

January 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 journey with God, to serve with love”

Our Vision...

“As a community of believers journeying with God together, we at Bethlehem are called to serve with love by growing a premier youth ministry; enlivening Christian discipleship through lifelong learning, care, and spiritual formation; fostering a vibrant and inspiring worship experience; utilizing our natural setting and location for faithful creation care and outdoor ministry; and opening our doors always to be a “campus at the crossroads” for the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.”



“¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” – LK 2:11-12



“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.”

– JN 1:5

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

This past month has been a wonderful trip to the manger, despite the curveballs thrown to us by mother nature. Undaunted by two “snowed out” Advent nights, we persisted for a wonderful Blue Christmas / Third Thursday meal and worship service on December 19th . There we partnered with our homegrown cooking crew (thanks, Phil B!) and preaching friends from BLC, Bethany Lutheran and St. Christopher Episcopal of Suttons Bay, and the Presbyterian Church of Traverse City. We sang Christmas carols to our homebound stars on the 22nd, celebrated Christ’s birth on the 24th, and gathered for Taize and Carols on the 29th. Christ is born, and God is good (all the time!)

I took a moment afterward to look at our January STAR from last year, and it was inspiring to see how far we have journeyed together since. In a year we have made significant improvements to our church building and grounds (roofs, boiler, solar panels, parking alley repaving and more) and perhaps more importantly, we have begun a new visioning process. With one milestone behind us (new mission statement written last November) and one in front (new vision statement and focus areas discussed at our January 11th retreat), we are a community on the move... sent from the manger, forward.

For those reasons, I couldn’t help but revisit last year’s January STAR devotion from author Bob Goff:

“... Who we are after Christmas morning says a lot about who we found in the manger. If you find a God who gave up everything to come live with us and die for us so we could finally get a taste of grace, you will want to give that grace to everyone you encounter. It is as if, from a manger in Bethlehem, God leaned over the whole world and said, ‘It is your move.’ Do not be discouraged just because you do not have all the answers. God is not sending you on a business trip. He is inviting you to join Him on an adventure which will always lead you to Jesus. How will you respond to His calling as we approach this New Year?” – Bob Goff, Live in Grace: Walk in Love: A 365 Day Journey

Our Advent time of waiting now brings Christmas re-imagining, as the manger is a place of re/birth and new light. From the manger, we celebrate God’s pure creativity within us all. Just how will the Christ child awaken within us a new sense of being and becoming? The light does indeed shine brightly...!

-Pastor Paul

PROSE FROM THE PREZ:

Were you here at Bethlehem for our Christmas eve service or did you have the opportunity to watch it virtually? I was so excited to see that the early service designated for families with children featured many “STARS”, Bethlehem’s own logo. It was such joy to have so much congregation participation as we learned the true meaning of Christmas. Blessings to all who participated.

And blessings to all of you who have given so much of your time, tithe, and talent to Bethlehem in the past year. I thought about trying to mention some by name, but then I knew I would neglect many others who deserved thanks. Please, all of you, give yourselves a pat on the back and consider yourself appreciated!!!

And special thanks to all who receive a paycheck from Bethlehem. I can assure you that they are at BLC many more than their scheduled hours assisting in a variety of ways. And thanks to those of you in the congregation who were able to donate towards the monetary gifts given to all of the staff in addition to their annual Christmas luncheon. It is in giving that we receive.....

Hope to see as many of you as possible at the congregational budget meeting on Jan 5 during which in addition to the 2025 budget the motion to initiate a funding campaign for the lower level is on the agenda.

May you be truly blessed in the New Year

Cindy Monroe BLC Council President

FINANCIAL NEWS

November income was \$35,948 compared to budgeted income of \$30,366. We received \$5,582 more than budgeted. This was primarily from one-time special donations/receipts of \$4,834. Expenses were \$37,767 compared to a budget of \$31,488. This resulted in spending \$6,279 more than budgeted. Higher expenses were primarily due to a one-time audit expense of \$1,800 and designated expense of \$5,317. For the month, the church spent \$1,819 more than we brought in.

