

DECEMBER 2018



Bethlehem
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Traverse City, MI 49686
(231) 947-9880



Website: www.bethlehemtc.org
Email: bethlehem@bethlehemtc.org

Building Hours:

Monday – Thursday, 9am to 3pm

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday, 9am to 3pm

Worship Times:

Saturday: 5 pm Celebrate! Worship
Sunday: 8:45 am Traditional Worship
9:45 am Education 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.”



³Abraham said, ‘My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.’ So they said, ‘Do as you have said.’

-Genesis 18:3-5

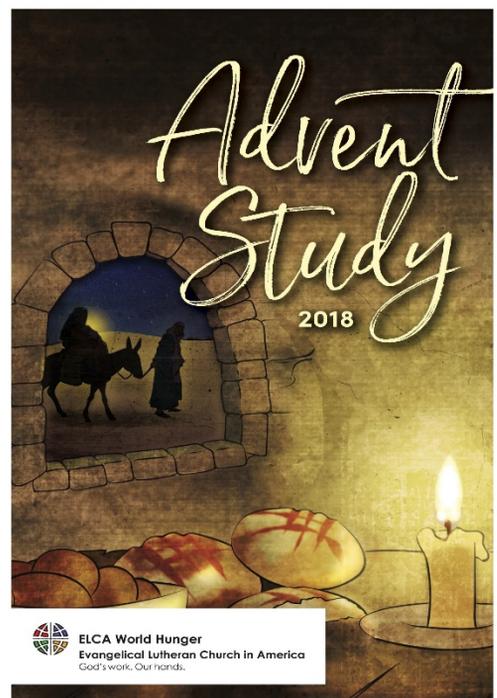
In the sermon on Sunday, December 2nd, the invitation was set: a spot in the “Waiting Room” of Advent: a place where we all reside this season...waiting in healthy, hopeful anticipation for what (the baby) Jesus has in store for our lives and our hearts.

This Advent I invite you on this journey of waiting, and waking, to the dawn of something new. In our Advent night these next three Wednesdays (December 5th, 12th and 19th) we will embark on a study (see the cover of the booklet below) of how meals, hospitality, and love can enlighten how we see our time together – and perhaps even how we reach out to our neighbor.

We also encourage you to read all of the special messages in the pages ahead: for our important upcoming budget meeting, in hopes for an internship program beginning in 2019, and for all the new ways we can see evangelism, outreach and growth from within and without.

As Abraham learned in the passage above, these are days where we host the Lord, in ways unexpected and wonderful.

In peace,
Pr. Paul



November 28, 2018

Greetings, brothers and sisters in Christ!

We give thanks always for the prayerful consideration and generous giving by those who have responded to our Fall 2018-2019 Stewardship drive. **To those who have not yet pledged, we would like to emphasize the importance of pledging prior to year-end, as pledging gives us a valuable snapshot of how our 2019 budget can be actualized in good faith.** For example, though we typically receive 90 to 100 pledges by December, thus far have received only around 70. The good news is that pledging, on average, has shown an increase in giving of 4.9% over last year...But the total number of pledge responses, and pledged contributions, is still lagging, and we know that for many it has just been a case of busy schedules or new factors like the new IRS “Minimum Required Distribution” guidelines that may be creating new questions or hesitations. For more information on new IRS rules for people over age 71, please see the re-printed article from our May STAR newsletter, written by Jim Hutchison.

Yet it’s not all about pledging, nor is it all about money. Actually, **the biggest challenge we face at Bethlehem is that we are a church in transition, and a church whose greatest attribute – its sense of welcoming the community – is in need of help, YOUR help!** Each weekend, we see new visitors enter our midst, and we are constantly in need of both (1) one-on-one follow-up and relationship-building with our visitors and (2) finding new ways to create sustainable events and ministry to the community with our people, grounds and resources.

For an example of the *first type of welcome*, we pose this question: **How might you, as a friendly ambassador of Bethlehem, invite a visitor to something** as informal as coffee (outside of church) or as structured as a small group or future event or ministry at BLC? For an example of the *second type of welcome*, we ask this question: **Might you consider becoming an integral member of some of our “tried-and-true” outreach ministries** like Safe Harbor, the Fall Craft Show, next year’s Health Fair (“Little Arms Open”) or perhaps something totally new that you are passionate about and could demonstrate our outreach and care for the world “Beyond F(our) Walls”? Other examples might include volunteering with the baby pantry that Bethlehem hosts twice/month, starting a bible study or some new idea you may be itching to start!

This leads us to **our next big and exciting avenue of ministry at Bethlehem: becoming a “teaching site”** or (for those who know the last 30 years of history at BLC) once again taking on an internship program. The beauty of becoming an intern site is three-fold:

1. **We build new leaders** for the local and larger church, and – as we are inspired by this growing leader – we build up new lay leaders in our midst;
2. **We all become teachers** (of the intern) **and students** (of wherever the Spirit guides us through his or her ministry); and (*see next side*)

(continued)

3. **We allow ourselves to try something new**, to open up our hearts, and deepen our sense of community with new learning, discipleship and shepherding.

