



WEEKLY CONNECTION

OCTOBER 26, 2025

SUNDAY'S WORSHIP: REFORMATION DAY

Scripture: Revelation 14:6–7; Romans 3:19–28; Matthew 11:12–19 or John 8:31–36

The Son of God Has Set Us Free from Sin and Death by His Grace

“Wisdom is justified by her deeds” (Matt. 11:19), and the true Wisdom of God, Christ Jesus, the incarnate Son, justifies us by His deeds. He prepares His way by the preaching of repentance, but He has suffered the violence of the Law and voluntarily handed Himself over to violent men, that we might eat and drink with Him in His kingdom and *“remain in the house forever”* (John 8:35). For He is *“a friend of tax collectors and sinners”* (Matt. 11:19), and He has rescued us by His grace from the slavery of sin and death. By the proclamation of His eternal Gospel *“to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people”* (Rev. 14:6), *“the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law”* (Rom. 3:21), *“that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus”* (Rom. 3:26). And by hearing the Gospel of Christ Jesus, *“whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith”* (Rom. 3:25), *“you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”* (John 8:32).

SERVING THIS SUNDAY – October 26

Preacher –	Pastor Bender
Lay Reader –	Brenda Wilson
Elder in Charge –	9 am Ryan Mulder and Bill Wuerfel 10:30 am Mike Weiss and Steve Harvey
Greeters –	9 am Laurie Denno and Christine Engelhardt 10:30 am Ann Braun, Liz Reyes and Char Turner
Tech Team –	9 am Will Conrad, Bobby Truitt and Mark Stabek 10:30 am
Special Music-	10:30 am Senior Choir
Music Leaders –	9 am Dan Stauffer 10:30 George Frank

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE (For more Information see blurbs below.)

October 26 - Contemporary Worship @ 9:00 am
October 26 - Bible Study @ 9:15 - Lower Level
October 26 - Traditional Worship @ 10:30 am
October 27 - Braille @ 5:30 pm
October 28 - Braille @ 8:30 am
October 28 - Women's Bible Study @ 9:30 am - David Room
October 28 - Bethlehem Knitters @ 11:00 am - David Room

October 30 - Braille @ 8:30 am

October 31 - Men's Bible Study via Zoom @ 6:15 am

November 2 - Contemporary Worship with Communion @ 9:00 am

November 2 - Bible Study @ 9:15 - Lower Level

November 2 - Traditional Worship with Communion @ 10:30 am

Bethlehem BOLD Update

Bethlehem Overview of Leadership and Discipleship

This section highlights the current topics being discussed by Bethlehem's three primary boards. It will be updated so that our congregation stays informed and connected. While some topics may remain steady for a time, new items will be added as they arise, and you will be notified through each new weekly BOLD update.

Church Attendance

Worship Date: October 19, 2025

1st Service Attendance: 238

2nd Service Attendance: 64

Online Worship Views - Contemporary: 68

Online Worship Views - Traditional: 45

In-person July-September Attendance Averaged 150

Ministry Leadership Board (MLB)

- Pastor Gary installed; forming Transitional Task Force
- New Business Manager selected; training underway
- School steady at 150; Education Sunday Sept 14; Trunk or Treat Oct 25
- Voters' Meeting Sept 14 for MLB election and teacher Call
- BOLD updates start in October
- Kids Against Hunger Oct 12; volunteers needed
- Special Gifts task force forming
- Garden Club maintaining church grounds

Board of Elders

- Elders approved continuation of two church services
- Contemporary and Traditional services starting in October
- Elders are working on Church Security and Safety procedures
- Elders are forming a team to address music program needs at Bethlehem
- Elders are requesting congregation members to read the Gospel of John in October
- October is Worship Leader Appreciation Month. Please show your appreciation to Pastor Gary, Deacon Ken, Jenna (Wittig) and Kiel Fauske and our very own George Frank
- Contact Mike Denno to discuss any matter related to Elders at mp_denno@yahoo.com or 989.284.2063

Board of Education

- Monthly Report for the board from Brenda Wilson and Lisa May on where things currently stand in both K-8th grade & in our Little Stars Preschool. 150 students are currently enrolled in preschool thru 8th

grade. New Staff updates received, welcoming Mr Deneen in 7th/8th Grade, Mrs Biver moving to 2nd grade & the change of Mrs Jenna as our lead teacher in GSRP. Spanish was added to the school curriculum this year taught by Bethany Weiss, a Valley Grad who comes to us as a shared time teacher.

- New Policies written and updated in regards to 12 month salary distributions to be added to the employee manual
- Starting the process of a review of the employee manual. Which according to accreditation policy should be done annually.

