



WEEKLY CONNECTION

MAY 28, 2023

SUNDAY'S WORSHIP: The Feast of Pentecost

Pentecost proves for God's people that Jesus remains at work in our midst. As we read the story of Pentecost in Acts 2, we see that the ascension departure of Jesus some ten days beforehand is not the end of His work in this world. Far from it! Jesus continues His saving work through the Spirit, whom He poured out upon the lives of His earliest followers. This same Spirit of Jesus enables us to carry His message into all the world. We are the messengers who spread the Good News of Him who was crucified for us, who rose again, who reigns on high, and who will one day return to this world in His full, heavenly glory. We listen to His message today as the Spirit brings it into our midst and are assured that as we are brought to faith in Christ, we receive the fullness of who we've been called to be.

SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK:

"But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy."

Acts 2: 16-18

GRADUATION RECOGNITION SUNDAY On Sunday, June 4th, we will be recognizing our 8th grade, high school, and college graduates at both services. All graduates are invited to meet in the David Room prior to the service. Call 989-755-1144 or email office@bethlehemsaginaw.org for more information.

PRAYER FOCUS

SPECIAL PRAYERS: Gail LeClair, Ken Willman, Herb Berlin, Myra Bixby (Hospice), Nancy Arnst, Joe Mader, Gloria Colwell, Donna Mader, Ronda Ehlert, Duane Davis, Jim Lutz, Hope Kittel, Ed Pietsch, Rob Filipiak, Dale Thomson, Michelle Dingman, Chuck Dingman (Hospice)

HOSPITALIZED: Grace Korte

OUR CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is extended to the family of Jim Mavis who entered eternal life on Tuesday, May 23rd. Jim was the husband of Lena. May God give them peace in the victory over death in Jesus.

PASTORAL CALL UPDATE: We have received word that Pastor Christopher Ramstad of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Columbus, NE has respectfully declined our divine call as pastor. We ask God’s continued blessings upon him as he continues his ministry in Columbus. We continue to hold the Bethlehem’s search committee and our congregation in our prayers. We know that God has the perfect plan in store for us we just do not know that plan yet. We continue to pray in the words of Jesus, *“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest”* (Matthew 9:37–38).

BETHLEHEM’S PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE: The search committee has worked tirelessly over the past 3 ½ almost 4 years. They include: Laurie Denno, Bambi Neidzielski, Ian Sheinart, Larry Griffin, Gary Grauf, Kevin Keysor, Jon Herzberger, and Ryan Mulder. Give them a word of thanks and encouragement. Please keep them in your prayers as they continue their work.

PASTOR CANDIDATE NOMINATION INSTRUCTIONS: If there is a potential candidate you know that fits the Pastor profile as provided by the Call Committee and whom you would like to nominate for consideration, please follow the instructions below. **PLEASE NOTE:**

1. Nominations may be submitted by communicant members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 18 years of age or older.
2. Complete the nomination form, (forms are available in church office or at end of this Connection) write legibly and provide as much information as possible.
3. Submit the form by depositing it into the church office.
4. You can also mail or drop off your completed form to the church office at the attention of the Call Committee. Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 808 Weiss Street, Saginaw, MI 48602
5. The deadline to submit nominations is 3 pm on **Wednesday, May 31st**. No nominations will be accepted after this date.

Thank you for your prayers and participation in the Call process

PRAYERS AND SUPPORT are requested as Alex Holcomb begins theological training with course work towards a Master of Divinity degree. May he be blessed as he continues to learn and serve Bethlehem as our Worship Arts Director.

OUR STEWARDSHIP:

FINANCIAL UPDATE: July 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023

Church Income:	Budgeted \$500,413	Actual \$573,301
Church Expenses:	Budgeted <u>\$574,446</u>	Actual <u>\$562,282</u>
	- \$ 74,033	\$ 11,019

School Income	Budgeted \$611,914	Actual \$811,860
School Expenses:	Budgeted <u>\$572,866</u>	Actual <u>\$593,191</u>
	\$ 39,048	\$218,669

CHURCH ATTENDANCE:

Fourth Sunday of Easter: 05-21-23 188 Online viewership: 17

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT Acts 2:1 – “When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.” Pentecost is the Old Testament harvest festival, taking place around the time when the wheat and oats are ready to be brought in. Of course, this was an image and foreshadowing of the great harvest of humankind that God means to carry out through the preaching of His Word. God gives the seed, and God brings about the harvest. From first to last, in things temporal and things eternal, we stand only by His grace.

