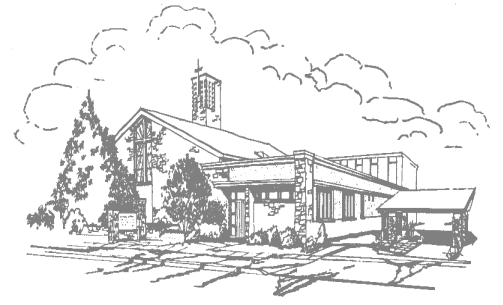


Bethlehem Star

Lutheran Church Lansing



Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church - Lansing, Michigan

Pastor Matt Smith

January 2025

A New Year, A New Calling: Reflecting on Baptism and the Life of Faith Initiative

As we embark on a new year, the season of Epiphany invites us to consider not just the revelation of the Christ Child, but also the beginning of Jesus' public ministry marked by *his* baptism in the Jordan River.

A Call to New Beginnings

Luke's Gospel account of the Baptism (Luke 3:21-22) is rich with symbolism that resonates with our own journeys of faith. We see Jesus at prayer, demonstrating the importance of a life rooted in communication with God. The descent of the Holy Spirit signifies the empowerment Jesus receives for his ministry, and also foreshadows the gift available to all believers. Perhaps most importantly, the voice of God proclaims, "You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). This echoes the message of Isaiah 43:1: "I have called you by name, you are mine."

This dual aspect of God's declaration is significant. Yes, we are God's beloved, cherished and protected. But we are also called to serve, to be sent forth as witnesses to God's love. The Baptism of Jesus can thus be seen as an ordination, a commissioning for ministry.

January: A Springboard for Revitalization

Just as Jesus' public ministry begins with his baptism, so too can January serve as a springboard for our own revitalization. This new year offers an opportunity to ponder our call from God, to rediscover the unique gifts and passions God has placed within us. The Life of Faith initiative provides valuable resources to support us on this journey. Simply put, the Life of Faith Initiative is a program designed to refocus the mission of the church to emphasize the service of the baptized in everyday life. The initiative encourages congregations to develop programs and resources that will help members integrate their faith into their daily activities, serving their neighbors through family, work, school, and their local communities.

Join the Life of Faith Discussion

The Life of Faith Guiding Team is hosting virtual meetings on January 13th and 27th at 7:30 pm to watch and discuss videos from the Life of Faith program. This is a fantastic opportunity to connect with others in our church community, deepen your understanding of the program, and explore how it can guide your own faith journey. For more information and to sign up, please speak with me as soon as possible.

Together, let us embrace this new year as a time of renewed commitment, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and guided by the call of God in our lives.

In Christ's Service,

Additional Resources:

◇◇ Pastor Matt

Life of Faith website: <https://lifeoffaith.info/>



Assisting Ministers

Jan. 5 - Don Telles
Jan. 12 - Nancy Holderread
Jan. 19 - Bob Meeker
Jan. 26 - Susan Mahoney

Children's Sermons

Jan. 5 - Pastor Matt Smith
Jan. 12 - Pastor John Burow
Jan. 19 - Pastor Matt Smith
Jan. 26 - Pastor Matt Smith

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>



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

Are You a Fountain or a Drain?

When I was introduced to this phrase, it was in a business context. The basic premise is that in our daily interactions we can behave as fountains, encouraging, considerate, and thoughtful. We can inspire people to be their best selves and be refreshing and uplifting. Or we can be drains, negative, critical, and impatient. Drains take away, deplete, and empty, and can get clogged with garbage and stink.

I have also thought about this in the context of my battle with depression. When I am in the throes of a downturn, I get caught in the drain of my symptoms and find myself spiraling down and in ever tightening swirls of anxiety, sadness, and loneliness. But, with truly little effort, when I reach out to others for help or to help them, I can feel myself moving upward again in expanding spirals of lightness and life.

As Christians we are gifted with so much. Christ who saves us from the bonds of sin. Grace that grants salvation freely. Faith that gives us hope. The assurance that God is always with us and gives us everything we need to accomplish God's purpose in us.

We are only required to seek his will for us, let his love flow through us into others, grow in our faith, and be grateful and generous.

Romans 6:16-18 reminds us that we have been set free from sin to be slaves of righteousness. 2 Peter 1:5-7 says we should supplement our faith with goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, mutual affection, and love. In Psalm 36:9, David says, "For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light."

Colossians 3:16&17 says, "...with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Vicki Leighton



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*

New Year, New Board!

