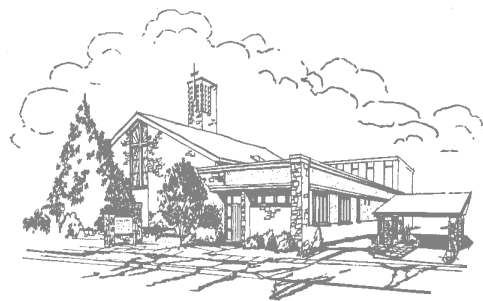


Bethlehem Star

Lutheran Church Lansing



Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lansing, Michigan

Pastor Matt

May 2020

I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground.
- Isaiah 42:16

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.
- Luke 1:78-79

Things do seem a little dark and a little rough right now, but from the prophet Isaiah we hear the promise that God will turn our darkness into light. It might seem difficult for you to see light at the end of the tunnel that is this pandemic. The roughness that has been the rising number of deaths from COVID-19 infections will be smoothed once again into level ground.

But by the tender mercy of God, as we read in the gospels, the dawn from on high has come. Light shines upon us in Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world. He is with us as we journey in the shadow of death, guiding us into the light.

Returning to In-Person Worship

I know that many of you are wondering when we will be able to worship in church again. *My main goal directing WHEN and HOW we come back together is to not get anyone killed!* I know this sounds harsh, a little dark and a little rough, and I never imagined I would be writing such words in a church newsletter, or anywhere. The Mutual Ministry Committee is working on a detailed recommendation they will present to the Congregation Council. We are seeking input from the Board of Worship Life and others.

Cleaning guidelines will be clear and thorough. We have no date set at this time, as we will be following recommendations from our governor, our bishop, and state and local medical professionals. In the short term, when our “Stay Home. Stay Safe” order is lifted, I will begin streaming Sunday morning worship from the sanctuary at church, rather than my dining room table.

When the Congregation Council does decide, based on the recommendations, that people can gather together again for worship, they will also set guidelines for when it is safe for us to SING in church and when it is safe for us to have COMMUNION once again. The idea that it might be MONTHS before we can safely sing together or share the Eucharist, grieves me deeply, but what would grieve me even more deeply would be someone needlessly dying because we sang a hymn or shared the bread and wine of Holy Communion.

Yes, dark and rough indeed! The two verses from scripture I shared at the beginning were from the *Daily Texts* appointed for today as I write this on May 6. I could not have picked better verses to share with you. And I will close with the appointed prayer for today:

*Merciful Lord, be the lamp unto our feet and the light in the dark spaces of our lives.
Your unending love is a comfort in times of trial. Amen.*

Your Servant in Christ,

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
bethlehemplansing@gmail.com
(517) 482-3225

Parish Administrator
Laurey Wyble
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
8:30 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 May

Assisting Ministers for May & June:

May 10: Don Telles	June 7: Don Telles
May 17: Bob Meeker	June 14: Phil Frame
May 24: Susan Mahoney	June 21: Bob Meeker
May 31: Crystal Collins	June 28: Nancy Holderread

Resources to Nurture Faith and Spirituality

This is a short, far from complete list of resource that you can use to strengthen your faith and spirituality, 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.

Facebook

As a community we are continuing to worship at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/belcworship/>. You will find the Parish Notes and Worship Bulletin available for download. Taking Faith Home is also available for download every week.

In order to take advantage of these resources and be part of our live community, you must be on Facebook and ask to join BELC Worship. In order to receive a link to the service each week we must have an email address for you in our system.

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.

Pastor's Blog

I will be writing a bit each Wednesday, usually. The blog will be located on our website with links posted on our social media.

Zoom

BELCW Bible Studies will still be able to happen through Zoom. Board Meetings can use Zoom too. And we will have occasional Zoom coffee hours...

Statement of Purpose and Guiding Principles for Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church

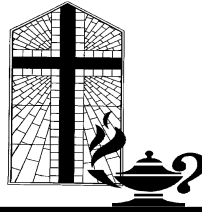
God's purpose for our church, as disciples of Jesus Christ, is to share with all people God's word, love and saving grace.

