

WEEKLY CONNECTION SUNDAY MAY 9, 2021

This Week at Bethlehem

***Updates & Recorded Worship for
May 9 Available Sunday on website***

www.bethlehemsaginaw.org

LIFE QUOTE: “Little though you can see it now, God intends to do wonderful things with you. If He is taking it slowly, that’s no surprise; He did it the first time, too. Nothing the devil can do will stop the Lord from finishing His work in you. After all, He has already laid down His life to make you His own.” *Dr. Kari Vo, Lutheran Hour Ministries*

STEWARSHIP THOUGHT: A steward is a caretaker and manager for the gifts which the Lord has entrusted to them, the chief of which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our good and gracious Lord has made and redeemed us to steward all those things entrusted to us for the sake of others. The steward does not exist to sustain the Church. The Scripture tells us that the Lord is about the task of sustaining the Church. It is the task of the steward simply to be faithful with those gifts the Lord has entrusted to the individual. This faithfulness is then used by the Lord instrumentally to bring the Gospel to those who do not know it. Money is given to the local congregation so that the preaching of the Gospel and the education of the young and old alike may be carried out. The local congregation then partners with other congregations to carry out the mission work of the Church locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

NOISY OFFERING: Starting on May 2nd, Bethlehem’s’ Noisy Offering will be collected in the buckets in the narthex for **Saginaw Rescue Mission**. Join in their mission of sharing God’s Word throughout the world and help to Change Lives for Christ.

A MOTHER'S DAY PRAYER: Lord, on this day in which we honor mothers, may we love and cherish the special women who have born us, who have nurtured us, and who have prayed for our well-being. May our hearts overflow with gratitude to you, who formed and knitted each of us in a mother’s womb. We pray you give each mom strength. We ask you to be the daily bread of tired mothers. May each mother find rest in you. Amen.

LAST WEEK

Worship 5 - 2

Attendance:218

Viewer Households:34

Drive-Up Communion: 22

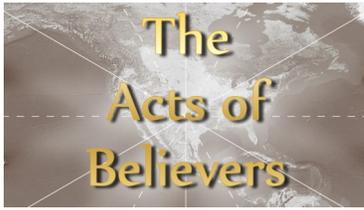
Offering: \$9,236

Electronic: \$7,226

Total: \$16,462

Weekly Need: \$14,750

You may mail your offering.
You may like to sign up for
electronic giving. Visit our
website for more information
on electronic giving.



The Acts of Believers Our Easter Response:

The Sundays after Easter (April 11) until the Festival of Pentecost (May 23) the first reading from Scripture each week is from the Book of Acts. The physician Luke wrote the Book of Acts as a continuation of his Gospel account of Jesus' Life and Resurrection. Acts is the story of the followers of Jesus and how they lived their lives and shared the Gospel message of salvation to all people. Often, the **Book of Acts** is known by its longer title, **The Acts of the Apostles**.

We are also followers of Jesus. Because of Christ's death and resurrection our lives have been forever changed. So, how should we **ACT**? What are the "**Acts of Believers**"? What is "**Our Easter Response**"? Over the next seven weeks following Easter we will look at the readings from the Acts of the Apostles, to see how our lives can also be lived with a sense of purpose and mission.

Sunday, April 11

Theme: Our Easter Response: Generosity – Acts 4:32-35

Sunday, April 18

Theme: Our Easter Response: Restoration – Acts 3:12-19

Sunday, April 25

Theme: Our Easter Response: Healing – Acts 4:5-12

Sunday, May 2

Theme: Our Easter Response: Witnessing – Acts 8:26-40

Sunday, May 9

Theme: Our Easter Response: Hospitality – Acts 10:44-48

Today, our Easter Response is centered around Hospitality. In the Bible reading Peter says that "God shows no partiality." Peter says that God welcome all people both Jew and Gentile into His family. Right before our reading, Peter has a vision three times about a sheet being lowered from heaven with unclean animals and hearing God tell him to eat them. (Acts 9:10-16) To Peter a Kosher Jew this would have been unthinkable. Why would God now have him eat animals that he had been raised to detest. Each of these animals was in one way or the other abhorrent to Jewish people. But God, through Christ sacrifice accepts each of us, even though we are detestable and abhorrent to God because of our sin. God loves even a poor miserable sinner like me!

