

# FEBRUARY 2021



Bethlehem  
LUTHERAN CHURCH



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: (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

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.”*



*Happy are those whose delight is in the [word\*] of the LORD...They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.*  
– Psalm 1:1a, 3



The above verse from the first song in our psalter is surprisingly parallel to the first book in the bible. Like Genesis, Psalm 1 starts with images of Creation and the problem of sin. Those who delight in God's "law\*" (or "law and gospel" for us Lutherans!) understand the importance of distinguishing what is sin and its opposite: movement toward God and gospel. What I enjoy most about this first psalm is that it, too, starts with a tree in God's garden. Like the tree of Knowledge and tree of Life "in the beginning," the delight in God's word and life helps our hearts gravitate to God. And we are not drawn to God blindly or vaguely...but in the real and in the specific.

This Lent we focus on the real places, the landscapes and the ordinary where God's extraordinary love meets us. Our journey will dovetail with our Wednesday noon book study, where we read theologian Belden Lane's *The Great Conversation: Nature and the Care of the Soul*.

Enter "**Faithscapes: the Great Conversation with our Creator**" this winter and spring, as we combine two words – Faith and Landscape (not to be confused with "escape"! ) to examine the places that affect the *internal* landscapes of our own spirit, as we live both outward and inward walks of faith. This is not a mere appreciation of God's Creation, but a look inward to how God is creating new relationship with/in us. Here is the breakdown of what we'll focus on each week:

**Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>:** Mortality & "dusty" landscape "We are from dust...and shall return."

- Please note: We will worship Wednesdays online at our usual "2.0" Wednesday 7pm offering on Facebook and Youtube (Real Church Virtual); ***Parking Lot Communion and Ash distribution will take place at two time slots on Ash Wednesday: 11:15am – 12:15pm and 5:15-6:15pm***

**Faithscape #1, Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>: Desert, Dune and Mountain** (Scarcity and highlands of the spirit)

**Faithscape #2, Mar. 3<sup>rd</sup>: Countryside and Prairie** (The Openness of the familiar and inviting)

**Faithscape #3, Mar. 10<sup>th</sup>: City and Township** (The streets we walk, the structures that define...)

**Faithscape #4, Mar. 17<sup>th</sup>: Valley and Canyon** ("Though I walk through the valley of the shadow")

**Faithscape #5, Mar. 24<sup>th</sup>: Seashore and Lakeshore** (Returning to the place/s Christ calls us)

**Something Special for Lent Wednesdays: 'Table for 12':** As we continue to monitor the numbers for Covid-19 positivity in Grand Traverse and enter the season of Lent, ***Pastor Paul is eager to see each of you in a safe way, in small numbers, while we hopefully transition into larger participation in the near future.*** One interesting proposal is what some of our sister churches have started doing before they open up for worship: small groups of 10 or 12 members who could sign up beforehand (by phone or online) to participate in weekly communion with one of two Wednesday time slots. We could gather (socially distanced with masks, of course) for 15 minutes in the sanctuary for a short prayer, devotion and communion. If such an idea is approved by Council this month, we could possibly start this program as early as February 24th and continue during all the Lenten Wednesdays.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Traverse City Michigan

"We Journey with God to serve with Love"

MINUTES FROM CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING; December 15, 2020

CALLED TO ORDER: Leonard Graf at 6:02 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER: Nancy Downer read from Dr. Charles Stanley, "A Gift for Every Heart" and Matthew 1:23.

ROLL CALL: Gail Goldsmith; Phil Anderson, Maureen Bauer, Pastor Paul Busekist, Nancy Downer, Gail Goldsmith, Leonard Graf, Laura Hahn, Mark McPherson, Cindy Monroe, Jim Monroe, Jan Stretlien, Paul Wiemerslage all present.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED 2021 BUDGET: Dave Peppler presented the update on the 2021 Budget at this time it has a \$4387 deficit.

VISITOR/S OR CONGREGATIONAL COMMENT: none

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM November 17, 2020: the minutes were approved.

REPORTS:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Leonard stated that if the Governor allows 50 people to gather we can look at having in person worship inside.

PASTOR'S REPORT: 1.) Pastor Paul stated he would like to take a vacation after Christmas. 2.) He handed out the information from Pastor Jonathan on the cost of the Live Stream and the quote from NetSmart Plus to upgrade the Church's WIFI system to make it work for Live Streaming.

FINACIAL SERCRETARY REPORT: 52 Pledges have been received, we are about 36 Pledges short compared to last year. The Pledges are about a month behind where we were at last year. There are some people on the automatic donation system, who maybe don't feel the need to send in the Pledge Cards. Stewardship committee will send out another message as encouragement and thankful to those who have sent their pledges in.

