

JULY 2020



Bethlehem
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Traverse City, MI 49686
(231) 947-9880

Website: www.bethlehemtc.org
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: 5 pm Celebrate! Worship
Sunday: 8:30 am Traditional Worship
9:45 am Educational 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.”



Dear Bethlehem brothers and sisters in Christ,

As I write you this letter, the number of coronavirus cases in the U.S. has reached its highest single-day total ever. And I did not write this letter in April, my friends, when the shutdowns were at their greatest severity; I am writing this on June 24th, 2020, as the number of new U.S. cases today reached over 40,000. That daunting spike does not currently reflect the state of Michigan, because we took early precautions, though that could change at any time during this “tourist season.” But we know one thing: *we are not “out of the woods” with COVID-19 and will not be for a while.* This perspective has a direct relationship to our plans to keep the church office closed and worship outside and online at BLC for the near future, knowing that Traverse City summers are amazing but do not last forever. More later, but as always, health and safety are our primary concerns.

Many of us have spent time recently reflecting upon what this pandemic culture means for ourselves, our families, our communities, and our faith. I will say more on the faith part later, but the short answer is that we certainly have the proverbial “bad news and good news.” **The bad news is that I believe church as we know it will never be the same. The good news is that I believe church as we know it will never be the same.** In other words, our ultimate situation is only “bad news” if we insist on going back into church buildings too soon, for example, if we dismiss all the massive efforts by churches and other organizations to work (and worship) well safely or remotely, or if we fail to learn from this challenging era and embrace that age-old truth that “the church is not a building...but a people.” And we are a people of boundless hope and resilience!

A piece of this transition that appropriately feels “bad” is the **GRIEF** of not having face-to-face contact with our loved ones, at church and elsewhere. That grief is real and difficult, my friends. We need only harken to the words of Christ – “Do not be afraid” – for **faith and comfort** that our days of isolation are numbered, and that we will emerge with a new appreciation for human contact, both remote/virtual and close/physical.

One specific area of our grief stems from **our sense of vision** as a society and community, which has taken a back seat recently to what we might call “survival mode.” As a church, we have adjusted these last few months in rapid, appropriate and prudent fashion – all with YOUR help (thank you!) I would love to also tell you that Bethlehem has a team of people “ready to go” and that we are “on track” for continuing the vision momentum we began in 2019. But we do not, and in some ways we *should not*. Though Council has come together to support our re-opening phases (see next page), our views may vary on our how our sense of vision should move forward. It is my belief as your pastor that *jumping head-first into full-scale visioning during this volatile and frankly exhausting time would be a misuse of our efforts for the next few months.* Recent articles by ministry consultants like Carey Nieuwhof (see an example in the July STAR) tell us clearly that one of the “Ways to Blow It” in ministry right now is to either “play the short game” with no vision beyond the week, or dive back into the same kind of long-term visioning we did prior to the virus. Many leaders say our next 6-12 months will almost surely have a steady stream of curveballs from the virus and other external forces. Instead, such times of rapid, unprecedented and unpredictable change require churches who want to survive and *thrive* to do something different, something for which we fortunately have plenty of practice...**pivoting**.

Bethlehem has the advantage of recent pivots to build upon, like our Y2A/internship discernment, Real Church Virtual additions and Worship Renewal Task Force efforts. Pivoting will take a team of thinkers who can balance immediate needs with the less-than-long term. Two pivot points we do well to examine this year are **(1) returning to the merits of this spring’s Saturday/weekend worship conversation**, and **(2) investing further in worship technology and help**, especially live-streaming, so BLC can stay relevant on the web. In hindsight, coronavirus forced us to do what we probably should have done 5 years ago in that arena: get online and stay there...even as we phase back to live, in-person gatherings. For years, our shut-ins have only had access to audio recordings of worship; that has now changed, and with the proper “pivots” we can get where we need to be. With your help, *I hope soon to assemble what we might call a “Listen/Pivot Team,”* as our leaders take a

deep breath from “crisis mode,” zero in on appropriate pivots, and assemble the right team to re-engage with the synod’s REVIVE program (also currently in limbo), but in a way we might now call **“Pivot...then Vision.”**

In the meantime, **we share with all churches looking for ways to re-open safely and responsibly.** Our phased approach below offers us more ways to gather together as the weeks progress, and also stay connected virtually/online for those who cannot safely gather...as long as we can sustainably do so*.

Starting this coming weekend, June 28th, 2020, we will be entering Phase 3 of our re-opening together:

- **Sundays at 9am (online): “Real Church Virtual”** LiveWatch on Facebook; notice one hour earlier
- **Sundays at 9:45 (online): Zoom Fellowship***, also an hour earlier, led by Annie
- **Sundays at 10:15 (live, in-person at BLC): “Parking Lot Worship”** with participants in cars, led by pastor and musicians, and broadcast via 99.7 FM on your radio dial. P.L. Communion held after worship...
- **Sundays at 11am: “Parking Lot Communion”** with drivers from Parking Lot Worship ushered into communion as desired, after 10:15 worship ends around 11am.
- ***Wednesday content: Re-airing Sunday worship at 7pm on Facebook LiveWatch, followed by 7pm Zoom Fellowship;** this content will change soon**, however, to reflect alternative worship styles like Holden Evening Prayer, and more later if able.

