



WEEKLY CONNECTION

SEPTEMBER 25, 2022

SUNDAY'S WORSHIP: Theme: Abide in Me – Week of BEING: The Red Letter Challenge

Before we are called to do anything for Jesus, we are called to spend time with Jesus. However, in our desire to follow Jesus we often jump into action and forget that our DOING flows out of our BEING with Jesus. In the coming weeks, Jesus will call us to Forgive, to Serve, to Give, and to Go. None of these are possible unless we first learn to abide in Being with Jesus.

John 15:5-9

⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

Please pick up a **Red Letter Challenge** (RLC) Book in the entryway of the church. This Week we begin reading Day 6 -12. (If you would like to help defray the cost of a book, a donation of any amount can be placed in the envelope marked "RLC" and in the offering.)

RED LETTER THOUGHT OF THE WEEK:

WE NEED TO SAY "NO" TO MANY GOOD THINGS, SO WE CAN SAY "YES" TO THE BEST THING.

OUR CHURCH ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK:

In Person Attendance 09/18/22: 180 Online Viewers: 9 households

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: Amos 6:1a – "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion." The Book of Amos is a warning to God's people who have been given great material wealth. As Jesus Himself mentions, material blessings can turn into temptations – chiefly the temptation to think of ourselves as self-sufficient and independent. What does Amos suggest as a way to combat this temptation? First, faith in the Lord and dependence upon Him! And if our faith is right, we will want to follow the rest of Amos' instructions – to bless the poor with our alms and to make sure the Lord's House is properly cared for. In other words, we are called to align our actions with God's priorities and put others ahead of ourselves.

PRAYER FOCUS

SPECIAL PRAYERS: Ken Willman, Irene Lange, Ginny Bergant

HOSPITALIZED: Ed Peitsch, Jim Schenyko

CARING FOR OTHERS

SEPTEMBER NOISY OFFERING: The Called **Church Worker Scholarship Fund** – Over the past 20 years Bethlehem has been blessed with young people who have been called by God to full time ministry in the church. These young people attend one of our Concordia's to become teachers, music directors, directors of Christian education, or pastors. Your contributions help to support and encourage them as they seek to serve the church. Thank you for your Noisy Offering.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS are canned fruit, canned beans, peanut butter, pasta sauce, vegetable, vegetable beef, and chicken noodle soups and boxed potatoes. Items can be dropped off at the office. Thank you for your support!

OUR NEXT FOOD PANTRY is **Tuesday, October 18, 2022**. 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 at 989-755-1144 x108.

SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE The LCMS Office of International Mission is currently working with five partner churches to help refugees from this conflict. To support the people of Ukraine, please pray for them. If you desire to contribute to their needs, there are three ways to **donate**: Text LCMSUKRAINE to 41-444; Give online; or call 888.930.4438

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN BARREL: Bethlehem continues collecting infant supplies, (diapers, clothing, stuffed toys); medical equipment, (bed & bath linens, walkers, wheelchairs); hygiene supplies (toothbrushes, sanitary items for women, bar soap, combs), and more for Orphan Grain Train Ministry. A more detailed wish list can be found at [OGT-Wish-List.pdf](#) or can be viewed in the narthex. Thank you supporting this ministry!

CALLING ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS: Did you know that there are active campus ministries at universities throughout the state of Michigan? No matter where you go to school in Michigan, we have nearby university campus ministries and a network of pastors at local congregations who are eager to connect with you and plug you into a caring community while you're away from home. Most of our campus ministries are hosting welcome events at the start of the semester. You're invited! Visit michigandistrict.org/campusconnect to fill out our Campus Connect form. It'll take just a minute or two!

AROUND BETHLEHEM

WEEKLY ADULT BIBLE STUDIES

- **Fridays, 6:15 am** on Zoom. **"The Chronological Gospels."** For info: mp_denno@yahoo.com
- **Tuesdays, 10 a.m. PEW SISTERS** - a Bible study based on true stories shared by women of faith who have faced bad stuff the devil throws at us. We meet on **Tuesdays, from now through September 13**, in the **church library at 10:00 a.m.** Please call Sally at 989-284-4090 for more info.
- **Red Letter Challenge begins the week of September 18!** Sign up online or in the narthex (church lobby)

BETHLEHEM TO HOST LWML RALLY

Bethlehem will be hosting our LWML Saginaw Valley Zone Fall Rally, October 15, 2022. Registration is 8:30-9:00 am with continental breakfast. Cost is \$6.00. The rally goes from 9 am – 12 pm followed by a luncheon. This will be a servant event rally plus an ingathering for Underground Railroad. List of needed items for the Underground Railroad will be by the box in the narthex. We are looking for volunteers to help with setting up on Friday or helping on Saturday. If you would like to help by donating/making food for either the breakfast or lunch, please call Ann Gould 989-928-9089 or Irene Lange 909-754-1546

SENIOR CHOIR WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS: Whether you are a soprano, alto, tenor or bass you are welcome to be part of Bethlehem's Senior Choir under the direction of George Frank. One-hour weekly practices have begun on Thursdays at 7 p.m. in the choir room. The Choir typically sings one Sunday each month and for special services. Come and make a joyful noise unto the Lord. For more information call George Frank (989-652-2345).

