

Bethlehem Star

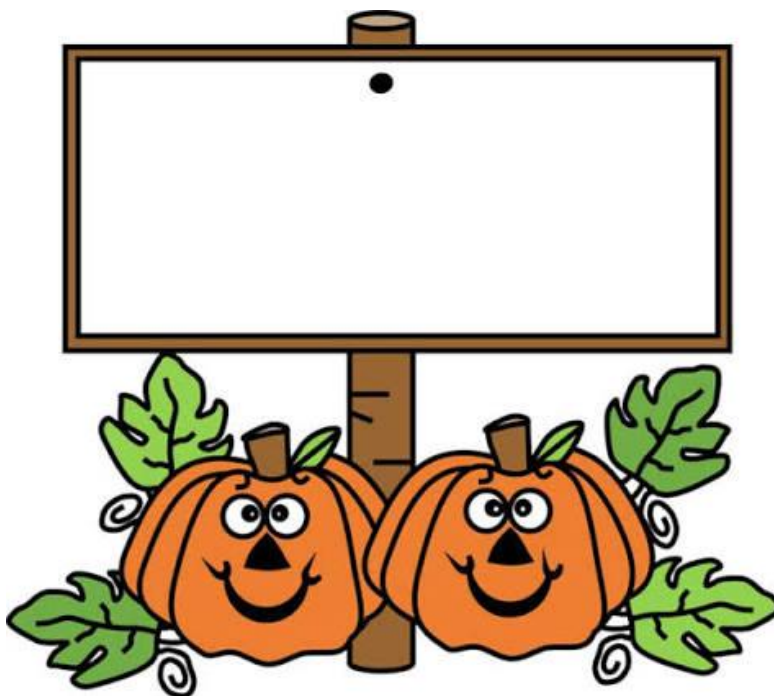
Lutheran Church Lansing

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Newsletter Deadline is **October 15, 2026**
for the **November 2026** Bethlehem Star.

Also available at
www.bethlutheran.org

In-Home Date: Saturday, October 3, 2026
Mailed on September 30, 2026





Patience, Understanding and Faith

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Bethlehem,

We are a little over two months into the pastoral transition at Bethlehem and while there are many decisions and work ahead of us, there is much going on behind the scenes to secure our future and advance the mission of Bethlehem.

Church leadership and Council continue to work with Pastor Scott Torkko, Assistant to the Bishop in the Call Process and progress is being made. The first course of action is to complete the Ministry Site Profile, which involves Bethlehem's history, membership demographics, community setting and involvement, and what the vision is for Bethlehem. Council traditionally meets once per month, and that will continue, to manage the ongoing business of the church. In addition to the regular meetings, Council will be meeting twice per month to work solely on the Ministry Site Profile, development of a Call Committee and all other details involved in the Call Process. The Synod Call Process Manual is a fifty-page document that provides the roadmap that Council will follow in getting Bethlehem to the point of interviewing potential candidates as the next pastor of Bethlehem. It is a very detailed process, and Council will perform the due diligence required in a realistic timeline. This is where patience will be needed. It is understood that Bethlehem is in an unprecedented time without a Called pastor leading us. The fifty years of uninterrupted pastoral leadership is an outlier for virtually all churches. We have been blessed and we continue to be blessed during this time as God is still with us, watching over us and serving as a source of strength for church leadership and Council during this time. On Sunday, September 20, we were fortunate to have former Bishop and retired Pastor John Schleicher lead us in worship. He too spoke about patience in the process, and I pray that his words resonated with all of you as they did with me.

It does not go unnoticed that there is a level of anxiety about the unknown while we navigate this process, especially since we have not been in this situation in decades. It is important to convey that all of you, your hopes for Bethlehem, as members of this church are important, and will be at the forefront of every decision that is made during this process. The best interests of this church will always be the most important factor in any decisions that are made. There may be an opportunity for a Town Hall event to allow membership to have the ability to express their thoughts and ideas prior to a Special Meeting of the Congregation to elect the Call Committee. This is still under consideration with a decision coming soon as we lay out the calendar for the Fall. Council is reviewing the Listening Team Summary from the initiative that was conducted in late 2022 for reference to input from the congregation regarding pastoral care. We are trying to be fully transparent in the work being done to provide an understanding of the process, as well as the myriad components involved. As we have stated previously, any questions you may have can be directed to any of the church officers and Council members at any time.