Financial Summary Combined Church & School			YTD: July 1 though October 31, 2025		
Category	October Actual	October Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance (YTD)
Income	\$108,831	\$90,986	\$314,438	\$320,158	-\$5,720
Expenses	\$118,249	\$131,938	\$325,245	\$376,788	\$51,544
Net Income (Loss)	-\$9,418	-\$40,952	-\$10,806	-\$56,630	\$45,824
Summary for October	▲ Ahead of Budget by \$31,534				
Summary Year to Date	▲ Ahead of Budget by \$45,824				
Cash Account Balances as of October					
Category	Balance				
Checking Savings	\$132,009				
Monthly Change in Cash	-\$6,103				
Investments Tri-Star	\$659,874				
Total Assets	\$844,694				

Kids Against Hunger –We are still collecting donations to help cover the cost of the food.

OVER 19,000 KIDS AGAINST HUNGER MEALS PACKED

People who we will probably never meet are grateful for the 19,440 meals packed for Kids Against Hunger. 84 people “manned” 5 assembly lines preparing meals or wrote encouraging notes to accompany the meals. Generous gifts totaling \$6,697 toward our total cost of \$7600 (40 cents per meal!) also blessed this effort. Special donations are still being accepted to reach our goal of meeting the full cost of the packing. A sloppy joe and potluck luncheon was enjoyed following a very productive couple of hours.

Special thanks to Bill and Charmaine Wittig who organized the packing, Paul Wagner who led the set up crew, and Melissa Bergant and family who made the sloppy joes with the help of a Thrivent Grant.

In the last three years nearly 60,000 meals have been packed and over \$21,000 given to feed those less fortunate. We are grateful for Bill and Charmaine's leadership each year. As they take on new challenges, this becomes an opportunity for others to build on their work. It is a chance for 1 or 2 couples to lead what has become a very positive multi-generational event. If you would like to learn more contact Congregation President John Brandt (brandtjohn1964@gmail.com) or anyone on the Ministry Leadership Board.

ELDERS UPDATE

To improve the security and safety of our congregation, the Elders have decided that the doors to the church will be locked during services starting October 19th. We will ensure that someone will be in the narthex to welcome and admit anyone arriving after the doors are locked – Please knock on the doors! We will have a doorbell installed as soon as possible. Thank you for your understanding.

PRAYER FOCUS:

SPECIAL PRAYERS: Pastor Korte, Grace Korte, Mary Gallegos, Wendy Sova, Milda Persons, Pam Grueber, Terri Fawcett, Jan Pringle, Diane Michael, Edward Frank, Casey Hurley, Timothy Ziegler, Billie Mull, Melissa Bullard, Debbie Pappas

HOSPITALIZATION & PASTORAL CARE: If you or a loved one is hospitalized or in need of pastoral care, please call the Church Office at 989-755-1144 and leave a detailed message. (Name, Room #, Contact, etc.) This line will be checked during business hours and messages will be responded to in a timely manner.

EMERGENCY PASTORAL CARE: If you need to speak with Pastor in an emergency, please call or text Pastor Gary Bender at 989-770-0005.

REQUESTS FOR CONNECTION ARTICLES AND CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS need to be called in by phone, or emailed to the office at: office@bethlehemsaginaw.org by noon on Wednesdays. This allows time to ensure the information is directed to the appropriate person responsible for preparation for the upcoming weekends slides and connection printing.

STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Revelation 14:6 – “Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people.”

During the Reformation, this text was used to refer to Luther's ministry and the Lutheran message. We have an eternal Gospel to proclaim. Christ has freed us from our sins without any works on our part. We are saved by grace alone! And, ironically enough, Luther said this should

make him the “apostle of works.” Once we are freed by grace, we are truly free to serve God in works that flow from thankfulness and praise.

WEEKLY ADULT BIBLE STUDIES

- **Wednesdays, 7:30 am (Men)** Meeting at Miles Market Café on Gratiot Rd. in Saginaw. Men from Bethlehem, Holy Cross, Immanuel, and Peace will be in attendance. Currently in Corinthians. Coffee and donuts will be available. Contact Bill Denno at 989-781-4851 or 989-295-8618 for more info. Bring your favorite Bible!
- **Fridays, 6:20 am (Men)** on Zoom. “**The New Testament in Chronological Order.**” For information, please contact Mike Denno at: mp_denno@yahoo.com or 989.284.2063

Your October Spiritual Challenge

Read the Gospel of John and share your experience with someone—maybe over coffee, at the dinner table, with a friend, at church, or someone you meet. Once you're done, let an Elder know before or after a church service to receive a special gift.

