November 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.

Pastor Paul's Page

"12 For now we see only a reflection, as in a mirror, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known."
– 1 Corinthians 13:12 (NRSVUE)



Dear sisters and brothers of Bethlehem,

The above verse from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians is clear about its vagueness! (and about ours) In this life, or even in this part of our lives, we often don't see the "big picture" until after we try to see it. Either we need more information, more time to discern, or a certain level of like-mindedness with others around us…You might say that we live in the unknowing as much as we live in the knowing. But we can always trust that God is "with us always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18)

November is a month of "not-yet-knowing" or experiencing Advent…Advent, and our theme for it, will come soon…and certainly by the time our December STAR emerges on the horizon. Yet we wait. And even though our November 7th Craft Fair at Bethlehem has been in the works for months, we don't yet know how many folks will walk through our doors and what joy and creativity it will bring. And our opportunities to serve with Habitat for Humanity, both be in November (i.e. the mission trip to Sebring from the 9th to the 14th, and the local build in Kalkaska on the 16th) All are yet to come…known partly now, and fully later.

November's BLC Stewardship Campaign begins on the 1st, later to be made fully known…along with our "Renewing Our Foundation" September and October Capital Campaign. The other day, I used an online app to create a fun visual model of what an "arch pledging thermometer" might look like. In this diagram the "south leg" of the arch consists of 11 foundational donors, the (unseen) north leg has 12, and the remaining triangular building blocks of the arch have 33 pieces (in blue) filled in…adding to our current capital pledge total of 56. Over 100 pieces (pledges) remain to be filled…And more important than money is simply adding our gifs of time and talent to this gospel "bridge" we call BLC.



So, today our work is incomplete, but someday it will be completely known. Until that day, many blessings and much goodness!

-Pastor Paul

Greetings,
What is the difference between thanksgiving and gratitude? A quick online search says gratitude is an inner attitude of appreciation that exists regardless of immediate events while thanksgiving is an active, outward display or communication of being thankful. As Luke 17: 11-19 shows us, both are a part of our spiritual identity. It is the action of giving thanks to Jesus, though, that healed the Samaritan. Practicing thanksgiving reminds us of his eternal gift and bonds us with God. I am thankful to you all for being part of God's family at BLC and for the work we do on his behalf.
"The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all." — 2 Timothy 4:22
Jana Rockne

FELLOWSHIP REPORT

Help is needed for the November Third Thursday. The theme is “Harvest” and will feature traditional fall foods. Food donations are needed for this event. There is a sign up sheet in the Gathering Space – look for the “Harvest” poster.

December is the start of Advent meals each Thursday before Christmas (December 3rd, 10th, and 17th). There will be a need for additional food donations for each meal, which includes the Blue Christmas meal which has greater attendance needs. Sign up sheets will be posted in the Gathering Space in November. Please consider helping with these important events!



November’s Third Thursday service will be Taize 1 beginning at 7:00pm on November 19th.. Come early at 5:45pm for a delicious “Harvest” meal focusing on fall foods.

Native Plant Seed Sowing Workshop Sunday, November 22, after the service. Starting a native plant garden can be simple and cost-effective when you know how to sow your own seeds! Join us for a hands-on workshop hosted by the Creation Care Committee and learn how to grow native plants from seed. We’ll sow seeds in containers to set outside for the winter season. Once spring arrives, the seeds will germinate naturally with very little maintenance— perfect for transplanting to your new or existing gardens. Containers will be provided. Sign up in the hallway to RSVP and help us prepare. We’d love to see you there!

“Let Your Love Shine!” Our fall Bethlehem Stewardship Campaign is in full swing!

Even though our big focus this fall was on our capital campaign, we give thanks always for your support of BLC ministry - your time, treasure and all the spiritual gifts you bring! Having an annual stewardship season this time of year is so important, as we remind ourselves also that all that we have is God’s, and we are God’s faithful stewards. We carry this gospel light to share with our world, and we could not do this ministry without you! Over the next three weekends, we will have **temple talks** from Sherri Helman, Cindy Monroe and Bethany Uhl, our Stewardship chair. ***Pledge Sunday will be November 22nd.***

Please check your mailboxes at church or at home for your letter and pledge card, and may God’s love flow from us so that others will see His love!



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 November 2nd and November 16th. Any questions contact Peggy Burns 232-392-6913.

Free band concert at TC Phil: Some of your fellow BLC members are playing in the "ACT 3 adult band" at TC Phil. There will be a free concert November 18th at 7:00pm. Please come and cheer on the band and see if you can spot who is playing flute, trumpet, and percussion.

Sunday School and Sunday's Adult Education hold their classes at 9:15am on Sunday.





The next XYZ (EXtra Years of Zest) potluck & presentation will be on Friday, November 13th. Join us for a delicious potluck lunch at noon, followed by a wonderful presentation by our own Tom Rockne. Tom traveled to Ukraine in November 2025 to support the Ukrainian war effort, and will have stories to share with us about his time there. Remember, XYZ is predominantly geared toward seniors but is enjoyed to adults of any age - all are welcome!

