

**Lebanon  
Evangelical  
Lutheran  
Church**

*A Congregation of the North/West Lower  
Michigan Synod, of the ELCA  
Craig Satterlee, Bishop  
Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop*

**1101 S. Mears Avenue  
Whitehall, MI 49461  
(231) 893-5745**

**Rev. Douglas M. Ogden**

**Sunday Morning Worship  
10:15 am in person  
YouTube Worship on the Web**

**Office Hours**  
Please contact the church office for  
current hours

**Newsletter Editor &  
Bulletin Announcements**  
Margaret Everling

**Church Council**  
Meg Eaton      Cheri Crouch  
Laura Hollister      Brian Jaekel  
Sarah Schmalz      Wietse Schaafsma  
Al Wheeler

**"We are baptized members of God's  
Church, forgiven and set free by grace  
through faith.**

**[www.lebanonlutheranchurch.com](http://www.lebanonlutheranchurch.com)**

**Facebook: Lebanon Lutheran Church  
(ELCA)**

**Instagram—Twitter : #lcsignsofgrace**

TO BRING GOD'S GRACE AND LOVE TO EACH OTHER  
AND TO THE WORLD

# THE LIGHT



## Pastor's Notes

**January 2024**

I hope you are still enjoying the days of Christmas, memory of the worship on Christmas eve, the time spent with family and friends on Christmas day, the visits with people in the days before. I hope that, if the days around Christmas were difficult, that you find the hope that comes from the birth of Christ in a later time, when the difficult things have receded, and as church we pray with you that they do.

We lit candles Christmas eve, and as the Christophers used to say, "it is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness," but if from time to time you need to protest against the darkness, we can relate. January and the first half of February are the epiphany seasons, the Christmas afterglow, that there is a bigger light than our own. Even as our candles grow shorter when they burn, we hold them out a little further, reach a little higher in protest.

"I'm holding out my only candle, though it's so little light to find my way  
And it's shorter every hour as it reaches for the day  
Yes I feel just like a candle in a way". - Jackson Browne sang that

Your own light is important. The idea of "the light of Christ" might seem a little too impersonal, a little too metaphorical. Like the ten lamp-bearing women whose lamps were lit in expectation of a bridegroom, we all run out of oil sometimes. Their lamps needed to be re-lit by the coming Christ. When the light of Christ comes, it illumines what is truly important, rather than what seems urgent. I know of several people this Christmas who had to put some plans on hold while emergencies forced an unexpected change.

"For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the people, but the Lord will rise, the glory of the Lord will appear over you." (The gospel for Epiphany Day, January 6). And each reading from. The Gospels throughout the epiphany season will highlight a story where the light comes not to a mass movement, or a nation, or anything else impersonal. It comes to a person – Jesus himself at his baptism (Jan 7), magi travelers from the east, John the Baptist, who questioned Jesus if they should wait for another. There is Philip and Nathaniel (Jan 14), Simon and Andrew (Jan 21) an unnamed man with an unclean spirit (Jan 28), Simon's mother-in-law (Feb 4). The light of Christ may be big and bright, or small and candle-like, but it is never impersonal. It is for you. Thank you for lighting candles on Christmas eve for one another. Together we will seek to re-light yours should it ever begin to flicker, if you will do the same for me

*Pastor Ogden*



**January 2024**  
**Fund of the Month**  
**Quilting**



**Websites of Interest**

[www.lebanonlutheranchurch.com](http://www.lebanonlutheranchurch.com)

[www.mittensynod.org](http://www.mittensynod.org)

[www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

[www.whitelakescouting.com](http://www.whitelakescouting.com)

[www.whitelakechorale.com](http://www.whitelakechorale.com)

[www.hopescarves.org](http://www.hopescarves.org)

[LivingLutheran.org](http://LivingLutheran.org)

[www.samaritas.org](http://www.samaritas.org)

**Suicide Hotline** [1-800-273TALK.org](http://1-800-273TALK.org)  
[www.co.muskegon.mi.us/cmh/suicide\\_prevention](http://www.co.muskegon.mi.us/cmh/suicide_prevention)

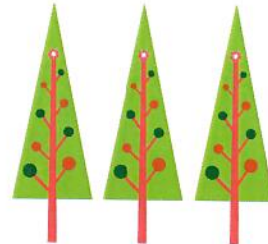
**Every Woman's Place** 231-722-3333 or  
[www.everywomansplace.org](http://www.everywomansplace.org)

**The Trevor Project** 1-866-488-7386

The Trevor Project is the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning) young people.



