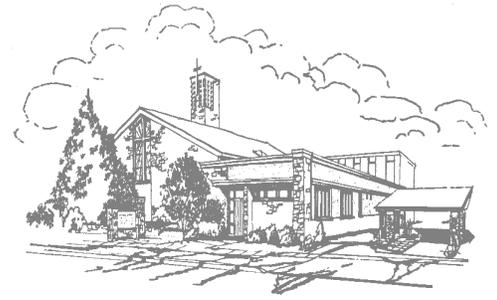


# Bethlehem Star

Lutheran Church Lansing



Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lansing, Michigan

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**Pastor Matt Smith (and John Burow)**

**January 2023**

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<sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.  
- Romans 8:26-27

## PRAY fervently

*Praying Fervently* is the first of the Marks of Discipleship. You have likely heard these **Marks of Discipleship** referred to as **Spiritual Practices**. I like the term Spiritual Practices because it emphasizes *practice*. Saying that, “Prayer is one of my spiritual practices,” flows much better than, “Prayer is one of the Marks of Discipleship I practice.” It also is more easily understood by those outside the church.

Starting on Sunday, January 8, we will begin a deep dive into Prayer. We will see how the Spirit moves us, but we are likely to continue this focus all through the Sundays after Epiphany as we will be praying in the Light of Christ. On January 8 the Adult Forum will be held in the Social Hall starting at 9:00 a.m. On that day we will begin working through a process to help us determine our **Spiritual Type**, which can point us toward prayer practices that we may find meaningful or even prayer practices that might challenge us. Is your spirituality more of a **Social Action Spirituality**? Is yours more a **Head Spirituality** or a **Heart Spirituality**? Or perhaps a more **Mystical Spirituality**? If you can't join us on Sunday, there will be worksheets available for you to work on your own to determine your Spiritual Type.

When we read Romans 8:26-27, we often get hung up on the phrase, “for we do not know how to pray as we ought.” I don't much care for the word ‘ought’ because it sounds a lot like ‘should’. Just as there is no one, single, correct Spirituality Type, there is no one, right way to pray. When we get hung up on this phrase, we often miss that these verses tell us that the Holy Spirit helps us by interceding (praying) on our behalf with groanings or sighs too deep for words. But not only that, God the Father searches hearts and knows the mind of the Spirit. God and the Spirit have already established prayer. Today in our prayer practices, our task is to tap into what God is already doing, the open door that God has already created.

In addition to helping folks identify their Spiritual Type(s), we will also be offering a suggested fixed prayer for the week as well as a topic or specific practice. Through spiritual conversations and personal sharing and modeling in the Adult Forum and in Worship we will be sharing ways that people can enrich their own prayer life.

Prayer is, perhaps first and foremost, about relationship, our relationship with God. Wherever you are in your own prayer practice, whatever you find meaningful in nurturing your relationship with God, know that God is with you wherever you are. But also remember that God loves us too much to simply leave us where we are. God is eager to be in continued relationship with us, delighted to be engaged.

We want everyone at Bethlehem to dive deeply into the Spiritual Practice of Fervent Prayer. If your Sunday morning responsibilities mean that you can only stay for the first 30 minutes of the Adult Forum, please feel free to come and go as you need. Thirty minutes in Prayer, Reflection, and Spiritual Conversation is better than nothing. To make sure everyone has a chance to be included we are also looking at having 30-minute sessions from 11:30-noon on Sunday mornings for everyone, but especially those who teach Sunday School or are on the technical side of worship. We will also be setting up a camera to broadcast our Adult Forum on the internet so that those who are at home can participate.

May God continue to bless us on our journeys into this New Year. And we close with the words of Jesus:

<sup>9</sup> “So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.” - Luke 11:9-10

<sup>41</sup> “Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”  
- Matthew 26:41

◇◇ Pastors Matt and John

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  
bethlehemplansing@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](http://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

# Worship in January 2023

## Assisting Ministers

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

## Children's Sermons

January 1 - Pastor Matt Smith  
January 8 - Pastor Matt Smith  
January 15 - Pastor John Burow  
January 22 - Pastor Matt Smith  
January 29 - 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 100<sup>th</sup> 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 [bethlehemplansing@gmail.com](mailto:bethlehemplansing@gmail.com) with the subject line **ANNIVERSARY STORY**, or brought to the church office.

**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

## PRIVILEGED TO BE GOD'S STEWARDS

Our Heavenly Father has called us to be his stewards (Genesis 1:28; 2:15), and he equips us as his stewards to use our time, talents, and resources faithfully for his purposes. Because stewardship is about serving, enabling, taking care of, funding, helping, and bringing hope and life to all, we should seek to have a better understanding of what it means to be faithful stewards in God's kingdom.

