

# JUNE 2020



**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



**Outdoor Worship Service**

Coming Soon! (See next page...)

**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.”*



***“O Lord, our God, how majestic is  
your name in all the earth!***

***– Psalm 8:1***



Friends, it may seem like we have been meeting and “calling upon the name of God” (Psalm 8) from afar these last three months. Perhaps a more compelling perspective is that we are now as close as we ever were to living out that old adage that “the church is not a building, the church is a *people*.” Regardless, the #1 question on my mind (and maybe yours) is **“When will we gather again at Bethlehem?”** now that northern Michigan is starting to re-open from all the Covid-19 precautions. The short answer is “soon” and the follow-up question is just as important: **“How will we re-open?”**

The key answers are in these words: “Safely and Gradually.” A special workgroup of staff persons, leaders and worship volunteers has met several times over the last two months and has created a general “phased approach” (below). Please note that **only Phases 1 & 2 have been approved by Council**. Other phases will need further deliberation and detail. Also of note: this strategy has not yet addressed office and non-worship building use: Here are the gathering needs for Bethlehem, as we move forward with our 5 phases:

- **Social distancing** and facemasks for outdoor worship/gatherings (Phases 1-4) and later indoor (Phase5)
- Preferably **no use of the BLC building for worship/gatherings** prior to Phase 5, including bathrooms
- **Continuing virtual worship** for the foreseeable future: Start times may vary; Wed. night innovations likely
- **No live worship when it rains** during Phases 1-4 (i.e. while gatherings are “outside-only.”)
- **One live, in-person worship service per weekend starting out**, possibly through the entire summer: With all of the setup for both holding worship outside AND continuing filming/editing for virtual worship, a “wait and see” approach makes sense for Saturday worship possibilities and sustainability for the short term.

**A “Phased” approach may look like this (note: dates approximate and subject to change):**

- **Phase One – Current Situation:** Virtual worship only; innovations online continue, starting with what we will call “2.0” (new programming for Wednesday nights and more), extending beyond this phase.
- **Phase Two – “Parking Lot Eucharist”:** tentatively starting Sunday, June 14th; involves a prayer and communion, using circle drive by main entrance, likely with a continuous car line. We hope to include musicians playing live music in the background. Virtual worship continues separately.
- **Phase Three – “Parking Lot Worship” (worshippers attend in vehicles):** This would begin once our FM transmitter arrives on order, and after a “dress rehearsal” could be done with key leaders prior, as technical difficulties may emerge. We hope to include live musicians, full or abbreviated worship and communion at the worship end. Start date: late June or early July. Virtual worship continues separately.
- **Phase Four (TBD) – “Full Outdoor Worship Service, BYOC (‘Bring Your Own Chair’)”:** This would be done on the West Lawn (near the parking lot, on the grass; tent for some chairs possible; likely using FM transmitter in addition to our outdoor sound system.) Full worship service, with short sermon, possibly more songs than virtual worship; communion within the context of the service. A “dress rehearsal” before starting this phase would also be a good idea. Virtual worship continues separately.
- **Phase Five – “Using the Building”:** Possibly starting late summer or early fall, with small groups and appropriate precautions (another document will be formulated later, for indoor worship criteria), eventually with larger gatherings in the sanctuary. Virtual worship status TBD.

**This “New Normal” workgroup has agreed to meet again Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> 2:30pm**, as details and other perspectives emerge. Other interested parties are welcome.

Thanks always for your patience and support. Shalom, and do not be afraid.

- Pastor Paul

## July Congregational Meeting

Greetings to All,

Though June is typically the month we have our Congregational Meeting, we are hopeful that by July 12<sup>th</sup> we can safely gather together and elect new members to serve.

This summer we have a need to fill 4 Council Positions, so I am asking anyone who would like to come forward to get their names to our Nominating Committee. Our Nominating Committee Members are Leonard Graf, Carl Lehto, Laura Acker and Dave Peppler. Please contact any of them to submit your name.

Additionally, we have 2 open positions on the Sustaining Endowment Memorial Fund to serve. We also have 2 openings for our Mission Endowment Fund and Barbara Wright and Tom Woodworth have agreed to be nominated to serve.

Please consider serving in one of the open positions to help move our Church forward. We will keep everyone up to date on any changes as trying to plan going forward is subject to change based upon guidelines provided by the State.

Please Stay Safe,

Chuck

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

Minutes from the Virtual via Zoom Church Council Meeting of April 21, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Chuck Ardingo, President, at 6:06 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER: Jan Stretlien

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

VISITOR/S OR CONGREGATIONAL COMMENT: None.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: A motion to approve the agenda for the 04/21/2020 Council Meeting, motion to approve by Tim Fox, seconded by Jan Stretlien, motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM February 21, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING: Motion to approve the minutes by Cindy Monroe, seconded by Jan Stretlien. Motion carried. Please note, this was the approval of the 02/21/2020 Council Meeting Minutes as we didn't have a quorum at the 03/17/2020 Council Meeting to approve the minutes, therefore, there were no "official minutes" for the 03/17/2020 meeting only notes and highlights published in the May STAR.

