

# February 2024

See special  
inside front cover  
for help w/March road  
construction! 😊



Bethlehem  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Paul Busekist  
Traverse City, MI 49686  
(231) 947-9880



Website: [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)  
Email: [bethlehem@bethlehemtc.org](mailto: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

Sunday School/Adult Education: 9:15am

Third Thursday Worship: 7:00pm

Nursery open during worship service

## Follow the STAR to Bethlehem!

Our Mission...

**“We journey with God, to serve with love”**

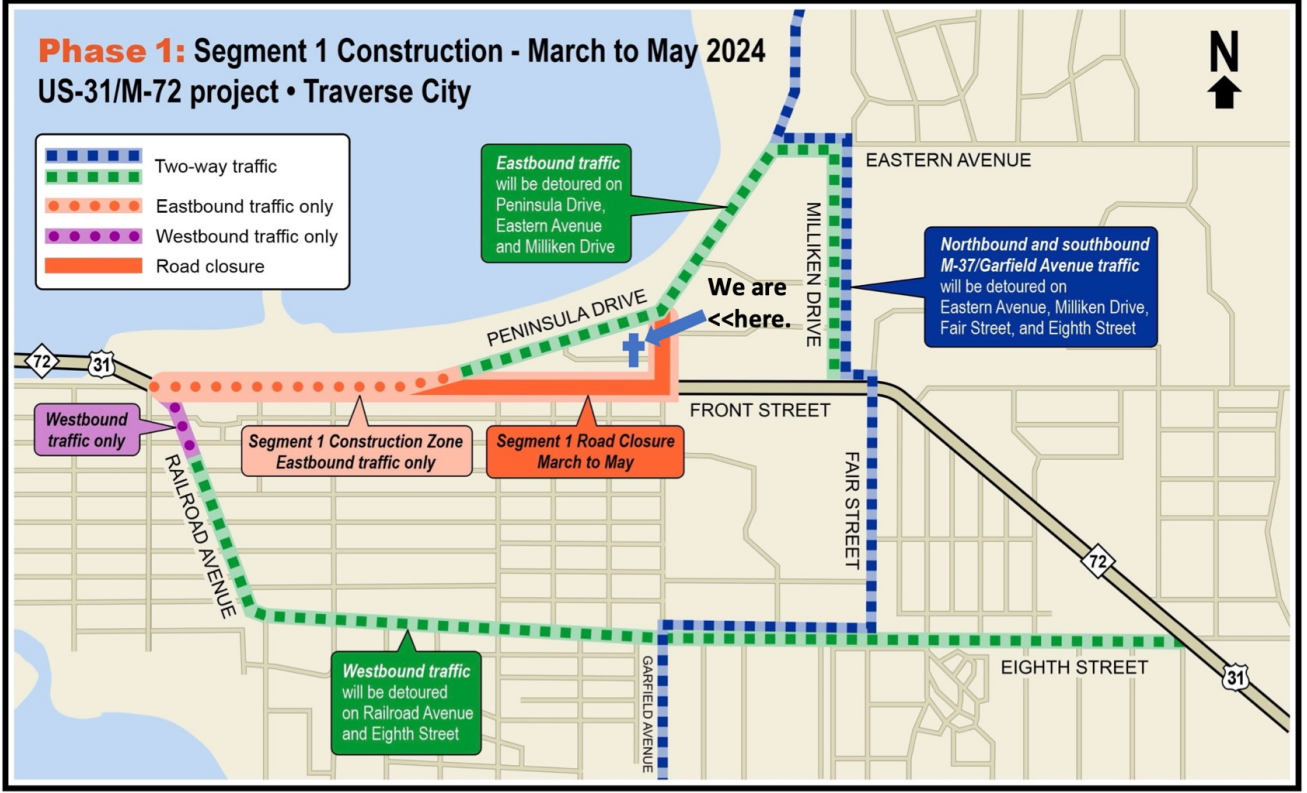
Our Vision...