We are calling **the next few phases of re-opening, especially our new Wednesday content, “2.0”. Moving forward, 2.0 would be blessed by varied musicians, leaders and readers, some who might feel more comfortable, for example, reading in front of a camera than a group of live churchgoers by sending a simple audio or video file reading a lesson for a “2.0” Holden service aired on Facebook or Youtube. *You might say this is another way church may be forever inspired and altered by the things we have learned in our Covid-19 era.*

We hope Phase 4 of re-opening will soon follow on Sunday, July 19th - changed items in bold:

- Sundays at 9am (online): “Real Church Virtual” LiveWatch on Facebook
- Sundays at 9:45 (online): Zoom Fellowship*, led by Annie
- **Sundays at 10:15 (live, in-person at BLC): “Green Space Worship” with “Bring Your Own Chair” seating on the West Lawn at Bethlehem, led by pastor and musicians, over our outside sound system; also broadcast via 99.7 FM on your radio dial. Communion held after worship...Worshipping outside will also allow us all to sing safely, as worshippers inside buildings are advised by health officials to avoid singing and spreading potential virus particles in enclosed spaces. This is a big consideration.**
- **Sundays at 11am: “Parking Lot Communion” with participants in Green Space Worship given communion, as others too share Eucharist in the Parking Lot, after 10:15 worship ends, around 11am.**
- **Wednesday content: New “2.0” Holden Evening Prayer airing Wednesdays at 7pm on Facebook LiveWatch in mid-July, followed by 7pm Facebook Live with Zoom Fellowship.**

Finally, unlike many churches, Bethlehem has not included “virtual offering invites” during our online worship services, but our Stewardship Committee gently reminds us all that **Bethlehem needs your financial support now more than ever.** Bookkeeper Phil Anderson has noted a slight (5%) decrease in offerings, which may be due to summer travel and other factors. We encourage you to please be mindful of all the areas we currently support, as well as the likely surge in expenses we will incur as we hopefully phase into the eventual “new normal” (Phase 5) beyond the summer months. And so we proceed, friends, with an unwavering faith, hope, mutual care, safety and confidence...together!

Much peace to you all, and God bless.

Pastor Paul and BLC Leadership

Summertime is Here Congregational Meeting is Scheduled

Greetings to All,

As I write this, we have just had a wonderful summer like week. Our garden is planted and flowers are starting to bloom. All our outdoor projects are in full swing. As the State starts to slowly open up perhaps life can finally feel a little more normal.

Although we have had to make some adjustments this year, our Congregational Meeting is scheduled to take place on July 12th right after service. This year we will be holding our meeting outdoors following all State and CDC requirements that are in place on the July 12th date. We know that things can change from week to week so are asking everyone to please come prepared to keep each other safe. We will keep seats distanced appropriately and chairs that we use will be cleaned before and after our meeting.

If meeting outdoors is not possible, we will hold the meeting in the Fellowship Hall. At this time, we will have to limit the number of people in the Fellowship Hall to 50, however, things can change and we will adapt to whatever the number is on the day of the meeting. If we are in the Fellowship Hall, chairs will be spaced properly, masks will be required and chairs will be cleaned before and after the meeting.

We will move the meeting along as we will be voting on new members for our Mission Endowment Committee, Sustaining Endowment Committee and Church Council.

We know it has been somewhat challenging to put everything together this year and we appreciate your patience as we try to work with an ever changing landscape. We know everyone has different thoughts and concerns but we are doing our best to keep everyone safe as we slowly reopen.

Thanks to everyone, enjoy your summer and we hope to see you on July 12th.

Be Safe Until We Meet Again,
Chuck

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Traverse City, Michigan
"We Journey with God to serve with Love."

Minutes from the Virtual via Zoom Church Council Meeting of May 19, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Tim Fox, Secretary, at 6:22 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER: Pastor Paul Busekist

ROLL CALL: Tim Fox, Secretary: In attendance: Pastor Paul Busekist, Phil Anderson, Jan Stretlien, Nancy Downer, Cindy Monroe, Mark McPherson, Jim Monroe, Katie Fox, Annie Slabaugh, Paul Wiemerslage and Tim Fox. Excused Absence: Chuck Ardingo and Leonard Graf.

VISITOR/S OR CONGREGATIONAL COMMENT: None.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: A motion to approve the agenda for the 05/19/2020 Council Meeting, motion to approve by Mark McPherson, seconded by Jan Stretlien, motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM April 21, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING: Motion to approve the minutes as amended by Phil Anderson, seconded by Mark McPherson. Motion carried. Please note, this was the approval of the 04/21/2020 Council Meeting Minutes as we didn't have a quorum at the 03/17/2020 Council Meeting to approve the minutes, therefore, there were no "official minutes" for the 03/17/2020 meeting only notes.

