



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

August 2025

The LORD has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness to the nations.

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! (Psalm 98:2-4)

Dearly beloved of Bethlehem,

August. Summer vacation is winding down. Fall sports (with summer heat) are starting up. School will be back in session soon. Loose schedules are tightening up once again. I enjoy a period of flexibility and laxity, sleeping in and slowing down just a bit. But I also enjoy getting back to the order and structure of a daily and weekly grind. Spiritual practices such as prayer, worship, Bible study, and devotions can thrive during a lax schedule, but at least for me, it helps to be in a regular routine.

This year, our school ministry THEME is “Let’s Make a Joyful Noise” based on Psalm 98:4 (quoted above). Our school chapel services will utilize and highlight various Psalms throughout the year. Therefore, whenever our congregation observes a major holiday or festival this year, I will lean into the Psalms a little more than usual.

The Psalms are a rich treasure for Christians. Yes, I often use them in Pastoral Care and counseling situations. Yes, we often sing hymns that’re based on the Psalms. Yes, some of you regularly incorporate Psalms in your daily devotions and prayers. (Note: *Portals of Prayer* regularly references a Psalm at the top of the page.) Yes, we regularly incorporate Psalms in our regular Divine Services—namely, the Introit and Gradual. However, I don’t always highlight or quote the Psalms in my preaching and teaching. It isn’t common practice within Lutheran churches today. Though, Martin Luther was excellent at referencing the Psalms in his preaching and teaching.

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Incorporating the Psalms in our personal and corporate lives as Christians is a very good thing. After all, Jesus used the Psalms in his prayers, teaching, and preaching. The Psalms respond to the good, the bad, and the ugly of life in this sinful world. These words are Holy Spirit approved and supplied. These words express what we often feel—when words don't come easily—to God and to each other.

Making a joyful noise,

Pastor Witte



Bethlehem Lutheran School

2025—2026 School Year News

Back to School Bash: Sunday, August 3rd, 6:00—8:00 p.m. at the Community Park, Fairborn. Parents, teachers and students will all gather to re-acquaint with each other in a playful, social setting.

Teachers return: Monday, August 4th at 9:00 a.m. to begin to prepare for the coming school year.

Student Orientation: Tuesday, August 12th from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Teachers and students meet each other in their new classrooms.

New school year begins: Thursday, August 14th at 8:15 am.

Chris Nelson had sent this elder article for inclusion in the June/July Star, but in my haste to get the Star out last May, it was forgotten. So here it is, a couple of months late.

Growing up in a small town, every day during summer vacation felt like an endless, open horizon - no rules, no worries - especially when my parents weren't home. Fueled by this newfound freedom, though we loved the TV, video games and A/C that were indoors, my brother and I explored on our bikes, often taking trips to our sense of Eden, Smith's corner store. Smith's held the ultimate temptation for boys our age: baseball cards. We needed these cards. Ripping open those wax packs brought us a sense of adventure. Any pack might contain one of our beloved Indians, a star player, or possibly a hated rival, like a player in the Big Apple.

One sunny morning, we bought several packs, eager to see what treasures they held. When we arrived home, disaster set in - we discovered that we'd locked ourselves out of the house. We panicked. How could we enjoy the day now, stuck outside?! We whined, I blamed my brother, my brother called me a liar, and we brainstormed many excuses. I checked the garage door (locked). My brother tested the windows (locked). We debated climbing through a second-floor window (we were very short). I looked under the welcome mat (no). He searched near our porch for a rock that was suspiciously larger than the others, almost like it contained a key (nope).

Exhausted and desperate, we trudged over to Mrs. Miller's house. With no way to hide our mistake, we faced the inevitable: telling our father. As his work phone rang, we knew that our lives were in his hands and yes, his judgment was swift. Though clearly not happy, Dad agreed to a tremendously inconvenient hourlong lunch break consisting of a 30-minute drive home to unlock the door and a 30-minute drive back to work.

Roughly 30 minutes later, Dad stepped out of his car with the turkey sandwich in his hand that I watched him prepare for his lunch earlier that morning. He said very few words and to our surprise, he did not scold us; he did not lecture us. Our father simply unlocked the door. Just like that, our perfect summer day was restored. The endless possibilities of the day were available to us. We were saved. We thanked him profusely and Dad may have even muttered that he loved us.

Our daily freedom is a gift, but it also leads us into trouble. When we step outside of God's perfect design, we can relieve ourselves of tremendous anxiety if we first call on our Heavenly Father, who loves us more than words can say. God patiently holds the keys to our peace every time we go to Him, confess our mistakes, and seek His forgiveness. This summer as we work, rest, travel, and search for adventure, let us remember that no matter how many keys we think we need to fix our problems, God's grace is always available. He is the one with the key to true peace. Trust in His forgiveness and find rest in His love, all summer long and always.