Why? The Gospel of John holds a distinctive and powerful place within the Christian Bible. Through its telling of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection, it reveals that Jesus is the Son of God—sent by the Father to offer eternal life to all who believe in him. Again and again, Jesus overturns expectations, proclaiming that salvation is not something earned but a miraculous gift of grace: to be born again. A strong thread of mission runs throughout the Gospel. Just as the Father sent Jesus into the world, Jesus commissions his followers to carry on his work—bearing witness that he is the Son of God, so that “whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

OCTOBER IS WORSHIP LEADER APPRECIATION MONTH

Members of Bethlehem, please do not hesitate to share your appreciation.

Thank you, George, Jenna, Kiel, Deacon Ken and Pastor Gary, for leading us in meaningful, beautiful, and Spirit filled praise, music, song, prayer, confession, and worship! We at Bethlehem Lutheran Church want to express our deepest love and thankfulness. May you be blessed through the love of the people at Bethlehem and the Rock of our salvation, who is Jesus Christ our Lord.

Psalm 95:1: "Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. "

With heartfelt appreciation, Bethlehem Lutheran Congregation

ALTAR GUILD SIGN UP October is Altar Guild Sign Up month! Altar Guild is not a hard job to do. You will be in a group where each person has a job to do for about an hour. We do not always meet on a weekend anymore for cleaning and preparing communion. We do clean up after communion on Sundays where it is offered. It is a blessing to work for our Lord. Please prayerfully think of joining us! Any questions, please call Ann Braun at 989-293-0439.

CARING FOR OTHERS

October Noisy Offering Supports New Life

Life Clinic, with locations in Saginaw, Bay City and Midland, provides encouragement to pregnant women and helps new mothers and fathers support their babies.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS The food pantry is in need of the following items: cereal, hearty soups, and stews, boxed potatoes, and canned pasta. Donations can be dropped off at the church/school office.

METAL RAMP DONATION

Looking for a Bethlehem member, family member or veteran who is in need of a ramp to help with mobility issues at home. Please call or text Diane at 989-798-6006 for more details.

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

UNDIE SUNDAY- Orphan Grain Train is in need of NEW underwear and socks, any sizes for men, women, and kids. Thousands of destitute people in the US and worldwide need the most basic of items- NEW underwear and socks. We will be collecting each Sunday until Nov.

23. Remember to pray for OGT and its recipients. Thankyou- Helping Hands Team (formerly Evangelism Board)

AROUND BETHLEHEM

BETHLEHEM STARS will meet November 4th at noon at Pierce Road Grill, 2903 Pierce Rd. Saginaw. Please call Billie Mull at 989-792-5843 to make a reservation.

CEMETERY CLEANUP The fall cemetery cleanup will happen soon. Please remove anything you would like to keep by November 2nd. Anything that is out of season, faded, or broken will be removed. Also, all of the flags placed by the American Legion on Memorial Day will be removed. Thank you - The Cemetery Committee.

Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser!

Bethlehem School is teaming up with Texas Roadhouse for a mouthwatering fundraiser you won't want to miss! You can purchase Texas Roadhouse Gift Cards in any amount from \$5 to \$100. This is perfect for holiday gifts or a night out! PLUS, we've got your Thanksgiving dinner covered with: One dozen of those famous frozen rolls for only \$8.00 and an 8oz of sweet honey butter for just \$2.00.

Everything will be delivered before Thanksgiving, so you'll have the best rolls on the table (and one less thing to stress about!). PTL will have order forms available between services this Sunday! Stop by, place your order, and support our school in the tastiest way possible! We accept cash only, and payments must be made when placing the order. **The last day to place orders in the office is on Monday, October 27th, with cash only.**

Welcome Our New Business Manager!

We're excited to share that Bethlehem has hired a new Business Manager, Ryan Nuenke. Over the next few weeks, Delanie will be working alongside him during his training, and we're looking forward to a smooth transition. Please join us in welcoming Ryan to our church and school family—be sure to say hello when you see him around!

SCHOOL NEWS Our Youth Group hosted a fabulous Trunk or Treat this weekend, with the entry "fee" of a canned or boxed food item for our Bethlehem Food Pantry. Thank you to everyone who donated bags of candy or decorated a trunk and helped to make this such a success! Special thanks to our Youth Group leaders and students for all of their hard work!

Thanks to all for making our recent World's Finest Chocolate Bar fundraiser such a success. Our GSRP class sold the most candy bars, with a total of 27 boxes, and our GSRP friend Alberto was the overall biggest seller with EIGHT boxes sold! We are so happy to have these GSRP families as a much-involved part of our Bethlehem Family.

