

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

# THE LIGHT



Pastor's Notes

May 2024

## 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 : #llcsofgrace

The White Lake Area Food Pantry at Lebanon Lutheran serves approximately 100 families each Wednesday from 9:30 am to 10:30 am, with boxes of groceries which include milk, meat, toilet paper and fresh produce in the summer months when people donate from their gardens.

Food is purchased from Feeding America West Michigan ( Grand Rapids), as well as through deals with local retailers, can drives, fundraisers, and donations including the Post Office and Electric Forest Festival.

We have White Lake Women Who Care, Wesco, Twin Cities, Battelle Corporation, Dancing with the Local Stars, and Country Dairy, along with many supportive individuals and congregations .

The Food Pantry began under Irene Swenson primarily because of her work tutoring, and was housed in just one closet, serving about five families per month. In the nineties, it expanded as a cooperative venture among area churches so that those in need could receive an adequate supply of food with one stop. Sandy Robbins has been our organizer since 2016, and as of this spring continues to volunteer, but has handed the organizing over to Paul Collins.

Many volunteers work to bring the milk, fill the boxes, and set up and serve on Wednesdays. Al and Michele Wheeler coordinate the milk pick up from Country Dairy each Tuesday. They along with Mary Koenen, Barb Reese, Larry VanderPlaats, Wietse Schaafsma work get milk for our clients.

Tom Pawlowski, Jenna Brown, Sue Sikkenga, Susan Newhof, Kathy Walsh, Cindy Lipka, Bill DeMumbrum, Tony DeNicolo, Diana Delgado, Mitch Coleman and Holly VanderPlaats volunteer their time to packing boxes, stocking shelves and unloading deliveries.

Rob Montgomery and Larry VanderPlaats drive the truck from Muskegon or Grand Rapids to pick up food. Margaret Everling keeps the records, including the confidential contact information from clients. Thanks to Dr. McDowell, Superintendent at Whitehall District Schools, we were able to get Covid vaccines for clients and volunteers, making it safer for everybody. We get boxes from many businesses (especially MasterTag) since we give out a hundred per week. Food arrives in boxes we cannot use, so Tony DeNicolo takes them to MasterTag for recycling.



**May 2024**  
Fund of the Month  
**Synod Benevolence**

*See the article on Page 10*

**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.



**mum mama mommy**  
**BEAUTIFUL**  
*unconditional love*  
creative **UNSELFISH**  
**LOVE U LOVE U LOVE U**  
**BELIEVES**  
*life patient* **GENTLE**  
**compassionate**  
**NURTURING**  
*strength* **DEVOTED**





**North/West Lower  
Michigan Synod**

**P.O. Box 517  
Dewitt, MI 48820**

**517-321-5066  
mittensynod.org**

**In this Issue:**

"Mālama ka 'aina"

2024 Synod Assembly

Upcoming Events

Congregations in Transition

### "Mālama ka 'aina"

In the Hawaiian language, the phrase "Mālama ka 'aina" means to take care of the land. Hawaiians, to this day, love, preserve, and protect the land as the source of their living. Hawaiians believe that, if we take care of the land, the land will take care of us. A related phrase, "Mālama Honua," means to take care of the earth. When we protect the planet, we keep it well for future generations.

My family and I learned the concept of "Mālama ka 'aina" as we explored the islands. We were asked not to litter and to stay on the trails, keep our distance from wildlife, and make certain there were no seeds on our shoes that could take root and threaten plants endemic to Hawaii. Mostly, we were invited to consider the islands and the ocean that surrounds and connects them as sacred.

There are few places in the modern world in which the connection between humankind, myth, and nature is more obvious than Hawaii. More than a relic of Hawaii's distant past, Hawaiian mythology is a very present spiritual belief among many of the islands' indigenous people. As noted historian Herb Kawainui Kane stated in the PBS series, *The Hawaiians*, island natives believed that, "The entire universe was an orderly, fixed whole in which all the parts were integral to the whole, including man himself. Man was descended from the Gods, but so were the rocks, so were the animals, so were the fish. Thus man had to regard the rocks, the fish and the birds as his relatives."