REPORTS:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Chuck Ardingo, President: 1) Chuck spoke regarding the Church looking at the Paycheck Protection Program Loan, PPP, from the Small Business Association, SBA, which would be offered through Huntington Bank. 2) Chuck mentioned that both he and Katie Fox will be leaving Council in June as his term is up and Katie has work and graduate school commitments. 3) Chuck also mentioned that the Congregational Meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2020, that date dependent on any virus restrictions.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor Paul Busekist: 1) Pastor stated that he is speaking with other Pastors about the time when we will be able to "re-engage" as a Church. 2) Pastor thanked the Congregation and Council for their support during these Covid-19 times in which we are now living. 3) Pastor talked about the Church Staff stepping up to the Virtual needs of the Church during this Covid-19 time. 4) Pastor mentioned that the Virtual Zoom Fellowship meeting on 4/19 had 12 participants which was exciting and nice to gather even if done virtually. 5) Pastor then spoke on a personal note and stated that he would be taking 4/23/2020 off as a day to recharge as he has been working basically each day since the Covid-19 has it and during the Holy Week time period. 6) Pastor then spoke on what Church might look at after May 10 and that he was looking a continuing virtual worship after the May 10 date.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Katie Fox: Prior to the meeting Katie provided Council with her financial reports as of the end of March 2020. 1) Katie stated: March 2020 Financial Results: March income of \$31,642 was \$1,044 under budgeted income of \$32,686. March expenses of \$32,535 were \$3,177 under budgeted expense of \$30,402. March was budgeted to have a surplus of \$2,284, but BLC had a loss of \$893. 2) YTD 2020 Financial Results: YTD income of \$90,761 was \$7,577 under budgeted income of \$98,338. YTD expense of \$99,871 was \$3,315 under budgeted expense of \$103,186. YTD we budgeted to have a deficit of \$4,848 as of the end of March. We actually ended March with a deficit of \$9,110 which means we are \$4,262 behind where we budgeted to be at this point in time. This negative variance is primarily due to the lower than expected contributions in January along with the challenges that coronavirus brought in March. 3) As previously noted, expenses were below budget in March which helped the bottom line and we have a smaller deficit in March than we did in February. So, there is some sunshine in this report. It is important to remember that the 2020 budget was created in 2019 based on historical performance and our expectations of 2020. Obviously, no one expected these unprecedented times and we will work through it as a Congregation. 4) There was then discussion on the Church's rental home. Phil Anderson, Bookkeeper and Council Member, stated that there have been no rental payments to date. Also, that the rental management company, Schmidt Rogers, billed the Church \$17.00, approximately for miscellaneous expense. Phil will investigate this bill and the rental payments and report back to Council.

At this time there was general discussion on a Committee to recruit new Council members. This committee will be chaired by Leonard Graf and have members, Laura Acker, Dave Peppler and Carl Lehto as part of the committee.

CONSENT CALENDAR: COMMITTEE REPORTS: The committee reports are: Financial Secretary's Report, Christian Care Report, Christian Education Report, Membership and Evangelism, Personnel Report, Property Report, Stewardship Report, Worship and Music, Youth/Y2A Report, Fellowship Report, Visions Report, Endowment Fund Report (Quarterly) and Sustaining Endowment Memorial Fund Report (Quarterly). All reports submitted were accepted as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS: None at this time.

## NEW BUSINESS

- A. VIDEO/VIRTUAL CHURCH PAYMENT FOR WORK: Pastor Paul spoke on the work that Trent Slabaugh has done to assist BLC with Virtual Services. Discussion involved the amount of compensation and that the Y2A Committee had approved \$250 from their budget to be approved for payment to Trent Slabaugh, his company is Renegade Films LLC. After further discussion the motioned amount approved by Council was \$750.00 this would bring the total to \$1,000, with Council's \$750 and Y2A's \$250. This was motioned by Jan Stretlien and Seconded by Mark McPherson. Motion carried by Council

- B. NEWSPAPER AD: Chuck Ardingo, spoke regarding BLC's ad in the Sunday, April 26, 2020, Record-Eagle, offering our prayers and support for the community and letting the community know that we are there for them. This would be a quarter page ad and in color for a one-time fee of \$189. A motion was made by Tim Fox to proceed with the ad, seconded by Nancy Downer and motion carried by Council.
- C. NEW MEMBERS: Cindy Monroe presented the names of Erin Shaw, Ryan Freye and Scott Farley as new members to BLC. Cindy's motion to accept these new members was seconded by Leonard Graf and the motion approved and carried by Council.
- D. STOCK CASH IN: Chuck Ardingo mentioned that there was a donation of 16 shares of common stock, Microsoft, to BLC. There was discussion on the selling of the stock and splitting the proceeds into the General Fund, Mission Endowment Fund and the Sustaining Endowment Memorial Fund. There was discussion on the timing and need to sell the stock at this time, this was brought up by Mark McPherson, and after discussion and a motion by Chuck Ardingo, we will leave the timing and sale up to the Finance Committee. This was seconded by Leonard Graf. Motion carried.

VISITOR OR CONGRESSIONAL COMMENT: None.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Leonard Graf and seconded by Mark McPherson, motion carried. Adjournment at 7:14 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tim Fox, Council Secretary

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

Hello Bethlehem! It's summer! Even though this summer will be different from what we know, we still have some fun things planned! God is still Good and we will overcome!

### JUNE HAPPENINGS ...

Normally, we do not hold **Youth Group** during the summer months...however with so many things cancelled I'm hoping to have a few Youth Group get togethers this summer. At this time, we don't have a date when things will get back to normal. When we are able to attend things in the church building more, this plan will be adjusted but for now let me know if you are interested. What we will be doing during these nights is still up in the air so stay tuned!