Yes, all of this will require a commitment of time, resources, and good will. In the new year, we hope to encourage one another to make such moves sustainable (be on the lookout for a specialized challenge in January or early February!) So we have good courage – for with God all things are possible – and through your open minds, adventurous hearts and renewed sense of vision, we will get there...together.

In peace,

Pr. Paul, Barbara Wright (Stewardship), Jim Parkinson (Council President), Chuck Ardingo (Council VP, Fellowship & Property liaison), LoAnn VandeLeest (Membership/Evangelism), Phil Anderson (Bethlehem Visions Chair)

Qualified Charitable IRA Distributions

A way to make charitable donations tax-free and still use the standard deduction when filing taxes.

Written by Jim Hutchison

This year Margaret and I have elected to make our donations to the church and other charities using a provision the IRS calls a Qualified Charitable IRA Distribution. These withdrawals from my IRA are not subject to income tax. If you qualify, you may wish to investigate this form of giving.

To qualify

- You must be age 70 ½ or older.
- The donation must be transferred directly from a traditional IRA to the charity.

To set up our donation I use the web site of my IRA manager - in my case TIAA/CREF. I fill out a form listing the amount of my withdrawal with the name and address of the charitable origination to which they will directly send a check. I need to complete the form every time we make a donation. We plan to make quarterly donations to the church and annual donations to other charities.

This donation is not counted as part of the taxable income we receive from the IRA, hence we lower our tax bill, and we will be able to take advantage of the new higher standard deduction when we file our taxes. Even though the donation does not count as taxable income, it does count toward satisfying the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

Please note I am only describing my understanding of this type of IRA withdrawal. I am not qualified to offer tax advice. You should consult a tax advisor or IRA manager. A web search for *Qualified Charitable IRA Distributions* will generate useful information.

President's Report

December 2018

Immanuel – God with us!

My dear friends of Bethlehem,

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.

James 1:2

This time of year certainly has its trials. Long lines, out of town visitors, weather, holiday dinners and too many presents to wrap! All these add to stress and can take away from the joy of this season. It is important to have your hope in God all day long. It's easy to be confident and trusting *sometimes* – like when you are well rested and things are going smoothly. However, when things get hectic or unpleasant, you often forget the object of your hope: God. Yet this is when you need Him most! So make it your goal this holiday season to keep in constant communication with God through prayer. I am sure you will find that this practice will help you enjoy His presence as you go along the path of life.

There are so many activities taking place at Bethlehem this month! Watch the bulletins, kiosk, and the website for activities and times that everyone can enjoy. Be a part of your church and be an Ambassador – invite your friends and family to join you for church services. Please take time to pray for those in need and remember those who are struggling. Remember, we are all fighting something; we all have trials.

God's peace to each of you!

Jim Parkinson
Church Council President



FROM THE DESK OF ALEXIS—
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND
OUTREACH



Time to dust off the Christmas albums.... December is here!!
We have a busy Christmas season approaching for all our youth programs at BLC, we can't wait!

Our **Sunday School** programming is going fabulously, thanks to our amazing teachers and dedicated parents (and kiddos). Our annual **Christmas program** is on **December 16th** (between services)—our SS students will be re-enacting the Nativity story, complete with costumes (and goodies afterward!) The **kid-friendly Christmas Eve service** will be at **4pm on the 24th**.

BLUES has had a great 2018! Our October and November get-togethers saw **record-high turnouts** and LOTS of fun! We are so grateful for everyone who has come out to spend time with us! We will not be meeting in December, due to the close proximity to Christmas day, but we're excited to start up in 2019 with a sledding party! **January 27th at Twin Lakes**, be there or be square!

Confirmation is wrapping up for the year with our annual retreat (Nov.30th—Dec.1st) and December 16th meeting. We are excited to continue again in January... more details to come!

High School Nights have also been a highlight! November's meeting had a great turnout as we discussed plans for our **2019 mission trip!** We will be travelling to **Marvell, AR from July 7th—12th**. All high school age students are welcome, so let me know if you are interested! (Deposit to secure spot is due by **January 1st!**)

Upcoming Conferences: The Great Lakes Gathering is coming up at the end of this month (Dec. 27th—30th) in Lansing! We will be partnering with Zion in Cadillac for the trip. For our middle school students, **Charge** registration is now open, but this event sells out fast! We will be working with Advent (in Lake Ann) for room sharing and devotionals. If you have questions about either of these events, please don't hesitate to contact me! ☺

And DON'T FORGET: **Advent Nights** are the first 3 Wednesdays in December (the 5th, 12th, and 19th) —we will have crafts and stories available for the kiddos... We can't wait to see you all!
Some other points of interest: I will be trying to get news out about activities/extracurriculars that our youth are involved in and ways that you can go out and get involved! We have students involved in dance, robotics, band, and all sorts of other stuff. Show them some love this holiday season!

