



**Bethlehem Star**

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**May 2019**

### Monthly Meditation



Over the next few weeks, northern Michigan will waken from her winter slumber and the orchards will be awash in a sea of white cherry blossoms, pastel pink apple blossoms, and the forest

floor bedecked with trillium that remind us of the Holy Trinity. (It's a special treat that almost seems reserved mostly for the locals who have survived another winter!)

It is reminiscent of Isaiah's words, "The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom, (Is. 35:1). It's as if all creation seems to join in celebrating God's redemption of his creation from sin, death, and the devil. It also reminds us that we too have been clothed in resurrection apparel – the "white robes of righteousness."

Isaiah 35 is such a joyous chapter as it foreshadows God's plans for us when he "strengthens the feeble hands, gives sight to the blind, and promises that the lame will leap like deer." But, Isaiah has another message of comfort for us now. Today, no matter what foolishness or fear has snared you, confess your sins in the confidence that the Lord has redeemed you by grace alone and has prepared for you a new way of life. Let Jesus take your trembling hand and grant you peace and joy in your day.

### Spring Concert

Please join us on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, at 7PM for the Leelanau Community Singers as they joyously present their Spring concert at Bethlehem. Twice a year, the Singers share their very special talents with the community and us. You don't want to miss this!



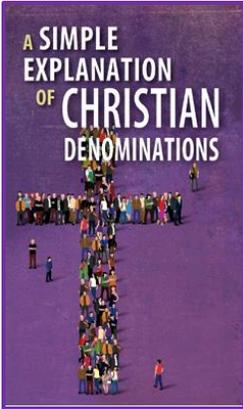
Also, please consider bringing cookies for the reception following in the Fellowship Hall.

### Annual Diaper Drive

Mary Martha is collecting diapers and baby products for the Leelanau Christian Neighbors' Baby Pantry during the month of May. Please consider the wee ones whose parents' love is great, but whose income is limited.



## What Do They Believe At My Neighbor's Church?



People often wonder what other churches teach and believe. Although it was not written to be a complete study of the major denominations, CPH has published a 32 page tract that will provide you with a quick look at the similarities and differences between churches. (NOTE: Please remember that not everyone within a church fully understands what their church officially teaches.) These are available on the Fellowship Table for you to take and read (and to share with others). If there is enough interest, Pastor will lead a small group on My Church and Others.



### Rite of Confirmation

Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, was a very special day for Ryan McCreedy. After two years of faithful and intensive study, Ryan became a communicant member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and the LCMS! Ryan's day was even more special because his grandfather, Pastor Loeschke, served as one of his instructors and confirmed Ryan into the Christian faith. "Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart (Ps. 37:4)."



## Father Welcomes to His Family

*By water and the Word, Josiah Kraatz was welcomed into the Kingdom of God on April 7<sup>th</sup> with Pastor Loeschke officiating at the Sacrament. Josiah is the son of Jonathon Kraatz and grandson of Grandpa Jim. Welcome to the Family, Josiah!*



- May 02 - Mary Martha at 3 PM
- May 09 - Euchre at 5:30 PM
- May 12 - Mother's Day
- May 26 - Memorial Day
- June 01 - Kraatz-Mallory Wedding
- June 02 - Visioning at 11 AM
- June 16 - Father's Day
- June 23 - Council/Voters at 11 AM



Visioning meets monthly to explore ways to grow our congregation by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the last meeting, committee members have been designing a survey to gather your thoughts, opinions, and dreams for Bethlehem.

In addition to the survey, please be thinking about ways that BLC can better meet your needs and/or ways that you see BLC reaching out into the community to share God's love.



### Bethlehem Mowers

When we put the budget together last fall, several volunteers indicated that they would be willing to mow the lawn instead of using our previous service.

Although the lawn is still waking up, please sign up for your mowing shift so that we will always have that manicured look! Thank You.

### We Remember in our Prayers

▪ Fae Shalda as she recovers at the Pavilions from a fractured neck.



▪ Pat Bennett as she enjoys being in her new home with John. It was a very long rehab for Pat. Please also keep John in your prayers as he is the primary care giver.

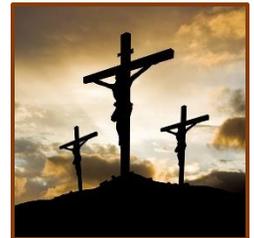
▪ Sherry Slessman as she continues to wait patiently for further medical tests and interventions.

