

April 2026



Bethlehem
LUTHERAN CHURCH



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

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

Building Hours:
Monday – Thursday, 9am to 2:30pm

Office :
Monday – Thursday, 9am to 2:30pm

Worship Times:

Sunday: 10 am Modern Worship with
Traditional service on the 2nd Sunday.
Livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube
Sunday School/Adult Education: 9:15am
Third Thursday Worship: 7:00pm
Nursery open during worship service

Follow the STAR to Bethlehem!

Our Mission:

We worship, work and welcome... Sharing God's love and grace with all.

Our Vision:

Together, we embody our mission by BOLDLY following Jesus, serving the needs of the world and one another, and caring for all of God's Creation. ALL ARE WELCOME.



"The light shines in the darkness..."

- John 1:5

"His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

- Matthew 28:3



Greetings Bethlehemers (and Easter people_!

Though we have reached the end of Lent as we move into the Easter season, I am still a bit "stuck" on a one word: Cosmic.

As I shared with you on my Lenten devotion for March 25th, "cosmic" is the word that always pops into my head when comparing John's gospel to the other three "synoptic" gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Cosmic is also how I would define just what happens at the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus.

At approximately 3pm on Good Friday, the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom, as the earth quaked and Jesus breathed his last. It's also when a Roman Centurion, who had no one influencing him to say this, said, "Surely, this man was the Son of God." The sky went dark for 3 hours. In that moment in time, I believe the entire cosmos was speaking, along with unlikely humans. As in the preamble for all of Creation in Genesis chapter 1, you might say it was as if "darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters."

Perhaps that 'second darkness' was Christ's earthly death...but that was temporary.

The sweeping wind from God that remained after Good Friday, and breathed air into Christ's lungs again on Sunday...was the Holy Spirit...reminding us again that life has the final Word (not death.)

And the verse that comes next in Genesis is an Easter verse anew: "Then God said, 'Let there be light. And God saw that the light was good.'"

And now we are full circle..."In Christ there is a new Creation." (2 Corinthians 5) As angels in dazzling robes speak in ways of lightning...

We are Easter people...who see light amidst the darkness, new life and hope forever.

In peace and joyous blessings of cosmic light and life,
Pr. Paul

A Word From the President:

Isn't it amazing, April is here! Spring is here, Easter is in a week and summer is around the corner. One of my favorite Bible verses is Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV, There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.

Enjoy this beautiful season.
God Bless you all.
Gail

APRIL 2026 STAR FELLOWSHIP REPORT

The first Lenten dinner was held on Thursday, February 26, 2026. Dinner included: Beef stew, zucchini muffins, chocolate mousse pie, and apple pie. There were 20 people attending the dinner. Free will donation: \$80.00

There were 30 people at the March 5th Lenten meal. We had a delicious soup made by Meredith, chili, bread & crackers, salad, and Sammy's pumpkin chocolate chips. Free will donations: \$100 for the Outdoor Food Pantry.

Lenten meal March 12, 2026 featured pizza, pasta and Caesar salad, fruit, and a variety of desserts. There were 30 people attending. We collected \$130.50 in free will donations.

March 19th was our penultimate Lenten dinner. Beef Barley Soup and Chicken Enchilada Soup were served along with a tray of cold cuts and sandwich fixings, and individual cream pies and gluten free cookies. There were 30 people in attendance and \$129 in donations was collected.

We are grateful for all the people who have signed up to help with set-up and clean-up for these events as well as donating main dishes and desserts.

An Easter Brunch is planned for 9:00 AM on Easter Sunday. We are asking for people to sign up and bring a variety of foods for the event. We anticipate around 80 in attendance based on prior year's attendance.



SPRING FLING: Sunday, April 26th at Noon. Potluck lunch: salad and fixins', rolls & butter and beverages will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass. **THEME:** "Pampered: Inner & Outer Beauty". Speaker is from the GT Beauty Academy who will focus on skin, hair and nail care and she will provide us with a couple of surprises. There will be a signup sheet in the Narthex. Please sign up by April 19th. **Join us for a fun day of pampering!**

NEW MEMBER INSERT IN YOUR MAILBOX FOR YOUR DIRECTORY: If you haven't already retrieved it from your church mailbox, PLEASE TAKE IT HOME!!! Tuck it in the back cover of your directory in case you want/need to contact any of these new members. If you cannot stop by church please contact the office so a copy can be sent by email or snail mail.

Social Ministry/Outreach update:

Monthly outreach meal: We have a confirmed interested group of 10 volunteers to prepare a community meal the **4th Sunday of the month** at Grace Episcopal. We would like to have 6 more volunteers so each volunteer is only needed about 6 times per year. Please prayerfully consider this service which we will begin offering in April. Even if you can only come once or twice in a year, your help will be appreciated.