**Happy (Early) Advent and a Merry Christmas to all of you lovely folks! ☺
Peace, and God's Blessings,**

Alexis Steig
**Director of Youth and Outreach
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, TC**

"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'" -John 6:35



October 10, 2018

Together

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!
- Psalm 133:1

Dear Bethlehem Family,

We continually give praise to God and thanks to you all for your contributions of time, talent and treasure. Last year we not only had an amazing staff and year of ministry together, but when we saw a small shortfall and asked you for help, you answered. Our December 2017 "Bridge the Gap" campaign helped balance the 2018 budget and exceeded our goal of \$6,000 by over \$800. This year we have new areas of concern, and a lot of exciting potential directions for ministry.

First and foremost, the Youth Challenge Fund initiated in 2010 has run out, and the funds we used to supplement our Y2A ministry each year (averaging \$6k/year) are no longer available. When you couple that with the obligations we face for outreach, ministry and growth, our financial leaders tell us we need to raise our regular giving by over \$18,000 this coming year to maintain our current programming and staffing.

So, in addition to welcoming more members each weekend, one way to increase our giving is to focus on our vision and mission through an exciting new process of discovery: a call to visualize what we hope to look like in the future, with a clear and bold new set of goals. We have thrived at Bethlehem for 125 years (technically, 126!), so now we ask "How will we begin the next 100 years, or the 'new century' of Bethlehem, together?"

This year we focus on the theme "Together" as we move forward, visualizing 100 ways of...:

- 1.) **Welcoming: 100 New Faces in the pews...**To keep growing, we do well to focus on one of our biggest strengths – our hospitality and sense of community. Starting in 2014, we spent three years building up to our 125th Anniversary with the goal of welcoming 125 new members. We fell short of that goal, but only by a few (we brought in about 110 new members!) If we made our new goal 100 members over the next 3-5 years, could we not do the same? However, this time we could focus not solely on the numbers, but on new ministry to engage our new friends and help them stay, thrive and lead – with a new energy for a new goal: becoming a place of deeper teaching, and a place where disciples make disciples who make more and more disciples.
- 2.) **Growing Closer: 100 New Ways to Build Relationship...**Growth is not just about getting "bigger" as a church; it is about getting deeper in relationship to God and with one another. At Bethlehem there is a need, and indeed a clamoring, for more small groups, bible studies, and other specialized ministries that might require shorter time commitments (for those not wanting to serve on a committee, for example) with just as much depth and impact. Studies have shown that getting new members involved *early* and connected to their passions of ministry help strengthen their faith and increase the likelihood they will remain and thrive with the flock.
- 3.) **Building Sustainability: An additional "100" for each family to contribute...**Here we get real about the finances. For us to meet our current budget, we are told that each family at Bethlehem would either need to increase their pledge by 7% more than last year's giving, or for each family to make, on average, a *one-time* contribution of \$100 in addition to their regular giving.

Our vision is clear, and our congregation is strong. But our needs are real. Please consider what the Bethlehem faith community means to you and how you can help us thrive and grow based on the above themes and considerations. The enclosed pledge card can be returned on Pledge Weekend (November 3rd and 4th), via mail, or placed in the office mailbox of Bookkeeper Phil Anderson.

Grace and peace to you,

Your Stewardship Committee

ANNUAL ALL CONGREGATION BUDGET MEETING—Sunday,
December 9—9:45am

YOU ARE INVITED: Please join us on Wednesdays, the 5th, 12th, & 19th at 5:30 for our advent dinners followed by Adult inspiration, crafts for the kiddos, and mini worship.

Advent and Christmas Schedule

Advent Week One

December 5 – Advent Night Dinner, Programming & Worship – 5:30pm

Advent Week Two

December 8 – Blue Christmas Service – 5:00 pm

December 9 – Traditional Service – 8:45am

December 9 – Modern Service 11:00am

December 12 – Advent Night Dinner, Programming & Worship – 5:30pm

Advent Week Three

December 15 – BLC Christmas Concert – 5:00pm

December 16 – Traditional Service 8:45am

December 16 – Children’s Sunday School Christmas Program 9:45am

December 16 – Modern Service 11:00am

December 16 -- Christmas Caroling—Details to follow

December 19 – Advent Night Dinner, Programming & Worship – 5:30

Advent Week Four

December 22 – Christmas Carol Taize Service – 5:00pm

December 23 – **NOTE:** One Service Sunday – 10:00am

December 24 – Children’s Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – 4:00pm

December 24 – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service – 7:00pm

December 24 – Candlelight Holden Christmas Eve Service – 9:30pm

December 25 – Christmas Day Hymn Sing – 10:00am

December 31 – Jubilee Service – 10:00am

Bethlehem Visions Committee

November 2018

Road maps and cell phone navigation apps are helpful in getting us to unfamiliar destinations. The Bethlehem Vision Committee is more like the Lewis and Clark Expedition or for you more modern folks, the five year mission of Star Trek. "To boldly go where no man has gone before." We are led by the Holy Spirit to chart a course for our church going forward. We have an excellent committee consisting of Karen Fehr, Renae Wells, Sharon Weller, Pastor Paul, and myself.