(continued on page 7)

The Bethlehem Star
A monthly publication of
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

549 E. Mt. Hope Ave.
Lansing, Michigan 48910
Phone: (517) 482-3225
FAX: (517) 482-2458

Ministers

**All of the members of
Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

Acting Pastor John W. Burow
pastorjburow@yahoo.com
(517) 614-4559

Church Secretary / Star Editor
Tracy Baker
bethlehemlansing@gmail.com
(517) 482-3225

Congregation President
James Whitman
jimw@lifecyclefs.com

Organist
James Schippers
jameschippers@gmail.com

Choir Director
Sue Nelson
ntimothy1@att.net

Contemporary Worship Coord.
Debbie Simmons
Laura Halbakken

Office Hours
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (M-F)

Visit our website at:
www.bethlutheran.org

Worship Schedule

8:45 – Sunday School
9:00 – Adult Forum
10:00 - Worship - Holy Comm.
Sanctuary - in person
And LIVE Streaming on
YouTube

[https://www.youtube.com/
@bethlehemworship126/streams](https://www.youtube.com/@bethlehemworship126/streams)

Worship in October 2026

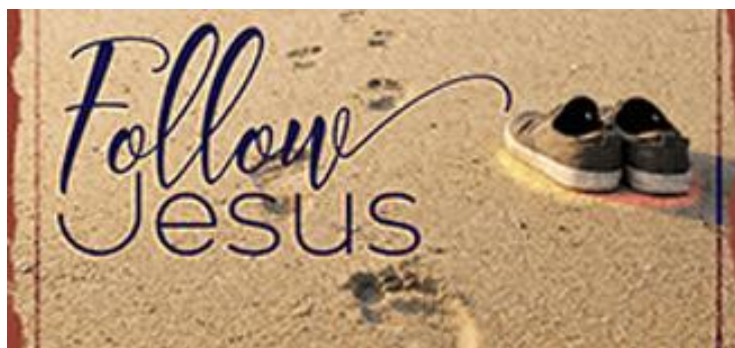
October Assisting Ministers

October 04 - Nancy Holderread

October 11 - Don Telles

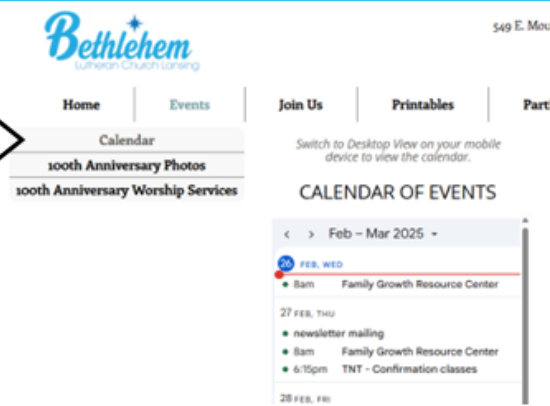
October 18 - Bob Meeker

October 25 - Susan Mahoney



WEBSITE UPDATES

Visit bethlutheran.org and click on 'Events' for information on what's happening. Select 'Calendar' from the Events menu to view the *full* church calendar.



Statement of Purpose and Guiding Principles for Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church

God's purpose for our church, as disciples of Jesus Christ, is to share with all people God's word, love and saving grace.

We will pursue this purpose by:

1. Being a Christ-centered, joyful community of baptized believers who gather regularly for worship, the Lord's Supper, study and prayer.
2. Inviting, accepting, and supporting all people as we build attentive, respectful relationships.
3. Taking action and risks with bold faith, acknowledging our imperfection, while trusting in Christ.
4. Actively engaging in community outreach near and far.
5. Being faithful stewards of our time, talents, possessions and all of God's creation.

Adopted January 29, 2017

STEWARDSHIP

Monthly Bethlehem Financial Update

Each month in the newsletter, we will provide an update on the monthly financial picture to keep the congregation apprised, and informed. Because we do not have the financials for the previous month completed by the time the newsletter deadline arrives for inclusion, it will generally be a trailing one month snapshot of our finances. This will allow for a consistent reporting of our finances and not allow for any surprises throughout the year. This update is reported through August 31, 2026.

Thank you again for your continued faithful generosity to Bethlehem and keeping our future bright.

Jim Whitman
Congregation President

	<u>General Offerings</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Net</u>
January	\$24,347.87	\$29,922.61	(\$5,574.74)
February	\$32,122.63	\$28,367.50	\$3,755.13
March	\$32,286.25	\$25,376.93	\$6,909.32
April	\$28,149.34	\$29,240.24	\$1,090.90
May	\$25,763.34	\$27,174.43	\$1,411.09
June	\$23,389.89	\$21,104.15	\$4,873.46
July	\$28,041.99	\$26,265.68	\$1,776.31
August	\$26,234.39	\$22,216.68	\$4,017.71

Year to date positive Income to Expense total--\$10,667.48

Saving Account Balance	\$3,777.98
Checking Account Balance	\$25,185.82
Money Market Fund Balance	\$32,668.60
Total Cash Accounts	\$61,632.40
Memorial Fund	\$10,746.92
Endowment Fund	\$318,730.00



Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church Women

**Women of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America**

All women of Bethlehem Lutheran Church are members of the Women of the ELCA and are invited and encouraged to participate in all activities listed in the newsletters, bulletins, flyers or on the bulletin boards.