Jim also keeps track of the COVID-19 updates in the area, the numbers appear to be flattening out, but they go up and down.

CONSENT CALENDAR: COMMITTEE REPORTS: The committee reports are: Financial Secretary's report, Financial and Executive Committee report, Christian Care Report, Christian Education Report, Membership and Evangelism, 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). Personnel Report; addendum, Personnel Committee Chair will meet with Pastor to discuss time off in the future. All reports submitted were accepted as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Update on in person worship services. The information will continue to be updated and looked at to determine when the church maybe able to open in person worship services.
- B. Streaming worship services. Funds may be obtained through other committees and funds.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Mark McPherson made the motion to recommend the 2021 budget with the deficit to the congregation, Maureen Bauer seconded the motion and the motion carried.
- B. Maureen Bauer made the motion to pay for the upgrade to the network up to \$3000.00 out of the 2020 General Operations funds. Jan Stretlien seconded the motion. Maureen Bauer called the question, Cindy Monroe seconded the call to question. The call to question motion was carried. The motion to upgrade the network motion was passed.
- C. Mission Support from the Non-ELCA funds: Mark McPherson made the motion to donate to the Salvation Army, Nancy Downer seconded the motion, the motion carried.
- D. The cost of the Christmas Tree for the East Lawn; Cindy Monroe made the motion to pass the hat to collect money for the Christmas tree, Laura seconded the motion, the motion passed the hat was passed and the tree was covered.

VISITOR OR CONGREGATIONAL COMMENT: none

GOOD TO THE ORDER: A time for general/undocumented comments by each Council Member if so desired. Everyone wished all a Merry Christmas!

LORD'S PRAYER: was said by all.

ADJOURNMENT: Leonard Graf made a motion to adjourn, Cindy Monroe seconded the motion, adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Goldsmith, Council Secretary

## ABRIDGED WITH ANNIE: A SUMMARY OF YOUTH EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY...

Hello there everyone! Happy February! I'm so thankful for this year already. So many good things have happened even amongst the not so great things....it's just a perfect reminder that God there protecting us in everything we see and do, everywhere we go!

### FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS ...

Our Confirmation Class has been meeting virtually as of the end of January. We will be having a **virtual confirmation retreat on Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>**! If your confirmation age youth would like to join or if you more information about the retreat or need the links, please reach out to myself, Pastor Paul or Feast of Victory's Pastor Carolyn!

Although we will not be able to have our Ski Trip this year due to restrictions at the ski resorts I am happy to say that this month we will be having an our first ever **All Youth Sledding Party on Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup> from 12:30PM – 2:30PM at Twin Lakes Park!** All youth and their families are invited to join! I plan to also have prepackaged snacks and hot cocoa there as well! If you need more information feel free to reach out to me! This party will also take place of all of the individual youth groups meeting this month. I can't wait to spend time with all of the youth *together!*

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

I'm sure that everyone is aware by now, but I'm so excited to share with you all that my husband, Trent and I are expecting a baby who will be arriving in **early August 2021!** It has been a long journey to get to this point and I'm so excited to be having this new adventure with you all! I am working with Council and Y2A as to what things will look like once the baby arrives but I will keep everyone updated as we discuss.

As we go about our February I ask that you keep Bethlehem's youth and families in your prayers as they go about navigating the still uncharted waters and uncertainties that COVID-19 still brings us all. Pray that that take comfort in their hearts with the knowledge that God is in everything and that God is always with us!

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."  
(Psalm 46:1)*

Cheerfully in Christ,

**Annie Slabaugh**

Director of Youth and Outreach  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church – Traverse City





## BLC Book Club News

The BLC book club continues to meet the 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm via ZOOM. On Feb. 23 we will discuss the book "Little Fires Everywhere" by Celeste Ng. Even if you have not read the book you are welcome to join our discussion. If you are not on the contact list just send your email address to Cindy Monroe at [cmonroe@chartermi.net](mailto:cmonroe@chartermi.net) so you can receive the ZOOM invite.

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### A Stewardship reflection:

I have many things to be thankful for. First is the worship that we are still able to enjoy each week. I am very grateful for Pastor Paul, Annie and the entire worship team which makes this possible. The gifts and abilities that they bring to us are energizing.

The second thing I am thankful for is to all of you for maintaining your pledges in 2020. We finished the year at 98% of pledged offerings being received. Nothing short of amazing given the year! We did however finish with a reduction in non pledged contributions and other building use. On the other hand, total expenses were down which helped to offset the loss in additional revenue.

