

October 2025



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

Worship Times:

Sunday: 10 am Modern Worship
including Communion with service
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.



**"Praise the Lord! Praise
the Lord, O my soul! -
Psalm 146:1**



BLC's Ragnar Race Support team, 9/19/25

Dear Bethlehem sisters and brothers:

When searching for a bible verse to begin this month's "STARticle," I did not have to look far. Psalm 146 is a song of praise, and in the words of the Christ in Our Home devotional writer for this verse, "'we are urged to praise the Lord' for God's gracious acts. So, what are 'God's gracious acts?'" As ELCA Lutherans, we are faithfully called to do and be "God's work, [with] Our Hands" and ask God to "make [us] instruments of peace?" How might we (1) embody God's work this month and (2) praise God for inspiring believers to glorify God's name?

The list is a long one. Everlasting, to be sure. But maybe we can start here:

Sunday, October 5th: Join us for the CROP Walk at 1:00 pm in Northport to increase hunger awareness (and raise funds for all who can contribute.) We will gather at the gazebo in the south marina in Northport for a short and flat, 1-mile walk. We will join our friends from Trinity Church, Northport, who host this group. See the write-up a few pages later in this STAR for more details.

Sunday, October 12th: Congregational Informational meeting about how we might address the needs of our facility, but also aspirations for the future when it comes to building and grounds.

Sunday – Tuesday, October 19th-21: Hosting the Autumn Leadership Event at Bethlehem - for pastors and rostered leaders in our "mitten" synod and sister synod in South East "SEMI" Michigan. We are excited to host leaders from all over the state, with this year's theme: **"For Such a Time as This."**

Saturday, Nov 1st: BLC's Annual Craft Sale (see elsewhere in STAR and Facebook for more details!)

Saturday, Nov 8th – Saturday, Nov. 15th: Combined Habitat for Humanity mission trip to Sebring, FL, in partnership with St. Luke's (Grand Rapids) and Atonement (Sebring) Lutheran Churches. The trip will be led by BLC's Fred Reyelts, continuing a long-standing relationship with Habitat. We already have 2 BLCers interested, with room for a few more. Contact Fred (rayeltsf@gmail.com) if interested:

There is much more goodness to report (September 7th Vision in Motion! Confirmation and Sunday School! Bibles for 3rd-5th graders, and everything in between...) God is good! All the time! Shalom...

- Pastor Paul

A Word From the President:

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under Heaven - Ecclesiastes 3:1

This is my favorite verse in the Bible and it reminds me of this time of year. New beginnings with the school year starting as well as Sunday School, Bible Study, sports, community programs. Not just for children, but for adults too.

It is a great time of the year to start something new, for yourself, for our church or for our community.

God's Blessings to all!

Gail Goldsmith

AUGUST FINANCIAL NEWS

August income net of one-time basement project income was \$30,407 which exceeded budget by \$614. August expense of \$55,837 exceeded budget by \$23,470. Most of this overage was the result of a one-time consulting payment and miscellaneous repairs. From a budget perspective we had a shortfall of \$22,856. From a cash flow perspective...cash out the door...our August shortfall was \$25,430.

YTD income net of one-time basement project income was \$265,459 which exceeded budget by \$23,838. YTD expense of 308,927 exceeded budget by \$36,787. From a budget perspective we had a shortfall of \$12,949. From a cash flow perspective, YTD shortfall was \$43,468. While this is a very large number, we had several large expenses related to HVAC and infrastructure problems. You will hear more about these in October. Keep in mind the YTD budget assumed we would be \$30,519 in the red as of the end of August. So, one could say we are only \$12,949 deeper in the red than our \$30,519 budget projection. However, the impact on cash flow remains a minus \$43,468. We have funds remaining from the prior sale of the rental property to help with this shortfall.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH ART & CRAFT SHOW SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2025 9:00am TO 3:00pm

