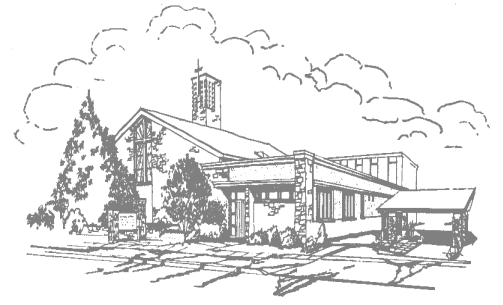


Bethlehem Star

Lutheran Church Lansing



Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church - Lansing, Michigan

Pastor Matt Smith

December 2024



⁶ A child is born to us, a son is given to us,
and authority will be on his shoulders.
He will be named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ There will be vast authority and endless peace
for David's throne and for his kingdom,
establishing and sustaining it
with justice and righteousness
now and forever.

~Isaiah 9:6-7 (CEB)

Advent is the season where we intentionally prepare our hearts and anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth – the moment that changed everything. *Advent Conspiracy* is a counter-cultural movement that helps us reorient our hearts back to Christ. It's about letting go of traditions that take our focus away from God during Christmas and embracing the wondrous moment when Jesus entered our world to make things right.

To help guide us through this process, there are four tenets, or principles we follow: Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, Love All. These will be our worship themes on the Sundays of Advent.



Worship Fully - 12/1

- We worship fully because Christmas is about Jesus. If we forget this foundational truth, everything else falls apart. May our actions and our words come from a place of true worship.



Spend Less - 12/8

- We spend less because we know mindless consumption is not the way to celebrate our Savior. By spending a little less on ourselves during Christmas we are able to more joyfully give to others in need using our Advent Conspiracy Offering Envelopes to benefit Lutheran World Relief.



Give More - 12/15

- We give more of ourselves because this is the way of Jesus. God gave us his Son and now it is our turn to reflect that same selflessness to the world. We share our time, talents, and presence with the people we love.



Love All - 12/22

- We love all because we have been loved first. We believe that the poor and hurting of our world can be reached by God through the way we choose to celebrate Christmas.

Our Advent (Conspiracy) Offering Envelopes which are included in this newsletter will benefit Lutheran World Relief. The donation from Bethlehem through our Advent Conspiracy will be matched, dollar for dollar, through donations from other generous congregations.

- What do you want to experience this year during Advent?
- What are some obstacles that might get in the way?



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

Worship in December 2024

Assisting Ministers

Dec. 1 - Don Telles
Dec. 8 - Susan Mahoney
Dec. 15 - Bob Meeker
Dec. 22 - Nancy Holderread
Dec. 29 - Crystal Collins

Children's Sermons

Dec. 1 - Pastor Matt Smith
Dec. 8 - Pastor Matt Smith
Dec. 15 - Pastor Matt Smith
Dec. 22 - Pastor Matt Smith
Dec. 29 - Pastor John Burow

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

Assistant to The Pastor
Pastor John W. Burow
pastorjburow@yahoo.com
(517) 614-4559

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

Congregation President
open seat

Organist
James Schippers
jameschippers@gmail.com

Choir Director
Sue Nelson
ntimothy1@att.net

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

<https://www.youtube.com/@bethlehemworship126/streams>



**Join us on
Tuesday,
December 24th
for our 100th Anniversary
Christmas Eve Service
at 7:30 p.m.
in the Sanctuary**

100th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION BULLETINS & LINKS

For full PDF files of each bulletin,
links to the worship services,
and individual links to the
historical videos.



Visit <https://www.bethlutheran.org/100thanniversary-worship-services>

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

Being A Living Sacrifice

What should our response be to God for giving us our physical lives, our new lives in Christ, and life eternal to come? And on top of all that, we know through faith that God is the creator and owner of all things, so what should our appropriate response be to show our gratitude? In this Advent season, awaiting the birth of Christ, we have so much for which to be thankful.

God commanded Old Testament believers to honor and worship him through ceremonial laws which included tithing. As New Covenant Christians, we are no longer bound to the laws of the Old Testament. As New Testament Christians, our motivation to express our gratitude comes from Christ, who gave his life for us. Through Jesus, we not only have an abundant life today (John 10:10), but we will spend eternity with him in heaven.

In determining how we are going to show our thanks, we often get wrapped up in deciding if we are going to give two, five, or ten percent or more of our income to our church. We may also question whether it is important for us to join a committee or become a member of one of the boards in our church. Are we going to participate in various Christian causes or activities? The Apostle Paul went well beyond these questions when he exhorted the Roman believers (and us) to *“present your bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God. This is your appropriate priestly service. Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature”* (Romans 12:1-2). Paul expected that Jesus should be the Lord of every area of our lives. As recipients of God’s grace, love, and mercy, we are to commit our lives to him.

