

# August 2026



**Bethlehem**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Pastor Paul Busekist**  
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:  
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 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday.  
Livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube  
Sunday School/Adult Education: 9:15am  
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.

"Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,  
And rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save.  
His glories now we sing, who died and rose on high,  
Who died, eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die."  
- **Crown Him with Many Crowns (ELW Hymn #855, v.3)**



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ at Bethlehem,

*Maybe I have crowns - and knights and castles – still on my mind from Vacation Bible School last week. So I thought I'd frame my page on the three subthemes from VBS at Bethlehem:*

***"A Mighty Fortress":*** *On day one of VBS, we focused on Psalm 91:2, the famous Lutheran Hymn "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," and the story of Noah's Ark in Genesis 6. What that reveals to me for this upcoming month is that God has chosen us in a special way, not just to help preserve God's Creation but to provide a safe space for us and members of our community to worship God, care for one another and walk "two by two" (or simply, together) as we share our life together. One expression of that is our Creation Care team's nature hike on Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> after worship. See the 4<sup>th</sup> page of the STAR for details on how to join them!*

***"The Armor of God":*** *Day 2 of VBS centered on the ways God prepares us as disciples to weather the challenges of the world; think Ephesians 6:13 and the story of David and Goliath, to name a few. For this coming month, perhaps it would be a good spiritual exercise to take note of a certain spiritual gift or talent you may have that can help you counter the negativity or injustices you may be seeing on the news or with folks you know and care about at home or abroad. Might there be a way that your voice or efforts can make someone's life better? Maybe helping serve at the community meal at Grace Episcopal on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month, or at Safe Harbor, would be just the sort of "armor" you need to say "no" to hunger and poverty and "yes" to Christ's model of love and service in the world.*

*Finally, the "Crown of Life" was our 3<sup>rd</sup> VBS day's focus, centered in part on James' writing on perseverance in James 1 and the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den. Amidst each God-given sign of God's perseverance and everlasting love for us all is something else...a crown that WE can wear to remind us that we are loved, we are important, and that the everlasting life Christ came to give us is intended for all who believe and walk in his ways. The crown of life and light that Jesus wears is beyond royalty...it is the way, truth, and life we can all wear in small ways, with God's big and boundless love!*

*- Pastor Paul*

Greetings,

August is looking to be a busy month for BLC. With approval from the congregation, the Infrastructure Project will officially launch and work will ramp up. Please watch for notices on the project and plan to attend the special Congregational Meeting on August 9 after church. Additionally, we continue with our ongoing activities both within our membership and in the community. We've recently had VBS, a baptism, a graduation, and a funeral—all parts of the fabric of our Christian lives. As always, I am grateful to everyone who makes BLC such a vibrant, loving environment. To the wonderful ladies who sit behind Tom and me in church, a special thank you for helping guide me back to my correct pew after communion. We all benefit from a good laugh, even during church!

"The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all." — 2 Timothy 4:22

Jana Rockne

**A Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday August 9th following the 10:00 AM service** to vote on a motion to authorize the Council to negotiate a mortgage not to exceed \$750,000 for HVAC, water remediation, infrastructure projects, and facility improvements. Please plan to attend.

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**Where 2 or more are gathered in my name. (Matt 18:20)** In our world today there are a lot of things that we need prayer for. Every 4th Tues. starting at 11:00, we will be offering a time and place in church to pray. **The next date is August 25th..** Please join us. If any questions, please contact Peggy Burns at 231-392-6913 or [cobaltblues2003@yahoo.com](mailto:cobaltblues2003@yahoo.com)



**The Social Ministry/Outreach committee** gained approval to have the 4th Sunday of every month dedicated to collecting items for the Food Pantry. For future months, please see the display in the Narthex for items needed and take a flyer for your shopping trip. If everyone could just bring one thing, it would go a long way to fill the closet. This month's date is August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Thank you for your support. Linda Hansen

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## **FELLOWSHIP REPORT**

As the school year starts in September, so do the multitude of events for Fellowship. In addition to six Third Thursday dinners and services, there are three Advent meals in December, Shrove Tuesday on February 9th, Souper Bowl Sunday on February 14th, six Lenten meals, and Easter Brunch on March 28th. Each Third Thursday meal will have a theme (for example, October will be Oktoberfest and feature German foods) and we are asking for people to sign up to bring food for each of these events. Starting in September, sign-up sheets will be in the hallway of the Gathering Space. **Your help is greatly needed and appreciated!**

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**WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM & FRIENDS:** There will be a Summer Bible Study at the home of Carl and Suzanne Lehto on Thursday, August 13th beginning at NOON. Please bring a dish to pass (meat, beverages and table service are provided), Bible and lawn chair (if possible). Please sign up in the Narthex by August 9th so we can get a handle on the number attending, NOTE: We need someone to be responsible to set up car pooling. Please call Nancy Ammann if interested.