THE BETHLEHEM TRUST accepts donations to our 6 funds to fund our ministries. If you have any questions please contact the church office or any member of the Trust Committee.

CARING FOR OTHERS

THANK YOU FOR ALASKA DONATIONS The full box was deeply appreciated. Cleaning items are very costly and cannot be carried by the team on the bush planes. They will be shipped by mid-June. We'd also like to recognize an anonymous donation of kiln-fused refrigerator magnets bearing the symbol of the cross and the blood of Christ. When the team arrives in Goodnews Bay, they plan to go door-to-door to invite villagers to VBS and Bible studies. Ideas for something to give out at the time were coming up short, and this thoughtful and beautiful donation will fill that need. Thank you to all at Bethlehem for your continued support of spreading the Gospel in Alaska.

HELPING HANDS PROJECT Bethlehem’s Evangelism Board is collecting diapers and wipes along with Messiah Lutheran for LifeClinic Community Resources from Mother’s Day (5/14) to Father’s Day (6/18). Please place donations in the Playpen in the Narthex. Monetary donations can be placed in the Joash box. Thank you!

KNITTING FOR THOSE IN NEED All knitters and crocheters are invited to join us at 11 AM on Tuesdays in the David Room to make children’s hats, baby blankets, prayer shawls, and other items to give to those in need. We are also accepting donations of yarn or money. You are also more than welcome to join us for Bible study at 9:30 AM. We are starting the Book of Acts. Please call or text Mary Kay Hall at (989) 528-5244 with any questions.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS are canned fruit, tuna, peanut butter, jelly, and cereal. Thank you for your support!

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!

AROUND BETHLEHEM

COMMUNITY PRAYER CIRCLE Youths and adults of all ages are invited to join Community Prayer Circles. This includes participants from our own church and school families, as well as members of sister LCMS and other Christian congregations. Our next meeting will be Sunday, June 18, 2023, 3-4:30 p.m. at St. Mark's Lutheran Church; 2565 N. Miller Road; Saginaw 48603. Pick up a blue half-sheet form in Narthex to RSVP or email office@bethlehemsaginaw.org.

BETHLEHEM STARS will be meeting for lunch at Uno on Tittabawassee on June 6th at 12:00 PM. To make reservations, call Billie Mull at 989-792-5843.

LISTENING POST REPORT For a report of information gathered at Listening Posts in April, see the end of the Connection.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HAVING OUR TRADITIONAL SERVICE LIVE STREAMED? Due to a lack of volunteers, we have only been able to live stream the 9 AM contemporary service in the past. If anyone is interested in helping with technology for the traditional service at 10:30, we would be happy to train him or her regardless of age. This would be a great blessing for our shut-ins who prefer the traditional service.

FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR Sign up for altar flowers on the schedule on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Thank you for helping us to beautify our altar.

CAN MY ESTATE PLANS CHANGE OVER TIME? Sometimes change happens in our lives almost imperceptibly. Maybe someone's health changed in your family and the goals they had for life changed. Maybe you have gotten involved in a new ministry focus in these last years, all to share Jesus with the world. You want to include support for that work. Has your plan kept up with your life and its focus? Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can help you evaluate that. Contact...

Julie Burgess
Gift Planning Counselor
Church Extension Fund/MI District
Email: Julie.burgess@lfnd.org
Mobile: 713-822-5284

FALL – SPRING LADIES BIBLE STUDY led by Mary Kay Hall has ended for the season. The group will start back up in the fall. If you are interested in joining this group, please call or text Mary Kay at 989-528-5244 to reserve your spot.

SUMMER LADIES BIBLE STUDY led by Sally Denno will be meeting Tuesdays at 9:00 am in the David Room. We will be reading through Ecclesiastes. All you need is your Bible. Call Sally for updates – (989) 284-4090

BETHLEHEM “FAMILY” TIME: Enjoy fellowship and snacks with your Bethlehem Family on the 2nd and 4th Sunday each month from 10 to 10:30 a.m. “Early service people” stay late and “Late service people” come early and see your Bethlehem Family. Family Time is hosted by the Board for Christian Life. See Shawn Griffore if you would like to help host.