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**

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2-4

Caring and compassion

As our church family continues to be separated for the foreseeable future, it will be more important than ever to stay connected through social media, phone calls, texts and cards. As each day seems to be the same as the day before, we should have hope knowing that God is with us and bringing some sunshine to our faces. Being able to open windows, go for a walk or bike ride, or sitting in the sun can take our minds off the uncertainty that we are all dealing with. Even though our ability to meet and worship together is on hold for now, meetings and some Circles are being conducted via Zoom. This new technology medium allows us to continue to address the timely needs of keeping Bethlehem operating, as well as to see the faces of those we have been isolated from for too long. Church Council, Mutual Ministry, Stewardship and Finance, and Building and Grounds are groups that I have been actively meeting with and there may be more that I am not aware of. Our Food Pantry continues to operate on a regular basis with new safety protocols in place to keep our volunteers and those we serve safe. This service will continue to be important mission work that Bethlehem has faithfully sustained for many years.

It is a certainty that we are all feeling a sense of the unknown during all of this and that is okay. We have strength in numbers knowing that we are all in this together, however long it lasts. We also have the strength and peace of God being with each of us at the same time. As much as we long to be in our beloved sanctuary together, we can find some level of peace knowing we are together in spirit praying for each other and the same healing outcome for the world.

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Funding

I am sure that everyone has heard about the PPP introduced from the federal government when the pandemic reached critical mass on the economy. It is a program that provides for forgivable loans from the Small Business Association and executed through large and local banks. As a qualifying 501c3 entity with the government, Bethlehem was eligible to apply for funds that would help cover payroll, health insurance, pension contributions and utilities during this uncertain time. Church Council discussed and approved the plan to apply and that application process was managed by our Parish Administrator, Laurey Wyble and our Treasurer, Vicki Leighton. Our application was submitted through our relationship with MSU FCU in the first round of funding, but was not approved because the funding ran out in a matter of days. However, I am pleased to inform you that Bethlehem was approved in the recent second round of funding and we received the sum of \$38,700.00 to assist with payroll and utilities during this time. The loan will be forgiven as long as the funds are used for the two areas mentioned (and that will be done), so it is not a loan that will need to be paid back. It is important to know that our financial position has remained steady during this time, as your continued faithful offerings have been sent to the church, even as we are not able to have regular worship services. This additional PPP funding is a blessing for Bethlehem and we will use it in the manner required with gratefulness. Our continued stewardship to Bethlehem will be needed as well and a sincere thank you for your faithfulness and generosity.

Continued on page 4

Boiler Update

Another topic that has been discussed for many years is the need to replace the church boiler. The board of Buildings and Grounds had been working on getting three bids to replace it long before the pandemic hit and that work has continued. Council has been kept apprised of the process and felt it was important to support the process and approved the recommendation from B&G that the bid from McNamara Heating and Cooling, Mason MI be accepted in the amount of \$18,085.00. An additional contingency amount will be used should any incidental costs arise in the amount of approximately 10%. The following is a breakdown of where the funding will come from to pay for the project:

Total bid	\$18,085.00
Buildings and Grounds Long Term Capital Account	10,084.26
Endowment Fund	4,000.00
Remaining balance	4,000.74

Stewardship and Finance will be meeting soon to determine where the remaining balance will come from. In addition, as we did with the stained-glass window project, if anyone would like to contribute to the project individually, that would be greatly appreciated. Any checks contributed to the project should be directed to the boiler project. The project is approved and will be moving forward with updates conveyed to the congregation.

Council/Mutual Ministry

As I mentioned earlier, Council and Mutual Ministry are meeting regularly to keep abreast of the on-going church business that must be conducted. It is amazing how much can be done electronically and our creativeness has proven to be efficient. Church leadership wants you to know that even though we are not in the building for meetings, the work of Bethlehem continues and we have a wonderful group of people serving on Council, boards and committees looking out for the best interests of our church and congregation.

