

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

THE LIGHT



Pastor's Notes

January 2025

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
Meg Eaton

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

Facebook: Lebanon Lutheran Church
(ELCA)

Instagram—Twitter : #lcsignsofgrace

"Sooner or later all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace; if this is to be achieved, we must evolve a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation."

This is part of Martin Luther King, Jr's words upon accepting the Nobel Prize for Peace December 10, 1964. After sixty years we still hold to that necessity to evolve.

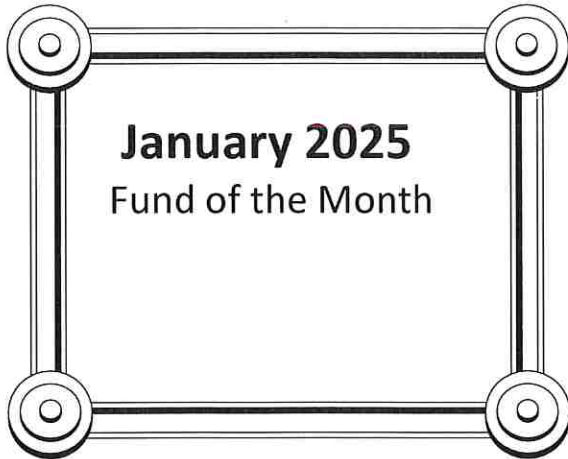
Revenge, aggression, and retaliation are responses all-too human to three basic human emotions: greed, fear and panic, responses we need to be saved from, whether they rise up in ourselves, or whether they become the common practice of factions in power.

There is a Lutheran style of being Christian, which is dramatically different from the loudest voices in our culture calling themselves Christian. I do not doubt their sincerity, nor criticize them following what they believe their God is saying to them. It just isn't a god I recognize when God is revealed as Emanuel – God-with-us, Jesus Christ, the one born a Christmas. That a Lutheran style includes receiving the events of each day as a gift, some gifts harder to accept, of course, than others.

This coming year, may test the strength of our convictions:

- That peacemakers are blessed;
- That the meek have an honored place;
- That those in grief deserve space;
- That mercy is a strength;
- That righteousness is worth the pursuit;
- That persecution is sometimes a sign that you're doing it right;
- That God stands with those in need; especially the widow, the orphan, the stranger who sojourns in your land;
- That there aren't many rules on how to make a success out of your life, but doing right by children is one of them; that the leading cause of harm for children is still gun violence. And so we will continue to support and advocate for the immigrant child, the foster child, the lonely or isolated child, the Giving Tree child, the Toys for Tots child, the Kids Klub child, the Scouting child.

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January 2025
Fund of the Month

The Annual Meeting will take place on January 26, 2025. The meeting will be followed by a potluck.

Volunteers needed to help with the monthly newsletter!

If you have a spare hour at the end of each month to help label, stamp and mail the Light, please let the church office know.

If several people have the spare time, it will be finished quickly.

Thank you,
Margaret Everling

Websites of Interest

www.lebanonlutheranchurch.com

www.mittensynod.org

www.elca.org

www.whitelakescouting.com

www.whitelakechorale.com

www.hopescarves.org

LivingLutheran.org.

www.samaritas.org

Suicide Hotline 1-800-273TALK.org
www.co.muskegon.mi.us/cmh/suicide_prevention

Every Woman's Place 231-722-3333 or
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.



Thank You to all our members who took a mitten from our White Lake Giving Tree, and those who purchased toys for the Toys for Tots program.

Because of your generosity, children in the White Lake Area had a merry Christmas!

Correction: Please note the following birthday was inadvertently missed in the December Light.

David Dusenberry—12/9
Wietse Schaafsma—12/27

(Continued from Page 1)

There are many young people in our area who have come to appreciate that Lutherans on the side of a Jesus they hope for too, but are still leery of the word “church”, as it too often means rejection. They haven’t yet joined in worship, but they are listening. And watching. And learning if we will walk the walk that goes with the talk.

In the word made flesh, God has given us in Jesus grace upon grace, and grace is best when like love it is given away. I wish you joy in 2025, the 1700th anniversary year of the Nicene Creed, in which we say, “We believe”

Pastor Ogden

Happy New Year from Marci Bentz – Thrivent Whitehall Office

New Year, Same You. (Wait, did I type that right?)

