

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

# THE LIGHT



**Pastor's Notes** **March 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

**Bulletin Announcements**  
Margaret Everling

**Newsletter Editor**  
Meg Eaton

**Church Council**

David Dusenberry Cheri Crouch  
Laura Hollister Sarah Schmalz  
Wietse Schaafsma Amy Swope  
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 : #llesignsofgrace**

On Sunday February 23, 2025 we installed our 2025 Church Council. We said:

"You are to see that the words and deeds of this household of faith reflect the one in whose name we gather.

You are to work together with others to see that the worship and work of Christ are done in this congregation, and that God's will is done in this community, and indeed in the whole world.

You are to be diligent in your serving, so that the one Lord is glorified.

You are to be examples of faith active in love, to help maintain the life and harmony of this congregation."

With these words each year Lebanon's newly installed Church Council accepts the trust you have placed in them as your elected leaders.

And then in worship we ask the whole congregation:

"People of God, will you support these, your elected leaders, and will you share in the mutual ministry that Christ has given to all who are baptized?" And the worshipping Assembly said, "We will, and we ask God to help us."

Our newly elected Church Council for 2025 are  
President Wietse Schaafsma  
Vice-president Sarah Schmalz  
Recording Secretary Al Wheeler  
New Members Amy Swope and David Dusenberry  
Returning Members Cheri Crouch and Laura Hollister  
Appointed to Offices Curt Crouch and Terry Beekman

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**March 2025**  
Fund of the Month

**Good Gifts**

**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)

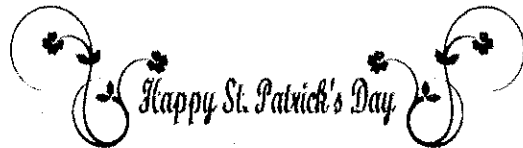
**Every Woman's Place** 231-722-3333 or  
[www.everywomansplace.org](http://www.everywomansplace.org)

**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.



**March 9, 2025**



## Bishop's Newsletter—February 2025

### No “Vision?”

Reacting to the barrage of executive orders issued by the White House, some are convinced that our synod—and our church—are bereft of “vision” and without direction. I assure you: we are not. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton offered some perspective on the ELCA’s “vision” after the election: <https://bit.ly/4jXiQFo>. I’d like to offer some perspective on our synod’s “vision” here.

Receiving phone calls, reading emails and social media posts, and listening to leaders, I conclude that neither our synod nor our church lack “vision” and direction. Rather, neither our synod nor our church are of one mind and heart when it comes to “vision” and direction. Some believe our synod should become more politically active and even strident in our opposition to the administration and pursuit of social justice. Others believe our synod should do everything possible to prevent congregations from closing, including changing our theology and stand on certain social issues, assuming congregations’ mortgages, and absorbing their pastors’ compensation packages. Still others assert our synod’s primary function is providing an annual, in-person, multi-day assembly that affords ample opportunity for recreation, informal interaction, building “authentic community,” socializing over cocktails, and reconnecting retired rostered ministers and their spouses with other retired colleagues. Of course, some people hold that their passion ought to be the synod’s priority—creation care, global mission, world hunger, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, and Samaritas, for example.

That we might not agree on a “vision” does not equate with our synod and our church lacking one. I find it splendidly ironic to hear that, under my leadership, our synod is without “vision.” From my perspective, “proclaiming Christ and prayerfully participating in Jesus’s own work of reconciling the world to God’s very Self,” the “vision” we’ve named for almost 12 years, remains especially poignant and urgent these days. And, as I say in every written report to Synod Council and the Synod Assembly, “Living Stones [endorsed by Synod Council in 2023] provides a framework for our strategic initiatives for the three-year period (2023-2025). I find this framework helpful in directing and communicating Synod mission and the work of the Staff.” We provide these initiatives on our website: <https://www.mittensynod.org/living-stones/>. Allow me to briefly (and incompletely) review them here.