The **Middle/Junior High School Group** will have Youth Night on **Wednesday June 10th**.

The **High School Group** will have Youth Night on **Saturday June 20th**.

The **BLUES Group** will have Youth Night on **Friday June 26th**.

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

As some of you may be aware, we have had to make the difficult decision to cancel traditional VBS for this summer...however I'm really excited to announce a new virtual event that will be in its place...**BIBLE STORIES** will be taking place **every Monday Night at 6PM on Zoom starting on Monday June 8th until Monday August 31st**. Kids will log on to join their favorite Bible Story characters as they tell their stories in a fun-filled interactive virtual experience.

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

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

As we go into June I ask that you keep Bethlehem's children and their families in your prayers. That they are able to get out and enjoy the sunshine and the fresh air!

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

Cheerfully in Christ,

*Annie Slabaugh* Director of Youth and Outreach/ Bethlehem Lutheran Church

### **April 2020 Financial Results:**

April income of \$39,533 was \$6,419 over budgeted income of \$33,114.

April expense of \$25,329 was \$10,118 under budgeted expense of \$35,447.

April was budgeted to have a deficit of \$2,334, but BLC actually reported a surplus of \$17,642.

### **YTD Financial Results:**

YTD income of \$130,315 was \$1,137 under budgeted income of \$131,452.

YTD expense of \$121,738 was \$16,896 behind budgeted expense of \$138,634.

YTD we budgeted to have a deficit of \$7,182 as of the end of April. We ended April with a surplus of \$8,577 which means we are \$15,759 ahead of where we budgeted to be at this point in time. While the size of this surplus is indeed good news and we are certainly encouraged by it, these are uncertain times we are in. Monthly giving has been strong and expenses low during the last couple months. We expect our expenses will catch up with some April invoices due in May, synod payment and staff wage increases (\$3,400) which will be charged later in the year. Your continued support is needed and very much.

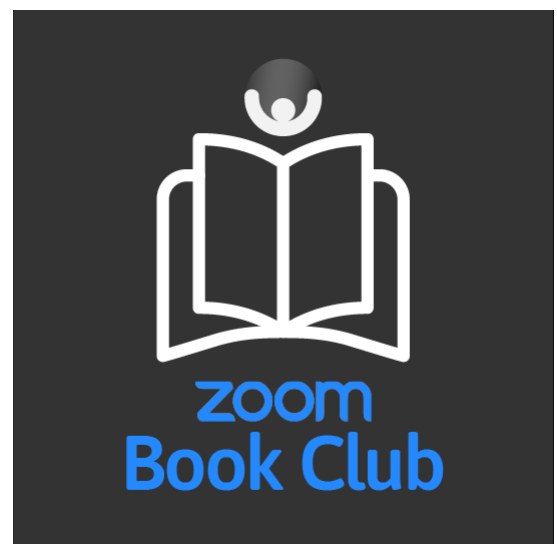
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We are sorry that we do not have our typical photo page/s this month. **We do have a special “Virtual Photo Page” near the back page.** We hope to have more regular photos from our worship preparation and outdoor services in time for the July STAR. Or if you would like to submit photos of your home worship, please send a jpeg to [admin@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org). Thanks for your understanding.

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### **BLC bookclub ZOOMS into summer**

By the time you read this the BLC book club successfully completed their first discussion via ZOOM. Some of us just could not wait until we are all physically in the same room. ( And this way we don't have to drive anywhere.) You too can participate when we connect again on Tuesday, June 23 at 5:30. If you are not already a regular book club member simply send your email to Cindy Monroe and she will send out the ZOOM information. We have changed our schedule slightly. Since many people had not finished the book for May we will be discussing Unsheltered by Barbara Kingsolver. We will add July 28 to discuss One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Yes, it is a classic! It is our one book this year that we selected from a list of top 100 books. Even if you only saw the movie, if you want to share with us, just send that email to [cmonroe@chartermi.net](mailto:cmonroe@chartermi.net) and be ready to participate that night.





# Hope Spreads Further: From Crisis to New Life (Week 4)



(Previous weeks were published in separate packets – available online or in the “Shooting STAR box” outside the church.)

**Earth Day**  
April 24, 2020

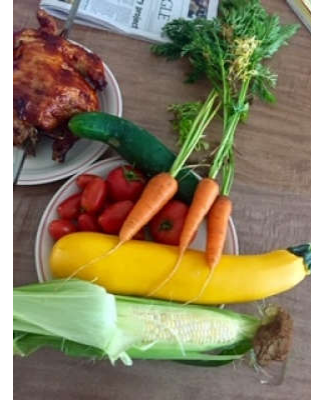
Celebrating earth day as we are apart...There is beauty even in a storm but also the knowledge that it will pass. Thanks be to God. (Inga Nyquist)



## Thinking about My Garden

April 25, 2020

Even as the snow blows by my window this morning, I am thinking about my garden! I love to dig in the dirt, prepare the soil, and drop in the seeds of new vegetables. I feel a strong connection to the earth and new growth as I envision the bounty to come in the fall. This reminded me of a devotional reading I did the other day:



Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.” John 15:4, ESV.

Anyone familiar with planting fruit or vegetables connected to vines knows that the life-giving nutrition is accessed from the main vine. If that connection is severed, life and growth cannot continue. So it is also in our relationship with Christ. Jesus metaphorically refers to himself as the Vine in John’s gospel. He is our source of spiritual life and strength. As long as we abide in Him by staying in close communion, we draw spiritual nutrition from Him, His strength becomes our strength, His will becomes our will. Ultimately, we bear fruit as we stay connected. Fruit is evidence of our connection.