Sunday, May 16

Theme: Our Easter Response: Leadership – Acts 1:12

Sunday, May 23

Theme: Our Easter Response: Believers are Filled with the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1-21

Sunday, May 30

Theme: Trinity Sunday

PRAYER FOCUS

HOSPITALIZED: Larry Long

OUR CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is extended to the family of Barb Petre the sister of Chuck Jones.

GOD'S RICHEST BLESSINGS upon Carol Kunitzer and Michael Armbruster who were joined together in marriage on Thursday, May 6 at Bethlehem. May God grant that the love of all married couples continue to grow.

SPECIAL PRAYERS: Michael DeChane nephew of Jim and Diane Harris, Taylor Bellinger & Family

NEW CONNECT 7 DEVOTIONS: A new edition of daily devotions based on our sermon series, **The Acts of Believers, Our Easter Response:** Beginning April 5th is available for you in the entry way of the church. They are also available on our website under the Christian Life button.

UPDATE ON PASTORAL CALL: The Board of Elders and Search Committee for the New Senior Administrative Pastor has been working hard and would like to update you on their progress and request your continued prayers. Here is a very abbreviated list of the tasks accomplished.

Summer and Fall of 2019: Did needs assessment and

Created Position Descriptions.

Spring of 2020: Created call committee and held voters meeting.

Summer 2020: Created interview questions.

Fall 2020: Received first call list of 10 and 3 candidates agreed to be interviewed.

November 2020: Issued Call to Pastor Ahlersmeyer which was returned.

February 2021: Received second call list of 10 and 3 candidates agreed to be interviewed.

May 2021: All 3 candidates decided to withdraw their names.

Current: We have requested a third list of candidates.

Please ask for guidance of the Holy Spirit as we continue the process. Pray unceasingly for wisdom as we seek the pastor, whom God has already selected for Bethlehem. Pray for patience and endurance as we await our new pastor. Remember that God's timing is not our timing. Request the Holy Spirit to work in the heart of the next candidate that we issue a divine call to be our pastor. Pray for our future pastor, his family and the congregation he currently serves. Let your requests be made know to God.

A PRAYER FOR PERSONS SUFFERING FROM THE CORONAVIRUS:

You shall not fear the terror of the night
nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that roams in darkness,
nor the plague that ravages at noon.
Psalm 91:5-6

Merciful God, You are the ultimate healer, hear our fervent prayer for all who suffer from the coronavirus. May those who are infected receive the proper treatment and the comfort of Your healing presence. May their caregivers, families and neighbors be shielded from the onslaught of the virus. Give comfort to those who grieve the loss of loved ones. Protect and guide those who strive to find a cure, that their work may conquer the disease and restore communities to wholeness and health. Help us to rise above fear. We ask all this in the name of Your Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER Pray for governmental officials, pray for police officers and first responders, and pray for an end to racism, destruction and violence. Pray that God might

grant justice, unity and peace to our land.

IN NEED OF PRAYER? The prayer chain is taking all calls thru Ronda Ehlert (616-583-8670). If no answer leave a message and name, number. I will call you back ASAP.

Anyone interested in the prayer chain please call me, we pray for healing, strength and blessing for those in need and their families if requested. Our Goal is simply "Power of Prayer." Thank you.

ANOTHER WAY TO PRAY A Prayer Request form is now available on Bethlehem's web-site under contact button. Submitted prayer request forms are sent directly to the church. These requests will be prayed for daily for a week. Thank You.

CARING FOR OTHERS

PANTRY NEEDS are muffin mix, hamburger helper, scallop potatoes, rice, tuna fish, & peanut butter. Drop off any food collected to the office. Thank you for your support!