REPORTS:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Chuck Ardingo, President: No report as Chuck had an excused absence. Tim Fox, Secretary chaired the meeting in Chuck's absence.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor Paul Busekist: 1) Pastor stated that he would reserve his time for the New Business section of the meeting to discuss the "New Normal" Workgroup Talking Points. This group has had two meetings thus far and the last meeting being May 18th. 2) Pastor mentioned that during the Covid-19 times he has been working from home and his work computer is now 11 years old and will need to be replaced as his current computer would not handle some of the software upgrades that could be coming in the near future. He stated that his current computer is worth a small amount of money to help offset the new computer purchase costs. Phil Anderson asked about what type/make of computer Pastor would be looking at and the answer being, undecided at this time.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Katie Fox: Prior to the meeting Katie provided Council with her financial reports as of the end of April 2020. 1) Katie stated: April 2020 Financial Results: April income of \$39,533 was \$6,419 over budgeted income of \$33,114. April expenses of \$25,329 was \$10,118 under budgeted expense of \$35,447. This under budget expense number was attributed to expenses that will actually fall in the May numbers and some into the latter part of the year. April was budgeted to have a deficit of \$2,334, but BLC had a surplus of \$17,642. 2) YTD 2020 Financial Results: YTD income of \$130,315 was \$1,137 under budgeted income of 131,452. YTD expense of \$121,738 was \$16,896 behind budgeted expense of \$138,634. YTD, we budgeted to have a deficit of \$7,182 as of the end of April. We ended April with a surplus of \$8,577 which means we are \$15,579 ahead of where we budgeted to be at this point in time. The size of this surplus is partially misleading as we have a few large expenses that will be hitting in May, as previously mentioned, (heat, Synod payment, etc.) and staff wage increases which will be charged later in the year.

CONSENT CALENDAR: COMMITTEE REPORTS: The committee reports are: Financial Secretary's Report, Christian Care Report, 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. Zoom subscription, staff raises and others. 1) Regarding the Zoom or WebEx subscription a couple of donors have stepped forward to cover the costs for the one-year subscription. The staff raises were tabled at this time. Others: also tabled at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. **QUARTERLY DONATION OPTIONS: NON-ELCA DONATION:** Phil Anderson, bookkeeper asked for a recommendation. Cindy Monroe motioned to make the donation to Northwest Michigan Supportive Housing, to aid the homeless. The amount of donation \$500.00. Seconded by Pastor Paul. Motion carried.
- B. **MUSICIAN RATES: (ADJUSTING TO ONLINE SERVICES):** This topic was tabled at this meeting.
- C. **RESTARTING WORSHIP: (PLAN AND DISCUSSION, LIVESTREAM):** Pastor Paul led this item on the agenda. 1) Pastor spoke of the "New Normal" Workgroup talking points from their first 2 meetings. Talking points discussed; a) Not opening immediately and not meeting in the building but outside meeting to start. b) social distancing and masks, the need of both, c) no use of BLC building, d) continue virtual service for the entire summer, e) no live worship in rainy/inclement weather, f) "Parking Lot Eucharist", g) bring your own lawn chair, h) video-taping portions of the Sunday outdoor worship for "Virtual 2.0" on Wednesday nights, I) using an FM transmitter for listening to the service from your car in the parking lot for those uncomfortable in meeting in group, j) one live, in-person worship service per-weekend through the summer.

2) Pastor mentioned “residual concerns”, a) retaining Renegade Films LLC throughout the summer, b) getting a vision/strategy for livestreaming and c) maintaining/revisiting worship diversity when the dust settles. Pastor asked for feedback on the above talking points and residual concerns. Tim Fox asked that all of Council review the handout Pastor presented and to please respond with their comments. 3) There was discussion of having our first service in June on the 14th but that will depend on the Governor’s order. 4) A donation was received of \$750.00 to be used to pay Renegade Films, LLC for their continued work during this time. A motion was made by Nancy Downer to pay Renegade \$50.00 per weekend for the next 15 weekends for their work. These 15 weekend payments would equal the \$750.00. Seconded by Cindy Monroe. Motion carried.

D. JUNE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: A tentative date of June 21st was set at this time, but, again, it will depend on the Governor’s order.

VISITOR OR CONGRESSIONAL COMMENT: None.

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

LORD’S PRAYER: The Lord’s Prayer was said by all.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Leonard Graf and seconded by Mark McPherson, motion carried. Adjournment at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Fox, Council Secretary

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

Hello Bethlehem! The sun is shining and we're a month into summer. Although this July is still going to be different from years past we've still got a jam packed summer!

JULY HAPPENINGS ...

We are still holding our **Youth Groups** this summer. When we are able to get back into the church building more, this plan will be adjusted but for now we will plan on this. What we will be doing during these nights is still up in the air so stay tuned!

The **Middle/Junior High School Group** will have Youth Night on **Wednesday July 8th**.

The **High School Group** will have Youth Night on **Saturday July 18th**.

The **BLUES Group** will have Youth Night earlier this month than normal. This will be on **Friday July 24th**.

I am also still offering **One on Ones** to all of the youth in a virtual capacity. These can be done and be arranged when it is convenient for you and your families! Just reach out to me if you are interested and we can figure out a time.

BIBLE STORIES is still going strong and has been a lot of fun so far! It's still taking place **every Monday Night at 6PM on Zoom until Monday August 31st**. Kids will log on to join their favorite Bible Story characters as they tell their stories in a fun-filled interactive virtual experience.

Register at: myvbs.org/blcbiblestories/ or reach out to me personally to receive the weekly zoom link!

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

As we go into July I ask that you keep Bethlehem's children and their families in your prayers. That they are enjoying their summer and doing God's work!

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."
(2 Corinthians 3:17)

Cheerfully in Christ,
Annie Slabaugh

Director of Youth and Outreach/ Bethlehem Lutheran Church/Traverse City



May 2020 Financial Results:

May income of \$29,157 was \$3,219 under budgeted income of \$32,376.

