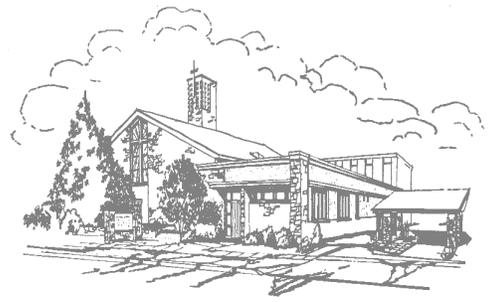


Bethlehem Star

Lutheran Church Lansing



Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lansing, Michigan

Pastor Matt Smith

September 2022

In the August 2022 *Bethlehem Star* I shared that PRAYER is the number one thing that all revitalized churches have in common. A church cannot even begin the process of revitalization without a bold commitment to expectant prayer, that is, with a belief that prayer is powerful and effective, that God is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

We have recruited seven (7) Prayer “Warriors” (see Ephesians 6) who will lift specific prayers in the process along the way. They have been asked to pray for the process of reaching out to our membership, that it will have an impact on the faith of those we reach. In addition to morning and evening prayers for revitalization and the five prayer petitions I listed in August, they will meet quarterly or so to check in with each other and share ideas on how we can continue to encourage the congregation in prayer.

The first way for us to encourage the congregation in prayer is by recruiting people to pray for our process of revitalization for Bethlehem throughout the day. Using SignUpGenius we have created a sign up for Prayers for Revitalization (<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805054EAEA628A02-prayers>) asking two people to pray every 1/2 hour from 6:30 am to 10:00 pm. As of the writing of this newsletter 18 of the 64 slots have been filled, leaving 48 remaining! That means we need 48 more members to commit to praying at a specific time every day for Bethlehem, revitalization, and anything else you would like to pray about. And please note, we are not asking you to pray for the entire half hour, though you are more than welcome! We just ask that you take a moment at your assigned time and lift your church in prayer using the petitions that we have created or your own. *Every Sunday morning we will have an updated sign up sheet for those who want to volunteer manually.*

- Pray that our members will learn to share the story of what Christ means to them; how God has been and is active in their lives and in the life of the congregation.
- Pray that Bethlehem will have an ever increasing impact in our community for the Kingdom.
- Pray for ourselves as disciples that we will grow in spirit and truth.
- Pray for the community, that their hearts would be good soil, prepared to hear the gospel.
- Pray for the leadership (including me) to hear and be led by the Spirit in the right path.

I could not be MORE excited to be underway in this process! I am overwhelmed by your response...

Some of you may have noticed that I get energized when talking, preaching, and writing about prayer. I believe that this energy comes from the Holy Spirit. God is at work, and we have been invited to be part of what God is up to.

I also believe that this energy comes from my experience on sabbatical focusing on prayer, weekly spiritual direction, and attending a six-day silent, directed prayer retreat in Northern Michigan. I did not know what to expect from that experience. There were 13 of us on retreat, and other than my spiritual director I knew no one. Still it was difficult not talking. The days began with breakfast, which was silent, as were all meals. This allowed me to learn and practice prayerful eating, savoring the aroma of the food, trying to taste the distinct flavors in each bite, and giving thanks to God for creating such a diverse eco-system, and thanking God for all of the people who labored to bring that food in front of me. The practice is simple. Take reasonable sized bites, and put your fork down. As you chew (twenty times), try to identify as many flavors and textures as you can, and then prayerfully imagining all the people involved in growing, harvesting, and preparing the food. Take a sip of water and repeat.

After breakfast we would spend an hour with our spiritual director. This was the only time we were allowed to speak. Those sessions would focus on what we were experiencing in what we hoped to get out of the retreat. My hope was that on retreat I would learn to mend my nets so that I could pick them up to follow Jesus more closely. Then I would read scripture, pray, and reflect on my experience with God as I walked the Prayer Labyrinth or the Stations of the Cross at the retreat center. Then there would be more time for prayer and journaling and exploring the beauty of Northern Michigan, including my childhood home of Harbor springs. I spent two nights on the shores of Lake Michigan, watching the sunset and giving thanks to God for our marvelous creation.