Freedom Builders: Orientation meeting is July 21 at 6pm and work days July 22-25 7:30am 'til done meeting at their new warehouse at 571 West Commerce Drive

Habitat for Humanity build: It helps to plan ahead...could you assist with a build project in Florida in late October or early November? Or perhaps a different build project? Dates are not certain at this time, but you could set aside some time and money.

REMEMBER: If questions, concerns, or ideas contact Cindy Monroe or Jim Hutchison.

Grief Group meets the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month from 3:30-4:30 in the gathering space, unless the TC schools are closed. Any questions contact Peggy Burns 232-392-6913.

Chair Yoga will continue to meet at 3:00pm on Mondays. It is still \$5 per class

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 with a study a new book, *Mary's Memoirs The Hidden Years*, which will start on April 15th. See Pr. Paul or Barbara if you have any questions.

Join us on Friday, April 10th at noon for another XYZ gathering! XYZ is predominantly geared toward seniors, but anyone is invited to attend and gatherings are enjoyable for adults of any age! We will be hearing from Kelly McCord, an RN and educator for Accelerate The Care. Accelerate The Care is a non-profit entity dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for caregivers and those affected by Alzheimer's & other types of Dementia. Kelly is an expert in Alzheimer's and Dementia care with decades of experience in caregiving and teaching. Her style as an educator is warm, captivating and easy to understand. We hope you can just us for a delicious lunch and a wonderful presentation!

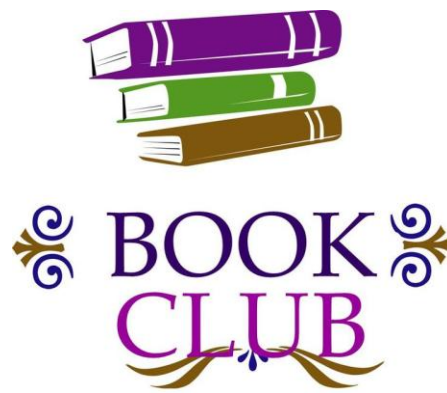


The Noisy Offering

A NOISY OFFERING is coming!! We have not had one for years. Our synod is requesting that all participating congregations make an offering of coins to bring to the synod assembly May 15-16. From April 12 thru May 10 we will be collecting coins which will be divided between Lutheran Disaster Response Ukraine and Samaritas-New Americans. So search those pockets, purses, cushions etc. and bring in any coins you can spare. (Bills and checks also accepted even though they don't jingle-jangle). Any questions can be directed to BLC's voting delegates, Peggy Burns, Jim Monroe, and Cindy Monroe.

Verse O.N.T.A.P.: Do you like the Beatles, Pat Benatar, Bob Marley, Elvis (and other artists from the last few decades)? Turns out that scripture has some things to say about love, relationship, and some connections to these rockers' lyrics! Check out Verse O.N.T.A.P. on **Sunday, May 17th** 5:30pm-7:00pm at The Workshop 221 Garland St.

BOOK CLUB: We will meet at the home of Betsy Morley on Wed Apr 29 at 5:30 to discuss *A Calamity of Souls* by David Baldacci. If not already on the email list please contact Betsy at betsymorley@charter.net to find out what to bring for the meal.



A big thank you to all who have turned in Olesons' slips. On March 8, 2026, we received a check from Olesons for \$294.24. In 2025, we received a total of \$1031.80 from people turning in their Olesons receipts. We will see how well we do this year! Thank you so much to everyone who turned in their Olesons receipts. 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

Caring for God's Creation



Creation Care Team update: our next Creation Care core team meeting will be Monday, May 4th 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.

Join Your Creation Care Team on our next hike. We are scheduled for April 19 at 12p at Timber Ridge Campground. Plan to pack a picnic as weather permits. They have a pavilion on site. God's creation is plentiful.

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!!

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 Pepler.

Below are the important dates for Holy Week/Easter.

April 2 – Maundy Thursday service 7:00pm (Live Streamed)

April 3 – Good Friday service 7:00pm (Live Streamed)

April 4 – Easter Vigil service 7:00pm (Live Streamed)

April 5 – Easter services 8:00am / 10:00am (only 10:00am Live Streamed)

April 5 – Easter Brunch 9:00am

Outdoor food pantry update from Linda Hansen: Our congregation provides food for two different missions: The Baby Pantry and the Outdoor Food Pantry. The needs are very different. This is the focus for the Outdoor Food Pantry: Food or toiletries in individual or small packaging. We have found the needs to be serving sizes of items that are portable. Some examples are:

tuna fish or chicken pouches (not tuna or chicken salad),

protein bars, granola bars, trail mix

crackers or crackers with peanut butter or cheese filling

plastic fruit or vegetable cups

ramen, rice or potatoes in the individual serving cups or foil packets

oatmeal packets, small containers of peanut butter

jerky/meat sticks, dried soup mixes, dried fruits

Toiletries/other: toothbrushes, toothpaste, feminine products,

small first aid kits, toilet paper, wet wipes, glasses wipes

hand/toe warmers

NO CANS or GLASS containers in the winter months.