*“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.”*

# Have no fear...**just be prepared for March Road Work Closures!!**

Starting in March, there will only be **one way to get to BLC.**

*This will be "Phase 1" of road work (note: directional traffic):*



**Starting in May (Phase 2), things should get easier.**

*Hopefully, by July we'll be back to normal!*



**"The awe\* of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." –Proverbs 1:1**



Dear sisters and brothers in Christ at Bethlehem,

We have a lot to look forward to this February. God's awe-some-ness is all around us. Perhaps we can think of this awesome in terms of **three colors**:

**Red:** This year's Lenten journey will be based in-part on a series by Zach Zehnder called the Red Letter Challenge. Based on a book and video series, we will focus on the 5 weeks of Lent, and engage in some fun collaboration with Pastor Dana Hendershot and Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mt. Pleasant along the way. More details coming... The five weeks and their subthemes are:

- Feb 21 (Wed – Tue): **"Week of Being"**
- Feb 28 (Wed – Tue): **"Week of Forgiving"**
- March 6 (Wed - Tue): **"Week of Serving"**
- March 13 (Wed - Tue): **"Week of Giving"**
- March 20 (Wed – Tue): **"Week of Going"**

**Green:** This February we also consider the exciting possibility of Solar at Bethlehem. Please take a look at the next few pages of the STAR to gather more details for the ways we might invest – in one of three ways – in panels that could save us over \$100,000 in energy costs over the next few decades... and make good on our 2012 vision goals for Creation Care.

**Dark Gray:** Ash Wednesday is coming... and it marks a time to remember our mortality with the sign of the cross, starting a journey with Christ to the cross of our sin, and the burst-open tomb of life eternal.

With you on the journey. In peace...

-Pr. Paul

**PROSE FROM THE PREZ:**

First, some words of THANKS... A heartfelt thank you to all who contributed to Christmas bonus gifts for our very deserving staff. I have heard from many of the staff that they are very grateful for the gift they received. Those gifts would not have been possible without your generosity. Apologies to those who missed the invitation to contribute. The invite comes as an extra colored note in the December STAR or via email to those who prefer to receive the STAR in that form. Be looking for it next year or remember that you can put the donation in an envelope labeled "STAFF GIFT" and it will be designated as such.

Thank you also to those who attended the annual budget meeting. It was apparent that our members have different ideas, but at least to my eyes and ears, every person and everyone's thoughts were listened to respectfully. We need to pray that others in our nation and world can learn to show each other such respect.

Let us hope that respect for others continues to the special meetings scheduled for Feb. What an amazing idea to consider solar panels as a way to make a statement to our community and help the environment. This truly is the 21st century and many things are possible. In addition to these Sunday meetings in Feb. (described elsewhere) I hope you come to our annual Mardi Gras night on Feb 13.

Early Happy Valentine's greetings to you and your loved ones, Cindy Monroe BLC Council President

- **Our new boiler cost ~\$32,500. Solar panels could cost even less and save BLC money for decades.**
- New sloped roofs (over sanctuary, FH), if bought *without* solar incentives, would cost approx. \$110,000.
- **New roofs, if Fellowship Hall (FH) roof is bought w/a solar rebate, could cost ~ \$97,000 (\$13k saved)**
- **Only if the panels are Direct Purchased (DP) or DP w/borrowed funds can we get a FH roof rebate.**

• **Electric bill savings:** though there are three different options for investing in panels through Solar Faithful, **the Solar Subcommittee strongly recommends the second option**, which requires a **net investment of as low as \$30,000, yielding more than \$100,000 in NET energy savings** over the next 25 years or more. (See separate sheet from Solar Faithful for details.)

- Current proceeds from house sale on Peninsula are \$305k, held in a fully liquid, interest-bearing money market account. Even after purchasing a new boiler (\$32,500) and roofs (~97,000) we'd have enough liquidity to purchase a solar array outright, receiving 30-40% rebates, OR finance w/a loan.

### **Some of the Q and A Council asked Rob Rafson from Solar Faithful at their 12/19/23 mtg:**

#### **Q1. Will the Bethlehem Fellowship Hall (FH) roof withstand the added weight of solar panels?**

A1. Yes. The average pound per square foot load of a northern Michigan roof (beyond the roof shingles themselves) is at least 60lbs/square foot. Solar panels only add a weight of about 2.5 lb/sqft.

