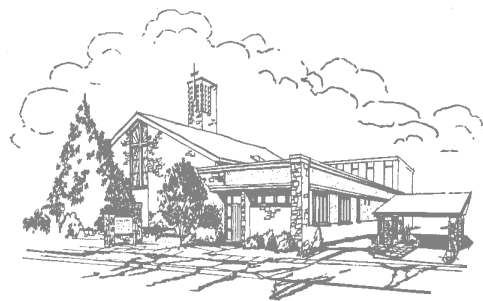


Bethlehem Star

Lutheran Church Lansing

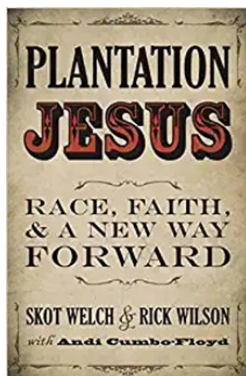


Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lansing, Michigan

Pastor Matt

November 2020

The scribe said to Jesus, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." Mark 12:32-34



Racial Justice Book Study

Our Wednesday night book study will continue with *Plantation Jesus* start Wednesday, November 11, at 6:30 pm. From Google Books:

Through their shared passion for Jesus Christ and with an unblinking look at history, church, and pop culture, the authors of *Plantation Jesus*, Skot Welch and Rick Wilson, detail the manifold ways that racism damages the church's witness. Together Welch and Wilson take on common responses by white Christians to racial injustice, such as "I never owned a slave," "I don't see color; only people," and "We just need to get over it and move on." Together they call out the church's denials and dodges and evasions of race, and they invite readers to encounter the Christ of the disenfranchised. With practical resources and Spirit-filled stories, *Plantation Jesus* nudges readers to learn the history, acknowledge the injury, and face the truth. Only then can the church lead the way toward true reconciliation. Only then can the legacy of *Plantation Jesus* be replaced with the true way of Jesus Christ.

If you would like to be part of this study please email me at pastormattsmith@gmail.com.

Availability

As we have returned to online only worship as the weather turns cold, if you would like to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, please contact me at 517-881-9890. We can meet at the church to share in the Eucharist. If you are not able to get out, with your family's permission, I can also briefly visit you in your home and bring communion. A visit of less than 15 minutes while wearing masks is the safest way, and a risk I am willing to take, again, with your family's permission. If you would like to connect I am available by phone 9:00 am – 9:00 pm. If you need to talk with me in an emergency I am available outside of those times. Simply call, leave a brief voicemail message, and then call again.

Organ

A larger, color photo of the 'new to us' organ was included in the October newsletter. We have engaged Follow-Hebert Organ Co. from Eaton Rapids to handle the installation of this beautiful instrument. They are developing a plan for installing the organ in such a way that the congregation will be bathed in its beautiful sound when we are ready to worship again in person. Speakers that came with the organ are being painted white so that they will blend into our worship space. Other speakers will remain in the organ chamber.



Walking Wednesday Video

In late August we filmed a Walking Wednesday video for the Baker Neighborhood in South Lansing highlighting Bethlehem and our ministry, the Family Growth Center, and the Landbank. The video aired on Lansing's public access channel on Wednesday, October 21. If you would like to view the video you can follow this link: <https://youtu.be/aDrBIWtW9n4>.

Even in this time of pandemic, Bethlehem is continuing to faithfully express our love for God and our neighbors.

God of creation—all-knowing God—we face trials and days when things don't go the way we want. Help us to know that you are still by our side. You rule the world and know what the future holds for us. We lift our praise to you for being with us during the rough times when we can't see what our future holds. Amen.



