



**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

### June/July 2026

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*[Jesus says,] “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.” Matthew 7:24-25*

Dearly beloved of Bethlehem,

I love summer. At Bethlehem Lutheran School, we’re now on summer break. Our awesome school staff is looking forward to sleeping in a little bit more, not rushing to get out the door in the morning, wearing jeans or shorts instead of dress clothes, (re)pursuing their hobbies, reading for fun, and going on vacation. I share many of their summer joys and intentions. Over the summer, you may see me in my “Class B” pastoral garb—jeans and clergy shirt.

Some of you still have a full work routine that doesn’t decrease during the summer. Or perhaps, your vocational “ops tempo” INCREASES during the summer. If this is the case for you, may God give you a time and season for rest that you may also relax and recharge later.

During our busy seasons, God still gives us a Sabbath, finding our rest in Jesus—in His holy word and sacraments. In the slower seasons, we also find our rest in Jesus—in His holy word and sacraments. In fact, we can devote MORE time to find rest for our souls, along with our bodies, during the slower times. Regardless of our life’s tempo, Jesus offers us a sure foundation for our lives: hear and do His word.

Rains, storms, challenges, temptations, and trials are going to hit us, individually, as a family, as a congregation. Life in this sinful, fallen world is hard. The Devil seeks to destroy all that is good and holy in this world—that includes your faith, your family, your congregation. But Jesus offers us a firm foundation—hear and do His word. Jesus is your firm foundation.

Our elders are currently reading and studying “Built on the Rock: The Healthy Congregation” by Ted Kober. His argument sounds so simple. Many church consultants and leaders today focus on having visionary senior pastors, modernized congregational governance, being mission or outward focused, or having

“inspiring worship” (whatever that means) to be a healthy congregation. However, Ted Kober simply argues that a healthy congregation is deeply engaged in the Bible and able to apply the Scriptures to themselves and with each other.

In his experience and research, Kober found one key area to gauge a congregation’s spiritual health and maturity. Are the congregation’s leaders and members active in Bible study? Healthier congregations have over 20% of its average worship attendance in Bible study. Unhealthy congregations have less than 20%. Sue Saunders and I are currently crunching the numbers. Our hypothesis is that we’re at 35%. (Standby for more accurate data.)

Dear Bethlehem, I think that’s good, but it could be better. In fact, part of our congregational strategic plan was to increase the opportunities for small group Bible Study within our congregation. And it’s worth pursuing. Pastor, elders, and our parish assistant will be working on this. In the meantime, I encourage and invite you to take advantage of Sunday morning Bible Study at 9:30am. We have a great group, but there’s room for more. At least 20 more.

Bible Study allows opportunity for God’s people to gather around His word in a setting that’s different from worship, yet complementary. In Bible Study, we can ask questions, share insights, and engage with one another intentionally around God’s Word. Bible study trains us not only in our knowledge of Scripture, but also in our “doing” of the Word. Bible Study helps us to apply God’s word to our own actions and gives us the opportunity to apply God’s word to one another. It builds a Biblical framework for our understanding of God, the world, and our callings in life.

In times of conflict, Kober noticed that that congregations with higher levels of Bible class attendance tend to show more respect to those they disagree with, admit their own errors more, repent of their sins better, and forgive others when they’ve sinned against. They tend to declare God’s Word and will to one another as opposed to relying on worldly experiences and resources. In the words of Jesus, they are built on the rock. Dear Bethlehem, I want you to remain on this firm foundation:

His oath, His covenant and blood Support me in the raging flood;  
When ev’ry earthly prop gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.  
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.  
(LSB 575; v3)

*Your dear pastor,  
Pastor Keith Mitte*



# Vacation Bible School June 1-5, 9 am—noon



Vacation Bible School this year is from 9 am to noon on Monday through Friday, June 1-5. Register with the QR code or website below. All children from potty trained three year olds to just having finished grade 5 are welcome to come and join the Tropical Trek!



## Voters' Assembly in person and virtually



**Please join us on June 7<sup>th</sup> for the next Voters Assembly at 4 pm in the Fellowship Hall.** Please see Brett Fiepke with any questions or concerns. It will be held in person, or on Zoom:

Meeting ID: 831 1390 6567 on the zoom app or <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83113906567> without the app.

The quarterly meeting of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Widows' Support Group will be Thursday, June 18, 2026 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Please bring your own lunch and beverage.

We will meet at the home of Louise Durrenberg, 213



Woodlawn Drive in Fairborn, off of Maple Avenue near the church. Her house is the second one on the left. Any lady who attends Bethlehem Lutheran Church who has lost their husband is invited to attend for grief support and fellowship.