Featuring 50 local artists and crafters with original, handmade goods! Please sign up in the Narthex hallway to volunteer for our fundraiser. Your help would be greatly appreciated. There will be a Silent Auction of items donated by the crafters and a Grand Traverse Baby Donation booth for items to bid on. Both auction and donation sales support the baby pantry and Bethlehem's ministries. "Many hands make work light"

BAKE SALE ITEMS NEEDED! We are having a bake sale during the Craft Show on November 1st with proceeds to benefit the youth of Bethlehem. Any type of baked goods is much appreciated as well as sugar-free and gluten-free items. Please pre-package in groups of 6 or so and label on the outside what they are and if they contain nuts, peanut butter, etc. Items can be dropped off on Friday during the day OR early Saturday morning, Thank You!

NEW INSERT IN YOUR MAILBOX FOR YOUR DIRECTORY: If you haven't already retrieved it from your church mailbox, please stop there and get it. Please tuck it in the back cover of your directory in case you want/need to contact any of these new members. For those of you who cannot stop by church please contact the office so a copy can be sent by email or snail mail.

What IS GRIEVING? Could it be the loss of a marriage, your home, or community, good health, a dream or something else? The list can go on and on. No matter the loss you have a family here at Bethlehem that loves you, wants to support you, and be here for you! We meet here on the first and third Mondays of the month from 3:30-4:30. If you have any questions, please contact Peggy Burns 231-392-6913.



Fellowship

Fellowship Chair Person Needed: Since Gail Goldsmith has taken on the role of President of the BLC Council she is not able to continue as the chair person for the Fellowship Committee. There is a wonderful group of people on the committee, so there is great help in the kitchen.

The primary responsibility are planning and shopping for dinners, such as Third Thursday meals before service, Advent and Lenten Dinners, Easter Brunch pot luck and Shrove Tuesday pancake supper. There are other church activities such as game days after church, community activities such as arranging Pit Spitters games. These are just some ideas that we have done in the past. Some years we have had more and some years less. This person does not need to attend Council meetings, just write up a short summary of monthly Fellowship activities for the council meeting. Please talk to Gail Goldsmith with any questions or interests.

Food Pantry News! As you know, when the pantry is filled, it is typically empty again within 24-48 hours. The need is great and our pantry is helping many! Please continue to donate to this wonderful pantry that truly serves our community. Suzanne and Kathie

'God is good. All the time. All the time. God is good.'

CASH OR CHECK WORKS TOO: The pantry has some savvy bargain hunters who are willing to shop and there is now a line item for food pantry in the budget. Feel free to put some cash or money in an envelope and label with "food pantry" (add your envelope # if you want a record of giving).



We Are Having Guests, Let's Get Ready: BLC has been chosen to host the Fall Theological Event from October 19th, 20th and 21st. We will have 2 Synods including 2 Bishops as well as many Pastors involved with activities at our church. There will be approximately 80 to 100 participants. So we are asking for your help. **On October 5th right after church we are asking for about 10 people to help with extra cleaning our church.** We will be vacuuming carpets in the Gathering Space, Narthex, hallway, sanctuary and fellowship hall. Spot cleaning carpet in Gathering Space and fellowship hall, cleaning the entryway and dusting. Please sign up if you can stay and help. Snacks will be provided.

**Congregational Informational Meeting
October 12, 2025
Immediately after Worship Service**

As most of you are aware we have water issues in the basement and in some instances building systems infrastructure reliability issues that should be addressed.

In May of 2024 the Lower Level Committee was formed in an effort to resolve the ground water seepage issue caused by high Grand Traverse Bay water levels. This problem has gone on for many years. We anticipated and expected this issue would be resolved by now. The remediation company BLC contracted with, over promised and under delivered. Despite assurances, they were not able to produce approved engineering to obtain the required permits to complete the project. Moving forward BLC has requested proposals from two different companies and is currently awaiting for their estimates.

