

AUGUST 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 Education Hour

11 am Modern Worship

TBD

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.”

Friends of Bethlehem,

As I write this pastor's article, Bethlehem is deep in the process of discerning "what's next" in our ever-changing world and church together. When Bethlehem's building first shut its doors to worship and regular office use way back in mid-March, none of us thought we would still be in this position nearly 5 months later.

But here we are, brothers and sisters. **Please take comfort that we have not sat idly, as the church is reinventing itself in real time.** Yes, we "went virtual" right off the bat, which helped carry us through Holy Week and beyond. The skills and means of reaching others electronically both near and far will be in some ways "here to stay," even as we do reach our "new normal" with a greater sense of stability. So, you might say that church as we knew it will never quite be the same again. If that is true, my friends, that reality can be full of blessings and promise...despite the challenges and and difficulties of the day. For example, in the case of a blizzard in the winter, we now have a way to worship! 😊

I would also like to share with you something that I check everyday now (in addition to the news); it is a website called www.covidbystate.org, and I encourage you all to check it out. On this site, you can compare the trends of the virus in every state to Michigan. I took the liberty of **taking a snapshot of Michigan as of Friday, July 31st**, compared to states like Arizona and Florida (which did not "peak early" like Michigan, but are now quite high in cases.) This chart also compares us to other states which, like Michigan, peaked early but are now doing much better than we are (i.e. New York and New Jersey). Illinois, you might say, is more of a "peer" to us in its trajectory. These numbers and graphs are helpful, so we can understand the seriousness of prevention and precaution (masks, distancing, etc) and provide context to why it seems that "the goal posts keep changing" in our state. Bethlehem leadership has determined thus far that safety is our top priority, so we are doing all that we can to make sure our worship is outside for as long as the warmer weather will bear, and safe when we determine we can go back into the building. That old adage that "the church is not a building but a people" is true as ever!

More to come, and may God's peace be with you always!

-Pr. Paul



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

Minutes from the Virtual via Zoom Church Council Meeting of June 16, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Chuck Ardingo, President, at 6:03 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER: Pastor Paul Busekist: Romans 3 Verses 1-8

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

VISITOR/S OR CONGREGATIONAL COMMENT: None.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: A motion to approve the agenda for the 06/16/2020 Council Meeting, motion to approve by Cindy Monroe, seconded by Chuck Ardingo, motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM May 19, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING: Motion to approve the minutes by Mark McPherson, seconded by Cindy Monroe. Motion carried.

