

The musical score is written for a piano and voice. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: 'In the Lord I'll be ev - er thank - ful; in the Lord I will re - joice! Look to God; do not be a - fraid. Lift up your voic - es, the Lord is near; lift up your voic - es, the Lord is near.' The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and chords. Chord symbols C, Dm, C, and F are written above the treble staff in the third system.

Psalmody

Psalm 148

- 1 Hallelujah! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise God in the heights.
- 2 Praise the Lord, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**
- 3 Praise the Lord, sun and moon; sing praise, all you shining stars.
- 4 Praise the Lord, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.**
- 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord, who commanded, and they were created,
- 6 who made them stand fast forever and ever, giving them a law that shall not pass away.**
- 7 Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;
- 8 fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**
- 9 mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;
- 10 wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds;**
- 11 sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;
- 12 young men and maidens, old and young together.**
- 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.
- 14 The Lord has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the Lord. Hallelujah!**

A Reading from

Hebrews 2:10-18

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

10 It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, 12 saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." 13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

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14 Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. 16 For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

L: Word of God, Word of Life. C: **Thanks be to God.**

Song (sung three times)

I Am Sure I Shall See

E A/C# A D Bm Bm/D E E7/D
I am sure I shall see the good-ness of the Lord in the

3 A/C# A E Bm F#m F#m/E
land of the liv - ing. Yes, I shall see the

6 Bm/D D/F# C#m C#m/B F#m/A Bm/D Bm E
good-ness of our God, hold firm, trust in the Lord. I am

A Moment of Silence

“Fifth Reading”

Read by Barbara Oster

From *The Life of Pi: A Novel*, as the main character, Pi, a Hindu believer from India who in this scene also pursues Christianity as a child. He stumbles upon a Catholic church in a rural area while on vacation with his family and speaks, daily, with the priest. Here are excerpts from those interactions:

“This Son [of God, Jesus] is a god who walked, a pedestrian god – and in a hot place, at that – with a stride like any human stride, the sandal reaching just above the rocks along the way; and when He splurged on transportation, it was a regular donkey. This Son is a god who died in three hours, with moans, gasps and laments. What kind of god is that? What is there to inspire in this Son?”

“Love,” said Father Martin.

“And this Son appears only once, long ago, far away? ... Is done away with before He has a single grey hair on his head?...What could justify such divine stinginess?”

“Love,” repeated Father Martin.

...I had tea with Father Martin three days in a row. Each time, as teacup rattled against a saucer, as spoon tinkled edge of cup, I asked questions.

The answer was always the same. [“Love.”]

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He bothered me, this Son... I couldn't get Him out of my head. Still can't. I spent three solid days thinking about Him. The more He bothered me, the less I could forget Him. And the more I learned about Him, the less I wanted to leave Him.

On our last day, a few hours before we were to leave Munnar, I hurried up the hill on the left. It strikes me now as a typically Christian scene. Christianity is a religion in a rush. Look at the world created in seven days. Even on a symbolic level, that's creation in a frenzy... It is a religion as swift as a swallow, as urgent as an ambulance. It turns on a dime, expresses itself in the instant. In a moment you are lost or saved. Christianity stretches back through the ages, but in essence it exists only at one time: right now.

I booted up that hill [and up to the church.] Short of breath I said, "Father, I would like to be a Christian, please."

He smiled, "You already are... in your heart. Whoever meets Christ is in good faith a Christian. Here in Munnar you met Christ." ... It was a good smile he gave me. The smile of Christ.

I entered the church, without fear this time, for it was now my house, too. I offered prayers to Christ, who is alive.

A Moment of Silence

The Gospel:

A Reading from St. Matthew 2:13-23

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

13 Now after the magi had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." 14 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." 16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. 17 Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: 18 "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more." 19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 20 "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." 21 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. 23 There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

P: Word of God, Word of Life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Song (sung three times)

See, I Am Near

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The melody is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4, with lyrics "See, I am near, says the Lord." and "See, I make all things new." respectively. The second system contains measures 5 through 8, with lyrics "O" and "O" respectively. Chord symbols are provided above the notes: Eb, Bb/D, Cm, Fm, Eb, Bb/D, Fm Eb/G, Ab/Eb, Ab/C, Db, Eb, Ab, Db, Fm, Bbm, Bbm/F, and Eb. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

The Great Silence

Prayers of Intercession

O Lord, Hear My Prayer (sung after each intercession)

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, an - swer me.
OR The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: all my hope comes from God.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and lis - ten to me.
The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: God, the well-spring of life.