As I close out this message, I would ask that you continue to pray for and support Pastor Matt as he leads us through this unprecedented time. Our Sunday morning live-stream service is a comfort to us all and I can't convey how much time and work it takes for Pastor Matt to put it all together. It is easy for us to sit at home drinking a cup of coffee watching and not have an appreciation for all that goes on to make it happen. I can tell you personally that the music production and coordination is a massive undertaking. I know this because the production and coordination is happening in our home, by none other than my wife. It is my job to stay out of the way and work on these messages that I so enjoy sending to you all.

May God's peace be with you all,
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:

Janenne Grinnell in Ingham Co. Medical Care Facility

Shelby Waters in The Willows at Okemos

Those at home: *Mary Ann Allen, Virginia Bauman, Mary Brenke, Crystal Collins, Ernie Hassell, Nancy Holderread, Rhoda Hunter, Carol Kinney, Kurt Kollmeyer, Marilyn Kostrzewski, Michael Mahoney, Linda McClellan, Yvonne Nelson, Tharin Palmer, Chris Ransom, Bob Robbins, Carol Roush, Audrey Skidmore, Don Spencley, Cheryl VanPatten, Ron Wescott*

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.

PRAY FOR JASON MILLS Jason 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.



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
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



May Birthdays

Betty Strother	May 3
Robert Meeker	May 4
Carolyn Kosloski	May 5
Ken Teter	May 6
Jean Chandler	May 8
Joyce Rothenberger	May 8
Connie Scott	May 10
Nancy Pickford	May 12
Donna Bernitt	May 14
Keith Ferguson	May 15
Joanne Dyer	May 17
Linda Butts	May 18
Karen Cote'	May 18
John Nelson	May 25
Don Telles	May 25

Sally Davison	May 26
Diane Miller	May 27
Julie Clark	May 29
Dorothy VanConant	May 30



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.

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

<u>MAY</u>	<u>08</u> Romans 12:9-18	<u>16</u> Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16	<u>24</u> John 17:1-11
<u>01</u> Matthew 14:13-21	<u>09</u> Psalm 23	<u>17</u> John 14:15-21	<u>25</u> Acts 1:6-14
<u>02</u> Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19	<u>10</u> John 14:1-14	<u>18</u> Acts 17:22-31	<u>26</u> 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11
<u>03</u> John 10:1-10	<u>11</u> Acts 7:55-60	<u>19</u> 1 Peter 3:13-22	<u>27</u> 1 Thess. 5:13-28
<u>04</u> Acts 2:42-47	<u>12</u> 1 Peter 2:2-10	<u>20</u> Deuteronomy 31:7-8	<u>28</u> Deuteronomy 8:1-10
<u>05</u> 1 Peter 2:19-25	<u>13</u> Romans 8:31-39	<u>21</u> Acts 1:1-11	<u>29</u> Ephesians 4:11-16
<u>06</u> Galatians 6:1-10	<u>14</u> Hebrews 11:29-40	<u>22</u> 2 Timothy 1:3-7	<u>30</u> Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35
<u>07</u> Ezekiel 34:11-31	<u>15</u> 2 Corinthians 12:1-10	<u>23</u> Psalm 66:8-20	<u>31</u> John 20:19-23



On Friday, March 27, 2020, the Oglala Sioux Tribe instituted a shelter-in-place order. This has required us to suspend the ministries of the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center (PRRC), including the furloughing of the community members that make up the Lutheran/Lakota Job Corps (LLIC). It is uncertain how long the shelter-in-place order will be in effect.

The members of the Job Corps are an integral part of the ministry of the PRRC. These individuals care for many people in their immediate and extended families and will not qualify for unemployment. It is our prayer that we will be able to support them by providing a stipend to lessen the financial burden in the near term, and in preparation for calling them back to work when the Covid-19 crisis has passed.