Our first project is charting a course of action to bring on an Intern to Bethlehem in 2019. With the departure of Alexis Steig in July, we need to provide the staffing support that Pastor needs to continue our Mission and Vision. We are looking at all aspects of this new staffing position from selecting a seminary to work with to the various resources we need to make this idea a reality. We need the support of many diverse groups, committees, Church Council, and of course you, the members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. We will provide the map and you, the congregation must approve it and then walk with us as the Spirit leads us.

The path may be difficult and at times rocky, but with God as the lamp that lights our way, we can and will be successful. The destination is a vibrant church with many new members, programs, and opportunities to serve. With an Intern we will also be teaching new ministers in the faith and at the same time, growing our outreach into our community. Let us never tire of reaching out and preaching Love. Christian love is a call to action and we need bold action, founded in love to move forward.

My hand in yours, our hearts with God,
Phil Anderson Committee Chair Bethlehem Visions



*Not feeling the 'Christmas spirit' this year? Mourning loved ones or experiencing loss?
You are not alone, and you are welcome here.*

*In the midst of festivities, shouts, and bright lights, some feel dark sadness in our souls. Join us as
we come together to find peace, hope and light in the darkness...together.*

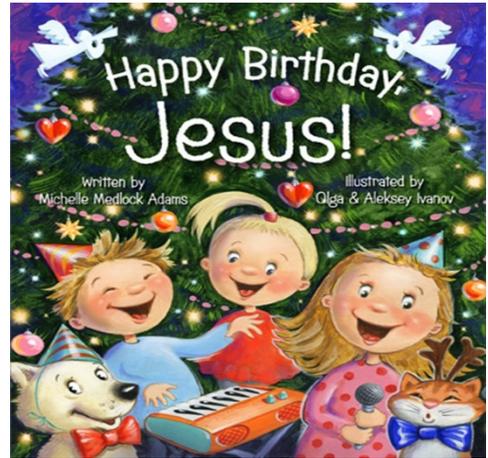
Saturday, December 8 - 5:00 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church

1050 Peninsula Drive, Traverse City, MI 49686

*Together with our friends from **Central United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church of
Traverse City, and Immanuel Lutheran Church of Suttons Bay***

Christian Education Page News

December, 2018



NOVEMBER RECAP

We had a very successful Thank Offering Sunday (lots of goodies gathered for ACTS) and a GREAT turnout for BLUES this month as we made cookies & cards for our shut-ins! A big THANK YOU to all the dedicated parents and kiddos who continue to share the love at Bethlehem... to people in and outside the church!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Advent Nights (Wednesdays) – December 5th, 9th, and 19th

Sunday School Christmas Program — Sunday, December 16th

‘Well’-Style Sunday School – Sunday, December 23rd

Kid’s Christmas Worship Service –Monday, December 24th at 4pm

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL on Sunday, December 30th (Jubilee Service)

***Please note that there will be No BLUES this month!*

We hope you get to spend time with your loved ones this Advent & Christmas season... and we’re so blessed by all of you! ☺

Lots of love, and **Merry Christmas** from the Christian Education Committee!

DEADLINE FOR COUNCIL REPORTS IS WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12

TOGETHER: Threads of Giving, Bread of Life PLEDGES STILL WELCOME!!!

November 3 & 4 was our 2019 Pledge Weekend. "The Pledge Card Vase" will be in the back of the church or you can put your envelope in Phil Andersen's mailbox just outside the Office. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE consider automated giving!!! (It makes me feel so gratified to have my "duty done" each week--Rena).

2019 Mission Trip, End of Year Due Date!

There's no time like the present to start building energy for our **2019 mission trip**... to Marvell, Arkansas! We will be making the trip from **July 7th-12th**, and we want as many **high school students** as possible to come with!

A \$50 deposit for the trip is due by January 1st, so please prayerfully consider this amazing opportunity and talk to Alexis as soon as you can!

Please direct questions and inquiries to Alexis at alexis.steig@bethlehemtc.org

XYZ

Our next XYZ Get Together will be THURSDAY, December 20th with a pot luck at noon. Ham will be provided. After lunch we will travel to the home of Joe and Fran White to view their Christmas decorations. All are welcome....bring a friend (or two). Direct your questions to Jan or Butch at 231-271-3802 or etwaisanen@centurytel.net.

SEEKING MEMBERS: Please consider sharing a bit of your time, input, talent, and LOVE for BLC. The following groups could use your help: The Stewardship Committee (Chair Barbara Wright 231-735-3227), The Altar Guild (Barbara Oster 231-668-7038), and Y2A (needs parents of youth and children for future programming) (Alexis Steig—Church office).