Additionally, a second basement water problem surfaced beginning this past June when we experienced flooding as a result of torrential rains. This is attributed to a possibly severed storm drain as a result of work done on Garfield Avenue. BLC has retained Rhoades Engineering as a consultant and has brought in a scoping contractor to identify the source of the problem. BLC along with Rhoades Engineering has initiated meetings with the Michigan Department of Transportation, Team Elmer's, and the City Of Traverse City to determine how to resolve the problem.

We met with Keen Technical Solutions and have contracted with them to analyze our aging building infrastructure systems. Due to the excessively high maintenance cost this past year in all areas, especially HVAC, it was thought prudent to do a complete building analysis to determine the needs of our building in a cost effective manner.

This will be an informative meeting to discuss the current needs of our building and the possible means to fund all of these projects.

Please bring ideas and questions of what you see could be future needs of the church.

This is an important meeting to discuss our current and future needs.

The CROP Hunger Walk happens on Sunday, October 5th. At 1:00 pm we will gather at the gazebo in the south marina in Northport, for the mostly flat, one-mile stroll through our village. You'll see the big banner there! Your dog on leash is welcome and we'll have a midway hydration break. Make your checks payable to "CWS/CROP" and be sure to write "The Next Step" in the memo line--this is important. That memo means that your contribution is attributed to our specific walk, and so Leelanau Christian Neighbors will receive their portion from it. You can scan the QR code below or also donate online here:

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks/event/northportmi>

Online donations are immediately available for Church World Service to use world-wide. Please give generously. It may not appear that we are able to make up the crippling deficit in funding that Church World Service is experiencing because of the dissolution of USAID. Nonetheless, we give in faith; knowing that what we do offer will make a difference to populations, to people, to souls, in need.

Sincerely,
James Thatcher
CROP Hunger Walk Coordinator
Trinity Church, Northport
(231) 386-5801



BOOK CLUB NEWS: We are again meeting early this month on Wednesday, October 8 at 5:30 at the home of Betsy Morley. We will be reading *HELLO BEAUTIFUL* by Ann Napolitano. If you are not currently on the email list and would like to receive information please contact Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net. The dinner this month has a Mexican theme.

XYZ continues on Friday, October 10th with a potluck at 12pm, followed by a presentation. Our speaker this month will be Nicole Westrick of Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home, bringing us a "Peace of Mind" presentation on pre-planning for funerals and other final wishes. Remember, XYZ is predominantly geared toward seniors but is open to adults of any age - if you would enjoy a great lunch and fellowship followed by an interesting and educational presentation, we invite you to join us!



Sunday School and Sunday's Adult Education hold their classes at 9:15am on Sunday. **The Wednesday Zoom Bible Study** meets at 1:30pm with a study of *Esther The Hidden Hand of God*. You may attend either on Zoom or in person in the Youth Room.

Notes From Alanna

Intergenerational Bowling!

All ages are invited to join us for some bowling fun at Incredible Mo's on Saturday, October 11th from 12-2pm! This is a 'pay-your-own-way' event, but we hope that many of you can join us for some fun together outside of church! Looking forward to seeing you there!



Contra Dancing Resumes!

Bayside Travellers is back with contra dances on the second Saturday of each month beginning October 11th! Live music, and lots of fun for everyone - no dance experience needed. Dances are by donation. You are also welcome to attend just to watch the fun and enjoy the music if you like! I would love to see you there!

-Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator

Christian Education News October 2025

NOVEMBER 1st – BAKE SALE AT BLC'S ANNUAL CRAFT FAIR

Donations of baked goods would be very much appreciated!

Thank you for your support of our ministry!



Christmas Program

Stay tuned...

We're starting to plan
for this year's Christmas Eve Children's Program
and we'll need some helpers!

October is Pastor Appreciation Month –



We thank Pastor Paul
as he brings our vision into focus!



Bibles for Youth class

Sunday mornings Sept & Oct –

Kids learn special lessons & receive a Bible!