#### **Q2. The roof we want to install has a 40-year-rated shingle. What is the average lifespan of a solar panel?**

A2. The actual lifespan of both a high quality new roof and the panels can be as long as 40+ years, not the standard 25 often listed for either. For "Tier 2" (high quality) panels, panel efficiency degradation is roughly one-half of one-percent per year or about 12.5% after 25 years. So, even if you count for some degradation of equipment with a very conservative estimate, the "savings above investment" will likely be far greater than \$100-110k after 25 years, with panels functioning above 85% efficiency even after the 25-yr mark.

#### **Q3. Does Bethlehem have a straightforward building and roof setup for panel usage?**

A3. Yes, Bethlehem has in many ways an ideal setup for a solar array with a roughly 15-20-degree south-facing roof of the Fellowship Hall (max. efficiency directional placement and slope) and a short distance from the roof to the main circuit box in the boiler room below for wiring.

#### **Q4. Would a "Direct Purchase (using borrowed funds)" plan be tied to a mortgage for Bethlehem?**

A4. No, any borrowed funds (if we chose to finance through Solar Faithful) would be leveraged only against the materials of the solar array and inverter setup, not via mortgage lien against our church property.

#### **Q5. Are there other churches in Michigan who have installed this type of setup with whom we can speak about their experience?**

A5. Yes, there are several. Rob Rafson has provided contact information for the Solar Faithful install sites, and all three of the sites already contacted have positive stories, to be shared at Feb. 11 Q& A or sooner.

#### **Q6. Is now a good time to do this roof/solar upgrade?**

A6. **Yes. Bethlehem needs a new roof, and incentives for combined roofing/solar installs have never been better.** Large-scale government incentives for petroleum-based and other/older sources of energy have been provided at the state and national levels for nearly a century. A 30-40% rebate on both panels AND roofs is new, and there is no guarantee that next years' leaders will keep incentives the way they are. In order to get the full rebates on panels and the Fellowship Hall roof, both would need to be installed within months of each other, preferably within the same calendar year, according to Solar Faithful.




# So, that last page was the DATA...What is the STORY?

In 2012 Bethlehem created its 10+ year vision with 5 vision focus areas: **Y2A** (Youth and Youth Adult) Ministry was the first, followed by a “Vibrant and Inspiring Experience of Worship” or (**VIEW**). To both those areas, BLC gave significant attention and financial resources, as well the third and fourth (Enlivening Christian Discipleship and Campus at the Crossroads.) Yet the one 2012 vision area where Bethlehem has not yet been able to dedicate the same resources thus far has been the fifth: **“Creation Care and Outdoor Ministry.”**

**We as a “Solar Subcommittee” believe now is our chance to actualize that final vision area** in a way that both demonstrates to members and visitors alike that **WE DO CARE** about the earth and the legacy we leave our grand/children **AND** we are demonstrating a sound financial investment for and by the church. And while the **first 30% of the green energy rebates is guaranteed, the second 10% (of the 40% shown to the right) is essentially first-come, first-serve.** That is why we encourage Bethlehem to consider this sooner than later.

**Simply put: at a time when BLC needs a new roof, this roof-and-solar project could save more than any other capital improvement or financial investment we could make.**

It's exciting. Solar works. It helps when people are in the building and when they are not. And it helps us, *and* our neighbors. We hope you can **join us on February 11<sup>th</sup> after worship for a Question and Answer (Q & A)** with the team and Rob Rafson from Solar Faithful. And as we hope to move toward a **congregational vote for this on February 25<sup>th</sup>,** we prayerfully ask that you consider what the Solar Subcommittee and Solar Faithful have been working on...a way to partake in good stewardship and Creation Care for our sliver of the world, right here at home!



### Solar Project Proposal – Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Solar Faithful is proposing the development of a **23 kilowatt (kW) solar system with roof.**  
There are two options: Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) or Direct Purchase.

Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)	
Up Front Cost	\$0
First Year savings	\$476
25-Year Savings	\$32,332

Direct Purchase	
Total Project Cost	\$107,738
Roof Cost	<\$31,314>
40% Investment Tax Credit* (Rebate through Direct Pay Option)	<\$43,095>
Net Project Cost	<b>\$27,643</b>
First Year Savings (inc. O&M costs)**	\$4,246
Anticipated 25-Year Savings**	\$142,742

Direct Purchase (using borrowed funds)	
Total Project Cost	\$107,738
Roof Cost	<\$31,314>
40% Investment Tax Credit* (Rebate through Direct Pay Option)	<\$43,095>
Net Project Cost	<b>\$27,643</b>
Total Interest (solar project cost at 7.5% for 10 years)	\$15,861
<b>Total Project Cost (inc. financing)</b>	<b>\$43,504</b>
First Year Savings (inc. O&M costs)**	\$4,246
Anticipated 25-Year Savings (inc. all financing + O&M costs)***	\$99,239

\*Project should qualify for 30% tax credit plus an additional 10% from the Energy Community Bonus Credit  
 \*\*Assumes post-solar switch to General Services rate. With only 4 months of usage provided, savings are a very rough estimate.  
 \*\*\*\$141,944 25-year energy savings - \$48,022 full financing costs

1310 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Muskegon, MI 49441    231.246.7816    rob@solarfaithful.com

-Your Solar Subcommittee (Paul Wiemerslage, Dale Wentzloff, Scott Farley, Norm Fred and Pastor Paul)

**New member acceptance:** Peggy Burns, Joe Thomas, and Maureen McGerty will be accepted on a Sunday in Feb when most or all of them can attend. Please come and support them on their special day.

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**SPECIAL MEETINGS IN FEBRUARY:**

During the budget meeting it was mentioned that the congregation would like more information on the proposal for solar panels on the fellowship roof, and would like the privilege to vote on taking this step. For these reasons there will be 2 meetings on Sundays in Feb. The first will be informational on Feb 11. We will have a chance to hear directly via ZOOM from the leader of the company who has led other congregations in this new venture. Since it will be right after church and on Super Bowl Sunday we will have some tasty hot soups for you to enjoy...nourishment for the tummy and for the mind. And don't worry...you'll be home in plenty of time for the 6:30 kick-off. Two weeks after that, on Feb 25, we will have a congregational meeting to determine if we will go forward with the panels. We hope as many of you as possible can attend and voice your opinion and vote.

FOR BOTH OF THE MEETINGS THERE IS ONE NEW REQUEST. TO STREAMLINE THE MEETINGS WE WILL SET UP MICROPHONES ON STANDS AND YOU WILL BE ASKED TO COME FORWARD TO THE MIC. (A lot of time is lost while someone is walking a mike between members.) If you have mobility problems that day, please alert the hospitality team so a mike can be brought to you.

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**Changes In Church Security:** In an attempt to be proactive, not reactive, the Church Council has approved a trial of 90 days to lock the church doors 10 minutes after church services begin. This will begin on Sunday, February 4th. **We will be asking congregation members to volunteer to be in the Gathering Space to let late comers into the church.**

The Safety and Security Committee have contacted over a dozen churches in the Traverse City area. All of them report feeling vulnerable and are increasing their safety measures during services. Our cameras will allow the person in the Gathering space to monitor and take action if a situation arises. We also have an outside buzzer to alert someone that someone wishes to come into the church.

Safety and Security, in addition to council, staff members and interested parties, have participated in the Active Shooter Presentation by Officer Mike Makowski from the Grand Traverse Sheriff Department. He also conducted a walk through our church to give us advice on a plan for our church. His biggest advice to all is to Run-Hide-Fight if an intruder would enter our church. Remember to:

- **EXIT QUIETLY.**
- **LEAVE YOUR BELONGINGS**
- **IF YOU HAVE A CELL PHONE ON YOU, SILENCE IT.**
- **DO NOT CALL 911 AS THERE ARE DESIGNATED PEOPLE TO DO THIS.**

Our community is vulnerable to attacks. No matter where you are, be aware of your surroundings, who may be around you, exits, what you can use to protect yourself in case of an emergency. We want everyone to be safe in our church and in our community. Blessings to you all!

**A big thank you to all who have turned in Olesons' slips.** On January 14, we received a check from them for \$255.85. Olesons' slips never expire. Please continue to turn in your receipts to Bethlehem. Thanks so much!!!

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**Contra Dancing by Bayside Travellers** Contra dancing is similar to square dancing, and each of their dances feature live music by local folk bands. They will be back with us for dancing on **February 10<sup>th</sup>.** . All are welcome to attend, no partner or experience is necessary! The dances are by donation. For more information or further dates, please reach out to Alanna at [alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org)

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**Food Pantry:** We will NOT be closing our outdoor pantry for winter this year. We have a new member who ran an outdoor pantry downstate and she has given us lots of ideas of foods that can be stored there during the cold months including: hamburger helper, stuffing mix, dry milk, instant potatoes, cookies, and rice. Also, there is always room for dry goods such as toilet paper, paper towels etc. Please start looking for some of these items when they are on sale and bring your extras to the coat room. Your generosity is so appreciated.