NEXT FOOD PANTRY May 18th 10-11a.m. We are doing a drive through distribution. People can line up in their cars along the church sidewalk in the Weiss lot next to the church. The line will start at the church entrance. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Trevor in the church office.

ARE YOU FEELING EXHAUSTED from all the disruptions to life brought on by the pandemic? If so, you don't have to face it alone. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to listen, care, encourage and provide emotional and spiritual support. For more information, call our church office or one of our Stephen Ministry Leaders: Bill Wuerfel or Andy Cox.

AROUND BETHLEHEM

A SPECIAL VOTERS MEETING has been called by the Board of Education and the Pastor for Sunday, May 23 at 11:30 am. You may attend the meeting in person or virtually. You may join the meeting virtually using the following Zoom information:

Topic: Special Voters Meeting 05-23-21

Time: May 6, 2021 11:30 Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82346911936?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82346911936?pwd=RFoyT2xxUjhPK1E0cXpuN3hqOTBNQT09)

[pwd=RFoyT2xxUjhPK1E0cXpuN3hqOTBNQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82346911936?pwd=RFoyT2xxUjhPK1E0cXpuN3hqOTBNQT09)

Meeting ID: 823 4691 1936

Passcode: sQ7Ue7

Dial by your location

+1 929 436 2866 +1 301 715 8592 +1 312 626
6799

+1 669 900 6833 +1 253 215 8782 +1 346 248
7799

Meeting ID: 823 4691 1936

Passcode: 931202

The sole item of business that will be discussed and voted upon is the following **ISSUE A DIVINE CALL FOR TEACHER**

PROPOSED MOTION: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, School and Preschool by guidance of the Holy Spirit in a regularly called special voters meeting on May 23, 2021 issues a divine call to candidate Rebecca Smith (Graduate of Concordia University, Ann Arbor) as teacher of its school.

Volunteers Needed: We need at least one more crew to help with our lawn mowing needs at the church and school. A crew consists of three people, who rotate with our other crews to mow and trim once every 5 weeks. TWO more crews would make it possible to cut that down to once every 6 weeks. Each crew needs to mow Thursday or Friday evening, or anytime Saturday on their assigned weeks. Mowing season usual runs from April through the end of November. We will put crews together, if you are an individual interested in helping with others.

If this is something you would be willing to help out with, please call the school office and leave your contact information with Mrs Krystena. Thank you!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY IRENE LANGE We will be having a drive by birthday party on Sunday, June 6, 2021 to celebrate this WONDERFUL milestone

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
808 Weiss St.
Saginaw, MI 48602
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

In lieu of presents if you wish to acknowledge Irene's birthday, donations can be made to Bethlehem's landscaping project or to Alaska Mission for Christ. Questions...call Ann Gould 989-928-9089

Bethlehem's Landscape Team Is looking for help to install new stone into the flower beds on May 13th from

9 am to noon. Bring yard rake or shovel and gloves.

PORTALS OF PRAYER: As we come to a close on this past years subscription to the portal of prayer we are reminded that the next subscription begins to come out July of 2021. 1 Year subscription runs July 2021 to June 2022 for \$16. Notification of renewal needed by April 30th. Payments can be dropped off to the Church office or contact Paul Evans 989-755-1144 Ext. 105.

BETHLEHEM'S SINCERE THANKS are extended to Eric Sowatsky, who has served for many years as our congregational treasurer. After many years of faithful service Eric has requested to step down from the position of treasurer due to personal reasons. Please express your gratitude to Eric for his service to Bethlehem and our Lord. May the Lord bless Eric, even as Eric has been a blessing to Bethlehem.

CONGREGATIONAL TREASURER: Our congregation is seeking a person to fill the position of treasurer. The ideal person would be a faithful member of Bethlehem and skilled in basic accounting principles. The treasurer is responsible for review, analysis, and supervision of proper accounting procedures. Detailed duties for this position are found in Bethlehem's Bylaws, 2. Officers of the Congregation, Section D. Our current treasurer, Eric Sowatsky, has agreed to help with the transition of this position. If you are interested in the position or would like more information please contact either the church office or Jon Herzberger, Bethlehem's Executive Director.