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 November 24th.**. Please join us. If any questions, please contact Peggy Burns at 231-392-6913 or cobaltblues2003@yahoo.com

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**. Beginning with Wednesday, September. 9th, Phil will work these days.

Alanna Steffunick-Boomer/Ministry Coordinator working in the office on the first Tuesday of each month **10:30am - 1:30pm* *note time change! Wednesdays 11:30am - 2:30pm on All Other Weeks; Work From Home:Tuesday through Thursday When Not In Office**

Habitat for Humanity:: We have an opportunity to work with Habitat for Humanity on the Kalkaska project. We're looking for two to three individuals for **Monday, November 16th** to join us. No building skills needed! Please contact Fred Reyelts for more information or to sign up

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Handbell rehearsals will return in November: Practice for ringing handbells will resume on Monday, November 16 at 3:30 and continue through Decmberc. If you have thought this is something you want to try please contact Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net

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The Wednesday Zoom Book/Bible Study meets from 1:30pm-3:00pm in the Youth Room. We study the Book of Hebrews using the book *Hebrews* by N.T.Wright. The group will not meet on November 25th, the day before Thanksgiving. See Pr. Paul or Barbara if you have any questions

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The next collection date for the Food Pantry is Sunday, November 22nd.

New Life Together Team

Our New Life Together team is having a fun time brainstorming and planning fun things for all the congregation. Our **Women's Wine Down Wednesdays** continues to grow and is a monthly activity, all women are welcome, even if you do not drink wine or would just prefer non-alcoholic beverages. Our **Tapas** get togethers continue to thrive and grow. Please check the weekly emails, worship folders and Sunday morning announcements for times and dates. On Sunday, December 13th, we will be going **Christmas caroling** at homes of our homebound, we hope you will join us. We are planning on having a blood drive here at BLC to help especially at the holiday times when the need is greater. Information on the date to follow. Stay tune for more upcoming activities. We are always looking for more people and would welcome you!

SPIRITUAL GIFTS: Would you like to know what your Spiritual Gifts are or see if your gifts have changed since you took a class awhile ago? This is a common sense approach. Starting Wednesday, November 11th and continuing November 18th, December 2nd and December 9th, we will meet from 6:00 t0 7:00 in the Gathering Space. Materials will be provided. Any Questions please contact Peggy Burns 231-392-6913.

A big thank you to all who have turned in Olesons' slips. On June 18, 2026, we received a check from Olesons for $211.15 for a total so far this year of $505.39. Thank you so much to everyone who turned in their Olesons receipts. Also, the area for the Olesons' receipts is in the lower cabinets below the mailboxes (under the last names beginning A-C). 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

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 10/7, 10/14, 10/21, 10/28 —The Pub TC, Traverse City, 7:00pm

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NEW MEMBERS: The next gathering for potential new members to Bethlehem will be Sunday November 15 after the service. Grab your coffee and treat and bring them to the library so you can meet some others and learn a little more about Bethlehem. If you are interested in membership, please contact the office or membership co-chairs Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net or John Halstead at marilynjohntc@hotmail.com

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Social Ministry/Outreach update It has been decided that this group is choosing an approach like the "no-huddle offense" in football. We will have "**no-meeting service projects**", meaning NO EXTRA MEETINGS other than the area(s) you are serving. Everything has been running smoothly, so, if you feel called to help in one of these areas, please contact the leader of these groups listed alphabetically: **Baby pantry (2nd Thurs)-** Patty Leibenguth **Food pantry**-Diane Cunningham **Freedom Builders (July)-**Carl Lehto or Jim Hutchison **Grace Community meals (4th Sunday)** -Cindy Monroe or Jim Hutchison **Habitat for Humanity**-Fred Reyelts **Safe Harbor**-Tom Rockne **Salvation Army Bell Ringing (Dec.)**- Carl Lehto or Jim Hutchison **Super Saturday (Feb**)- Nancy Ammann

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Book Club: We have needed to adjust our schedule due to the Thanksgiving holiday. We will meet at Betsy Morley's at 5:30pm on Monday November 30th to discuss *Theo of Golden*. If distance to her house is too far for you, many of us car pool from BLC at 5:00.

RENEWING OUR FOUNDATION
A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR BETHLEHEM'S FUTURE

Renewing Our Foundation: Nearly $500,000 Pledged

Bethlehem Lutheran Church's Renewing Our Foundation capital campaign is supporting critical infrastructure and renovation projects throughout our church, and we are grateful to share that the campaign is off to a very strong start.

To date, $490,125 has been pledged through 54 commitments, representing 33% of our congregation. Thank you to everyone who has already made a pledge and helped move us significantly closer to our $750,000 goal.

This generous response is an encouraging start, and we hope to see participation continue to grow. Our goal is not only to fund these important improvements, but also to have every Bethlehem family take part in a way that is meaningful for them.

The work has already begun, and every additional pledge helps us continue that momentum. If you received a pledge card in person or by mail and have not yet returned it, it is not too late to participate. Every commitment, at every level, brings us closer to completing these important improvements.

