



**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

### December 2025

*The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High...” And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” (Luke 1:30-32a, 34)*

Dearly beloved of Bethlehem,

On the Last Sunday of the Church Year (Nov 23), preached based on Jesus’ crucifixion from Luke 23. I applied Psalm 33:8 as a fitting way to view our Lord’s crucifixion, “Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.” There’s something beyond words when we consider Christ crucified. We can only marvel and say, “Wow.”

We also marvel, with Mary, at Jesus’ conception and birth. It is a profound mystery, a profound miracle, that God is born. That a virgin conceives and bears a son. That God is with truly with us in human flesh.

Because of Jesus’ conception and birth, and because of his suffering and death on the cross, our human experiences of birth and death, are set apart as holy, special. We sing of this in the Lenten hymn, “In the Cross of Christ I Glory”:

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure  
By the cross are sanctified;  
Peace is there that knows no measure,  
Joys that through all time abide. (LSB 427, v4)

Some of the most powerful Advent and Christmas hymns marvel at Jesus’ nearness. God is man. God is with us. This baby Jesus is holy, and He has come to make us holy. Wow.

And because of this “*holy infant so tender and mild*,” we have hope, for ourselves and for our children. Despite our sinful, unholy conception, we can still marvel at the gift of a child. Jesus’ conception, birth, life, suffering, death, and resurrection gives unto every person—no matter how sinful—value, dignity, hope, and potential.

But even before Jesus was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary, his forefathers and mothers rejoiced in the gift of children. They marveled at the miracle of life. They struggled with the effects of sin in the world—despair, persecution, rivalries, infertility, poor reputation, anxiety. But they relied on God to work out all things for them. They listened (or eventually listened) to God’s direction and promise. And they praised God for opening the womb and giving life.

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During this year's Advent midweek and Christmas worship, we'll marvel at how the Lord Opens the Womb, especially for Sarah (Genesis 18), for Manoah's wife (Judges 13), for Hannah (1 Samuel 1-2), and of course, for Mary (Matthew 1/Luke 1).

*Your dear pastor,*

*Pastor Witte*



The congregation is caroling to those members who may not be able to attend services. Please share the gift of your voice and the message of Christ to those who may not otherwise hear them. We will meet on Sunday, December 16th at 4 pm in the Fellowship Hall, caravan to multiple locations and then return to the Fellowship Hall for a warm chili supper. The only thing you are asked to bring is a side for the chili (cheese, crackers, sour cream, etc). Hear you there!



**For the Christmas season,** since we cannot help the seminarians food bank, we will be participating in the seminary's Christmas card shower. The seminary tries to give each seminarian a \$25 gift card to restaurants, gas stations, big box stores, DIY stores or any place you like to shop. Please give your cards to Kathy Fiene or Pat Horn and they will take or send them up to the seminary before the students leave for Christmas break.

We are revising the annual Christmas Tea in the Fireside Room on Saturday, December 13th at 3 pm. Daryl Witte will be giving a presentation of the history of favorite Christmas hymns and carols. If you need a ride to the church, please call the church office (878-0651) and we will see that you get here.





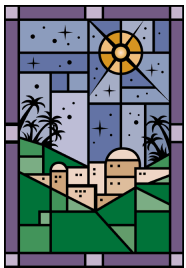
# Bethlehem Lutheran School 2025—2026 School Year News

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

Advent Greetings to the entire Bethlehem community! December at Bethlehem is a time of joyful anticipation, not only for Christmas Holiday but for the celebration of our Savior's birth. We are busily preparing for the season and all of the teachers are decorating their doors to celebrate Christmas. The winning door will be the one that captures the spirit of, and reason for, the season in the most creative way. Walk down the hallway off the lunchroom on Sunday morning and you can see the Kindergarten - 5th grade classroom doors all decorated. Our Christmas program will be at 7pm on Friday, December 5th at the John Legend Theater in Springfield. Our Christmas Band Concert will be on Thursday, December 11th here at Bethlehem at 7pm. We will also have a special Christmas chapel on Friday, December 19th at 11am. All of you are invited to all three events. Through these celebrations, daily classroom devotions, and Christmas carols echoing through the halls, we are helping our students fix their eyes on Jesus, the true gift of the season!