Year-to-date income was \$349,306 compared to budgeted income of \$317,601. This resulted in the church receiving \$31,705 more than budgeted. Expenses were \$380,531 compared to a budget of \$354,640. We have spent \$25,891 more than budgeted. For the year, the church has spent \$31,225 more than we brought in.

BLC ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JAN 5 AFTER THE SERVICE: Please attend if you can. It is critical for you to be involved in knowing the financial status of our congregation and in voting to approve the budget for 2025. Copies will be available in church. If the service has to be cancelled due to bad weather on Jan 5, the meeting will be postponed to the following Sunday.

It's January! Time For Bethlehem's In-person Support at Safe Harbor!

Many of us Bethlehem members will be serving Safe Harbor guests on Saturday, 25 January; Sunday, 26 January; Tuesday 28 January. Kitchen Teams will be led by Cindy Monroe, B.J. Christensen, and Tina Dohm and the crews they have recruited. Zeke will be entertaining Tuesday night and we are seeking more talent- guitar, keyboard, other... The sign-ups for other jobs are all in the Gathering Space! Remember, Full-time Safe Harbor personnel are there with us...to explain each job and to deal with any and all issues. The sign-up for treats are also in the Gathering Space. This is needed community outreach. This is heeding Christ's command to serve our neighbors. C'mon and join in! Please contact me with any questions. Tom Rockne Bethlehem Safe Harbor Coordinator
M.231.631.0040

The following people were Bethlehem's Salvation Army Bell Ringers on December 6 and 7, 2024:

Doug and Dianne Cunningham, Sherri Helman, Lindsay Susalski, Betsy Morley, Bill Allen, James Hinds, Kay Rumbach, Leonard Graf, Dan and Laura Hahn, Tim and Peggy Goebel, Mary Ann Tanis and Linda and Braxton, Sue Allen, Don Sheehan, Donna Novak, John Halstead, Pastor Paul and Parker Busekist, April Kurkowski, and Carl Lehto. They stepped up and answered the call not knowing what the weather might be. Fortunately it was not terribly cold. The total donations received for the two days of ringing was \$1,547.35. That is more than we have ever raised before. It will certainly put some extra cheer in the lives of several families in the Traverse City area. Thanks for a job well done.

CHAIR YOGA: Chair Yoga will continue every Monday at 3:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Cost is \$5.00 per person. It is slow paced stretches that helps with balance, flexibility and relaxation. Come and try it out.

Coffee and Cookies on Sunday Remember that treats and a drink on Sunday are appreciated by all. Please take a moment to sign up to bring cookies or some other tasty treat on the Sunday that works best for you. Or sign up to prepare the coffee to give our loyal volunteer Mary Ann Tanis a day off. Our final Sunday of the month will be a time when we join in the Fellowship Hall for this activity. We can sit at a table and chat with someone new while we munch on a treat. For this month it will be on December 29th

The next XYZ Potluck & Presentation will be on Friday, January 10th, at 12pm noon.

We hope you can join us for a delicious potluck lunch, followed by an informative and enjoyable presentation! All adults are invited to join us. Our guest presenters will be Melinda Hollands and Laurie Deluca (as well as Laurie's guide dog Pele) of TC - VIP (the Traverse City Visually Impaired Persons group). The group was started by Melinda in 2015 to connect those with visual impairments in the local community and to share education, networking, and socialization. They will be sharing with us "Guidelines for Interacting with People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired", a recently developed presentation designed to raise community awareness by providing basic information about visual impairment, and helpful hints about how to interact with people with limited vision. TC - VIP is hopeful that this new presentation will promote positive interaction, interpersonal connections, and inclusive communities.

The beautiful Christmas tree in the sanctuary is an artificial tree donated to Bethlehem by a client of Tim Goebel. We should all give Tim and Peggy a big thank you for making the arrangements for this generous donation.

