

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Inclement Weather Policy
July 2022**

The following is a policy for when Bethlehem Lutheran Church (BLC) activities and worship services would be cancelled due to inclement weather and the process for how that decision would be made. Factors influencing the decision include: safety of the members of the congregation; the ability of staff member to report in; the ability to clear the parking lot and sidewalks for safety reasons during the winter months; whether there is power, light and electricity; whether roads are clear; the closing policy of the Portage School District; if other area churches are closing, and other factors.

What are inclement weather conditions?

Inclement normally refers to severe or harsh **weather** that has the existence of rain or abnormal climatic conditions (whether they be those of hail, snow, cold, high wind, severe dust storm, extreme high temperature or the like), by virtue of which it is unsafe and/or unreasonable for people to be out in these conditions.

Church Office, Adult and Youth Education and Other Activities

1. Weekdays

If Portage Public Schools are closed or dismissed early due to inclement weather, the church office will be closed, and all church activities, **except worship**, will be cancelled for the day and that evening. If there is a delayed start, the church office may be closed until staff can safely travel.

Procedure: It will be the responsibility of the Church Secretary to post notifications of weekday cancellations in the following places:

- BLC Facebook page
- BLC website
- Email will be sent to all those on the monthly newsletter list
- Text message will be sent to all of those on the text message list

2. Weekends

If activities have been planned (not to include worship) to take place at BLC, and if Portage is under a **Winter Storm Warning, Tornado Warning, Severe Thunderstorm Warning, Flood Warning or warning of any kind, designated by the National Weather Service**, a decision to cancel those activities will be mutually decided by the Pastor, Council President, a designated Property Committee member, and the activities' Coordinator. If there is a decision to cancel, the activities' Coordinator will contact the Church Secretary to organize a plan to announce the cancellation.

Cancellations will be posted by the Church Secretary in the following places:

- BLC Facebook page
- BLC website
- Text message to all those on the text message list

If we have emails for those planning to attend the activity, the activities' Coordinator will email those effected.

Worship Services

1. Wednesday Evening Worship

If Portage is under a **Winter Storm Warning, Tornado Warning, Severe Thunderstorm Warning, Flood Warning or warning of any kind, designated by the National Weather Service**, and many other area churches are cancelling their services, a decision to cancel worship service will be mutually decided by the Pastor, Council President, and a designated Property Committee member, 2 hours prior to the start of worship, if possible. If worship is cancelled, they will notify the Church Secretary to post notifications in the following places:

- BLC Facebook page
- BLC website
- Email will be sent to all those on the monthly newsletter list
- Text message will be sent to all of those on the text message list

If it is physically possible, a notification will also be posted on the front door of the church.

2. Sunday Morning Worship

If Portage is under a **Winter Storm Warning, Tornado Warning, Severe Thunderstorm Warning, Flood Warning or warning of any kind, designated by the National Weather Service**, and many other area churches are cancelling their services, a decision to cancel worship service will be mutually decided by the Pastor, Council President, and a designated Property Committee member, 2 hours prior to the start of worship, if possible. If Sunday worship is cancelled, Sunday School will also be cancelled. If worship is cancelled, they will notify the Church Secretary to post notifications in the following places:

- BLC Facebook page
- BLC website
- Email will be sent to all those on the monthly newsletter list
- Text message will be sent to all of those on the text message list
- Local TV and radio stations
 - Channel 27 WKOW email closing to: news@wkow.com
 - Channel 15 WMTV News: news@nbc15.com
 - Channel 3000: <https://www.channel3000.com/email-sign-up/#/>
 - Magnum Media radio stations

The deciding committee will also notify the Choir Director if the choir is scheduled to sing (the Choir Director is to notify members of the choir), the Parish Associate, which will notify the Sunday school teachers (asking them to contact their students), and any other activity coordinators depending on the events scheduled for the day.

If it is physically possible, a notification will also be posted on the front door of the church.

3. In the event that worship is not cancelled, but the Pastor is not able to travel due to poor road conditions, worship will be lay lead as a prayer service: the readings for the week will be read and if someone is available who knows how to use the sound system and projector, they can access the Snow Day Emergency Resources on BLC's Google Drive and You tube account. The Resources include the following:

It will include 3 songs and two options for a sermon:

- Sermon option 1: "For Such a Time, ELCA Synod Assembly 2019" by Bishop Elizabeth Eaton
- Sermon option 2: "Welcoming the Stranger"
- Song 1: "Amazing Grace"
- Song 2: "Here I am Lord"
- Song 3: "A Mighty Fortress is our God"

Interactive Option

- Working Preacher.org
Commentary for the weekly readings, as well as Reflect and Connect questions