Though we celebrate and have fun during this time, we are still hard at work. Students are continuing to learn more about God's love for them, his creation, and the people in it. From the A, B, C's to five paragraph essays, students are developing their knowledge and skills. This is all led by the wonderful, hard working, and caring staff of teachers that have been called to serve here at Bethlehem this year.



December 19th will be Bethlehem Lutheran School's last day before Christmas break. Students will be off December 20th - January 4th with school resuming at the normal time on Monday, January 5th. During this time when we gather with family and friends both from far and near, I encourage students to ask family members about stories of when they were young. Maybe how they celebrated Christmas, or what their school days were like. I bet you will learn something unique about your family.



For our chapel offering we are still collecting items for the holiday baskets that Bethlehem distributes to residents of Fairborn. It is our hope that what we collect will bless the lives of our neighbors in need.

Our Christian character word for the month is compassion. Our selected Bible verse is Colossians 3:12: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience." We will be looking at examples of compassion during the month with the greatest example being of course, Jesus.

As you consider year end charitable giving, I encourage you to donate to the LSGOO (Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization of Ohio). Because of the generosity of Ohio taxpayers, we have been able to give over \$70,000 to Bethlehem students over the past two years. As you are no doubt aware, costs continue to increase and there are families who want to give the gift of a Bethlehem education to their child but are unable to afford it. A donation to the LSGOO not only gives you a dollar-for-dollar tax credit of up to \$750 for an individual and \$1500 for a couple filing jointly on your Ohio taxes, but it also can be designated specifically for tuition assistance at Bethlehem. We have set an ambitious goal of raising \$45,000 in LSGOO donations over the next five months. All taxpayers in Ohio are eligible to participate in this program so please share this with relatives, neighbors, and friends who don't necessarily live in the Fairborn area who also support Christian education.



As we close out the calendar year, we reflect on God's faithfulness and look ahead with hope. Bethlehem's investment in Christian education is bearing fruit in lives rooted in truth and grace. Everyday our staff are sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with students and families.

Thank you for continuing to support the students, staff, and families of our school in thought, word, and deed.