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### **Wednesday Bible Studies:**

**Adult Bible Study:** meets in the Youth Room from 9:30-11:30am, with the Gospel of John.

**The Zoom Book and Bible Study:** meets on Wednesdays from 1:30-3:00pm. With a study of the book of Mark.. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Barbara Oster or Pr Paul.

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### **Adult Education in the Youth Room plus Sunday School - every Sunday at 9:15am**

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**The next Third Thursday service will be a Holden Evening Prayer service on March 21st at 7:00pm.** The service will be livestreamed. The BLC Fellowship Committee will be providing a meal at 5:45 p.m. Please come early and share in fellowship and stay for the service. Please note that there will not be a Third Thursday service on February 15th because of the Shrove Tuesday Pancakes on Feb 13th and the Ash Wednesday service on Feb 14th.

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**January's XYZ Potluck & Presentation will be on Friday, February 9<sup>th</sup> at 12pm noon.** While primarily geared toward seniors, the group is open to any adult who would like to attend! XYZ meets monthly September through May for a potluck lunch, followed by a program or presentation. February's presenter is Naomi Pobuda of Cherryland Humane Society.

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### **FOR BOOK CLUB MEMBERS AND ANY WHO LOVE TO READ:**

The book club will discuss *The Mystery of Mrs. Christie* during a pizza dinner meeting at 5:30 on Tues Feb 20 This is a novelized account of the true disappearance of Agatha Christie for 2 weeks. There will be some copies of the book in the plastic bin outside the front door. Just sign your name on the sheet by the corresponding number of your book. Please contact Cindy Monroe at [cmonroe@chartermi.net](mailto:cmonroe@chartermi.net) if you want to participate and cannot come to church in order to give plenty of advance notice so that ZOOM can be set up.

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**DIRECTORY UPDATE:** Unfortunately, the first draft of the directory sent to our fearless team did not measure up to their expectations. They are currently in negotiation with the company to provide what was promised. Our team spent hours making certain that every member's email and cell phone was correct, and that is NOT what they received in the sample copy. So, there is no tentative date at this time.



## Notes from Alanna...

### **Ski Trip to Crystal Mountain - All Ages!**

BLC's annual Ski Trip to Crystal Mountain is scheduled for Sunday, February 18th at 1pm! If you would like to attend, please reach out to me at [alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org) so I can add you to the list!

### **XYZ Potlucks**

The monthly XYZ potlucks are growing, and are a wonderful chance to enjoy good food and fellowship together! On February 9th, we'll enjoy a presentation by Cherryland Humane Society. We are excited to have them, and hope you can join us!

### **Contra Dancing!**

Bayside Travellers now has dances scheduled at BLC through June 2025! They will break this summer July-September, but otherwise will be here dancing every second Saturday of the month! Find a month that works for you, and join them for a dance!

*-Alanna Steffunick, Ministry Coordinator*

"...with that hymn he softly sang, of God's good grace."

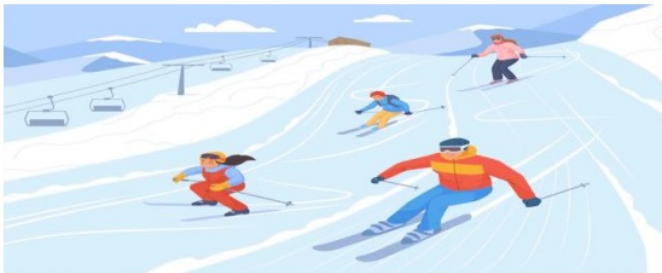
The Soldier and the Oak, Elliot Park



## Christian Education News February 2024

### **FEBRUARY 18<sup>th</sup> SKI TRIP**

We're planning to ski at Crystal Mountain!  
Watch for signup sheets with more details!!!