Through faith, we become God's stewards, and our deeds of stewardship come from being stewards. Stewardship is about receiving God's blessings thankfully, managing them faithfully, and giving them generously. One way to define stewardship is, "*Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the Church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.*"

Despite our weaknesses and unworthiness, God honors us with the privilege and responsibility to be stewards of all that has been entrusted to our care. "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received" (1 Peter 4:10). Growing in a biblical understanding of Christian stewardship is a continuing process. By our own strength, it is impossible for us to be God-pleasing stewards. To be God's stewards, we need the Holy Spirit to change our hearts. The Holy Spirit shapes and molds us through a lifelong process of sanctification so we can become trustworthy stewards. With new hearts, we embrace our role as God's stewards. We become new people who are God-centered rather than self-centered. We acknowledge that God owns, controls, and sustains all things. "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it," (Psalm 24:1). God not only calls us to be stewards, God equips us to accomplish the work that has been prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 4:10).

Being a steward is a relational concept. We do not live in isolation. Our primary relationship is with God, who has created and redeemed us through Jesus. We live to love and support our neighbors, and we want them to know Jesus as we do. As God's stewards, we live in relationship with creation, so we are not to misuse the earth, the seas, or the air.

As God's stewards, it is a mistake to view stewardship as only relating to managing and giving money. As we carry out our responsibilities as God's stewards, it involves the use of money, but it is much more. God's Word tells us that our stewardship involves all of life. Through faith, we believe that God is the creator, owner, and sustainer of all things, and has given us the wonderful privilege of being stewards.

### "Stewards Living With Purpose" (Commitment Forms)

In our Fall Stewardship program, we explored the purposes for which we have been created by God. In mid-November we mailed Commitment Forms and Time and Talent Sheets to every household. If you did not receive one or both forms, they are available at church on a table in the Social Hall or by calling the church office. The board of Stewardship and Finance appreciates knowing your financial commitments for the coming year as they are preparing the budget and forecasting needs. Simply return your form (keeping the bottom portion for your records) to the church office or in the offering plate on Sunday morning.

### Congregational Meeting

Our semi-annual Congregational Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 22, at 11:30 a.m.** We will also be emailing a Zoom link for those members who cannot attend in person. The agenda will include a Church Revitalization update, Financial Reports, the presentation of the 2023 Budget for review and approval, an update on the Mission Home, as well as the approval of additional folks to serve on Boards and Congregation Council. Please plan to be with us in person (or on Zoom) for this important meeting to keep God's mission moving forward at Bethlehem.

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## Bethlehem Lutheran Church Contributions

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Income includes all monies given for budgeted items such as heat, power, water, salaries, repairs, maintenance, ELCA Mission Support, support for Samaritas, local benevolence and board spending as of November 30, 2022.

### General Fund Operational:

*Expenses through November 30, 2022:*  
\$321,805.83

*Received through November 30, 2022:*  
\$283,750.38

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# Prayer Corner

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*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:

*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:** *John Bartel, Virginia Bauman, Tosha Brisbo  
Crystal Collins, Joann Dyer, Doug Griffin, Emma Hicks  
Marilyn Bass-Huyser, Nancy Jackson, Michael Mahoney  
Linda McClellan, Yvonne Nelson, Tharin Palmer, Carol Roush  
Connie Scott, Audrey Skidmore, Betty VanConant, Steve Viele  
Emily Viele, 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.



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

<i>Chris Browne – U.S. Air Force</i>	<i>Rusty Landry – U.S. Air Nat'l Guard</i>
<i>Tyler Barnes – U.S. Marines</i>	<i>Christopher Morgan – U.S. Marines</i>
<i>Darian Doan – U.S. Army</i>	<i>Ben Painter – U.S. Air Force</i>
<i>Andrew Devine – U.S. Nat'l Guard</i>	<i>Ryan Schiffner – U.S. Air Force</i>
<i>Carson Kosloski – U.S. Marines</i>	
<i>Joshua Kosloski – U.S. Army</i>	



**Pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers, asking for everything you need. To do this you must always be ready and never give up. Always pray for all God's people.**

*~ Ephesians 6:18*

# 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 NEWS

As my term as President ends, I want to say thank you for the opportunity and especially for the support over the past year or so. It has been a privilege learning so much about the work we do for one another, the church, and WELCA. I am excited to serve on the board in yet another role sharing the news of our work, our projects, and events we will have this year. This year we were able to gather for all of our general meetings and celebrate with a wonderful Christmas program last month. Thank you, James! FAB has been busy this year and our dedicated quilters produced and delivered 125 quilts this year to LWR. Circles were busy with their own projects as well collecting items for our own food bank and Loaves and Fishes Ministries. If you are not yet part of a circle, we would love you to visit one (or all three) to learn more. If you like to knit, crochet, or needle point, check out FAB, which meets the first Saturday of each month. If you know how to sew, tie or are interested in learning to quilt, the quilting group would love to have you. They meet on the second Wednesday of each month.

