

September 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.



"For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven..."

-Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NRSVUE)



Dear friends in Christ,

First – this is a busy season and I am quite certain I will miss highlighting all that is going on in September and early October, but here is my best effort (yes, I'm asking for forgiveness early!)

On September 9th we are discussing the book *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi in the Zoom Book and Bible study on that Wednesday, 9/9 from 1:30 to 3pm. Because we classified this as "summer reading," I doubt we will discuss it for more than one or two sessions; then we will pick our next novel or book from the Bible to study later in September. All are welcome to join us in the Youth Room or at the Zoom link provided in the church email.

September 11th and 12th are the Synod Connect days, whereby congregation members from all segments of our synod (i.e. the lower peninsula minus Detroit and its surrounding area) are invited to venture to TC and Suttons Bay for worship Friday night at Bethlehem, bike riding and/or lunch, an apple orchard ride, and fellowship at Immanuel and Hop Lot in Suttons Bay (see schedule below.) You can also **check out** <https://www.bethlehemtc.org/synod-connect-days> for more info.

September 13th is God's Work, Our Hands Day – packed with some extra items in worship like the **"Blessing of the Backpacks (and briefcases)"** for all ages; the official kickoff for our new Capital Campaign (see the next page for details) and later that afternoon our first confirmation class of the school year.

With everything going on, we have not publicized this, but our confirmation students, their families (and any others who'd like to join!) will partake in the Northport **CROPwalk this October 4th** at 1pm: <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/event/northportmi>

Other items? Perhaps a "virtual blessing of the animals" this year, you say? Stay tuned and many blessings!

- Pastor Paul

Friday:

7pm - informal gathering at BLC
7:30pm – Holden Evening Prayer at Bethlehem (BLC)

Saturday:

8:15am – Cont'l breakfast at BLC
9am - Travel to TART trailhead
9:45am - Start bike trail ride north
11:45am - Arrive ILC (Immanuel Lutheran Church in Suttons Bay)
12pm noon - BBQ at ILC
1:15pm - Apple orchard (hay)ride
2:30pm – Gathering at Hop Lot
4:15pm - Depart

Greetings,

I met Davonte on an early Tuesday evening, as I arrived at the church for a council meeting. He and his girlfriend were at the food kiosk. There were a lot of bags, stuffed with food items. Were they emptying the thing? No, as it turned out, they were not. After we introduced ourselves to one another, Davonte explained that he and his girlfriend had used the pantry earlier in the year, when they were in need. They had rebounded and were refilling the pantry with a multitude of food gifts – staples, fresh veggies, milk, eggs, you name it. Obviously, we put the perishable items in the kitchen frig (yes, with an explanation note on the front of the frig), stocked the food pantry and put the excess food items in the storage area. What an amazing experience! Our involvement in the work of the Lord greets us every day, if we invite and allow it. Thank you, Davonte, for being part of my life and allowing me to see the impact of Christ's calling.

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

Jana Rockne

Renewing Our Foundation

A Capital Campaign for Bethlehem's Future

We are excited to announce an upcoming capital campaign to raise funds for vital infrastructure updates at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, including a new HVAC system, lower-level renovations following flooding from recent road construction, updated lighting and bathrooms, and other improvements throughout the church.

These projects address pressing needs while creating meaningful improvements that will strengthen our church and positively impact our congregation and surrounding community for years to come.

Renewing Our Foundation reflects both the important work ahead and our commitment to caring for the church that has supported our ministry, worship, and community for generations, while preparing it to serve future generations.

PLEASE JOIN US TO LEARN MORE

- **SEPTEMBER 13** Campaign announcement during worship
- **SEPTEMBER 20 & 27** Presentations following worship

We encourage all members to attend, learn more about the projects, and consider how you can be part of **Renewing Our Foundation** and help build a strong future for Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

“...Like a wise man who built his house on rock.”

Matthew 7:24



FELLOWSHIP REPORT

This summer the Fellowship Committee, Peg Peppler and Linda Hansen, along with Diane Cunningham performed an extensive clean up and organization of the kitchen drawers and cabinets. Unused and redundant items were removed and donated to Goodwill. All drawers and cabinet contents have laminated labels listing the contents. We ask all users of the kitchen return items to the designated space!

