



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

September 2025

Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:15-16)

Dearly beloved of Bethlehem,

The main focus of every Epistle is Jesus. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone. Jesus died and rose again and lives and reigns as our perfect Lord and Savior. As we live by faith and in faith, the Epistles repeatedly encourage Christians to live together in peace, remain in the Word, and be thankful.

Let me begin with a word of thanksgiving. I thank God for the opportunities that He has called me to. He has called me to serve you, dear Bethlehem. I thank God that He has called me to serve at a congregation with a Lutheran School, a WONDERFUL gift and privilege that not every city nor every congregation gets to receive. I thank God for the extra service in the Air Force as a Chaplain and all the extra training that I have received to bless not only Airmen and their families, but the congregation and school as well.

Thank you, dear Bethlehem, for your encouragement and permission to pursue my Chaplain service and training. Particularly, last spring, you allowed me to pursue my professional development with a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Those of you who sought counseling from me over the last 5 months have hopefully noticed an improvement in my counseling abilities. I feel more comfortable and confident in providing Spiritual Care not only to the congregation but to students and families from our school who are not Lutheran or Christian. CPE has also helped me develop some better personal and professional habits for my long-term sustainability in ministry. So, thank you.

Starting this September, with the help of our Parish Assistant, Alex Fry, we are going to work on the EDUCATION aspect of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School (BLCaS) Strategic Plan.

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Our aspirational target is this: **BLCaS will have Bible-centered educational opportunities for every member, and everyone attends to learn and grow in grace and knowledge.** To move toward this target, we are going to emphasize the following goals:

1. Bethlehem will have a minimum of four Fellowship Groups that adequately represent the needs (and interests) of the congregation.
2. Bethlehem will have 1-3 additional small group Bible Studies with at least 5 people in each.

During Bible Class (9:30am) on September 14, we are going to recognize our past and present Fellowship and Bible Study groups. They will share what they do and the impact that they have on their participants. This is also an opportunity to reorganize, revitalize, recruit, and/or create new groups.

Alex will be giving more direction on how Bible Study and Fellowship groups are going to organize. He will also be a resource to you so that everyone who participates can grow in grace and knowledge together. It will be good for our congregation to have a little more energy, intentionality, and coordination in this area of our life together.

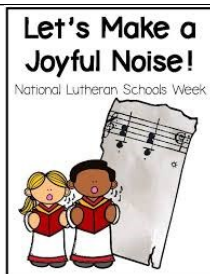
Making a joyful noise,

Pastor Witte



Catechism Instruction: There are three ways to learn or brush up on your knowledge of the Lutheran Church and our doctrines and practices

1. Bethlehem Lutheran School students in grades 6-8 began instruction on Aug 20. They will continue every Monday and Wednesday through the 2nd week of May, 2026.
2. Youth from Bethlehem Lutheran Church not attending BLS will begin instruction after the 2nd Service (noon-ish), starting September 7 through the end of April 2026.
3. Adults who are interested in becoming members or in learning more about the Lutheran Christian faith will meet on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm, starting September 3 and will finish early November 2025.



Bethlehem Lutheran School

2025—2026 School Year News

Greetings in the name of our Risen Savior, Jesus Christ!

As summer winds down and the school year ramps up, we're filled with gratitude for all that God is doing in our midst. August has been a month of joyful beginnings, renewed connections, and fresh opportunities to grow together in faith and learning.

On August 3rd, we kicked off the school season with our annual Back to School Bash at Community Park! It was an evening of laughter, games, and fellowship. Seeing both familiar faces and new families come together was heartwarming.

We officially launched our 27th academic year on August 14th! With around 140 students from preschool through 8th grade, our halls are once again filled with the sounds of learning. We began the year with a special opening chapel, and we were blessed to have several parents join us in worship. We love it when families worship with us.

Chapel is held every Wednesday from 8:45–9:15 AM, and we warmly invite all parents and congregation members to attend. This year's theme is "Making a Joyful Noise" from Psalm 98.

We know each school year brings its own challenges and successes, but we trust that God is at work in all things. We're eager to see how our students will grow in grace and knowledge this year and how God will use both students and staff to grow His kingdom.

We're thrilled to welcome new members to our ministry team:

- Mrs. Crawford – Reading Tutor
- Mrs. Snyder – K–8 Art Teacher

We also celebrate staff stepping into new roles:

- Mrs. Mattern & Mrs. Rodriguez – Preschool
- Mr. Fry – K–3 Music
- Mrs. Ellington – Middle School ELA, Social Studies, Spanish & Health

We're especially excited about the collaboration happening among our teachers to support every learner, whether they need extra encouragement or extra challenge.

As we approach Labor Day, we pause to thank God for the work He's given us and the work He's doing through us. Thank you for what you do!

One of the pillars of our mission is partnering with families. To strengthen that connection, we'll be holding Parent-Teacher Conferences at the end of September. These conversations are a wonderful opportunity to build bridges between school and home, and to work together so that each child can thrive here at Bethlehem.