WEEKLY ADULT BIBLE STUDIES

- **Tuesdays, 9:00 am (Ladies)** in the David Room. We will be reading through Ecclesiastes. All you need is your Bible. Call Sally Denno for updates – (989) 284-4090
- **Fridays, 6:15 am (Men)** on Zoom. “**The Chronological Gospels.**” For info: mp_denno@yahoo.com
- **Sundays, 9:15 am** We are beginning our study of the book of Philippians beginning on April 30th. This Bible Study is led by Larry Hauser and meets in the lower level.

OFFERING COLLECTION: You may 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.

COLLECTING UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION If your name, number, address, or email address has changed, please call (989) 755-1144 or email office@bethlehemsaginaw.org with your new information. Thank you!

SCHOOL NEWS

It has been a very eventful month at Bethlehem! We had many students participate at Music Festival last week, and our annual Art & Music Showcase went well. Thank you to all who came to support them! This is the last week of school for our preschoolers, and K-8 will be done in just 8 school days. Please pray that these last weeks go smoothly for all involved. Thank you!

OTHER NEWS

VLHS MINISTRY UPDATE The ministry of Valley Lutheran High School is blessed in so many ways and continues to be active and strong. Thank you for being a valued partner in this ministry! Here are a few "bulletin sized" updates:

- VL is seeking qualified candidates in the continued search for the Executive Director position. The ministry position description was recently updated. If you - or someone you know - may be interested in learning more about this leadership role, view the ministry position description at vlhs.com/executivedirector. Interested candidates may send a resume and cover letter to Board Chairperson Julie Neumann (jneumanncpa@yahoo.com) by June 7th.
- The incoming Freshman class is on track to be the largest class in the last 6 years! If you, or someone you know, are interested in learning more about a VL education, contact Director of Admissions Amy Cooper (acooper@vlhs.com).

- Mr. Billy Cmeyla has accepted a Call to join the ministry team at VLHS as the Dean of Students
- thanks be to God!
- Mr. Barry Wittig is retiring at the end of this school year after 32 years of faithful service.
- 67 seniors will graduate on June 11th! We celebrate their accomplishments to date and we look forward to watching them "launch" into the world, prepared to follow God's calling in their lives.

Thank you for continuing to keep the ministry of VLHS in your prayers!

VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL in Saginaw is looking to fill one part-time faculty position for teaching Physics and Physical Science beginning August 22, 2023. The ideal candidate would have an LTD and a high school science teaching certificate but other certifications and experience will be considered (i.e. certified in K-8 Science or experience as an Engineer). Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to Dr. Lisa Meyers by mail (3560 McCarty Rd. Saginaw, MI 48603) or email (lmeyers@vlhs.com). Interviews are anticipated to begin middle of June and continue until the position is filled.

GOODNEWS BAY, ALASKA MISSION TRIP Do you have a passion for mission work? Do you want to support a local team traveling to Goodnews Bay, Alaska for VBS in July of 2023? Donations can be made payable to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Saginaw with a notation in the memo for Alaska Mission. 2023 Alaska Mission Team – Ray, Juli and Celeste Martin (Valley), Karen Bell, Molly Pickard, Jenny Rauschert (all from Good Shepherd), Rachel Webb (Immanuel\Valley) and Keegan Hook (Bethlehem). If you would like more information about the mission trip or interest in serving with the Alaska Mission Team in the future please contact, Jenny Rauschert, 989-751-4525, jenrausch@gmail.com

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Pastoral Candidate Nomination Form
Must be return by May 31, 2023

Nomination of Pastor for Consideration by Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Saginaw, MI for the Office of Pastor Michigan District, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

(Members of the congregation who wish to suggest names of pastors to be considered for our Call list are asked to complete this form. When it is completed, please give it to an elder or to the chairman of the Call committee. It will be forwarded to District President David Davis. Please include your name at the bottom of the form; otherwise, it cannot be recognized as valid.)

