



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

October 2025

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

Dearly beloved of Bethlehem,

One of my greatest joys is to teach youth catechism at Bethlehem Lutheran Church AND School. Before I go through each petition of the Lord's Prayer, I spend some time with the students on the basics of prayer (who, what, where, why, when, how).

What is prayer? The answer in the 2017 Edition of Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation states, "Prayer is speaking to God in words and thoughts" (p231). This is a good answer. However, it dawned on me that prayer is MORE than just talking or communicating with God. It's RESPONDING to God in two ways. (1) We respond to whatever we see, hear, experience, think, or feel to God in prayer. And (2) we respond to what we hear, read, or learn from God's Word. Both kinds of responses are important for our prayer life.

To teach (1), I use the list of the different kinds or forms of prayer listed on page 233 in the Catechism:

Confession: In which we acknowledge our sins to God (Psalm 51:1-12)

Request: In which we seek God's help (Psalm 22:11-21)

Intercession: In which we pray for others (Psalm 82:3-4)

Thanksgiving: In which we express our gratitude to God for His gifts (Psalm 118:1-7)

Lamentation/Complaint: In which we express our sorrows to God (Psalm 10)

Praise/Adoration: in which we extol God's wonderful deeds and qualities (Psalm 117)

Life in general should spark plenty of responses to God, on behalf of ourselves and for others. There are wonderful gifts which God provides every day. There are significant challenges to our body and soul every day. Respond to God in prayer with all these forms of prayer!

To teach (2), I utilize Martin Luther's, "A Simple Way to Pray." There's an adapted summary and application in our new catechism on pages 360-361. Sometimes,

Turn to page 2

it's referred to as the I.T.C.P. method. This is a great way to let whatever Bible verse or passage you heard in church or read in devotions sink into your heart and life deeper. If some verse or phrase struck you, positively or negatively, capture that response! Capture that Bible verse and respond to God:

- I. Instruction: Simply quote or paraphrase the Bible verse or phrase that struck you. Lord, you teach me, “....”
- T. Thanksgiving: What gifts, promises or acts of God does that Bible verse tell you of or remind you of? Thank and praise God for His goodness to you.
- C. Confession: Based on that passage, what have you done or left undone? Have you taken anything from that Bible passage for granted? Do you have doubts? Admit those to God and ask for forgiveness.
- P. Prayer: What needs of body and soul do you have based on that Bible verse? Who else needs to hear, learn, apply, or believe that passage? Pray for them, too.

Having graded their homework, our catechism students from both church and school are understanding and applying these lessons well. I am excited to see them grow and mature, especially as they pray, responding to the various petitions of the Lord's Prayer and the Bible passages that unpack the richness of Jesus' teaching.

If you'd like to see (and complete) the same homework that I give the catechism students, for the development of your prayers, please send me an email: pastorwittel@gmail.com And I'd be happy to provide—and grade your assignments if you'd like!

Making a joyful noise,

Pastor Witte



DONATOS

Every piece is important.™

Tuesday, October 7th, 5:15 to 7:15 pm

Please join the school families at the Donatos on Dayton-Yellow Springs Road for a night of fun and pizza! Proceeds from the fund raiser will help support the Bethlehem Lutheran School Christmas program. The last couple of years we have basically taken over the entire restaurant. Come help your school and enjoy some great dinner.



Bethlehem Lutheran School 2025—2026 School Year News

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

Now that we are starting October, the school year has settled into its familiar rhythm. Students are growing in grace and knowledge as they learn more about the world around them, and more importantly, God's love for them through Christ. The end of the first quarter is October 17th and report cards will be available to view soon after that. You don't have to wait until then though to see student progress. With our school program Schoolcues, you can always keep up to date on your child's grades.

God has certainly blessed our school throughout its history and that continues in this, our 27th academic year. This year we started the school year with 144 students in pre-school - 8th grade. This means that throughout each week, 144 souls will hear the Gospel message of salvation through Christ. We do have a significant percentage of families who do not yet believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit, working through the believing students and teachers, would work faith in the hearts of those students and families. We ask that this would be your prayer too.