While we can bear fruit of various kinds as Jesus followers, nothing is greater than helping people find their way to Him and being, in turn, connected to the Vine. When we are intimately connected to Jesus receiving His life-giving power and being tied into His will that none perish but come to everlasting life, our lives produce beautiful fruit.

When we’re connected to the true Vine, we have all we need to produce fruit. We don’t have to worry whether there is sufficient strength available. We can abide in Him in confidence, grow strong spiritually, and produce a harvest of fruit that will perpetuate life and vitality.

Stay connected with friends and family during this time of being alone, yet together. Be the nourishment that someone needs and we can all grow and bear much fruit.

-Phil Anderson

**(Orchids...)**  
April 26, 2020

Hello Bethlehem Faithfuls!

This is a picture of the beautiful orchid that Barbara and I have in our office. How, you ask, does this picture portray hope? Look at the center, below the blossoms on the left hand stems, and you will see a new branch growing! I've always thought budding flowers represented one of God's most beautiful signs of hope. We know that with proper care, those buds will, in time, turn into pretty flowers. I am certain that, with proper care, we will all be able to worship together again soon! If you're like me, social distancing and staying at home is starting to get tedious. I miss seeing your smiling faces and worshipping together, but staying the course is important!



I hope you have had a chance to tune in to some of our online services. Virtual Worship has been an amazingly innovative and creative process! What you see on the screen represents a ton of hard work and collaboration between various people, but I think everyone involved would agree with me that it is well worth the effort to be able to connect with you. I encourage you to visit our website at [bethlehemtc.org](http://bethlehemtc.org) to find information on how to join the Zoom Meetings both after service on Sundays and after the rebroadcast on Wednesday evenings. It's nice to be able to see familiar faces!! If you're having difficulty finding the information, please reach out. I monitor the phones and email daily, so someone will be able to get back to you with help.

These past weeks are nothing like anyone could have ever imagined. We have faced challenges and heartbreak, but also joy and happiness. The resilience of our congregation as God's chosen people will always shine through! Remember Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." God is in charge! And we WILL be together again, soon :-)

Peace,

Sharon

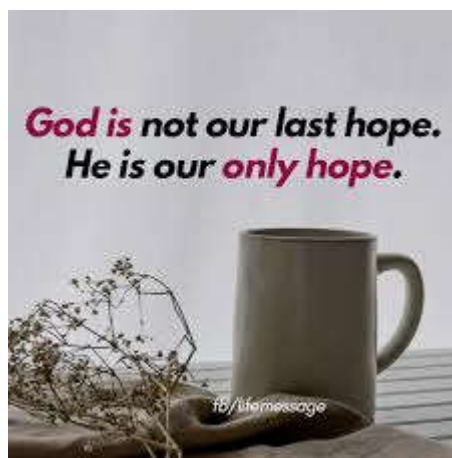
## Beginning, Middle, End

April 29, 2020

Many people have given us hope throughout the past few months by telling us that the current Covid 19 situation has a beginning, a middle and an end. While we are still in the middle, each day we are getting closer to the end. Pr Paul and staff are working towards the time that we are able to worship and have fellowship together. How we are going to do that is still being discussed. There are different options being considered for such things as how many services each weekend, how we do Communion, how to handle the passing of the peace, where do we sit, etc. for our worship and fellowship. We are planning for the “new normal” – whatever that turns out to be. We are working on getting back to our services slowly with the care and safety of our congregation in mind. The staff and all the volunteers are also considered in the planning. I will be reaching out soon to our worship volunteers for help in volunteer planning.



Take care  
Shalom – Do not be afraid  
Barbara Oster



## Thinking about the 23rd Psalm

April 30, 2020

During this shutdown, stay home, stay safe period I have been thinking about Psalm 23. To me, this is an inspirational chapter in the Book of Psalms. During the next few weeks I want to share some thoughts I have about this wonderful and inspiring passage. Now, I am no Bible scholar or theologian – I leave that to Pastor Paul. I am simply giving you some of my person reflections.



We can have what we need within the word of God where we find refuge, serenity, wisdom and forgiveness. Not all messages within the Bible may be clear to our usual way of speaking and comprehending. In the words of Psalm 23, we can take meaning from what one believes to have been said or at the very least, a clear message that God will be with us no matter what happens, or who we are.

Did you know that you can count the first five words on the 23rd Psalm on the fingers of your right hand? Do that when you are feeling stressed or need the peace that only God can give you.

Let's look at the first three words of the Psalm:

The Lord

In the book of Exodus, God appeared to a shepherd – Moses. He gave his name, “I am Who I am”, God almighty, unchanging, yesterday, today, forever. Our minds simply cannot fathom the limitless glories of the Creator. It humbles our hearts, balances our thoughts, lifts our perspectives, reassures our spirits and strengthens our souls.

Think about it – The LORD – The Creator of the entire universe, the One who sustains all things by his word, the One who knows us by name, and the number of hairs on our head, the One who has Infinite Power, the One who is Sovereign every detail of our lives, the One who gives life to every creature from kings to single-cell amoebas. He cares about YOU and listens to your prayers! – The LORD – is MY shepherd.

Is

The present tense. Not was or could be; he is ever present, right here right now. To be present.

Come back next week for more on this wonderful and inspiring psalm – filled with love, hope, and courage.

