



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

January 2026

*Isaiah 'twas foretold it, The rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, She bore to us a Savior,
When half-spent was the night. (LSB 359, v2)*

Dearly beloved of Bethlehem,

During Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, our Sunday morning Divine Services have been focusing on the big, bold promises which God makes in our Old Testament readings. Interestingly, almost every scheduled Old Testament reading this season is from the prophet Isaiah. Why Isaiah? Isaiah vividly pictures Jesus' birth, childhood, ministry, suffering and death, resurrection, reign, and second coming.

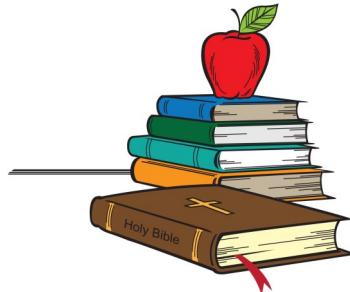
Here's a little recap of what we've covered so far and where we're headed as we listen to God's prophet, Isaiah in worship:

- Nov 30: Isaiah 2:1-5: Isaiah paints a bold picture of peace when God will judge between the nations: the nations shall turn their swords into plowshare.
- Dec 7: Isaiah 11:10: Isaiah pictures God's peace as the wolf and the lamb dwelling together and a child playing over the hole of the cobra like it's no big deal. For no one shall hurt or harm another on God's holy mountain.
- Dec 14: Isaiah 35:1-10: A highway shall appear in the wilderness, leading God's people to Zion with singing. Like water in a parched land, God's people will be strengthened by God's coming salvation.
- Dec 21: Isaiah 7:10-17: God speaks to Ahaz, "I am with you, Emmanuel." And to prove it, the virgin shall conceive a bear a son.
- Dec 28: Isaiah 63:7-14: Isaiah recounts the steadfast love of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted to the house of Isarel. (*Note: I did not focus on this passage on this day, selected the promise from Jeremiah instead, "There is hope for your future, declares the LORD."*)
- Dec 31: New Year's Eve reading is from Isaiah 30:15-17.
- Jan 4: Isaiah 60:1-6: Nations and their wealth shall come to the LORD in praise and worship.
- Jan 11: Isaiah 42:1-9: The LORD will give His servant as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations.
- Jan 18: Isiah 49:1-7: Kings and princes shall see God's people and shall prostrate themselves because of the LORD.

- Jan 25: Isaiah 9:1-4: The people who walked in darkness shall see a great light and shall have their joy increased.
- Feb 8: Isaiah 58:3-9a: God's boldly chosen fast is to loose the bonds of wickedness and let the oppressed go free.

Each of these big, bold promises find their fulfillment in Jesus. Jesus has done all these things and more. He has brought, or will bring, these promises to fulfillment. We have anticipated the coming of Christ. We have celebrated His birth. And this month, God's prophet Isaiah will uncover more about who the Christ is and what He came to do for our salvation.

*Your dear pastor,
Pastor Witte*



I am thankful to be teaching 5th grade again this year. The class is doing so well! What a joy to teach the students about our dear Lord and Savior, Jesus!

The students are working diligently in increasing reading fluency, comprehension, grammar skills and spelling words. Students also rehearsed and presented a reader's theater with two dramas to BLS Kindergarteners all the way through the eighth grade class. They really flourished in the deliveries of these productions!

We are moving accurately and rapidly through multiplying and dividing with decimals! The students are also working on their science fair projects already for this coming February. How exciting the fair will be when all of the projects are done!

The students are thoughtful, respectful and kind to each other and to the other students in our school! What a blessing to be with such a dear class! It is a pleasure to teach for BLS! I am so thankful for this school and all of you!

*Thank you,
Mrs Murphy*



Bethlehem Lutheran School

2025—2026 School Year News

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

Happy New Year to the entire Bethlehem community! We will be resuming school from the Christmas break at the normal time on Monday, January 5th. The beginning of the calendar year is often a time of reflection and renewal. Our students, from the youngest preschoolers to our eighth grade leaders, will return from the Christmas Holiday ready to tackle new challenges.



The end of the second quarter is in early January. This means the year is about halfway over. It seems like a few days ago it was August and we were starting the year. The end of the second quarter gives us an opportunity to celebrate the progress students have made and make plans to continue to achieve as we move toward our academic goals for the year.

Monday, January 19th we will have the day off to commemorate MLK Jr. Day. Presidents of both parties have called on Americans to honor Dr. King's legacy by making it a day of service to the community. I encourage everyone to find some way to make their community brighter during that weekend. Bethlehem students, if you do any community service don't forget to log your hours using the forms hanging on the bulletin board outside the office.



This month, some of our 7th and 8th grade students will be participating in a creative writing competition called *Power of the Pen*. The students are given a prompt and then are given a set amount of time to create a story. Students start at a local competition and their entries are judged. Those students who receive an excellent rating may be chosen to move on to a district or even state level competition.