REPORTS:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Chuck Ardingo: 1) Chuck mentioned that he was unable or slow to respond during the past month to emails, texts or phone calls as his daughter gave birth to a baby girl and his daughter had some complications. Chuck reported that both mother and daughter are doing fine now. 2) Chuck thanked the Council for their support as he is leaving Council as his 3 year term has ended. 3) Chuck then asked that the next Council ensure that they work toward always a balance budget, as we as a Church are living off the money of others. 4) Chuck mentioned that we as BLC need to work on outreach ministry, with examples of Safe Harbor or during the Covid-19 times reaching out to our community. 5) Chuck stated that he felt BLC's Vision Committee has been a "no show". He feels that there is no vision and that there is no reason for that to happen at BLC.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor Paul Busekist: 1) Pastor stated that he is glad Chuck's daughter and granddaughter are doing well. 2) Pastor addressed his thoughts on vision and that the Covid-19 issues has caused a slowdown and we owe the Congregation to get back on track with our Vision. 3) Pastor then thanked Chuck for his service as President this past year and Vice President for the two prior years. And of course, all of the other work that Chuck does for BLC. 4) Pastor then mentioned the staffing of BLC and that though mainly working from home all are busy and that Pastor is wearing many hats during these Covid-19 times. 5) Pastor stated that he will be working from home the next couple of months and has his work computer at home. He asked if he could purchase his outdated work computer from the Church and it was agreed to sell for \$1.00, as the computer not capable of handling any upgrades that will be needed in the future. Pastor was also given permission by Council to start looking for a new office computer and start the purchase process. 6) Pastor talked about the use of the BLC building and that any groups, baby pantry, driver education must follow the rules from Council and only use the Fellowship Hall and bathrooms near the Fellowship Hall. 7) Pastor stated that there will be virtual worship throughout the summer. 8) Pastor reported that we had 55 participants during the Communion in the parking lot and in car. 9) Pastor stated that there will be 3 weeks of parking lot Communion. We will have a parking lot Service, in car, on 6/28, at 10:15, followed by parking lot Communion at 11:15. Virtual worship on 6/28 will be at 9:00. 10) 7/12 there will be an outdoor worship for the first time, bring you own chairs.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Katie Fox: Prior to the meeting Katie provided Council with her financial reports as of the end of May 2020. 1) Katie stated: May income of \$29,157 was \$3,219 under budgeted income of \$32,376. This short fall is the result of contributions being down and non-operating income down because of Covid-19 and building uses for driver education, co-op nursery and other building uses. May expense of \$28,338 was \$4,313 under budgeted expense of \$32,651. The down expense numbers were the result of Music and Program Staff expenses and other expense reductions during the pandemic. May 2020 net results, BLC actually reported a surplus of \$819. YTD income of \$161,214 is \$2,614 under budgeted income of \$164,828, again driven by below average contributions. YTD expense of \$154,309 was \$16,977 behind budgeted expense of \$171,285, again the Music and Program Staff expense and custodial supplies savings/reductions during these Covid-19 times. YTD we budgeted to have a deficit of \$7,457 as of the end of May. We ended May with a surplus of \$6,095 which means we are \$14,362 ahead of where we budgeted to be at this point in time. The size of the surplus is partially misleading as we haven't applied 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. Motioned by Leonard Graf and seconded by Katie Fox. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. STAFF INCREASES: Chuck Ardingo motioned that we make the Pastor's and Staff's increases of 3% retro-active to 04/01/2020. Seconded by Mark McPherson. Motion carried. It was noted that the Director of Youth and Outreach would receive the 3% increase on 07/01/2020 which is one year from Annie's original start date. Phil Anderson's, bookkeeper, "payroll sheet" will be used to conduct the raises.

NEW BUSINESS

A. RE-OPENING CHURCH PHYSICAL FACILITY WITH RESTRICTIONS. 1) Chuck Ardingo presented Council with a plan and guidelines for groups using our Church facility. The focus of Chuck's plan and Council's concern was to have a "safe opening". There was much discussion on this agenda item. The groups wanting to use are facility are All-Star Driving School, Drive My Way Driving School, The Baby Pantry and Anonymous Groups. There was discussion on the scheduling conflicts for the fore mentioned groups, these will be scheduled as best as possible. Phil Anderson mentioned the need of appropriate cleaning after use and for all groups to police themselves. Paul Wiemerslage mentioned that we must be cautious but not fearful and to follow the State and CDD guidelines, as these group provide additional income for BLC. A motion was made by Leonard Graf to adopt Chuck's re-opening plan, this was seconded by Katie Fox. The motion carried. The first use of the building was to be Monday, 6/22/2020.

B. JULY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: Chuck Ardingo stated that the Congregational Meeting would be held on Sunday, July, 12, 2020, rain or shine.

C. PHIL ANDERSON PERSONAL ISSUE: Phil stated that his position is as a "non-voting" member of Council. Phil asked that he be reinstated as a voting member, which would also allow Phil to motion and second on issues. This would be for issues not related to Phil's bookkeeper position. It was decided that Phil's name would be added to the ballot for a "voting member position" on Council at the next Congregational Meeting in July.