Thank you for helping Renew Our Foundation and investing in Bethlehem's future.

Notes From Alanna



Trunk or Treat Thank You's!
We had a FANTASTIC time at our first ever Trunk or Treat event! We handed out treats to over 100 kids, and it was an absolutely beautiful afternoon of sunshine, laughter, and fun. Huge thanks to everyone who signed up to hand out treats from their car, donated treats, or helped with the event. It was a huge hit with our local community and I hope we can expand on it next year!

Youth in Action!
If your kids or grandkids have any recent accomplishments or photos or any upcoming events that you'd like shared with the congregation, please let me know! I love highlighting our kids and showing all of the cool things they are up to!

-Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator

Christian Education News
November 2026

NOVEMBER 7th – BAKE SALE AT BLC'S ANNUAL CRAFT FAIR
Treat donations, time volunteering, & tasty purchases – thank you for supporting our ministry in so many ways!





Stay tuned…
We'll need some helpers
for this year's Christmas Eve Children's Program!!!

Happy Thanksgiving!



-Christian Education Committee



Plan to join us for Advent each week in December:
12/03, 12/10, & 12/17 –
We'll have dinner & family activities before worship!



ELCA - Global Links

The ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program invites adults ages 21-35 into a transformative year of international service. As they walk alongside global companions, volunteers are shaped by the witness of neighbors and share in the ministries of partner churches and organizations.

A year of service invites young adults to embody Christ's love, supporting ministries and projects in communities of need. This journey also provides space for deep reflection — exploring identity, God's work in the world and one's own place within it all.

WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM - NOVEMBER 2026



WELCOME NOVEMBER!

As you open your eyes to see this new month of November,
God is opening doors and opportunities for you.
Expect breakthroughs, answered prayers,
good news, blessings and miracles in your life. (Anon)

NOVEMBER BIBLE STUDY: We will meet on Thursday, November 19th ****NOTE DATE CHANGE! **** at 1PM in the Fellowship Hall. Our lesson will be taken from the Fall issue of *Gather* magazine - Session #3 - "Bold faith on an unexpected journey": As Mary Magdalene's story declares, God entrusts women to carry resurrection hope into a hurting world.If you need a copy of the lesson, please contact Nancy Ammann.

CHRISTMAS TEA: Our Christmas Tea will be held on Sunday, December 6th from 2-4PM. We are in the process of finalizing plans. Please watch for further information coming soon!

BLC - Non assigned mtg. space, Conference Room, Event Held Outside of BLC, Fellowship Hall, Gathering Space, Lower Room 2, Lower Room 3, Lower Room 4, Nursery Room 1, Nursery Room 3, Nursery Room No #, Sanctuary, Youth Room

Nov 2026 (Eastern Time - New York

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 12:30pm - Youth	2 2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga 3:30pm - Grief Group 5:30pm - Worship Music	3 Craft Fair Set-up Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters 9am - Property Work 10:45am - Staff Meeting	4 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book &	5 5:30pm - ACA	6	7 8am - Craft Fair prep 9am - Craft Fair 8pm - AA
8 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Traditional	9 11am - Finance Cmte. 2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga	10 Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters 9am - Property Work 1pm - Friendship Bible 6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed 6:30pm - Executive	11 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book & 6pm - Spiritual Gifts	12 9am - Baby Pantry Setup 10am - Baby Pantry-FH 5:30pm - ACA	13 12pm - XYZ	14 7pm - Contra Dance by
15 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 11:15am - New Member 12:30pm - Youth	16 2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga 3:30pm - Grief Group 3:30pm - Handbell Choir	17 Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters 9am - Property Work 6:30pm - Council Meeting	18 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book & 6pm - Spiritual Gifts	19 1pm - Rebecca 5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Third Thursday 7pm - Third Thursday	20 STAR articles due today 10am - Sew Pieceful 1pm - Lehto SG -	21 8pm - AA
22 FOOD DRIVE SUNDAY 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 11:30am - Native Plant 1pm - Community Meal at	23 2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga 3:30pm - Handbell Choir	24 Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters 9am - Property Work 11am - Prayer in the	25 11:30am - Music	26 Church Office Closed Have Blessed 8am - Bossardet Family 5:30pm - ACA	27	28 8pm - AA
29 9:15am - Adult Education 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service	30 2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga 3:30pm - Handbell Choir	1 Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters 9am - Property Work 10:45am - Staff Meeting	2 11:30am - Music 1:30pm - Zoom Book & 6pm - Spiritual Gifts	3 1pm - Rebecca 5:30pm - ACA	4 10am - WELCA SET-UP	5 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,
Kyle, Janet, Cheryl, Pat & Bob,
Matthew, Jacque, Carmen Svalstad,
Ron & Marilyn Dork, Kathryn,
Scott Schlagel

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

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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

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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
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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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Council President's notes
Council officers and committee liaisons
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Stewardship News
New Life Together
Spiritual Gifts
XYZ News
Habitat for Humanity News
WELCA News
ELCA Global Links
The Power of Prayer
Church Calendar
And much more!

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