We elected a new board for the year 2025! Look for these great women to do all sorts of special things this year:

- President – Peggy Teter
- Vice President – Vacant (Please prayerfully consider being part of this wonderful mission)
- Secretary – Susan Sterling
- Treasurer – Keitha Snider
- Mission Action – Kelly Carpenter
- Mission Growth – Tosha Brisbo
- Publicity – Michelle Smith
- Circle Chairs – Laura Halbakken (Harmony), Cindy Marsh (Friendship), and Susan Mahoney (Rainbow)

Please reach out to anyone on the Board if you are interested in visiting a circle meeting or becoming part of a circle.

Cheer Bags: Laura Halbakken and Joanna Alvera purchased gripper socks to go along with the items donated by circles. There were 16 Cheer Bags distributed this holiday season. The board is looking for suggestions for anything else to include in the cheer bags for next year since they have been the same for the past several years.

At our general meeting in December, the women of the church unanimously voted to support the following services and programs for this year:

- Give-A-Kid Projects - \$200
- Davies Project - \$200
- LPD Social Work Program - \$200
- T.W.I.G.S. - \$200

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.

Upcoming Events:

DATE	TIME	EVENT	NOTES
01/04/25	9:00 AM	FAB	
01/06/25	6:30 PM	Board Meeting	Zoom – Devotions: Laura Halbakken
01/08/25	TBD	Bible Study Leaders Meeting	
01/08/25	9:00 AM	Quilting	
01/08/25	6:30 PM	Harmony Circle	
01/12/25	10:00 AM	Installation of Officers	
01/20/25	6:30 PM	Friendship Circle	L – Cindy H - Peggy
01/21/25	1:00 PM	Rainbow Circle	L – Sandy H -

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, Mark Nelson, Linda McClellan, Yvonne Nelson
Tharin Palmer, Bob Robbins, Sandy Rollis, Connie Scott, Ken Teter, Betty VanConant
Cheryl VanPatten, Rob 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
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



A Prayer for Healing

Father God, we thank you for all the blessings in our life;
for the very world in which we live
and for the health and strength you have bestowed upon us.

Thank you for Christ Jesus, our risen Savior,
who takes away the sins of the world.

Have mercy on us, God, as we ask now for healing.
The stripes Christ endured provided healing and power over illness.

Lord, direct that healing toward our fellow Christians who suffer,
who believe you can and will restore them to full health.

We call them by name....

We believe you have already provided our healing, Father.

Thank you for being our Great Physician.

In faith, believing, we accept your gift of restoration and thank you for it.

All glory and honor and praise be to God, from whom all blessings flow.

In the mighty name of Jesus we submit our petition,

Amen

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

JANUARY 2025

<u>01</u> Proverbs 1:1-7	<u>08</u> 2 Timothy 1:8-14	<u>16</u> Colossians 3:12-17	<u>24</u> Philemon 1:4-7
<u>02</u> 1 Corinth. 4:1-5	<u>09</u> Psalm 18:28-36	<u>17</u> Ephesians 4:1-6	<u>25</u> Psalm 36:5-10
<u>03</u> James 3:13-18	<u>10</u> John 12:44-50	<u>18</u> Psalm 29	<u>26</u> Luke 4:14-21
<u>04</u> Psalm 148	<u>11</u> Psalm 147:12-20	<u>19</u> John 2:1-11	<u>27</u> Nehemiah 8:1-10
<u>05</u> John 1:1-18	<u>12</u> Luke 3:15-22	<u>20</u> Isaiah 62:1-5	<u>28</u> 1 Corth. 12:12-31
<u>06</u> Jeremiah 31:7-14	<u>13</u> Isaiah 43:1-7	<u>21</u> 1 Corinth. 12:1-11	<u>29</u> Isaiah 61:1-7
<u>07</u> Ephesians 1:3-14	<u>14</u> Acts 8:14-17	<u>22</u> Psalm 16:7-11	<u>30</u> Leviticus 25:1-24
	<u>15</u> Matthew 3:13-17	<u>23</u> Jeremiah 33:10-13	<u>31</u> Galatians 5:13-15




JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Mary Bartel	Jan. 2
Deborah Gentilozzi	Jan. 10
Kurt Kollmeyer	Jan. 12
Audrey Olson	Jan. 12
Leah Henrys	Jan. 13
Lois Cairns	Jan. 15
Brian Pickford	Jan. 15
Karen Nault	Jan. 16
Gloria Robbins	Jan. 19
Ann Gienapp	Jan. 23
Laurey Wyble	Jan. 24
Kaye Alden	Jan. 25
Daniel Smith	Jan. 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.



Pastor Matt
& all the Caroleers
From Bethlehem



I'm so grateful... for
the beautiful gift of your time.
Your songs & your visit
was awesome.