OFFERING COLLECTION: We now are passing the offering plate during the worship services. If you desire you may place your tithe or offering in the collection plate as it is passed. For the time being, the wooden “Joash Box” will remain in the entry way of the church and you may continue to place your offering in it before or following the service. You may also continue to contribute your tithe by automatic withdrawal, electronically on the website, or by texting. We appreciate your gifts as we return a portion of what the Lord has given us.

BETHLEHEM’S PERPETUAL CHARITABLE TRUST FUND: The Gift that Grows. If you enjoy sharing Christ’s love and your blessings with others, you might consider a gift to your Trust Fund. You can help our congregation seed and expand our ministries and outreach with a gift to one of six funds. Just use your convenient envelopes in your giving packet or give directly through the office. Since 1994, over \$250,000 in earnings have been distributed. Contact Charmaine Wittig at 989 792-0669 with any questions or to donate.

MOPS September 26: ALL mothers of children from birth through kindergarten are invited to join MOPS, and ALL mothers with children from kindergarten through 6th grade are invited to join MOMSnext. The groups meet together on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, **6-8 pm (in the lower level of Bethlehem Lutheran Church)** beginning in September through the end of May. Please join us to enjoy time with other moms while we grow closer to Christ! Childcare is available during meetings, but space is limited. If you are interested in attending or have questions, please email bethlehemops@yahoo.com or visit our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/BethlehemLutheranMOPSandMOMSNext>.

SCHOOL NEWS:

We celebrated Constitution Day on Friday by reviewing the preamble while making special booklets, and writing a Constitution Day poem, just to name a few classroom activities.



This Friday we are excited for the return of our PEP ASSEMBLIES! It will be fun to once again recognize our sports teams (volleyball and soccer) while rocking our Charger Pride school spirit with the entire student body!

Our Step it Up! Fundraiser is off to an amazing start! We so appreciate all of the monetary donations that have already come in from our church families. The drawing continues for our students to win mini party fridges stuffed with cash and a \$250 Amazon gift card! All money raised will be used to support technology upgrades in the classrooms, as well as some more curriculum enhancements, and innovative learning materials for our Preschool through 8th grade classes.

A Message from our PTL

We are looking for volunteers to **Adopt a Staff Member!**

Our mission at Bethlehem is to Share Christ's love and care for all people. We are blessed to have staff and teachers care for our children all year long. Let's show how much we appreciate these amazing people that we entrust our most precious treasures to everyday.

Ways to celebrate your teacher/staff member may include, but are not limited to:

- pray for them often
- send thinking of you notes or cards
- give small gifts to celebrate their birthday, Christmas, and other holidays
- any other fun way you choose to recognize them throughout the school year

You will find their interest sheets provided in the school office. You may decide on your own if you would like to be anonymous, or make it known from the start who you are. Available teachers/staff members are listed in the sign up genius (see link below.) If you have any questions, please feel free to call or text Melissa Grosaman (989) 274-4378. Thank you!!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090C4EA4A92CA6F58-adopt1>

ENCOURAGEMENT

Our Savior Lutheran Church in Lansing has been my church home for over forty years. Just over thirty years ago I witnessed something amazing. Pastor Eldor F. Bickel was retiring after serving at Our Savior for 33 years. A new pastor was arriving to become the new Senior Pastor. I've been told that this exact situation was considered the absolute worst scenario for young pastors to begin a ministry- a long serving, beloved pastor that was retiring, but planning to stay as member of the congregation.

Rev. David P.E. Maier was that new young pastor arriving in Lansing. The fears of the seminary nightmare stories of the retiring pastor staying on were quickly put to rest. The very first Sunday I saw Pastor Bickel direct some influential women of the church directly to Pastor Maier with their questions. That was the affirmation needed to transition to new pastoral leadership. From that day, the encouraging relationship that developed was a blessing to the entire congregation. Pastor Maier has even described Pastor Bickel as a blessed mentor and like a second father, as they did God's work at Our Savior.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 says, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

That's exactly what was happening in Lansing thirty years ago and what should be happening all over. It doesn't matter if it is a new pastor, a called servant of twenty plus years or the people you are working with on a committee to further the work of the church.

That encouraging manner shouldn't stop in the church. What a difference a word of praise, a pat on the back or a smile for a job well done, would do in our world. Think about your children or grandchildren who would whole-heartedly welcome that word of encouragement. It could make all the difference in a work relationship to deepen the sense of teamwork and cooperation.

Think about who you can influence today. Who can benefit from you being the hands, feet and voice of Jesus? Isn't that part of the reason Jesus attracted so many, because He took the time to listen and encourage? We may not be able to heal the sick or do miracles, but we can give our time, share the healing message of the Gospel and encourage people in our world.

We can plant the seeds, nurture and watch the Spirit of God work. Thanks in advance for your words of encouragement