We know that many of you are facing similar challenges and making difficult decisions in these unforeseen circumstances. We would ask that you keep us and the people of Pine Ridge in your prayers and if you are able we would welcome any financial contributions to support staff members, or to cover the reoccurring monthly expenses of the Center.

We thank you for your continued support and prayers for this ministry as we go forward in this unforeseen time.

Thank you!

Standing in Solidarity,

Pastor Karen Ressel, Director and Pastor
Nicholas Breining, Children & Youth Coordinator
Lindsay Boehmer, Cultural Immersion Facilitator

Community Partners:



- March had five Sundays and once again BELC came through with Lansing SAVE offerings! Our gifts will be equally deposited in the accounts of 144 students who live in the Baker Neighborhood and are BELC members. You may notice that our total count has been reduced; this is due to the spring count from the Lansing School District. 137 students live in the Baker Neighborhood and 7 are BELC members. To date, BELC members have contributed a total of **\$7025** to this worthy cause! A note about Bethlehem from Ben Thompson, Financial Education Coordinator for Lansing SAVE: *"When I feel cooped up, I think of your generosity and the weight lifts off my shoulders. Thank you for your giving. These dollars will move mountains!"* Once again, thank you Bethlehem members! For more information on Lansing SAVE go to: <https://www.lansingmi.gov/674/Lansing-SAVE>
- Partnering with the Lansing School District, the YMCA is serving free meals to our community from the BELC parking lot; Monday through Friday.
- Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, Walking Wednesdays for the month of May have been cancelled; this includes the one for our Baker Neighborhood. Stay tuned to see if there will be an alternate event planned.

BELC/Building News:

- The Board of Building and Grounds is looking into alternate options for the building's custodial needs. If you see something that needs attention, please inform Laurey at belcparishadm@gmail.com.
- Tracy will be keeping a Monday through Friday working schedule: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and Laurey will be working from home until the stay-at-home order has been lifted.
- The Board of Building and Grounds has made the difficult decision to close our building to the general public until further notice. This decision was not made lightly. It was made to protect and keep safe the Bethlehem personnel and volunteers who have committed to continue working as "essential" workers (as defined by the Governor's executive order). Bethlehem members and volunteers are **not** included in this mandate; however, it is imperative that if you don't need to be in the church office during office hours, please refrain from doing so. If you must use the church office during office hours, wearing face masks and 6' social distancing protocol will be observed and Tracy will vacate the area until your work is complete.

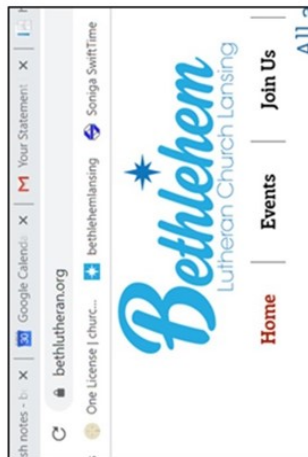
Unfortunately, this means that our much loved coffee and donuts fellowship, in the conference room, has been suspended. It means that our wonderful Elves group on Thursdays is not together. It means that the newsletter will be printed, assembled and mailed without the help of our fantastic Newsletter Team. It means that all BELC personnel is greatly missing all of you!...not just because of the work you help us with, but, because we love you.

We look forward to the day that our doors will be flung open and we can welcome all of you back into the building. We predict that, on that day, many things will change. Perhaps, no coffee or donuts... hugs may be replaced with elbow bumps...absolutely no kisses!...but, dancing in the halls will be encouraged!

HOW TO CREATE AN ONLINE GIVING ACCOUNT

You need an email address and your checking/savings account routing and account numbers or your credit card number.

1. Go to bethlutheran.com

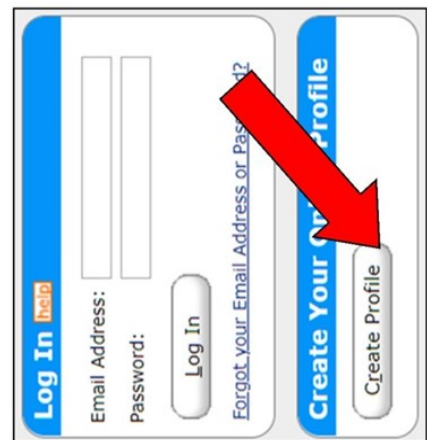


2. Click on the Online Giving link- bottom left.



3.

