



**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 March 2025

*Jesus, I will ponder now On Your holy passion;  
With Your Spirit me endow For such meditation.  
Grant that I in love and faith May the image cherish  
Of Your suff'ring, pain, and death That I may not perish.  
Graciously my faith renew; Help me bear my crosses,  
Learning humbleness from You, Peace mid pain and losses.  
May I give You love for love! Hear me, O my Savior,  
That I may in heav'n above Sing Your praise forever. (LSB 440; v1,6)*

Dear Bethlehem,

We are about to journey with Jesus to the cross once again during the season of Lent. Ash Wednesday is quickly approaching, 5 Mar 2025. In our Lenten Midweek services, Wednesdays at 7:00pm, we will take a unique approach. We will journey with Joseph, son of Jacob, to the cross. While Joseph was not crucified for our salvation, the themes of betrayal, temptation, trials, suffering, forgiveness, reconciliation, God's will, mercy, and endurance have much in common with Jesus' journey to the cross. We will find much in common with Joseph—the same struggles and the same strength in God's good and gracious will. In worship, we will hear portions of Genesis, chapters 30-50 and Luke, chapters 22-23. If you would like the whole picture, please read these chapters before or during Lent.

There are a few things that I cannot explain, but deep down, I know that they are vital to our Christian faith and practice. When they happen, it “feels” good, right, and salutary. Let me share a few examples that I noticed recently.

Last Sunday, in our prayers of the church, we prayed for our enemies as Jesus taught us in Luke 6:27-36:

We implore You, by Your gracious visitation, lead our enemies to true repentance and to have the same love, be of one accord, and share one mind and heart with us and with Your whole Church.

We should pray for our enemies more in our personal and corporate prayers. I cannot explain it, but it is right for us to do so.

*(continued on page two)*

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Another distinctively Christian belief or practice that I cannot fully explain is the acceptance of God's Word as recorded in the Bible. When I say, "Jesus says" or "Thus says the Lord" before or after reading the Scripture, Christians just listen intently and take it seriously. We don't wonder IF it's the word of God or not. We don't need to be convinced by history or reason as to why a book is in the Bible or not. It just is. As Lutherans, we understand it as Law and Gospel. We hear God convict us of our sin and His call to repentance—Law. We hear God forgive us and reassure us of His grace and love in Christ crucified and risen—Gospel. Every book in the Bible does this!

Finally, Christians naturally desire to hear of Jesus' journey to the cross during Lent and Holy Week, reflect upon it, sing about it, and have our faith strengthened by it. When we suffer and struggle to understand why—we go back to the mystery of Christ's own suffering for our salvation. We also rejoice as we share in the sufferings of Christ. When we feel guilt and shame from our own sin—we find comfort and healing in Christ's wounds.

*Looking to Jesus,  
Pastor Chaplain Keith Witte*



### News from Second Grade

Second grade is learning and growing everyday! We spent the first half of the year learning how to be second graders and reviewing all we learned in first grade. Things are getting a bit trickier now that we are building upon the skills we learned in kindergarten and first grade. We have just finished learning how to add and subtract three digit numbers in math. Right now, we are reviewing and learning all about money in math and social studies. Throughout the chapter, we are earning 'money' that we responsibly have to keep in our wallets. After our test, we will get to spend our hard earned cash on special rewards in a classroom store! We have also started working on our animal research projects. From jellyfish to black widow spiders, armadillos to sand cats, we are learning how to research our own animals and organize our findings. The best parts: we get to type our final paper instead of writing and make a diorama out of shoe boxes! Make sure to check out our final projects at the Festival of the Arts on March 13!

*Thank you for your continued support,  
Miss Zulfer*



# PRINCIPAL'S PAGE

**ENDURE**  
HEBREWS 12:1-3



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



Enrollment is open for the 2025-2026 school year and if you know of anyone who would benefit from our Christ-centered education I would encourage you to have them contact the school office. We are doing tours each week for next year.

We are having a Family Fellowship Night at City BBQ in Beavercreek on March 4th! We are raising money to support our band program. With every order you place either dine in or carry out that mentions Bethlehem we will receive 20%.



We will be sharing our connection between church and school by having students singing at Bethlehem on the 16th at the 10:45am service.

This year we are doing something a little different. Instead of a science fair we are doing a history fair. Students in grades 3 and 4 did a class project together. Students in grades 5-8 did either an individual project or a small group project. Select students in grades 7 and 8 will participate in the Ohio District National History Day program at Carillon Park.



We will also celebrate the arts the same night as the history fair. All students will have artwork on display and students in kindergarten through second grade will have curricular work and projects from throughout the school year on display. Students in kindergarten through third grade will also be singing songs from different decades.