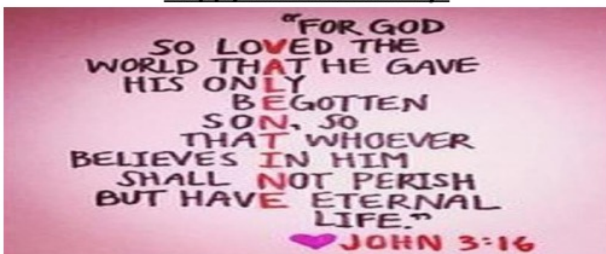


Join us for Lent Nights!

**WHEN:** Thursday evenings during February & March

**WHAT:** dinner, worship, special lessons, & crafts

### **Happy Valentine's Day!**



-Christian Education Committee



Movie nights, and VBS, and intergenerational events...  
OH MY!

So many things in 2024 – join us so you don't miss out!





## **FINANCIAL NEWS**

December income was \$39,681, compared to projected income of \$31,832. We received \$7,849 more than projected. Expenses were \$30,906, compared to a budget of \$31,193. This resulted in spending \$ 286 less than budgeted. For the month, the church brought in \$8,774 more than we spent.

Year-to-date income is \$386,250, compared to projected income of \$364,452. This resulted in the church receiving \$21,798 more than projected. Expenses were \$395,652, compared to a budget of \$388,785. We have spent \$6,867 more/less than budgeted. For the year, the church has spent \$9,401 more than we brought in.

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**Giving Statements Available:** Your individual giving statements will be available in your mailbox in the Narthex beginning Sunday January 28, 2024. The statement covers giving from January 1st through December 31, 2023. Please pick them up at your convenience. To save on postage, I will mail out the ones not picked up by the end of March 2023. Thank you for your generous support for the programs and ministries of your church. We are all blessed by your faithful giving. Your Bookkeeper

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**Coffee and Cookies on Sunday:** Remember that treats and a hot drink on Sunday are appreciated by all. Please take a moment to sign up to bring cookies or some other tasty treat on the Sunday that works best for you. Or sign up to prepare the coffee. As requested by some of our new members there is a plan in the works to usually have the final Sunday of the month be a time when we join in the Fellowship Hall. We can sit at a table and chat with someone new while we munch on a treat. Already we have some exceptions...this will not occur in February due to the congregational meeting and also not in March due to the celebration of Easter. So be ready to enjoy that new experience in April!!

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**Spotlight on Zeke:** So many of us enjoy Zeke's talents with religious music, but did you know that he plays other kinds of music at various locations in the Traverse City area? Here is a list of his engagements in the next month that are close to TC:

**Sat, Feb 03**—Hotel Indigo, 6PM

**Every Wednesday**—Park Place/Minerva's Happy Hour 4PM

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**Ski Trip:** Join us for an Intergenerational Ski Trip to Crystal Mountain on Sunday, February 18th! The date is tentative and time is to be decided, but mark this down on your calendar so you don't miss a great day of fun on the slopes with other members of Bethlehem! If you would like to sign up, please contact Alanna at [alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org)

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**COLLEGE AND MILITARY MEMBERS:** We are again looking to send love packages to our college and military members. Please give us their name and the COMPLETE address by February 4th. We will be mailing packages around the middle of the month. Thank you.

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**Our Care Giving Committee has put up a "Communitas" Board on the wall of our Coat Room!** This "BOARD" is needed and helpful for ALL of us! Following is a suggestion of some things YOU and our YOUTH can do to "interact" with the board and other members of our congregation. The purpose of our "Auxilium Communitas" BOARD (Latin for "Community/Congregation Assistance") is to SHARE our gifts, talents, or skills to others that might be in NEED of something like: Gardening, Organizing, Painting, Raking leaves, Shoveling, Household tasks, Carpentry, Manicures, Pedicures, Companionship, Care giving, etc. - This list is Endless! You never know when YOU will be in need of some extra help personally, in your home or yard – let's make this "reciprocal" - All ages are Welcome to Help Service our Congregation!

**Shrove Tuesday Dinner and Fun:** The Fellowship Committee has planned a Breakfast for Dinner meal for Tuesday February 13th. Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The menu will consist of pancakes, sausage, egg casseroles and fruit. We will have Paczkies for dessert and beverages. We will be having fun and games with a Mardi Gras theme after dinner. We are asking for volunteers to help with dinner preparation and clean up. There will be sign-up sheets in the Narthex.