Waimea Canyon, Kauai



Poipu Beach, Kauai

In Hawaiian mythology, the islands and ocean provide unmistakable evidence of the gods. Pele is the goddess of fire and volcano; Namaka is the goddess of water and the sea—and waves. Laka, the goddess of the forest who enriches the plants with light, is best known for creating the beautiful Hawaiian hula dance. Seen most recently in Disney's *Moana*, Maui is a demigod and the god of the sun. When the sun rose and set too quickly, Maui tamed it and extended the length of a day so people could have longer days to work. Yet, my favorite is Kamohoali'i, the chief deity among the shark gods, who is revered for his role in guiding ancient Polynesian travelers to Hawaii, leading lost ships to safety, and protecting sailors. For a lighthearted appreciation of Hawaiian mythology, pay attention to the ocean in Disney's *Moana*. For something more substantial, read Chapter 2 of James Michener's novel *Hawaii*.

These goddesses and gods, and several more, are connected to particular places in Hawaii. For example, on the island of Kauai, Pele dug into the earth and formed a hill called Pu'u'oupele or "the hill of Pele." We understand associating places with the divine, at least in theory. In the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament, Jacob called the place where he wrestled with the angel Peniel "face of God," because he saw God face-to-face and his life was

*Continued on Page 4*

**Continued from page 1**

preserved (Genesis 32:30). Many pilgrims to the Holy Land report they experience Jesus's presence most acutely not in church buildings, but in natural places, including the Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, Mount of Olives, and Garden of Gethsemane.

Yet, these Biblical locations are far away; connecting to the places Jesus lived, taught, suffered, died, and rose requires either study or pilgrimage. So, here at home, we experience Jesus in church buildings, which are a step removed from nature and creation. If we are honest with ourselves, we subtly discourage people from experiencing Jesus in nature and creation, out of fear that, if people genuinely experience Jesus in nature, they may not return to our church buildings.

How much we want to care for and protect our church buildings! Rather than sacrificially caring for the land, so the land will take care of us, by asking how many buildings the church actually needs, we endeavor to make our buildings more hospitable to the planet through green teams and solar panels. These are certainly worthwhile undertakings that, of course, deserve to be lauded. Nevertheless, I return from Hawaii wondering what would happen if we strove to recover the sacredness of creation rather than confining Jesus and our appreciation of sacred space to our buildings. What kind of impact would we have if "Mālama ka 'aina" became an integral part of our spirituality?

How might we cultivate this Hawaiian (and Native American) spiritual perspective? Earth Day is April 22. Perhaps we could use this day and month to put some plans in place for the summer. Here are four ideas:

- First, let's get out of our buildings at least one Sunday this summer. I'm not thinking of folding chairs on the church's front lawn. Let's go to the beach. Let's go to the park. Let's go into the woods. I seem to recall that, once upon a time, Immanuel in Suttons Bay held Easter sunrise worship in a cherry orchard; perhaps they still do. Our Ludington and Muskegon congregations used to worship on the beach. St. Paul's in Alpena worships on the shore of Lake Superior. Forty years ago, as an intern, I spent some summer Sundays leading worship at Trinity/Midland's camp.

Perhaps being locked out of our church buildings during the pandemic has made us determined never to leave them again. People remind me that Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching in their synagogues and that Jesus taught in the temple in Jerusalem. That's true. Jesus also taught in a boat on the sea of Galilee and on a mountain (as in Sermon on the Mount). Jesus also prayed on a mountain, in a garden, and at a river. We can leave our building; our building will be there when we come back. I acknowledge that this is easier for me to say because I do not have a single church building that I call home.