The end of the third quarter will be the 14th with report cards being available on the 21st. We will be having our spring break from the 24th through the 28th of March. We will resume school at the normal time on March 31st.



You can still donate to the LSGO for 2024. Your donation will directly impact the ministry here at Bethlehem and will go to tuition assistance for families that want to have their child in a Christ-centered school but might not otherwise be able to afford tuition. Our goal is to raise \$26,000. Go to <https://lsgoohio.org> for more information and to make a donation

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*



## **Basic estate planning and financial concepts**

**March 22, 2025, 10:30 am to noon**

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

Please join us for a special estate planning educational event. Having a strategy in place can make things easier for your family after you're gone. At this workshop we will discuss financial topics such as tax efficiency, qualified charitable distributions and transferring wealth. Guest speaker Bob Emerson, a former financial professional, will cover estate planning essentials, estate documents and the flow of estate assets.

This free workshop will be held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church on Saturday, March 22, 2025 at 10:30 am - Noon. It's hosted by Financial Advisor Terry Powers. **All church and school members and staff are invited.**

Please call Sue at 937-878-0651 to reserve a place for yourself and a guest.

No products will be sold.

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## Lenten Fast

For various church bodies, notably Catholic and Orthodox, the season of Lent is underscored by an adherence to fasting. The forty days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday mirror our Lord's forty days in the wilderness. Moses and Elijah also fasted for forty days under God's care. But there are instances in the Old Testament where the practice was abused. "For these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted?" (Zec 7:5) The Pharisees routinely made a public show of fasting and Jesus rebuked them after they accused his disciples of not fasting. We know that we are not bound by a command to fast because Jesus fulfilled the Law. But can the practice still be beneficial to us today and why did the apostles and early Christians retain regular fasting?

For many people it is customary to give up something for Lent. But if we are giving up some secret sin, we shouldn't settle to abstain only during Lent. Alternatively, fasting is not about abstaining from sin, but rather the good gifts from God. The Jewish and early Christian practice of occasional fasting strengthened their spiritual discipline. Paul writes in Philippians 4:12: "In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need." Temporarily denying our bodily appetites can not only build discipline and fortitude but also remind us of the heavenly food that only Jesus provides. "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

In our society, many indulgences are available on demand. It isn't easy to turn our attention away from the constant stream of worldly desires. Dedicating more time to prayer and devotion sets our minds on Christ. For some people, adding a form of fasting trains them not to overly rely on earthly gifts.

As Christians, we know that our works cannot save us. We are assured of God's grace freely given through his Word and Sacraments and we look forward to the heavenly feast to come.

*By His Grace,*

*Brian Bell*

*Elder*





Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School will again be searching for the best chili maker within our midst. Dust off your favorite knockoff (Wendy's, Skyline) or Grandpa's Chuckwagon Snakebite Bowl of Love and enter it in the cookoff on Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup> after the late service (around 1 pm). Don't have a recipe? Come anyway and sample and judge. Bring a chili topper or crackers to round out the meal.

### Come, Work at Bethlehem

We currently have two open positions within the church:

**HANDYMAN**— a part time position (21 hours a week). The Handyman is responsible for the regular maintenance of the building and also for monitoring the many systems (elevator, furnace, etc.) we have. Must be able to pass a background check and drug screening, have your own transportation and driver's license. Compensation commiserate with experience and ability. See Brett Fiepke if you are interested.



**PARISH ASSISTANT**—a part time position (up to 20 hours a week). The parish assistant will help pastor to organize and recruit volunteers for board memberships/leaders, small group Bible Studies and coordinate fellowship opportunities with the school and congregation. See Pastor Witte or Brett Fiepke if you are interested.



Lutheran Women in Mission  
PRAYER SERVICE 2025  
**Blessed**  
are they...  
Matthew 5:1-12

## LWML Miami Valley Zone Prayer Service

**Saturday, March 15, 2025**

**9:30 Welcome/Registration  
10:00 Program**

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
1240 S. Maple Avenue, Fairborn, OH**

This Lent, we will journey with Joseph, son of Jacob, to the cross. While Joseph was not crucified for our salvation, the themes of betrayal, temptation, trials, suffering, forgiveness, reconciliation, God's will, mercy, and endurance have much in common with Jesus' journey to the cross. We will find much in common with Joseph—the same struggles and the same strength in God's good and gracious will. In worship, we will hear portions of Genesis, chapters 30-50 and Luke, chapters 22-23. If you would like the whole picture, please read these chapters before or during Lent.



