

March 2025



Bethlehem
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Paul Busekist
Traverse City, MI 49686
(231) 947-9880

Full
to
the **Brim**
An expansive Lent

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.**



“¹²Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.” – Joel 2:12-13



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

There is excitement brewing as we speak – not just for our new vision but also for our Lenten theme. To begin, let’s look at our new mission statement followed by the new vision (in bold letters) below:

We worship, work and welcome... Sharing God’s love and grace with all.

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.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will flesh out that mission and vision more – abiding in the love of Christ, and emboldened to serve in real ways. But for now, we turn our focus to Lent, and a new “expansive” way of looking at this season that is ordinarily full of somber introspection. Our Lenten theme this year is **“Full to the Brim,”** created by ELCA and other pastors at “A Sanctified Art” (www.sanctifiedart.org). To best explain the theme, I’ll let one of its creators speak for themselves:

“After a particularly exhausting season of my life, I sat on a Zoom call with my therapist and said in exasperation, ‘I just feel like there has to be more than this. I think God would want more for me than this nonstop rat race of gym-work-sleep-repeat.’ My therapist nodded and said, ‘You’re looking for an expansive life,’ and I knew she was right. I crave a life overflowing with beauty, drenched in gratitude, and full to the brim with meaningful relationships. I crave space to revel in God’s goodness. I crave a life where we don’t forgive once, but seventy times seventy—forgiveness in excess. I crave a life, a love, a faith that is expansive, overflowing and full to the brim. So this Lent we are flipping the script. We are releasing the Lenten view that drills down on devotion as a response to guilt, sin, or grief, which many of us have learned over the years. Instead, we are leaning into the story of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection to open doors to this expansive life we trust God has in mind for us. Maybe the rat race isn’t the answer. Maybe it’s time to get off the hamster wheel. Maybe there is more here than the world lets on. Life, love, and faith—full to the brim.” —Rev. Sarah Speed, Founding Creative Partner

Sound interesting and life-giving? I thought so, too. ☺ We’ll see you soon – on Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday, for Thursdays in Lent, and all the way to the cross and empty tomb... Shalom!

-Pastor Paul

PROSE FROM THE PREZ:

Oh my!!! Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday are almost upon us!! The gray days of January and February drag, and then suddenly the somber days of Lent are here as we prepare for Easter joy.

Recently, I have experienced my own joy here at BLC, being amazed at things that are happening that even I, the “super-optimist” of all time did not think were possible. I am referring specifically to the cleaning out of the lower level INCLUDING THE STORAGE ROOM!!! I know that I did not want to take on that challenge, and I did not think that anyone else would either. But I was so wrong!!! Many thanks to Bethany Uhl, Nancy Ammann, Gail Goldsmith, Carl Lehto and the property crew. My apologies if there were others involved that I do not know about. The lower level is now ready for the first stages of its necessary remediation. And onward we go....

Jim and I won’t be around church as much during the month of March. We have 2 vacation trips and some time we want to spend downstate with grandkids because of some of their special events. We counted and we will only be in town 12 days!! But, know that you can always reach us by phone or email, and we will be watching you on Sundays. Blessings as we leave winter gray behind us and move into a brighter Spring

Cindy Monroe BLC Council President

JANUARY 2025 FINANCIAL NEWS

January Operating Income came in at \$39,483. When compared to the budgeted income of \$29,993 you can see we had a very good month with \$9,490 received more than budgeted. Expenses were \$38,715. When compared to a budget of \$37,400 you can see we spent \$1,315 more than budgeted. For the month, the church brought in \$768 more than was spent.

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 Monday of the month from 3:30-4:30 and on the third Monday from 5:30-6:30. If you have any questions, please contact Peggy Burns 231-392-6913.

HOW DO WE CARE AND SERVE? John 12:26 "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant will also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me".

YOU ARE LOVED BY YOUR CHURCH FAMLTY. If you would like to have a visit and you would like to receive Communion, Christian Care Giving is here for you! Please let Peggy Burns at 231-392-6914 know and we will have one of our Care Givers come and see you.

