

Bethlehem Star

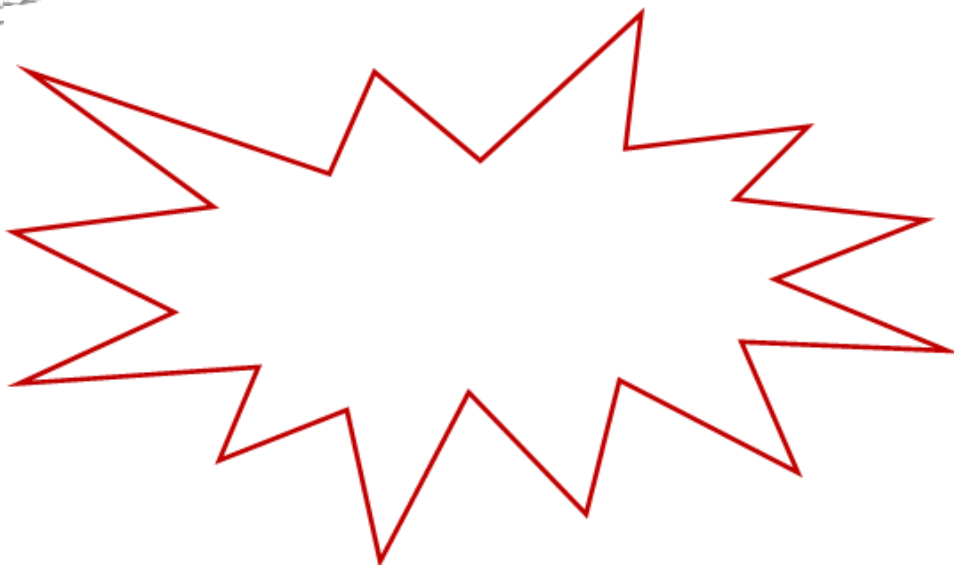
Lutheran Church Lansing

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549 E. Mt. Hope Ave.
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Newsletter Deadline is **September 15, 2026**
for the **October 2026** Bethlehem Star.

Also available at
www.bethlutheran.org

In-Home Date: Saturday, August 29, 2026
Mailed on August 27, 2026



Bethlehem Star

Lutheran Church Lansing

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church - Lansing, Michigan



September 2026

Dear Bethlehem Family,

Thank you.

Thank you for the marvelous send-off on August 15 and 16. Thank you to Jim Whitman for the fabulous meal, and to everyone who came to celebrate, to share a hug, and to say farewell.

Thank you for the beautiful prayer shawls, for worship and the gift of song, and for the many thoughtful cards, words, and well-wishes.

Thank you for wrapping us in the warmth of your love as you sent us on our way wrapped in a quilt. That quilt will be a tangible reminder of Bethlehem and of the people who have been such an important part of our lives.

And thank you for the many years of laughter, tears, challenges, celebrations, worship, ministry, friendship, and countless moments we have shared together. I have been blessed beyond words by the privilege of serving as your pastor and being part of the Bethlehem family.

As we begin this next chapter, we carry so much of Bethlehem with us. We carry your love, your prayers, your stories, your faith, and the memories we have made together. We do not know exactly what the future holds, but we know that the God who has been faithful to us here will continue to lead us wherever we go.

Please know how deeply grateful we are for each of you and for the ways you have blessed our lives.

God's peace and love,
Pastor Matt and Michelle

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
bethlehemplansing@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