**Grief Group** meets the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month from 3:30-4:30 in the gathering space. The group will meet on August 3<sup>rd</sup> and August 17<sup>th</sup>. Any questions contact Peggy Burns 232-392-6913.

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**Chair Yoga**

meets at 3:00pm  
on Mondays. It  
is \$5 per class.



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**New member inserts:** please check your mailbox! The current new member insert (except for those just accepted at the end of May) is now there for you to take home and put in your church directory.

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**Sunday Education News**

**Sunday School** holds class at 9:15am on Sunday throughout the summer..

**Sunday Adult Education:** During the summer, there will not be a formal class at 9:15am in the Youth Room, however, folks could come and discussion would take its own course whether that be checking in with one another or addressing the lessons for the day.

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**July has been a busy month for the New Life Together team** we had a tapas get together at the Goebels house. Then we had Women's Wind down Wednesday at Rove Winery. And last but not least we went to a Pit Spitter's game. In the next month or two another Tapas get together and the same for Women's Wine Down. In October we will be having a Spiritual Gifts class where you will see what gifts you have and also how you can use them. More info to come later.

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**Please join the Creation Care team for a hike after church on Sunday August 23rd.** We will meet at Seven Bridges Nature Area ( Valley Rd, Rapid City, MI 49676) for a picnic tailgate and walk, and then we can go to Freedom Park for a hike. After that, if anyone is so inclined- they can go swimming in Torch Lake. All ages are welcome!

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**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 Thursday. Phil works these days through the summer months

**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.

## **Some Personal Thoughts**

Carl and I have been members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church since 1965. The church has been a major part of our lives all these years, and we are most thankful for our involvement here: we have worked (and studied and played) along side many wonderful people, blessed by many opportunities to serve Jesus in and through this church body. It has literally been our 'second' home. God is good!

After 61 years at BLC my strength and abilities are waning; and there are quite a few of us in this stage of life, still working hard yet running out of energy. (I'm not complaining, just stating the obvious.) I am thankful to see many of you doing 'God's work with [your] hands' - both new and long-standing members. I know also there are many chances to do God's work outside of Bethlehem. Yet, there are still many opportunities at Bethlehem that need willing hands ..... people who need to share some of your time and talents, and therefore experience the joy that comes from being connected to your fellow workers in Christ.

Thank you for sharing with me the joy of the Lord in this place. God bless us all.  
Suzanne Lehto

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**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

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Peggy Burns 231-392-6913 or Renae Wells 616-204-8900

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**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.

**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:

**Tues 8/4—** Grand Traverse Resort Patio Grille, 7:00pm

**Wed 8/5, 8/12, 8/19, 8/26—** The Pub TC, Traverse City, 7:00pm

**Fri 8/7, Sat 8/8—** Grand Traverse Resort, 7:00pm

**Sat 8/15—** The Dam Shop, Elk Rapids, 6:00pm

**Sat 8/29—** Brady's, 6:30pm

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**NEW MEMBERS:** If you are interested in membership, please contact the office or membership co-chairs Cindy Monroe at [cmonroe@chartermi.net](mailto:cmonroe@chartermi.net) or John Halstead at [marilynjohnntc@hotmail.com](mailto:marilynjohnntc@hotmail.com)

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**Social Ministry/Outreach update** (REMEMBER: If general questions, concerns, or ideas contact Cindy Monroe or Jim Hutchison). Thanks to all of those who have been participating in any way with the Baby Pantry, Food Pantry, and the monthly meals at Grace the past few months, and for those who helped with Freedom Builders in July. Your efforts are greatly appreciated!

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### **CHRISTIAN CARE**

Wanted to update everyone about what we have been up to. Lindsay Susalski has graciously agreed to lead the delivery of flowers, thank you Lindsay! We have a couple new people to go visit our members who are unable to come to church. All the communion kits are gone and if you could return them here to the church, as we don't have enough kits for everyone to take and keep. I would like to update the list of people who are doing the visits. We are in need of people to help give rides to folks who can't drive and want to come to church service. It is not an every week thing, it would be great if we could have even more! Thank you I am working to have a small group start this fall, more to come sooner. If you would like to join the Christian Care team you would be more than welcome, please see Peggy Burns.

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**Book Club:** Enjoy whatever you choose to read during the next few weeks. New books will be available mid-August on the counter by the mail boxes with a sign-out sheet. Plan for the next meeting to be Wed Sept 23.

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**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 others who also bring the goodies. 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 continue to do so.