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper will begin at 5:30 on March 4th. The menu will be: Buttermilk and gluten free pancakes, sausage links, crustless quiche (gluten free) with ham and cheese, fruit, juice and coffee. We will play games after dinner, so bring your favorite games. Please come for a nice evening of food, fellowship and fun.

First Communion Classes will begin on Sunday, March 9th at 9:00am. The dates will be March 9, 16, 30 and April 6. For any questions, please see either Pr Paul or Sherri Helman.

NEW MEMBER MEETING: If you want to be an official member of BLC, please join us Sunday March 9 after the service in the library. We will have some snacks, learn about Bethlehem, and have a chance to visit with some long-time and potential new members. Bring your calendar so we can set the date for official date of your acceptance during a Sunday service.



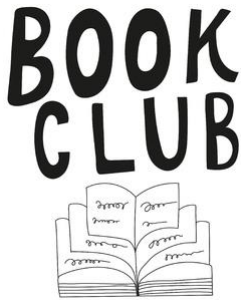
CHAIR YOGA: Chair Yoga will continues every Monday at 3:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Cost is \$5.00 per person. It is slow paced stretches that helps with balance, flexibility and relaxation. Come and try it out.

Do you have a famous chili or soup recipe? Or, do you just really love eating chili or soup? The Soup & Chili Cook-Off is back on **Sunday, March 16th, right after church.** We will be raising funds to support Bethlehem's youth program! Prizes will be awarded for best in each category (beef chili, chicken chili, vegetarian chili, and soup) as well as for overall winner! Enter your special recipe or just come to enjoy a delicious lunch. Email Alanna at alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org to enter the competition!



XYZ: All adults are invited to join us for another wonderful XYZ potluck and presentation on Friday, March 14th! The potluck lunch begins at noon, and afterward we will have a presentation by H.A.N.D.D.S. to the Rescue. H.A.N.D.D.S. is a local, volunteer-based rescue for dogs. They do not have a shelter - all dogs are placed in experienced foster homes where they receive love and care until they find that special home to call their own. Join us for an afternoon of good food and fellowship, followed by a great presentation!

A big thank you to all who have turned in Olesons' slips. On January 7th, we received a check from Olesons for \$317.06. 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, Mar 19 at 5:30.* We will be reading "The Best Part of Us" by Sally Cole-Misch. This meeting will be a potluck held in an off-site location. If you are not a regular participant please contact Betsy Morley at betsymorley@charter.net for details.

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

Our next Third Thursday Service will be on March 20th with a Behold Our Light service. The meal will start at 5:45pm. The service begins at 7:00pm. We hope to see you there.

DRIVING VOLUNTEERS?: Thanks to those who have already said "yes" to being a regular or substitute driver to transport a delightful member couple to church. They have good mobility but due to other health issues currently cannot drive. 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. They will be out of town with their family during the months of Feb and March, so rides will need to be lined up as of the beginning of April. If you would like to be added to the list of volunteers please contact Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net or 231 631 0887.

The season of Lent, and the promise of Easter are just around the corner.

From the Fellowship Committee's perspective, that means planning for food and fellowship during this holy season.

- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper at 5:30pm on March 4th. There will be games after dinner
- There will be meals before the Lenten services on March 13, 20, 27, and April 3.
- Meals will be at 5:45 followed by the service at 7:00.
- Kitchen help would be greatly appreciated; you pick the dates that work for you. Any questions, please contact Gail Goldsmith ggoldsmith74@gmail.com Or 231-633-2630. Thank you! There will be a sign-up in the Narthex
- There will be a Seder meal at 5:45pm prior to the Living Last Supper presentation on April 10th.