One way that you can support the ministry of Bethlehem Lutheran School is through a night out! We are having a fellowship night at Donato's in Fairborn on Tuesday, October 7th from 5.00pm - 8.00pm. Last year we did this and from 5.30pm - 7.15pm the restaurant was full of Bethlehem people enjoying time with each other along with their excellent pizza. We do receive 20% of the proceeds from people who mention Bethlehem that night and we will use that to help fund our Christmas program.

This year, instead of going off to a conference, the classroom teachers of Bethlehem will engage in some professional learning here on campus on October 3rd. So while the kiddos have the day off, the teachers will be the ones in school. Among other things, the teachers will be spending some time learning more about AI and how to teach students to use it responsibly.

The PTO is busy planning the annual Fall Festival which is its largest fundraiser. This will be happening on November 7th. You are all invited to this fun event. If you have an item or service that you would like to donate to the auction, please let me know. Look for more information as we get closer to the 7th.

Making a Joyful Noise,

Mr. Ferguson

Thank you for thinking and praying about
the students and teachers at our school,

One Spirit Fellowship: Looking Back with Gratitude

About thirty-six years ago, Bethlehem made an effort to encourage in-home Bible study groups. Under Mary Smith's leadership, several groups were formed—each with a Bible study leader and a “captain” who coordinated the details of meetings. Most groups met monthly in someone's home, often sharing a meal together, with the host providing beverages and tableware and the others bringing food.

The One Spirit Fellowship Group quickly grew out of the Young Adult Fellowship Group. Several couples with young children realized they shared more in common with one another than with college students and decided to form a new group. The Young Adult group was pretty crowded with 15-16 people attending. Interestingly, after the two groups split, both still had 15-16 people who attended—it seemed like something of a “seven loaves and fishes” event (Mark 15).

Over the years, I had the privilege of leading most of the One Spirit Bible studies. We generally used studies from The Lutheran Witness, from the LWML, the Lutheran Layman's League, and Good News magazine. I always stayed with LCMS sources to keep our study grounded in sound theology. Through the decades, about 10-12 people at any given time could be counted on as regulars, with many others attending from time to time. I can count more than 56 people who were “regulars” in One Spirit over the years, plus another dozen or so who came occasionally.

Looking back is somewhat bittersweet (you young people will understand one day). Many members left when transferred to other bases. Two were called home to the Lord at too young an age. Yet, the fellowship was rich, and God bore fruit through it. Two members went on to seminary and became pastors, another became a Director of Christian Education, and two couples had sons who also entered the ministry. I like to think our studies and fellowship played some small part in shaping their faith journeys.

Recently, I was struck by Paul's words in his letter to Philemon, addressed “to the church in your house.” In the first two centuries, there were no cathedrals or chapels or even store-front missions—only house churches, where believers gathered for Word and Sacrament. The spirit of those first “house churches” still echoes in fellowship groups like One Spirit. Those early Christians knew their Savior and they knew one another. Fellowship groups enable us to know one another as well and so strengthen our bonds in Christ. Though One Spirit has now pretty much run its course—some members are shut-ins, and others face challenges that make gathering difficult—I remain deeply grateful. This group was a blessing to me personally and, I believe, to many others. Our fellowship was one small part of Bethlehem's ministry of drawing people together as “one body and one Spirit” (Ephesians 4:4).

I pray that new efforts to foster fellowship groups will meet with success, building up the church and glorifying God.

By His Grace,

Steve Fugate, Elder

PTO FALL FESTIVAL AUCTION DONATIONS

A successful auction happens because of donations of goods and services from generous businesses, organizations, and individuals.

Donation Ideas

RESTAURANTS	MUSEUMS
SALON & BEAUTY	HOME MAINTENANCE
AUTO SERVICES	ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES
ARTS & CRAFTS	SPECIALTY FOODS

Donation Deadline OCTOBER 19, 2025

An official letter of request can be provided if you or your employer needs one.

Questions? Contact Alison Witte or email pto@mybethlehemschool.com



Church and School Picnic

Who is invited?

You are (and your family)!!!

Where is it?

**Fairborn Community Park, Pavilions 1& 2
691 E. Dayton Yellow-Springs Rd**

When does it start?

11:00 a.m. Saturday, October 4th

What should I bring?

If your surname starts with A-L, please bring a salad/side dish to share, M-Z please bring a dessert.