2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES If you have any questions please contact the church office.

ELECTRONIC GIVING Would you find it helpful to have your offerings debited directly from your bank account? Bethlehem offers electronic giving for those of you who wish to have your offering transferred electronically to the church's account. If you travel, this is particularly helpful in keeping up with your intended offerings. One simple, easy-to-use authorization form can begin or change your electronic contribution amount. Contact the church office for more details.

BETHLEHEM SOUND SYSTEM: Bethlehem is seeking donations in order to replace our aged sound system. The new system will greatly improve the sound for both services in the music and spoken word. All donations can be made to Bethlehem; please indicate your donation is for the sound system.

LIVE STREAM WORSHIP of Bethlehem's 9 am

Contemporary Worship The Live Stream worship will be recorded and placed on Bethlehem's website, our YouTube channel, and our new Vimeo channel for your viewing. **At this time, we will not be able to provide a Live Stream of the 10:30 service because of a lack of volunteers.** If you are interested in volunteering to provide this valuable service for our Bethlehem family, training is available. Contact Alex Holcomb at 755-1144 ex 107 or aholcomb@bethlehemsaginaw.org.

FACILITIES USE PROCEDURE The Bethlehem Board of Elders is re-evaluating the use of Bethlehem's facilities. If a group desires to use Bethlehem please contact the church office for guidelines and pre-approval. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping Bethlehem Church and School safe during this pandemic.

SPRING CHURCH & SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS Bethlehem office will be open on site Monday thru Friday from 7:30 am until 3:30 pm. We will maintain safe physical distancing practices. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

TIPS FOR HELPING TO STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS 1. Cover your cough 2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose & mouth. 3. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

CONNECT TO THE WORD

FRIDAY MORNING MEN'S BIBLE STUDY: Continues to meet via zoom on Friday mornings at 6:15 am. Unfortunately you must brew your own coffee. However they are currently studying the **Letter to the Galatians**. For information contact Pastor Korte or Mike Denno

LADIES BIBLE STUDY The group will meet Tuesday's at 10 am in the David Room. Safety requirements include hand sanitizing, face masks, and physical distancing. We will start meeting again to study the Gospel of John. Contact Mary Kay Hall at 497-8474 for questions.

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY Join us beginning Sunday March 14 at 9:15 a.m. to study the Book of Acts. Learn about those inspired men and women who braved persecution to share the news of Jesus from Jerusalem to Rome and beyond. Did you know that in his Pentecost sermon Peter spent one verse on Jesus life, one on his death, and 9 on his resurrection? The class is held in the lower level with plenty of spacing.

SCHOOL NEWS

SCHOOL UPDATE: We celebrated Teacher Appreciation Week with SO many goodies, kind notes, and generous gifts. Our teachers feel appreciated every day of the year, because of the love of our awesome families, but it sure boosts our spirits to be spoiled rotten for a few days! Thank you to all who contributed to the "spoiling."

So far, we have nothing but growth to report from our MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) testing this week! We are so happy to see this, as we missed half of last school year and have dealt with unimaginable challenges this school year. God is good!!

The Fun Fair is under way! Please check with a school family to see how you can pledge to sponsor a student's run, or call the school office for more information. We would like to thank Garber Chevrolet, RightWay Automotive, and Garber Chrysler for sponsoring our Fun Run this year.

OPEN HOUSE May 19th from 5 pm to 6:30 pm. Are you looking for a new school for the fall of 2021? Come check out Bethlehem Lutheran School and Bethlehem Little Stars Preschool where we pride ourselves on providing a high quality, Christian education with small class sizes! We have openings in 3 and 4 year old Preschool as well as Kindergarten through 8th grade!