With the arrival of September, significant Fellowship events are planned. September marks the start of Third Thursday meals and services. This year, Peg Peppler will be alone as chairperson. There are six Third Thursday meals, three Advent dinners, Shrove Tuesday, Souper Bowl Sunday, six Lenten meals, and Easter brunch. I am asking for help from the congregation to sign up and bring potluck food as well as assistance with set-up and clean-up. Sign-up sheets for September, October, and November are in the hallway to the Gathering Space. Each Third Thursday will have a theme with food suggestions. September is "Back to School" featuring foods such as pizza, tacos, and Sloppy Joe for example. October will be Oktoberfest with German foods, and November is Harvest (late fall foods such as squash, apples, pumpkin, turkey, etc). This is a sizeable task for one person, and I am hopeful someone will accept the co-chair to assist with these events.

Grief Group meets the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month from 3:30-4:30 in the gathering space. The group will not meet on Labor Day September 7th but will meet on Monday September 21st.. Any questions contact Peggy Burns 232-392-6913.

Chair Yoga meets at 3:00pm on Mondays. It is \$5 per class. They will not meet on Labor Day, September 7th and September 14th.

Bethlehem is currently posting a job for a new part-time Music Coordinator.

Our friend, Tony Bero, will be leaving as soon as we can hire someone to take over his position. The position requires some of the following: 1.) Plan the music for regularly planned worship services, special services, and guest special musicians 2.) With the choir and handbell choir, coordinate music themes, dates and conduct practices, and performances (Hand Bell choir currently led by volunteer) 3.) Have knowledge of ELCA liturgy and Bethlehem worship practices to aid with worship planning. For a complete job description and application, contact Barbara in the church office during normal office hours or Maureen Bauer at personnel.committee@bethlehem.org

Sunday Education News

Sunday School holds class at 9:15am on Sunday – they will not meet on September 6th and 13th. Regular classes will start on September 20th.

Sunday Adult Education: This class will begin again on September 20th at 9:15am in the Youth Room to discuss the lessons for the day.



XYZ potluck & presentations will resume on Friday, September 11th! After a delicious potluck lunch at noon, we will hear a presentation by Kristina Schnepf, the director of Green Door Folk School. Green Door is a recently opened nonprofit that is rooted in the folk school tradition, offering hands-on workshops that connect people to passions, new or old, the land, and each other. Remember, XYZ is predominantly geared toward seniors but the time spent together and the wonderful presentations are enjoyable for adults of any age - we hope you can join us!

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 September 22nd.** Please join us. If any questions, please contact Peggy Burns at 231-392-6913 or cobaltblues2003@yahoo.com

Third Thursday Service on September 17th starting at 7:00pm. will be a Holden Evening Prayer. We have picked the theme of Taco Bar for September's Third Thursday meal starting at 5:45pm. Please sign up to bring a contribution to the meal. The service begins at 7:00pm. We hope to see you there.

The Wednesday Zoom Book/Bible Study will meet on Wednesday, September 9th from 1:30pm-3:00pm with a study of the book, *Theo of Golden*. See Pr. Paul or Barbara if you have any questions

The brown round tables are gone!!: Thanks to Alanna's skills with Facebook Marketplace and the availability of the Monroes to be at church and assist, the tables left the building the same day they were listed. They will have a new life in Central Lake for family and neighborhood gatherings, and perhaps even in a small wedding venue. The couple who bought the tables were very happy with the excellent condition of our tables. The funds from the sale will help support the Community Meal that BLC volunteers assist with at Grace Episcopal.

Habitat for Humanity opportunity. Looking for 4-6 members of BLC to join with St. Luke's Lutheran in Grand Rapids on a trip to Sebring Florida to build houses. Dates are Nov 8-14. (Help with BLC craft fair on 11/7). No carpentry skills needed; only a love for our less fortunate neighbors. Trip cost is approximately \$1200 which includes airfare, hotel, meals, transportation and fun! Contact Fred Reyelts. text 616-560-2861 or reyeltsf@gmail.com

Nature / Animal Photos Needed! Alanna needs your pretty pictures to create videos for the Gathering Space TV! Nature photos, animal photos, anything pretty and pleasing to look at! Photos must be in JPEG or similar format, preferably horizontal orientation, and must be good quality. The more photos submitted, the better! Credit will be given for the photos unless you wish to remain anonymous. Please email photos to Alanna at alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org Thank you!