D. WORSHIP STARTING INSIDE THE CHURCH: 1) There was much discussion on this agenda item. Pastor stated that he and the Team working on the starting worship plan are looking at September for an indoor service. 2) Phil Anderson mentioned that people are anxious to go back into the building. And that if the people are comfortable they will come. 3) Mark McPherson asked what has the Synod stated about starting Worship inside? Pastor stated that they have not given any specific guidelines as of this meeting time. Pastor stated that he will always be looking at safety for all as a foremost concern. 4) Pastor spoke of a phase in approach, possible having a Holden Service, but being creative as the Church has now changed forever. 5) Paul Wiemerslage asked about watching the Covid numbers and possibly getting in sooner than September, as many members are looking for the personal interaction. 6) Paul Weimerslage asked about tape delaying the outdoor service and Pastor explained the logistics of trying to film and record outside. 7) When will we have indoor worship, Nancy Downer commented, "when we are safe and we don't know when that will be." 8) Mark McPherson talked about how downtown Traverse City on Front Street has made transitional changes and the BLC has to look at transitional tools to get through this Covid time. 9) Pastor Paul spoke also on the time and work it takes to produce and record the Virtual Service each week. 10) Pastor stated that he wants to get back as soon as possible but is looking at a safe route.

VISITOR OR CONGREGATIONAL 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 Cindy Monroe and seconded by Leonard Graf, motion carried. Adjournment at 8:27 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Fox, Council Secretary

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

Hello Bethlehem! It's crazy to think that we're already into August. I know things are different this year and that things still seem daunting and up in the air. Remember that God is with us and we're finding lots of different and creative ways to be the church while still keeping each other safe during these times. For that, I'm thankful. God's got this, and we've got this too!

AUGUST 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! I'm hoping we can do something socially distant on the lawn but it will all depend on COVID numbers. Please reach out to me if you have questions or concerns.

The **Middle/Junior High School Group** will have Youth Night on **Wednesday August 12th**.

The **High School Group** will have Youth Night on **Sunday August 16th**.

The **BLUES Group** will have Youth Night earlier this month than normal. This will be on **Friday August 28th**.

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 August I ask that you keep Bethlehem's kids and their families in your thoughts and prayers while they finish up their summer and look toward the school year whatever that may be. Pray that they stay safe and healthy.

"Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

Cheerfully in Christ,

Annie Slabaugh

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

New Members will be formally accepted into Bethlehem on the final Sunday of August. The new members and their sponsors include the following:

Erin and Ryan Freye sponsored by Erin and Zach Word

Rose Taylor sponsored by Annie Slabaugh

Scott Farley sponsored by Kristen Rivard

Phil and Denice Bossardet sponsored by Carl and Suzanne Lehto.



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.

STAR delivery

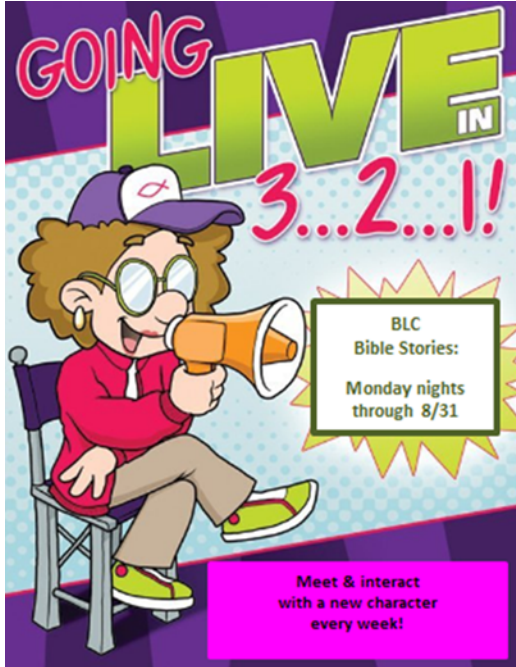
Hasn't it been a blessing to have the STAR delivered to your home the past few months? Thanks so much to 2 cherished members who dedicated their time and monetary donation so this could occur. While we continue to have limited/reduced weekend services the membership committee is proposing the following: 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.

BLC Book Club News

Book Club News: The book club will continue to meet via Zoom. On August 25 at 5:30 we will discuss *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* which is based on a true story. If you would like to be involved and have not already sent your email to Cindy Monroe, please send it now to cmonroe@chartermi.net.



**Christian Education News
August 2020**



There's still time to join us!

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 😊**

**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!!!**





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

ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.



Lutheran Disaster Relief has supported 45 responses in 34 countries around the world, plus five global responses, that address a wide range of needs, from supplying personal protective equipment and medical equipment; to provision of food and other necessary supplies; to water, sanitization and hygiene and awareness education. Additionally, 28 synods and three social ministry organizations have received LDR support for congregational feeding ministries, such as food pantries, hot meal delivery and meal distribution.