Blanket Sunday is October 4th. If you can help box up quilts after worship, we would appreciate the help. Also with the number of awesome quilts that are made every year, the shipping boxes are heavy. Because of this, we need your help with shipping costs. It costs \$2.80 per quilt to ship, and we will send about 100 quilts this year. If you would like to make a donation to help fund the cost of the quilt shipping, please make your check payable to BELCW and give it to Keitha Snider, place in the basket marked Blanket Shipping or mail to 14685 Center Rd, Bath, MI 48808. We are so grateful for your generosity.

Special Thanks to Diane Miller for leading our first Bible study lesson on Bold Faith on an Unexpected Journal, Session 1 – Encountering God in the wilderness. A nice group of women gathered for a potluck, Bible Study and our General Meeting. Over the next 2 months we will continue the journey of Bold Faith with Love & Loyalty in October and Proclaiming resurrection in Hope in November.

Circles – If you are not part of a Circle, now would be a good time to join. All women are invited to join.
Harmony – meets 2nd Wednesday @ 6:30pm – Laura Halbakken chair (517) 281-3133
Rainbow – meets 3rd Tuesday @ 1:00 – Susan Mahoney chair (517) 944-1068
Friendship – meets 3rd Monday @ 6:30pm – Peggy Teter chair (517) 281-2713

Thankoffering Sunday – Thankoffering Sunday, November 15- Thankofferings show gratitude for God's blessings and give us an important and tangible way to express that gratitude. It is a tradition grounded in our celebration of community, of meeting together to joyfully give thanks for what God has given us. Thankofferings have always been, and still are, our opportunity to say thank you to God in both significant and ordinary moments. Here at Bethlehem Thankofferings have become a tradition that dates back 50 some years. The concept of Thankoffering celebrations dates back more than 100 years and beyond for Lutherans. On November 15 you will bring your Thankofferings to the Altar, for a special offering.

Upcoming Events October 2026:

FAB - October 3, 9:30 am
Blanket Sunday - October 4, 10:00 am
Board Meeting – October 4, 1:30 pm (Devotionals/Sue Leimenstoll)
Deliver Quilts – October 10 & 11
Quilting Day – October 21, 9:00 am (new date)
Harmony Circle – October 14, 6:30 pm
Friendship Circle – October 19, 6:30 pm (Connie M/Cindy)
Rainbow Circle – October 20, 1:00 pm (*?/Carol P)

Prayer Corner

Please Note: Hospitals do not notify churches when a member has been hospitalized; even if you inform them at registration of your church membership. If you would like a visit from the pastor, please call the church office at 482-3225.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS and with your cards and visits:

Marilyn Bass-Huyser in Independence Village, Grand Ledge
Larry & Virginia Bauman, 5314 Evergreen Ridge Dr. Cincinnati, OH
John Nelson in Grand Haven Living Center-Senior Care in Lansing
Joe Skidmore, in Assisted Living, 475 Jacks Canyon Rd. Apt. #229 Sedona, AZ 86351
Betty Strother in Independence Village, East Lansing
Julie Clark, Burcham Hills Residential, East Lansing



Those at home: Kaye Alden, John Bartel, Tosha Brisbo, Ron Clark
Crystal Collins, Keith Ferguson, Tom Finn, Carl Gallagher, Nancy Jackson
Bruce Large, Michael Mahoney, Linda McClellan, Mark Nelson, Don Olson
Tharin Palmer, Bob & Gloria Robbins, Sandy Rollis, Connie Scott
Dana Stevens, Ken Teter, Betty VanConant, Cheryl VanPatten



If you know of a member you would like us to include on this list or remove from this list, please call the church office.

MISSION PARTNERS Pray for the people and ministry at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Pray for the Baker Neighborhood Partners and Community Police Officer, Morgan Parrott and other first responders.

