



Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church and School is a community of sinners trusting in the forgiveness given by the crucified and risen Christ, offering peace, joy, stability, and purpose to a despairing and chaotic world by sharing this gospel through our words and deeds.

The Bethlehem STAR April 2024

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus! (Philippians 2:1-5)

Dear Bethlehem,

So much to cover. The last few months have been a whirlwind—planned and unplanned.

First, let me start with the most important thing:

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Without the suffering, death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we would be lost eternally—without forgiveness, without peace, without hope, without purpose, without stability. If Christ hadn't been raised from the dead, our faith would be meaningless—so would our suffering and service in His name. But since Christ IS risen from the dead, our labor in Christ is never in vain. We can be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. (See 1 Corinthians 15.)

Second, I am heading down to Alabama and Georgia for my Annual Training and Inactive Duty Training days from April 2-29. Assuming everything goes to plan, I will have completed my minimum requirements for duty this Fiscal Year—through the end of September 2024. Again, thank you, dear congregation. Usually, we say "Thank you for your service" to military members. However, the spouses, children, and parents of military members are the ones who need to be thanked. Their sacrifice while their loved one goes away on temporary duty, training, or deployment is significant. The same is true for the "family of God" when it comes to letting me, your called pastor, to depart for temporary duty and training. So, dear Bethlehem, "Thank you for your service." My prayer is that you see how beneficial my chaplain duty is beneficial not only for our military members and their families but also for our congregation and school. This will be a future topic in my upcoming reports for the congregation.

Third, Bethlehem has completed 99% of our Ministry Clarity Process. We have a vision statement. We have defined four areas in our life together to enact our vision statement. We have analyzed and sought congregational input on what ministries our congregation has done and can continue, improve, or add in the future. We developed a draft Strategic 3-5 Year Plan, solicited feedback, and fine-tuned the plan accordingly. The Congregation passed the Strategic Plan unanimously on March 24. One piece of the Plan, Worship Pillar Goal #2, was requested to go back to the committee for reconsideration to be presented at the regular May Voters' Meeting. In the meantime, we can start implementing our agreed-upon goals. There's plenty to do and much good fruit to bear.

Fourth, Bethlehem hosted a meeting from interested churches and individuals who would like to see Lutheran Education extended through 12th grade. Due to many logistical and practical concerns, a full association among our LCMS churches in the Dayton area is not ideal at this time. However, the growing desire among the school families at Risen Christ Lutheran School, Springfield and at Bethlehem Lutheran School, Fairborn has implored us to at least look into the feasibility of offering a Lutheran High School. No commitments have been made—only the commitment to pray, ask questions, meet and discuss the what if's of a partnership between us and Risen Christ. If you (or anyone you know) might be interested in entrusting your children to a Lutheran High School, please take this survey—even if the children don't attend Bethlehem Lutheran School:

<https://forms.gle/iHag8WciAfgrBcJC9>

Fifth, finances at church have been a little tight over the last few months. Our expenditures are slightly above our giving. Please prayerfully consider (or reconsider) your giving. If you haven't taken a good look at your income in the past few months, especially if your income has increased, that's a good time to look at your giving. Has your giving increased proportionally as well? This is also good to do at tax time—you can see on a form how much God has provided for you in your net income and compare this to your giving. While a tithe, 10%, is not a Biblical requirement for Christians, it is an excellent goal AND easy math—slide the decimal point one place to the left. For some, 10% is not possible. But could 5% work? Or even 1%? Take on the challenge—to give first unto the Lord. For others, 10% is too little of a challenge. For practical questions on how to give to Bethlehem please contact our treasurer: Jim Carlson (blcchecks@gmail.com). First fruit, proportional giving is a matter of faith—God does provide! It's also a matter of joy—God loves a cheerful giver.

Sorry for the length of this article. There's a lot to cover—for God has entrusted much to Bethlehem for the sake of the world and His kingdom of grace.

In Christ, the Vine,

Pastor Witte





PRINCIPAL'S PAGE

Easter Greetings in the name of our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Elizabeth Lindsey competed in the regional spelling bee at Wright State in March and she finished in the top eight spellers. Congratulations Elizabeth!

The beginning of April we will be continuing our Easter break. We start school again at the normal time on April 9th.