BETHEHEM LUTHERAN SCHOOL is currently seeking a middle school teacher to join our team beginning the 2021-2022 school year. Applicants should hold a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with a strength in math and science and a valid MI teaching license. Our teachers are positive Christian role models who teach the love of Christ, emphasize academic excellence, grow the development of curiosity and innovation, and encourage servant leadership through a Biblical Worldview. Come join our dedicated team! All candidates must be able to pass a background check.

Contact Brenda Wilson bwilson@bethlehemsaginaw.org

FRIENDS OF BETHLEHEM

Commission on Aging / Meals on Wheels

Needs volunteer drivers. For Information call Beverly Yanca at 797-7566 or 797-6880

Physician Assistant Program at Concordia University

Ann Arbor Do you have a spare bedroom? An unused "in-law suite"? A vacation house that sits empty all winter? The first class of CUAA PA students are in search of affordable housing during clinical rotations located across the state beginning in May 2022. If you have room for a student (or two!), please consider opening your doors to a graduate student in need!

Please contact the PA program with questions or to add yourself to the potential housing list!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

On-site Communion Procedures for Covid-19 Phase 4

1. We have once again are offer the Lord's Supper during our regular worship times on Sunday morning at 9 am and 10:30 am. (First and third Sundays of the month.)
2. We will follow the recommendations of the CDC, our government, and the Michigan District LC-MS, along with advice from fellow congregations.
3. Communion will take place at the end of the service following the Benediction.
4. Pastor will give verbal instructions to those wishing to receive communion.
5. Pastor will say the Words of Institution and Communion blessing before beginning.
6. Pastor, Elders, Ushers, and communion assistants will be masked, use hand sanitizer, and gloved as needed before serving communion.
7. There will be markings on the floor to indicate proper physical distancing between families. Family units including children and those not receiving the Lord's Supper will proceed forward for blessing.
8. We will begin with the middle section and go from front to back. An usher will release the members family by family making sure to maintain physical distance.
9. Please keep your mask on until you receive the Lord's Supper and replace it following reception of communion.
10. Pastor will distribute the host to each family group at a station set up by the gate to the altar area. Pastor will drop host into their hands.
11. Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ way down the railing another station will have individual communion cups in trays with every other cup filled with red wine. The center cups will have non-alcoholic white wine for those needing this option.
12. After reception communicantes will place used cups in receptacles at normal position.
13. The congregation will be instructed to leave the building once they have received communion. They may exit using the door with steps at the front to the church or continue to the narthex and exit as normal. If they so desire, they may use the hand sanitizing stations as they exit the building.
14. For those members who have difficulty walking to the front of the church the pastor will give them the Lord's Supper in their seats following the service. (Please let the pastor or an elder know.)
15. Those uncomfortable with communion in church may request a time to receive communion privately in the chapel or drive-up style.

Bethlehem Resume Worship

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia! I pray that those familiar words of our joyous Easter greeting are still ringing in your ears. Easter is the reason we exist as a church. Each Sunday is a celebration of Easter. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we know that we have victory over death and the grave. That victory is not just for the future, but the victory is ours even now in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Few of us would have thought that the "Stay at Home! Stay Safe!" order would continue as long as it has, when it was first issued way back in March. All of us have had to adapt in one way or another. Bethlehem church and school have also had to quickly change the way that we are doing things. Our Christian day school teachers, and children along with their parents have transitioned to virtual class rooms. Our normal worship services have had to adjust to online worship. But one thing will never change, God's unending love and promise to be with us at all times.