**Sharing the Story of Jesus:** We made “It’s About Jesus!” the theme of the 2023 Synod Assembly and provided three retreats to equip rostered ministers and lay leaders to share the story of Jesus for no reason other than it is such good news. A fourth retreat is being planned for May 2025. We also authorized a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community at our campus ministry in Grand Rapids. Call Process: We understand that matching the right pastor or deacon and congregation is essential to congregations thriving, engaging their communities, and sharing the story of Jesus. We therefore make a priority of attracting candidates to our synod and actively attending to call processes. From 2023 to 2025, we celebrated 31 installations; we also negotiated many contracts for stated supply pastors for congregations unable to call a pastor. Often, this initiative does not become important to people until pastors are seeking a new call or congregations are seeking a pastor.

**Sustainability:** We know that, when a congregation’s or ministry’s mission becomes survival, engaging the community, sharing the story of Jesus, and even the faith of leaders are in jeopardy and likely to be lost. We therefore provide struggling congregations and synod ministries accompaniment and assistance to realistically assess their sustainability and, where appropriate, to either partner with neighboring congregations, both ELCA and full communion partners, or to move toward holy closure. Of course, this initiative may be less important to congregations that are sustainable and their pastors.

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*Bishop's Newsletter—continued from page 3*

**Adult Theological Education:** We provided five six-week courses via Zoom for adults (lay and rostered), one course in each of the five “semesters” January 2023 through January 2025. We are thrilled that through these courses, we have connected with 2,100 people both in our synod and throughout the ELCA. As these courses can only be done virtually, we are inspired that participants’ strong desire to learn and connect with each other has made them so successful. Additionally, I am also personally thrilled that we have offered two preaching retreats that over 40 rostered ministers have attended. Given the positive responses to these events, we anticipate them continuing.

**Candidates for Public Ministry:** I am disappointed that we did not reach our goal of identifying 20 people to enter public ministry. However, I rejoice that, during the period of 2023-2025, four pastors were ordained—Christina Schultz, Kyle Duff, Bridget Whately, and Megan Floyd. Three of these pastors come from our synod, two from Prince of Peace in Portage. Indeed, the work of raising up leaders for public ministry is primarily that of congregations and pastors. When you see the gifts for ministry in someone, no matter how young they are, tell them. You may be planting the seed that takes root. And if you are feeling even the slightest curiosity about becoming a pastor or deacon, reach out to your pastor, to Pastor Chrisy, or to me. I remind you of what I’ve been saying for years: money will not keep anyone feeling called to be a pastor or deacon from going to seminary.

**Rostered Minister Debt Reduction:** Rostered ministers are relieved of some measure of educational indebtedness. This is the most successful of our original Living Stones initiatives. From 2023-2025, our synod awarded \$24,000 in debt reduction grants. This program will continue as long as there is a need and available funds.

**Saying Thanks:** Celebrating our God of abundance, we thank congregations leading and growing in their mission support of our synod, together with individuals committed to supporting synod ministries financially. An annual river cruise aboard the Michigan Princess has become a cherished time together, which in 2024 we made available to the entire synod. We are grateful that over 70 members of our synod participated in last year’s cruise and we look forward to gathering again for recognition and celebration.

**Welcome:** Our synod makes a renewed commitment to discuss ways to welcome all God’s people. 90 people participated in the “Introduction to Social Justice” course and a smaller group participated in the “White People Doing Their Work” course. Our Ministry with Persons with Disabilities Task Force offered two learning days and remains available for consultation with congregations. Our “Open Hearts. Open Church” Task Force is available to consult with congregations considering becoming Reconciled in Christ.

**Youth:** We continue to support Living Water Ministries, and their summer camps and other youth events, as the foundation for youth ministry in our synod. We encouraged and facilitated our congregations’ participation in the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, including MYLE, the tAble, and the Young Adult Gathering, by providing \$15,000 in scholarship assistance. We have a renewed Youth and Young Adult Ministry Table and we anticipate holding more youth events in our synod, such as the peer ministry training held in February. Some may embrace and support this “vision” and direction. Others may not and may desire a change in “vision” and direction. That’s okay. It is important to understand, however, that desiring a different “vision” is different from asserting that we lack “vision” and direction. Our synod will have the opportunity to reflect on and unite around a renewed or new “vision” and direction in May. But until then, we will embrace the “vision” of proclaiming Christ and prayerfully participating in Jesus’s own work of reconciling the world to God’s very Self by following the direction provided by the Living Stone initiatives.