For 2021 we are behind in the number of families making a pledge so far. Hopefully these family units would continue their 2020 pledge into 2021. Should this not be the case, the church council would need to make adjustments to the 2021 budget. It is still not too late to make a 2021 pledge. If you would like to do so, please contact the church office for a new card if needed.

Third, I am very thankful for the church council in their decision making process last year. Unfortunately, given COVID-19, it looks like 2021 is bringing a continued set of challenges. I know we can all move forward together in a safe and healthy manner in this ever changing world. Blessings,  
Mark McPherson

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**2021 Giving envelopes are available. Please call the church office to make arrangements to pick up your box. Those boxes not picked up will be mailed.**

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### HONORING GOD'S CREATION

Since 2019 we have been enjoying Bethlehem's "Honoring God's Creation" column so ably organized by Judy Strickland. The time has come that Judy has decided to step down. So that we may continue with this excellent information, this is a request for contributions from the congregation. You can do as a one time submission or you can step in to organize the column. Topics can include gardening, recycling or saving the planet. This is a great way to take care of your BLC family. Please contact Barbara Oster at [admin@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org) if you would like to participate.

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**Due to the restrictions in place at ski resorts at this time we have made the difficult decision to cancel the Ski Trip for this year.** While we are very disappointed, Annie would like to invite the youth and their families to the **all youth sledding party on February 20th at Twin Lakes Park.** She will be sending more information in regards to more details in early February. If you would like to make sure you are on the email list or if you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Annie at [annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org). We promise that we will have an amazing Ski Trip in 2022!

Below is a thank you letter from the principal of Traverse City High School, Lance Morgan. You can see that even with 2020 as it was, the people of Traverse City, including Bethlehem, made Christmas for these kids a special one. Thank you for caring.

As we all know this pandemic has been super hard on everyone. One of our strengths at TCHS is our ability to form relationships with our students which has been extremely difficult this year as we try to figure out what is best for our students and our families. We are proud of our ability to "think outside the box" and figure out a way to do what is right for our kids.

For over 20 years we have had the tradition of helping our families with Thanksgiving and Christmas. We were able to navigate Thanksgiving with only minor changes but I have to be completely honest in that I was very worried about our ability to pull off Christmas. The reason I was worried was that in the past we have had a Holiday gathering that included a visit from Santa and gift bags for every student. For those of you who have been able to attend it is amazing. For some of our students this is Christmas. Santa does not come to their houses on Christmas Eve and there is no magical holiday spirit. The look on their faces is priceless and it is an amazing feeling to be involved in the process. I am happy to tell you that we have done it again! In fact I think this is the best year yet!!

We are completing our deliveries that include a gift basket for every student containing a Maverick Nation tee shirt, hats and gloves, sweatshirts, blanket and gift cards. Each family also receives a Family Bag that includes snacks, a homemade quilt, board game, and a Holiday treat. For our families who are in need of assistance from our food pantry we also were able to create food boxes that were complete with ingredients and recipes to help them bridge the gap over the break. Add a weighted blanket and a skateboard and that completes the package that we were able to create for EVERY student at TCHS. Great day to be a Maverick!

This was possible because my staff is incredible and our community is amazing. I would love to list the people and organizations that all made this possible but I can't because the list is too long. We appreciate each and every one of you and please know that you made a difference for several families in our community.

Sincerely,

Lance Morgan Jr.  
Principal, Maverick Nation

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**A big thank you to those who have turned in Oleson's receipts. For 2020, we received a total of \$545.66. Please continue saving your Oleson's receipts for Bethlehem. Please drop them off in the bin under the mailbox counter. Thanks.**

## Christian Education News February 2021



### Packet lessons & BLUES:

Although we are not having in-person Sunday School yet, the Christian Education Committee is mailing materials for at-home Sunday School lessons! If you would like to receive a February packet for your child(ren), please contact Nancy Ammann.

Bethlehem Lutheran Upper Elementary Students (BLUES) is a special Youth Group for children in 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade that meets approximately every month, in-person or virtually, depending on the activities. Please contact Annie Slabaugh for details.

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!!!



And now these three remain:  
faith, hope, and love. But the  
greatest of these is love.  
- 1 Corinthians 13:13

### Happy Valentine's Day!



-Christian Education Committee



WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM  
FEBRUARY, 2021  
CELEBRATING **BOLD** WOMEN'S DAY  
(AKA **BOLD** CHRISTIAN'S DAY)



In 2 Timothy 1:2, 5 Paul talks about Timothy learning about faith from his grandmother and mother. Who taught you to pray? Was it your mother or grandmother? Maybe a Sunday School teacher or youth pastor? Whoever it was, chances are that - just like Timothy - you were taught to pray by a woman - a woman who handed on a living faith to you. This month we celebrate **Bold** Women's Day, a day we give thanks for the **bold** and faithful women who have made us who we are today - and for the **bold** and faithful women who will lead us into who we will be tomorrow.

