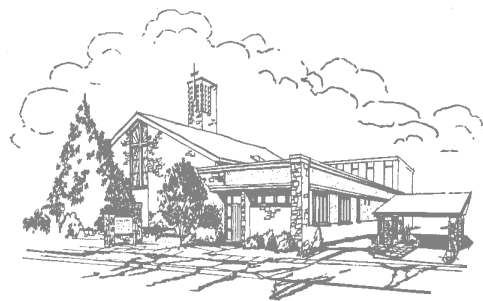


Bethlehem Star

Lutheran Church Lansing



Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lansing, Michigan

Congregation President Jim Whitman

April 2021

The past year has tested everyone of us in so many ways, but there is still a way to go before we can exhale and know we are on the other side of this. You will notice that I am purposely not using the words pandemic, coronavirus, or Covid-19. I am only stating them now because the situation is so obvious. We all know what we are facing, so I see no need to keep repeating them.

In response to our 'Returning to In-person Worship Survey' and other communications, many have shared their feelings on how the church should act and there are certainly differing points of view. The challenge for us all to put our own desires aside for what may be better for the greater good. Church leadership has been considering what is in the best interest of the entire congregation and we will continue to do that. Church leadership collectively misses regular activities and in-person worship just as much as all of our members. We need to embrace that understanding more than ever to allow us to overcome these unforeseen challenges. We are all one in Christ.

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! ~Psalm 133:1

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. ~2 Corinthians 13:11

None of the decisions that have been made have been easy and, as you can imagine, there have been passionate and heartfelt discussions. Council and church leadership has been united throughout the process while being conscious and considerate to the needs of the entire congregation and membership. Faith and trust in God have driven every decision that has been made. And every decision that has been made is subject to change based on things that are not in our control.

The following is what I feel we need to focus on as we approach what we hope is the beginning of a methodical approach to returning to what we all want, which is coming back together as a church family, in-person. These are the things that have been front of mind for these many months of decision making. It has been a balancing act of not putting people in harms way and keeping the desires of the congregation as a priority.

As we move forward we will need *patience, understanding, empathy, mutual-respect, confidence in God, and service* (but with a little more emphasis on patience). The related scriptures reflect what God would have us consider.

With regards to patience, for those of you who know me well, it is something that I struggle with. I want to be clear about this because I am talking to myself as well as to all of you. I know my limitations, which are many, and this is one of them. I know that we can work through this area together.

Patience

We all need to be patient in life and especially now. Without patience, it is impossible to serve God. In our challenges and temptation, we must remain undeterred and focused on our service to God. Patience is the ability to hold back and persevere through all forms of temptations and trials. In our anger, frustration, and suffering, we must be patient and trust God. This is one of the qualities we need to maintain as Christians.

Having said all that, the exact phrase, "patience is a virtue" is not in the Bible. It is a figure of speech used many years ago to illustrate patience as one of the virtues of Christians.

The following are verses from Scripture that relate to patience and may help us all work through this together:

Be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. ~Psalm 27:14

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised. ~Hebrews 10:36

But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. ~Romans 8:25

Understanding

Understanding does not only mean to comprehend what someone is saying or doing. When using understanding as an adjective, it means "sympathetically aware of other people's feelings; tolerant and forgiving".

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. ~Proverbs 19:21

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to sense other people's emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling.

Try to do what is good for others, not just what is good for yourselves. ~1 Corinthians

(continued on page 3)

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Congregation President
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Organist & Bell Choir Director
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

9:30 - Live Streaming
Worship Service
On Facebook
BELC Worship Group

Worship in April



Assisting Ministers

April 4 - Susan Mahoney
April 11 - Don Telles
April 24 - Bob Meeker

Children's Sermons

April 11 - Pastor Matt Smith
April 25 - Liisa Whitman

Resources to Nurture Faith and Spirituality

In our June/July newsletter we included a short list of resources you can use to strengthen your faith and spirituality, to deepen your relationship with God, especially in this time of crisis.