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**PROTECT OUR CARPET:** spills always happen, but we now have TWO consistent ways to deal with them. If you cause one or see a spot, please grab the spot cleaner in the squirt container below the sink in the fellowship hall. Just follow the directions on the bottle and we should be able to keep our carpet in good condition. But, if the stain is too big or too resistant, please use the carpet cleaning machine in the maintenance closet. Thank you!!

## Notes From Alanna

Join me in praying for our Vacation Bible School kids:

Dear God,

We send our prayers to You for the 25 wonderful kids we welcomed into Bethlehem this week for VBS. Each and every one of them is a precious gift from You, and they are so full of life, joy, and enthusiasm. It was an incredible joy to have them with us. Thank you for watching over us all this week, keeping us safe, and letting us have so much fun together. Help these wonderful kids to remember the messages that they learned at VBS - that You will always be their Mighty Fortress, and that the Armor of God will always be part of them. Remind them how much You love them, and help them to run the race of life and keep their faith in You no matter what, even when it's hard, to win Your Crown of Life. Be with them no matter where they go from here.

Bless them and keep them in Jesus name,  
Amen.

*-Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator*



## Christian Education News August 2026

Join us Rally Day Sunday 9/13/2026  
for GWOH special events!



God's work. Our hands.



Grades 6-12 "Charge" faith experience  
with Living Water Ministries at TC Great Wolf Lodge  
this fall 11/06 to 11/08!



Do you hear the voice of Jesus calling you to serve?  
Lessons are easy with very simple scripts –  
Please prayerfully consider this opportunity!!!



Calling all youth to Minneapolis next summer!

## ELCA Global Links - Venezuela



### Earthquake relief in Venezuela

Following the two devastating earthquakes in Venezuela, **Lutheran Disaster Response** is responding through trusted, long-standing partners in the region, including the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela (IELV). ELCA partners have deployed assessment teams to affected areas, working together to identify urgent needs, provide immediate relief (food, shelter, water) and coordinate a plan for long-term assistance.

Donations to **Lutheran Disaster Response** from individuals, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization are used in order to assist with aid to those with desperate needs.

## 2026 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL KNIGHTS & CASTLES



## DUNCAN THE DRAGON



| Sun                                                                                                                                                                           | Mon                                                                     | Tue                                                                                                                                    | Wed                   | Thu                                                                                           | Fri                                                                             | Sat                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 26                                                                                                                                                                            | 27                                                                      | 28                                                                                                                                     | 29                    | 30                                                                                            | 31                                                                              | 1                                           |
| <b>FOOD DRIVE SUNDAY</b><br>9:15am - Adult Education<br>9:15am - Sunday School<br>10am - Worship Service<br>11:15am - Infrastructure<br>1pm - Community Meal at               | VBS 9:00-1:30<br>3pm - Chair Yoga                                       | Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work                                                                                     |                       | 10am - Piano Tuning - Rot<br>11:30am - Music<br>5:30pm - ACA                                  | 6pm - LifeRing Recovery                                                         | 8pm - AA                                    |
| 2<br>9:15am - Adult Education<br>9:15am - Sunday School<br>10am - Worship Service<br>11:30am - High School                                                                    | 3<br>1pm - Friendship Bible<br>3pm - Chair Yoga<br>3:30pm - Grief Group | 4<br>Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work<br>10:45am - Staff Meeting<br>2pm - EPS Maintenance<br>6pm - Parking Lot usage | 5<br>11:30am - Music  | 6<br>5:30pm - ACA                                                                             | 7<br>6pm - LifeRing Recovery                                                    | 8<br>8pm - AA                               |
| 9<br>9:15am - Adult Education<br>9:15am - Sunday School<br>10am - Traditional                                                                                                 | 10<br>9am - Mission<br>11am - Finance Cmte.<br>3pm - Chair Yoga         | 11<br>Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work<br>1pm - Friendship Bible<br>6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed<br>6:30pm - Executive     | 12<br>11:30am - Music | 13<br>9am - Baby Pantry Setup<br>10am - Baby Pantry-FH<br>12pm - WELCA Summer<br>5:30pm - ACA | 14<br>6pm - LifeRing Recovery                                                   | 15<br>8pm - AA                              |
| 16<br>9:15am - Adult Education<br>9:15am - Sunday School<br>10am - Worship Service                                                                                            | 17<br>3pm - Chair Yoga<br>3:30pm - Grief Group<br>6pm - Co-Facilitators | 18<br>Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work<br>6:30pm - Council Meeting                                                   | 19<br>11:30am - Music | 20<br>5:30pm - ACA                                                                            | 21<br>STAR articles due today<br>10am - Sew Pieceful<br>6pm - LifeRing Recovery | 22<br>3:30pm - Parking - Powell<br>8pm - AA |
| <b>FOOD DRIVE SUNDAY</b><br>9:15am - Adult Education<br>9:15am - Sunday School<br>10am - Baptism<br>10am - Worship Service<br>12pm - Seven Bridges<br>1pm - Community Meal at | 24<br>3pm - Chair Yoga<br>6pm - Creation Care                           | 25<br>Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work<br>11am - Prayer in the                                                       | 26<br>11:30am - Music | 27<br>5:30pm - ACA                                                                            | 28<br>6pm - LifeRing Recovery                                                   | 29<br>8pm - AA                              |
| 30<br>9:15am - Adult Education<br>9:15am - Sunday School<br>10am - Worship Service                                                                                            | 31<br>3pm - Chair Yoga                                                  | 1<br>Bulletin articles due today<br>9am - Property Work<br>10:45am - Staff Meeting                                                     | 2<br>11:30am - Music  | 3<br>5:30pm - ACA                                                                             | 4<br>6pm - LifeRing Recovery                                                    | 5<br>8pm - AA                               |