A big thank you to all who have turned in Olesons' slips. On August 29th, we received a check from Olesons for \$190.86 for a year-to-date total of \$397.46. Olesons' slips never expire. Please continue to turn in your Olesons receipts to Bethlehem. Thanks so much!!! **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.**

BOOK CLUB NEWS: The next meeting will be Wed, Jan 15 at 5:30. We will be reading "*The River We Remember*" by William Kent Krueger. The book club has previously enjoyed books by this author. Please enter the kitchen door and join us in the Fellowship Hall if you like to discuss good books. Any questions can be directed to Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net.

FOOD PANTRY NEWS

Winter has definitely come in with a bang. In order to keep our food pantry open in these freezing temperatures, we have to shift the types of items we keep it stocked with. Foods in cans and glass jars can't withstand these temperatures. Therefore, consider picking up dry good, especially things like powdered milk, cereal, and pasta. We can also stock hand and foot warmers and some personal care items. Thank you in advance for your generous and continued support of our little pantry. Suzanne and Kathie

The next Third Thursday service will be January 16th with a meal beginning at 5:45pm and the Holden Evening Prayer Service at 7:00pm.

ANY AVAILABLE DRIVERS OUT THERE?: There is a delightful couple in our congregation who have good mobility but due to other health issues currently cannot drive. They would love to be able to attend church on Sunday mornings. They live at the east end of 14th street so it should be an easy pick-up and drop off for any members coming from the south or west side of town. When we established this service before for a member we had 4 volunteer groups who each selected one Sunday of the month to do the driving. Can you do that? If so please contact Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net or 231 631 0887. We will also have a list of alternates if you have to be out of town for one of your designated weekends.

CHECK YOUR MAILBOX: The photo sheet of new members is now available as a loose insert for your directory if you took the time to have your photo taken. Please check your BLC mailbox and carry the sheet safely home to place inside your directory. Be sure to check the reverse side for more names.

VISIONING RETREAT SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 11:

Our Visioning work is well underway and we are experiencing a well-deserved pause during this Advent and Christmas Season. Our mission statement has been created and we are now going to be doing some "heavy lifting" in creating the Vision Statement. The January retreat is open to those who would like to join the work of the Visioning Team and Pastor Roger Hardy as we move into this next phase. The retreat will be from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 11, at Liv Arbors, 2955 Leggett Drive (off of Hartman Road). There is no cost and lunch and snacks will be provided. If you plan to attend, please sign up on the sheet posted in the church gathering space by Sunday, January 5. For those attending, we ask that you plan to stay for the entire retreat in order to complete the tasks planned for that day! Many Thanks! Blessings as You Continue your Preparations for the Christ Child! VISIONING NEWS... GIVING THANKS FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST:

Support our Youth Program and their upcoming Ski Trip!

The annual Pancake Breakfast will be on Sunday, January 12th, beginning at 8:45am and going until service begins. Come enjoy a delicious breakfast served by our youth! All donations will go directly to funding the upcoming Ski Trip and other BLC youth opportunities. We thank you for your generosity! We would like to have as many youth volunteers involved as possible - parents, please contact Alanna Steffunick-Boomer at alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org if your youth is able to help!



Christian Care Giving

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as you are doing. As a Ministry we are called to take care of each other. Our goal is to provide care for all of those in need and to make sure no one feels alone and not cared for by our congregation. You are loved and wanted by all of your church family. If we can help you or you know of anyone who has a need, please let me know. Peggy Burns cobaltblues2003@yahoo.com or 231 392 6913 If you would like to be a caregiver please let me know.

Are you grieving something from a death or something else? It could be any kind of loss, and it hurts. We have a place for you here at Bethlehem on the 1st Monday of the month from 3:30 to 4:30 and the 3rd Monday of the month from 5:30 to 6:30 in the Youth Room. The January dates are January 6th and January 20th. If you have any questions, please contact Peggy Burns at 231 392-6913.