We observe National Lutheran Schools Week in January. We will be celebrating with 65 other LCMS schools in the Ohio District and almost 200,000 LCMS students worldwide. The week will be full of festivities, starting with our Kindergarten - Third Graders participating in worship at Bethlehem on January 25th. Each day of the week will be anchored by a scripture verse that will inform our theme for the day. We also have fun dress up days and unique activities organized for the week.



Our Christian character word for January is Encouragement. Our verse for the month is Hebrews 10:24, "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." To encourage the students, each month we have our Mustard Seed Award. At the end of the month each teacher chooses a student in their class who best exemplifies the Christian character word and that student receives a certificate after one of our chapel services. It is wonderful to hear classmates cheer for the students who win these awards each month.



We have mentioned the past few months about making a donation to the LSGO to help us support families with tuition assistance. If you did not make a donation prior to the end of the calendar year, fear not! You can still make a donation in January and have it counted toward your 2025 taxes. Please help us reach our goal of raising \$45,000 to be used to help families be able to afford the gift of a Bethlehem education for the 2026-2027 school year.

 I encourage you to join us for one of our chapel services this month. Chapel is usually on Wednesday mornings starting at 8:45am. There is a chapel schedule on the bulletin board just outside the sanctuary doors. If you'd like to join us, just come to the wooden doors under the overhang and someone will be there to greet you. We love it when families and church members worship with us.



We are opening enrollment at Bethlehem for members of the general community starting January 5th. If you are new to Ohio, you need to know about the EdChoice program. This program was created by the state and provides funds to parents in grades K-8 which they

 can use to pay tuition at a private school like Bethlehem. While the scholarship is income based, every Ohio resident is eligible for some kind of assistance. The least amount one can receive annually per student is \$616 and a full EdChoice scholarship is \$6166 per student. While it does not cover the entirety of the tuition at Bethlehem, it certainly makes it more affordable to every family. Plus, we use funds that are donated to the LSGO to make it even more affordable for families. If you, or someone you know, would like more information on the EdChoice program, please contact the office at 937-878-7050 or email us at office@mybethlehemschool.com

Thank you for your continued support and prayers,

Making a Joyful Noise,

Mr. Ferguson

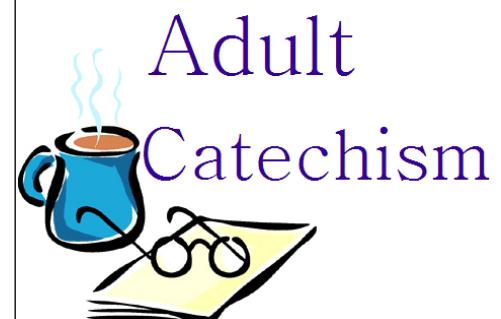
Are you (or someone you know) interested in becoming a member of Bethlehem or exploring what we believe, teach, and confess as Lutherans?

Would you like a refresher on what we believe?

Pastor Witte would like to assemble another Adult Catechism Class starting in January.

Please email pastorwitte1@gmail.com to let him know you're interested and give input on when the class will meet.

Classes typically take 6-8 hours (at least 1 hour per week) and if transportation is an issue, classes can be joined via Zoom.

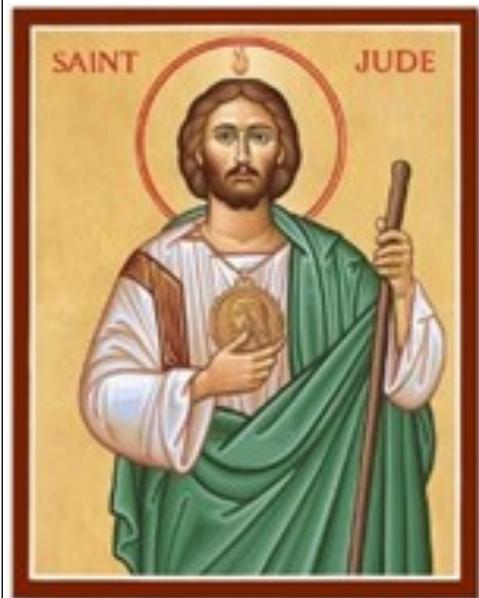


Simple Recipes

Do you have a favorite EASY recipe that you are willing to share with others in our congregation? This year we realized people sometimes find themselves in need of making SIMPLE recipes due to life changes, but they may not have cooked before or cannot expend a lot of energy in meal prep. So we would like to help out by compiling a small Simple Recipes Library they can access for help. Your tried-and-true simple recipes will satisfy this effort. If you have a minimum ingredient/minimal preparation recipe, please email it to Lisa Thibeault at rthibeault@woh.rr.com NLT 31 Jan 26. Please entitle the email "church recipe".