COMMUNION PARTIES AT BAY RIDGE: Once a month, (currently on the second Wednesday at 2pm) Pastor Paul, John and Jan Stretlien, and occasionally other folks, go to Bay Ridge to offer a Communion Party to the residents. This happens at 2:00 pm and there are songs, communion, a short sermon and fellowship with coffee and cookies after. The congregation is welcome to attend! ☺

HELP NEEDED: We have a young couple in the congregation needing an economical place to live. (EX. A mother-in-law quarters or extra room). Please contact Pastor Paul for additional information.

Reminder---All are welcome at our Council Meetings: Tuesday, December 18 at 6 pm. There is a time slot for guests to speak at the beginning of the meeting,.

October 2018 Financial Update

October Income = \$23,592

October Expense = \$30,554

Negative Cash Flow = \$6,692

YTD Income = \$305,374

YTD Expense = \$310,871

Negative Cash Flow = \$5,497

The month of October was budgeted to have a negative cash flow of \$5,388 so we were actually \$1,574 off our budget target. Remember that some months are budgeted to be positive and some negative. It all depends on how many Sunday's and pay periods hit in any particular month...plus the usual variables of income and expense. YTD we have a negative cash flow of \$5,497. With only two months left in the year we need to finish strong to avoid ending the year with a deficit cash flow.

A reminder the 2019 Budget will be voted on during our December 9th Congregation Meeting. Copies of the budget will be available for your review prior to the meeting.

Secretary of Council's December STAR Article

The main thought that I took away from our November Council Meeting is the need for Evangelism from our Bethlehem Family. This is a topic that comes up at every meeting. Bethlehem loses members for a number of reasons, a relocation, death, etc. We as a Council have the concern for our, Bethlehem's, continued growth and realize that Evangelism by all of us is needed. Chuck Ardingo, Chairman of the Fellowship Committee and liaison to the Property Committee for Council is setting up a meeting for all committee chairpersons to come together and brainstorm ideas of Evangelism for Bethlehem. For our individual part we can look to invite family, friends and neighbors to hear the word of Jesus and come to Bethlehem. I feel this Advent Season is the perfect time for our Evangelism. Please join me in this Evangelism effort. As always, thank you for all you currently do for Bethlehem.

Tim Fox
Secretary of Council



WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM

DECEMBER, 2018



THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

A BIG thank you to all the people of Bethlehem Lutheran Church for the generous offering collected at our WELCA Thank Offering Service. We received \$1,343.63 which is being used to support the ongoing ministries of the churchwide women's organization. Words seem so inadequate; just know we appreciate you so very much. Thank you again!



END OF YEAR DISTRIBUTION OF MONEY

At the end of every year, Bethlehem's WELCA donates money to different charities and organizations. This money is received from the monthly offerings taken at the circle meetings. Fifty percent goes to the State WELCA organization and 50% is used for our own projects. This year we divided \$600 between ELCA Good Gifts water project (international), Lutheran Disaster Response for California fires (national), and locally to Community Meals. We also are assembling cosmetic bags for local needs.



CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Another BIG thank you goes to Ruth Circle for the Christmas Luncheon held on December 1st. Great Food! Great entertainment! We especially enjoyed our Sunday School children's participation and the personal experiences the women gave about their favorite carols. And great fellowship with each other! Awesome job, Ladies!



GATHER MAGAZINE BIBLE STUDY

The Bible Study for December is entitled 'Fear Not', reminding us that God is at work beyond our ability to imagine.

GOD'S BLESSINGS TO YOU ALL!





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

ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.

We Are One in the Spirit. We Are United in Jesus' Name

"There is a safety and refuge in this place that is so, so very holy," proclaims the Rev. Kirsten Fryer. Fryer is an ELCA missionary serving as the pastor of an English-speaking congregation, St. Andrew's United Church of Cairo. St. Andrew's houses, several ministries including St. Andrew's Refugee Services, that serves 25,000 refugees annually. Learn more about the inspiring ministry and work of the St. Andrew's community. Rev. Fryer's ministry is a look at the Church serving in an Islamic country.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGA8n3W89y4&feature=youtube>

ELCA, Episcopal and Catholic Church Leaders Issue Statement on East Jerusalem Hospitals

In a recent press release, the presiding bishop and Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), alongside the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church on behalf of its House of Bishops, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' committees on International Justice and Peace and Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, united to voice their deep concerns surrounding a *move by the United States to begin halting humanitarian assistance to hospitals in East Jerusalem*.

The hospitals have provided medical and surgical services to Palestinians. Today, Augusta Victoria, a Lutheran hospital provides specialty care for Palestinians from across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with services including a cancer center, a dialysis unit, and a pediatric center. It is the second largest hospital in East Jerusalem, as well as the sole remaining specialized care unit located in the West Bank or Gaza Strip. The hospital was founded in 1907 and has been serving people since then.