B-Team Basketball games start November 4th with a home game against Peace. Girls play first at 4:30pm and then boys play immediately after. Please join us as we cheer on our Chargers! All games are listed on the athletics calendar on our website: www.bethlehemsaginaw.org.

PRESCHOOL NEWS HUGE NEWS! Bethlehem Little Stars Preschool has been chosen for the prestigious "Platinum" status in Childcare Services for Saginaw County! We are incredibly proud of our growing presence and positive impact in the community. Thank you to all of you who support us in so many ways—especially with your prayers!

Parenting and Childcare
Childcare Services

Share This Category



Platinum

**Bethlehem Little Stars
Preschool**

OTHER NEWS

FROM VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

The VL Drama Department invites you to their fall show: "Fools" by Neil Simon. It takes the stage November 6, 7, and 8 at 7 pm. Tickets available beginning November 4 in the office or at the door. Synopsis: Leon Tolchinsky is ecstatic. He's landed a terrific teaching job in an idyllic Russian hamlet. When he arrives, he finds people sweeping dust from the stoops back into their houses and people milking upside down to get more cream. The town has been cursed with Chronic Stupidity for two hundred years, and Leon's job is to break the curse.

Have you seen the recent Valley Vision newsletter highlighting Valley's newly renovated spaces, impressive 2025 AP score results, and our school year theme? Find it at www.vlhs.com/vvoct2025!

Valley Lutheran High School has the following coaching positions open for the upcoming season:

Varsity Men's Bowling Head Coach (could be combined with women's)
Varsity Women's Bowling Head Coach (could be combined with men's)
Varsity Wrestling Head Coach

If you are interested or know someone who is interested, please send a resume, cover letter, and contact information to VL Athletic Director, Tyler Yahn at tyahn@vlhs.com.

The VLHS Booster Club Fruit Sale continues through November 7. Fruit can be ordered from a Valley student or online at www.vlhs.com/fruitsale and can be picked up at Valley on Saturday, December 6.

FROM ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Ascension Lutheran Church, 8695 Gratiot Road, Saginaw, MI 48609 is accepting vendors for their fall Craft Fair 11/1/2025 10am-3pm. Our goal is to provide an experience for the community to support local artists, crafters, and vendors and to find a wide variety of unique gifts and crafts. All registrants keep 100% of their sales. Rental Space: \$30, includes one 6-foot table & 2 chairs in an 8x8 space. Doors open at 8:30 a.m. for set up. Additional tables and displays provided by vendor can be set up within the space. Secure your table with check or cash AND the registration form received no later than October 23, 2025. Registration forms available at ascensionlc.org or email a request to ascensionlc@sbcglobal.net A bake sale provided by the Youth of Ascension will also take place during the event.

FROM ST MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH

Annual Bazaar, Saturday, November 1 ~ 8:30a-2:30p Bake Sale, Vendors, Luncheon
2565 N Miller Rd, Saginaw. Info: 989-781-3205

FROM ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH of AUBURN

Zion, Auburn, Grave Blanket Sale: Grave blankets will be available for sale **November 2nd through December 7th**. They are sold from our home, located at 2255 9 Mile Road (between Seidlers and Beaver Road). Feel free to just stop by, or text/call Diana ahead at 989-280-3185 to make sure we are home. Prices are small-\$30, large-\$50, and full-size (available upon request) \$75. Please make checks available to **Zion Lutheran Church, Auburn**. In the memo add "Santa Store". Please bring a check or cash as we are not set up for credit card payments.

FROM ST. LORENZ of FRANKENMUTH

St. Lorenz is seeking a qualified candidate to serve as our next **Director of Information Technology**. This position oversees the technology needs of both church and school, ensuring systems run smoothly to support our ministry and education programs. Please email any questions or your resume to church@stlorenz.org.

LCMS FOUNDATION

We can face competing priorities when we think about planning our estates someday. To work on your Christian Estate Plan today, you must decide if you are more controlled by past goals or future dreams. Throughout life, many of our decisions are based on financial budget decisions, whether we can afford this or that, planning for retirement. As life changes, we start anticipating when we get to go home to be with Jesus, instead of focusing on the temporary needs of this life. That can change our perspective about our gift plan in our Christian Estate plan, that focused on transferring blessings to family or ministry. There is freedom at this point in life. Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can help you to explore that new freedom.

Contact: Julie Burgess - Gift Planning Counselor

Email: Julie.burgess@lfnd.org

Mobile: 713-822-5284