**The Church Office will  
be closed on Monday,  
January 1, 2024.**





## Bishop's Newsletter

December 2023



North/West Lower  
Michigan Synod

P.O. Box 517  
Dewitt, MI 48820

517-321-5066  
[mittensynod.org](http://mittensynod.org)

### In this Issue:

Ground Everything in the Good  
News of Jesus Christ

Walking Together in Ministry

2023 Synod Wrapped

Upcoming Events

Congregations in Transition

### Ground Everything in the Good News of Jesus Christ

"What is your most important or meaningful story about Jesus today?" I ask myself this question to close every day. Sometimes I am flabbergasted by what story or saying floats into my mind. For example, on the Friday after Thanksgiving, the news was filled with the hostage exchange in Israel and Gaza, hate speech on college campuses and at Black Friday shopping centers, and the unending political division in our country. I was anticipating Christ the King Sunday, when we hear Jesus say, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40) and that evening I heard Jesus saying, "I was maligned and you spoke up for me. I was threatened and you stood up for me."

Of course, Jesus never said this but that is when a saying attributed to Jesus floated into my mind: "So, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16). I know how hard our rostered ministers try to remain balanced and to not give offense. For a while now, I have wondered where the line is between caring for all God's people and being lukewarm to Jesus. I suspect we are going to find out. I am convinced (perhaps I am afraid) that 2024 will be a year in which the church will not have the luxury of remaining lukewarm. The church will not get away with remaining neither cold nor hot. Some will call upon the church to be hot; others will demand the church be cold. It would be so much easier if we were all of one mind. But we are not.

Less important than where we end up on any issue is how we ground it in the good news of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we all must become confident and comfortable speaking of Jesus in ways that directly address life in this world. Speaking of Jesus may lead some to be hot and others to be cold. What's important is that we speak of Jesus and offer good news that matters. I am not assigning us more to do. I am realizing that the wisdom of what we have been doing since our last synod assembly will likely become apparent in 2024. My advent prayer is that God will bolster those sharing the story of Jesus, and that the spirit will inspire more of us to join them. A way to start might be closing your day by asking yourself, "What is your most important or meaningful story about Jesus today?"

The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop

## **HAPPY NEW YEAR from your Thrivent Whitehall Office !!**

### Understanding Required Minimum Distributions and Qualified Charitable Distributions

In late December 2022, the President signed legislation that included the Secure 2.0 Act which extended the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) age from age 72 to 73 beginning in 2023 and to 75 beginning in 2033. If you have a qualified retirement plan (i.e., IRAs, 401(k)s and 403(b)s), you're required to take a minimum amount of money out of your plan each year. (Roth IRAs do not require RMDs.) These RMDs are taxable and must continue for your lifetime or until the account is depleted.

But what if you don't need these funds for daily living expenses in retirement? Fortunately, there are several ways you can repurpose your RMDs to make the most of the money you must withdraw. These options can enable you to spread generosity to people and causes that matter most to you and help you better meet your priorities and generosity goals.

Included in these options is Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD). Individual Retirement Account (IRA) owners age 70 ½ or older are eligible to make qualified distributions directly to a charitable organization.

The benefits of making a direct Qualified Charitable Distribution from an IRA include:

- ☐ The contribution results in a reduction of adjusted gross income (AGI) based on a number of tax calculations.
- ☐ The contribution allows taxpayers who use the standard deduction to reduce taxable income.
- ☐ The charitable amount counts toward the individual's RMD for the year, as calculated annually based on age and account balances.

The contribution must be made directly from the IRA trustee to the charitable organization (the funds cannot be received by the account owner).

Contact your Whitehall Office Thrivent financial advisor, Marci Bentz at 231-894-8886, text 231-760-8246, or email [whitehalloffice@thrivent.com](mailto:whitehalloffice@thrivent.com) for assistance to guide you in strategies to consider.



## Prayer Concerns

**It is an important part of our ministry to be praying constantly for one another.**  
*We add names to the prayer list with consent in order to maintain privacy and confidentiality.* This month in your prayers, please remember:



### Prayers for those who are homebound:

### Our Minister

**Helen Bartlett**, at daughter Carol Roods' home now.  
**Mary Bernhardt**, at Robinswood Assisted Living #115 (Kay Snell)  
**Marlene Holmstrom**, at home  
**Ken Kolb**, with health issues  
**Sandy Kolb**, hip replacement surgery  
**Elaine Liska**, at White Lake Assisted Living - Whitehall  
**Phyllis Monte**, at Legacy of Caring - Whitehall  
**Ruth Nurmi**, with health concerns  
**Nancy Peterson**, McCauley Place, E. Sherman, Muskegon #407 A  
**Barb Smith**, at Legacy of Caring - Whitehall  
**Marty Windbacher**, at home under Hospice Care