If there is one word to describe how we must navigate re-assimilation after the COVID-19 exile, it's this:

GRACE. Some people will be confident, others cautious and most every stage in-between. There will be disagreements over acceptable post-COVID social norms between friends, church members and family. Hurt feelings will abound if we're not careful. **Extend lots of GRACE.** Everyone is different. Wouldn't it be terrible if after Covid-19 social distancing passes we "social distance" ourselves from others because of our inability to love others who approach Covid-19 differently than we do? It is extremely important that the church be a loving place full of **GRACE.** The following list of **Service Precautions** is being provided for you so that all of us may safely return to church:

1. The Board of Elders has determined that **Bethlehem will re-open with proper restrictions**, Bethlehem will follow the recommendations of CDC and our government as we slowly return to "regular" worship at Bethlehem.
2. We will use common sense; if you are in high risk category, are sick, are running a temperature, have difficulty breathing or have been in contact with someone having the coronavirus with-in the past 14 days please stay home and stay safe for yourself and others safety.
3. The church has been and will be sanitized weekly according to the CDC guidelines. In between services we will seek as best as possible to sanitize any common use areas, door handles, restroom, etc.
4. Before you come to church make sure you bring your mask or other PPE items with you. **Bethlehem is requiring that you wear a mask** for the protection and safety of others. The church has a limited supply of hand sanitizer.
5. Doors will be open 20 minutes before each service. With warmer weather the entry doors to the church will be propped open, so that no one needs to touch them.
6. Greeters will be stationed at each door maintaining proper 6-foot distancing.
 - a. Greeters will ask the names of those entering and record them on an attendance pad. They will also identify any guests and their contact information for follow-up purposes.
 - b. Greeters will instruct worshipers to use the hand sanitizing stations located at each entry point. Wash/sanitize your hands often.
7. We encourage people to sit as families. But to maintain 6-foot physical distancing space between families. People can use the entire church half reserved for their service. (The Board of Elders has determined; we will use the East half (left side) of the church for the 9 am service and the west half (right side) of the church for 10:30 am service. Every other pew will be marked closed for physical distancing. Blue painter's masking tape will be placed on pews to help families maintain 6-foot physical distancing.
8. The attendance pads, hymnals and Bibles will be removed from the sanctuary (worshipers are encouraged to bring their own) until further notice. We will project the entire service on the front walls.
9. During greeting time there will be NO hand shaking, no hugging or holy kiss. Greet one another with a wave, a word of peace and blessing.
10. Our praise band, choir and other worship leaders will be limited and maintain 6-foot physical distancing while leading us in worship.

11. There will be no passing of the offering plate. The Joash box will be set in the entry way of the church for worshipers to place their offerings and tithes as they enter or leave services. You may also continue using electronic giving on mailing your offering to church.
12. A children's message will be delivered with kids sitting in pew.
13. There will be **NO C2C** until further notice.
14. The Board of Elders has determined that we will hold a drive-up style Communion on set Wednesdays every month.
15. To help us maintain physical distancing as we leave church:
 - A. Worshipers will exit the sanctuary pew by pew, beginning in the front maintaining physical distance practices.
 - B. Pastor will not shake hands following services but will greet from a safe distance.
 - C. Coffee fellowship hour will be suspended until further notice.
 - D. Service will be kept to 45-50 minutes and worshipers encouraged to leave so that cleaning and the next group of worshipers be able to safely enter.
16. All activities or groups meeting at church will be suspended until at least December. This includes Bethlehem groups such as MOPS, choir, TOPS, Nar-anon, Braille, Bible Studies, lower level showers and receptions and other activities. Check with the leaders about restarting times.
17. We ask that no one enter into the school portion of the building (north of offices). It has been sanitized according to CDC recommendations and prepared for the next school
18. NO Monday Night services at this time.
19. There will be live streaming or video recording if you are unable to attend worship, we will have a recording of a service on the church Website @ Bethlehemsaginaw.org

20. Please continue to be flexible and understanding as we navigate these extraordinary times with **GRACE**. As we move forward our guidelines are subject to change.

John wrote so that his readers would not be deceived. (1 John2:26) John wrote so that his readers might believe the truth about Jesus. John wrote so that we might know that we have eternal life of both body and soul. (1 John 5:13) John was writing so that we might not be fooled but understand the real truth of the Gospel. During this sermon series we are going to get real about the gospel, confession of sins, what truly satisfies us, how real change happens, what real love is all about, how we can have lasting relationships, and finally about the real victory we receive in Jesus.

In His Service,

Pastor Korte