Please come and talk to me if you have questions about the retreat or Prayers for Revitalization. I would love to share more of my experience with you. PRAYER is an incredible gift that we have received from God. It is God’s way, through the Holy Spirit, to strengthen us individually and as a congregation. Thanks be to God. Amen.

◇◇ Pastor Matt

Worship in September 2022

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

Pastor Matthew A. Smith
pastormattsmith@gmail.com
(517) 881-9890

Pastoral Assistant
Pastor John Burow
pastorjburow@yahoo.com
(517) 614-4559

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

Congregation President
Jim Whitman

Organist
James Schippers

Choir Director
Sue Nelson

Handbell Choir Director
James Schippers

Contemporary Worship Director
Laurey Wyble

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 and on Facebook at
BELC Worship Group

Assisting Ministers

September 4 - Nancy Holderread
September 11 - Don Telles
September 18 - Susan Mahoney
September 25 - Bob Meeker

Children's Sermons

September 4 - Pastor Matt Smith
September 11 - Pastor John Burow
September 18 - Pastor Matt Smith
September 25 - Pastor Matt Smith

Guess Who Is Turning 100?!

We are, and we look good for our age!

In September of 2024 we will be celebrating the 100th year anniversary of Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church. What a wonderful milestone! **And one that will certainly warrant a special event.**

September of 2024 and the 100th Anniversary of BELC will be here before we know it, and we want to be ready! Here is your first assignment. Much of the history of the church is told in stories and in pictures. So, for the next few months we are asking that you find those special pictures that document the church's past. Whether it is a picture of the first members or of last week, we want your photos.

Please bring or send COPIES of your photos to the church office and ask them to be placed in the anniversary box. On your COPIED photos please provide information about the who, what, when, where and why if possible. Please only submit COPIES of your photos as we are going to be unable to return them to you after the celebration. In addition we are looking for your stories. A one page typed story to be included on a storyboard would be a wonderful way to share a memory you have about the church for all to see. These pages can be emailed to bethlehemlansing@gmail.com with the subject line **ANNIVERSARY STORY**, or brought to the church office. We hope to collect them from now until January 2023.

So, bring in your pictures and email those memories!

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

In Giving We Receive

God is the greatest giver, and, have you ever considered that because we were made in God's image, we were created to give? God uses giving to help direct our hearts to things 'above' and away from the love of the world. Faithful and generous giving is evidence that God is first in our lives. In giving, we break the grip that this world has on us.

We don't give to be blessed, but God's Word clearly tells us that through our faithful generosity God will bless us. Several verses in Scripture promise us God's abundance when we honor God through our giving. (Proverbs 3:10; Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38). We are certain of God's spiritual blessings and possibly material blessings.

In the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, which is found in all four Gospels, we find a truism that God blesses those who give. Jesus had attracted a large crowd to whom he was preaching. When it was time for dinner, Jesus' disciples wanted to send the people away to find their own food. Andrew, one of the disciples, told Jesus that a boy had given them five barley loaves and two fish. If the disciples had chosen to keep the boy's lunch for themselves, it could *possibly* have been enough food for Jesus and his twelve disciples. Realizing that Jesus intended to use the lunch to feed the crowd of people, the disciples became anxious about their situation, overlooking what Jesus could do with this meager amount of food.

Jesus had another idea: he had the people sit down in groups. He gave thanks for the bread and fish. After the blessing, the disciples began to distribute the food. As the disciples gave each person a portion of the bread and pieces of the fish, the food never ran out. In his book *Thank, Praise, Serve, and Obey* (2017), William Chancellor Weedon shares the following:

Stop and ask yourself what would have happened if the disciples had held onto their little lunch, had kept it for themselves in fear, terrified that there would be no more if they gave it away and then they would go hungry? How much would each have had at the close of that day? A handful? That's it. But Jesus began to open their eyes that day to see a new truth in God's economy. By giving away to others, they ended up richer themselves! They ended up with a basket of bread each, far more than that fistful they had started out with. Hands clutching in fear were transformed into hands opened wide to give away.