We will celebrate them Sunday, November 2, 2025

Global Links - Global Refuge – Partner Organization – ELCA
[Formerly Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service]

Many immigrants hoping to enter the United States are turned away and return to their home countries. In 2024 Global Refuge began a program to assist those returning to Guatemala and Mexico, serving 981 participants, 654 clinical sessions, and spending \$65K in financial assistance.

Each year, thousands of youths from Central America and Mexico migrate due to poverty, violence, and instability. For those who return, reintegration can be tough—many face pressure to work, while also dealing with trauma from the journey and challenges at home.

Thanks to Global Refuge's Camino a Casa "The Road Home" program, a young man named Juan was able to enroll college and received a laptop to complete assignments. He works as a bricklayer's assistant during the week and studies on weekends. "It's been a great help because not everybody would give you the chance to pursue your dreams and continue your education," he said.

With the support of Global Refuge, Juan has decided to stay in Guatemala and is determined to make a difference in his community. "My wish is to work with people, learn about empathy, do things with love, and do things right," he shares. "I want to be a social worker."



WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM
OCTOBER, 2025



***MAY THIS BLESSING OF CHANGE BRING YOU AN ABUNDANCE OF
JOY, LOVE, PEACE, GOOD HEALTH AND HAPPINESS
FOR THE MONTH AHEAD - AND ALWAYS.***

OCTOBER BIBLE STUDY: Our study this month is taken from the *Gather* magazine, titled: "How do we tend and multiply our treasure?" Stewardship is a 'churchy' word for the practice of caring for what God has entrusted to us. written by Christa VonZychlin. Contact Nancy Ammann 946-8433 and join us!

THANK OFFERING SUNDAY COMING UP: Join us on Sunday, November 16th for WELCA's Thank Offering Sunday. The majority of the service will be presented by the women of Bethlehem. We will be collecting an offering that Sunday to be used to help women of the ELCA in many different ways. Offering jars will be available for you to use in collecting this offering or you may donate that Sunday. Keep an eye out for further information.

CHRISTMAS TEA 2025: December 7th has been set aside for the Christmas Tea. We will be providing further information as the time draws nearer. It's truly a blessed way to usher in the Christmas season.

