

THE LIGHT



Lebanon Evangelical Lutheran Church

*A congregation of the North/West
Lower Michigan Synod of the ELCA*

*Julie Schneider-Thomas, Bishop
Yehiel Curry, 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
M-Th 9AM-1:00PM

Office Manager
Margaret Everling

Church Council

Cheri Crouch Dave Dusenberry
Kim Nelson
Toni Schillaci Amy Swope
Seve Troy Al Wheeler
Treasurer: Terry Beekman
Financial Secretary: Curt Crouch

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

www.lebanonlutheranchurch.com

Pastor's Note

February 1, 2026

Thank you to Council members who have fulfilled their terms of office: Laura, Sarah and Wietse. Congratulations to those newly elected to Council: Steve, Kim and Toni. Your willingness to lead is deeply valued. We will have installation of officers after the February Council meeting.

We pray for the Evangelical Lutheran church in Greenland, recently independent from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, who do not know what the future will bring for them. Ninety percent of Greenland belongs to the state Lutheran Church there.

We pray for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela, living with joy, fear and uncertainty all at the same time. The ELCA Bishop of the Florida/Bahamas Synod comes from the ELCV.

We pray for the Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA, whose concerns for safety and for justice pull in all directions. We pray for the congregations which have been serving coffee and cocoa, blankets and hats, on the street corners to deepen the sense of community in their neighborhoods. Many have sponsored refugees from Somalia over the years and are concerned for the families they have come to know. We pray for children, who always seem to be the most traumatically affected, the most vulnerable.

We pray during our own feelings of helplessness, during the times of protest, during times of support for law enforcement. Public safety depends upon trust and respect for one another, and we are a long way from that at the moment. Powerful voices from "the factions" as Chloe's people calls them in First Corinthians have not been making trust easy.

We pray for the Haitian families in Springfield Ohio, whose Temporary Protected Status ends Tuesday, Feb. 3, unless something changes.

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They are temporary in that it is to last until it is safe to return, and protected means protected from deportation until it is safe to return (from the USCIS.gov website). We pray they do not experience violence from ICE or vigilante groups. For the students, faculty and administrators of Wittenberg University, that they be safe during this time, yet continue to grow in awareness of the issues around them.

When calls for peace and calls for justice cannot be reconciled, when the needs for safety and for mercy conflict, we pray for God's intervention, insight. We know people will sit home and do nothing, even when nothing seems the perfectly clear right thing to do. I hope we start with recognizing that protestors, immigrants, agents and police are all fellow human beings that deserve to be treated the way we would like to be treated ourselves. We cannot let our language dehumanize others, we cannot refrain from advocacy, and we cannot refrain from speaking up, and we cannot take our frustrations out on one another for issues that are made by powers above us. Chloe's people would not be pleased.

Pastor Doug Ogden



**ASH
WEDNESDAY**

*Prayer Service and Imposition of Ashes:
Wednesday February 18 at 7:00 PM*

Newsletter from Bishop Julie Schneider-Thomas – January 2026

Dear Siblings in Christ,

In my pre-Thanksgiving cleaning binge, I came across a diary from my sophomore year in high school. My entry for the page headed by "January 1" had a list of resolutions for 1985. Among them was "Get my life completely in control." HA! Forty years later it is still messy, and I have long since abandoned the idea that "complete control" is even within my ability. Most days I'm happy with a semblance of order.

I go into 2026 with no list of resolutions, just hanging tightly to the promises of God and with the words of the Christmas angels lingering in my ears, "Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."

God is in control and looks on us in love. We are grounded in that word for our lives and for the Year of Our Lord 2026. I'm thankful to be traveling on with you into this New Year, following wherever Jesus takes us.

The synod staff is starting to feel like we have our feet beneath us. We have concentrated our time and energy in these areas:

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People wanting to begin the candidacy process to become rostered ministers — we currently have seven people attending seminary!

Congregations who are currently without called leadership — giving thanks for the many lay leaders who are giving of their time to take on extra ministry.

Checking in with our committees and task forces to see where they are in their work and where things need to be rekindled.

Expanding and redesigning our communication — including weekly and monthly newsletters and a complete overhaul of our website.

Preparing for Synod Assembly 2026 (May 15-16, Prince of Peace, Portage) — including preparing a budget for 2026-2027.