Making a Joyful Noise,

Mr. Ferguson

Grace Abounds

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

At Bethlehem we have brought back our Matins Service, 4 times a year, on the fifth Sunday of the appropriate months. This is a non-communion service. However, for those members whose love of the Lord leads them to wish to partake of the Lords Supper every Sunday, we do offer a short communion service after the first Matins service at 9:00am.

I heard that one of our young communicant members had asked their parents if they HAD TO go to the Lord's Supper, which is offered between services, on a Matins Sunday. They were concerned that it was something they needed to do to be saved.

Grace is sometimes hard for all of us to grasp. Simply put, there is nothing we do to be saved. We play no part in the work of our redemption. We are shackled to our sin and apart from Gods grace, we can do no good thing at all.

The Lord's Supper is not a work we do. Therefore, we should not talk of the Lord's Supper as a work, chore, or obligation. The person who partakes of the Lords Supper on these Sundays is no better than the person who does not. The person who does not is no worse than the person who does.

The Lord's Supper is a gift—a gift we GET TO receive. We can encourage one another at Bethlehem to receive the Lord's Supper, but we should speak of the Supper as a wonderful gift, not an obligation. It is the gift of Christ's body and blood, given and shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

It is only through our faith in Christ's suffering, death and resurrection that we are saved. This faith is fully a gift, which he gives to us. We do not deserve it; we do nothing to obtain it. The best we can hope for is to be like Lazarus and when we hear our Lords voice, we stand and rub our eyes and walk to him.

Kevin

Kevin S. Green
Elder

Trophies, Anyone want a Trophy

Bethlehem has amassed around 16 trophies from various competitions. We haven't added to the collection in quite a while. The trophies are gathering dust and taking up storage space. By the end of September, we will be dispose them to free up space. If any are of value to you personally or you want to repurpose them, please take them home. If there are questions please contact Brett Fiepke.

Brett



The Bethlehem Lutheran Church (BLC)

Widows' Support Group will have their quarterly meeting on September 18, 2025, 1100 am to 100 pm, in the church library. Bring your lunch and enjoy an informative video entitled, *Invincible Summer: Returning to Life After Someone You Love Dies*. We will discuss that grief has a natural progression like the seasons of Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer. All ladies of BLC who have lost their spouse are invited to join us and determine what season you are in. Please contact Sherry Matsel at imboo25@yahoo.com or text/phone 937-581-2909, if you have any questions about the BLC Widows' Support Group or the presentation. I hope you will join us for a meeting of fellowship and support.



PHILIPPIANS

The Epistle of Joy

Pastor England has chosen Paul's beautiful Letter to the Philippians as the study topic for this fall's Wednesday Morning Bible Study. We will begin class on Wednesday, September 10. The class will meet in the Church Library beginning at 9:30 each Wednesday.

Knowing Jesus is a deeply personal and transformative experience. Living as a Jesus-follower means seeing your own story as an embodied expression of Jesus' story. These are the big ideas of Paul's Letter to the Philippians. It is one of his Prison Letters written from Rome. Philippians reveals Paul's intense love for and joy in this congregation. The warmth he shows toward them is unique among his Letters, since the congregation seems to need less discipline than others. He describes the Christian life in all its blessings and goodness, which come from the Lord's work in us.

My prayer is that as we study Philippians, the Lord will work in our lives, transforming our minds to be like Christ's. Pray that we may receive the fullness of His joy in all circumstances and live worthy of His Gospel. For our righteousness is through faith in Christ alone. Knowing Him has "*surpassing worth*" (3:8).

Please contact Pastor England if you are interested in attending. He can be reached at e.l.england@att.net or by calling (937) 878-3152.



4 Money Moves to Make Now



**With time on your side,
help prepare for the future
you want.**

If you are just getting started, understanding why you're making certain money moves can help you set goals and accomplish them. Financial Foundations: Your Blueprint to Thrive will explore what you can do to help build a stable financial future – and be prepared to handle financial setbacks.

- Discover what's behind the money decisions you make.
- Get tools to pay debts, manage expenses and save money.
- Learn how to protect your biggest asset.

This session is hosted by Terry J Powers, ChFC®, CLU®, FIC and Scott Michael Leo. Bring your family and friends that you think may benefit from this Workshop.

Reserve a spot for you and a guest today.

Please call Church Office-Sue at 937-878-0651.

Saturday, September 13, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
1240 S. Maple Ave.
Fairborn, OH



**BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN
SCHOOL**

Bethlehem Staff for 2025 - 2026

Please pray for these people as they have prepared to be the hands, feet and voice of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School to the children whom God has sent to our school for this new school year.