The Winter Quarter Wednesday Morning Bible Class will be studying the Epistle of Jude. He preached the Gospel with great passion, often in the most difficult circumstances. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, he made profound differences in people's lives as he offered them the Word of God. The Gospel tells us that St. Jude was a brother of St. James the Less, also one of the Apostles. Although Jude's letter is only 25 verses, he has much to teach us about the love of God in Christ Jesus. The class will begin on Wednesday, January 14 at 9:30 am in the Church Library. All are welcome, including those who wish to follow the study but can't do so in person. Simply contact Pastor England at (937) 878-3152 or email him at e.l.England@att.net.

*Pastor Edward L. England
Emeritus*





Happy Birthday!

January Birthdays

Bethany Huffman	2
Chris Nelson	3
Jack Humphreys.....	5
Jim Carlson	6
Elizabeth Lindsey	12
Edna England	15
Nehemiah Johnson	
Karl Maron	17
Mariam Drollinger.....	19
Thomas Tressler.....	20
Adaline Engel	
Meagan Zulfer	21
Emma Olcott	26
Jodi Crosby	29
Joyce Whitt	



Nathan Huffman.....	1
Aaron Fry	10
Andrew Fry	
Amanda Humphreys	
Charles Martinek	
Bryan Miessler	
Nehemiah Johnson	30



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

Hopefully you were able to enjoy all the wonderful special music offered to enhance your worship during the Advent and Christmas season! Many thanks to all the individual and groups who employed their God-given gifts to enhance our worship and praise God! Our congregation is truly blessed with deep musical talent. Be sure to thank these talented individuals for the blessing they bestow on us! We look forward to the offering of musical gifts in 2026!

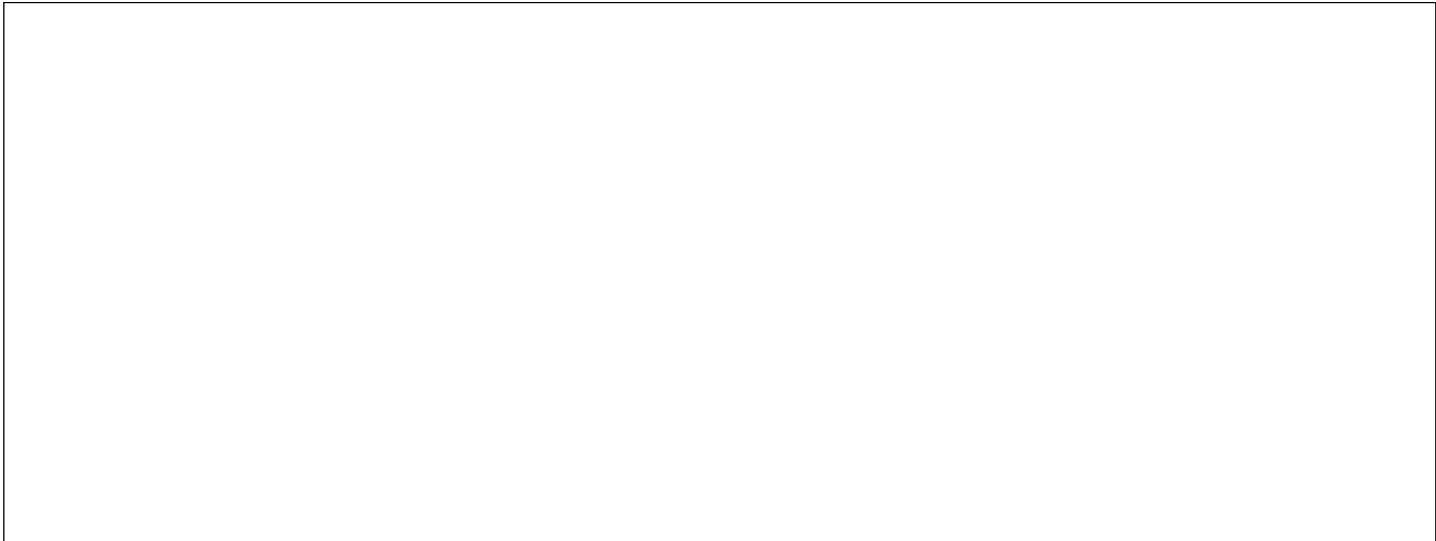


It might be hard to believe but Lent is just around the corner and that means the Easter season won't be far behind! If you have musical talent please be thinking now about when you would be willing to share your God-given talent to enhance our worship! Please see Lisa Thibeault to reserve a spot on the calendar!

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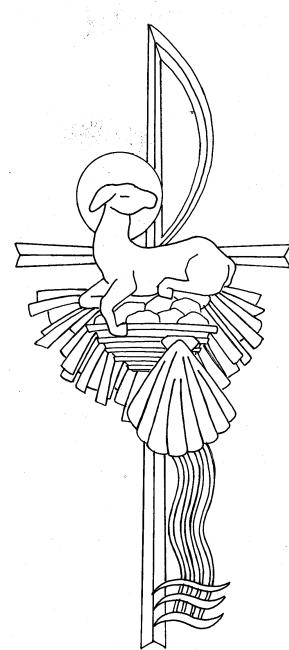
January 2026

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



Church Office

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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

February deadline: Sunday, January 18th.

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