

# February 2025



**Bethlehem**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



Website: [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)  
Email: [bethlehem@bethlehemtc.org](mailto: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.”*

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good,  
and what does the LORD require of you  
but to do justice and to love kindness  
and to walk humbly with your God?” – Micah 6:8



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

There are a lot of **cool** things happening, and some things that are challenging. As we speak there is a flurry of activity out of our nation's capital that is impossible to ignore. What will funding and policy changes do to the global missions we support as a larger church? What might they mean for families (jobs, healthcare and other assistance), for marginalized populations, or even for our congregation (solar rebates, etc.)? We simply do not know what we do not know, but we do pray confidently that through all of this God is with us and that voices of hope and “silver linings” may present themselves. We know that God works through all things, and we will find purpose and inspiration still.

Now the cool stuff: in addition to the wonderful Safe Harbor experience this past week and new summer opportunities Cindy mentions below, both our mission statement and vision statement are taking shape. Why is that exciting, you might ask? Let's start with our finalized mission statement:

**“We worship, work and welcome... sharing God's love and grace with all.”**

The Vision team and BLC members who helped write this new mission statement were emphatic that worshiping and welcoming were central to who we are.. But right in the *middle* of those things is a word that caught us all by surprise: work. It's not a word that comes naturally to Lutherans (“We are saved by grace through faith, apart from works [with an “s”!]”) But when we abide in God's love and gift of salvation and grace... something amazing happens. We desire not only to **“be”** (think Psalm 46: “Be still and know that I am God”); we want also to **“become”** disciples that serve actively, responsively, and boldly... not unlike God's call for justice, mercy and humility in Micah's chapter 6.

So, as we finalize our vision statement soon – the text that “visualizes” our mission – be on the lookout for key words like **“embody”** (both **being** and **becoming** that mission), phrases like **“boldly following Jesus,”** and carry-over words from our previous mission and vision like **“serving** the world and one another” and **“caring** for God's Creation”... all in the name of Welcome. We have exciting gospel to embody at Bethlehem this year and moving forward. And we are just getting started!

Shalom! -Pr. Paul

### **PROSE FROM THE PREZ:**

Have you felt the gift of generosity flowing through our congregation through the past weeks? I certainly have. From the surprising monetary support for the lower-level project generated in the budget meeting to the time and talent given during BLC's days at Safe Harbor. All I can say is WOW!!!

And now, we have another way to think about being generous. BLC council has voted to be a “Community Partner” with Old Town Playhouse (OTP) for their summer production of Dreamworks: The Prince of Egypt at Milliken Auditorium. This is a musical re-telling of the story of Moses Aug 21-23. Along with another church on the west side of town we will be hosting rehearsals in July and August of the community choir for this show. We were the first to volunteer so we will be managing the concessions (and earning the benefits) definitely of flower bouquets and water, and hopefully small snacks. Anyone can step forward to help with building the set, painting, or accepting material and a pattern to sew a costume. When the group prices are set we will determine shows for one or more groups from BLC to attend. Time to invite your kids and grandkids for a last fun hurrah for summer. Any questions can be directed to me at [cmonroe@chartermi.net](mailto:cmonroe@chartermi.net)

Blessings as you stay warm, drive carefully, and walk gingerly on snow and ice.

Cindy Monroe BLC Council President

## DECEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL NEWS

December income was \$46,925 compared to budgeted income of \$30,555. We received \$16,370 more than budgeted. This higher income was primarily from a one-time special donation of \$10,000 directly related to basement repair along with \$3,400 higher offerings and \$2,400 of Other Income from sources like Thrivent Choice and Oleson's Receipts. Expenses were \$34,350 compared to a budget of \$31,350. This resulted in spending \$3,000 more than budgeted. Higher miscellaneous repair expenses made up \$2,075 of this overage. For the month, the church brought in \$12,575 more than was spent. For the year income was \$396,231 compared to budgeted income of \$348,156. This resulted in the church receiving \$48,075 more than budgeted. Expenses were \$414,881, compared to a budget of \$386,014. For the year the church has spent \$28,867 more than budgeted. Expenses exceeded income by \$18,650. If you remove the one-time \$10,000 basement special donation from operating income, our operating deficit comes to \$28,650 for 2024.