CHOIR REHEARSALS CHANGING:

Since we have members coming from a distance and no one likes to drive on slippery or stormy roads at night, the choir has requested daytime rehearsals at least for the winter months. We apologize if this will prevent anyone from trying out the choir who wanted to do so. Beginning in Jan rehearsals will be at 2:30 on Mondays.

Notes From Alanna

Happy New Year! I hope that 2025 is full of new blessings and opportunities for all of you! We have some exciting things to start off the year at Bethlehem:



Pancake Breakfast Youth Fundraiser - Support Our Youth Program!

Come enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast beginning at 8:45am on Sunday, January 12th - served by our youth to raise money for their upcoming ski trip!

Intergenerational Sledding Day!

We will be sledding at Twin Lakes Park on Saturday, January 18th, from 12:30 - 2:30pm! All ages are invited - bring a sled and join in, or bring a chair and a blanket to watch the fun! Warm drinks and snacks will be provided. Let's enjoy our own winter wonderland!

-Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator

Christian Education News January 2025

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18th – ANNUAL BLC SLEDDING PARTY
Dress warm & bring a sled to Twin Lakes Park 12:30pm-2:30pm!
We'll bring the hot cocoa & snacks – ALL AGES WELCOME!!!



Join us for our annual Ski Trip Fundraiser!
WHEN: 8:45am – 9:45am Sunday, January 12th
WHAT: Pancake breakfast served by our youth

Happy New Year!



-Christian Education Committee



Annual February Ski Trip – Sunday, February 23rd
Watch for more details,
and join us for fundraiser pancakes!



ELCA - Global Links

"The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord. All the brothers and sisters send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss." — 1 Corinthians 16:19-20.

A message from Paulina Dasse, Senior Director, Companion Engagement and Global Personnel

"The Roman province of Asia is present-day Turkey. This letter from the apostle Paul is a greeting to his fellow Corinthians — a greeting from one church to another, crossing the geographical landscape. As you see in this text, the early church already practiced sending messages of affection and fellowship from one region to another. . .

"Sometimes this togetherness expands in the journey of walking together, connecting us to someone else. Today's holy kiss could be a greeting, a hug, a hospitable act, or a smile as we open our homes and community to others. It could even be the process of waiting for a relationship to develop.

"The ELCA believes the Holy Spirit calls us to serve in the world. I encourage you to pray for ELCA missionary personnel and to connect with one of them as the beginning of a new relationship in Christ."



WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM - JANUARY 2025

JUST ONE REQUEST

Dear Master: for this coming year just one request I bring:

I do not pray for happiness or any earthly thing--

I do not ask to understand the way Thou leadest me;

But this I ask: Teach me to do the thing that pleases Thee.

I want to know Thy guiding voice, to walk with Thee each day.

Dear Master: make me swift to hear and ready to obey.

And thus the year I now begin a happy year twill be...

If I am seeking just to do the things that pleaseth Thee.

--Author Unknown--



BIBLE STUDY: 'FAITHFULNESS' by Denise Rector: JANUARY: Session 1: RUTH AND NAOMI: "Ruth chooses to remain part of Naomi's family, even after Naomi has lost everything - including her husband and sons. This intergenerational story of faithfulness during emptiness helps us learn how to rely on God in bleak times." Come join us! Contact Nancy Ammann 946-8433 for further information.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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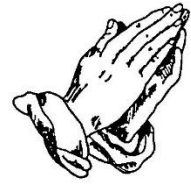
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Questions??? Please contact Alanna Steffunick at 231-947-9880 or
alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org Make checks payable to BLC...put "Star Ad" on envelope.