May God grant us giving hearts in order to multiply our gifts to help others and to extend God's kingdom.

GIVING IS NOT SO MUCH AN ACT OF GENEROSITY AS IT IS AN ACT OF TRUST.

"You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:11, ESV).



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 or call Pastor John directly at 517-614-4559.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS and with your cards and visits:

*Shelby Waters in The Willows at Okemos
John Nelson in Grandhaven Living Center-Senior Care in Lansing
Rhoda Hunter in Prestige Way in Holt
Pat Lebsack in The Willows, East Lansing*

Those at home: *Mary Ann Allen, John Bartel, Virginia Bauman
Tosha Brisbo, Crystal Collins, Gina (Bauman) DeWitt, Doug Griffin
Emma Hicks, Marilyn Bass-Huyser, Nancy Jackson, Carole Kienke
Michael Mahoney, Linda McClellan, Yvonne Nelson, Andrea Norman
Tharin Palmer, Carol Roush, Connie Scott, Audrey Skidmore
Betty VanConant, Cheryl VanPatten, Matthew White*

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 and other first responders.



Pastoral Acts:

Funeral:

Marilyn Kostrzewski Aug. 16, 2022

Wedding:

Brennan & Anna Hoadley Aug. 26, 2022

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

*Chris Browne – U.S. Air Force
Tyler Barnes – U.S. Marines
Darian Doan – U.S. Army
Andrew Devine – U.S. Nat'l Guard
Carson Kosloski – U.S. Marines
Joshua Kosloski – U.S. Army*

*Rusty Landry – U.S. Air Nat'l Guard
Christopher Morgan – U.S. Marines
Ben Painter – U.S. Air Force
Ryan Schiffner – U.S. Air Force*



**Let the words of my mouth,
and the meditation of
my heart,
be acceptable in thy sight,
O Lord,
my strength, and my redeemer.
Psalm 19:14**

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.

NEWS FROM YOUR BELCW BOARD

The Board met August 1 via zoom. Our discussions were on the rummage sale and Project day. The Board would like to thank Candy Barnes for taking Michelle Smith's position as president while she was on sabbatical with Pastor Matt. We welcome Michelle back.

SAVE THE DATE – There will be a General Meeting on **September 19 @ 6:00pm**. It will be a potluck starting at 6:00. Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Beverages & rolls will be provided. After dinner Pastor Matt will kick off our Bible Study from the September Gather Magazine. Please bring your September Gather magazine. There will be a General Meeting following the Bible Study. Hope to see you there!!

Things seem to be getting back to normal with the Synod too, they will have a mini Retreat on Saturday, September 24, at 9:30am – 4:00pm, at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Big Rapids. The guest speaker will be Pastor Sharon VanDam. There will be fellowship opportunities, election of officers, Bible study, lunch and worship service. Cost is \$10 (may be paid at the door). See the posters for more details.

The Rummage Sale will be September 28-30 as long as there are enough people signed up. Men are very welcome to sign up and help any day. Rummage **may not** be brought to the church until September 23, under no circumstances is rummage to be placed on the stage. **No computers, printers, TVs, or any components of them. Furniture is welcomed.**

*“Nevertheless, in the Lord, woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God”
~ 1 Corinthians 11-12*

THANKOFFERINGS

Giving Thankofferings is grounded in scripture and in our constitution. 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.



Thankoffering Sunday will be November 13. Keep thanking God for your blessings.