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**Lenten Meals:** Our Lenten Services will be held on Thursday Evenings at 7:00 p.m. There will be 5 weeks of Lenten meals prior to the services, beginning on February 22nd at 5:45 in the Fellowship Hall. The Fellowship Committee is planning on having soup suppers. We are asking for volunteers to make soup. We would like 2 pots of soup each week. So if you would like to make soup there are sign up sheets in the Narthex. The Fellowship Committee will be providing bread, crackers, peanut butter and jelly, desserts and beverages. We are also asking for volunteers to help each week with set up and clean up. So please sign up in the Narthex. We can enjoy food and fellowship before our Lenten Services.

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**Lenten services – half hour service at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary with 5:45pm meal – the first four will not be Live Streamed**

Feb 22nd – Holden Evening Prayer  
Feb 29th – Taize 2  
Mar 7th – Taize 1  
Mar 14th – Behold Our Light  
Mar 21st – Holden Evening Prayer, Live Streamed

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**Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)**

QCD's have been around for several years and provide a unique opportunity for those with a traditional IRA(s) and wish to make their charitable dollars go farther. Any person 70 1/2 years old during 2024 can reduce their taxes using QCD's. For individuals age 73 and above QCD's may count towards their IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

Here's an example of how this works. Assume you withdraw \$10,000 from your IRA and your tax rate is 22% resulting in tax due of \$2,200. If you donate \$2,400 to Bethlehem Church you can make that donation direct from your IRA and that becomes a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). For tax purposes, the QCD amount can be deducted from the IRA withdrawal amount leaving taxable income of \$7,600 which yields a tax savings of \$528 as show below.

	Non-QCD	With QCD
IRA Withdrawal	\$10,000	\$10,000
Non-taxable QCD		2,400
Taxable Income	\$10,000	\$7,600
Tax Due @ 22%	\$2,200	\$1,672
Tax Savings	-0-	\$528

In this example, you could make a QCD of \$2,928 (\$2,400 + \$528) to BLC without any impact on your taxes when compared to the Non-QCD alternative.

The additional \$528 allows you to increase your giving to BLC's general budget or the Mission Endowment Fund or the Sustaining Endowment Memorial Fund. This example was simplified to demonstrate how you can reduce your taxes and give more to BLC that would otherwise be paid in taxes. You should consult a tax/financial advisor or your IRA manager or search the web for helpful articles regarding QCD's. One final consideration. The standard deduction on tax returns for a couple now exceeds \$29,000. Many no longer qualify to itemize deductions on their tax returns and therefore do not enjoy any benefit from charitable donations. Using QCD's is a method to effectively save on taxes and perhaps enable you to increase your charitable contributions.

## Global Links - United States New Program Across the ELCA. *Living Lutheran* digital explains . . .

Centuries after colonial models of education were first forced on Indigenous people in North America, their effects are still keenly felt. Western theological education has remained the default methodology within the church, including the ELCA. This fall, Native leaders from across the ELCA, in partnership with leaders from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS) of California Lutheran University in Berkeley, are seeking to change that with the launch of the Theological Education for Indigenous Leaders (TEIL) program.

“The TEIL program is a historic and first-of-its-kind opportunity for Indigenous leaders and for our church,” said Vance Blackfox, ELCA director of Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations. “It gives students an opportunity to access education and leadership development—and possibly become ordained—so that they might be even more effective leaders in their communities and congregations.”

“Ninety percent of our instructors, whom we call wisdom keepers, are Indigenous, and the students will experience Indigenous pedagogy, or ways of learning about ministry and biblical studies, that are not offered anywhere else in our church,” said Blackfox, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.



## WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM - FEBRUARY 2024



**FEBRUARY BIBLE STUDY:** Our study for February is: *“Scripture and Nature: Teachers of faith: Creatures”* written by Sara Olson-Smith. Human and animal interactions in Scripture can reorient our relationships with non-human creatures and deepen our trust in God. Biblical stories of the natural world help us grow our love for God, other creatures and the earth. Contact Nancy Ammann if interested in joining us - 946-8433

**SPRING GATHERING IN APRIL:** We will be having a synod-wide gathering here at Bethlehem in April! We are excited to be able to host this event. Watch for further information so you can attend AND how you can help. This is open to ALL women. Come join us!