Pastor Matt

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
bethlehelmsing@gmail.com
(517) 482-3225

Parish Administrator
Vicki Leighton
belcparishadm@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. - 2:30 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 November

Assisting Ministers

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

Children's Sermons

November 1 - need someone
November 8 - need someone
November 15 - Pastor John Burow
November 22 - need someone
November 29 - need someone

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

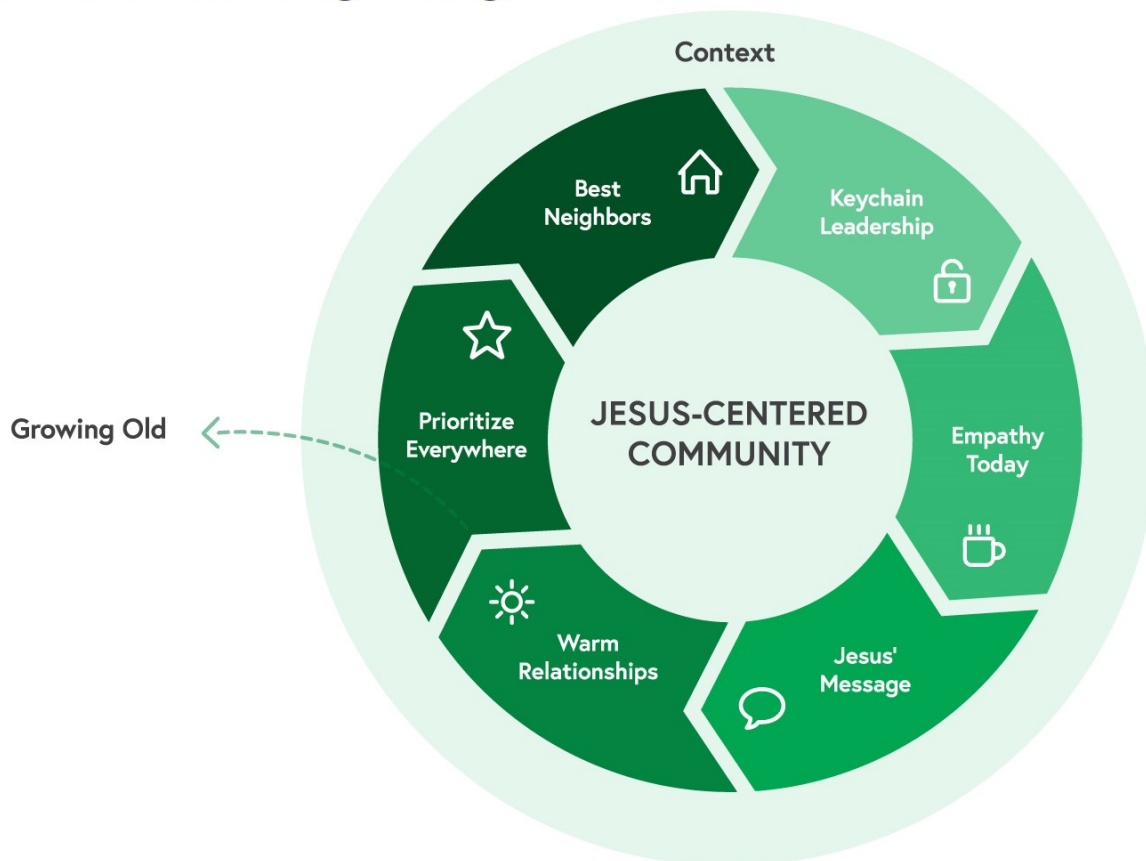
Stewardship



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

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

The 6 Core Commitments of Churches Growing Young



Unlock keychain leadership:

Instead of centralizing authority, empower others—especially young people.

Empathize with today's young people:

Instead of judging or criticizing, step into the shoes of this generation.

Take Jesus' message seriously:

Instead of asserting formulaic gospel claims, welcome young people into a Jesus-centered way of life.

Fuel a warm community:

Instead of focusing on cool worship or programs, aim for warm peer and intergenerational friendships.

Prioritize young people (and families) everywhere:

Instead of giving lip service to how much young people matter, look for creative ways to tangibly support, resource, and involve them in all facets of your congregation.

Be the best neighbors:

Instead of condemning the world outside your walls, enable young people to neighbor well locally and globally.

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we continue to work through these uncertain times individually and as a congregation, I find that as unsettling as things are, there is still much to be hopeful and thankful for. None of us could have predicted where the world is today, but the one thing we could predict and know is that God is with us. He has been faithful to us in the past, today and will be in the future with His unending love. God has encouraged us that if we believe in Him, He will give us strength, no matter what we are dealing with. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “God does not give us everything we want, but He does fulfill His promises, leading us along the best and straightest paths to Himself”.