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### Our basement needs help

Little by little our basement has succumbed to the rise and fall of the water table causing our lower hallway to seep water from the floor. At the January 5 Congregational meeting, we approved fundraising to remediate the problem. We will:

- Remove asbestos tiles in the hallway and classrooms
- Digging a trench to collect the water
- Add two sump pumps to collect and dispose of the water
- Painting the entire lower level
- Install flooring

#### How can you help?

This project will cost \$70,000. Yes, it is a lot of money, but it will resolve the water problem once and for all. THEN, our entire building will be available for use by ourselves and the community.

We need your involvement. Already \$34,700 has been given!!

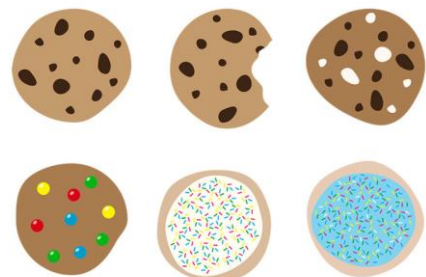
Would you consider making a gift to solve the basement dilemma?

- Donate, electronically or check, and simply add BASEMENT to the memo line
  - Call Bethany Uhl for more information (540-598-3170 or [bethanyuhl@gmail.com](mailto:bethanyuhl@gmail.com)).
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**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.

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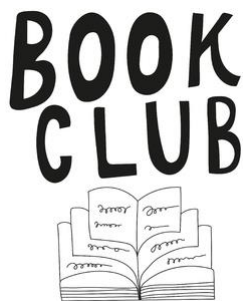
**Coffee and Cookies on Sunday** Remember that treats and a drink on Sunday are appreciated by all. Please take a moment to sign up to bring cookies or some other tasty treat on the Sunday that works best for you. Or sign up to prepare the coffee to give our loyal volunteer Mary Ann Tanis a day off. 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 February 23<sup>rd</sup>.



**The next XYZ potluck and presentation will be on Friday, February 14th.** After a delicious potluck lunch at noon, we will have a presentation from our own Peggy Burns on the different types of grief we experience through our life. We often don't realize that there is more than one type of grief that we may come across, and may not even realize that what we're feeling and dealing with is grief in some form. XYZ is open to any adult who would like to attend - we hope you can join us for delicious food and a great presentation!

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**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, Feb 19 at 5:30. We will be reading "*The Book of Lost Names*" by Kristin Harmel. 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](mailto: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

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**Our next Third Thursday Service will be on February 20th with a Taize 2 service.** The meal will start at 5:45pm and will include a baked potato bar, with several toppings, salad, desserts and beverages., dessert and beverages. The service begins at 7:00pm. We hope to see you there.



**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](mailto: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.



**LET'S PLAY GAMES:** On February 16th after church let's have a game day. Please bring your favorite game and a snack to share. There will be sandwich fixings and beverage available. So come and have fun. Please sign up in the Narthex. Any questions talk with Gail or Alanna.

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**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.

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**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.

#### **Christian Care Giving**

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage on 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.

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**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 February dates are February 3<sup>rd</sup> and February 17<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions, please contact Peggy Burns at 231 392-6913.

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#### **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.

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## Notes From Alanna

### **Ski Trip at Caberfae!**

BLC's annual ski trip will be on Sunday, February 23rd! All youth who volunteered at the pancake breakfast fundraiser in January will be completely covered - if you haven't talked to me about this yet, please reach out so we can add your youth's name to the list! Anyone else who would like to join us is more than welcome (you will just be responsible for paying your own way)! It'll be a fun day out in the winter wonderland - let me know if you plan to join us so that we can keep an eye out for you!



### **Soup & Chili Cook-Off!**

The soup and chili cook-off is scheduled for Sunday, March 16th, right after church! I will have sign-ups available soon, so start thinking about what soup or chili recipe you want to enter! The cook-off is a fundraiser for the youth program, so even if you can't enter the competition, plan on joining us after church for a delicious lunch!