### Special Prayer Concerns:

**Cindy Albert**, recuperating from recent gallbladder surgery  
**Brianne Beekman**, (Terry & Mary Beekman's granddaughter) diagnosed with multiple brain tumors.  
**Anita Benes**, ("oboe sister" of Michele Wheeler), battling leukemia  
**Lucas Carlson**, (Terry and Mary Beekman's grandson) for new treatment.  
**Sheila Fretty**, re-occurring cancer.  
**Elin Frietsch**, diagnosed with Lymphoma  
**Margaret Fountain**, (Mary Koenen's sister) diagnosed with multiple myeloma  
**Dave Gross**, (Kathy Keller's brother) hospitalized in Canada  
**Frank Hollister**, with health concerns  
**John Lewallen**, (Mary Lewallen's brother-in-law) liver cancer  
**Mary Lewallen**, with home & pet issues  
**Jill** (Chuck Miller's daughter) Knee replacement on 10/11/23  
**Dwight Mead** (Paula Moreau's brother-in-law), non-hodgkin lymphoma mantel type (stage four).  
**Pastor Sarah Samuelson**, recently diagnosed with colorectal cancer  
**Wendy Shalifoe**, undergoing chemo treatment  
**Donna Stacy**, undergoing knee replacement surgery 12/4  
**Verne "Barney" Sutherland**, with serious heart issues

**For our partners in faith**, our companion synods in Salud para la Vida in San Pedro Sula, Honduras for their mission and ministry in their place as we fulfill our mission in our place; for all the churches of the Lutheran World Federation, for people of the gospel throughout the world



## Worship Notes

**Sunday, January 7 - Baptism of Our Lord  
Worship - 10:15am**

**Color: White**

**Musician:  
Monica Ogden**

**Readings**

**Today we pray for:**

**Genesis 1:1-5  
Psalm 29  
Acts 19:1-7  
Mark 1:4-11**

**Prayer of the Day**

Holy God, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, and transform us by your Spirit, that we may follow after your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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**Sunday, January 14 - Epiphany 2  
Worship - 10:15am**

**Color: Green**

**Musician:  
Monica Ogden**

**Readings**

**Today we pray for:**

**1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]  
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18  
1 Corinthians 6:12-20  
John 1:43-51**

**Prayer of the Day**

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day, praising you, the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Sunday, January 21 - Epiphany 3**  
**Worship - 10:15am**

**Color: Green**

**Readings**

**Musician:**  
**Monica Ogden**

**Jonah 3:1-5**  
**Psalm 16**  
**1 Peter 1:3-9**  
**John 20:19-31**

**Today we pray for:**

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**Sunday, January 28 - Epiphany 4**  
**Worship - 10:15 am**

**Color: Green**

**Today we pray for:**

**Readings**

**Musician:**  
**Monica Ogden**

**Acts 2:14a, 36-41**  
**Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19**  
**1 Peter 1:17-23**  
**Luke 24:13-35**

**Prayer of the Day**

Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**





2024



1/1 Julie Johnson	1/19 Christie Phillips
1/2 John Parks	1/19 Mary Bernhardt
1/3 Marsha Hulce	1/19 Marjie Bronsink
1/3 Barbara Brooks	1/19 Alan Hinks
1/4 Jacob R. Brooks	1/20 Becky Bronsink
1/5 Jim Coddington	1/20 John Hildebrandt
1/5 Robert Eklund	1/20 Doug Ogden
1/5 Laura Hollister	1/20 Kathy Scarbrough
1/5 Katherine Lathrop	1/22 Helen Bartlett
1/5 Luke Thompson	1/22 Richard Carlson
1/6 John Lathrop	1/22 Nancy Dahl
1/6 Scott Veeder	1/23 Gabe DeMumbrum
1/7 John Lundell	1/23 Laura Schnepf
1/8 Stephanie Larson	1/25 Virginia Foster
1/9 Glenn Eaton	1/25 Traci Murphy
1/10 Alexandra Kesteloot	1/26 Ann Snow
1/10 Ann Nessa	1/27 Taylor Hughes
1/10 Sarah O'Donnell	1/27 Erin Wendell
1/11 Lynda Lauterberg	1/28 Barb Aardema
1/11 Randy Nurmi	1/28 Bill Cloutier, Jr.
1/13 Kerry Fretty	1/29 Cory Wyatt
1/14 Jone Benedict	1/30 Joel Newsted
1/14 Steve Albert	1/30 Dwight Roesler
1/16 Jeffrey Baker	1/31 Joe Ferrentino
1/16 Jennifer Stanhope	
1/16 Al Wheeler	
1/17 JoAnne Silk	
1/18 Linda Decker	