- Lutheran Hour Ministries <https://www.lhm.org/covid-19/> Daily Devotions, Learning Resources, and even kid's activities.
- Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations <https://cac.org/category/daily-meditations/>.
- Centering Prayer App from <https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/> available on Google Play and the App Store.

As you explore these resources, or engage in your own time of pray, ask yourself, "What is God inviting me to do in this time? What is God inviting Bethlehem to do?" My deepest prayer for all of you is that you will continually find ways to abide in God's love (John 15:9).

Virtual Worship

As a community we are continuing to worship at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/belcworship/>. The service is also uploaded to our YouTube channel each week.

Our Website

There is a button on the Home page for prayer requests and there is so much other information on our website. It is a great resource to keep you connected to the community of faith. I also encourage you to text "belcprayer" to 81010 to join our Prayer Corner 2.0.

God's Peace and Love,



Pastor Matt

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”

(continued from front page)

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. ~1 Thessalonians

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tender-hearted, and keep a humble attitude. ~1 Peter:3-8

Mutual Respect

Mutual respect is understanding that we all do not share the same beliefs and values. Respecting the values, ideas and beliefs of others while not imposing our own on others. Mutual respect is defined as a proper regard for the dignity of a person or position.

... even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many, so that they may be saved. ~1 Corinthians 1:33

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves. ~Philippians 2:3

Confidence in God

This means depending completely upon God and His strength to handle the things in your life. It is not the strength or the confidence that we put into earthly things.

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline. ~2 Timothy 1:7

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. ~Hebrews 4:16

But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. ~Jeremiah 17:7

Service

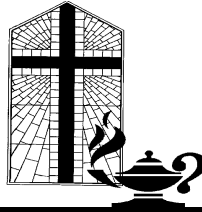
When you serve and give up your time and energy for someone else, you get emotionally and spiritually recharged. It gives more meaning to your life as a servant of Christ.

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. ~Proverbs 4:23

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ~Galatians 6:9

I pray that this message provides some clarity and brings you peace. Thank you and may God continue to bless Bethlehem!

Jim Whitman
Congregation President



Sharing the blessings we receive
from the Lord will surely give us joy!

**Make a gift to the
Bethlehem Evangelical
Lutheran Church
Endowment Fund**

A Note from Pastor Matt

...patience, understanding, empathy, mutual-respect, confidence in God, and service... That sounds like another set of Heroic Lutheran traits to me! :) (maybe for Lent 2022?)

We are working to take steps to get back to in-person worship. **We will begin OUTDOOR worship in the parking lot on Sunday mornings, starting May 2, at 10:30 AM.**

In the last year I have targeted three different dates for when I hoped we might be able to begin limited, in-person worship in the building. Every time I thought I had found a date, cases have started to go up at an accelerating rate. And this has happened again. The tentative date in my mind now is that perhaps we could begin as early as **Sunday, May 23**. Now, that date has not been discussed by the Board of Worship Life, and would require Council approval. So, we will discuss. The one thing that is different now is that MANY of our regular attendees have been vaccinated. We will still have to wear masks, and take all of the necessary precautions. But, maybe?

My selfish goal since the beginning of all this has been to not do anything that would get people killed. Your safety is what matters to me. My faith tells me that, yes, God would be glorified by our worshipping together in-person. But, do you know what would bring God even more glory? If we were all still alive when this is over! Maybe vaccines that are 90% effective change that? Maybe I should be willing to take the smaller risk of getting someone killed. Would that bring God glory? ... I am glad we have a Congregation Council to make these difficult decisions! So, we will discuss.

If that date doesn't work, I am sure I'll pick another for hope's sake. Regardless of what happens with that May 23rd date, we **WILL** begin having outdoor worship at 10:30 AM in the parking lot (as long as it's not raining sideways) on Sundays beginning May 2. And we will still have the entire service produced beforehand and available on Facebook and YouTube.

But, the GOOD NEWS is that, when all this is over, the tomb will still be empty! Jesus will still be Risen! Alleluia!