*-Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator*

## Christian Education News February 2025

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

**WHEN:** Thursday evenings during March & April

**WHAT:** dinner, worship, special lessons, & crafts



**Mark your calendars & plan to join us for lunch!**

**WHEN:** after worship Sunday, March 16th

**WHAT:** chili/soup friendly competitive fundraiser

### **Happy Valentine's Day!**

LET ALL  
THAT  
YOU DO  
BE DONE  
WITH  
**LOVE.**

1 CORINTHIANS 16:14 NIV



-Christian Education Committee



**Annual February Ski Trip – Sunday, February 23rd**

**Watch for more details, and  
thank you for supporting our pancake fundraiser!**



## **Bliss Tungnung, a graduate of the International Women Leaders program, opened Bliss International School in 2023**

Bliss Tungnung, a former International Women Leaders scholar and a 2022 graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn., is using her psychology degree to make a difference in her home community in Manipur, India. Not long after she graduated, civil war broke out among local ethnic groups. Upon arriving home, she saw a need for psychosocial care and education among the children of her community. With **support from Lutheran Disaster Response** and her denomination, the Manipur Evangelical Lutheran Church, she became a community organizer and counselor for people, especially children, traumatized by the ethnic violence.

As a counselor, Bliss identified education gaps for both local children and children displaced by the violence. In 2023, she established Bliss International School to address these gaps. "The main problem I see with education in my city is the lack of psychological awareness," she said. "I believe that education should foster the child both academically and mentally to utilize their knowledge to the fullest." At the school, students not only learn basic skills such as reading and writing but are encouraged to use those skills to express their emotional needs and to create space for themselves to become global citizens.

## **WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM - FEBRUARY 2025**



**God's love is free. He asks for nothing in return;  
all He wants is for His love to be accepted.**

**Praise Him - not because your life is good - but  
because His love is better than life.**

**Let all you do be done in love. 1 Corinthians 16:14**

**FEBRUARY BIBLE STUDY: Taken from January/February Gather magazine:  
Session 2 - FAITH IN THE DEPTHS - PSALM 22. "As we try to hold on to faith  
in difficult times, the words of Psalm 22 model a way to confess both pain  
and praise." by Denise Rector If you would like to join one of our study  
groups, please call Nancy Ammann 946-8433.**



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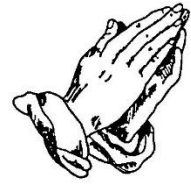
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Questions??? Please contact Alanna Steffunick at 231-947-9880 or  
[alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org) Make checks payable to BLC...put "Star Ad" on envelope.



## 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,  
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,  
and the people of California affected by the wildfires*

**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.

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### **Prayer Requests:**

- Prayer Chain:** Please contact Jan Stretlien at [jstretlien@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org)
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Are you checking for the latest BLC updates at: [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)?

You saw Norm and others take the photos...be sure you see them at [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)!

Good News...and great news...at [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://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](http://bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes)**

# BLC Contacts

## **Church Office**

Pastor Paul Busekist	<a href="mailto:paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org">paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Admin. Asst., Barbara Oster	<a href="mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org">admin@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Bookkeeper, Phil Anderson	<a href="mailto:bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org">bookkeeper@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Tony Bero, Music Director	<a href="mailto:bero.tony@gmail.com">bero.tony@gmail.com</a>
Alanna Steffunick-Boomer, Ministry Coordinator	<a href="mailto:Alanna.Steffunick@bethlehemtc.org">Alanna.Steffunick@bethlehemtc.org</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.bethlehemtc.org">www.bethlehemtc.org</a>

## **Church Council**

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

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  
Choir News  
Book Club News  
XYZ News  
Third Thursday  
Basement Update  
Chair Yoga  
Notes from Alanna  
Christian Education News  
Financial News  
ELCA Global Links  
Women of Bethlehem 2024  
The Power of Prayer



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