Connecting with rostered ministers in times of transition and difficulty, as well as to think together about new ministries and possibilities.

It has been a blessing to witness in the past four months how resilient and faithful the congregations and people of our synod are. There are so many ways in which you all are gathering to give honor to God and to hear God's Word for us and then going out to your communities to share the good news of great joy — a Savior has been born for us, all of us and we need not live in fear.

God bless you in these days of Christmas and in the year to come!

+Bishop Julie

**“By gracious powers who wonderfully sheltered, and confidently waiting come what may,
we know that God is with us night and morning and never fails to greet us each new day.
By gracious powers so faithfully protected, so quietly, so wonderfully near,
we live each day in hope, with you beside us, and go with you through every coming year.”**

— ELW 626 “By Gracious Powers.” Lyrics by Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Seeking volunteers for the church office for vacation coverage on the following dates: March 30, March 31, April 2, April 6. Hours are 9AM – 1:00 PM if possible. Please call the office at 231-893-5745 if you can help. Thank you.

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 to maintain privacy and confidentiality.*

This month in your prayers, please remember:

Prayers for those who are homebound:

Jane Blyth, 28801 Jefferson Ave., Apt. 332; Saint Clair Shores, MI 48081
Chris Claus, at American House - 17383 174th Avenue, Spring Lake, MI 49456
Shirley Glass, with health concerns, 3121 Lake Michigan Dr. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Marlene Holmstrom, at home. 2643 Benston Road, Whitehall, 49461
Val Johnson, at White Lake Assisted Living, 6827 Whitehall Road, Whitehall, MI 49461
Ken Kolb, with health issues - 6755 W. Old Channel Trail; Montague 49437
Elaine Liska, at Sunrise of Troy – Room 130, 6870 Crooks Road, Troy, MI 48098-1704
Phyllis Monte, at Legacy of Caring - Whitehall—1302 Warner Street, Whitehall 49461
Ruth Nurmi, with health concerns —308 E. Dayton Street, Fremont, 49412
Lois Szcerbinski, at Robinswood Assisted Living, 2650 Ruddiman, N. Muskegon 49445

Special Prayer Concerns:

Brianne Beekman, (Terry & Mary Beekman's granddaughter) diagnosed with multiple brain tumors
Jenna Brown, at home recuperating after surgery
Lucas Carlson, (Terry and Mary Beekman's grandson) for new treatment
Diane Eastman, with health concerns
Shawn Erwin, hip replacement surgery on January 6, 2026
Sheila Fretty, re-occurring cancer and health concerns
Brian Holmblade, with heart issues
Mary Lewallen, recovering from spinal surgery
Dwight Mead (Paula Moreau's brother-in-law), non-Hodgkins's lymphoma mantel type (stage four)
Martha Ogden (Pastor Ogden's mother), with health concerns
Bev Statz, with health concerns
Darlene Willbrandt, with re-occurring pancreatic cancer and clinical trial that ended 2 years early

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.

HAPPY
Birthday

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2/2 Sharon Ackerman	2/12 Ray Veeder	2/20 Ariel Ogden
2/2 Karl Holmstrom	2/13 Tiffany Barnes	2/22 Jeanne Berry
2/2 Isaac Otterman	2/13 Marilyn Schmuker	2/22 John Wahr
2/3 Barb Dusenberry	2/14 Beverly Statz	2/23 Molly DeBolt Mooren
2/9 Toni Schillaci	2/15 Trevin Bernhardt	2/24 Krysten Hosticka
2/10 Saige Phelps	2/17 Lori Skinner	2/25 Dawn Brackmann
2/10 Amy Swope	2/17 Ethan Wendell	2/26 Frank Hollister
2/10 Holly Davis	2/19 Gregory Civis	2/26 Allie Ogden
2/11 Thea Lothschutz	2/19 Dustin King	2/28 Jenna Brown

Baptism Anniversaries

Celebrate your baptism anniversary by lighting a candle with 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 into Christ.”