Chris Nelson,
Elder

PHILIPPIANS

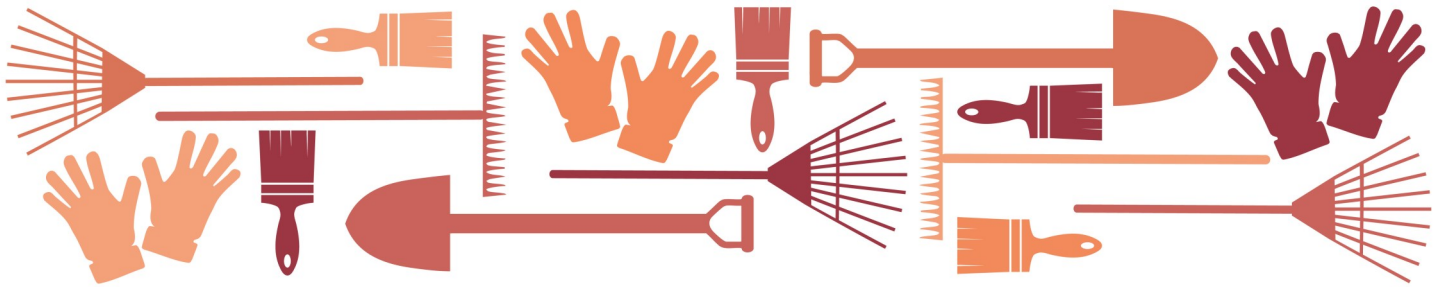
The Epistle of Joy

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.



CHRISTMAS

in Action

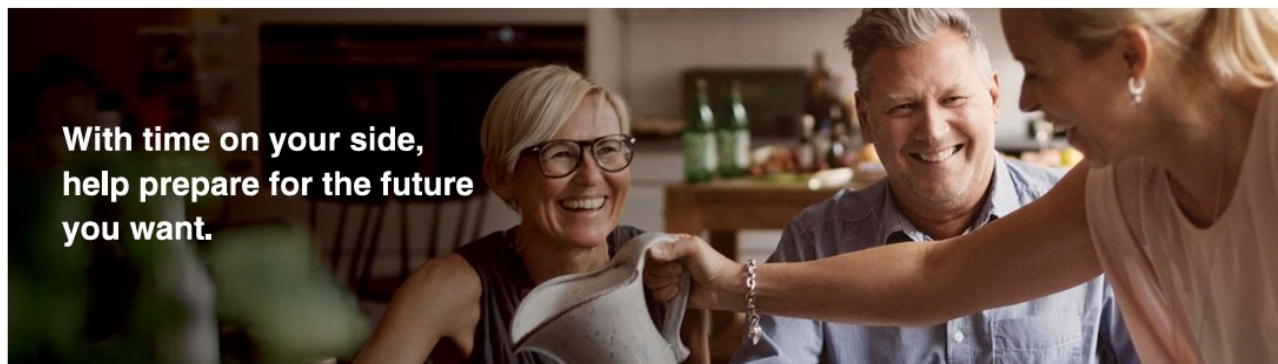
Saturday, August 9th, 9 am

**Meet at the Fairborn Senior Center
for directions to project house**

We will be sponsoring a team for repairing a home in the Fairborn community on Saturday, August 9th (with rain date of August 23rd). We have a much easier project this year (we will be doing yard work and small projects on one house in Fairborn). If you want to participate, please call the church office [(937)878-0651] and get the forms.



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



Happy Birthday!

August Birthdays

Veronica Smith	1
Elayna Humphreys	4
Sandy Hensley	7
Sherry Matsel	10
John Card.....	11
Helga Clark	13
Susan Werner	
Dave Benoy	14
Bobbe Houck	19
Emilie Humpheys	20
Rebekah Hitzeman	21
Leslie Lindsey	
Joe Clark.....	23
Otha Lowe.....	24
Sarah Tangeman	
Erika Hoganson.....	25
Louise Durrenberg.....	31



August Anniversaries

Tom & Carol Bruesewitz	13
Dave & Brenda Hemphill	15
Steve & Bonnie Fugate.....	17
Jamie & Paulette Hensley	27
John & Pat Nowicki	
Clayton & Marcia Vail	

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



VOLUNTEER POSSIBILITIES

The congregation depends on volunteers for many of the jobs around the church. Please consider helping out in some way. Please see Alex Fry to volunteer. Here is a partial list of the kinds of things we need:

Altar Guild

Usher

Acolyte/crucifer

Coffee cleanup

Fellowship Coffees

Classroom prayer warrior

Various deliveries

Church picnic

Classroom parent



Terri Thompson	1
John Nowicki	4
Zoe Witte.....	5
Mike Shipman	12
Nancy Beaty.....	15
John Card	17
Dave Hemphill.....	25
Pat Green	
Jim Hensley	27
Leslie Lindsey.....	31

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



Orientation:

Tuesday, August 12, 4-7 pm

School begins:

Thursday, August 14, 8:15 am

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

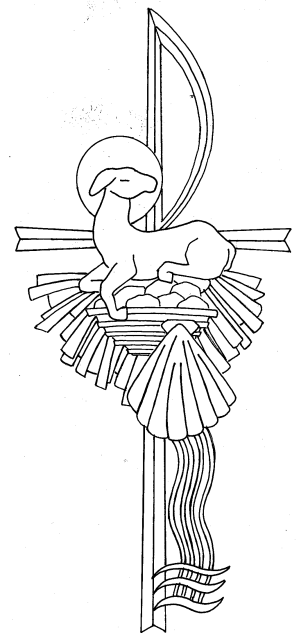
Sunday

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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