

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 Steve 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

April 1, 2026

The Adult Forum has been exploring these past few weeks some of what I call “The iconic moments” in Martin Luther’s life, the stories and images we as Lutheran Christians often come back to and re-tell frequently. Not all of them are historically accurate, but that never stopped a good story! Here’s a bit of a recap:

Martin Luther (1483-1546) barely knew anything about the discoveries of the Americas, let alone the peoples who lived there. Born and raised in Eisenach and Mansfeld, west of Berlin, Germany; his father a leader in the newly emerging copper mining industry there. Most of the Reformation takes place in a pretty small area, in what was East Germany until recently.

Caught in a thunderstorm in 1505 Luther cried out, “Help me, St Anne and I will become a monk!” St Anne was the patron saint of miners and of the Eisenach/Mansfeld area, but I will contend this is something you cry out not because you are a 22-year-old afraid of lightning, but because not only are you cold, wet, and miserable, but you don’t like the path that has been laid out for your life in your father’s insistence you become a lawyer for the mining industry. He became a monk. His father reminded him about the Honor Thy Father Commandment. Kids these days.

Studying the Bible was not something people did much, but Luther’s talks on the Psalms, Galatians, and Romans attracted attention, and planted the seeds that continued the search for a gracious way to talk about God. Still does.

The 95 Theses were probably not nailed on All Saints Eve (Oct 31, 1517) to the Castle Church door – they were too long and

most people couldn't read anyway, despite the massive brass plaque of them that covers the entire door today. They were debate topics probably mailed, not nailed, to other academics and church leaders. Nevertheless, the story is that Reformation was launched by "the hammer blow heard 'round the world." A better story than "the postage stamp licked in the nick of time."

Luther's ideas advanced way beyond the sale of indulgences in three main books in 1520-1521: Letter To The Christian Nobility, advocating for lay people, who were already empowered by their baptism to be priests, bishop, and popes to take responsibility for liberating the church from abuses; The Babylonian Captivity of The Church, in which he minced no words describing those abuses; and On Christian Freedom, in which he declared Christians were completely free in Christ, subject of no one, yet completely dutiful toward the needs of their neighbor. When it was demanded he recant his writings, he didn't. "Here I Stand," he said, either fearfully or boldly, depending on how much you like the story.

To protect him after a really contentious session with the Pope and his people, in which Luther was excommunicated, Luther's friends "kidnapped" him and hid in the Wartburg Castle. Bored out of his mind, he translated the New Testament into German, wrote A Mighty Fortress, and made a disguise so that he could walk around town as St George, unrecognized by the townspeople, much to his delight. Luther knew of St George for his time singing in St George's Church back in Eisenach as a kid.

1529 – Luther finds himself the leader of a network of Lutheran churches across Europe. He makes a series of posters to help leaders teach the faith. These posters become the Small Catechism (yes, that means there is a Large Catechism, kind of like a teacher's edition. It is much, much Larger).

In 1530 he and his closest colleague Philip Melanchthon write (mostly Melanchthon) statements of belief they hoped the medieval Catholics and the new Lutherans could agree to. They didn't. But one, a rather polarizing one called the Augsburg Confession, became the one statement that to this day is the one Lutheran pastors promise to uphold. It is also called Augustana, which is the name of the old Swedish and the current Slovak denominations.

The Reformation, part of the wider Renaissance movement, gave us a high view of human beings through its art, music, democracy, as well as a solid recognition of personal sinfulness and the collective misuse of power. Through it all we continue to "Here I Stand" on the idea that we are made right in God's eyes simply because God is gracious, something we might never know until we step out into the uncertain with faith that the story of Christ is true. That's my paraphrase of the slogan "we are justified by grace through faith in Christ alone apart from works of the law."

This Easter, as baptized priests, bishops and popes, I hope you catch yourself stepping out into the needs of your neighbor, into the unknown possibilities, and discover the resurrected Christ already there.

Pastor Doug Ogdén

Holy Week at Lebanon

Maundy Thursday – April 2nd – Potluck at 6:00 PM, Service at 7:15 PM

The Resurrection of Our Lord – Easter Day – April 5th at 10:15 AM – with special music led by guest Choir Director Alexys Nevitt

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, The Cottages at Martin Lake, 3088 S Van Wagoner Ave, Fremont, MI 49412

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 Szczerbinski, 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, recovering from surgery

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

John Parks, with health concerns

Bev Statz, with health concerns

Katie VandeBunte (Donna and Ernie Stacy's daughter), being treated for Stage II breast cancer

Darlene Willbrandt, with re-occurring pancreatic cancer

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

4/4 Brenda Koster
4/5 Doug Aardema
4/5 Hannah Bowen
4/5 Ted Gribas
4/7 Colby Eklund
4/12 Jeff Otterman
4/13 Kelly Shalifoe
4/13 Irene Parks

4/14 Erica Wyatt
4/15 Rob Wahr
4/16 Jay Otto
4/17 Carla Nessa
4/17 Esther Baldrige
4/19 Tony DeNicolo
4/19 Jon Honoré
4/19 Mary Koenen

4/21 Flo King
4/23 Blake Brackmann
4/24 Terry Kesteloot
4/24 Scott Lamiman
4/26 Nova Woodring
4/27 Sarah Stacy Schmalz
4/27 Tobias Lothschutz

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.”