A new year always seems to come with high expectations of great life change. I don’t know about you, but there have been years I’ve promised myself just about anything you can imagine in the way of personal growth. However, my good intentions were based on the idealistic version of myself, not who I really am or what’s truly important to me. Turns out that there may not be anything magical about the turning of the calendar, and that’s ok.

If a grand New Year’s Resolution isn’t your thing, may I humbly suggest one simple idea to give your 2025 some healthy momentum? Name what’s most important to you and keep living those things out. Faith, family, health, education, adventure, and more... You can find your Top 5 Values through a quick online assessment at www.rootsandwingslegacy.org. From there, you can see where those things naturally show up in your life and be more intentional to invest in them if you’re seeing gaps. Because your values are important to you, this alignment process can help create easy wins and a more peaceful life. Happy New Year!

For any financial questions, needs or concerns, please call Marci Bentz, your Financial Advisor, Whitehall Thrivent Office at 231-894-8886, cell 231-760-8246 or email whitehalloffice@thrivent.com.

Gaudete: Rejoice!

How Disaster Recovery Works 2025 Synod Assembly The Third Sunday in Advent, when we light the pink candle on our Advent wreath, is Gaudete Sunday. This year, it falls on December 15. Gaudete is Latin for rejoice. The name comes from the appointed Second Reading from Philippians: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (4:4-7). Why, with all the holiday hype, Hallmark movies, and ho-ho-ho-ing, do we need the church to remind us to rejoice?

The season of Advent originated as a fast of 40 days in preparation for Christmas. Advent was a kind of "little Lent." So the color was, and in some places still is, purple. In the ninth century, the duration of Advent was reduced to four weeks (a period starting four Sundays before Christmas) while still preserving most of the characteristics of a penitential season. Advent provides a break that signifies the nearness of the Lord's coming and the joy and gladness that Christ will bring.

Gaudete Sunday reminds us to rejoice in the Lord. Such joy flows from confidence and trust that God is God, that the God revealed in Jesus Christ loves us, forgives us, and intends for us and for the world abundant life. Such joy transcends circumstance and motivates and empowers us to be gentle to everyone, not worry about anything, and in everything let our needs be made known to God. This joy is not something we will or conjure. Rather, this joy wells up in us as we contemplate the God revealed in Jesus Christ and engage in acts of charity or love. In his 2014 Gaudete Sunday homily, Pope Francis said that Gaudete Sunday is known as the "Sunday of Joy" and that instead of fretting about "all they still haven't done" to prepare for Christmas, people should "think of all the good things life has given you." [i]

Decades ago, I always spent time on Gaudete Sunday flipping through catalogs, looking at pink or rose vestments. The time has long passed for me to acquire such liturgical splendor. Besides, I would much rather wear the beautiful purple stole and cope that Christine Allen made for me. This year, I got to wear them at Chris's home church, Trinity in Kalamazoo. Nevertheless, Gaudete Sunday invites us to do four important things in the 10 days before Christmas.

First, spend time contemplating the God made known to us in Jesus Christ. I like to spend time examining a creche or nativity set, holding each piece in my hand. Then I read the Christmas Gospel from John (1:1-14) aloud. Then sing or recite a verse from your favorite or most meaningful Christmas carol. I always turn to the final verse of "O Little Town of Bethlehem." See how slowly you can do this.

Second, pray and have an honest conversation with God. Open your heart. Name your fears. State your needs. Most important, listen. The Office of Bishop changed my prayer. I spend much more time sitting in silence with open hands than speaking to God. More precisely, I speak best to God after a long listening spell.

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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. 5337 W. McMillan, N. Muskegon 49445
Mary Bernhardt, at Robinswood Assisted Living #115 (Kay Snell) 2650 Ruddiman, N. Muskegon 49445
Jane Blyth, 28801 Jefferson Ave., Apt. 332; Saint Clair Shores, MI 48081
Chris Claus, American House - 17383 174th Avenue, Spring Lake, MI 49456
Karl & Shirley Glass, with health concerns, 3232 Richmond NW, Walker, MI 49534
Marlene Holmstrom, at home. 2643 Benston Road, Whitehall, 49461
Ken & Sandy Kolb, with health issues - 6755 W. Old Channel Trail; Montague 49437
Elaine Liska, Sunrise Senior Living—Sunrise of Troy; 6870 Crooks Road, Troy, MI 48098-1704.
Elaine Liska—Room 130.
Phyllis Monte, at Legacy of Caring - Whitehall—1302 Warner Street, Whitehall 49461
Ruth Nurmi, with health concerns—308 E. Dayton Street, Fremont, 49412
Barb Smith, at Legacy of Caring - Whitehall—1302 Warner Street, Whitehall 49461