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 September 2026

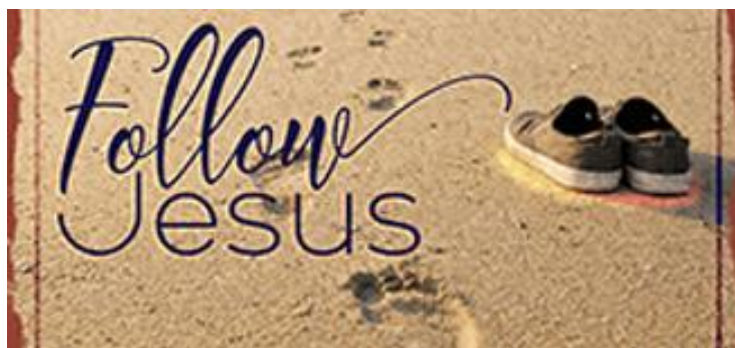
September Assisting Ministers

September 06 - Don Telles

September 13 - Nancy Holderread

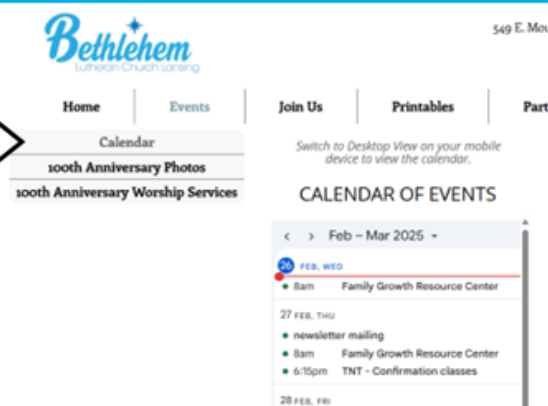
September 20 - Bob Meeker

September 27 - 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 on our finances and not allow for any surprises throughout the year. This update is reported through July 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

Year to date positive Income to Expense total--\$6,655.77

Saving Account Balance	\$3,777.18
Checking Account Balance	\$20,112.47
Money Market Fund Balance	\$32,634.15
Total Cash Accounts	\$56,524.49
Memorial Fund	\$10,446.92
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.

BELCW

*Bethlehem Evangelical
Lutheran Church Women*

Bible Study Kickoff, Potluck & General Meeting

All women of the congregation are invited to join us for our **Bible Study Kickoff, Potluck, and General Meeting** on **Sunday, September 21 at 6:30 p.m.** **Rainbow Circle** will serve as hostess for the evening. We look forward to gathering in fellowship as we begin a new season of Bible study and ministry together.

Please bring:

- A dish to pass for the potluck
- Your own table service
- Your copy of the *Gather* magazine, if you have one

Thank You for Project Day!

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who was able to help with Project Day in August. Your time, energy, and dedication are greatly appreciated. A report on the number of kits assembled and other Project Day accomplishments will be shared during the General Meeting on September 21.

Looking ahead to Fall

As summer comes to a close, we look forward to gathering again for fellowship, learning, and service. Whether you've been involved for years or are joining us for the first time, there's always a place for you at BELCW. We hope you'll join us on September 21 for an evening of food, friendship, and faith!

Offerings to BELCW

If you would like to make an offering to BELCW, please send checks to: **Keitha Snider, Treasurer**, 14685 Center Rd., Bath, MI 48808

Upcoming Events

Date	Event
September 14	BELCW Board Meeting
September 21	General Meeting, Potluck & Bible Study Kickoff, 6:30 p.m.
October 4	Blanket Sunday
November 15	Thankoffering Sunday

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, Sedona, AZ
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
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



MEN ON THE WAY BIBLE STUDY

will resume Thursday, September 10

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

We will pick up where we left off 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

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

September	<u>08</u> Romans 13:-14	<u>16</u> 2 Chronicles 7:12-18	<u>24</u> Psalm 105:37-45
<u>01</u> Romans 12:9-21	<u>09</u> Philippians 4:1-3	<u>17</u> Ephesians 1:3-14	<u>25</u> Romans 2:1-11
<u>02</u> Exodus 3:1-15	<u>10</u> Romans 5:6-11	<u>18</u> John 8:1-11	<u>26</u> Psalm 145:1-8
<u>03</u> 1 Peter 4:12-19	<u>11</u> Ephesians 4:25-32	<u>19</u> Psalm 103:1-13	<u>27</u> Matthew 21:23-32
<u>04</u> 2 Timothy 2:1-13	<u>12</u> Psalm 119:33-40	<u>20</u> Matthew 20:1-16	<u>28</u> Ezekiel 18:1-32
<u>05</u> Psalm 26:1-8	<u>13</u> Matthew 18:21-35	<u>21</u> Johah 3:10-4:11	<u>29</u> Philippians 2:1-13
<u>06</u> Matthew 18:15-20	<u>14</u> Genesis 50:15-21	<u>22</u> Philippians 1:21-30	<u>30</u> Proverbs 4:20-27
<u>07</u> Ezekiel 33:7-11	<u>15</u> Romans 14:1-12	<u>23</u> Exodus 16:9-21	