PRAY for those who are on active duty in the United States Military Services:

Chris Browne – U.S. Air Force
Isaiah Castellanos – U.S. Army
Andrew Devine – U.S. Nat'l Guard
Anthony Erb – U.S. Army
Carson Kosloski – U.S. Marines
Joshua Kosloski – U.S. Army
Christopher Morgan – U.S. Marines
Ben Painter – U.S. Air Force
Ryan Schiffner – U.S. Air Force
Nicholas “Leo” Snow – U.S. Navy
Dayton Tucker – U.S. Marines



Dear Bethlehem Church,

Thank you so much for your wonderful donation of baby blankets last month! We so appreciate you!

May God Bless You!
Shared Pregnancy - Baby Café'

Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

Thank you for providing space for our “Kids Night” The summer program was great for our kids in the neighborhood. Looking forward to next summer!

Baker/Donora Neighborhood Assoc.
Nancy Smith & Yavonne Billington

Dear Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift of \$120.00 to Lutheran Disaster Response!

With gratitude, The Rev. Daniel Rift

Here, you will find a list of the scripture readings that are part of the Daily Lectionary which move us from one Sunday to the next. You can also find these readings on our “Taking Faith Home” sheets we distribute after worship. They are also posted daily on our Facebook page. We encourage you to read your Bible every day as you live out your life of discipleship.

◇◇ Pastor Matt

October	<u>08</u> 2 Timothy 3:10-17	<u>16</u> Matthew 5:1-11	<u>24</u> Psalm 96:1-13
<u>01</u> Psalm 78:1-8	<u>09</u> John 14:1-7	<u>17</u> Psalm 23	<u>25</u> John 8:31-36
<u>02</u> James 1:19-27	<u>10</u> Psalm 80:7-15	<u>18</u> Matthew 22:15-22	<u>26</u> Jeremiah 31:31-34
<u>03</u> Psalm 25:1-9	<u>11</u> Matthew 22:1-14	<u>19</u> Isaiah 45:1-7	<u>27</u> Romans 3:19-28
<u>04</u> Matthew 21:33-46	<u>12</u> Isaiah 25:1-9	<u>20</u> 1 Thess. 1:1-10	<u>28</u> John 15:12-17
<u>05</u> Isaiah 5:1-7	<u>13</u> Philippians 4:1-9	<u>21</u> Exodus 33:12-23	<u>29</u> John 21:15-19
<u>06</u> Philippians 3:1-14	<u>14</u> Exodus 32:1-14	<u>22</u> Psalm 99	<u>30</u> Galatians 2:15-21
<u>07</u> 2 Peter 3:14-18	<u>15</u> Psalm 106:1-23	<u>23</u> Isaiah 42:1-9	<u>31</u> Psalm 46

October Birthdays

Jim Koessel	Oct. 2
Eleanor Ibarra	Oct. 4
Ron Clark	Oct. 5
Ralph Sergeant	Oct. 6
Sue Christiansen	Oct. 10
Cloyd Barnes	Oct. 13
Dean Ford	Oct. 22
Larry Bauman	Oct. 27
Carl Gallagher	Oct. 27
Denise Kenger	Oct. 27
Jean Peckham	Oct. 27
Gail King	Oct. 28
Betty Bonney	Oct. 29



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Each year our birthday list of members 62 and over is updated from the church records. If for some reason you do not wish to have your name appear in the newsletter or if you see someone we have missed, please call the church office.

BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWS

(continued from page 1)

Last, but certainly not least in this message is our faith: our faith in positivity, our faith in the process, and most importantly our faith in God.

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Hebrews 11:1

The most important thing that leadership, Council and the congregation can do is to understand and believe that this is a new beginning for Bethlehem. Yes, it is the end of a long period of consistent pastoral leadership, but it is also a time to reimagine what Bethlehem can be. Maybe not to continue to do the things we have always done in a certain way. To listen to what God would have us do for each other, the community we serve and the world in which we live. This time can be both anxious and exciting at the same time and we should try to embrace it and be the best version of Bethlehem at this time in our long history.

I would ask that you support and pray for leadership and Council as we do the work of Bethlehem and reach out when you have questions or concerns. We are here to serve and if we do not have the answer, we will find it.

Thank you and may God continue to bless you and Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church,

Jim Whitman

Congregation President

Council Members

Jim Whitman - Congregation President

Sherry Bass-Pohl - Secretary

Susan Mahoney - Financial Secretary

Sandy Westover - Treasurer

Ron Miller - Council Chair

Candy Barnes - Council Vice-Chair

Cindy Marsh - Council Member

Mary Jakubiak - Council Member

Peggy Teter - Council Member

Ralph Sergent - Council Member

Jack Midgley - Council Member

REFORMATION SUNDAY

October 25, 2026

Don't forget to wear RED!