May expense of \$28,338 was \$4,313 under budgeted expense of \$32,651.

May was budgeted to have a deficit of \$275, but BLC actually reported a surplus of \$819.

YTD 2020 Financial Results:

YTD income of \$161,214 is \$2,614 under budgeted income of \$163,828.

YTD expense of \$154,309 was \$16,977 behind budgeted expense of \$171,285.

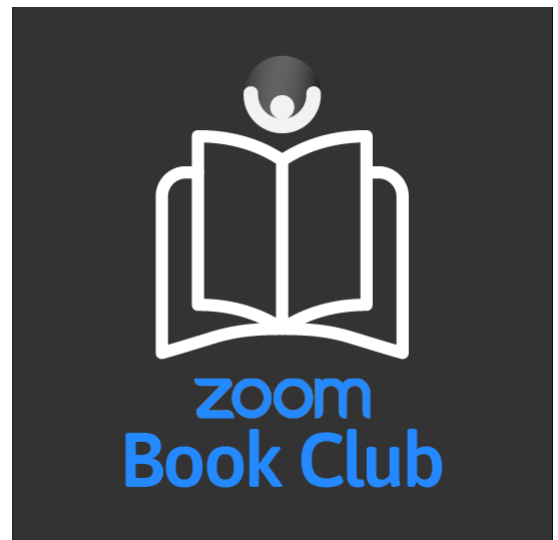
YTD BLC budgeted to have a deficit of \$7,457 through the end of May. We ended May with a surplus of \$6,905 which means we are \$14,362 ahead of where we budgeted to be at this point in time.

The family of Hazel Lautner would like to thank the congregation for the cards, prayers, and kind words we received from them. Mom was an amazing person, and we were privileged to have her as our mother.



BLC Book Club continues to ZOOM away the summer

By the time you read this the BLC book club will have successfully completed 2 discussions via ZOOM. Some of us just could not wait until we are all physically in the same room. (And this way we don't have to drive anywhere.) You too can participate when we connect again on Tuesday, July 28 to discuss One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Yes, it is a classic! It is our one book this year that we selected from a list of top 100 books. Even if you only saw the movie, if you want to share with us and are not on our regular email list, just send your email to cmonroe@chartermi.net and be ready to participate that night. You will be sent the contact information for ZOOM in advance. If you want to think towards the future our book for August is The Tattooist of Auschwitz by Heather Morris. Hope to see you on the screen.



STAR delivery

Hasn't it been a blessing to have the STAR delivered to your home the past few months? Thanks so much to 2 cherished members who dedicated their time and monetary donation so this could occur. While we continue to have limited/reduced weekend services the membership committee is proposing the following: The STAR will be available for dispersal the first Sunday of the month. For those of you who can make it to the weekend service you will be asked to pick-up your paper STAR. Or, if you prefer to read yours on-line you will be asked to notify the committee. Committee members will mark off those who have received their STAR so paper copies will only be sent to those who do not have one. This way we can make certain that everyone is receiving all of the Hot-off-the-press news and also do this in the most cost-effective manner. Hope to see as many of you as possible on the first Sunday of the month.

Share your name please

Some of us are finding that not seeing an entire face and dealing with sunglasses causes us to have more difficulty knowing and calling other BLC members by name. If you enjoy being greeted by name please consider placing your name on your dashboard while drive-through communion is occurring. If you have an extra name tag at home you may want to consider wearing it when green space services occur. And please be sure to wear your name tag when the time comes to re-enter church.

The Joke is on me from Cindy Monroe

You may have read the blog entry I wrote for June 6 which told about the amazing masks which were donated to our church by the daughter of one of our members. These are at church in case someone forgets theirs or comes unprepared. On each mask there were wonderful designs which I described as a paisley or Jonah, the whale. Well now I know that the joke is on me. When the masks are open and on a person it is apparent that the "design" is an old time curly moustache. I never even thought of such a thing. And of course....they are perfect moustaches! If you see someone wearing one, be sure to smile and have an extra chuckle at my expense.

Courtesy Church Callers

Your membership/evangelism committee was working behind the scenes during this unbelievable time with a group of volunteers to make certain that everyone who considers themselves a member was contacted by Bethlehem. Our goal was simply to make certain that everyone was doing "ok" out there. If you did not receive a phone call or voice mail or email it may mean that your church does not have your current information. Please call the church office (231-947-9880) and leave a message with your current phone number or email (admin@bethlehemtc.org) so that records can be updated. Thanks!



Christian Education News

July 2020



**“Behold,
I have engraved you
on the palms
of My hands...”
(Isaiah 49:16)**

We are fervently praying each and every day for our precious Sunday School children and their families!

Jesus loves you VERY much, and so do we!!!

Have you joined us yet?

BLC Bible Stories

Each week, your children can meet and interact with a different Bible character! Runs all summer 6/08 to 8/31

Preregistration is required
Please see the BLC website for full details, or contact Annie ☺





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

ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.

During these troubling times, ELCA Global Mission is offering “food for thought,” discussion and action regarding Covid-19 and anti-Racism

Addressing anti-Asian racism and white supremacy *“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ”* (Ephesians 4:15). May is **Asian and Pacific Islander American Heritage Month**.