-Phil Anderson

## I've Got the Music in Me - Part 1

May 1, 2020

Music has been a part of my life since the day I was born. My folks are both vocalists who met in The Acapella Choir at Holland High School. As far back as I can remember, my mom sang in a trio with



of my aunts and a mutual friend of theirs. They “toured” Holland, singing at many area churches. She, my dad, my sister and I have all been members of the adult church choir since we were teens. My dad was relegated to sitting with me and my siblings during church while we were young, but once we were old enough to be on our own, he once again joined the choir. Years after we left home, he joined a men’s touring choir called The Singing Crusaders of Western Michigan, a group from which he has since “retired.”

Aside from all of the vocal talent in my family, my sister, brother and I were all instrumentalists in the school band and learned to play the piano. Nancy played clarinet and then bassoon, I played flute and Randy was a percussionist. We did concert, jazz and marching band. My sister and I also played in the orchestra. As the drum major of the band as a senior, I was the student director of the jazz band. We played in the field house for basketball games and our number-one tune was “Sweet Georgia Brown” which we played when the team came out on to the court for warm-ups, just like the Harlem Globetrotters! My children are also quite musical. They all sing and each was a member of the concert and marching bands: David played trombone, Liz and Steph both played flute (of course!!) and Brad was a percussionist. Music must just be in the genes of my family!

My musical “career” started in children’s choir at church, and then at about age eight, I started piano lessons. One of my favorite hymns is “Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross” by Fanny Crosby. It’s in our red ELW hymnal (#335) and was in the hymnal my church was using when I was young. It’s the first hymn that I learned to “play with both hands.” Even without practicing, I can still play most of it without mistakes, even though I don’t play piano much anymore. I actually have a lot of favorites, but the words in this song mean so much to me. The fourth verse and chorus are: “Near the cross I’ll watch and wait, HOPING, trusting ever, till I reach the golden strand just beyond the river. In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever; till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.” This song sings of peace and contentment and the protection we find at the cross. My personal faith journey has been complicated, not in a bad way, but with a joyful variety of experiences. In every phase of my walk, the one thing that I’ve always held close to my heart is the secure knowledge that Jesus bought my salvation at the cross. No matter where I am or what’s going on in the world, I know that the hope I have in Christ will sustain me and protect me!

Peace,  
Sharon



## Doxology May 7, 2020

My mother went on a trip to Turkey, Greece and Rome with Dr Paul Maier while he filmed the study series, *Odyssey of St Paul*. Some of you may remember that BLC small groups used this video a few years ago. It was a very interesting visit because of Dr Maier's wonderful knowledge of both the secular and spiritual history of the area. Especially in Turkey, Dr Maier had to be careful while he filmed his script as they were in a non-Christian country. One day the entire group, which was large enough to fill two tour buses, found themselves in a cave. While they were looking around, the group sang the Doxology. Luckily they were alone because they may have been told to leave if someone objected. My mother said that the sound of the many voices singing was one of the most powerful events on the tour.

PRAISE God FROM WHOM  
ALL blessings FLOW,  
PRAISE Him ALL  
CREATURES HERE BELOW,  
praise HIM ABOVE,

I love singing the Doxology and look at it as a way of thanking God for all that he has done for my family and me. During this time of uncertainty, we do have a lot to be thankful for. We have our health, we have the internet and phones to keep in touch, and we have our church family. I look forward to singing this when I walk back into the Bethlehem sanctuary.

Take care  
Shalom – Do not be afraid  
Barbara Oster



## Thinking about Psalm 23 - Part Two

May 9, 2020

Welcome back to my third in a series of blogs about Psalm 23. I think this a beautiful set of verses, written by King David in which he draws upon his experience as a shepherd and his relationship with God. David clearly understood the role of the shepherd and his importance to the flock. He also understood and embraced his dependence on God in a spiritual and practical way. Our word today is the fifth word in the verse and is the underpinning of the entire Psalm.



### Shepherd

The word shepherd is a contraction of the two words shepherder. Even the word pastor means shepherd and is related to the word pasture. Pastors are the ones who lead their flock into the nourishment of God's word. In Biblical times, one of the most important duties of the shepherd was to love his flock. The shepherd bonded with the sheep and they bonded with him. I hope you see where I am going with this: We are God's sheep and He is our shepherd. Read Ezekiel 34:31, "You are my flock, the sheep of my pasture. You are my people and I am your God". We all know the story of the shepherd who left his flock of 99 to search for and recover one lost sheep. What a beautiful story and testament to the love of God – all of us are loved and cared for. In writing Psalm 23, David never forgot how attached he was to his woolly friends as he had migrated for weeks and months in the remote regions of Palestine,

We are like the sheep, utterly dependent on our shepherd. Sometimes we like to think we can get along just fine without our good and gracious God. However, in the end, we are really nothing more than sheep without a shepherd. We are defenseless against the prowling lion that wants to devour us. We need God to lead, guide and direct us to the green pastures and quiet waters.

I remember my Mom playing this song on the piano in our living room: Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us.

*Savior, like a shepherd lead us  
Much we need Thy tender care  
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us  
For our use Thy folds prepare  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus  
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus  
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.*

The words and imagery are powerful and speak to us today, as we are apart and yet together. Have a great week and come back next time for more about Psalm 23.