God is good and has seen Bethlehem Lutheran School through 25 years. Our 25th Anniversary celebration will be on April 13th and Young's Jersey Dairy in Yellow Springs. We are looking forward to the opportunity to catch up with former principals, teachers, and students as they reminisce about their time at Bethlehem and share what God is doing through them now. Thank you to everyone who has purchased a ticket and who will participate in the event. I'm looking forward to meeting people from all different chapters of Bethlehem Lutheran School's life.

Our kindergarten and first grade students will be supporting worship through song on April 21st while our eighth grade students will be supporting as greeters. We love the opportunity to worship together and for the students to share their gifts with the congregation.

Our students in grades 3-8 will be taking their Ohio state achievement tests in English Language Arts from April 15th - 26th and in Math and Science from April 29th - May 10th. We usually have the results by the end of June.

To keep up on what is happening at Bethlehem Lutheran School please follow us on our social media pages. Facebook - @mybethlehemschool and Instagram - @bethlehemfairborn.

Thank you for continually lifting up the students and staff at Bethlehem in prayer.

In His Service,

Mr. Ferguson

APRIL



April Birthdays

Betty Marlette.....	1
Chad Hollingsworth	13
Maggie Nelson	14
Kathy Fiene	22
Paul Thibeault	
Tom Hitzeman	24
Christian Huffman	
Jane Jones	
Brett Fiepe	25
Phillip Maffett	
Sue Saunders	
Benjamin Ausserer	26
April Sadowski	27
Johnathan Tressler	
Jennifer Ramsey	29

April Anniversaries

Jim & Kathy Fiene	3
Pastor & Edna England	6
Scott & Holly Olcott.....	10
Dalton & Kyla Miller.....	27



Kathi Brockman	1
Meghann Martinek	
Art Casci	9
Chris Nelson.....	14
Elaine Schultz.....	17
Nesta Harris	20
Pat Horn	23
Mary Giese	25
Jodi Crosby	26

- Jonathan Fiene
- Matt Greggeron
- Nesta Harris
- Louise Hellickson
- Doris Humphreys
- Dave Johanson



- Bob Koogler
- Ezra Miller
- Jean Robinson
- Marilyn Scheu
- Elaine Schultz
- Alison Witte

April 8, 2024
Totality in Dayton:
3:09-3:14 pm



Pastor Witte will be spending the month of April in Alabama and Georgia on duty with the Air Force. Pastors England and Casci will be helping with pulpit supply and teaching the Adult Bible Class and the elders are handling the catechism classes. Please contact Kevin Green (937-581-5160), Ray Saunders (937-431-0297) or call the church office (937-878-0651) for any help you need.



The Miami Valley Zone Spring Rally will be held at Risen Christ Lutheran Church, 41 E. Possum Road, Springfield. This is the annual business meeting for the zone.

Registration begins at 9 am and the meeting should end around noon. The in-gathering will be the items gathered for the upcoming district convention in June: single serve shelf stable items for the Akron homeless and baby items for Hope Rising (formerly the Miami Valley Women's Center). We will concentrate on the local needs.

The Bethlehem STAR

April 2024

Rev. Keith F. Witte

Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School

1240 S. Maple Avenue, Fairborn, OH 45324

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Saturday

April 13

5-9 pm



Church Office

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School Office

Phone: (937) 878-7050

Email: bethlehemschool@aol.com

Web Page—www.mybethlehemschool.com

Mr. Scott Ferguson, Principal

Mrs. Michelle Zulfer, Vice Principal

Sunday

Worship Services at 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Bible Classes at 9:30 a.m.

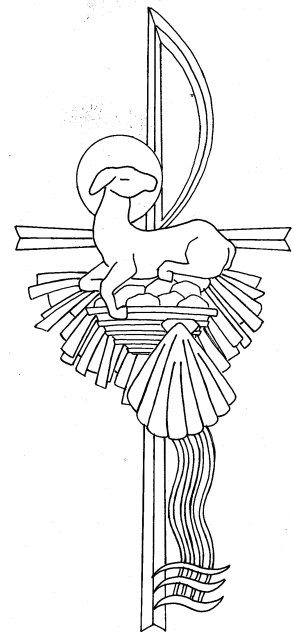
Wednesday

Bible Study at 9:30 a.m.

Chapel Matins Service at 8:45 a.m. (when school is in session)

Advent/Lenten Service at 7 pm

May 2024 issue deadline: Sunday, April 21st.



"We seek to honor and glorify the Triune God by sharing our faith in Jesus Christ as man's only Savior."