Food – Masks - Sanitation Project

A COVID-19 project established by the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia (ELCZa)** reaching communities in the district of Zambezi, was lauded by a local leader as a "generous and open act of kindness to the entire community."

The sanitization and awareness project targeted people with disabilities, the elderly and secondary-school-aged children, supporting 260 people with food and masks. More than 900 participated in awareness raising about COVID-19.

Chief Nyakuleng' a of the Lunda speaking people of Zambezi District said the move taken by the ELCZa to reach out to the vulnerable and disabled people in her district was "welcomed and timely," adding that others should "emulate" the diaconal work of the Lutheran church.

Food Insecurities

Two tropical storms in El Salvador last month further exacerbated food insecurities experienced by residents due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In response, the **Salvadoran Lutheran Church (ILS)** designated its Concordia Lutheran Center in the City of San Salvador as a collection center for food distribution and provided basic supplies to 700 more families already economically disadvantaged because of COVID-19.

Bishop Medardo E. Gómez Soto said that the church's diaconal work is "ethically and morally responsible" when it adheres to government mandates in the fight against the spread of the virus. The bishop also noted that "the response was immediate" from agencies and churches with generous donations of food packages and financial support.

The COVID-19 food and hygiene distribution project of ILS is one of 68 church projects funded from the Lutheran World Federation's COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund (RRF). The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Mission Eine Welt of the Bavarian Lutheran Church in Germany and local partners who contributed to the storm emergency relief efforts.

Health Concerns*



The Power of Prayer

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

Grand Traverse Pavilions: Bev Attwood

Homebound: Marleen Baesch

Traverse Manor: Margie Whitney, Marinan 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

Natural landscapes help us preserve clean lakes and drinking water.

Following are some tips on keeping your landscaping natural.

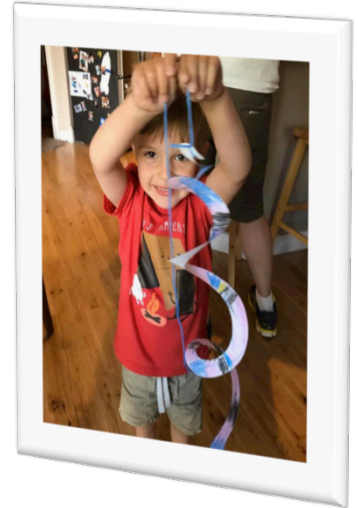
1. Plant trees--native trees take less water and less of your time.
2. Use natural lawn fertilizers.
3. Install porous patios, paths, and driveways
4. Do not use toxic chemicals to get rid of insects or weeds. Be especially careful not to use products with neonics.
5. Some natural plants that can be particularly beneficial include asters, sunflowers, purple coneflowers, lupine.
6. Plant rain gardens.



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).

VBS Bible Stories included crafts

Looks like the kids had fun



BLC Contacts

PLEASE NOTE SEVERAL ADDRESS UPDATES


Church Office

Pastor Paul Busekist	paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org
Admin. Asst. Sharon Weller	admin@bethlehemtc.org
Admin. Aide Barbara Oster	admin@bethlehemtc.org
Bookkeeper, Phil Anderson	bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org
Sharon Weller, Music Director	sharon.weller@bethlehemtc.org
Annie Slabaugh, Youth & Outreach Director	annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org
Website	www.bethlehemtc.org

Church Council

Leonard Graf, President	Email address in process
Mark McPherson, Vice President	Email address in process
Gail Goldsmith, Secretary	Email address in process
, Treasurer	treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org
Jim Monroe, Financial Sec.	financialsecretary.council@bethlehemtc.org
Phil Anderson, Bethlehem Vision	Bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org
Jan Stretlien, Christian Care Giving	christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org
, Christian Ed.	christianeducation@bethlehemtc.org
Laura Hahn, Fellowship	Email address in process
Cindy Monroe, Membership/Evangelism	membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org
, Property (Carl Lehto-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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Smile. God loves you. 😊

Shalom, and do not be afraid.



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