*Making a Joyful Noise,*

*Mrs. Ferguson*

# The Lord Opens the Womb Advent and Christmas Series



## **Wednesday, November 26<sup>th</sup>**

Thanksgiving Eve Service 7:00 pm

## **Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>**

*First Sunday in Advent*

Matins Baptism Remembrance Service 8 & 10:45 am

Communion Service 9:00 am

Sunday School for all ages 9:30 am

## **Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Advent Supper 6:00 pm

Advent Worship Service 7:00 pm  
*Of Sarah (Genesis 18)*

## **Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**

School play at John Legend Theater,  
Springfield 7:00 pm

## **Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>**

*Second Sunday in Advent*

Divine Services 8 & 10:45 am

Sunday School for all ages 9:30 am

## **Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>**

Advent Supper 6:00 pm

Advent Worship Service 7:00 pm  
*Of Manoah's Wife (Judges 13)*

## **Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

School Band Concert 7:00 pm

## **Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**

Christmas Tea 3:00 pm

## **Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>**

*Third Sunday in Advent*

Divine Services 8 & 10:45 am

Children's Christmas program 9:30 am

Fellowship Coffee

Christmas Caroling 3:00 pm

## **Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**

*Deadline for Christmas Food Baskets*

Advent Supper 6:00 pm

Advent Worship Service 7:00 pm  
*Of Hannah (1Samuel 1)*

## **Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>**

Chapel 11 am

School Early Dismissal 11:30 am

No Extended Care

## **Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>**

Christmas Basket Distribution 11:00 am

## **Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>**

*Fourth Sunday in Advent*

*Deadline for Star articles*

Divine Services 8 & 10:45 am

Sunday School for all ages 9:30 am

## **Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**

Christmas Eve Worship Service 5 & 7 pm

*Of Mary (Matthew 1)*

## **Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup>**

Christmas Day Divine Service 10:00 am

*For Second Birth (John 1)*

## **Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup>**

*First Sunday after Christmas*

Divine Services 8 & 10:45 am

Sunday School for all ages 9:30 am

## **Wednesday, December 31<sup>st</sup>**

New Year's Eve Divine Service 7:00 pm

## **Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup>**

*Observation of Epiphany*

Divine Services 8 & 10:45 am

Sunday School for all ages 9:30 am



# Birthdays & Anniversaries

## December Birthdays

Ida Luebke .....	1
Meghann Martinek	
Doris Humphreys .....	4
Clara Maffett	
Paula Fiepkke .....	7
Ray Saunders .....	9
Noel Johnson .....	12
Mike Jones .....	15
Jeanne Hooper .....	16
Bryan Miessler .....	21
Erik Denlinger .....	26
Jacob Whitt .....	29
Joyce Casci .....	30
Bill Scheu	

## December Anniversaries

Ray & Sue Saunders .....	18
Hans & Betty Marlette .....	19
Dave & Carol Benoy .....	24
John & Michelle Zulfer .....	27
Ken & Jodi Crosby .....	31



Lauren Green .....	1
Ida Luebke	
Alison Witte .....	5
Pat Nowicki .....	10
Bonnie Fugate .....	12
Joyce Whitt .....	15
Bradley Hooper .....	16
George Giese .....	21
Jeanne Hooper .....	25
Chris Scheu	
Paula Fiepkke .....	27
Zora Griffith .....	28

Larry Barnhard

Nancy Beaty

Norma Dupre

Jonathan Fiene

Erma Haggerty

Nesta Harris

Louise Hellickson

Helga Hemphill

Eileen Hitzeman



Doris Humphreys

Gene Ninnemann

Jean Robinson

Marilyn Scheu

Elaine Schultz

Robyn Shipman

Pastor & Lynda Viken

Sue Williamson

Gladys Zink



**The Sunday School classes and the school chapel offering for the months of November and December** are items for the Christmas Food Baskets provided to residents of Fairborn. We have re-vamped the types of food to be given in the boxes (based on feedback from previous year recipients). The new suggestions are listed below. Donations can be placed on the table in the front of the Fellowship Hall. There will also be a container for money as well.

## Some suggestions for the baskets are:

Packages of Christmas candy

Packages of cookies  
(Christmas especially)

Packages of crackers: any kind

Cans/jars of fruit  
(applesauce, cocktail, any kind)

Nut butters, jams or jellies

Breakfast cereals (any kind)

Soups (not cream): any kind  
you would make for a meal

# The Bethlehem STAR

December 2025

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



**Christmas Eve Worship Services**  
Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> 5 & 7 pm

**Christmas Day Divine Service**  
Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup> 10 am

## Church Office

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

## School Office

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

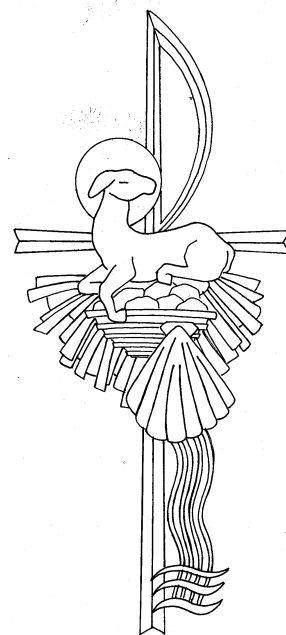
## Sunday

**Worship Services at 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.**  
**Online: [churchstreamer.org](http://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

**January 2026 deadline: Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>.**



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