On the road together,  
*The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop*

P.S. You’ll notice “vision” is in quotes throughout this letter. Since long before I was a bishop, one of my personal missions has been to reduce the use of ableist language in the church as we undertake to reduce language of race and gender.

## 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 Glass**, @ Edison Christian Health Care Center, 1000 Edison St., Grand Rapids, MI 49504.  
Room #382.

**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:

**Cindy Albert**, implant surgery for sleep apnea

**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. New treatment will be started requiring hospitalization. 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

**Lauralee Kesteloot**, recuperating from a hip fracture.

**Dwight Mead** (Paula Moreau's brother-in-law), non-hodgkin lymphoma mantel type (stage four).

**Harry & Yolanta Swiatek**; Harry uses a wheelchair and is in a nursing home between Pentwater and Ludington. Yolanta is at the Medilodge of Ludington, 1000 E. Tinkham Ave., Ludington, MI 49431 after a fall resulted in hip & femur fractures.

**Linda Umstead**, (Carol Norwick's sister), with health issues

**Paul Vos**, (Ken and Sandy Kolb's son-in-law) hearing issues



## Worship Notes

**Sunday, March 2 - Transfiguration of Our Lord  
Worship - 10:15am**

**Color: White**

### Readings

**Exodus 34:29-35  
Psalm 99 (9)  
2 Corinthians 3:12 — 4:2  
Luke 9:28-36[37-43a]**

**Today we pray for:  
Ted & Sharon Gribas**

### Prayer of the Day

Holy God, mighty and immortal, you are beyond our knowing, yet we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Transform us into the likeness of your Son, who renewed our humanity so that we may share in his divinity, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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**Sunday, March 9 - Lent 1  
Worship - 10:15am**

**Color: Purple**

### Readings

**Deuteronomy 26:1-11  
Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 (11)  
Romans 10:8b-13  
Luke 4:1-13**

**Today we pray for:  
Sharon Barnes**

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide us now, so that, following your Son, we may walk safely through the wilderness of this world toward the life you alone can give, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Sunday, March 16 - Lent 2**  
**Worship - 10:15am**

**Color: Purple**

**Today we pray for:**  
**Eric & Stephanie Hein**

**Readings**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

God of the covenant, in the mystery of the cross you promise everlasting life to the world. Gather all peoples into your arms, and shelter us with your mercy, that we may rejoice in the life we share in 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, March 23—Lent 3**  
**Worship - 10:15 am**

**Color: Purple**

**Today we pray for:**  
**Charlie & Michaelanne Hendrixon**

**Readings**

**Genesis 45:3-11,15**  
**Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40**  
**1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50**  
**Luke 6:27-38**

**Prayer of the Day**

Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

# Birthdays



3/1 Sheila Fretty	3/19 Louis Hosticka
3/1 Samantha Jo Hendrixon	3/19 Heather Moss
3/1 Ray Richardson	3/23 Braxton Murphy
3/1 Roger Silk	3/23 Bryce Murphy
3/3 Karen Baker	3/23 Charles Schmalz
3/4 Dakota King	3/25 Mallory Crouch Lothschutz
3/5 Mary Lewallen	3/25 Anna DeNicolo Geiser
3/8 Kelsey Fretty	3/26 Brittney Roesler
3/10 James Will	3/28 Nathan Baker
3/11 Tim DeMumbrum	3/29 Marty DeNicolo
3/13 Ethan Reynolds	3/29 Donna Knoth
3/14 Sandy Robbins	3/29 Chuck Miller
3/15 Lucinda Grover	3/30 Jane Blyth
3/15 Tom Palmer	3/31 Eric Plewka
3/17 Karl Glass	3/31 Denise Rumsey

**Messages from the local Thrivent office:**

My name is Matilda and I'm going to be taking over for Sue Carpenter as Marci Bentz's Office Professional (Administrative Assistant). Sue will be training me for another month before she starts towards her next exciting journey into retirement! I wish her the best and can only hope to be as helpful and sweet as she has been for Marci and you all.