We hope you'll be able to join us for an inspiring "Show & Tell" program. Bring something memorable from your marriage that you would like to share with the group. If you have a quilt, pillow, teddy bear, or special piece of jewelry created as a memento, that would be especially meaningful. Item from the past have also included special keepsakes, such as pictures, collages and gifts (bring whatever touches your heart).

Contact Sherry Matsel if you have any questions or just want to talk. Spread the word of our meeting to other widows in our congregation. Thank you.

Pastor Witte will be spending time in Alabama (June 8<sup>th</sup> through June 29<sup>th</sup>) on duty with the Air Force. Pastor England will be handling the pulpit supply and teaching the Adult Bible Class. Please contact Kevin Green (937-581-5160) or call the church office (937-878-0651) for any help you need.



## Birthdays &



JUNE

## Anniversaries

### June Birthdays

Daryl Witte .....	1
Jonathan Fiene .....	3
Roman Ewing .....	4
Anne Ausserer .....	5
Joseph Ausserer	
Thomas Tressler	
Molly Whitt .....	10
Jean Robinson .....	11
Kyla Miller .....	14
Kevin Green .....	16
Jamie Hensley .....	17
Asia Greggerson .....	20
Alex Giese .....	21
Dalton Miller .....	29

### June Anniversaries

Jared & Keri Johnson .....	10
Mike & Jane Jones .....	15
Richard & Lisa Thibeault .....	17
Tyler & Erika Ewing .....	20
Art & Joyce Casci .....	22
Dianah Williamson .....	1
Mira Sadowski .....	2



Jonathan Fiene .....	3
Raymond Saunders	
Kyla Miller .....	14
Annika Nelson	
Donna Oda	
Jennifer Ramsey	
Nathaniel Witte	
Marcia Vail .....	15
Mary Smith .....	19
Charley Houck .....	27
Doris Humphreys	
Daniel Ausserer .....	28

## Birthdays &



JULY

## Anniversaries

### July Birthdays

Jeff Ramsey .....	1
Helga Hemphill .....	2
Daylond Hooper	
Ezra Miller .....	3
Stellan Tangeman .....	4
Richard Thibeault	
Carol Bruesewitz .....	6
Michael Gableman .....	12
John Nowicki	
Nathan Huffman .....	13
Brett Williamson	
Charleen Carlson .....	14
Devon Sadowski	
Deb Graver .....	16
Aidan Fry .....	19
Teddy Green	
Christopher Ausserer .....	20
Kayden Baker .....	21
Cayden Crewe	
David Hemphill	
Terri Thompson	
Dianah Williamson	
Pat Green .....	22
Jim Hensley .....	23
Gregory Campbell .....	25
Eileen Hitzeman .....	29
Zoe Witte .....	30

### July Anniversaries

Pastor & Alison Witte .....	2
Joe & Helga Clark .....	4
Jared & Kerri Johnson .....	10
Eric & Terri Thompson .....	12
Austin & Andrea Brokamp .....	20
Brett & Paula Fiepe .....	22
Rick & Debbie Graver .....	26

Larry Barnhard  
Nancy Beaty  
Norma Dupre  
Jonathan Fiene  
Erma Haggerty  
Louise Hellickson  
Helga Hemphill



Gene Ninnemann  
Eileen Hitzeman  
Doris Humphreys  
Jean Robinson  
Marilyn Scheu  
Elaine Schultz  
Robyn Shipman  
Sue Williamson  
Alison Witte  
Gladys Zink



Anne Ausserer .....	3
Daryl Witte	
Elayna Humphreys .....	5
Emilie Humphreys	
Ezra Miller	
Gladys Zink .....	6
Cayden Crewe .....	7
Kevin Green .....	8
Logan Green	
Jean Robinson .....	10
Richard Thibeault .....	11
Stellan Tangeman .....	13
Louise Hellickson .....	15
Marcia Vail	
Jamie Hensley .....	17
Laura Card .....	18
Helga Hemphill .....	21
Phil Maffett .....	24
Todd Anderson .....	26
Eileen Hitzeman	
Aidan Fry .....	27

# The Bethlehem STAR

June/July 2026

Rev. Keith F. Witte

Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School

1240 S. Maple Avenue, Fairborn, OH 45324

*The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*



June 1 —5  
9 am to noon

Address Correction Requested

## 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.**

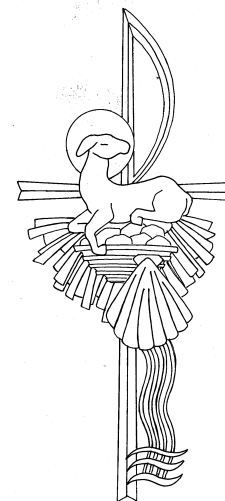
## Wednesday

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

**August 2026 issue deadline: Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup>.**



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