YAGM Endowment Fund

Thanks to a major gift from a generous ELCA family, an endowment fund in support of the Young Adults in Global Mission program has been created. The endowment fund will support the program in perpetuity. Make a gift to the fund at: <https://www.ELCA.org/YAGMGive>. Select "Young Adults in Global Mission Endowment" from the drop-down menu.

NOTE: The Global Mission space on the kiosk will no longer be maintained. For those interested in ELCA global mission programming and activities, pick up a current issue of *Living Lutheran* by the entrance. Updates are also posted at: www.elca.org/globalmission.

ELCA Global Mission defines its purpose as follows. *Walking and working together, we seek to accompany our companions. Accompaniment is defined as walking together in a solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality. The ELCA lives out accompaniment in relationships with global companions, striving to share God's love and participate in God's mission together.*

UPDATED INFORMATION: AED CERTIFICATION: We now have a full class of 9 people signed up to take the CPR & AED class representing most groups in the church. We are accepting donations so we can pay the \$700 class and for updating our equipment. The date has been set for January 20. If you wish to contribute please use an envelope marked CPR/AED and place it in the offering plate. Thank you for your generosity....The Christensen Small Group@231-835-0900

CCC is moving down the alphabet to FFF: Finger-Food Fellowship!

This is a way for any Bethlehem member to be involved! We all know how nice it is to munch a little something on Sunday morning while chatting. Any person, couple or group can sign up to bring cookies OR ANY FINGER-FOOD which only requires a napkin. It could be crackers, cheese and meat cubes, veggies, nuts, candy, mini-sandwiches, or whatever your clever brain and hands can create. One tray should be ready after both Sunday services with someone cleaning up before leaving church. Please feel the spirit moving you and sign up on the sheet in the Narthex. AND WRITE DOWN YOUR DATE BECAUSE NO ONE WILL BE REMINDING YOU. This is a wonderful ministry not only for members but also for welcoming visitors.



SHOP AT FAMILY FARE AND HELP RAISE MONEY FOR QUILTS!!

Shop at Family Fare, 905 E. 8th Street here in Traverse City (or at any Family Fare in the area) and help raise money for quilts!

*To warm others with more than a prayers,
save register receipts when you shop Family Fare!
Lutheran World Relief quilters need help from you.
Bring Family Fare receipts to us that you could do.
This helps raise money for the supplies it will take...
for fabric, thread, and shipping necessary for the quilts we make!*

Questions? Please call Betty Rutila at 231-947-1013

WELCOME TO OUR NEW PAGE

“We Care for God’s Creation”

This page will be a monthly feature page in the Star dedicated to taking care of our environment and appreciating the bounty that God has given us. We are going to be looking for your contributions. Help us highlight our gratitude to Him from whom flows all blessings. Please contact Judy Strickland with your ideas or the church office.

THE 3 R’S OF CONSERVATION

REFUSE—Say “No Thank You” to unnecessary things, i.e. plastic grocery bags, straws, etc.

REUSE—reuse the bag, donate old sheets to the quilters

RECYCLE—Paper, plastic, metal, batteries, etc.

NATURE’S INSPIRATION from the desk of Paul Wiemerslage

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.” Rachel Carson

Please take a moment to reflect on the quote above.

What do her words mean to you?

What emotions or thoughts do they evoke?

For most, finding beauty in nature is easy, especially living in northern Michigan. Each day is bookended with a momentous rising and setting of the sun, lifting and closing the veil on our scenic rolling hills, vineyards, forests, rivers, streams, and lakes (including one large enough to be a sea). To contemplate beauty and find symbolism or metaphor in this place is a task most will find quite easy.

That said, as Christians there is something far greater at work in Carson’s quote.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1.

We learn through Genesis that God *created* the earth. To contemplate its beauty is then to contemplate the Creator. We call this natural revelation, and it is one of the primary ways God reveals himself to us. As is true for all works of art, the artist is reflected in their creation. Knowing and believing this, how much greater then is a sunrise or sunset, or the moon’s steady tug on our tides? How miraculous his love and care for us that he would create a world as amazing and complex as this, only to remark, “Are you not more value than they?” (Matthew 6:26).

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING----When you see those HUGE packs of batteries while out shopping this month (like on Black Friday), please consider buying rechargeables and a charger. You will be doing your part---batteries that are thrown out emit greenhouse gases which cause climate change.



The Worship & Music Committee has restored the custom of honoring new members of the family of God with a rose at the Altar. Those who wish to celebrate their new child or grandchild can contact the church office. The cost is \$10.00 to be submitted to the church office, or labeled as such and placed in the collection plate. The rose and vase can be taken by the family after the 11:00 service on Sunday.

Musicality

Another way to support your Bethlehem Music Department is to join one of the music groups. Depending on the one you join, you could be a part of services every 2 months, once a month, once every three weeks, or about every other week. They all have different schedules. What fits you best?

Your choices are steel pans, bells, Worship Team, and choir. They rehearse once a week with trained directors and really build up quite a comradery. It's fun. Think about it.