This will transfer you to the Online Giving page. Click on "Create Profile" on the upper right.



4. Enter and confirm your email address.

Create Profile

Enter a valid email address below.
This will be used as your User ID.

Email Address:

Confirm Email Address:

5. Create your profile.

Profile

First Name: (required)

Last Name: (required)

Address 1: (required)

Address 2:

City: (required)

State / Zip: (required)

Phone Number:

Email Address: (required)

Confirm Email Address: (required)

Enter Password: (required)

Re-Enter Password: (required)

6. Add your transaction.

Thank you for creating a profile. To add a Donation:

My Scheduled Transactions

You do not have any transactions scheduled.

7. Enter your offering.

Donations

My Support to My Congregation

-GENERAL OPERATING:

-ENDOWMENT:

-FOOD BANK FUND:

-MISSION FUND:

-OTHER FUND:

Specify where you would like your donation to go

-DEBT RETIREMENT:

8. Enter your checking, savings or credit or debit card information. NOTE: Using a credit or debit card will add extra transaction fees.

Donation Information

Decade Born (i.e. 1980) (required)

I agree to share non-personal data with ELCA (About Sharing Data) (required)

Account: New Account - Checking

Routing Number:

Account Number:

Joe Smith
1234 Anystreet Court
Anytown, AA 12345
1234

9. Click process...and you're done! Thank you!

☒ I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA
Privacy · Terms

Note: Please review the information you entered carefully. Once you click the Process button, your donation will be processed and your account will be debited. This organization will not be responsible for any errors.

Bethlehem Star

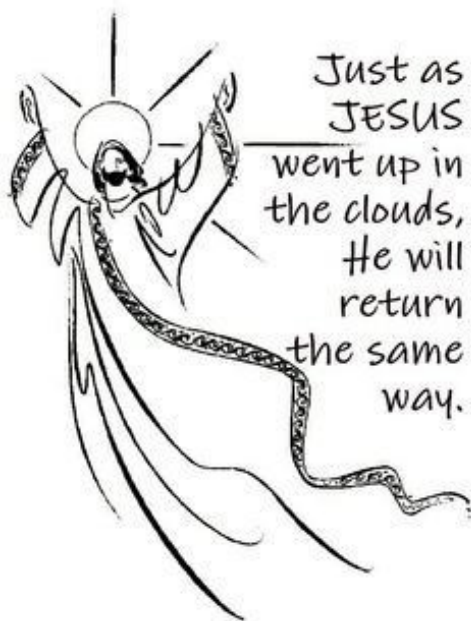
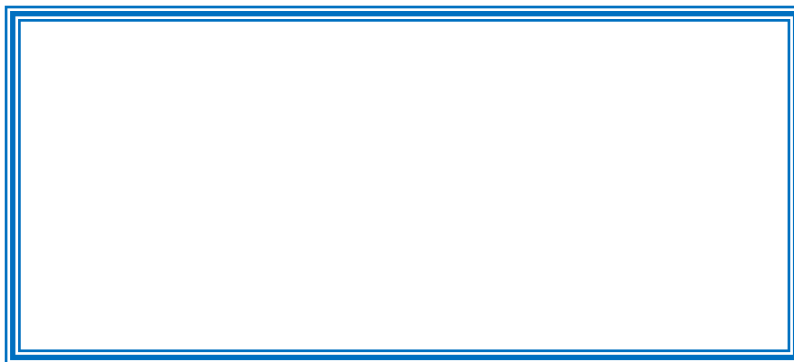
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Newsletter Deadline is **May15**
for the **June/July 2020** Bethlehem Star.

Also available at
www.bethlutheran.org

In-Home Date: May, 2020
Mailed on May, 2020



MAY 2020