Special Prayer Concerns:

Brianne Beekman, (Terry & Mary Beekman's granddaughter) diagnosed with multiple brain tumors.
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, suffered a relapse and waiting on new treatments. Prayers are urgently needed.
Lon Grover, (Lucinda Grover's brother) with health concerns.
Frank Hollister, for continued healing
Dottie Holmblade, (Brian Holmblade's sister) for no side effects from chemotherapy restarted for cancer diagnosis
Dwight Mead (Paula Moreau's brother-in-law), non-hodgkin lymphoma mantel type (stage four).
Pastor Sarah Samuelson, at home, diagnosed with colorectal cancer
Paul Vos, (Ken and Sandy Kolb's son-in-law) hearing issues
For families dealing with dementia
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 5 - Christmas 2
Worship - 10:15am

Color: White

Musician:

Readings

Today we pray for:

Jeremiah 31:7-14
Psalm 147:12-20
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:[1-9] 10-18

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Sunday, January 12 - Baptism of Our Lord
Worship - 10:15am

Color: White

Musician:

Readings

Today we pray for:

Isaiah 43:1-7
Psalm 29
Acts 8:14-17
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you anointed Jesus at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful in your service, that we may rejoice to be called children of God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Sunday, January 19 - Epiphany 2
Worship - 10:15am

Color: Green

Readings

Musician:

Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 36:5-10
1 Corinthians 12:1-11
John 2:1-11

Today we pray for:

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, source of every blessing, you showed forth your glory and led many to faith by the works of your Son, who brought gladness and salvation to his people. Transform us by the Spirit of his love, that we may find our life together in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Sunday, January 26 - Epiphany 3
Worship - 10:15 am

Color: Green

Readings

Musician:

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Luke 4:14-21

Today we pray for:

Prayer of the Day

Blessed Lord God, you have caused the holy scriptures to be written for the nourishment of your people. Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, comforted by your promises, we may embrace and forever hold fast to the hope of eternal life, through your Son, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Birthdays



1/1 Julie Johnson	1/11 Randy Nurmi	1/23 Gabe DeMumbrum
1/2 John Parks	1/12 Madeline Troy	1/23 Laura Schnepf
1/3 Barbara Brooks	1/13 Kerry Fretty	1/25 Virginia Foster
1/4 Jacob R. Brooks	1/14 Steve Albert	1/25 Traci Murphy
1/5 Jim Coddington	1/16 Jeffrey Baker	1/26 Ann Snow
1/5 Robert Eklund	1/16 Jennifer Stanhope	1/27 Taylor Hughes
1/5 Laura Hollister	1/16 Al Wheeler	1/27 Erin Wendell
1/5 Katherine Lathrop	1/17 JoAnne Silk	1/28 Barb Aardema
1/5 Luke Thompson	1/18 Linda Decker	1/28 Bill Cloutier, Jr.
1/6 John Lathrop	1/19 Mary Bernhardt	1/30 Joel Newsted
1/6 Scott Veeder	1/19 Steve Green	1/30 Dwight Roesler
1/7 John Lundell	1/19 Marjie Bronsink	1/31 Joe Ferrentino
1/8 Stephanie Larson	1/20 Becky Bronsink	1/31 Rosemary Grubb
1/9 Glenn Eaton	1/20 John Hildebrandt	
1/10 Sandy Coddington	1/20 Doug Ogden	
1/10 Alexandra Kesteloot	1/20 Kathy Scarbrough	
1/10 Ann Nessa	1/22 Helen Bartlett	
1/10 Sarah O'Donnell	1/22 Richard Carlson	
1/11 Lynda Lauterberg	1/22 Nancy Dahl	



1/19/02 Michael & Kathleen Palmer



Beginning January 3, 2025, the church office will be closed on Fridays.

Margaret will be "semi" retiring.

Please plan accordingly for any items needing to be in the weekly inserts or newsletters.