Phil Anderson



## I've Got the Music in Me - Part 2

May 10, 2020

I began playing the flute in sixth grade because I thought it was the most beautiful sounding instrument ever! I also played piccolo in high school. In my final concert as a senior, I got to play the piccolo solo in John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Striped Forever." It was possibly the hardest part I had ever played, plus my director made me stand up to play it! I don't think I've ever been as nervous as I was that evening.



When I was 16, I decided I wanted to learn to play the guitar. I took lessons for about six months, and then my instructor decided he wanted to get his Master's Degree in Music. He left all of his students to me and went off to school again, and thus began my career in teaching. Since 1999 I've been an instructor in the band program at Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools. Through this job, I've learned how to play the clarinet, oboe, saxophone and can teach beginning brass, even though I don't play any brass instruments. I've also taught percussion. I can perform on seven instruments and have a working knowledge of at least another seven.

My path to the door of Bethlehem was a bit unusual. Years ago I took steel pan lessons from Dave Warne in his private studio. Many years later, we ran into each other at Tom's grocery store. In the course of our conversation, he told me he had taken a position at BLC as their bell choir director. I played hand bells as a teen at my home church, and when Dave heard that, he asked me if I would join his choir. The one thing he failed to tell me was that I would have only one rehearsal (after 30 years of not playing) before our first performance! I honestly don't remember whether I did a great job, but they asked me to stay on, so I guess it wasn't too bad. Soon after that, I joined the choir and decided to make Bethlehem my home church. After holding several positions, I now enjoy my dual jobs as Administrative Assistant and Music Director.

*(Continued on next page)*

It has always been hard for me to identify a “favorite” song. I enjoy a variety of genres of music, but one that really speaks to my heart is Christian Contemporary. I feel blessed to be able to share my love of this music with all of you. If I had to name one song as my favorite, it would probably be Hans Peterson’s “Blessed Are Those.” This is one of the songs that the Celebrate! Band has really made our own. We’ve jazzed it up with Zeke’s wonderful guitar playing and when adding Pastor Paul’s drum set, we really rock this song out! It’s always fun to have David play with us on Sundays. His additions and fills make our little team sound professional. Part of the lyrics are “you are not loved for what you do, but for whose you are.” This line perfectly sums up my relationship with Christ. I know that no matter what happens in my life, or what I do (or don’t do), He will always be at my side.

I know with absolute certainty that His hand is on us throughout these trying days. I am also absolutely certain that we will be able to worship together again, in person, soon. My hope lies with the Lord in all things. Isaiah 43: 1-2 says, “1 But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.” God never promised us an easy walk, but he DID promise to help us through, if we just trust in Him. Keep safe and be healthy!

Peace,  
Sharon

### **I've Got the Music in Me - Part 3**

May 17, 2020

Singing. Did you know that the Bible contains over four hundred references to singing and fifty direct commands to sing? There are three short verses in the book of Psalms in which we are commanded to sing seven times! (Psalm 96:1-2; Psalm 47:6) God delights in hearing us sing praises to him. Personally, I can't believe that there are people who derive zero pleasure from listening to music, but there are. It's a real neurological condition called "Specific Musical Anhedonia" and it can be measured using a functional MRI scan of the brain. Scans of the brains of people without the condition light up when they listen to or perform music. For people with the condition, their brains do not react at all to the stimulus of music. They do, however, react to other sources of joy, such as winning a game of poker.

For me, music is simply a part of who I am. As I detailed in my last two blog posts, it has been a part of my life from the time I was born. I have studied it since about the age of eight and have developed the ability to perform on at least six or seven different instruments. I love the challenge of learning new music and enjoy the process of performing. Hearing the choir singing brings my heart such joy! I have to admit, though, that I really enjoy performing the contemporary songs at the Saturday Celebrate! services the best J I am fortunate to have very accomplished musicians to work with! It makes my job so much easier knowing that they can roll with whatever I throw at them.

As for the picture, yes, orchids again! In spite of being almost totally ignored over the last couple of months, my beautiful plant has sprouted TWO new branches that have buds for at least TEN new flowers J You can see the branches on the left hand stem, pointing to the left. I can't wait to see the new blossoms!

Stay healthy!

Peace,  
Sharon



## A Word from Stewardship

Stewardship is the practice of generosity. The last time our Country came together in coast to coast generosity was after 9/11. Today the world is having its turn. The news, social media, our church etc. are full of examples of generosity. All of us have been touched in one form or another. There are also plenty of opportunities to give. There are choices to make. Some good and others not so good. With opportunities come opportunists to take advantage of our generosity. We need to be careful today.

Bethlehem works to be good stewards with the gifts of generosity. When we join together in our faith community this generosity multiplies. The ELCA is made up of 65 synods, some more affected than other with the current events. A portion of offerings goes to the North/West Lower Michigan Synod and the ELCA. Our World Hunger contributions also fund domestic services including disaster grants. A little can go a long way. Our congregation and the church at large is a safe place for the practice of generosity.

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### **American Cancer Society's 24-hour Relay for Life**

**Life**: Our loyal runner, Shelly (McAllister) Carpenter, is once again looking for sponsors and donors for this **VIRTUAL** event. The date is June 20, 2020. PLEASE call or text her at 231-631-4346 or [smcallister3@hotmail.com](mailto:smcallister3@hotmail.com) to help her support this worthy cause.