The point of this message is that we must as a congregation continue to remain united in the hope of better days and trust in our approach to the pandemic. Proverbs 3:5-6 says: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths”*.

There are certainly questions within the congregation regarding the decisions and policies that Council and church leadership have developed to deal with the once in a lifetime health crisis that we are all living through. That is fair and we will continue to be proactive in providing all the information that we can to keep everyone apprised of where we are today and next steps. The main focus has been and will continue to be the health and safety of this congregation. While some may wonder why we are not resuming all activities and in-person worship, please know that we continue to daily monitor the situation in our primary area of concern for Bethlehem and our decisions are not based on the overall picture for the state. We have finally received all the sanitization equipment and associated supplies that will allow us to be prepared for the time when the coronavirus is in a downward trend regarding infection and positivity rate. Unfortunately, we are experiencing another spike in both of those areas and that keeps us further from being able to predict when we can consider any level of normal activities within the church building. The ultimate goal is to resume normal church life as soon as possible, but it will not be before we have the data we need to make the correct decision for all of you.

I have written many letters, newsletter articles and spoken to this congregation a great deal over the years, but I must say that it is somewhat of a challenge at times now because of the state of the world we are living in. In the past, we have talked about visions, plans and hope for the future works of Bethlehem. Now we are talking about remaining hopeful and faithful to a future that we have no control over. Although the immediate future is uncertain at best, I want us to continue to believe that our best days are ahead of us. Some days are easier than others as we all face isolation from family and friends that we love and miss. We are also isolated from our church family and the mission work that we do together. The fellowship that is on hold is something that we all need and pray will resume sooner than later.

We know that God is always with us waiting for us to hear what He is telling us. We can make all the plans in the world and think we have things under control, but we need to realize that God is revealing himself to us and that He is in control. We need to look for God in times like this.

“Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go”. ~ Joshua 1:9

In closing, I would like to thank you for your ongoing faithfulness and financial support to the mission of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Through your continued generosity, our work with The Greater Lansing Food Bank, Pine Ridge Reservation, our Mission Home, Lansing SAVE, holiday food baskets, the ongoing business of the church, and many other initiatives continue during this time. You are truly a blessing and Bethlehem would not continue to thrive without you.

In God's peace,
Jim Whitman
Congregation President

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
Rhoda Hunter in Holt Senior Care and Rehab Center

Those at home: Mary Ann Allen, Virginia Bauman, Mary Brenke
Marv Cole, Crystal Collins, Ruth Ferguson, Doug Griffin, Ernie Hassell
Jim Hicks, Ellie Ibarra, Carole Kienke, Kurt Kollmeyer, Marilyn Kostrzewski
Michael Mahoney, Linda McClellan, Teri Meeker, John Nelson
Yvonne Nelson, Tharin Palmer, John Ransom, Gloria Robbins
Bob Robbins, Carol Roush, Audrey Skidmore, Don Spencley
Cheryl VanPatten, 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 and the Baker Neighborhood Partners.



Pastoral Acts:

Interment:

Chris Ransom October 13, 2020

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



taking faith home

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

NOVEMBER

01 Matthew 23:1-12	08 Matthew 25:1-13	16 Zephaniah 1:7-18	24 Ephesians 1:15-23
02 Micah 3:5-12	09 Amos 5:18-24	17 1 Thess. 5:1-11	25 Psalm 100
03 1 Thess. 2:9-13	10 1 Thess. 4:13-18	18 Judges 4:1-7	26 Isaiah 1:16-20
04 Joshua 3:7-17	11 Joshua 24:1-25	19 Psalm 123	27 Amos 5:10-15
05 Psalm 107	12 Psalm 78:1-7	20 Philemon 1:4-7	28 Psalm 95:1-7
06 James 3:13-18	13 Luke 21:29-37	21 Psalm 90:1-12	29 Mark 13:24-37
07 Psalm 43	14 Psalm 70	22 Matthew 25:31-46	30 Isaiah 64:1-9
	15 Matthew 25:14-30	23 Ezekiel 34:11-24	31 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

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.