Baptism Anniversaries



1/1 Diane Eastman	1/9 Scott Lamiman	1/25 Lisa Holmblade
1/1 Gretchen Lane	1/10 Mitch Foster	1/27 David Pearson
1/2 Carley Smercina	1/11 Donna Jensen	1/30 Gary Holmstrom
1/3 James Will	1/18 Dawn Baker	
1/7 Matthew Ferguson	1/18 Nathan Parker	
1/9 Joshua Cloutier	1/22 Helen Bartlett	
1/9 Lucinda Grover	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



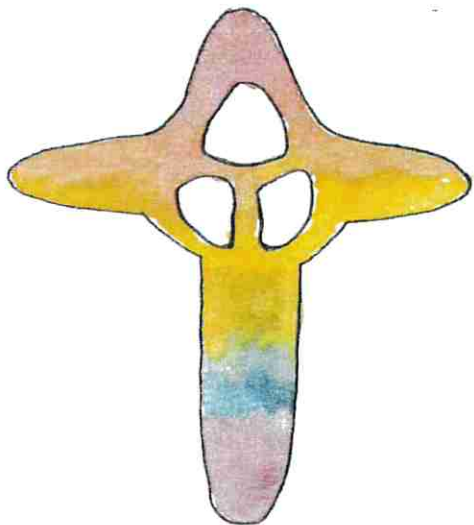
DONATE RIGHT FROM YOUR SMARTPHONE

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.



Dear Lebanon Lutheran Church,
Our congregation of St. Luke's
in Grand Rapids is lifting
your congregation in prayer
this week. We pray that
our mission in this world,
"to know Christ and make
Him known" be extended to
you as you reach out
to others in love and
compassion. May
God's Holy Spirit lead
you and guide you!
In Christ,
St. Luke's Lutheran
Church.

This is the kind of note we receive when it is our turn to receive prayer throughout the synod.

We are grateful to Suzanne Troy, who sends out our notes to the congregations we are praying for.

Bishop's Newsletter continued from page 4

Third, engage in charity or love. Make it more than a random act of kindness. Build anticipation by planning and deliberating. Perhaps do it as a family or a group of friends. If it all possible, do something that puts you in direct human contact. There is a world of difference between bringing food to the food pantry and serving food at the food pantry.

Fourth, don't fret about all you have to do. Do something to make Christmas special for those you love. And avoid the trap of thinking that Christmas will be ruined if one detail isn't perfect or one expectation goes unmet. Take all the energy that you would spend fretting and scurrying and, as Pope Francis suggests, use it to "think of all the good things life has given you." [ii]

Cathy, Chelsey, and I will be together for Christmas—something I haven't taken for granted since the pandemic. It is the only thing I need to make Christmas special and, except for Jesus, the best thing life has given me. I pray that you find such clarity this Christmas, that you are filled with joy, and led to rejoice.

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



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Online

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2. In the "GET STARTED" section on the right, click **Direct Thrivent Choice Dollars®**.
3. Log in by entering your user ID and password. (If you haven't yet registered on Thrivent.com, click "Register for account access.")
4. Choose the organization to which you want to direct Choice Dollars:
 - a. To direct to a previous organization:
 - Click "Direct Now" next to the organization's name, or
 - Click on the "View activity history" link, scroll down and click on the **name of the desired organization**.
 - b. To direct to a new organization, enter keyword(s) like organization name, ZIP code, cause, etc. Click "Search."
5. Choose "Direct All" or enter a specific number and click "Direct Now." Follow the prompts on the confirmation page to direct Choice Dollars.

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2. Press **1** to direct Choice Dollars or **2** to hear Thrivent Choice Dollars® program Terms and Conditions. (If prompted, say or enter your phone number and date of birth.)
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HOPS FOR HARBOR HOSPICE
Friday, January 31, 2025
6:00—9:00 pm
Pigeon Hill Brewing
895 4th Street, Muskegon, MI 49440



Join your friends at Pigeon Hill Brewing Company in Muskegon for a festive kickoff to a month-long fundraiser supporting Harbor Hospice programs and services for patients and their families! Enjoy live music by Tommy Foster, raffle prizes, and an introduction to Pigeon Hill's exclusive "Give-Back Beer." Throughout February, \$1 from every pint of this beer sold will be donated to the Harbor Hospice Foundation.



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
(*best*)

hello
january
2025



**The Church Office will be closed on the
Following dates:**

Wednesday, January 1, 2025 - *No Pantry