In the wake of rising anti-Asian racism in the United States, the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, executive director for Global Mission, offered this teaching: “Scapegoating is not a Christian virtue. In the community of Jesus we don’t blame one another. We speak ‘the truth in love,’ always seeking to understand the other, to build relationships of trust and to live together as Jesus taught us.

“Amid this COVID-19 pandemic we come together to lend a hand to the neighbor in need, those close to us and the ones far away. Together the human global family works to find a vaccine and to support those who are experiencing undue hardships and suffering. No one is responsible for the emergence of this virus. All of us are responsible for fighting it.”

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton recently issued a pastoral message on COVID-19, racism and white supremacy. This is a portion of her message.

“We are a nation in distress. We are a church in distress. The coronavirus has killed 118,000+ of us. The virus of racism has taken hundreds of thousands more throughout our history. Now these two deadly viruses converge. Under this distress the veneer of equality has cracked and we see the pain, anger and frustration of those who have been denied the rights and dignity so many of us expect and often take for granted.

“I have heard it said that slavery ended with the Civil War. Why don’t people of color ‘just get over it.’ Here is the question we need to ask, ‘How do you get over something that isn’t over?’ The extrajudicial killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd that we have seen have laid open the wound in our country that has never been fully dealt with and has never healed. The officer’s knee suffocating the life out of George Floyd ‘reminds us that blatant acts of intimidation, hatred, and violence continue’ (ELCA social statement, *Freed in Christ*).

“Continued peaceful protests, vigils and demonstrations are not only legitimate but essential to move this country and this church to honest and deep self-examination. Just as the body of Christ is COVID positive, so is the body of Christ infected with racism and white supremacy. We cannot turn away from this truth. To deny it is dishonest and dangerous. . . .”

STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

The following article is from the “HomeTouch” publication that Suzanne sends to the Bethlehem home-bound members each week. I felt it had a very good stewardship message.

Boston Symphony Hall was packed for a performance of the Handel and Haydn Society. The program for this particular night in May, 2019 featured “Mozart’s Funeral Music”. The audience loved it. So they were ready to applaud when the final notes died away. The conductor’s baton was still raised -- but before the audience could start applauding, a little kid said, “Wow!”

The acoustics are great in Boston Symphony Hall. Everyone heard it.

According to CBS Sunday Morning, the conductor, Harry Christophers, sent emails to the attendees in an attempt to find the child. An online search began and eventually the child was found. He was Ronan Martin, 9, and he attended the concert with his grandfather, Stephen.

Ronan is on the autism scale and “doesn’t spontaneously come out with a lot of expressions on how he is feeling,” said his grandfather. His breathtaking “wow” therefore takes on even greater significance. David Snead, the president and CEO of the Handel and Haydn Society, said that “the boy brought so much joy to the entire audience.”

And how did the conductor react to the child? “It changed my life,” he said.

Ronan’s “wow” and the conductor’s response set me to thinking. Looking out my window at the pine trees as the sunshine glides down their massive trunks -- is this not worthy of a daily “wow”?

Yet, not everyone has a pine tree outside their window. What if you’re looking at a parking lot? Perhaps you don’t have a window in your room.

From whence do the “wows” of our lives come?

Ultimately, the wonder, the amazement, the joy, the wows of life come from God. Every blessing, large or small, is a God-given wow-moment in which to offer praise.

Ronan has challenged me to take note of my surroundings and express an appreciative wow; I am hopeful this will change my life.

Melanie Silva

Perhaps we too can be more noticeable of the “wows” in our lives as we have so much to be thanking and praising God for - in our church, church family, our country, and the beautiful area in which we are so fortunate to live. May our “wow” moments create “Wow” moments in those around us and may our “wows” also be reflected in our generosity to God and to others.

In this time of “social distancing” it is even more important to find a way to find a way to connect with others. Your membership/evangelism committee would like to highlight members who are willing to share something about their life outside of church. Some of you may recall Pastor Paul mentioning at the beginning of a service that Karen Feahr is a volunteer DJ. Fascinating!! And Karen was willing to share a little about her path to this position.

“The show is called 'Further Along' because it comes after a radio show called 'Traditional Jazz' that plays jazz from the beginning through the 1940's. My show starts with jazz from the 1950's and continues with jazz through today. I started last year by listening to the Jazz music played on WNMC, 90.7 FM, the Northwestern Michigan College station. I've always loved jazz from the 50's and the 60's because that's what my parents played at home when I was a child.



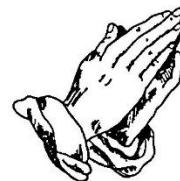
I like to volunteer for things to find out more about them. It drew me to become a DJ but also to honor my nephew who died in an accident five years ago when he was only 42. He was a volunteer radio DJ in Seattle and also in Ann Arbor at college stations. I remember thinking it was very cool when he first told me he had a radio show. I guess that stuck with me, so years later I put my love of jazz together with my love and admiration for my nephew and became a jazz DJ.

The 'Further Along' radio show is on every other Sunday from 2-5 PM. On rare occasions I trade with my partner and the schedule shifts but this is the current schedule:

July 5, July 19, August 2, August 16, August 30.”

Thank you Karen for being the first one willing to share your story. Please contact Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net if you have a story you would like to share, or if you know someone at BLC you think would have a good story to share.