2/8 Elly Hendrixon	2/16 Brian Peterson	2/24 Steve Albert
2/9 Austin Decker	2/16 Joni Will	2/26 Barb Aardema
2/14 Suzanne Troy	2/19 Nichole Page Farrar	2/26 Brian Holmblade
	2/21 Brenton Will	2/26 Bruce Holmblade

Anniversary Blessings

FIVE
WEDNESDAYS
FIVE
LOCAL
CHURCHES



EVERYONE
IS
Welcome

12 NOON - 1:00 p.m.



WHITE LAKE COMMUNITY

L E N T E N L U N C H E O N S

FEBRUARY 25 - Ferry Reformed Church
8637 Old Channel Trail, Montague
Guest speaker, Pastor Doug Ogden
of Lebanon Lutheran Church

MARCH 4 - White Lake Congregational UCC
1809 S. Mears Ave., Whitehall
Guest speaker, Pastor Mike Borgert
of Ferry Memorial Reformed Church

March 11 - White Lake Methodist Church
8555 Cook St., Montague
Guest speaker, Pastor Donna Morton
of White Lake Congregational UCC

MARCH 18 - Lebanon Lutheran Church
1101 S. Mears Ave., Whitehall
Guest speaker, Fr. Ronald Hutchinson
of St. James Catholic Church

MARCH 25 - St. James Catholic Church
5149 Dowling St., Montague
Guest speaker, Pastor Timothy Dibble
of White Lake United Methodist Church

Donations at the luncheons will go to support

HOPE
SQUAD

at Montague High School
and Whitehall High School

Learn more about HOPE SQUAD at:
hopesquad.com

February Newsletter from Thrivent

As a financial advisor and a sister in Christ, I believe true support goes beyond numbers—it's about walking together in faith. That's why I'm grateful to partner with *Roots & Wings* to share **Deeply Rooted**, a virtual support group for widows. This group meets every 2nd and 4th Thursday on Zoom and offers a Christ-centered space for encouragement, prayer, and hope. If you or someone you know is navigating this season, please visit <https://bit.ly/deeplyrootedgroup> for details. Let's remind each other that even in loss, our roots in Him hold firm.

As we head toward spring, please remember to **direct your 2025 Thrivent Choice Dollars by March 2026**. Choice Dollars are charitable outreach funds that eligible Thrivent clients can direct to enrolled nonprofits—**including local churches**. It's a simple way to strengthen ministry and community needs right here at home.

Plan your Action Teams: Now is a great time to outline your **Thrivent Action Teams** for 2026. These client-led service projects—like fundraisers, educational events, or hands-on service—receive a kit and **up to \$250 of seed money** to help you get started. Clients with **benefit membership** can **lead two Action Teams per year; associate members can lead one**. Imagine the impact if more of us lead a project this year!

As always if you have any questions or would like to speak to your local financial advisor- call Marci Bentz at 231-894-8886 or text her 231-670-8246.



The Fund of the Month for February is Kids' Klub

Kids' Klub is our youth outreach led by Ms. Amy and Ms. Toni. They meet monthly to help kids learn and feel at home in the church and in the faith. Funds raised will be used for curriculum, special events, outings and supplies. Just check the "Fund of the Month" box on your envelope or mark your check. Thanks for supporting Lebanon's Kids' Klub!



Worship Notes

Sunday February 1 – Epiphany 4 - 10:15 AM

Today we pray for: Greg and Molly Morren, Wesley, Fiona and Cecilia

Readings: Micah 6:1-8, Psalm 15, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, Matthew 5:1-12

Prayer of the Day:

Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Sunday February 8 – Epiphany 5 - 10:15 AM

Today we pray for: Megan and Seth Ahrenholz, Alice, Lucy and Silas

Readings: Isaiah 58:1-9a [9b-12], Psalm 112:1-9 [10], 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 [13-16], Matthew 5:13-20

Prayer of the Day: Lord God, with endless mercy you receive the prayers of all who call upon you. By your Spirit show us the things we ought to do and give us the grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Sunday February 15 – Transfiguration of Our Lord - 10:15 AM **Today we pray for:** Amy Swope

Readings: Exodus 24:12-18, Psalm 2, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Matthew 17:1-9

Prayer of the Day: O God, in the transfiguration of your Son you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the witness of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice from the bright cloud declaring Jesus your beloved Son, you foreshadowed our adoption as your children. Make us heirs with Christ of your glory, and bring us to enjoy its fullness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Sunday February 22 – Lent 1 - 10:15 AM

Today we pray for: Toni Schillaci

Readings: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7, Psalm 32, Romans 5:12-19, Matthew 4:1-11

Prayer of the Day: Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.