4/1 Marty DeNicolo
4/1 Holly Hughes
4/2 Richard Carlson
4/3 John Parks
4/4 Richard Bernhardt
4/5 Darrel Otto
4/7 Sheila Fretty

4/12 Karl Holmstrom
4/15 Louis Hosticka
4/16 Linda Decker
4/17 Amy Griswold
4/17 Melissa Herring
4/18 Mary Carlson
4/21 Holly Tenbrink Davis

4/23 Terry Beekman
4/24 Sandy Robbins
4/25 Helen Allshouse
4/27 Holly Moog
4/27 Heather Moss



Anniversary Blessings



4/4/87 Mike & Lisa Clark
4/30/77 Curt & Cheri Crouch

An Easter Message from Bishop Yehiel Curry

We remember the whispers of Advent as we anticipated the birth of Jesus. Now, as we journey through Holy Week, we anticipate the joyful noise of alleluias on Easter Sunday. But before we reach the Easter celebration, we make our way through Lent, through an in-between time where we don't know what tomorrow will bring. We often describe ourselves as an Easter church, but in this holy, solemn time that begins with Ash Wednesday and moves on to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, we are also a Lenten church. Living in uncertainty, waiting and hoping for renewal. Longing for the moments when God's presence feels closer and more sure.

During Lent, we learn what it means to live on unsettled ground.

In Matthew's retelling of the resurrection, he describes a "violent earthquake" as the angel came down from heaven and rolled the stone away from the entrance to the tomb where Jesus lay.

I imagine the earthquake, the rumble deep below the earth, as the ground shifted far under the surface. Perhaps those who were nearby felt the tremble. Maybe the women who were on their way to the tomb with prepared spices felt the earth shift. They were unsettled, but they knew something powerful was happening.

We can understand that human experience of feeling out of control, of not being able to make sense of what's happening around us. Many of us can relate to this as we witness the current unrest in our world and in our communities. Like the women at the tomb, we feel isolated, disconnected. We're unsettled, unsure, living the Lenten reality of waiting and hoping.

And then, in the midst of that shaking, comes the promise.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen."

God's promise offers reassurance and hope. The resurrection does not deny disruption — it meets us within disorder and disturbance. The stone is rolled away. Death does not have the final word.

Yes, we are Easter people. Even when the ground below us is shaking, we will not grow weary. We know that Jesus is our foundation. Christ is risen, and that truth strengthens us. It gives us courage to live, to hope and to proclaim joy.

Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Bishop Yehiel Curry

Sunday April 12, 2026 - Please join us for Brunch immediately after worship

Sunday April 26, 2026 – Guest musician organist Fletcher Wernholm



The Fund of the Month for March and April is Good Gifts: all proceeds will benefit Lutheran World Relief efforts to provide livestock, seedlings, water filters, medical care and education to individuals and communities around the world. Mark your envelope or gift “Fund of the Month” or Good Gifts.”



Thrivent April Church Newsletter: Spring and Easter are seasons of renewal, hope, and fresh beginnings. As we celebrate the promise of new life, it can also be a meaningful time to reflect on the everyday choices that support peace and stability for ourselves and our families. Simple financial habits—like reviewing spending, planning ahead, or setting aside a little margin—can help reduce stress and create space to focus on what matters most. Thoughtful stewardship isn’t about perfection; it’s about making wise, intentional decisions that allow us to live generously and confidently in every season. If you have questions or would like to begin a legacy conversation about caring well for what you’ve been given- contact your local Thrivent Representative!

If you would like to speak with Marci Bentz: call her at 231-894-8886 or text at 231-760-8246.



On Palm Sunday, members and friends gathered to put together 100 personal care kits for children in foster care through Samaritas.



Then the bell choir performed *Canticle of the Bells* to open Palm Sunday worship.



Worship Notes

Sunday April 5 – Easter Day - 10:15 AM

Today we pray for: Jim & Leslie Petersen

Readings: Acts 10:34-43, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, Colossians 3:1-4, Matthew 28:1-10

Prayer of the Day: O God, you gave your only Son to suffer death on the cross for our redemption, and by his glorious resurrection you delivered us from the power of death. Make us die every day to sin, that we may live with him forever in the joy of the resurrection, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Sunday April 12 – Easter 2- 10:15 AM

Today we pray for: Bill & Ruth Baxter

Readings: Acts 2:14a, 22-32, Psalm 16, 1 Peter 1:3-9, John 20:19-31

Prayer of the Day: Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Sunday April 19 – Easter 3 - 10:15 AM

Today we pray for: Bernice Schuitema

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

Prayer of the Day: O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Sunday April 26 – Easter 4 - 10:15 AM

Today we pray for: Franci Chamberlain

Readings: Acts 2:42-47, Psalm 23, 1 Peter 2:19-25, John 10:1-10

Prayer of the Day: O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.