***It's that time of year again; no not taxes, Choice Dollars!***

Thrivent Choice is a program that allows eligible clients to direct their charitable funds to non-profit organizations. These dollars that you've accumulated can be directed to any of the thousands of participating organizations including churches, schools, and other non-profits. (I'm sure Pastor would appreciate if you choose your church, \*wink wink, nod nod\*) This program is a way for Thrivent to support the causes that are important to you and to give back to the community!

To direct your Choice Dollars, you may log in to your Thrivent account and select 'Direct Choice Dollars'. Or call our customer service line at 1-800-847-4836, when prompted simply say 'Thrivent Choice'. We can't wait to watch your generosity come to life!

If you have further questions or want to get ahold of your local Thrivent financial advisor: call Marci Bentz at the office at 231-894-8886 or text her at 231-760-8246.



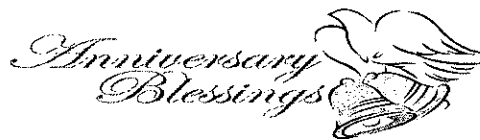
## Baptism Anniversaries



3/10 Beverly Statz	3/20 John Wahr	3/24 Tom Palmer
3/10 David Hendrixon	3/21 Mitchell Clark	3/28 Eric Plewka
3/13 Toni Schillaci	3/23 Braxton Murphy	3/29 Traci Murphy
3/17 Irene Parks	3/23 Bryce Murphy	

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



3/16/85 Glenn and Meg Eaton

### 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.*

**Our personal care kit schedule for Samaritas Foster Care and New Americans:**

March 5-9 bath towels (have 70 now)  
March 12-16 combs  
March 19-23 nail clippers  
March 26-30 toothpaste  
April 2-6 tooth brushes  
April 9-13 bar soap  
April 13 (Palm Sunday) assemble kits at 9 am

**Wednesday Lenten Lunches Tentative Schedule (at noon):**

March 12 @ St. Peters with Tim Dibble  
March 19 @ WLUCC with Bill Crawford  
March 26 @ St. James Catholic with Beth Wohlford

April 2 @ White Lake United Methodist with Donna Morton  
April 9 @ Ferry Memorial with Doug Ogden  
\*\* location and speakers are subject to change

**and Lenten Midweek Events**

March 5: 6:30 potluck and 7:15 pm Ash Wednesday worship  
March 12 & 19: 6:30 potluck and 7:15 pm Holden Prayer for Healing  
March 26 - April 16: potluck 6:30-7:15 pm and Peter Sagal documentaries, *Constitution USA*  
7-8 pm

**Sundays**

Dramas March 30 and April 6 in lieu of sermon  
Passion reading for Palm Sunday, April 13





Looking for a volunteer (or several) to cover the church office on Monday, March 31, April 1, 2, 3 while Margaret is on vacation. Anyone interested, please let Margaret know. Thank You!

*Pastor's Notes (continued from page 11)*

Please pray for all of us who call Lebanon their home to live up to these high visions of what can be. Please pray for our Synod Bishop and staff, especially at the time of the election of Bishop this May. Pray for the workers at Samaritas, who once again are facing the uncertainty, as they did in 2017, whether they will be able to continue the support of New Americans they have faithfully carried out for almost 100 years. For our colleges and universities, especially Wittenberg University in Springfield Ohio, which struggled to overcome the false rumors about the Haitian immigrants there — it has made recruitment of new students difficult.

It is the mission statement of the Congregation To Bring God's Grace and Love to Each other and To The World

It is the mission statement of the Church Council To Encourage and Empower Members to Fulfill Their God-given Dreams.

It is, as it always has been, a pleasure, a joy, and challenge to be your Pastor.

*Pastor Ogden*



## 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*)

# MARCH 2025