Health Concerns*



The Power of Prayer

*Richard Fernholz, Nancy Smith, Tom Miller, Margie Whitney, Jo Hasse,
Ellie Tacke, Bev Attwood, Priscilla Thompson,
Marleen Baesch, Alvin Kober,, Lynn Hoyt, Thad Hellenga,
Jan Waisanen, Molly Eastman, Harper Wiemerslage,
Ben Farley, Jennifer Mowers, Emily Wilson, Doris Weller,
Roy & Marilyn Dumond, and Brenda Denoyer*

Grand Traverse Pavilions: Bev Attwood

Homebound: Marleen Baesch

Traverse Manor: Margie Whitney, Marianne Bradford

French Manor LaFranier: Jo Hasse

Boardman Lake Glens: Inge Thomas, Bill & Dee Springer, Emily Wilson

Samaritas (Acme): Priscilla Thompson

Cherry Hill Haven: Jerrie Boike

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**

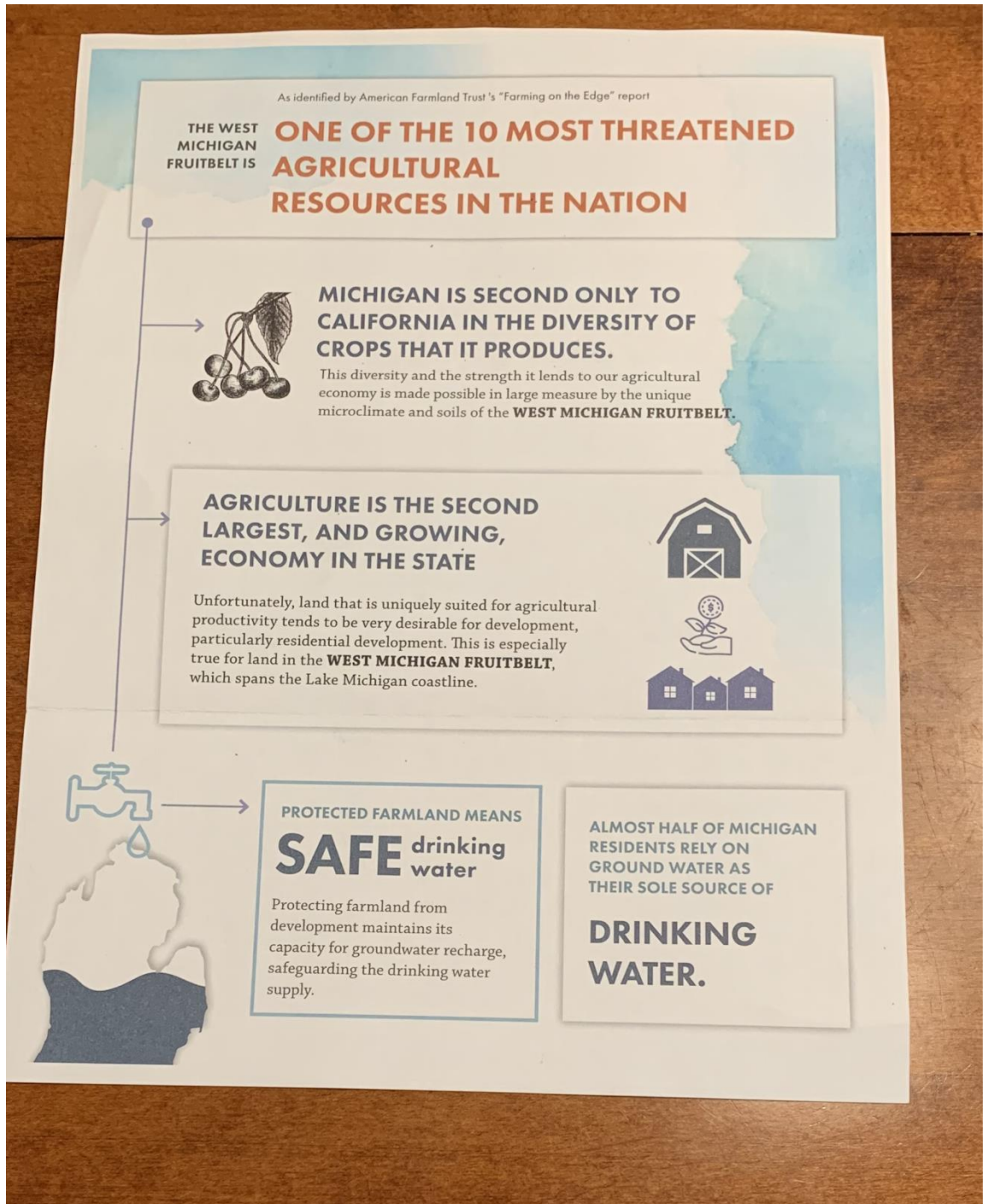
***If you would like your name, or the name of a loved one, to appear on this list which appears here and in the weekly bulletin, please call the church office at 947-9880.**

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...