I loved seeing you in person
& wish you all blessed
Christmas Day!

love,

Betty



Dear Congregation,
Pastor John, Pastor Matt and Tracy, would like to express our sincere gratitude for the wonderful gifts and treats we received this Christmas season. Your generosity and thoughtfulness have truly warmed our hearts. We are so blessed to be a part of such a caring and supportive church family. Thank you again for your kindness.

Wishing you all a blessed and joyous New Year!

With love and appreciation,
Pastor John, Pastor Matt and Tracy

As we approach the Holiday season, my heart overflows with thankfulness for the many blessings God has supplied and continues to supply to the Love Clothing Center. Bethlehem is counted among these blessings! I sincerely thank your congregation for the donation of several humongous bags of gently used clothing, over 300 pairs of new underwear and socks, plus a donation of \$20! This generosity helps us meet the needs of children and teens in the Lansing community.

Sincerely,
Debra Dawsey
Co-Director, Love Clothing Center

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your recent generous gift of \$745 to Lutheran World Relief's Quilt and Kit Shipping fund! Recipients tell us how touched they are that someone far away remembered them and cared for them in their time of need. Our neighbors in Ukraine come to mind.

Thank you,
Daniel V. Speckhard
President and CEO

P.S. God bless you and your generous spirit.

Thank you to all the Bethlehem Families who supported the Christmas Food Basket Program in December!
A SPECIAL THANKS to the **SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN** who provided an Advent Calendar and a special dessert "present" for each family! There were many generous donations from other Bethlehem members providing food for 16 families, including 23 adults and 31 children. As well a *Thrivent Action Gift Card* was used to purchase needed food. Working with the Salvation Army helped identify families in need to receive the food worked well, helping to streamline the efforts of those who prepared the food baskets. Again, **THANK YOU** for your generosity - the families all expressed great gratitude!

Blessings,
The Board of Outreach Ministries

The Season of Epiphany in this Year of Luke



Our Gospel readings for January and February are mostly from Luke's account of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (chapters 4 – 6). Our Sunday morning Adult Forum will ponder the same material, seeking a deeper connection between Jesus' work of announcing and displaying the Reign of God and our own life of faith and witness. A fine New Year's resolution would be to participate in this conversation for at least some of these 8 Sundays. You might be surprised at how richly both God's Word and lively conversation nourish your faith. Please join us in the Library at 9a.m. Sunday mornings.

Call to Me
and I will answer you,
and I will tell you great
and mighty things, which
you do not know.

Jeremiah 33:3

Bethlehem Star

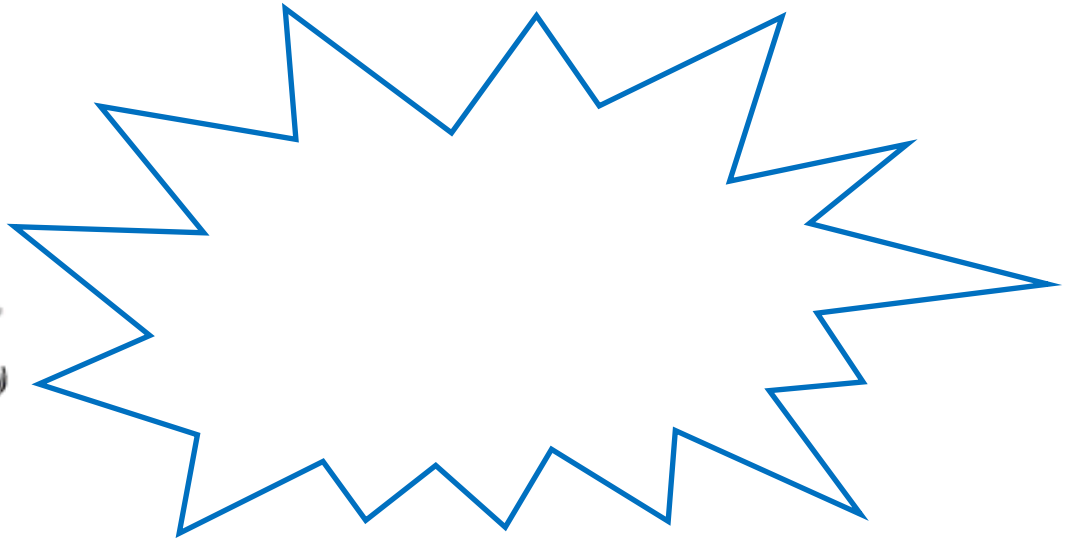
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Newsletter Deadline is **January 15, 2025**
for the **February 2025 Bethlehem Star**.

Also available at
www.bethlutheran.org

In-Home Date: Friday, January 3, 2025
Mailed on December 31, 2024