However, we at Bethlehem would like to include everyone in this day, hence the name **Bold** Christian's Day. What is a **bold** Christian? It is a person who has acted or is acting **boldly** on their faith in Jesus. It's important that we realize that Christians are **bold** in different ways: some **boldness** is bright and loud; some is firm and quiet. We can live out our **boldness** in Christ in the workplace, family home or community, in service to those in need, in advocacy, through hospitality. It's all about being a disciple of Christ, a call to action. (Read 2 Corinthians 3:4-6, 12)

WHO ARE YOU? I'M GLAD YOU ASKED! YOU ARE.....

**God's child** (John 1:12)

**Christ's friend** (John 15:15)

**A member of Christ's body** (1 Corinthians 12:27)

**A saint** (Ephesians 1:1)

**Redeemed and forgiven of all your sins** (Colossians 1:14)

**Complete in Christ, lacking in nothing** (Colossians 2:10)

**Free from condemnation** (Romans 8:1-2)

**God's co-worker** (2 Corinthians 6:1)

**Seated with Christ in the heavenly realm** (Ephesians 2:6)

**God's workmanship** (Ephesians 2:10)

**A citizen of heaven** (Philippians 3:20)

**Adopted into God's family** (Ephesians 1:5)

**Born of God: the evil one cannot touch you** (1 John 5:18)

Get acquainted with your New Self!

*(taken from Glory Days/Max Lucado)*

Da



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

# ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.



## ELCA Global Mission Ministry During a Pandemic

**How Many?** 121 **missionary households** including  
6 new missionaries in 2020 [fewer than normal]

**Where?** 45 countries around the world

### What?

**Education:** 35 **missionaries** serve as teachers professors, or trainers

**Administration:** 26 **missionaries** serve as representatives, program facilitators  
or communicators

**Parish Ministry:** 23 **missionaries** serve as pastors, pastoral interns  
or worship assistants

**YAGM:** 11 **missionaries** serve as coordinators for  
Young Adults in Global Mission

**Health:** 7 **missionaries** serve as doctors or health care coordinators

This is a glimpse of the work of our missionaries, called and sent to proclaim the good news of God's justifying and reconciling grace:

We have no mission but to serve In full obedience to our Lord: To care for all, without reserve, And to spread God's liberating word. —“The Church of Christ, in Every Age” (ELW 729)

## Health Concerns\*



# The Power of Prayer

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

**Homebound:** Marleen Baesch

**Traverse Manor:** Margie Whitney, Marianne Bradford

**French Manor LaFranier:** Jo Hasse

**Boardman Lake Glens:** Inge Thomas, Bill & Dee Springer

**Samaritas (Acme):** Priscilla Thompson

**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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**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](mailto:jstretlien@gmail.com)**

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**\*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](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)...**

# BLC Contacts

## PLEASE NOTE SEVERAL ADDRESS UPDATES

### **Church Office**

Pastor Paul Busekist	<a href="mailto:paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org">paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Admin. Asst. Sharon Weller	<a href="mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org">admin@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Admin. Aide Barbara Oster	<a href="mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org">admin@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Bookkeeper, Phil Anderson	<a href="mailto:bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org">bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Sharon Weller, Music Director	<a href="mailto:sharon.weller@bethlehemtc.org">sharon.weller@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Annie Slabaugh, Youth & Outreach Director	<a href="mailto:annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org">annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.bethlehemtc.org">www.bethlehemtc.org</a>

### **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	<a href="mailto:treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org">treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Jim Monroe, Financial Sec.	<a href="mailto:financialsecretary.council@bethlehemtc.org">financialsecretary.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Jan Stretlien, Christian Care Giving	<a href="mailto:christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org">christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>
, Christian Ed.	<a href="mailto:christianeducation@bethlehemtc.org">christianeducation@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Laura Hahn, Fellowship	Email address in process
Cindy Monroe, Membership/Evangelism	<a href="mailto:membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org">membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>
, Property (Phil Anderson) Not on Council	<a href="mailto:property.committee@bethlehemtc.org">property.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Maureen Bauer, Personnel	Email address in process
Mark McPherson, Stewardship	<a href="mailto:stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org">stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Nancy Downer, Worship and Music	<a href="mailto:worship.committee@bethlehemtc.org">worship.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Paul Wiemerslage, Youth/Y2A	<a href="mailto:youth.committee@bethlehemtc.org">youth.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Pastor Paul Busekist	<a href="mailto:paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org">paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org</a>

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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