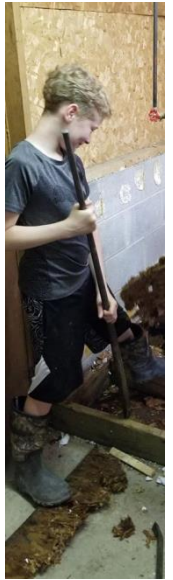
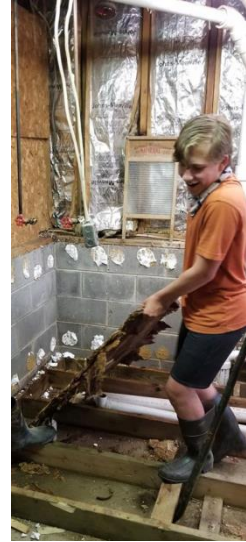
HONORING GOD'S CREATION



Please send any suggestions that could be printed in a later edition of the Star to Barbara Oster (admin@bethlehemtc.org) or Judy Strickland. (judytorch@gmail.com).

Parking Lot Communion





BLC Volunteers

At work

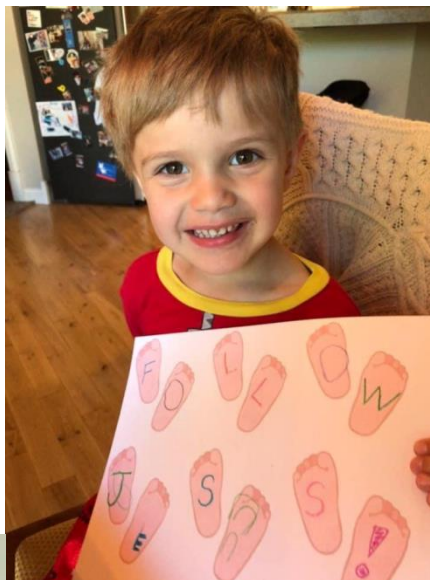
Cleaning up after

The flooding near Midland

Great Job! Thanks for
coming out!!



VBS Bible Stories included crafts
Looks like the kids had fun



BLC friends, when I came across this piece online, I knew I wanted to share it with you...It is written by ministry consultant Carey Nieuwhof, who offers a refreshingly honest group of challenges to churches so we can choose hope over complacency, and be invigorated instead of overwhelmed. **He uses double-negatives in the subtitles to be provocative**, which almost prompted me to add or remove a “Don’t” before each statement (Hint: He does *not* want churches to “play the short game.”)

There are also links embedded into the online version (see <https://careynieuwhof.com/8-easy-ways-to-blow-it-in-this-next-season-of-ministry/>) for more resources and articles, which I encourage you to check out. As I stated in my STAR letter, the hope is for Bethlehem to begin exploring good “pivots” very soon, then re-entering the visioning process (late in 2020 or early 2021?), when have taken a deep breath from our Covid-19 journey and can move with confidence and faithfulness into the future.

Shalom, and happy reading!

- Pastor Paul

★★

8 EASY WAYS TO BLOW IT IN THIS NEXT SEASON OF MINISTRY

The good news is it feels like we’re entering a new season of leadership and ministry. Although the coronavirus is still with us, churches and businesses are reopening and things that weren’t possible a month or two ago are now possible again.

That’s the good news. The bad news is that the new season is perhaps even more complicated than the season of crisis we just left. And it’s way more complicated than having a second wave of the virus (as serious as that might be). I also realize you’re likely tempted to stop reading right here. After all, you really can’t handle *one more person* saying more change is ahead. I get it. Some days, neither can I. We’re all more than a little fatigued, frazzled and irritated. And everybody (including me) is long for some semblance of normal. Everything in you wants to go back to as much normal as you can possibly find. And that would be great, if it wasn’t also deadly.



Carey Nieuwhof (careynieuwhof.com)

When change is as profound and disruptive as what we’re going through right now, this next season isn’t a finish line, it’s a start line. Right now, every church is a startup and if you see it that way, you can advance your mission. There are so many people to reach, and an entire next generation in need of the Gospel. And as hard as it is to hear, the next season will probably require more leadership from you, not less.

But, because of deep fatigue, a longing for normal and a hope that all the problems go away, too many church leaders will default into managing what *was* rather than leading into what *will be*— trying to bring the past back, to normalize ministry and to recreate what was lost rather than moving ahead into a new future. But your work is too important to do that. You know it. I know it. For all of those reasons and more, it’s just far too easy to blow it in this next season of ministry and leadership.

Here are 8 easy ways to [go wrong]:

1. DON’T TAKE TIME OFF TO RESTORE YOURSELF

I was going to put this last, but let’s lead with it instead and call an audible...

The reason you don't want to read this post, let alone act on it, is because you're tired. I get it. This has been a very tiring season. And one of the biggest mistakes you can make is to not take time off to restore yourself. While this isn't a clinical definition, having burned out years ago, I'm sensing three levels of weariness in myself and amongst other leaders right now:

Tired, Fatigued, and Exhausted.

Tired responds quickly to cause and effect. You put in a long, hard day, you eat well, get some exercise and get some sleep, and soon you bounce back. If not the next day, then shortly thereafter.

Fatigued is a level of weariness beyond just tired. Fatigue will respond to stimulus (sleep, rest, diet, exercise, prayer) but it just takes longer. You're not burning out, but there's a slow drain going on that you really can't ignore.

Exhausted is a place you find yourself in where you're more than just tired or fatigued. The recovery is longer, harder and you need more time for restoration. It can easily lead to burnout if you let it ([here are 11 signs you may be burning out – link found in online version](#)).