Being a living sacrifice for God does not mean that we spend all day on our knees repenting, praying, or reading the Bible. It means that wherever we are or whatever we are doing, we belong to God and are in his service. It is an inner attitude of having a heart and mind for God. He is in control of our lives. In the Old Testament, God’s people brought animal sacrifices to God. By God’s grace, as New Covenant Christians, we are encouraged to present ourselves to him as a sacrifice of praise, worship, and service. Because of who God is and what he has done for us through Jesus’ INCARNATION, life, death, and resurrection, he deserves nothing less than our whole selves. By God’s grace, we can be living sacrifices because we are *“strengthened through his glorious might...”* (Colossians 1:11).

FINAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2024

This advent season, we thank everyone who has supported Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church this past year with their time, **talent** and financial contributions and look forward to support from all our members in the year ahead. We also invite you to consider making an additional gift to Bethlehem as the year draws to a close. If you need a convenient way to make an additional gift before the end of the year or to make your regular offerings, we encourage you to check out our electronic giving option. As the pace of life continues to speed up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions. You will find a blue “online giving” button on our home page at www.bethlutheran.org. That is a good place to start, or contact our Financial Secretary, Susan Mahoney, for more information.

Contributions must be received by 12/ 31 to be counted in 2024.
← Scan to give by Dec. 31st.



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.



Holiday Happenings - As the year winds down and we looked towards the birth of Jesus, the women of the church have their December General Meeting and Program planned for December 2nd at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held from 6:30-7:15 p.m. with the program to follow at 7:15 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend our *Christmas Music Program as the Capital A Cappella share some holiday music with us.* Please join us for this program with dessert following.

Election & Vote on Charitable Giving - We will be electing new officers at our December General Meeting. In addition, we will vote on our annual charitable giving. We are looking for someone interested in serving as Vice President and President. The Vice President is a one-year term (second year to serve as President). As the Vice President, you will welcome new members, attend monthly board meetings, and observe and learn from the President.

Offerings to BELCW – If you would like to make an offering to the BELCW, please send checks to Peggy Teter, Treasurer, 1854 Creek Landing, Haslett, MI 48840.

Interested in BELCW? If you haven't attended a Circle Bible Study/ meeting and would like to, please reach out to one of our board members (Laurey Wyble, Peggy Teter, Susan Leimenstoll, Michelle Smith, Kelly Carpenter, Tosha Brisbo, Cindy Marsh, Susan Mahoney, and Laura Halbakken).

Upcoming Events:

12/02/24	6:30 PM	General Meeting / Christmas Program	Hostess: Harmony Circle
12/07/24	9:30 AM	FAB	Library
12/09/24	6:00 PM	Friendship Circle	Christmas Dinner – Coral Gables
12/10/24	1:00 PM	Rainbow Circle	Cookie Exchange - @ Church
12/11/24	9:00 AM	Quilting	Gym
12/11/24	TDB	Harmony Circle	Christmas Dinner

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 Matt directly at 517-881-9890.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS and with your cards and visits:

John Nelson in Grand Haven Living Center-Senior Care in Lansing
Rhoda Hunter in Prestige Way on Keller Road in Holt
Marilyn Bass-Huyser in Independence Village, Grand Ledge
Betty Strother in Independence Village, East Lansing
Joe Skidmore, in Assisted Living, Sedona, AZ
Kurt Kollmeyer, Hamilton Trace Apartments, Fishers, IN
Larry & Virginia Bauman, 5314 Evergreen Ridge Dr. Cincinnati, OH



Those at home: *Kaye Alden, John Bartel, Virginia Bauman, Tosha Brisbo, Kelly Carpenter, Crystal Collins, Ben Darling, Keith Ferguson, Tom & Eleanor Finn, Peggy Gaspersohn, Emma Hicks, Nancy Jackson, Mike (Ferris) Kosloski, Vicki Leighton, Michael Mahoney, Linda McClellan, Mark Nelson, Yvonne Nelson, Tharin Palmer, Bob Robbins, Sandy Rollis, Connie Scott, 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

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
Isaiah Castellanos – 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
Dayton Tucker – U.S. Marines