September Birthdays

Don Cairns	Sept. 3
Cynthia Dolan	Sept. 3
Laura Halbakken	Sept. 3
Marilyn Kosloski	Sept. 6
Ron Spencley	Sept. 7
Marcia Cummings	Sept. 8
Gayle Boyd	Sept. 9
Sandy Rollis	Sept. 14
Candy Barnes	Sept. 17
Dorothy Martin	Sept. 17
Chuck Gaus	Sept. 19
Louella Danbrook	Sept. 20
Carol Pride	Sept. 20
Mary Jakubiak	Sept. 24
Jennifer Stauffer	Sept. 25
Don Olson	Sept. 28



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

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Bethlehem,

It has been a tumultuous, emotional and evolving time since we learned that Pastor Matt had accepted a Call to Mamrelund Evangelical Lutheran Church and would be leaving Bethlehem. Anytime there is a seismic event like this with very little time to acknowledge, accept and react, we need to ensure that we try to slow down and not overreact. It has been fifty (50) years since Bethlehem has been without a Called Pastor and it feels strange and frankly, a little unnerving. As noted by Pastor Scott Torkko, Assistant to the Bishop during his sermon on Sunday, August 23rd, he stated it is remarkable and a testament to the shared ministry we have had with all our pastors. It is also a testament to this church family and all the members past and present, who have been a part of this ministry. Sometimes we may fail to see what you and God have given us here at Bethlehem. The time and financial giving to this place is a beautiful thing to see and to be a part of. Whatever need arises, be it time or financial, Bethlehem has always risen to the occasion without a second thought. It is what we do, what we have always done and will continue to do in this time of transition. It always happens because of the faith we have that God is, has and will always be with us.

While there are mixed emotions regarding Pastor Matt leaving, our sole focus and reason for being is to work through this potentially long and arduous process with one result in mind; listening to what God would have us do, determine what it is that this church at this time truly is and aspires to be, and finding the right person to lead us in the next phase of ministry. Bethlehem is a very different place now than it has been, and we need to be cognizant of that as we look to what we hope to find in our next pastor. This is one of the most consequential periods of work and discernment for church leadership and membership. It is a time for involvement, discussion, suggestions and all that goes into what we pray will be a long-lasting solution to our pastoral needs.

Leadership and Council has met with Pastor Scott, and regular communication is on-going to make sure we are on track and follow the process. We have already completed several components with the most detailed work to come. A critical piece of this is going to be patience, understanding and the realization that work is being done on behalf of the congregation with full transparency and regular updates with the progress. Any questions that you have can be directed to the following members of leadership.

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 Sergeant - Council Member
Jack Midgley - Council Member

If anyone has questions regarding the work that will be undertaken during this transition, the following link is for the Call Process Manual that we will be working on with Pastor Scott.

<https://www.mittensynod.org/docs/CallProcessManual.pdf>

(continued on page 10)

BELC UPCOMING EVENTS AND MINISTRIES

RALLY SUNDAY AND THE CHURCH PICNIC SEPTEMBER 13 @ 11:30



After the Worship service we will have a potluck.
Please bring a dish to pass and your own tableware.
Following the potluck there will be games for all ages.
Join us in the church lower level for games, and more!



We are looking forward to another great year of Sunday School!
Our first day of class crafts and fun will be September 20th at 8:45 a.m.

HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL THERE!

BELCW GENERAL MEETING AND POTLUCK

Monday, September 21, at 6:30 p.m.