No expired food.

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

4/01, 4/08, 4/15, 4/22, 4/29 – The Pub TC, 7:00pm

4/03—Middle Coast, Traverse City 7:00pm



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 working in the office on the first Tuesday of each month from 9:30am - 12:30pm, and on Wednesdays from 11:30am - 2:30pm on all other weeks. I will also work from home throughout the week.

Notes From Alanna

Game Night!

Board games, card games, Wii games, and food! Join us for a fun night on Friday **May 1st** at 6pm! We'll have the big TV screen set up for Wii games, board and card games galore, and hotdogs to keep us all fed and happy. It'll be a fun time, so mark it on your calendar and plan to be there! Bring a friend and be ready to play!



Mac 'n Cheese Cook-Off - Raise Funds for Youth!

Get ready to get your competition on! We're changing it up from our traditional chili cook-off fundraiser this year and trying something new with a mac 'n cheese cook-off, all to raise funds for our youth program! If you have a delicious mac n' cheese recipe that you want to enter in the competition, let me know and I'll add you to the list! And of course, even if you don't want to enter, plan to be here on Sunday, May 3rd after worship with your tasting spoon ready - we'll need people to vote for their favorites so we can crown our winners!

-Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator

Christian Education News April (& 1st day of May!)

Easter Sunday 4/05/2026

Worship service 8am

Breakfast 9am: food, fellowship, & fun – for ALL ages!!!

Worship service 10am

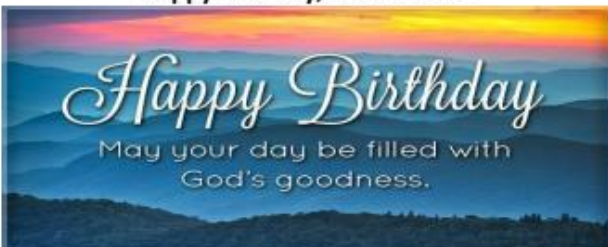


Mark your calendars & plan to join us!

WHEN: 6pm Friday, **May 1st**

WHAT: dinner with Wii, card, and board games

Happy Birthday, Pastor Paul –



We wish you the very best of God's blessings!



Starting 4/19/2026

Classes held during Sunday School each week –

We will celebrate our students in May!



Global Links - Evangelical Lutheran Church - Bogotá, Colombia - South America

Katie Larson, an ELCA missionary in Colombia, recently started a new call in Bogotá. As part of her position, she works with migrant women, building relationships and a safe environment. In reflection about her new role, Katie writes:

"One of the most beautiful things that I experienced is the hope of the people who participate in the migrant ministry project. After news broke of what had happened in Venezuela, I called each of the participants. I was checking in and holding space for each of them. Everyone was holding different emotions. There was grief, fear, and, also endless hope. It is a hope rooted in faith. In Latin America, many people live with uncertainty in their daily lives, and changes of government are not uncommon. Living with this constant instability has taught them that life continues, and one must put all worries and stress in prayer to God."

Katie is one of over 110 ELCA missionaries serving around the world.



WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM - APRIL 2026



May the joyous blessings of Easter be with you all!

BIBLE STUDY: Our study will be on April 9th at 1PM in the library. We will be studying Session #2 from the Gather magazine: "God's name, God's promise: God the protector: Gate and shepherd."

SPRING FLING: Sunday, April 26th at noon. Potluck lunch: salad and fixins', rolls & butter & beverages provided. Please bring a dish to pass. **THEME:** "Pampered: Inner & Outer Beauty" Speaker is from the GT Beauty Academy who will focus on skin, hair and nail care plus a couple of 'lovely' surprises. There will be a signup sheet in the Narthex. Please sign up by April 19th. **Join us for a fun day of pampering!**

SPRING GATHERING: A day of fellowship, Bible study and fun will be held at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Greenville, MI on Saturday, April 18th from 10to 3PM. We will carpool early on Saturday. If interested in joining us, please contact Ann Rundhaug at 938-1607. You will be glad you did!

ELECTIONS: There are some new people on the WELCA Board! Recently elected were:

Vice-President - Bethany Uhl

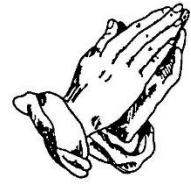
Treasurer - Ann Rundhaug

Circle Chair: Pam Reid.