*Laniakea Beach, Oahu*

Keep worship simple when you venture out into nature. As obvious as it sounds, don't attempt to re-create indoor worship outdoors. People and the word are all we really need to worship. Read a story about Jesus spending time in nature, ideally a story that is appropriate for the location. We can sing and pray things we know by heart. Don't bring books. Don't make bulletins. Some water for remembering baptism might be lovely; consider using the water that's there. Some bread and wine might be nice, but it's not necessary. I suggest some silence or guided meditation that provides space to experience the triune God in the setting.

- Second, let's encourage our people to spend time in nature this summer; to do this, we may need to give them permission not to show up at the church building once or twice, though they can certainly send their envelope. I spend some of my holiest summer Sunday mornings sitting at the end of my dock or standing waist deep in lake water praying. I have spent time with God on the same lake for more than 60 years; it is such a sacred place to me that Cathy and I have a cabin there that I call the cathedral. Wouldn't it be neat to have a map of Michigan where people could put post-it notes at the places they experienced God in nature this summer.

**Continued on page 3**



*'Akaka Falls, Hawai'i*

## 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  
**Barb Smith**, at Legacy of Caring - Whitehall  
**Marty Windbacher**, At Poppin House

Special Prayer Concerns:

**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 Beekmans grandson) for new treatment.  
**Sheila Fretty**, re-occurring cancer.  
**Elin Frietsch**, diagnosed with Lymphoma  
**Margaret Fountain**, (Mary Koenen's sister) diagnosed with multiple myeloma, now in remission  
**Dave Gross**, (Kathy Keller's brother ) hospitalized in Canada  
**Dan Hendrick**, (Curt Crouch's brother) battling cancer  
**John Lewallen**, (Mary Lewallen's brother-in-law) liver cancer  
**Mary Lewallen**, with home & pet issues  
**Dwight Mead** (Paula Moreau's brother-in-law), non-hodgkin lymphoma mantel type (stage four).  
**Tom Munn**, (Frank Hollister's friend), at SKLD-Whitehall, recuperating from multiple strokes and health issues.  
**Lois Szczerbinski**, with health issues  
**Pastor Sarah Samuelson**, recently diagnosed with colorectal cancer  
**Wendy Shalifoe**, Surgery in December, now cancer free  
**Paul Vof**, (Ken and Sandy Kolb's son-in-law) hearing issues  
**Darlene Willbrandt**, knee replacement on April 22

**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, May 5 - Easter 6**  
**Worship - 10:15am**

**Color: White**

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

**Readings**

**Today we pray for:**  
**Scott & Kathy Keller**

**Acts 10:44-48**  
**Psalm 98**  
**1 John 5:1-6**  
**John 15:9-17**

**Prayer of the Day**

O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

---

**Sunday, May 12—Easter 7**  
**Worship - 10:15am**

**Color: White**

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

**Readings**

**Today we pray for:**  
**Jim & Flo King**

**Happy Mother's Day**

**Acts 1:15-17, 21-26**  
**Psalm 1**  
**1 John 5:9-13**  
**John 17:6-19**



**Prayer of the Day**

Gracious and glorious God, you have chosen us as your own, and by the powerful name of Christ you protect us from evil. By your Spirit transform us an your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Sunday, May 19 - Pentecost  
Worship - 10:15am**

**Color: Red**

**Readings**

**Musician:  
Monica Ogden**

**Acts 2:1-21  
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b  
Romans 8:22-27  
John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15**

**Today we pray for:  
Mary Koenen**

**Prayer of the Day**

Mighty God, you breathe life into our bones, and your Spirit brings truth to the world. Send us this Spirit, transform us by your truth, and give us language to proclaim your gospel, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Sunday, May 26—The Holy Trinity  
Worship - 10:15 am**

**Color: White**

**Readings**

**Musician:  
Monica Ogden**

**Isaiah 6:1-8  
Psalm 29  
Romans 8:12-27  
John 3:1-17**

**Today we pray for:  
Brenda Koster**

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty Creator and ever-living God; we worship your glory, eternal Three-in-One, and we praise your power, majestic One-in-Three. Keep us steadfast in this faith, defend us all adversity, and bring us at last into your presence, where you live in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Synod Assembly begins on Friday, May 11th via Zoom. Thank you to Pastor Ogden and our Synod Representatives, Frank and Alice Hollister to representing Lebanon Lutheran.