Pastor Matt

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 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

Those at home: *Mary Ann Allen, Virginia Bauman, Mary Brenke, Lois Cairns, Marv Cole, Crystal Collins, Ruth Ferguson, Doug Griffin, Jim Hicks, Rhoda Hunter, Nancy Jackson, Kurt Kollmeyer, Marilyn Kostrzewski, Michael Mahoney, Linda McClellan, Yvonne Nelson, Tharin Palmer, John Ransom, Bob Robbins, Carol Roush, Audrey Skidmore, Don Spencley, Cheryl VanPatten, Dorothy Weber, Ron Wescott, 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.

SEMINARY STUDENT Jason Mills, from BELC, is studying at Gettysburg Theological Seminary. Please keep him in your prayers.

MISSION PARTNERS Pray for the people and ministry at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Pray for the Baker Neighborhood Partners and Officer Jake Kocan, LPD Community Police Officer and other first responders.



Pastoral Acts:

Funeral:

Duane Everett

March 19, 2021

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

Chris Browne – U.S. Air Force

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

Jake Sonnenberg – U.S. Army

Eric Wheeler – U.S. Army



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

APRIL 1 - MAUNDY THURSDAY

Live streaming 7:30 p.m.

APRIL 2 - GOOD FRIDAY

Live streaming 7:30 p.m.

APRIL 3 - EASTER PRAYER VIGIL

APRIL 4 - EASTER SUNDAY

Live streaming 9:30 a.m.



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 did not meet in March as there was not any business to discuss. With the Covid 19 numbers declining the Church Council is considering when members can safely come back into the church building. We all wait anxiously for that day. In the meantime, please consider sending an offering to the BELCW, you may mail your offering directly to Carole Kienke at 13625 Pearwood, DeWitt 48820, make payable to BLECW.



Dear Congregation,

This is a big thank you to all who sent us a 50th Anniversary greeting card for January 16th.

Thank you also for the lovely 50th Anniversary trophy plaque.

We found out early in our return to Bethlehem after living in Hudsonville, Grandville, and Newaygo County, where Larry built USA beautiful log houses, that Ken & Peggy Teter share the same day and year as ours!!!

Love,
Virginia & Larry Bauman

Thank you so much for your help. It is greatly appreciated. Your generous donation helps keep the Reconciliation Center and the Job Corp. active.

Thank you!!

Falina Esparza, Myron Shaw, Marty G., Edith Clifford, Virgil, Chevie Goings, Daneen M., Jamie Pacer, Shy, Robet Lenz

Speak the truth in humility to all people. Only then can you be a true man. ~ Lakota Wisdom

Thank you so much for posting your Sunday services on YouTube. My sister, Gloria Robbins, sends me the link via email.

Enclosed is a check, please use where it may be needed most.

Thank you!
Carol Pratt

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ!

Oh my! I'm so blessed to have your prayers and support, STILL!!!!

I look forward to ministry together!

Pastor Max

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

APRIL

01 John 13:1-35
02 John 18:1-19:42
03 Psalm 31:9-16
04 Mark 16:1-8
05 Acts 10:34-43
06 1 Corinth. 15:1-11
07 John 21:1-18

08 John 11:1-27
09 Matthew 28:1-20
10 Psalm 118:1-24
11 John 20:19-31
12 Acts 4:32-35
13 1 John 1:1-2:2
14 Hebrews 11:1-40
15 2 Corinth. 4:7-18

16 2 Corinthians 5:6-10
17 Psalm 133
18 Luke 24:36-48
19 Acts 3:12-19
20 1 John 3:1-7
21 Joshua 1:1-9
22 2 Timothy 3:14-17
23 Nehemiah 8:1-8

24 Psalm 4
25 John 10:11-18
26 Acts 4:5-12
27 1 John 3:16-24
28 Genesis 49:22-28
29 Mark 6:30-44
30 Ezekiel 34:20-31
31 Psalm 23

April Birthday's

Margaret Sergent	April 1
Joe Shreffler	April 2
Dana Stevens	April 5
Allan Haas	April 6
Ken Boyd	April 8
Susan Leimenstoll	April 10
William Huntley	April 12
Don Spencley	April 12
Jim Whitman	April 14
Otto Kern	April 15
Paul Lentz	April 16
Janie Buchner	April 18
Patrick North	April 19
Larry Cummings	April 20
Tim Carpenter	April 22
Debra Reemsnyder	April 25

Marv Halbakken	April 27
Jack Bauknecht	April 28
Sandra Johnson	April 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.

