms with the church. Jan Stretlien seconded the motion, the motion carried.
- E. Date of Congregational meeting: Mark McPherson made the motion to have the Annual Congregational Meeting June 20, 2021. Jan Stretlien Seconded the motion, the motion carried.
- F. Administrative Assistant: Maureen Bauer made the motion to hire Rebecca Eaton as the Administrative Assistant. She will work Monday through Thursday, 20 to 22 hours per week at \$15 per hour. Benefits of 5 day sick or vacation days with pay, up to 5 days off without pay, and 6 paid holidays. Mark McPherson seconded the motion, the motion carried.
- G. Anne Franco moving her belongings from the building: It has been over a year since there has been a preschool. Leonard will send Anne a letter to have her belongings moved out of the church and return her key by July 1, 2021. Anne has been taking her items out of the church, but it has been a slow process.

VISITOR OR CONGREGATIONAL COMMENT: none

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: Cindy Monroe made the motion to adjourn, Maureen Bauer seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Goldsmith, Council Secretary

ABRIDGED WITH ANNIE: A SUMMARY OF YOUTH EVENTS FOR JULY...

Hiya there, Bethlehem! It's crazy that July has started...this summer is going by so quickly but I hope that everyone is taking the time to enjoy their summer and take in God's creation—after all it's all around us!

JULY HAPPENINGS ...

Our Youth Groups and Confirmation classes have taken a break for the summer...but that doesn't mean that there still aren't fun things to come!



The signup is out for the **Parking Lot Fundraiser** which will be on **Sunday July 4th** **as that is the only day for Fireworks this year.** The Signup sheet is out by the sign in table during worship but also online so please see the Weekly Email Blast for the link or reach out to me directly!

Another thing that is happening later down the road but still needs to be on your radar is the **Youth/Family Camping Trip** that is happening **Thursday, August 26th – Sunday, August 29th** **at Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes D.H Day Campground!** The deadline for Youth to register is on **July 1st** but if you miss it....don't worry! Registration deadline for Families is not until **August 1st**. Please reach out to Pastor Paul for more information on how to register.

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

On another note, we are getting close to Baby Slabaugh's due date and that means that I will be going on maternity leave at that time. During the month of July, I plan on sending the youth and their families information as to what to expect while I'm away and who to contact...don't worry...lots of fun things are still in the works for while I'm gone and I'll be back before you know it!

As we enjoy our July I ask that you keep Bethlehem's youth and their families in your prayers. That they are enjoying the busy summer so far and that they will enjoy the fun to come! That they are all safe and enjoying all of God's blessings.

Cheerfully in Christ,

Annie Slabaugh

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

FINANCIAL NEWS

May income came in at \$33,429 compared to a budget of \$32,361 resulting in a surplus of income against budget of \$1,068. On the expense side we came in at \$24,675 compared to a budget of \$29,845 resulting in spending \$5,171 under budget. From a purely budget perspective we ended the month \$6,238 ahead. From a cash flow perspective income of \$33,429 exceeded expense of \$24,675 leaving us ahead \$8,754 for the month. Note our electric bill which approximates \$1,200 has not been received...despite efforts to pay...so cash flow is tempered somewhat until that bill is paid.

Year to date income came in at \$147,267 compared to a budget of \$160,396 resulting in a shortage of income against budget of \$13,129. On the expense side we came in at \$145,254 compared to a budget of \$160,614 resulting in spending \$15,360 under budget. From a purely budget perspective we have received \$13,129 less than budgeted but at the same time spent \$15,360 less than budgeted creating a positive variance of \$2,231. From a cash flow perspective (the more accurate way to look at how BLC is doing), income of \$147,267 exceeded expense of \$145,254 leaving us ahead 2,013 year to date. Note we have not paid an electric bill for two months in a row as the electric company is behind in billing. If you add in the expense of April and May electric bills we are actually at a breakeven point from a cash flow perspective. When we speak of cash flow, think of your personal checkbook. Money comes in and money goes out. When money coming in equals money going out you have a breakeven month.

Just a quick note on BLC's Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) loan of \$27,125. BLC has incurred the necessary \$27,125 in payroll expense since being funded in March 2021. We can now apply for "forgiveness" of the loan from the government. Since we have met all requirements of the loan we are confident forgiveness will be granted and any loan repayment obligations removed.

A Stewardship Word...

Going into the summer months offerings generally run low. This summer is no exception. What is a little different is coming out of a Pandemic with lower than normal offerings especially from the plate. Bethlehem is more physically open than it has been in the last 15 months. We can be very grateful for this positive change. We are able to worship together in the Sanctuary or at home with Livestream. Please be mindful of your offerings. Sometimes this is hard to remember when you're watching from home or to leave it in the vase in the back of the Sanctuary on Sunday. Electronic giving is the easiest way to remember.