2024



5/1 Darrel Otto	5/10 Lauralee Kesteloot	5/17 Eric Nessa
5/2 Eric Nelson	5/10 Katie Shalifoe	5/18 Renae Silk
5/3 Monica Ogden	5/11 Vicki Hinks	5/20 Dan Girvan
5/4 Jeremy Bernhardt	5/12 Mary Wendell	5/21 Mitchell Clark
5/6 Ann Bloom	5/14 Don Nelson	5/21 Minnie Estlund
5/6 Lauren Nelson	5/16 Megan Ahrenholz	5/21 Juanita Holmblade
5/7 Arin (Snell) Bowen	5/16 Andrew Hildebrandt	5/22 Phyllis Monte
5/9 Kathleen Wiethoff	5/16 Barb Smith	5/25 Thomas Hildebrandt
		5/28 Elaine Liska
		5/30 Art Plewka
		5/31 Elaine Stevens

*Continued from Page 1*

We had a morning breakfast for clients before Covid, but have now outgrown the space. The lounge couldn't hold the number coming each week. But we had great volunteers for a long time who shopped, cooked and cleaned up. It was a great way to meet our clients more personally and provide a sense of community.

For a long time we have been raising money for a one-floor building, instead of the awkward split-level layout currently in use, which includes lifting the truck's worth of groceries through the window ( sometimes 6 tons worth).

The building will also provide garage space for trailers and equipment for Troop 1048, which we also charter, replacing the scout house that used to sit on the corner of Division and Market Street, which had to be torn down due to its condition.

Cash donations for food have been about \$60,000 per year. The budget has grown from \$40,000 before Covid to an estimated \$80,000 this year. In 2023, for the first time, we spent more on food to give out than we received in donations. This slows down the building, as non-designated donations go to the groceries first, building second. Right now we are making some changes to decrease supply costs by getting groceries from new sources and still give out a full supply of needed foods.

The good news is construction plans and fundraising may be complete in 2025. At some point it will come before a congregational meeting for approval, and if approved, construction will begin. The pantry has become a substantial operation and an important extension of our eucharistic worship.

We welcome anyone to see how it works Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 10:30 am, or help volunteer to fill boxes, procure milk, and unload trucks. We are closed however when Whitehall Schools are closed due to weather related issues.

Donations need to be made payable to Lebanon Lutheran Church ( Food Pantry noted on the memo line).

And a hearty Thank You to the volunteers who made it work through COVID, and continue to make it work today. They have been there all winter long in snow, rain, wind, even power outages. We couldn't do it without such dedication, and without Lebanon's continued enthusiasm for it.

*Pastor Ogden*



## Baptism Anniversaries



5/1 Elaine Skinner	5/9 Bob Palmer	5/19 Jim King
5/1 Jenna Brown	5/11 Todd Lamiman	5/22 Nancy Dahl
5/2 Allie Ogden	5/12 Jay Otto	5/29 Lisa Clark
5/4 Wendy Shalifoe	5/13 Brad Carlson	5/30 Dean Roesler
5/6 Ray Lathrop	5/14 Jeannette Otto	5/31 Shawn Erwin
5/6 Sarah Lathrop	5/15 Matthew Parman	5/31 Taylor Ogles
5/6 Bernice Schuitema	5/16 Donna Knoth	
5/7 Zoe Fretty	5/18 Savannah Chittisane	
5/7 Krysten Hosticka	5/19 Dakota King	

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.*



5/6/78	John & Becky Wahr
5/26/12	Mike & Sarah Schmalz
5/28/95	Wietse & Melanie Schaafsma
5/30/87	Scott & Kathy Keller

## ***Fund of the month for May is our synod***

Lebanon supports our Northwest Lower Michigan Synod, based in Lansing. And this year the congregation honored and selected my wife Alice and me to represent our church at the May 11 annual meeting. Our fund of the month is our synod, so I pose some questions and their answers, so that you might guess what the synod does and how it spends our/its money.