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 2022		
<u>01</u> 1 Peter 4:7-11	<u>08</u> John 15:12-17	<u>16</u> Ephesians 5:25-32
<u>02</u> Acts 2:43-47	<u>09</u> Philippians 2:1-11	<u>17</u> Psalm 51:1-10
<u>03</u> Psalm 112	<u>10</u> Psalm 1	<u>18</u> Luke 16:1-13
<u>04</u> Luke 14:25-33	<u>11</u> Luke 15:1-10	<u>19</u> Amos 8:4-7
<u>05</u> Deut. 30:15-20	<u>12</u> Exodus 32:7-14	<u>20</u> 1 Timothy 2:1-7
<u>06</u> Philemon 1:1-21	<u>13</u> 1 Timothy 1:12-17	<u>21</u> Deut. 15:7-11
<u>07</u> Psalm 82:1-5	<u>14</u> James 5:13-16	<u>22</u> James 2:1-13
	<u>15</u> Jeremiah 31:31-34	<u>23</u> Isaiah 58:6-9
		<u>24</u> Psalm 113
		<u>25</u> Luke 16:19-31
		<u>26</u> Amos 6:1-7
		<u>27</u> 1 Timothy 6:6-19
		<u>28</u> Proverbs 11:24-25
		<u>29</u> Luke 21:1-4
		<u>30</u> Acts 20:32-35

**SEPTEMBER
BIRTHDAYS**

Don Cairns	Sept. 3
Cynthia Dolan	Sept. 3
Laura Halbakken	Sept. 3
Marilyn Kosloski	Sept. 6
Marcia Cummings	Sept. 8
Gayle Boyd	Sept. 9
Sandra Rollis	Sept. 14
Yvonne Nelson	Sept. 16
Candy Barnes	Sept. 17
Dorothy Martin	Sept. 17
Chuck Gaus	Sept. 19
Louella Danbrook	Sept. 20
Carol Pride	Sept. 20
Tom Armstrong	Sept. 22
Mary Jakubiak	Sept. 24
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.

NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Ever want to sing with the Bee Gee's? Well, that's not going to happen. But you can swing with the BGs, the Board of Building and Grounds that is. From time to time the Board members just need some help. It may be in the form of advice regarding the need to contact a business for services, maybe how to proceed handling an issue beyond members range of knowledge, or helping on site with a project. Outside cleanup and fix up comes to mind. Signing up with us is a great way to be involved in supporting our congregation without a long term commitment. If you will, email me, Jack Midgley at jacsan2@aol.com or call me at (517) 882 4112. You'll be glad you did.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Dear Parents of the Bethlehem Sunday School,

After more than 2 years we are finally looking forward to once again having in-person Sunday School. We will meet in the downstairs social hall on Sunday, September 11 from 8:45 - 9:45 a.m. All students, preschool through 6th grade, will meet together for welcome and opening. We will share a Bible Story time together and then split into classrooms to do crafts and worksheets. The older students, 7th - 9th grade will be meeting in their own classroom. At about 9:30 we will come together in the social hall for singing.

We have really missed being together with all of you and we look forward to seeing you again! Thank you to all the parents and teachers who kept Sunday School going online for all this time. Our children are a very important part of our family at Bethlehem.

If you have any question or suggestions, please feel free to call Sue Nelson at #896-3536 or Keitha Snider at #712-6062.

The Board of Parish Education, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church

Bethlehem Star

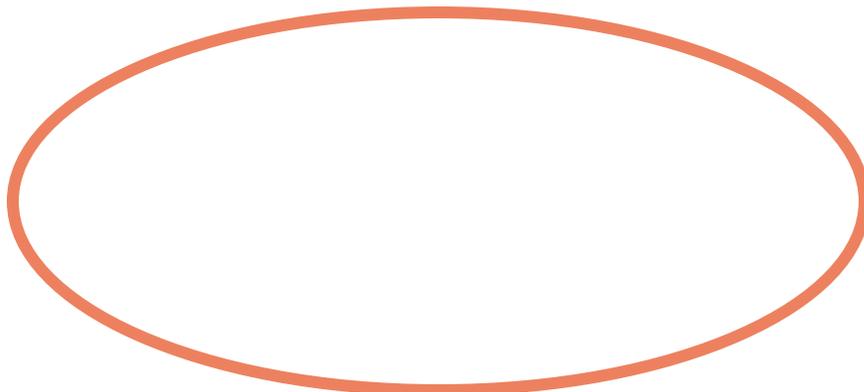
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Newsletter Deadline is **September 15**
for the **October 2022** Bethlehem Star.

Also available at
www.bethlutheran.org

In-Home Date: Thursday August 31 2022
Mailed on August 25, 2022