Sharing a Sign of Christ's Peace

Offering Instrumental

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Benediction

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. C: Amen.

Sending Song Joy to the World (Unspeakable Joy)

Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King. Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns; Let all their songs employ. While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy

Joy, unspeakable joy! An overflowing well; no tongue can tell! Joy, unspeakable joy! It rises in my soul, never lets me go!

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He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love and wonders of His love and wonders, wonders of His love!

Joy, unspeakable joy! An overflowing well; no tongue can tell! Joy, unspeakable joy! It rises in my soul, never lets me go!

Depart in Silence



Bethlehem December 28, 2025
LUTHERAN CHURCH

1050 Peninsula Drive
Traverse City, MI 49686
(231) 947-9880
www.bethlehemtc.org

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

12/28—Jane Fred
12/28—Renae Wells

12/28—Kathryn Thiel
1/02—Shelley Miller

1/04—Maggie Russell

Worship Servants for December 28

Assisting Minister—Barbara Oster

Lector—Tina Dohm

Musicians: Rick Church, Zeke Clemons, Phil & Denice Bossardet

Today's altar flowers are donated: *By Renae Wells in Celebration for being 75 today.*

Hospitality: Tim / Peggy Goebel

A/V—Paul Ton / Jim Hinds

Cookies/Coffee—Diane Cunningham / Mary Ann Tanis

Welcome Table—Volunteer

Bell Ringer—Volunteer

Front Door Monitor: Tom & Jana Rockne

Altar Guild—NO COMMUNION

Blue Christmas Thank Yous: The Blue Christmas dinner on December 18th was a wonderful feast. Thanks to all who made it happen: Phil Bossardet (the head chef), Peg Pepler, Linda Hansen, Nancy and Jay Pflasterer, Judi Block, Dan and Laura Hahn, Meredith Busekist, Cindy Monroe, Gail Goldsmith, Diane and Doug Cunningham, Kathi Ivany along with many others who made cookies. After the dinner, Phil packaged up enough food for 30 dinners and delivered those to Women's Resource.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing Report: The following people were Bethlehem's Salvation Army Bell Ringers on December 6 and 7, 2025: Frank and Pat Wall, Lindsay and Dave Susalski, Sue and Bill Allen, Don Sheehan, Tim Goebel, Dan and Laura Hahn, Mary Ann Tanis and Braxton, Pastor Paul and Parker, Jim Hinds, Jim and Cindy Monroe, Kathi Ivany, Jim Hutchison and Clare, Gail Tokey, and Carl and Suzanne Lehto. They stepped up and answered the call not knowing what the weather might be. The weather was quite cold and windy but bearable when suitably dressed. The total donations received for the two days of ringing was \$1,269.26. The first two hours of ringing on Friday were done by members of another church who had committed to ring before Bethlehem was assigned to ring on Friday and Saturday. We don't know how much was given during those first two hours but if we assume donations were made at a constant rate through out the day, then the donations during Bethlehem's bell ringing would be approximately \$160.00 less for a total of \$1,109.26. These funds will certainly put some extra cheer in the lives of several families in the Traverse City area during this Christmas season. Thanks for a job well done.

Sunday School and Sunday's Adult Education hold their classes at 9:15am on Sunday. **The Wednesday Zoom Book/Bible Study** meets at 1:30pm. The group will take a break for Christmas and New Year's and will start back on January 14th with a study of James with the book *James: Walking in Wisdom* by Lydia Brownback. Please see either Pr Paul or Barbara for more information.

Dear Members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

It's that time of year when the Finance Committee and the Church Council is preparing a budget for the next year. To help forecast income for 2026, please return your 2026 pledge card, if you have not already done so.