Bring your favorite game and your competitive spirit



Sitting at the Feet of Jesus Lessons from Mary and Martha

By Pastor Edward L. England,
Miami Valley Zone Counsellor LWML

**Miami Valley Zone
Christian Life Retreat**

**Saturday, October 18, 2025
Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

**1240 S. Maple Avenue,
Fairborn, OH
Free Will and MITE Offerings**

**9:30 a.m. Registration & Coffee
10:00 Welcome and Bible Study**

The ladies of Bethlehem will host this fall's Retreat. If you are able to attend, please RSVP to Sue Saunders at Bethlehem7@aol.com / (937) 878-0651 NLT Monday, October 13th so they know how many to expect.

The Ingathering will be for the ISAIAH 117 HOUSE in Montgomery County. They have asked for gently-used/new backpacks or small traveling bags along with clean clothes, bath toys, toys, toiletries such as soap, shampoo, lotion, tooth paste, and the like for the children they serve.



Happy Birthday!

October Birthdays

Dave Smith	1
Pastor England.....	6
Zora Griffith	9
Benedict Johnson	
Bonnie Fugate.....	14
Charley Houck	
Bradley Hooper	18
Olivia Tangeman	19
Lauren Elliot	21
Pat Horn	
Tamara Walters	
Cheryl Fischer.....	23
Tom Bruesewitz	24
Matthew O'Brien	26
Michelle Zulfer	27
Chris Tangeman	28
Chris Scheu	29
Aaron Fry	30



Lisa Thibeault	8
Brett Williamson.....	11
Carla Anderson	12
Benedict Johnson	13
Steve Fugate	14
John Zulfer.....	17
Maggie Geilenfeldt.....	28
Erik Nelson	
Gene Ninnemann	
Michael Gableman	31

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

Third Grade News

Third grade is back in the swing of things this new school year! Students have learned our routines and procedures and how we can be respectful, responsible, and caring at school.

Now, content-wise, students are studying fiction and nonfiction texts, place value and addition in math, the scientific method in science, and timelines in social studies.



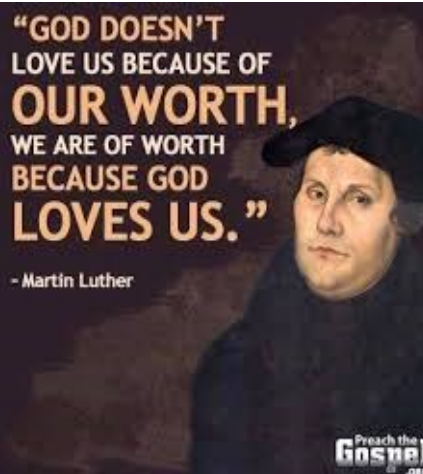
One exciting event the K-3rd grade classes have on next month's calendar is a field trip to La Comedia! We will be doing a Lunch and Learn as we watch a performance of Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day.

I'm excited to see the Lord work in the lives of our students this year! We are so blessed to be at a school where we can read Scripture, pray and worship together.

Thank you to the members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church for all your support of our school!

In Christ,

Serena Ford



October Anniversaries

Sam & Tamara Walters.....	1
Gary & Maggie Geilenfeldt.....	4
Chris & Sarah Tangeman	26
Erik & Karen Denlinger	28

The Bethlehem STAR

October 2025

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



Church and
School Picnic

Saturday, October 4, 2025

11 am to 2 pm

Fairborn Community Park

Pavilions 1&2

691 E. Dayton-Yellow Springs Road

Church Office

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

School Office

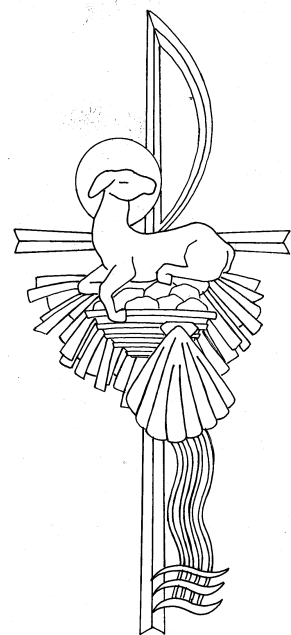
Phone: (937) 878-7050
Email: bethlehemschool@aol.com
Web Page—www.mybethlehemschool.com
Mr. Scott Ferguson, Principal
Mrs. Michelle Zulfer, Vice Principal

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



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November 2025 deadline: Sunday, October 19th.