BELC UPCOMING EVENTS AND MINISTRIES

MEN ON THE WAY BIBLE STUDY

Thursday's, 3:30 pm

Join us in the Library from 3:30 to 4:30.

We will pick up on our study of Paul. If you have never attended, consider it. A person can come in and out without ever getting behind or having to get caught up.

No tests, no grades.

The information is from respected Bible scholar, Luke Timothy Johnson, former Benedictine monk and distinguished professor at Emory University.

The discussion after the lecture is always lively. Try it. You might like it.

Questions? see Jack Midgley



KIDS ACTIVITY NIGHT AGES 6 - 17 **WEDNESDAYS 5:30 – 7:30 PM**



We need donations for our Kids Night.

Snack foods, drinks, games, dinners, anything would help.

If you have time on a Wednesday evening, come join us!

This is an opportunity to connect with our neighborhood children
and make a difference in their lives!

We thank you all for donating to this important ministry! **Thank you!**

If you have any questions about donations or donating your time,
please speak to Eliot Nutt or Shannon Nobles.



Sunday Night Bible Study

All are welcome for

Sunday Night Bible Study.

On the First and Third Sunday's
of each month,

join us in the Library at 7:00 p.m.

Becoming a "Green Voter" Part Two

Adapted from the Mitten Synod's October Newsletter

Here are some comments to expand on last month's appeal for us to do our creation care in the public square as well as individually.

Bill McKibben and other faithful environmentalists have made the following comparisons between drawing our energy from fossil fuels and making the switch to renewables: The extraction and burning of fossil fuels is destructive to the earth; entirely consumes the material - spilling toxins into the air, earth and water, and causing devastating disruptions to the climate. The production and use of renewable energy greatly reduces these harms, as we receive what is freely and abundantly given for our use.

Those congregations that regularly use the prayers from Sundays and Seasons have been praying for the well-being of creation for years. Have those prayers had an impact on our own attitudes and actions?

There is a proposal on the November statewide ballot worthy of our consideration. Proposal 2 "Michigan Money Out of Politics" would prevent Energy Companies and other companies with large contracts with the state (\$250,000+) from making contributions to state office holders or candidates for public office. One intended outcome is that current policies that inhibit the development of renewable energy would (without the influence of corporate money) be changed to more earth-friendly ones.

Because it is evident that the national government is not responding helpfully to the climate emergency, there is need for effective action on the state and local level. Please look for ways to make these public servants aware of the need to reduce carbon emissions and to effectively prepare for and address the negative impacts already occurring.

Finally, open your hearts, conversations and prayers to the awesome beauty and abundance of Creation that in love and gratitude you and others may be sustained in this vital, urgent work.

In love and hope,
Synod's Creation Care Task Force

Lyons Elementary Clothing Project – 2026-27

With the support of the Board of Outreach, I am excited to once again announce the winter clothing collection for Lyons Elementary School! This community outreach project at BELC has been taking place since 2021; donations from members have been received at Lyons by children from our immediate church neighborhood and from other nearby neighborhoods. They range in age from preschool to fourth grade. In the past we have provided the school with boots, snow pants, coats, gloves, hats, scarves, socks, sweatpants, and underwear. Staff members discreetly give these items out to children who need them throughout the winter months. Thanks to us, children who would not have otherwise been warm and dry were indeed warm and dry! I talked to the school secretary about this year's needs.

A new item on the list is tennis shoes. It's important that our donation be **tennis shoes** and not any other kind of shoes. These will be for the purpose of keeping kids participating in gym class. They can only join in with the activities if they are wearing proper gym shoes because of safety, but when they come without them or don't own tennis shoes, the school can loan them shoes for the gym class period or choose to give them shoes. So, the shoes we donate need to be appropriate for gym activities, rather than just any shoes.

Here is what the school needs this year:

- **Waterproof** gloves - preferably not pink or purple (need to be new)
- Snow pants, sizes 6-12 - preferably not pink or purple (can be new or gently used)
- Winter coats for girls and boys, sizes 6-14 (can be new or gently used)
- Tennis shoes, kids' sizes 12, 13, and 1-4 (can be new or gently used)
- Winter outdoor boots, kids' sizes 12, 13, and 1-4 (can be new or gently used)
- Girls' sweats or stretchy pants, sizes 6-10 (gently used is best – new is not necessary)
- Boys' sweats, sizes 6-10 (gently used is best – new is not necessary)

***A collection area will be set up at church in early November,
so watch for announcements on where/when that will be ready.***

The response to this outreach project has grown each year. Once again, we have the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of our local children! I hope you will consider supporting this project.

-- Cindy Marsh