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### **Courtesy Church Callers**

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



**Christian Education News**  
**June 2020**



Although we had to cancel VBS, we are planning a new activity: BLC Bible Stories

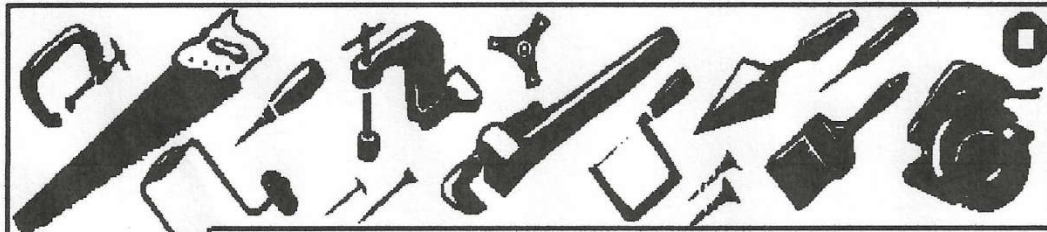
Each week, your children can meet and interact with a different Bible character! Runs all summer 6/08 to 8/31

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

**A very HUGE thank you!**  
Christian Education would like to extend our deepest thanks to everyone that volunteered for this year's VBS despite so many uncertainties. (We hope to see all of you next year!)  
Your support of our children's ministry is **GREATLY** appreciated ☺







## WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM

JUNE, 2020

### HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed  
and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society. --*Billy Graham*--

What you teach your children you also teach their children. --*Unknown*--

A father is neither an anchor to hold us back nor a sail to take us there  
but a guiding light whose love shows us the way. --*Unknown*--

### UPCOMING DATES:

JUNE CIRCLES CANCELLED

JULY BIBLE STUDY: CANCELLED

TRIENNIAL CONVENTION IN PHOENIX: CANCELLED

Because of the Covid situation we are in, all WELCA meetings and studies  
are being cancelled until September at which time we will take a new look  
at starting up again. Please stay tuned.....

God has definitely been present during the last few months. There is so much  
we can be thankful for and to praise Him for. Faith and trust are most  
important at all times but especially now. May God bless each and every  
one of you now and always.



## ELCA GLOBAL LINKS – Church in a Time of Crisis

*“Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.” 1 Peter 3:8*

In this time of crisis, we as the body of Christ continue to demonstrate love for our neighbors. The global Lutheran church is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic — hosting virtual services, educating communities, mobilizing prayer and providing aid. Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is responding to this pandemic here in the United States and around the world, including:

- Across the **United States**, LDR is providing support for ELCA World Hunger’s Daily Bread grants, which are supporting congregational feeding ministries as they do the critical work of providing those who are in need in their communities with food.
- In **New Orleans**, LDR is aiding the expansion of Bethlehem Lutheran Church’s community meal program, which targets the at-risk population who are impacted at this time.
- In **Southern California**, LDR is supporting Care Connection Network, a social ministry organization, to serve older adults and people who are home bound by delivering food and essential supplies, in collaboration with congregations in the Pacifica Synod.
- In **China**, we helped provide medical supplies including ventilators, protective face shields, disposable gloves and more, as well as daily necessities such as food.
- In **Italy**, through the ELCA’s companion church, the Chiesa Evangelica Luterana in Italia, LDR is providing Betania Evangelical Hospital in Naples, Italy, with support and medical gear and supplies.
- In **Palestine**, LDR is working with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem and the Holy Land to provide food and necessities to families whose livelihoods have been impacted.
- In **Sierra Leone**, we are supporting the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone so the church can participate in a national response plan with the government.

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

Shop at Family Fare, 905 E. 8<sup>th</sup> 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

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**Did you know Love Thy Neighbor 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 Thy Neighbor office 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!

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### STAR and Bulletin Deadlines

To be sure that your article or announcement is in STAR or Bulletin issue that you want, please note the following deadlines:

STAR: by the third Wednesday of the month  
Bulletin: by the Wednesday before each weekend

Submission by email is preferred ([admin@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org)) with either the word STAR or Bulletin in the subject line. Please write exactly what you want in the article or announcement. Be sure to include all pertinent information about your event, i.e. dates, time, location, etc. You can put it in the body of the email or as an attachment as a Word doc or .pdf. Also, please include the month(s) for the STAR issue or the date(s) for the Bulletin issue that you need your article or announcement included. If you have any questions, please contact **Barbara Oster** at [admin@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org) when she works in the office on Thursdays.

Also note that if you want an announcement on the weekly PowerPoint, please send to [annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org).



## **Health Concerns\***



# The Power of Prayer

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

**Grand Traverse Pavilions:** Bev Attwood

**Homebound:** Marleen Baesch

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

**French Manor LaFranier:** Jo Hasse

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

**Samaritas (Acme):** Priscilla Thompson

**Cherry Hill Haven:** Jerrie Boike

**Hospital Visits:** Please let the church office know if you are going into the hospital for a scheduled procedure or an emergency so Pastor Paul can visit you.

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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)...