Did you know Love In the Name of Christ has a Medical Equipment Loan Ministry? If you, a friend or a family members needs a wheelchair, walker, cane, bathroom equipment or more, we can help! We have closet locations at Christ the King in Acme, Grace Episcopal mid-town, St. Patrick in the Grawn area and at the Love INC offices on East Front Street. **Call 941-5683** to speak with us about a loan or a donation of equipment. Thanks to our partnership you can have love and care at home!

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is always looking for volunteers:

1. Skilled/Unskilled volunteers to serve as site coaches leading and teaching groups of volunteers in finish carpentry. No experience necessary.
 2. Committee Members. Time commitment is about three hours a month. Committees needing members are Faith Relations, Family Selection and Events.
 3. Re-Store volunteers / Donation drives / Pickup and Delivery
 4. Lunch volunteers to feed construction site crews.
 5. Deconstruction teams to salvage materials to be sold at the Re-Sale Store.
- If you're interested in helping out, please call Michelle Reichert at 231-941-4663



Health Concerns*

*Richard Fernholz, Nancy Smith, Hazel Lautner,
Margie Whitney, Jo Hasse, Mary Gordon, Ruth Boerman,
Linda Davis, Ellie Tacke, Vern and Bev Attwood, Cheryl Clark,
Roy Stowe, Kate Holtfreter, Joyce Rombouts, Priscilla Thompson,
Marlene Baesch, Alvin Kober, Sharon Stowe, Bill Gordie,
Mandy Hitesman, Dee Springer, and Harper Wiemerschlage*

Grand Traverse Pavilions: Vern & Bev Attwood, Bill Gourdie

Homebound: Hazel Lautner, Ruth Boerman

Traverse Manor: Margie Whitney

French Manor LaFranier: Jo Hasse, Joyce Rombouts

French Manor: Mary Gordon

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.



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.net

*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...



OPTIONS FOR OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

*****BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT:** Munson Hospice Bereavement Support Groups and Programs are available to the general public free of charge. Many groups and dates are available. (See flier on outside of Office) There is a workshop starting January 16 in Traverse City—“Understanding Your Grief” which meets for 10 weeks.

**** YOU ARE INVITED—**The 51st Annual Madrigal Dinner Theater at the Presbyterian Church—December 5th and/or 6th—at 5:30 pm..Tickets are \$20.00/person or \$140 for a table of 8 and available at the church office Phone 231-946-5680

****LOVE INC** is again reaching out with our Adopt A Family Christmas Program. Please consider adopting a family for Christmas. Call the Love INC office at 231-941-5683 or email Tony at tonyn@loveinctraverse.org to adopt.

****FATHER FRED:** Wednesday morning volunteers now needed. The typical shift is 10-2pm and you will receive an orientation and work with another volunteer that will help train you. Contact: Elaine Keaton at 231-947-2055 Ext: 118 or ekeaton@fatherfred.org

****GRAND TRAVERSE BAY AREA STROKE CLUB:** On December 12 the Club will host a Holiday Party. These are held at the Presbyterian Church on Westminster Rd. from 2:30-4:30pm. Contact Melinda Hollands, at 935-6380

****CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:** Volunteers to feed the local homeless and financially insecure, a free meal 7 days a week....any level of commitment is welcome. To volunteer, contact Rev. Jane Lippert at janerobertalippert@gmail.com or 231-946-5191

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 Renae Wells	admin@bethlehemtc.org
Bookkeeper, Phil Anderson	bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org
Sharon Weller, Music Director	sharon.weller@bethlehemtc.org
Alexis Steig, Youth & Outreach Director	alexis.steig@bethlehemtc.org
Website	www.bethlehemtc.org

Church Council

Jim Parkinson, President	president.council@bethlehemtc.org
Chuck Ardingo, Vice President	vicepresident.council@bethlehemtc.org
Tim Fox, Secretary	secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org
Dave Peppler, Treasurer	treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org
Shelly McAllister, Financial Sec.	Secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org
Phil Anderson, Bethlehem Vision	Bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org
Jan Stretlien, Christian Care Giving	christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org
Barbara Graf, Christian Ed.	christianeducation@bethlehemtc.org
LoAnn VandeLeest, Evangelism	evangelism@bethlehemtc.org
Chuck Ardingo, Fellowship	fellowship.committee@bethlehemtc.org
LoAnn VandeLeest, Membership	membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org
LoAnn VandeLeest, Personnel	personnel.committee@bethlehemtc.org
Chuck Ardingo, Property	property.committee@bethlehemtc.org
Barbara Wright, Stewardship	stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org
Nancy Downer, Worship and Music	worship.committee@bethlehemtc.org
Barbara Graf, Youth/Y2A	youth.committee@bethlehemtc.org