We are all grateful to have such abundant blessings with our location and our faithful members. It's important to remain dedicated to our Christian faith and do our best to follow through on our commitments. With love & kindness, **if you have not fulfilled your 2025 pledge, we ask also that you do so before the end of the year.** Thank you for prayerfully considering this appeal.

We appreciate your support and are grateful for all you do to make Bethlehem Lutheran Church a thriving community of believers.

Jim Monroe

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Financial Secretary

Phil Anderson

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Bookkeeper

Chair Yoga will continue meeting at 3:00pm on Mondays but not on Wednesdays. It is still \$5 per class

Choir News: The choir has resumed its practice schedule on Mondays at 2:30. The next rehearsal is January 12th. Come and join in the musical fun!

Creation Care Team update: our next Creation Care core team meeting will be Monday, January 12th at 6pm in the Youth Room. Subcommittee members may be meeting before as needed. Contact Paul Wiemerslage, Tina Dohm or Pastor Paul for any updates.



Social Ministry/Outreach update: Please step forward to volunteer when a call is put out for assistance with any of these activities:

Jan 24-28 Safe Harbor under the leadership of Tom Rockne.

Feb. 7 Northwest Michigan Action Agency Super Saturday event at the Career Tech Center on Parsons Rd (Carolyn Mann or Nancy Ammann)

Any time-If you feel the spirit calling you to volunteer at Jubilee House contact Pastor Derek Quinn at 231 947 2330 or email dquinn@gracetc.org.

Pray and consider: Could we field a group of 6 volunteers to prepare a community meal the 4th Sunday of the month at Grace Episcopal?

If questions, concerns, or ideas contact Cindy Monroe or Jim Hutchison. Next meeting for the full group will be scheduled in late Feb or early March.

Social Ministry and Outreach Group Activity Super Saturday February 7, 2026 - Northwest Michigan Community Action

Agency. More information is in the narthex. We need your name if you can volunteer. The reason for this early notice is that DHS needs to run a background check, which is required for those volunteering. They need the information well in advance of the event.

BOOK CLUB NEWS: The next meeting for the book club will be 5:30 on January 14 at The Cottage. We will be discussing *The Winemaker's Wife*, an historical novel by Kristin Harmel. If interested in attending please contact Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net.

SAVE YOUR PAPER SACKS: Please check the nooks and crannies of your home for paper sacks. The Baby Pantry fills requests from preschool teachers for their students whose parents cannot make it to the pantry. Paper sacks are the perfect size to place the needed items for each child. Just place your bags on the Care table in the coat room. Thank you!!

Coffee and Cookies: Our wonderful volunteers Mary Ann Tanis and Diane Cunningham have indicated a willingness to continue offering this after the Sunday service as long as there are volunteers who bring the goodies and help with clean-up after. Our thanks to these two women for their wonderful display of the goodies and the clean-up after. Thanks to all of you who have shared goodies, and please feel free to continue to do so.

A big thank you to all who have turned in Olesons' slips. We received a check from Oleson's for \$207.55 for a total of \$1031.80 so far this year. Olesons' slips never expire. Please continue to turn in your Olesons receipts to Bethlehem. Thanks so much!!! Also, the area for the Oleson receipts is in the lower cabinets below the mailboxes (under the A-B-Cs...). The cabinet door is marked with the receptacle inside. Unfortunately, we are no longer collecting the receipts from Family Fair or any other grocery store. We just collect for Olesons

Volunteers for Watching the Front Door During Worship: The Safety and Security Committee has the new sign up sheets available. We need volunteers who can be available to stay in the Gathering Space to lock the doors and let in late comers for Sundays. We appreciate all of the volunteers. If you have any questions, the committee members are Gail Goldsmith, Maureen Bauer, Jana Rockne, and Dave Peppler.

The January issue of the STAR is almost available. If you receive the weekly email, your January issue will be emailed on January 1st. The shut-ins will receive an issue by mail. There will also be a few copies available on the counter by the mailboxes. You may also contact the office at 947-9880 to request that mail delivery continues. For current issues of the Star, feel free to check online at www.bethlehemtc.org < About Us > "The Online Bethlehem Star" or type this URL to get these directly: <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/the-bethlehem-star-newsletter>.