**LOVE THOUGHTS:** Accept nothing less than Jesus! Be satisfied with nothing less than the Lord Jesus abiding in your life. He is the Light of the World. He is the Life of the World. He is your Savior, your Lord, and your Friend. He has promised to come to you and abide with you. Then accept nothing less than Jesus in your life. Invite Him into your heart. Embrace Him. Talk often with your Friend.

**And HE WILL LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE!**

## Health Concerns\*



# The Power of Prayer

*Richard Fernholz, Nancy Smith, Tom & Lee Miller,  
Margie Whitney, Judy Fenton, Julie Lapeer, Milt & Carol Bowes,  
Lynn Hoyt, Tom Woodworth, Ron Hellenga,  
John Stretlien, Harper Wiemerslage,  
Russ Luttinen, Sherry, Leroy Schlagel,  
Roy & Marilyn Dumond, Sean Rivard,  
Brenda Denoyer and the Denoyer Family,  
Patti McCracken, Sharon Vanmeter,  
Margaret Hutchison, Carol Collins,  
Patience Lambert, Dale Leider, David Suby,  
Jennifer Mowers, Debbie Knopf,  
Gail Goldsmith, Jim Rumbach,  
John Block, Dan Deutsch, Joann Stepka,  
Earl Manuel, Jack McCracken*

**French Manor South:** Brenda Denoyer      **Orchard Creek:** Margie Whitney

**Evergreen Cottage:** Milt & Carol Bowes

**Boardman Lake Glens:** Inge Thomas

**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.

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### Prayer Requests:

- Prayer Chain:** Please contact Jan Stretlien at [jstretlien@gmail.com](mailto:jstretlien@gmail.com) or 231-947-3265
  - Prayers read from the altar:** Please call the Administrative Assistant in the church office 231-947-9880
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Are you checking for the latest BLC updates at: [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)?

You saw Norm and others take the photos...be sure you see them at [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)!

Good News...and great news...at [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)...

**Looking for a link to last month's full Council minutes?**  
Type this address/url into your web browser to get the latest approved minutes from Council (or call the office for a copy:

**[bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes](http://bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes)**



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## **Church Council**

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If you have an interest in serving on any of the above Committees,  
Please contact the Committee Chairperson(s).

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
20 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service(S) 11:15am - Worship and Music 12:30pm - Confirmation Class at	29 BOLIVIAN articles due today 9am - LMR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 10:45am - Staff Meeting	30 BOLIVIAN articles due today 9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study	31 5:30pm - ACA 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	1 5:30pm - ACA 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	2	3 5pm - Kurkowsk/Lotan Wedding
4 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Traditional Worship	5 BOLIVIAN articles due today 9am - LMR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 10:45am - Staff Meeting	6 BOLIVIAN articles due today 9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study	7 8am - Baby Pantry Setup 10am - Baby Pantry-FH 1pm - Rebecca Annas Circle - 5:30pm - ACA 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	8 12pm - XYZ	9	10 7pm - Contra Dance - Bayside
11 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Traditional Worship	12 1pm - Finance Cmte.	13 BOLIVIAN articles due today Shtrove Tuesdays 9am - LMR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 1pm - Friendship Bible Study 6pm - Shtrove Tuesday Pancakes	14 ASHWEDNESDAY 9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 7pm - Ash Wednesday service	15 5:30pm - ACA 6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed Meeting 6:30pm - Executive Comte.(CR)	16 STAR articles due today 10am - Sew Piecetul 1pm - Lehto SG - Library	17
18 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service(S) 1pm - Skiing at Crystal Mountain	19 6pm - Grid Group (Library)	20 BOLIVIAN articles due today 9am - LMR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 12pm - Sarah Circle - Library 6:30pm - Council Meeting - 7pm - Launer SG @ at the home	21 9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study 7pm - Indian Woods Neighborhood	22 5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten service	23	24
25 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service(S)	26 BOLIVIAN articles due today 9am - LMR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 5:30pm - Book/Supper Club	27 BOLIVIAN articles due today 9am - LMR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 5:30pm - Book/Supper Club	28 9:30am - Adult Bible Study 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1pm - Johnson SG (Offsite) 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study	29 5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten service	1	2



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