THANKOFFERING IS NOVEMBER 15

This year's Thankoffering Sunday will be different. Because we are not able to worship in church we are asking that you mail a check for the total of your Thankoffering container. Please make your check payable to BELCW and mail to Carole Kienke, 13625 Pearwood, Dewitt, 48820, by November 15th. If you have any questions please contact Peggy Teter at 281-2713.



2020 CHEER BAGS/BOXES

Because of the pandemic we need to organize and deliver our Cheer Bags differently. We are asking you to drop off your items at the church where they will be put in a box. Laura Halbakken and Joanna Alvera will be filling decorative boxes that will be mailed to the recipients. Watch your email for a message from your Circle Chair with the items your Circle has been assigned and the deadline for the donations. The BELCW Board thanks you in advance for your donations.

NOVEMBER 16 BELCW BIBLE STUDY

All women of Bethlehem are invited to join the Zoom Bible Study. The Study is based on the November Gather magazine. Your Circle chair will send out the Zoom invitation via email on November 15 with the information to join the meeting. If you are not in a Circle but would like to participate please contact Jamie Andrews (president) or any BELCW board member for the invitation. Dorothy Martin will be leading the November Bible Study.

BELCW Board is still in need of a Vice President for 2021.

The VP 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.

**All women members of BELC are members of the BELCW.
Please consider volunteering.**

Community Partners:



- November has five Sundays, so we will be making another contribution to the future of our neighborhood (and BELC) kids. Bethlehem has partnered with Lansing SAVE since early 2019 and your generosity continues to affirm and encourage students to strive for a future that holds options for continued education. We support those Lansing School District students who are BELC members or live in the Baker Neighborhood.

For more information about the program go to: <https://www.lansingmi.gov/674/Lansing-SAVE>

- On November 7th, the City of Lansing is hosting neighborhood leaf clean-ups. In conjunction with their event, B&G is hosting our FALL CHURCH CLEAN-UP. More details can be found below.

BELC/Building News:

- The Board of Buildings and Grounds has secured a month-to-month contract with Boling Janitorial Service, Inc. The custodial position has been re-posted as our congregation is used to the benefits of having an in-house person doing our cleaning. **If you know someone who would be interested in the custodial position, please have them contact the church office or one of the board members.** Please, if you see something that needs attention, email Vicki @ belcparishadmin@gmail.com.
- Wow, who knew this process would take so long. We have not yet paid for the boiler project, but it should be completed. Timing is good as the weather continues to baffle us.
- We missed the spring clean-up this year, so our grounds really need attention. If you have some time and would like to help with some of the beds, or weed-encroached areas, please contact the Board or Vicki in the office. On November 7th, Buildings and Grounds Board will meet for the formal and final work day, late morning through early afternoon. If you would like to help, but are concerned about 'distancing', please schedule some time during that first week in November to bring your small group to the church and help us out.
- We have begun the process of training folk on the use of our electrostatic Clorox machine. Small group guidelines must be evaluated as the State's guidelines are no longer relevant. When we have an updated reopening plan from Congregation Council, we can begin the process of allowing small groups to use the building.
- COVID 19 Protocols have been established for the protection of our congregation. We limit access to the church building, use sign-in sheets to facilitate contact tracing, and use signage to inform people of the rules.

When individuals feel they do not need to follow the rules, for whatever reason, the ability of the entire congregation to meet in person is impacted. If we cannot protect our congregants according to the guidelines established by Congregation Council, we may have to re-evaluate our opening timeline.

Please be respectful of your church family and those who work in the building. Thank you.

November Birthdays

Marilyn Clark	Nov. 1
Carol Roush	Nov. 2
Gary Danbrook	Nov. 4
Norma MacKenzie	Nov. 5
Marilyn Bass-Huyser	Nov. 14
Jeff Kosloski	Nov. 15
Connie Meeker	Nov. 15
Marv Cole	Nov. 18
Cheryl Shreffler	Nov. 20
Eleanor Finn	Nov. 21
William Puffenberger	Nov. 22
Susan Mahoney	Nov. 23
Vicki Leighton	Nov. 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.