**NOTE:** If you would like to send them a card, call, and/or visit their contact information is available in Fellowship Hall.

# HOLY WEEK AT BETHLEHEM

What a beautiful and moving week as we journeyed with Jesus from Palm Sunday to the joys of Easter. Observing traditional Palm Sunday was marked with those fresh green palms and uplifting music as we welcomed Jesus into the Holy City.

The Good Friday Chancel Drama produced by Pastor Loeschke involved our youth and many members of the parish. It was well-done and exceptionally moving to be with Jesus on His journey to the cross.



Easter is always a spectacular day in the church and this year was no exception. Our thanks to the Altar Guild, Choir, John, and all those unseen who worked so hard to make this celebration "Worthy of the King of Kings!"

### If You Thought the Euchre Corned Beef was Good ...



Euchre will be having ice cream sundaes and players are asked to bring in toppings. Euchre begins at 5:30 PM on May 9<sup>th</sup>.



### What is the Prayer of the Day?

This prayer, often written in ancient days, "collects" our thoughts on the theme of the readings and the entire service. It may be little, but it is mighty!

### Where do we get the prayers we use in the service?

Our Synod provides pastors with two different sets of prayers to use and/or modify. Pastor will often use "ex corde" or "prayers from the heart," if something or someone needs our prayers and they are not included in the printed prayers.

The number one ingredient in ice cream is air!



### DID YOU KNOW?

Air is added to ice cream to make it lighter and improve its texture. The amount of air added determines the quality of an ice cream. The more the air, the cheaper the ice cream in terms of money and quality (in some cases). If you buy hand-packed from a dairy (which will cost you more), you actually are getting more ice cream! (A factoid from your editor who used to be a soda jerk during summer breaks in college.)

## Pastor and Tina Matro to Return to the USA to Serve in Parish Ministry

We have joyfully been LCMS missionaries for almost 4 1/2 years. We also served here in PNG for 8 years, from 1985-1993. After much prayer, counsel and deliberation we have decided to return to the USA in June. Larry will be awaiting God's call to once again serve a congregation. A wise friend reminded us that, "We can't make a wrong decision in giving ourselves in service to our Lord!" Yet, we struggled with wondering how long will the Lord have a missionary stay when there is yet work to do? That's a dilemma!



Please keep the Matro Family in your prayers as they transition stateside and await the Holy Spirit's work in sending them back to the parish. "Well done, Thou good and faithful servants!" Welcome home!

## Sri Lanka Missionaries Safe



Easter Sunday, our family gathered with three congregations at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church located in the Sri Lankan mountains. Rev. Nadaraja conducted the service assisted by Evangelist Anton.

After the service concluded, we learned of the terrorist attacks directed at three Christian churches and three luxury hotels. Rev. Nadaraja called the worshipers back together to pray for the victims and for the country. We were shocked and saddened by the terrible news.

I made several phone calls. I learned that our fellow missionary family, the Naumanns were unharmed. I learned that all of our partner church congregations, mission stations, pastors, and evangelists were unharmed as well. Praise be to God.

At the advice of several local people, we decided not to return to our home in Colombo on Sunday. Later, a curfew was imposed that would have prevented us from getting back. Monday morning the curfew was lifted and with the police and military present in full force, we decided to return to Colombo. We returned with no problems. We were thankful to find that our apartment complex had implemented extra security measures.

Monday, we were saddened to learn that Duncan and Rose's friend from school was at one of the hotels that was attacked. He was among the fatalities. Lord, have mercy.

It is clear that this attack was mainly directed at Christians at a time that the churches would have been full. Satan is behind these attacks.

Please keep the Mahlburgs and all those who serve in the mission field in your prayers as they share the Gospel of our Risen Lord.

**LWML NORTHERN LIGHTS ZONE  
MEETING/SPRING RALLY**  
**May 4th, 2019**  
St. Michael Lutheran Church  
921 S. Garfield Ave.  
Traverse City, MI 49685

**Guest Speakers from Created Free**  
*Anita VanDerziel and Brittany Jacobson make this Mother/Daughter team a dynamic duo with a passion for helping women in high risk life styles and spreading the Gospel in Traverse City and Grand Rapids.*

- Registration begins at 9:30am and is \$5, which includes lunch.
- Please RSVP to St. Michael Lutheran Church at 231-947-5293 or Chris Yeiter at 231-620-4440 with the total number of attendees from your group.
- Friends are welcome, but should be included in your total.