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



Cherry Festival 2026 Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped out in the Pepsi Tent and the Souvenir Tent this year! We earned \$550.00 for Pastor's Sabbatical fund! I hope to see you all next year. Thanks again – Lindsay

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:

Wed 9/2, 9/9, 9/16, 9/23, 9/30 —The Pub TC, Traverse City, 7:00pm

Tues 9/15— Bel Lago. Cedar, 3:30pm

Fri 9/18— MiddleCoast, Traverse City, 6:00pm

Tues. 9/22— Grand Traverse Resort Patio Grille, Acme, 6:00pm

NEW MEMBERS: If you are interested in membership, please contact the office or membership co-chairs Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net or John Halstead at marilynjohnhc@hotmail.com

Social Ministry/Outreach update (REMEMBER: If general questions, concerns, or ideas contact Cindy Monroe or Jim Hutchison). Thanks to all who have been participating in any way with the Baby Pantry, Food Pantry, and the monthly meals at Grace the past few months. Special thanks to Carl Lehto and Frank Wall for helping ALL 3 DAYS with Freedom Builders in July. And thanks to the other 8 who gave 1 or 2 days: Cindy and Jim Monroe, Tom Christensen, Tom and Jana Rockne, Kristin Rivard, Pastor Paul, and Steve Kramer. Thanks also to Jim Hutchison for the behind-the-scenes organization. Your efforts are greatly appreciated!

Did you know that BLC has a Facebook group? This is an online forum where we can chat, share upcoming event information, get to know each other, etc! This group is just getting going, but we would love to have more members join - the more the merrier! The group is called 'Bethlehem Lutheran Church New Life Together Group' and you can search it on Facebook, or let Alanna know that you would like to join and she will add you. Hope to chat with you online soon!



Book Club: We are moving to Tuesday We will meet 5:30 at Betsy Morley's house on September 22 to discuss *The Correspondent* by Evans. Contact will be made so you can choose your item for the potluck.

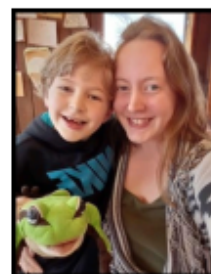
Coffee and Cookies: Our wonderful volunteers Mary Ann Tanis and Diane Cunningham have indicated a willingness to continue offering this after the Sunday service as long as there are others who also bring the goodies. Our thanks to these two women for their wonderful display of the goodies and the clean-up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

New Life Together The team will be meeting on September 21 at 6:00 in the gathering space for a planning meeting. We are looking for more member for the team and would love to have anyone join us!

Notes From Alanna

XYZ Resumes in September!

XYZ returns on September 11th with a presentation from Green Door Folk School! Join us for lunch at noon followed by the presentation - adults of all ages are welcome! I am currently booking for the rest of the year; I've gotten some great suggestions already, but feel free to send me any ideas you have!



Back to School!

All of our kids will be returning to school soon, if they haven't already. The start of the school year is exciting but can also be stressful and scary, so keep all of our kids in your prayers as they transition back into the school year routine! I hope to send a Youth in Action email out soon showcasing everything the BLC youth have been up to this summer!

-Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator

Christian Education News September 2026

Many thanks to all our VBS volunteers –
it was a HUGE success!



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!!!



Bake Sale annual fundraiser
11/07/2026 BLC Craft Fair

ELCA Global Links – Middle East & North Africa

Seven missionaries serve in **three countries, Egypt, Jordan & Palestine** where they:

- **Accompany and support** local communities and leaders.
- **Abide in relationships** of mutuality and trust with global companions.
 - **Amplify the voices** of marginalized people.
- **Advocate for justice** on behalf of global partners.



The Rev. Dr. Mark LaChonce preaching at the Evangelical Lutheran Good Shepherd Church in Amman, Jordan.

WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM - SEPTEMBER 2026

The changing of leaves reflects a season of transformation, reminding us to trust the Creator's patient work in our own lives. Then we look for the fruit of patience, peace and faith grown through the year.

BIBLE STUDY BEGINS! We are getting back to our regular routine. The September Bible Study will be on Thursday, September 10th at 1PM in the library. Our fall study will begin with "Bold faith on an unexpected journey" by Tiffany Chaney. Session one: Encountering God in the Wilderness. Hagar's witness is a reminder that God meets us in deserted places with vision and promise. New members are always welcome! If you need a copy of the lesson, please contact Nancy Ammann at 946-8433 OR nmammann@gmail.com.

FALL GATHERING at Cadillac: Saturday, September 26th, Evergreen Resort, 10AM to 3PM.

Cost is \$25 and we will car pool. It's a great time to be refreshed and renewed with the theme "I am worthy". Contact Nancy Ammann if interested in joining us 946-8433 or nmammann@gmail.com.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service	31 3pm - Chair Yoga 5:30pm - Worship and	Bulletin articles due today 9am - Property Work 10:45am - Staff Meeting	1 11am - Funeral - Shelley 11:30am - Music	2 5:30pm - ACA (Library)	3 6pm - LifeRing Recovery	4 8pm - AA
6 9:15am - Adult Education 10am - Worship Service	7 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSE HAPPY LABOR DAY	Bulletin articles due today 9am - Property Work 6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed 6:30pm - Executive	9 9am - Baby Pantry 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book &	10 9am - Baby Pantry Setup 10am - Baby Pantry-FH 1pm - Rebecca 5:30pm - ACA (Library)	11 Synod Connect Day 12pm - XYZ 6pm - LifeRing Recovery 10am - AAUW Set-up 11am - AAUW 8pm - AA	12
13 Rally Day / God's Work 9:15am - Adult Education 10am - Traditional 12:30pm - Youth	14 11am - Finance Cmte.	Bulletin articles due today 9am - Property Work 1pm - Friendship Bible 6:30pm - Council Meeting	16 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book &	17 5:30pm - ACA (Library) 5:45pm - Third Thursday 7pm - Thursday Thursday	18 STAR articles due today 10am - Sew Pieciful 1pm - Lehto SG - Library 6pm - LifeRing Recovery	19 8pm - AA
20 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service	21 3pm - Chair Yoga 3:30pm - Grief Group 6pm - New Life Together	Bulletin articles due today 9am - Property Work 11am - Prayer in the	23 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book & 5:30pm - Book Club	24 5:30pm - ACA (Library)	25 6pm - LifeRing Recovery	26 8pm - AA
27 FOOD DRIVE SUNDAY 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 1pm - Community Meal at	28 3pm - Chair Yoga	Bulletin articles due today 9am - Property Work	30 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book &	1 5:30pm - ACA (Library)	2 6pm - LifeRing Recovery	3 8pm - AA

Health Concerns*



The Power of Prayer

*Mary Woodring, Jerry Hill,
Richard Fernholz, Lee,
Judy Fenton, Julie Lapeer, Cindy Hitesman,
John Stretlien, Harper Wiemerslage,
Roy DuMond, Patti, Sharon,
Julie Barrett, Steve, Christine,
Sherry, John Block, Bob,
Norm Fred, Kyle, Janet, Cheryl, Pat,
Matthew, Jacque, Carmen Svalstad,
Ron & Marilyn Dork*

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

Jana Rockne, President	president.council@bethlehemtc.org
Bethany Uhl, Vice President	vicepresident.council@bethlehemtc.org
Nancy Pflasterer, Secretary	secretary.council@bethlehemtc.org
Dave Peppler, Treasurer	treasurer.council@bethlehemtc.org
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, Christian Ed.	christianeducation.committee@bethlehemtc.org
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, Youth/Y2A	youth.committee@bethlehemtc.org
Mark Fornwall, Constitution	
Scott Sorenson, Council Member	
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).

Lots of cool information inside
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XYZ News
Habitat for Humaity News
WELCA News
ELCA Global Links
The Power of Prayer
Church Calendar
And much more!