1/19/02 Michael & Kathleen Palmer



## Baptism Anniversaries



1/1 Diane Eastman	1/10 Mitch Foster	1/25 Lisa Holmblade
1/1 Wiestse Schaafsma	1/11 Donna Jensen	1/27 David Pearson
1/1 Melanie Schaafsma	1/18 Dawn Baker	1/30 Gary Holmstrom
1/1 Amy Swope	1/18 Nathan Parker	
1/3 James Will	1/20 Oliver Wyatt	
1/7 Matthew Ferguson	1/23 Tyler Grover	
1/9 Joshua Cloutier	1/24 Kristin Wolffis	

Celebrate your baptism anniversary with a candle a meal or this prayer:

“Stir up within me the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and joy, on this day when I give thanks for my baptism in to Christ.”

### DONATE RIGHT FROM YOUR SMARTPHONE

Giving through our Vanco Mobile app is an easy and convenient way to donate to our church. It only takes a moment to set up and account:

1. Download the free Vanco Mobile app from the App store or Google Play.
2. Find our Church by searching for our Church name:  
Lebanon Lutheran Church
3. Donate: to the General Fund

*Thank you for your generosity*

*This is the new version of the GivePlus app, and must be downloaded again from your App Store.*

Thank you to the women and crew for making baskets that went to many of our homebound members and friends.



Sue and every one who donated fruit and baked goods, delivered the baskets and even made one for Margaret and one for the Ogdens.

Thank you to a great group who made a great Christmas gift for us.

*Pastor Ogden*

## Annual Meeting & Potluck January 28, 2024 Please attend

Lebanon's Sleigh Ride will take place at Country Dairy on Saturday, January 20th at 1:00 pm.

If we have all the spots filled for 1pm, we will add a 2pm ride as well if there is interest.

Sign-up sheets are at the church or contact the church office or Pastor Ogden.





### *Milestone Birthdays*

Helen Bartlett - 98 on 1/22  
C/O Carol Rood  
5337 W. McMillan  
North Muskegon, MI 49445

Mary Bernhardt - 95 on 1/19  
Robinswood Assisted Living #115  
2650 Ruddiman  
Muskegon, MI 49445

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Advent and Christmas season so wonderful.

The bread that Sheila and Michele make each Sunday – it was still warm as I was passing it out. Those who prepared the altar, the candles, the garlands, the ornaments. Flo and Jim set up the creche behind the altar. Food pantry volunteers especially Sandy, whose team has been serving a hundred families a week, and still got everything downstairs for Art's yoga fund-raiser and for Christmas worship. Those who spontaneously did things in worship when they just needed to be done. And the long list of everybody who will lead worship Dec 30. And to Bishop Satterlee for his video sermon for that day. It is good for us that we hear the wider church leader from time to time. "Church" is more than just us.

Art estimates there was more than a thousand dollars raised for Hope Scarves. The FFA from Montague High School brought apples for food pantry clients. And we sent Fund-Of-The Month moneys to Samaritas. Thanks also to Pastor John Jacks who came in December representing Samaritas. Diane, Emma and the choirs led us in excellent music, along with Monica, Stephen and Mike. Mike (the other Mike) got it all on YouTube for us. To show you how significant that is, we have about 60 views on record for Christmas eve at the time of this writing.

Margaret works hard every day "coordinating the chaos" (her new job title) but this year it's been especially frantic. Synod reports, annual reports, bulletins, newsletters, mailing lists, prayer lists. And the cryptic task of deciphering my handwriting. But it all got done. Sue makes weekly calls and helps us support people we may not see very often. She organized the team that put together all the baskets that went to members' homes.

There are many more to thank, and so little space. My apologies. But the last word goes to Pastor Munther Isaac and former Pastor Mitri Raheb of Christmas Lutheran Church and school in Bethlehem, and Bishop Munib Younan of Jordan and the Holy Land, and the staff of the Lutheran Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem.

*Pastor Ogden*





Living in God's Amazing Grace

## Lebanon Lutheran Church

1101 South Mears Avenue  
Whitehall, MI 49461

*The Light* is published monthly by Lebanon Lutheran Church, 1101 S. Mears Avenue, Whitehall, MI 49461. Submissions are accepted through the 15th of each month. Submissions **MUST** include your name and a way to contact you in case of questions.

2 ways to submit your information:

- yellow folder in Margaret's office  
(better)
- [office@lebanonlutheranchurch.com](mailto:office@lebanonlutheranchurch.com)  
(best)



# 2024