1. Having carefully and prayerfully considered the pastoral needs of our congregation, I wish to nominate the following pastor as a candidate to be considered for a Call to our church:

Pastor's Name: (Please print): _____

Address: _____

(Please check The Lutheran Annual for the correct spelling and address!)

2. I believe this pastor will be good for our congregation for the following reasons:

3. Please state whether you know him personally, where, and for how long a time.

4. If you do not know him personally, state the source of your information, or the basis on which you are making your nomination:

Jesus said to His disciples, ***“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest”*** (Matthew 9:37–38).

We are praying that God will give our congregation another faithful pastor. Name of person making nomination (Please print): _____ I am a member of Bethlehem congregation of Saginaw, MI 48602

Bethlehem Ministry and Governance Task Force

Listening Post Congregation Report

May 2023

Introduction

In December 2022 the Parish Leadership Council established the Bethlehem Ministry and Governance Task Force and appointed its members - John Brandt, Laurie Denno, Jon Herzberger, Pastor Korte, Bill Wittig, and Bill Wuerfel. **Its task is twofold - first to hear about ministries that are or could be important to our members and, second, to develop a governance structure that best supports those ministries.**

In February and March 2023 a series of Listening Posts were held to hear member thoughts about current and potential ministries as well as our current congregational organization.

Thank you to the 82 members who participated in the 8 Listening Posts and to those who led them. Also thank you to Thrivent for the Action Grant that helped fund this effort.

What we learned about ministry and mission

There are a lot of ministries that are important to people. 18 different current ministries were specifically named and they included both inreach and outreach ministries. That is encouraging!

We also learned that there are a lot of ideas about new ministries. At least 21 potential ministries were suggested. Some were restarts of ministries we have done in the past and others are brand new. Like our current ministries, the potential ministries included both inreach and outreach ministries. That is exciting!

People want to do things together. They want opportunities to build and enjoy relationships with their fellow members.

We need to communicate better. What activities are happening? How can I be involved? Do you need anything? How can I get something started?

What did we learn about our congregation's organization?

Our organization is too complicated. It is sometimes difficult to determine who is in charge of what. There seem to be a lot of steps in the process to get something done. It takes too many people to make our current structure work right.

Here too we need better communication. People want to know who the congregational leaders are. They want to know what the boards and committees are doing. They want to know how to help with their gifts of time, talents, and treasures.

Next Steps

The Task Force will take this information and **develop a congregational organization** that will help us best meet our ministry needs - current and future.

We can improve communication right now. While there will be some formal work done to improve communication, right now every leader, board, and committee can make it a priority.

There are several **changes in the Task Force membership**. Thank you Laurie Denno who is stepping away after completing her commitment to help us learn about the ministry and mission of our congregation. And thanks to Lisa Burnell and Christine Engelhardt who have joined the Task Force for its work on the congregational organization.

Want to know more?

If you would like to know more contact any of the Task Force members mentioned in the Introduction. The video presentation of this report is available at bethlehemsaginaw.org.

BAY COUNTY

Faith, Bay City
www.FaithLutheranBC.org

Immanuel, Bay City
www.Immanuelbaycity.com

St. John (Amelith), Bay City
www.amelith.org

St. Paul (Frankenlust), Bay City
www.stpaulbaycity.org

Trinity (Monitor), Bay City
www.trinitymonitor.org

Zion, Auburn
www.zionauburn.com

Zion, Bay City
www.zionbaycity.org

HURON COUNTY

Christ the King,
Sebewaing & Unionville
www.ckl.org

MIDLAND COUNTY

St. John's, Midland
www.sjmidland.org

SAGINAW COUNTY

Bethlehem, Saginaw
www.bethlehemsaginaw.org

Good Shepherd, Saginaw
www.goodshepherdsaginaw.com

Holy Cross, Saginaw
www.hcls.org

Immanuel (Frankentrost), Saginaw
www.frankentrost.org

Peace, Saginaw
www.peacesaginaw.org

St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth
www.stlorenz.org

St. Peter, Hemlock
www.stpeterhemlock.org

TUSCOLA COUNTY

St. Michael's (Richville), Reese
www.stmichaelsrichville.org

St. Paul, Millington
www.stpaul-millington.org

Trinity, Reese
www.trinityreese.org

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