Scott Ferguson	Principal
Michelle Zulfer	Vice Principal for Admin and Human Resources
Amy Mattern	Preschool 3 & 4
Carla Rodriguez	KinderReady & preschool aide
Cheyenne Hanvey	Kindergarten
Kassie Puterbaugh	Kindergarten aide
Mallory Brewer	1 st Grade
Jessica Sherrick	1 st Grade aide
Riley Zulfer	2 nd Grade
Serena Ford	3 rd Grade
Gabby Brock	4 th Grade
Lisa Murphy	5 th Grade
Rebecca Strong	6 th Grade
Scott Zaage	Grades 7-8 (Math & Science & K-8 PE)
Jessica Ellington	Grades 7-8 (ELA, Health & Social Studies, K-8 Spanish)
Keith Witte	Catechism, Grades 6-8
Kelly Snyder	Art, Grades K-8
Tommy Beeker	Band, Grades 4-8
Alex Fry	Music, Grades K-3
Tiffany Knapp	Librarian
Kara Crawford	Tutor
Donna Oda	Extended Care (AM & PM)
Barbara Skean	Extended Care (PM)
Jeremy Adams	Custodian
Aaron Phillips	Maintenance



Happy Birthday!

September Birthdays

Holly Olcott	4
Steve Wolaver	
Maggie Geilenfeldt.....	7
Marilyn Scheu	13
John Zulfer	
Karen Denlinger	14
Nesta Harris	
Ken Crosby.....	15
Edison Tangeman	16
Nancy Beaty	18
Larry Barnhard	20
Pat Nowicki	
Amanda Humphreys	21
Erik Nelson	24
Lisa Thibeault	26
Alex Fry	28
Hans Marlette	29



September Anniversaries

Zora & Paul Griffith.....	1
Joseph & Anne Ausserer.....	5
Brett & Dianah Williamson	7
Charley & Bobbe Houck.....	9
Jim & Sandy Hensley	14
Larry & Pauline Barnhard	20
Dave & Yuki Lauderbach	24

Larry Barnhard

Nancy Beaty

Norma Dupre

Jonathan Fiene

Erma Haggerty

Nesta Harris

Helga Hemphill

Eileen Hitzeman

Doris Humphreys



Gene Ninnemann

Jean Robinson

Marilyn Scheu

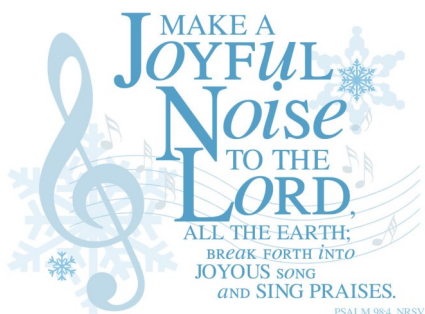
Elaine Schultz

Robyn Shipman

Pastor & Lynda Viken

Sue Williamson

Gladys Zink



The school year has officially begun here at Bethlehem. Students and staff are excited and ready for a successful year. The teachers are getting to know a new group of kids and building relationships for success.

The middle school students are getting used to a bit more freedom than they had in the past. Switching teachers and more independence will help to prepare them for the high school years which are rapidly approaching.



We are grateful for this school and the opportunity to share Christ each day. A biblical worldview exists here that is not available in the public schools. May God bless us this school year.

*Thank you,
Mr. Zaage*



Erika Ewing	1
Sarah Tangeman	2
Rebekah Hitzeman	5
Karen Denlinger.....	11
Sue Saunders.....	22
Mackenzie Elliot	24

The Bethlehem STAR

August 2025

Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School
1240 S. Maple Avenue, Fairborn, OH 45324
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Rev. Keith F. Witte, Pastor



FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Bible Study & Fellowship Group
Sunday:

Sunday, September 14, 2025

Church Office

Phone: (937) 878-0651
FAX: (937) 878-4794
Email: bethlehem7@aol.com
Web Page—www.Bethlehem7.org

School Office

Phone: (937) 878-7050
Email: bethlehemschool@aol.com
Web Page—www.mybethlehemschool.com
Mr. Scott Ferguson, Principal
Mrs. Michelle Zulfer, Vice Principal

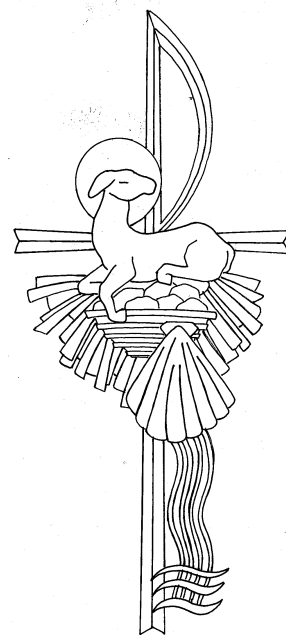
Sunday

Worship Services at 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
**Online: churchstreamer.org (live at 8 am service,
previously recorded services under "Live" tab)**
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

September 2025 deadline: Sunday, August 17th.



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