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

DECEMBER 2024	<u>08</u> Luke 3:1-6	<u>16</u> Zephaniah 3:14-20	<u>24</u> Luke 2:1-20
<u>01</u> Luke 21:25-36	<u>09</u> Malachi 3:1-4	<u>17</u> Philippians 4:4-7	<u>25</u> John 1:1-14
<u>02</u> Jeremiah 33:14-16	<u>10</u> Luke 1:68-79	<u>18</u> Isaiah 9:1-7	<u>26</u> Romans 12:9-13
<u>03</u> 1 Thess. 3:9-13	<u>11</u> Mark 1:1-8	<u>19</u> Hebrews 13:7-17	<u>27</u> Hebrews 10:5-10
<u>04</u> Luke 17:20-21	<u>12</u> Philippians 1:3-11	<u>20</u> Luke 15:1-7	<u>28</u> Psalm 80:1-7
<u>05</u> Matthew 6:25-34	<u>13</u> Isaiah 40:1-11	<u>21</u> Isaiah 12:2-6	<u>29</u> Luke 2:41-52
<u>06</u> Colossians 1:9-14	<u>14</u> Psalm 126	<u>22</u> Luke 1:39-55	<u>30</u> 1 Samuel 2:18-26
<u>07</u> Psalm 25:1-10	<u>15</u> Luke 3:7-18	<u>23</u> Micah 5:2-5	<u>31</u> Colossians 3:12-17



 *December*
BIRTHDAYS

Mary Ann Allen	Dec. 1
Terri Lentz	Dec. 2
Jack Midgley	Dec. 6
Sandra Westover	Dec. 7
Rick Wyble	Dec. 9
Kathy Halligan	Dec. 13
Cheryl VanPatten	Dec. 18
Tom Finn	Dec. 22
Robert Robbins	Dec. 24



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.

POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS



The Altar Guild will be taking orders for those who wish to purchase Poinsettias to be used to decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas. Those who order the plants may take them home after the in-person worship service on Christmas Eve. The 6-inch potted **Red Poinsettias** will be \$11 each. If you would like to order plants please place payment in an envelope with your name and a notation on the honorarium (eg. In memory or honor of a special person, or To the Glory of God.) **Orders must be received by December 1st - either delivered to the church office, given to, or mailed to Kris Burow, no later than December 8th.**

Thank you to all who sponsor flowers for these special services!

THE 2025 ALTAR FLOWER CHART

The chart is posted in the Lobby. If you have a special date in mind to sponsor flowers please sign- up on the Chart. Orders are submitted once a month in advance, so please sign up at least **6 weeks in advance** of your chosen date. Payment for the arrangements is made at the time of order so your payment must be received to the Altar Guild before the order is made. Sponsors may take the flowers home after the Sunday morning worship service. Thank you to all who sponsor Altar Flowers! Thank you to all who sponsor Flower Arrangements for our Sunday worship!



LYONS ELEMENTARY WINTER CLOTHING PROJECT

The collection for winter outerwear for the children at Lyons Elementary School has begun! Collection tubs are set up in the entryway at church. The tubs will be there into December, so there is plenty of time if you would like to donate to this community outreach project! **Waterproof gloves and waterproof mittens should be new. Snow pants and boots can be new or gently used if they are clean and in good shape. Here are the sizes the school needs:**

- **Waterproof** gloves or mittens - preferably not pink or purple, any children's sizes.
- Boots, sizes 12, 13, 1 and 2 - preferably not pink or purple, and not indoor fashion boots.
- Snow pants, sizes 8, 10, 12 and 14 - preferably not pink or purple.

Our donations make a difference to children from nearby neighborhoods whose families are unable to afford adequate winter wear! These items will be discreetly distributed by staff to children as needed throughout the winter. If you have any questions about this project, ask Cindy Marsh.



BELC UPCOMING EVENTS DURING “DECEMBER”



DECK THE HALLS

Join us on Friday,
December 6 at 6:30 p.m.

To decorate the church for Christmas!

We will meet in the sanctuary for prayer and singing before we get started. Then we will proceed to “**Deck the Halls**”!

Bring some cookies or treats to share when we are finished decorating.

Punch and coffee will be provided by The Board of Worship Life.

Hope to see you!!!!

CHRISTMAS CAROLING



Join us for an afternoon of Christmas caroling to BELC’s shut-ins, on **December 15.**

We will meet at the church at 3:00 p.m.

Please bring some cookies or treats to share following our caroling.

The Board of Worship Life will provide hot chocolate and coffee.

Our shut-in’s are so appreciative of our visits and songs!

Hope to see you there!!!

THE ANNUAL SENIOR DINNER

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church is pleased to announce that the Annual Senior Dinner will take place on Sunday, December 8th 2024.