Joseph Forgives His Brothers

**March 5 (Ash Wednesday)**

Divine service 7 pm

**March 9 (1st Sunday in Lent)**

*Daylight Savings Time begins*

Divine Service 8 & 10:45 am  
 Sunday School 9:30 am  
 Catechism class 12 noon

**Wednesday, March 12**

*A Wondrous Silence*

Lenten supper 6 pm  
 Lenten service 7 pm

**March 16 (2nd Sunday in Lent)**

Divine Service 8 & 10:45 am  
 Sunday School 9:30 am  
 Catechism class 12 noon

**Wednesday, March 19**

*A Miracles of Miracles*

Lenten supper 6 pm  
 Lenten service 7 pm

**March 23 (3rd Sunday in Lent)**

Divine Service 8 & 10:45 am  
 Sunday School 9:30 am  
 Catechism class 12 noon

**Wednesday, March 26**

*Wait for the Lord*

Lenten supper 6 pm  
 Lenten service 7 pm

**March 30 (4th Sunday in Lent)**

Divine Service 8 & 10:45 am  
 Sunday School 9:30 am  
 Catechism class 12 noon

**Wednesday, April 2**

*Chased by a Dirty Conscience*

Lenten supper 6 pm  
 Lenten service 7 pm

**April 6 (5th Sunday in Lent)**

Divine Service 8 & 10:45 am  
 Sunday School 9:30 am  
 Catechism class 12 noon

**Wednesday, April 9**

*God Does Have a Plan*

Lenten supper 6 pm  
 Lenten service 7 pm

**April 13 (Palm Sunday)**

Divine Service 8 & 10:45 am  
 Sunday School 9:30 am  
 Catechism class 12 noon

**April 17 (Maundy Thursday)**

Divine service 7 pm

**April 18 (Good Friday)**

*Forgiveness Finished*

Chief Service Noon & 7:30 pm

**April 20 (Easter Sunday)**

Divine Service 8 & 10:45 am  
 Sunday School 9:30 am

Easter breakfast served by LIFE



## BLESSINGS ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

### March Birthdays

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Zayden Bell .....           | 2  |
| Gene Ninnemann              |    |
| Karla Giese .....           | 3  |
| Anora Johnson .....         | 5  |
| Joe Schultz                 |    |
| Mike Shipman .....          | 11 |
| Brian Bell .....            | 13 |
| Mary Hooper .....           | 16 |
| Linda Hall                  |    |
| Yuki Lauderbach             |    |
| Riley Zulfer .....          | 17 |
| Louise Hellickson .....     | 21 |
| Shannon Hollingsworth ..... | 22 |
| Joseph Witte                |    |
| Brenda Hemphill .....       | 27 |



### March Anniversaries

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Alex & Karla Giese ..... | 3  |
| Chad & Shannon .....     | 18 |
| Hollingsworth            |    |

Jonathan Fiene

Matt Greggerson

Nesta Harris

Louise Hellickson

Doris Humphreys

Bob Koogler



Ezra Miller

Jean Robinson

Marilyn Scheu

Elaine Schultz

Robyn Shipman

Alison Witte

### Fellowship Groups



**Malachi** will meet on Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. If you have any questions, please call Paula Fiepke.

**One Spirit** will meet on Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm in the Fireside Room. The theme is *Irish Food*. The hosts are Brett & Dianah Williamson.



### Baptismal Birthdays

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| Pastor England .....   | 10 |
| Sue Wolaver            |    |
| Karla Giese .....      | 12 |
| Zayden Bell .....      | 13 |
| Helga Clark .....      | 14 |
| Alex Hooper            |    |
| Pastor Witte .....     | 15 |
| Emma Olcott .....      | 16 |
| Victoria Lindsey ..... | 17 |
| Daylond Hooper .....   | 18 |
| Gregory Campbell ..... | 21 |
| Brian Bell .....       | 25 |
| Shannon Hollingsworth  |    |
| Lucy Ausserer .....    | 26 |
| Joseph Witte .....     | 30 |



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# The Bethlehem STAR

March 2025

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



**March 5, 2025**

**7 pm Divine Service with Imposition of Ashes**

## 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

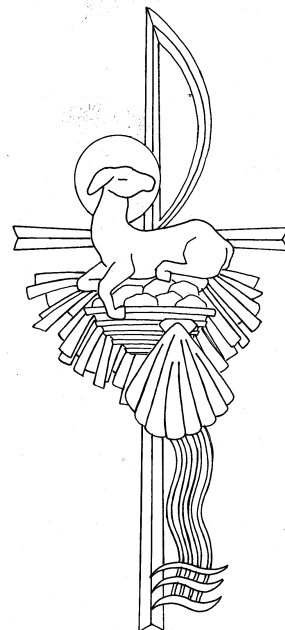
## Sunday

**Worship Services at 8:00 & 10:45a.m.**  
**Sunday School & Bible Classes at 9:30 a.m.**

## Wednesday

Chapel Service at 8:45 a.m. (when school is in session)  
Bible Study at 9:30 a.m.  
Advent/Lenten Service at 7 pm

**April, 2025 deadline: Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup>.**



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