Michigan Ragnar Road Race Volunteers



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
<p>9am - Bibles to Youth (Library)</p> <p>9:15am - Adult Education</p> <p>9:15am - Sunday School</p> <p>10am - Worship Service(S)</p>	<p>2:30pm - Choir</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p> <p>3:30pm - Grief Group</p>	<p>Bulletin articles due today</p> <p>9am - LWR Quilters (FH)</p> <p>9am - Property Work Group</p> <p>10:45am - Staff Meeting</p>	<p>Kitchen Floor Striping</p> <p>11:30am - Music Rehearsal</p> <p>1:30pm - Zoom Book & Bible Study</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p>	<p>5:30pm - ACA</p>	<p>6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group</p>	<p>8pm - AA</p>
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<p>9am - Bibles to Youth (Library)</p> <p>9:15am - Adult Education</p> <p>9:15am - Sunday School</p> <p>10am - Traditional Worship Service</p> <p>11:30am - Basement Informational</p> <p>12:30pm - Youth Discipleship</p> <p>1pm - WELCA Set-up</p> <p>2pm - WELCA Fun Day</p>	<p>2:30pm - Choir</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p> <p>3:30pm - Grief Group</p>	<p>Bulletin articles due today</p> <p>9am - LWR Quilters (FH)</p> <p>9am - Property Work Group</p> <p>10:45am - Staff Meeting</p>	<p>11:30am - Music Rehearsal</p> <p>1:30pm - Zoom Book & Bible Study</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p> <p>5:30pm - Book/Supper Club</p>	<p>9am - Baby Pantry Setup</p> <p>10am - Baby Pantry-FH</p> <p>1pm - Rebecca Anna Circle -</p> <p>5:30pm - ACA</p>	<p>12pm - XYZ</p> <p>6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group</p>	<p>12pm - Intergenerational Bowling</p> <p>7pm - Contra Dance - Bayside</p>
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<p>9am - Bibles to Youth (Library)</p> <p>9:15am - Adult Education</p> <p>9:15am - Sunday School</p> <p>10am - Traditional Worship Service</p> <p>11:30am - Basement Informational</p> <p>12:30pm - Youth Discipleship</p> <p>1pm - WELCA Set-up</p> <p>2pm - WELCA Fun Day</p>	<p>11am - Finance Cmte.</p> <p>2:30pm - Choir</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p> <p>6pm - Creation Care</p>	<p>Bulletin articles due today</p> <p>9am - LWR Quilters (FH)</p> <p>9am - Property Work Group</p> <p>1pm - Friendship Bible Study</p> <p>6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed Meeting</p> <p>8:30pm - Executive Comite (Zoom)</p>	<p>11:30am - Music Rehearsal</p> <p>1:30pm - Zoom Book & Bible Study</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p>	<p>5:30pm - ACA</p> <p>5:45pm - Third Thursday Meal</p> <p>7pm - Third Thursday Service</p>	<p>STAR articles due today</p> <p>10am - Sew Pieciful</p> <p>1pm - Lehto SG - Library</p> <p>6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group</p>	<p>3pm - Funeral - Debbie Knopf</p> <p>5pm - AA Chili Cook-off</p> <p>8pm - AA</p>
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
<p>Fall Leadership Event with Southeast Michigan Synod</p> <p>9am - Bibles to Youth (Library)</p> <p>9:15am - Adult Education</p> <p>9:15am - Sunday School</p> <p>10am - Worship Service(S)</p> <p>11:15am - Social Ministry &</p>	<p>10am - Sustaining Endowment</p>	<p>Bulletin articles due today</p> <p>9am - LWR Quilters (FH)</p> <p>9am - Property Work Group</p> <p>12pm - Sarah Circle - Library</p> <p>6:30pm - Council Meeting - Library</p>	<p>11:30am - Music Rehearsal</p> <p>1:30pm - Zoom Book & Bible Study</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p>	<p>5:30pm - ACA</p>	<p>6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group</p>	<p>8pm - AA</p>
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
<p>9am - Bibles to Youth (Library)</p> <p>9:15am - Adult Education</p> <p>9:15am - Sunday School</p> <p>10am - Worship Service(S)</p>	<p>2:30pm - Choir</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p>	<p>Craft Fair Set-up</p> <p>Bulletin articles due today</p> <p>9am - LWR Quilters (FH)</p> <p>9am - Property Work Group</p>	<p>11:30am - Music Rehearsal</p> <p>1:30pm - Zoom Book & Bible Study</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p>	<p>5:30pm - ACA</p>	<p>6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group</p>	

Health Concerns*



The Power of Prayer

*Mary Woodring, Jerry Hill,
Richard Fernholz, Tom & Lee,
Judy Fenton, Julie Lapeer, Carol Bowes,
Lynn, Ron Hellenga, Cindy Hitesman,
John Stretlien, Harper Wiemerslage,
Leroy, Roy Dumond, Dale & Cheryl,
Patti, Sharon, Julie Barrett, Steve, Christine,
Sherry, Jim Rumbach, John Block, Bob,
Marianne, Norm Fred, Chris,
Kyle, Janet, Cheryl, Jef*

Meadow Valley: Carol Bowes

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

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Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator	Alanna.Steffunick@bethlehemtc.org
Website	www.bethlehemtc.org

Church Council

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Bethany Uhl, Stewardship	stewardship.committee@bethlehemtc.org
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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
Pr Paul's Page
Council President's notes
Council officers and committee liaisons
Basement Informational Meeting
Art & Craft Show News
Grief Group
Book Club News
Chair Yoga
Crop Walk
XYZ
Notes from Alanna
Christian Education News
Financial News
ELCA Global Links
Women of Bethlehem 2025
The Power of Prayer
Church Calendar



Bethlehem Lutheran Church (ELCA)
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