## Health Concerns\*



# The Power of Prayer

*Mary Woodring, Jerry Hill,  
Richard Fernholz, Lee,  
Judy Fenton, Julie Lapeer, Lynn,  
Cindy Hitesman, Pr. Zack Nelson,  
John Stretlien, Harper Wiemerslage,  
Roy DuMond, Cheryl, Patti, Sharon,  
Julie Barrett, Steve, Christine,  
Sherry, John Block, Bob, Pat Burton,  
Norm Fred, Chris, Shelley Miller,  
Kyle, Janet, Cheryl, Pat, Gretchen,  
Matthew, Jacque*

**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.

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### Prayer Requests:

- Prayer Chain:** Please contact Jan Stretlien at [jstretlien@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org)

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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)...

**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](http://bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes)**

# BLC Contacts

## **Church Office**

|                                                |                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pastor Paul Busekist                           | <a href="mailto:paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org">paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org</a>         |
| Admin. Asst., Barbara Oster                    | <a href="mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org">admin@bethlehemtc.org</a>                         |
| Bookkeeper, Phil Anderson                      | <a href="mailto:bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org">bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org</a>               |
| Anthony Bero, Music Director                   | <a href="mailto:bero.tony@gmail.com">bero.tony@gmail.com</a>                             |
| Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator | <a href="mailto:Alanna.Steffunick@bethlehemtc.org">Alanna.Steffunick@bethlehemtc.org</a> |
| Website                                        | <a href="http://www.bethlehemtc.org">www.bethlehemtc.org</a>                             |

## **Church Council**

|                                      |                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jana Rockne, President               | <a href="mailto:president.council@bethlehemtc.org">president.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>                           |
| Bethany Uhl, Vice President          | <a href="mailto:vicepresident.council@bethlehemtc.org">vicepresident.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>                   |
| Nancy Pflasterer, Secretary          | <a href="mailto:secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org">secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>                           |
| Dave Peppler, Treasurer              | <a href="mailto:treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org">treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>                           |
| Jim Monroe, Financial Sec.           | <a href="mailto:financialsecretary.council@bethlehemtc.org">financialsecretary.council@bethlehemtc.org</a>         |
| Peggy Burns, Christian Care Giving   | <a href="mailto:christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org">christiancaregiving.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>   |
| , Christian Ed.                      | <a href="mailto:christianeducation.committee@bethlehemtc.org">christianeducation.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>     |
| Dave Peppler, Fellowship             | <a href="mailto:fellowship.committee@bethlehemtc.org">fellowship.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                     |
| John Halstead, Membership/Evangelism | <a href="mailto:membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org">membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a> |
| Doug Cunningham, Property            | <a href="mailto:property.committee@bethlehemtc.org">property.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                         |
| Jana Rockne, Personnel               | <a href="mailto:personnel.committee@bethlehemtc.org">personnel.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                       |
| Jana Rockne, Safety & Security       |                                                                                                                    |
| Bethany Uhl, Stewardship             | <a href="mailto:stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org">stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                   |
| Denice Bossardet, Worship and Music  | <a href="mailto:worshipmusic.committee@bethlehemtc.org">worshipmusic.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                 |
| , Youth/Y2A                          | <a href="mailto:youth.committee@bethlehemtc.org">youth.committee@bethlehemtc.org</a>                               |
| Mark Fornwall, Constitution          |                                                                                                                    |
| Scott Sorenson, Council Member       |                                                                                                                    |
| 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).

Lots of cool information inside  
Pr Paul's Page  
Council President's notes  
Council officers and committee liaisons  
Special Congregational Meeting  
Book Club News  
Monthly Prayer Time  
Notes from Alanna  
Christian Education News  
Creation Care News  
New Life Together  
Social Ministry/Outlook News  
Spotlight on Zeke  
ELCA Global Links  
The Power of Prayer  
Church Calendar  
And much more!