Join your friends for a yummy potluck.

You don't have to be part of a Circle to attend!!!!

Please bring: your own table service, and a dish to pass
and your September Gather magazine, if you have one.



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



We need donations for our Kids Night. Snack foods, drinks, games, 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”

Adapted from the Mitten Synod's September Newsletter

Our Synod's Creation Care Task Force is urging/imploring all members of the Mitten Synod to vote and advocate for those public servants and policies that will best protect God's beloved creation, now suffering from the impacts of human activity.

We certainly affirm the incredible importance of our individual and congregational choices to “touch the earth lightly.” In doing so we align ourselves with God's love for and delight in the abundance and beauty of creation. We show our neighbor love for those life forms and natural forces that also worship God. This faithful witness may prompt others to prayerfully consider ways to care for our Earth Home.

We also realize that an effective response to the ongoing climate emergency requires sustained, sweeping actions by governments and corporations. It is in the public square that these crucial choices will be made. Those public servants we elect this November 3rd will have the opportunity and obligation of choosing earth friendly paths in the coming months.

Our hopes and prayers are that many, many members of the Mitten Synod will contact your preferred candidates for public office. Tell them that you are a “green voter.”

Explain that your faith values; your concern for those impacted by climate change; worries for the next generations; and your delight in the beauty and abundance of creation are vital priorities in voting and in advocating.

An important part of this task is to contact candidates for local positions like county commissions, school boards, town councils as well as more publicized campaigns. Also, when you identify a candidate or public servant whose words and actions support meaningful creation care, show your gratitude with your thanks and support.

We hope that those who read these words will be bold, urgent and creative in sharing this appeal as widely as possible. As stated in the Synod's climate resolution last May: “time is short!”

Next month we will share some of the policies and positions that are worthy of our support. And highlight some ways congregations may get involved.

With hope and love,

The Creation Care Task Force

These resources have election guides available now and they will be updated closer to the election. You may look for the following in your search engine:

Michigan League of Conservation Voters – 2026 Candidate Endorsements

Sierra Club Michigan Chapter – 2026 Endorsements

(continued from page 7)

I want to convey that Pastor Scott has been incredibly supportive, forthcoming and thoughtful in this transition and we look forward to working with him and leaning on his guidance. We are blessed to have Pastor Scott with us on this journey, and it is already a blessing I see for Bethlehem. Little did he know as a young person shooting baskets in the Bethlehem gym that he would come here to play an important role in the future of this church. God does have a plan.

We are also blessed to have Pastor John Burow as an active and integral part of this transition. He will be serving us in many ways with visitation, health issues and leading us in worship 2-3 times a month through September. After that, the plan is that he will be leading us in worship twice a month. His familiar presence and calming effect will be invaluable, and we are grateful for his service. We also will have a familiar face in Pastor John Schleicher leading us in worship once a month. Pastor Schleicher has a long history of connection to Bethlehem, and we are grateful for his willingness to serve.

With the reality that there are not enough supply pastors within the Synod, we may have a service once a month with Service of the Word. This is a worship service to gather around the Word of God without the Eucharist. In that service of worship, we would not have Holy Communion. In this instance, we are blessed with wonderful Assisting Ministers in Susan Mahoney, Bob Meeker, Don Telles, Crystal Collins and Nancy Holderread. These are faithful servants and familiar faces who will also be a source of calm should the need arise.

I would like to thank the members who have chosen to serve in these positions with the understanding that they love this place and want only the best for Bethlehem. We all feel that this is our church home and family. While no one in leadership had any idea of the work ahead of them with this transition, we continue to work on behalf of the congregation and will lead with faith, prayer and an open ear to what God would have us do.

Let us continue to do the work of Bethlehem and allow for grace when things may not be seamless and not be like “it has always been”. This is a new time for Bethlehem, and I pray that we may be bold and open to what can be. Our history is amazing, but our future is now and I pray that it will also be amazing with this new opportunity.

Isaiah 40:31 – *“But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”*

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

Jim Whitman
Congregation President