Lenten Service Schedule:

March 5—Ash Wednesday service, 7:00pm
March 13 – Holden Evening Prayer, 7:00pm
March 20 – Behold Our Light, Live Streamed, 7:00pm
March 27– Holden Evening Prayer, 7:00pm
April 3—Taize 1, 7:00pm
April 10—Living Last Supper, 7:00pm



Lenten Dinners

Dinners will begin at 5:45

- On March 13th, our first Lenten meal will be potato soup and stuffed pepper soup, salad, bread, Pam Reid is making, Creme De Menthe cake, there will also be gluten free options, iced tea and lemonade.>
- March 20th Terry Farmer is making beef barley soup and we will have bread, salad, mini cherry cheesecakes, lemonade and iced tea.
- March 27th Beef vegetable soup, salad, bread, Pam Reid's mystery cupcakes, iced tea and lemonade.
- April 3rd Terry Farmer is making Italian beef, we will have cheese and buns for the sandwiches. Also coleslaw, chips, carrot cake, lemonade and iced tea.
- April 10th will be the Last Supper Reenactment at Bethlehem and we will invite community members and the actors for dinner. We will have foods similar to a Passover Seder. Norm Fred is making matzo ball soup, Terry Farmer is making brisket, the Fellowship Committee will make baked chicken, a vegetable rice dish, salad, Charoset with matzo crackers with macaroons for dessert and drinks. This dinner will begin at 5:30.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: Please mark June 8 on your calendar and plan to attend if you can. It is critical for you to be involved in the affairs of your congregation. Also, if any of you are thinking about dipping your toes in the water and becoming more involved as a leader there will be openings on the endowment committees and on council. All of the groups are very welcoming and every person's individual thoughts and talents bring so much more to a group. Please think and pray about it. You can leave your name with the office or any committee or council member.

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

Family Movie Day!

Come watch a movie at Bethlehem! We'll be watching WALL-E on Saturday, March 15th at 3pm - great for all ages! Popcorn and drinks provided - invite a few friends to come with you!



Soup & Chili Cook-Off!

If you've got a favorite recipe you want to enter in the competition, let me know! Plan on joining us after church on Sunday, March 16th for some friendly competition and great food!

VBS is Scheduled! July 28th, 29th, and 30th!

Get on the volunteer list early - reach out if you want to be involved! Lots more information coming soon, but mark your calendars now!

-Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator

Christian Education News March 2025

ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US FOR LENT NIGHTS!!!

WHEN: Thursday evenings during March & April
WHAT: dinner, worship, special lessons, & crafts

Lent



Join us for a family movie – Sat 3/15 at 3pm



We will watch WALL-E and eat popcorn!



Mark your calendars & plan to join us for lunch!
WHEN: after worship Sunday, March 16th
WHAT: chili/soup friendly competitive fundraiser



First Communion Class

It's time for First Communion classes!
Sunday mornings 9am-9:45am
3/09, 3/16, 3/30, & 4/06 (not 3/23 Spring Break)

ELCA Global Mission in Africa - A Snapshot of Impact



- **Thirty-Three mission personnel** are serving in **nine countries in Africa**.
- Mission personnel serve through **administration, education, evangelism, health care and gender justice**, and as regional representatives.
- ELCA synods and global companions **experience stronger engagement** for mission and ministry.



WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM - MARCH 2026

HELLO, MARCH! Take life day by day and be grateful for the little things. Don't get stressed or caught up over what you can't control.

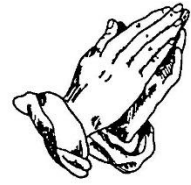
Focus on the positive. (louise.com)

REMEMBER - YOU are the sky. Everything else is just the weather! (PEMA CHOCRON)

SAVE THE DATE! SPRING GATHERING: Saturday, April 26, 2025 at St. Paul Lutheran, Reed City, MI. Join us for a day of fellowship and growing in Christ, exploring how we can encourage one another in every situation. Speaker will be from House of Hope. Watch for further information! Join Us!

MARCH BIBLE STUDY: Taken from *Gather Magazine*. *Session #3: Faith adventures: Peter and Cornelius*. "We do not always see eye-to-eye with our neighbor. Yet, we are called to love our neighbor. Peter's experience with someone different gives the Holy Spirit an opportunity to teach Peter, the church, and us - to see others as God sees them." If interested in attending this study, please come to Rebecca/Anna Circle on March 13th at 1PM OR Sarah Circle on Tuesday, March 18th at noon. Both meet in the library. We'd love to have you!