What is our Northwest Lower Michigan Synod? It is 95 congregations banded together covering the State of Michigan from the Indiana state line to the Straits of Mackinac, but without including southeast Michigan.

What is our Synod's budget? It is \$1,418,000.

What are the 5 main thrusts of its budget?

- 1) Proclaiming Christ through study, training, and campus ministry.
- 2) Renewing Congregations by caring for them and supporting Samaritans.
- 3) Empowering leaders by providing funds to Trinity Seminary, upholding the call process, and ensuring continuing education.
- 4) Strengthening connections with global mission opportunities, cooperative ministries, and advocacy in the public sector.
- 5) Supporting its administration with staff, office space, equipment and supplies.

As you may have guessed, there are more details as to where the money is spent, and subjects often intermingle with more than one main thrust.

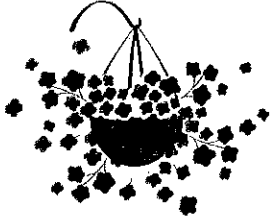
How much does Lebanon send to our Synod? \$14300 this year.

How much does the Synod send on to our national office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America? 50% of the synod's budget goes there, so \$7150 of Lebanon's money goes to support the national and international work of the ELCA.

How can one support our Synod? 1) give into Lebanon's offering and designate it for the Synod 2) give directly to the Synod for the Living Stones, which enhanced by \$5000 last year the work of the Synod or 3) give directly to the Synod's disaster relief fund, which last year sent \$22000 to Maui, Turkey, and Morocco to help with their huge needs.

Thanks for your support for this part of our ministry.

Frank Hollister



The White Lake Women's Club will be holding their annual Hanging Basket sale on Saturday, May 11, 2024 from 10am to noon.

Mark your calendars and stop by to get your Mother's Day baskets!

### **Thrivent Whitehall Office – Introducing *Roots & Wings***

One of the things I am grateful for as your financial advisor is the opportunity to connect with organizations doing amazing work in the community. **Roots & Wings** is a brand-new non-profit making the topic of legacy practical and accessible, helping families just like yours live and leave a legacy in their faith, family, and finances. You are *living* a legacy right now, whether you are intentional about it or not. In much the same way, you'll also *leave* a legacy when you pass away.

Through an online library of resources, **Roots & Wings** equips, encourages, and inspires individuals and families in the areas of:

- **Financial Education** that isn't confusing or boring, and helps with practical planning for generations
- **Purpose** and guidance for those experiencing an identity crisis in the wake of a major life transition
- **Nurture** that supports caregivers, widows, divorcees (and more) as they reclaim their stories in the midst of grief

**Roots & Wings** is celebrating the release of their online library on Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 12 – 12:30 p.m. EST. with a Virtual Launch Lunch – a quick, 30-minute webinar showcasing their resources and sharing their vision for community impact. **It's free and easy to register at [bit.ly/launch\\_lunch](https://bit.ly/launch_lunch)**. Will you join me online for this event?

**For any financial questions, needs or concerns, please call Marci Bentz at the Whitehall Thrivent Office at 231-894-8886, text 231-760-8246 or email [whitehalloffice@thrivent.com](mailto:whitehalloffice@thrivent.com).**



## Lebanon Lutheran Church

1101 South Mears Avenue  
Whitehall, MI 49461

Living in God's Amazing Grace

*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