Again, those aren't clinical definitions, but I hope they're helpful definitions. The point is regardless of which stage you're at, you need time to truly restore yourself this summer. The more tired you are, the more intentional your plan for recovery should be.

So what's your plan? If in fact you're going into a prolonged season of uncertainty and dislocation, you need stamina for the long haul. Maybe the best thing you can do as a response to this post and the challenges ahead is to book some downtime and then figure out a sustainable pace that will take you through the next few years...**If self-care is important in normal times, it's 10x more important now.**

And please hear me...the work you're doing is so important, and you want to be well and stay well for the road ahead. Because, as you know, the work is both important *and* challenging. Which leads us to the second way to blow it in the next season of leadership.

2. LET YOUR FATIGUE DRIVE YOUR DECISIONS

Your level of fatigue as a leader impacts more than you and your family. It also impacts your organization.

Why? Well, it can be so easy to let your fatigue drive your decision making. You avoid the hard decisions, take the complicated things off the agenda and go into robot mode or stick with what you know because it's just, well, easier. So how do you counter that?

The best way to gain energy for the decisions you know you need to make is to simplify your model of ministry. If you only do a few things and do them well, you'll be able to put most of your energy into the things that need it most, rather than diffusing it across a dozen things. Think about it this way: Doing the right thing, even if it's the hard thing, ultimately energizes you.

Taking the path of least resistance ultimately drains you when you discover you've lost ground and grown irrelevant and ineffective. Hint: **in leadership, the right thing is almost always the hard thing.** So get some good rest, and then rally the team and do the things you know you need to do.

3. PLAY THE SHORT GAME

Another easy way to blow it in leadership is to play the short game.

The short game right now probably looks like this: get back to normal as quickly as possible with in-person services and pick up where you left off or recreate what you lost. What's even more challenging is that for a meaningful percentage of churches, online attendance is up and so is giving, or at least it's steady.

That kind of success or stability will keep your focus on the short game while you ignore the tectonic shifts happening in culture.

The long game is about preparing your church to reach unchurched people in the future...And that's as complex and challenging as it sounds. **So many of the methods the church has used broke long before COVID. Trying to resurrect them isn't going to resurrect your church for the long term.**

4. IGNORE VOLUNTEERS

Because most churches were staffed and programmed for in-person ministry, one of the thing that went dormant almost instantly was the volunteer corp at most churches.

When church went online, what used to take dozens or hundreds of people to run suddenly only took a handful. As a result, many churches have dozens (or hundreds or thousands) of volunteers who haven't served in months. **Many early indications are that many volunteers, worried about the virus and having swapped a 5 hour Sunday commitment for a 1 hour Sunday commitment, [like many others, might not return \(link found in online version\)](#).**

Connecting with your volunteers, encouraging them to serve in their community and remobilizing them even before you need them will prepare you for a strong future.

5. ASSUME FAMILIES ARE JUST FINE

I realize it's been a crisis, so it's understandable that many leaders haven't had the bandwidth to think about volunteers. But there's another group that probably needs your attention: families.

Families will likely not be the first to return to in-person services because of a variety of factors, not the least of which is the lack of kids ministry upon re-opening in many cases.

[Frank and Jessica Bealer](#), who have served at several mega-churches, including Elevation Church, have some very powerful and insightful ideas and strategies about how to come alongside families who attend in person and those who attend online in these unusual times.

You can [listen to the conversation they had with David Kinnaman and me here](#). [\(link found in online version\)](#).

Just know this: **ignoring families tends to produce less effective ministry than serving them does.**

6. DON'T REPOSITION YOUR STAFF

The staffing structure you had heading into the crisis is likely not the staffing structure you need heading into the future.

Why? Well, when things change, you need to change too. Most churches are currently staffed for in-person ministry, and that's about it. As complex as in-person ministry is right now, online church is probably a big part of the future. And if that's the case, how are you positioned for it?

Tagging it onto your creative team's job description or handing it to a 19-year-old volunteer is probably not a great long term strategy. Further, it's probably going to require a skillset you may not have on your current team. So recruiting volunteers and staff around that is wise.

So is allocating some of your budget. **Most churches spend 99% of their budget on in-person ministry. If everyone you want to reach is online, you may want to rethink that.**

7. PUT ONLINE ON AUTOPILOT

Most churches have made significant progress with their online ministry: either they've started one or seen the existing online outreach and ministry grow. That's incredible.

And right now, the big temptation is to leave all that on auto-pilot as assume it will grow automatically. Which of course, as soon as you say it out loud, you realize won't happen.

When you invest in digital ministry, you're investing in the future and in reaching the world.

8. PUT ALL YOUR FOCUS ON SUNDAY

In the early days of the crisis, churches were trying all kinds of things online. Maybe you've noticed too. Almost everyone has pivoted back to focusing only on Sunday.

For all the reasons already listed in this post (especially fatigue), that's understandable. It's also a mistake. For the first time in history, online ministry allows church leaders to come alongside people 7 days a week in an easy, accessible way.

I've written about this extensively elsewhere, but [church-in-a-box was already past its expiry date](#). Returning your focus to one day—Sunday—and taking your eye off of all the other opportunities positions your church for the past, not for the future.

Here are [some ideas on the future church \(link found in online version\)](#). **In the future, churches will shift their focus from Sunday to every day, because people need to find faith and live out their faith every day.**

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Smile. God loves you.😊

Shalom, and do not be afraid.



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