# HONORING GOD'S CREATION

The pandemic is and has been horrible. We all know that we can learn from terrible things. One thing we need to be aware of is how much of the natural world has reacted to the change of human activity. Following are some examples gathered from varying sources:

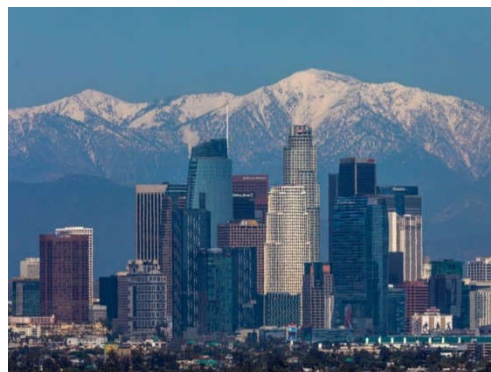
1. Milan, Italy was named Europe's most polluted city in 2008. Today the air pollution has dropped so much that the city is thinking about a plan to reduce traffic after the pandemic.
2. Before the pandemic Venice's high traffic waterways were generally murky. Today you can see the bottom.
3. Delhi, India has not seen such clear air in ages. It is experiencing the longest spell of clean air on record.
4. Los Angeles has seen more consecutive good air days in March than it has since at least 1995.
5. People are hearing the birds more often and more clearly.
6. Air pollution in China has been reduced by 25%
7. Wild animals are more easily seen.

As we look at these effects the change in human activities has caused, we can plan ways to continue the lack of air, water and noise pollution.

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



Los Angeles with its usual smog



Los Angeles in April, 2020, with no smog – you can even see the San Gabriel Mountains

# BLC Contacts

## PLEASE NOTE SEVERAL ADDRESS UPDATES

### Church Office

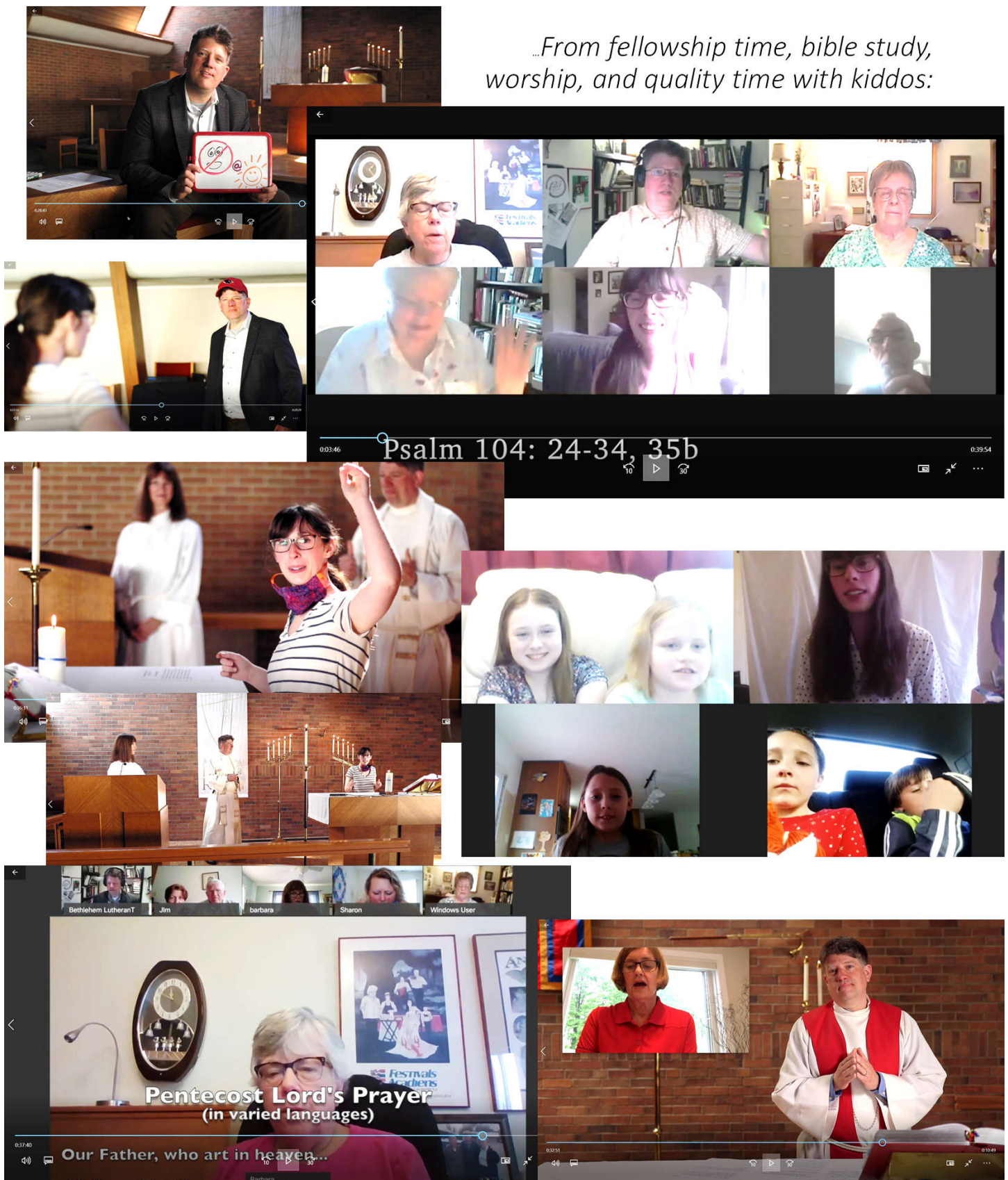
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Annie Slabaugh, Youth & Outreach Director	<a href="mailto:annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org">annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.bethlehemtc.org">www.bethlehemtc.org</a>

### Church Council


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, Property (Carl Lehto-Not on Council)	<a href="mailto:property.committee@bethlehemtc.org">property.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>
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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).

# Virtual Photo Page (Courtesy of "Real Church Virtual," ZOOM and YOUR online smiling faces!)







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Smile. God loves you.😊

*Shalom, and do not be afraid.*



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