### January Happenings:

01/02/23	6:30 PM	Board meeting	Zoom
01/04/23	TBD	Bible Study Leaders Meeting	Conference Room
01/08/23	10:00AM	Installation of Officers	Sunday Worship
01/10/23	6:30 PM	Harmony Circle	L- Joann Alvera
01/11/23	9:00 AM	Quilting	Gym
01/16/23	0630 PM	Friendship Circle	L – Candy Barnes; H – Cindy Marsh
01/17/23	0100 PM	Rainbow Circle	L – TBA; H – Sandy Westover



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

<b>JANUARY 2023</b>		
<u>01</u> Matthew 2:13-23	<u>08</u> Matthew 3:13-17	<u>16</u> Isaiah 49:1-7
<u>02</u> Isaiah 63:7-9	<u>09</u> Isaiah 42:1-9	<u>17</u> 1 Corinthians 1:1-9
<u>03</u> Hebrews 2:10-18	<u>10</u> Acts 10:34-43	<u>18</u> Psalm 77
<u>04</u> 2 Timothy 1:1-7	<u>11</u> Romans 10:5-17	<u>19</u> John 4:46-54
<u>05</u> Isaiah 41:2-10	<u>12</u> Jeremiah 1:4-10	<u>20</u> Acts 4:23-31
<u>06</u> 1 Chron. 28:19-21	<u>13</u> Colossians 4:2-5	<u>21</u> Psalm 40:1-11
<u>07</u> Psalm 148	<u>14</u> Psalm 29	<u>22</u> Matthew 4:12-23
	<u>15</u> John 1:29-42	<u>23</u> Isaiah 9:1-4
		<u>24</u> 1 Corinth. 1:10-18
		<u>25</u> 2 Corinth. 5:16-21
		<u>26</u> Lamentations 3:19-32
		<u>27</u> James 1:12-18
		<u>28</u> Psalm 27:1-9
		<u>29</u> Matthew 5:1-12
		<u>30</u> Micah 6:1-8
		<u>31</u> 1 Corinth. 1:18-31

**To Our BELC Church Family,**

As you all know by now, our food pantry will be closing as of December 31, 2022. It's been an amazing run but it's time for a change. On January 1, 2023 we will become a mobile food pantry drop off, which will operate the second Wednesday of every month from 1 to 3 p.m. in our church parking lot. We feel that we can accommodate more families with less effort than our present system. Please bear with us as we start this new venture and pray for our success. I want to thank all our volunteers who have worked in our pantry over all these years to provide this service for all those less fortunate in our community. We simply could not have been successful without your generous support, so a great be THANK YOU to you all and may God Bless each and everyone of you.

Most Sincerely,  
Donald Telles  
Director, BLFP

**JANUARY  
BIRTHDAYS**

<b>Mary Bartel</b>	<b>Jan. 2</b>
<b>Elsie Leisure</b>	<b>Jan. 4</b>
<b>Deborah Gentilozzi</b>	<b>Jan. 10</b>
<b>Kurt Kollmeyer</b>	<b>Jan. 12</b>
<b>Audrey Olson</b>	<b>Jan. 12</b>
<b>Lois Cairns</b>	<b>Jan. 15</b>
<b>Brian Pickford</b>	<b>Jan. 15</b>
<b>Karren Nault</b>	<b>Jan. 16</b>
<b>Gloria Robbins</b>	<b>Jan. 19</b>
<b>Ann Gienapp</b>	<b>Jan. 23</b>
<b>Dick Rollis</b>	<b>Jan. 23</b>
<b>Laurey Wyble</b>	<b>Jan. 24</b>
<b>Kaye Alden</b>	<b>Jan. 25</b>
<b>Daniel Smith</b>	<b>Jan. 29</b>



**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.

## AWESOME DELIVERY TO LYONS ELEMENTARY!

On December 9 Betty Strother and I delivered underwear and winter outerwear to Lyons Elementary School. This is the second year that Bethlehem has helped children in our nearby school community to stay warm and dry, and the response to this outreach ministry this year was much greater and more impactful than last year! Thank you to all who made a donation! Winter outerwear is expensive, and when children are growing and changing sizes from year to year, many families can't keep up with the cost. Also, the school population changes every year with families moving in and out, meaning that new children arrive each year in need.