Health Concerns*



The Power of Prayer

*Richard Fernholz, Tom & Lee Miller,
Judy Fenton, Julie Lapeer, Milt & Carol Bowes,
Lynn Hoyt, Ron Hellenga, Cindy Hitesman,
John Stretlien, Harper Wiemerslage,
Sherry, Leroy Schlagel, Roy & Marilyn Dumond, Sean Rivard,
Brenda Denoyer and the Denoyer Family,
Patti McCracken, Sharon Vanmeter, Dale Thiel,
Carol Collins, Julie, Steve, Christine,
Patience Lambert, Dale & Cheryl Leider, Julie Barrett,
Jennifer Mowers, Debbie Knopf, Janet Burmeister,
Jim Rumbach, John Block, Bob Pierce,
Billie Thompson, Earl Manuel, Jack McCracken, Marianne
Norm Fred, Betty Sheftall*

French Manor South: Brenda Denoyer

Evergreen Cottage: Milt & Carol Bowes

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

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

Church Council

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

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
<p>9:15am - Adult Education (YR)</p> <p>9:15am - Sunday School</p> <p>10am - Worship Service(S)</p> <p>11:30am - Congregational</p>	<p>2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p> <p>3:30pm - Grief Group</p>	<p>Bulletin articles due today</p>	<p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>Happy birthday!</p> <p>New Years Day</p>	<p>5:30pm - ACA</p>	<p>10am - Visitation - Margaret</p> <p>11am - Funeral - Margaret</p> <p>12pm - Luncheon - Margaret</p>	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<p>NO SUNDAY SCHOOL TODAY</p> <p>8:45am - Pancake Breakfast</p> <p>9:15am - Adult Education (YR)</p> <p>10am - Worship Service(S)</p> <p>11:30am - Congregational</p>	<p>2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal</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>9:30am - Adult Bible Study -</p> <p>11:30am - Music Rehearsal</p> <p>1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study</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>9am - Visioning Retreat (Offsite)</p> <p>7pm - Contra Dance - Bayside</p>
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<p>NO SUNDAY SCHOOL TODAY</p> <p>8:45am - Pancake Breakfast</p> <p>9:15am - Adult Education (YR)</p> <p>10am - Worship Service(S)</p> <p>11:30am - Congregational</p>	<p>1pm - Finance Cmte.</p> <p>2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</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>6:30pm - Executive Comte./Zoom</p>	<p>9:30am - Adult Bible Study -</p> <p>11:30am - Music Rehearsal</p> <p>1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study</p> <p>5:30pm - Book/Supper Club</p>	<p>5:30pm - ACA</p> <p>5:45pm - Third Thursday Meal</p> <p>7pm - Third Thursday - Holiday EP</p>	<p>STAR articles due today</p> <p>10am - Sew Pleceful</p> <p>1pm - Lehto SG - Library</p>	<p>12:30pm - Steedding at Twin Lakes</p>
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
<p>9:15am - Adult Education (YR)</p> <p>9:15am - Sunday School</p> <p>10am - Worship Service(S)</p> <p>12:30pm - Youth Discipleship</p>	<p>10am - Sustaining Endowment</p> <p>2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p> <p>5:30pm - Grief Group</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 -</p>	<p>9:30am - Adult Bible Study -</p> <p>11:30am - Music Rehearsal</p> <p>1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study</p>	<p>5:30pm - ACA</p>		<p>Site Harbor</p>
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
<p>Site Harbor</p> <p>9:15am - Adult Education (YR)</p> <p>9:15am - Sunday School</p> <p>10am - Worship Service(S)</p>	<p>2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>3pm - Chair Yoga</p>	<p>Bulletin articles due today</p> <p>Site Harbor</p> <p>9am - LWR Quilters (FH)</p> <p>9am - Property Work Group</p>	<p>9:30am - Adult Bible Study -</p> <p>11:30am - Music Rehearsal</p> <p>1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study</p>	<p>5:30pm - ACA</p>		

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Chair Yoga
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Financial News
ELCA Global Links
Women of Bethlehem 2024
The Power of Prayer