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
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
8:45am - Worship Service 9:45am - Membership & 9:45am - Sunday School 9:45am - WELCA Board 11am - Modern Worship - S 12:30pm - Wor. & Mus.	10am - Almon-B 10am - Almon-LR3 10am - Staff Meeting 3pm - Lessons/Weller 4pm - Drive My Way 6:30pm - Gamblers	9am - LWR Quilting 9am - Prayer Shawl 9am - Property Work Group 2pm - AUVW Set Up 3pm - Lessons/Warne 4pm - Drive My Way	3pm - Lessons/Weller 4pm - Drive My Way 5:30pm - Advent Dinner 6pm - Worship Team 6:15pm - Adult 6:45pm - Mini Worship	10am - Piano Tuning 3pm - Lessons/Warne 4pm - Drive My Way 5:30pm - ACOA (LR) 6pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	Conf. Retreat @ Feast of Victory Lutheran Church, 4400 Mt 10am - Set-up WELCA 12:30pm - WELCA Advent 5pm - Celebrate! Worship	5pm - Blue Christmas-S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8:45am - Worship Service 9:45am - Sunday School 11am - Modern Worship - S 12:30pm - Wor. & Mus.	10am - Almon-B 10am - Almon-LR3 10am - Staff Meeting 3pm - Lessons/Weller 4pm - Drive My Way 6:30pm - Gamblers	9am - LWR Quilting 9am - Prayer Shawl 9am - Property Work Group 2pm - AUVW Set Up 3pm - Lessons/Warne 4pm - Drive My Way	3pm - Lessons/Weller 4pm - Drive My Way 5:30pm - Advent Dinner 6pm - Worship Team 6:15pm - Adult 6:45pm - Mini Worship	10am - Piano Tuning 3pm - Lessons/Warne 4pm - Drive My Way 5:30pm - ACOA (LR) 6pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	10am - Almon-B 10am - Almon-LR3 2:30pm - Front Street Jazz 5pm - Faith and Family 7pm - Bridge-OS	5pm - Workshop-S
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
8:45am - Worship Service 9:45am - Sunday School 11am - Modern Worship - S	10am - Almon-B 10am - Almon-LR3 10am - Staff Meeting 3pm - Lessons/Weller 4pm - Drive My Way 6pm - Saw Placemat Quilters 6:30pm - Gamblers	9am - LWR Quilting 9am - Prayer Shawl 9am - Property Work Group 10am - Finance-CR 12pm - Sarah Circle 3pm - Executive Committee 3pm - Lessons/Warne	1pm - Baby Pantry 2pm - ALS Support Group 2pm - Communion Party-BR 3pm - Lessons/Weller 4pm - Drive My Way 5:30pm - Advent Dinner 6pm - Worship Team	9am - Baby Pantry-FH 1pm - RebeccaAnn Circle 3pm - Lessons/Warne 4pm - Drive My Way 5:30pm - ACOA (LR) 6pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	10am - Almon-B 10am - Almon-LR3 2:30pm - Front Street Jazz 5pm - Faith and Family 7pm - Bridge-OS	5pm - Workshop-S
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
8:45am - Worship Service 9:45am - SS Christmas 9:45am - Sunday School 11am - Christensen SG 11am - Modern Worship - S 12:30pm - Menroe SG 5:30pm - HSNight	10am - Almon-B 10am - Almon-LR3 10am - Staff Meeting 3pm - Lessons/Weller 4pm - Drive My Way 6:30pm - Gamblers	9am - LWR Quilting 9am - Prayer Shawl 9am - Property Work Group 3pm - Lessons/Warne 4pm - Drive My Way 6pm - Council Meeting 7pm - Laurner SG @ at the	3pm - Lessons/Weller 4pm - Drive My Way 5:30pm - Advent Dinner 6pm - Worship Team 6:15pm - Adult 6:45pm - Mini Worship	12pm - XYZ 3pm - Lessons/Warne 4pm - Drive My Way 5:30pm - ACOA (LR) 6pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	10am - Almon-B 10am - Almon-LR3 2:30pm - Front Street Jazz	9am - All Star DE 5pm - Christmas Carol
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
10am - Traditional 1pm - All Star DE	9am - All Star DE 10am - Almon-B 10am - Almon-LR3 4pm - Kids Christmas Svc 6:30pm - Gamblers 7pm - Christmas Svc.	Office Closed 10am - Hymn Sing	9am - All Star DE 1pm - Johnson SG (Offsite)	LANSGING GATHERING @ Radisson Hotel Lansing at the Capitol, 111 N Grand Ave, Lansing. 9am - All Star DE 1pm - Leahio SG 3pm - Lessons/Warne 5:30pm - ACOA (LR)	9am - All Star DE 10am - Almon-B 10am - Almon-LR3 1pm - Drive My Way 2:30pm - Front Street Jazz	9am - All Star DE 1pm - Drive My Way 5pm - NO WORSHIP
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
LANSGING GATHERING @ 10am - Jubilee 1pm - Drive My Way 4pm - All Star DE	9am - All Star DE 10am - Almon-B 10am - Almon-LR3 10am - Staff Meeting					