Thank You for your ongoing support of the ministry at Bethlehem.

STAR and Bulletin Deadlines

To be sure that your article or announcement is in STAR or Bulletin issue that you want, please note the following deadlines:

STAR: by the third Wednesday of the month
Bulletin: by the Wednesday before each weekend

Submission by email is preferred (admin@bethlehemtc.org) with either the word STAR or Bulletin in the subject line. Please write exactly what you want in the article or announcement. Be sure to include all pertinent information about your event, i.e. dates, time, location, etc. You can put it in the body of the email or as an attachment as a Word doc or a .pdf. Also, please include the month(s) for the STAR issue or the date(s) for the Bulletin issue that you need your article or announcement included. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Oster at admin@bethlehemtc.org. Please note that Barbara shares this email address with the Administrative Assistant, Rebecca, who does not produce the Star.

The BLC book club will meet via ZOOM at 5:30 on Tues, July 27. We will be discussing *The Only Woman in the Room* by Marie Benedict. If you are not already on the list and want to be added to the group for July just send your email to Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net.



A big thank you to all who turned in their Olesons receipts to Bethlehem. We just received a check from them for \$255.62. Please continue to turn in your receipts to church.

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.

Christian Education News

July 2021



Vacation Bible School—a HUGE success!



We had an **AWESOME** day
diving into God's promises
at Great Bible Reef!

Thank you to all our fantastic volunteers 😊

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!!!



Blessed is
the nation
whose God
is the LORD.

Psalms 33:12

Happy Fourth of July!



-Christian Education Committee



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.



We are a church that believes Jesus is God's "Yes" to us. Our lives can be a "Yes" to others.

Today, women represent 70 percent of the world's population living in poverty and are often underserved by a lack of access to education and training.

The ELCA believes the time has come for a strong, strategic emphasis on supporting and empowering international women leaders in the life and development of the church and society.

This year's degree program graduates at ELCA colleges and universities are from: the Mexican Lutheran Church, ELC in Cameroon, ELC Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, Church of Christ in Thailand, and the Lutheran Church of Rwanda.

Through the **International Women Leaders Program**, we are boldly investing in established and emerging women leaders from our global companion churches. Monetary gifts help support the education of 200 additional international women through educational seminars, south-to-south exchanges, in-country study programs, and degree programs at ELCA colleges and universities. Gifts given are invested in the future of women leaders, our companion churches, educational institutions and entire communities.

Join us in God's amazing work. Help us expand opportunities for women across the globe as we strive for a church – and society – built on true gender equity. Learn more about the International Leaders program at: <https://elca.org/iwl>. View the exciting video on-line!

Sacred Grounds Garden Planting



Thanks to our Garden Helpers:

Paul Wiemerslage

Gail Goldsmith

Barbara and Leonard Graf

Laura and Dan Hahn

Paul Ton

Chuck Ardingo

Frank Wall

Jim Hinds

Don Sheehan

Jon Waters



Smiling Faces on Sunday at BLC without masks!



Smiling Faces on Sunday at BLC without masks!



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
Jan Waisanen, Molly Eastman, John Stretlien,
Ben Farley, Jennifer Mowers, George Ammann,
Roy & Marilyn Dumond, Shawn Rivard, Brenda Denoyer,
Betty Evans, Patti McCracken, Jeffrey Hentschel, Jon Waters,
Robert & Carman Waters, Sharon Vanmeter*

Homebound: Marleen Baesch

Traverse Manor: Margie Whitney, Marianne Bradford

Boardman Lake Glens: Inge Thomas, Bill & Dee Springer

Samaritas (Acme): Priscilla Thompson

Grand Traverse Pavilions: Roy Dumond

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.

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: 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	paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org
Admin. Asst. Rebecca Eaton	admin@bethlehemtc.org
Admin. Aide Barbara Oster	admin@bethlehemtc.org
Bookkeeper, Phil Anderson	bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org
, Music Director	
Annie Slabaugh, Youth & Outreach Director	annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org
Website	www.bethlehemtc.org

Church Council

Leonard Graf, President	president.council@bethlehemtc.org
Mark McPherson, Vice President	vicepresident.council@bethlehemtc.org
Gail Goldsmith, Secretary	secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org
, Treasurer	treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org
Jim Monroe, Financial Sec.	financialsecretary.council@bethlehemtc.org
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, 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.



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