EASTER FLOWERS GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD

TO THE GLORY OF GOD IN MEMORY OF

Jonathon David Westover given by Sandra and David Westover
Ronald Kienke given by Carole Kienke
Don Martin given by Dorothy Martin
Loved ones given by Cheryl & Joe Shreffler
Our Parents Rusty & Else Schalkhauser, Allan & Lila Emmert
Given by Joni & Jim Schalkhauser
My Mother Ida give by Mary Bartel
Loved ones given by The Ferguson and Snider families
Nadine & Roland Robbins given by Bob & Gloria Robbins
Helen & Arthur Pratt given by Gloria & Bob Robbins
Annamary VanNortwick given by Karren Reish
Linda Reish given by Karren Reish
Mary Alice & John Snider given by The Snider Family



TO THE GLORY OF GOD IN HONOR OF

To all who provided for the BELC Worship in these challenging times
Given by Sandra & David Westover
Our Grand-children given by Joe & Cheryl Shreffler
Our Bethlehem Family given by Joe & Cheryl Shreffler
Pa & Grandma (Keith & Ruth Ferguson) given by Amanda, Noah,
Jacob, Jonah, Andrew, Keith & Rose
Jacob & Jonah Schneider given by Grandma & Grandpa Snider
The Viele Family given by Joni & Jim Schalkhauser
John & Darlene Sutherland given by Gloria & Bob Robbins
Carol Pratt given by Gloria & Bob Robbins

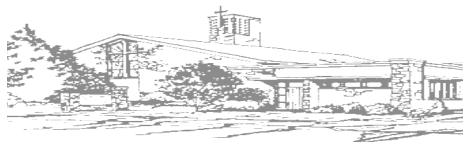
TO THE GLORY OF GOD

Given by Kathy Halligan
Given by Susan & Michael Mahoney



Bethlehem Star

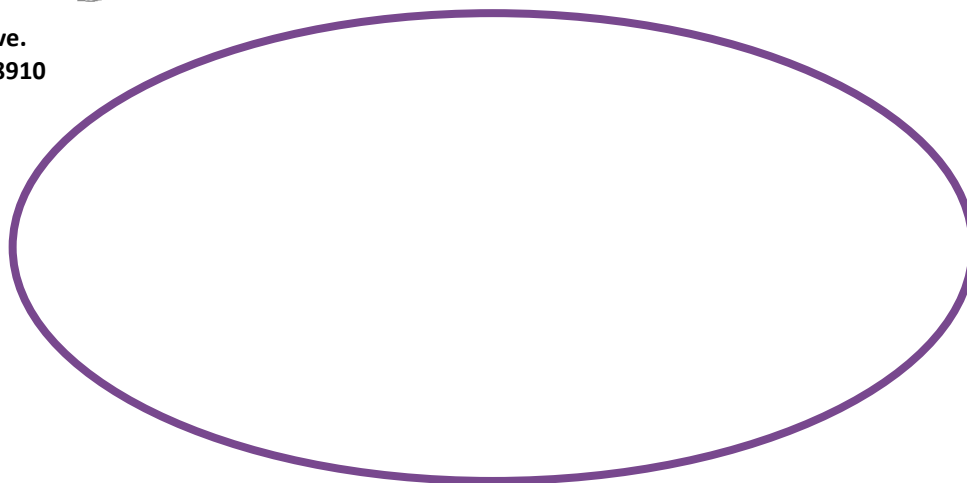
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Newsletter Deadline is **April 15**
for the **May 2021** Bethlehem Star.

Also available at
www.bethlutheran.org

In-Home Date: April 3, 2021
Mailed on March 30, 2021

April
2021