Offerings: Even though the offering plates are passed during the service, you may use the vase in the back of the Sanctuary if you prefer not to touch the offering plate.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: We often find the front door and/or the kitchen door unlocked when there is no one in the building. Please be sure that the doors are locked when you leave.

Please Note:

Barbara Oster/Administrative Assistant works 9:00am-2:30pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

Phil Anderson/Bookkeeper works 8:30am-12:30pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Please note that Phil will work these days until next summer

Alanna Steffunick-Boomer/Ministry Coordinator is on maternity leave. She will return in early January

Looking for a link to last month's full Council minutes? Type this address/url into your web browser to get the latest approved minutes from Council: bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes OR you may call the office to request a copy.



Prayer Requests:

- Prayer Chain: Please contact Jan Stretlien at jstretlien@gmail.com or 231-947-3265
- Prayers read from the altar: Please call Administrative Assistant in the church office 231-947-9880 or admin@bethlehemtc.org

Celebrate a new child in your life with a rose on the baptismal font! Cost \$10.00 per rose. Contact Barbara Oster at beo6475@yahoo.com or 231.668.7038.

Norm Fred has helped a previously homeless couple for a few years. They are proud people and do not like to be given charity but they will accept help in the form of donated cans that they can recycle for money. Please bring in your recyclables in for them. **Leave them in plastic bags by the garage.** These are nice people. There, but for the Grace of our God, go we.

Are you looking for the Caring Table for your donations? It is now located inside the coat room to the right. Your donations are very much appreciated.

LOST AND FOUND: If you lose something in the church building, please check our Lost and Found box located in the Coat Room. Also, if you find something, please put it in the box.

Have something important going on at Bethlehem that you'd like others to know about? Maybe a Small Group? A Club Event? Feature it on the Screen Announcements, weekly emails and on our Facebook Events Page! If there is something you'd like featured or included in any of these, please reach out to admin@bethlehemtc.org until Alanna returns from maternity leave. **If you are not getting the weekly emails for any reason, please contact Barbara at the admin email above.**

Please consider signing up for Altar Flowers for a Sunday service. Please use the sign-up poster in the Narthex by signing on the date you request. Then fill out a pink slip with the necessary information and place it and a check for **\$45** (This is a new amount.) The check should be payable to Bethlehem Lutheran Church or BLC) in the offering plate on Sunday morning (Preferable) or during the week, in the Administrative Assistant's mailbox near the church office entrance. You may select either "in honor" or "in memory" or "to celebrate". If someone has already signed on the date you would like, feel free to add your name – we welcome more than one on a Sunday.

Today's Prayer Recipients: Please send any changes or additions by email to admin@bethlehemtc.org

Harper Wiemerslage,
Jerry Hill,
John Block,
Roy DuMond,
Mary Woodring,
Norm Fred,
Lynn,
Steve,
Sherry,
Bob,
Ron Hellenga,

John Stretlien,
Judy Fenton,
Cindy Hitesman,
Richard Fernholz,
Julie Lapeer,
Lee,
Chris,
Dale and Cheryl,
Leroy,
Julie Barrett,
Patti,

Sharon,
Kyle,
Ben,
Marianne,
Christine,
Janet,
Cheryl
Pat,
Greg

The church calendar is below. Please be sure to notify the office (admin@bethlehemtc.org or 231.947.9880) to be sure that your group is of the calendar.

Sunday, December 28

9:15am—Adult Education (YR)
9:15am—Sunday School
10:00am—Taize & Carols Service (S)

Tuesday, December 30

Bulletin articles due today

9:00am— Property Work Group

Wednesday, December 31

Happy New Year

Church Office closes at Noon

Thursday, January 1

Happy New Year

Church Office is Closed

5:30pm—ACA (FH)

Friday, January 2

6:00pm—LifeRing Recovery Group (Library)

Saturday, January 3

8:00pm—AA (FH)

Sunday, January 4

9:15am—Adult Education (YR)
9:15am—Sunday School
10:00am—Worship Service (S)