SENIOR DINNER

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church is pleased to announce that the Annual Senior Dinner will take place on Sunday, December 13, 2020!

This will be a comfort food “take out” meal consisting of:

- Beef Pot Roast
- Mashed Potatoes with gravy
- Glazed carrots
- Dinner salad
- Dinner roll
- Pie

Those Seniors that would like to indulge will need to call the church office to place your “take out” order and indicate how many meals per household. More information regarding the pick-up process to come, but we wanted to let you know that your special day will still take place.

God bless you and take care,
‘Chef’ Whitman

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Given this unusual year, Bethlehem will not be ordering Poinsettias for Christmas. To all those who have ordered poinsettias to adorn the Sanctuary for Christmas in past years, we say thank you. We hope to carry on this tradition in 2021!



We want to express our heartfelt thank you to our dear friends at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Your cards, condolences, phone calls and prayers on the illness and passing of our dear wife and mother, Christine Ransom, have helped us through a very difficult time.

A special thank you to Pastor Matt for the hospital visits, phone calls, and prayers, and also to Pastor John Burow.

Your love and support has meant the world to us over the years, especially these past few months during Christine's illness and passing.

Thank you for always being there for us in our time of need.

Much love to all of you XOXO
The John Ransom Family

Dear Friends,

The Outreach Board has decided to provide food baskets again this holiday season. Due to COVID, we cannot accept any food donations as we have historically. We currently have almost half of the money we need to purchase all the food from two suppliers so we could use your financial help. If you traditionally purchased food, we are asking that you take the money you would normally spend on Thanksgiving donations and send that in this year.

We would appreciate a monetary donation in any amount. For the next two weeks (until Fri., Nov. 13) we ask that you send your donation to the church. (549 E. Mt. Hope Ave, Lansing, 48910) Please make sure you write "Thanksgiving Food Baskets" on the Memo line, so it goes to the correct account.

For those who prefer to donate online, we have an option for you also. Go to our website (Bethlutheran.org) and scroll down to the bottom of the page. Click on "Online Giving" (blue and red button). On the OTHER FUND line you can make your donation but you must type in **Thanksgiving food baskets** to specify where the money needs to be put. Please note, this process does cost a few dollars which you can pay extra for, or the processing fee will be taken out of your overall donation amount.

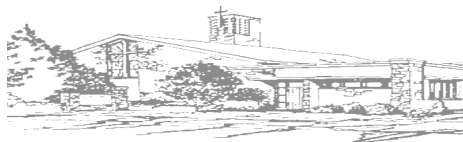
And finally, if you are a Bethlehem family that needs help this holiday and you have not received a letter from us, please call Tracy in the office as soon as possible so you can be added to our list at 517-482-3225.

Thank you for all you do for others.
Liisa Whitman
On behalf of the Outreach Board

*"You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land."
~ Deuteronomy 15:11b*

Bethlehem Star

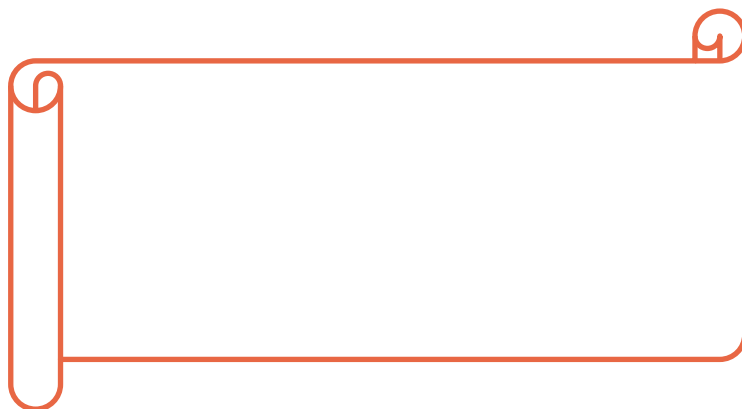
Lutheran Church Lansing



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



November 1st

Newsletter Deadline is **October 15**
for the **November 2020** Bethlehem Star.

Also available at
www.bethlutheran.org

In-Home Date: October 3, 2020
Mailed on September 30, 2020



November 2020