Health Concerns*



The Power of Prayer

*Carolyn Mann, Mary Woodring,
Jerry Hill, Jef Mort, C.J.
Richard Fernholz, Tom & Lee Miller,
Judy Fenton, Julie Lapeer, Milt & Carol Bowes,
Lynn Hoyt, Ron Hellinga, Cindy Hitesman,
John Stretlien, Harper Wiemerslage,
Sherry, Leroy Schlagel, Roy & Marilyn Dumond, Sean Rivard,
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, Marianne
Norm Fred, Kyle Scheunaman, Ben*

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
-

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-Boomer, 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
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Tina Dohm, Christian Ed.	christianeducation.committee@bethlehemtc.org
Gail Goldsmith, Fellowship	fellowship.committee@bethlehemtc.org
Cindy Monroe, Membership/Evangelism	membershipevangelism.committee@bethlehemtc.org
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Maureen Bauer, Personnel	personnel.committee@bethlehemtc.org
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Bethany Uhl, 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
23	24	25	26	27	28	1
9:15am - Adult Education (YR) 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service(S) 2pm - Girl Scouts (Library)	2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga 3:30pm - Grief Group	Bulletin articles due today Shrove Tuesday 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 10-45am - Staff Meeting 5:30pm - Shrove Tuesday	ASH WEDNESDAY 9:30am - Adult Bible Study - 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 7pm - Ash Wednesday Service	5:30pm - ACA		6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group 8pm - AA
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9am - First Communion 9:15am - Adult Education (YR) 10am - Worship Service(S) 11:30am - New Member Meeting	1pm - Finance Cmte. 2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga	Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 1pm - Friendship Bible Study 6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed Meeting 6:30pm - Executive Comite.(Zoom)	9:30am - Adult Bible Study - 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study	9am - Baby Pantry Setup 10am - Baby Pantry-FH 1pm - Rebecca Anna Circle - 5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten Service	12pm - XYZ	3pm - Movie Night 6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group 8pm - AA
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9am - First Communion 9:15am - Adult Education (YR) 10am - Worship Service(S) 11:30am - New Member Meeting	1pm - Finance Cmte. 2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga	Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 1pm - Friendship Bible Study 6pm - Y2A/Christian Ed Meeting 6:30pm - Executive Comite.(Zoom)	9:30am - Adult Bible Study - 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study	9am - Baby Pantry Setup 10am - Baby Pantry-FH 1pm - Rebecca Anna Circle - 5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten Service	12pm - XYZ	3pm - Movie Night 6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group 8pm - AA
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9am - First Communion 9:15am - Adult Education (YR) 10am - Worship Service(S) 11:30am - New Member Meeting	2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga 5:30pm - Grief Group	Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group 12pm - Sarah Circle - Library 6:30pm - Council Meeting -	9:30am - Adult Bible Study - 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study 5:30pm - Book/Supper Club	5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten Service	STAR articles due today 10am - Sew Piecedul 1pm - Lettto SG - Library	6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group 8pm - AA
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9:15am - Adult Education (YR) 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service(S)	2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga	Bulletin articles due today 9am - LWR Quilters (FH) 9am - Property Work Group	9:30am - Adult Bible Study - 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study	5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten Service		6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group 8pm - AA
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
9am - First Communion 9:15am - Adult Education (YR) 9:15am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service(S)	2:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 3pm - Chair Yoga	Bulletin articles due today	9:30am - Adult Bible Study - 11:30am - Music Rehearsal 1:30pm - Zoom Bible Study	5:30pm - ACA 5:45pm - Lenten Meal 7pm - Lenten Service		6pm - LifeRing Recovery Group 8pm - AA



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Lots of cool information inside
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Movie Day
Chair Yoga
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Women of Bethlehem 2024
The Power of Prayer