Nancy Ammann continues as President and Suzanne Lehto continues as Secretary. Thank you all!!

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 29 Palm Sunday 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Palm Sunday 11:30am - Social | 30 2:30pm - Choir 3pm - Chair Yoga | 31 Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work | 1 | 2 5:30pm - ACA 7pm - Maundy Thursday | 3 6pm - LifeRing Recovery 7pm - Good Friday Service | 4 7pm - Easter Vigil Service |
| 5 Easter Sunday 8am - Easter Worship 9am - Easter Brunch 10am - Easter Worship | 6 2:30pm - Choir 3pm - Chair Yoga 3:30pm - Grief Group | 7 Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work 10:45am - Staff Meeting | 8 11:30am - Music | 9 9am - Baby Pantry Setup 10am - Baby Pantry-FH 1pm - Rebecca Anna 5:30pm - ACA | 10 12pm - XYZ 6pm - LifeRing Recovery | 11 7pm - Contra Dance - |
| 12 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Traditional | 13 9am - Mission 11am - Finance Cmte. 11am - WELCA 2:30pm - Choir 3:30pm - Bell Ensemble | 14 Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work 1pm - Friendship Bible 6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed 6:30pm - Executive | 15 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book & | 16 5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Third Thursday 7pm - Thursday Thursday | 17 10am - Sew Pieceful 1pm - Lehto SG - Library 6pm - LifeRing Recovery | 18 8pm - AA |
| 19 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 12pm - Hike at Timber | 20 10am - Sustaining 2:30pm - Choir 3:30pm - Bell Ensemble 3:30pm - Grief Group | 21 Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work 6:30pm - Council Meeting | 22 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book & | 23 5:30pm - ACA | 24 STAR articles due today 6pm - LifeRing Recovery | 25 11am - AAUW 8pm - AA |
| 26 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 12pm - WELCA 12:30pm - Youth | 27 2:30pm - Choir 3pm - Chair Yoga 3:30pm - Bell Ensemble | 28 Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work 12:30pm - | 29 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book & | 30 5:30pm - ACA | 1 10am - Sew Pieceful 6pm - Game Night 6pm - LifeRing Recovery | 2 8pm - AA |

Health Concerns*



The Power of Prayer

*Mary Woodring, Jerry Hill,
Richard Fernholz, Lee, Ken,
Judy Fenton, Julie Lapeer, Lynn,
Ron Hellenga, Cindy Hitesman,
John Stretlien, Harper Wiemerslage,
Leroy, Roy Dumond, Dale & Cheryl,
Patti, Sharon, Julie Barrett, Steve, Christine,
Sherry, John Block, Bob, Pat Burton,
Norm Fred, Chris, Shelley Miller,
Kyle, Janet, Cheryl, Pat*

G. T. Pavilions: Shelley Miller

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.

Prayer Requests:

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

Are you checking for the latest BLC updates at: www.bethlehemtc.org?

You saw Norm and others take the photos...be sure you see them at www.bethlehemtc.org!

Good News...and great news...at www.bethlehemtc.org...

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

bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes

BLC Contacts

Church Office

| | |
|--|--|
| Pastor Paul Busekist | paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org |
| Admin. Asst., Barbara Oster | admin@bethlehemtc.org |
| Bookkeeper, Phil Anderson | bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org |
| Anthony Bero, Music Director | bero.tony@gmail.com |
| Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator | Alanna.Steffunick@bethlehemtc.org |
| Website | www.bethlehemtc.org |

Church Council

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Gail Goldsmith, President | president.council@bethlehemtc.org |
| Maureen Bauer, Vice President | vicepresident.council@bethlehemtc.org |
| Nancy Pflasterer, Secretary | secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org |
| Dave Peppler, Treasurer | treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org |
| Jim Monroe, Financial Sec. | financialsecretary.council@bethlehemtc.org |
| Peggy Burns, Christian Care Giving | christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org |
| Tina Dohm, Christian Ed. | christianeducation.committee@bethlehemtc.org |
| , Fellowship | fellowship.committee@bethlehemtc.org |
| John Halstead, Membership/Evangelism | membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org |
| Doug Cunningham, Property | property.committee@bethlehemtc.org |
| Jana Rockne, Personnel | personnel.committee@bethlehemtc.org |
| Jana Rockne, Safety & Security | |
| Bethany Uhl, Stewardship | stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org |
| Denice Bossardet, Worship and Music | worshipmusic.committee@bethlehemtc.org |
| Tina Dohm, Youth/Y2A | youth.committee@bethlehemtc.org |
| Pastor Paul Busekist | paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org |

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



Bethlehem Lutheran Church (ELCA)
1050 Peninsula Drive
Traverse City, MI 49686
www.bethlehemtc.org
231.947.9880