This year our donation was: **147 pairs of boys' and girls' underwear, 49 pairs of socks, 37 pairs of boots, 31 pairs of waterproof gloves, 30 snow pants, 5 hats, 2 scarves, and 1 winter hooded vest!**

When I let the school secretary Shari Martinez (that's her in the picture with us) know what we were bringing in our donations, she replied that we had **"outdone ourselves"**! I agree!

I am excited to share that we will be able to help the school families in yet another way, as well. Shari Martinez shared with me that hygiene kits would be very helpful for the school to have to give to needy families, and we are in a unique position to help with this! Bethlehem has been the fiduciary of a City of Lansing neighborhood grant that went unused by the Baker/Donora neighborhood since 2019. This money needed to be spent by the end of 2022 or it would go back to the city. This was never Bethlehem's money; we were only holders of the grant. Laurey Wyble did the paperwork needed to have the money reallocated for hygiene kits for Lyons families, and it was approved! We will be able to provide the school with **50 hygiene kits**, with the items for each one filling a 2-gallon baggie. The items have all been ordered in bulk and delivered, and in January they will be assembled at church and delivered to the school. Look for an update in the February newsletter on that delivery.

Thank you to Wendy Lamphier for making the marvelous display for the collection area, to Betty Strother for helping with the delivery to the school, to Laurey Wyble for her work in getting the grant money reallocated for us, to the Board of Outreach for supporting this endeavor, and especially to **THE MEMBERS OF BETHLEHEM** for your interest in and support of this outreach, making a difference in the lives of nearby children!

-Cindy Marsh



## REFLECTIONS OF PRAYER

*For prayer is nothing else than being on terms  
of friendship with God.*

~ Saint Teresa of Avila

Prayer is aligning ourselves with the purposes of God.

~ E. Stanley Jones

*'I do not understand the mystery of **grace** --  
only that it meets us where we are and does not leave us where it found us.'*

~ Anne Lamott

The less I pray, the harder it gets;  
the more I pray, the better it goes.

~ Martin Luther

*To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible  
than to be alive without breathing.*

~ Martin Luther



*“It will come to pass that before they call,  
I will answer;  
and while they are still speaking,  
I will hear.”*

~ Isaiah 65:24

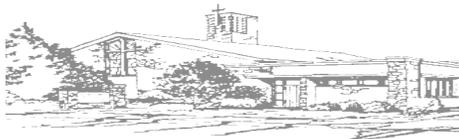
On behalf of all BELC's Seniors,

We thank you so much for honoring us with a scrumptious Christmas dinner. The TNT Youth graciously greeted us at the door and took our coats. We entered the fellowship hall in awe of the beautifully presented charcuterie tables prepared by Michelle Smith. Chef Jim Whitman and his kitchen crew outdid themselves with a gourmet Prime rib dinner. The apple pie topped off a lovely evening complete with Christmas carols playing softly throughout dinner. The youth were most attentive to every table by always keeping our glasses full. BELC is the BEST!!

Thank you.

# Bethlehem Star

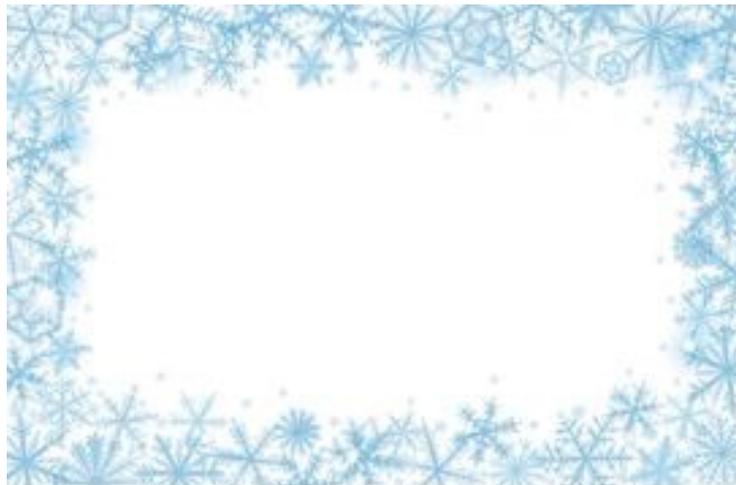
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Prayer is the exercise  
of drawing on  
the grace of God.  
~ Oswald Chambers

Newsletter Deadline is **January 16**  
for the **February 2023** Bethlehem Star.

Also available at  
[www.bethlutheran.org](http://www.bethlutheran.org)

In-Home Date: Saturday, December 31, 2022  
Mailed on December 28, 2022