Cocktails at 3:00 p.m. and Dinner at 3:30 p.m.

R.S.V.P. to the church office no later than Monday, December 2nd.

(517) 482-3225 or email bethlehemplansing@gmail.com

Bethlehem’s Sunday School Children’s Christmas Musical “Share the Good News” Sunday, December 22, 2024, During worship service

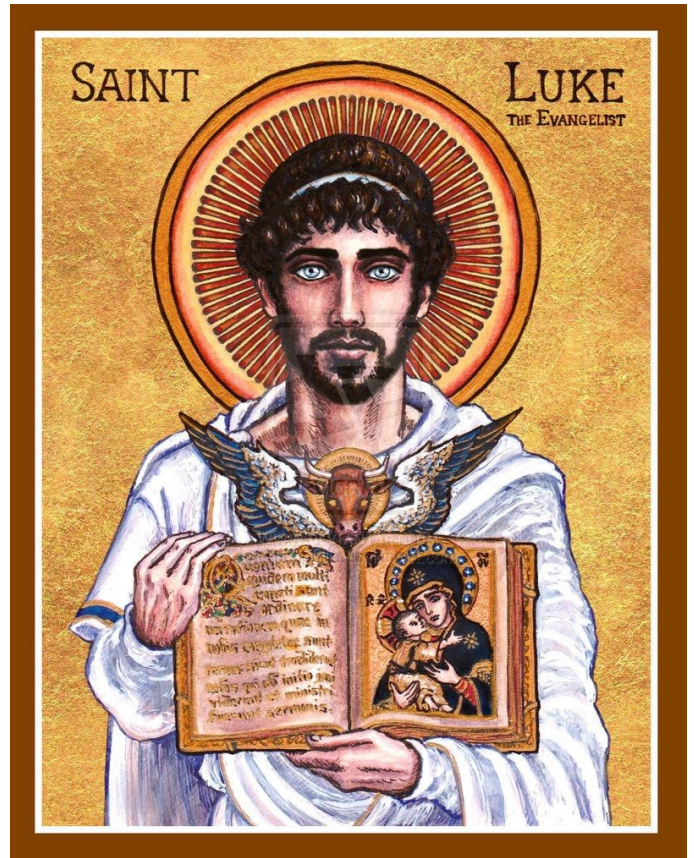
They will sing new Christmas songs they have learned and play instruments. Through narration and traditional nativity costumes they will tell the story of the first Christmas. We hope you will all join us to share the good news of Jesus’ birth.



Year of Luke: *The Great Reversal*

In December our Sunday Adult Forum will transition from, the ways we listen, to a chapter by chapter study of Luke's Story of Jesus. The timing works well, as We will be hearing and pondering Luke's "Infancy Narratives" just as we prepare to celebrate the Birth of Christ.

Beginning with December 1st, the First Sunday in Advent, our Sunday Gospel readings will emphasize the Third Gospel. Luke's special interests include: Jesus at prayer; piety worship and song; the role of women; the working of the Holy Spirit; and God's special care for the marginalized. Flowing through these and other aspects is the major theme that in Jesus, God is bringing a **great reversal**. We see this in Mary's song: *He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty*. There are several parables of reversal unique to Luke; among them The Rich Man and Lazarus; The Pharisee and Tax Collector; The Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan.



We hear in Luke the claim that what God is about in Jesus' life, death and resurrection will turn society upside down. The privileged and wealthy are not necessarily excluded from this Good News. But they, like Zacchaeus, are expected to participate in God's mission of lifting up the needy and exploited.

In Acts, Luke's second volume, the early Church strives to do away with economic inequity. Later, in Acts 17, comes the accurate accusation that Jesus' followers are turning the whole world upside down.

Without Luke's Gospel our celebration of Christ's birth would be diminished: no stable; no shepherds, no angelic choir. We would know nothing of Gabriel's announcement to Mary and her stirring response, "*I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said.*"

A helpful resource for getting better acquainted with Luke's story of Jesus is on YouTube under the title, "An Overview of Luke".

In this Year of Luke, may we be given hearts open to the Good News of Mary's Song and may we faithfully and generously participate in God's **great reversal** through Jesus.

Bethlehem Star

Lutheran Church Lansing



549 E. Mt. Hope Ave.
Lansing, Michigan 48910



Welcome to
Our Church

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Newsletter Deadline is **December 13**
for the **January 2025 Bethlehem Star**.

Also available at
www.bethlutheran.org

December 2024



Oh Holy Night

In-Home Date: Saturday, November 30, 2024
Mailed on November 27, 2024