



The Bethlehem STAR

May 2026

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.

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

Dear Bethlehem,

This Bible verse has been the basis for our yearly THEME for School Ministry, “Let’s Make a Joyful Noise.” Incorporating this THEME into our worship services, I have highlighted various Psalms in our Divine Services, especially for holidays and high festivals. This coming Ascension Eve (May 13), Pentecost (May 24), and Holy Trinity Sunday (May 31), we will break forth into joyous song unto the LORD, equipped with the Psalms and hymns.

Make a joyful noise! I told the Middle School students that the school year is almost over—and they rejoiced. It is good to accomplish a full year of education—and celebrate. It is good to accomplish a milestone of education and graduate—and then celebrate. (It is also good to have a break—and make a joyful noise to God.)

On May 3, we’ll make a joyful noise for our youth confirmands, Molly and Mira. We rejoice in their training in Luther’s Small Catechism and their readiness to receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. On May 10, it is good to rejoice in one more year of being and/or having a mother. On May 14, we can hear grades 4-8 of Bethlehem Lutheran School make a joyful noise unto the Lord at their Spring Concert (Location: First Presbyterian Church, Fairborn). On May 17, we can make a joyful noise with our graduating 8th grade class, for the Lutheran education and faith formation that they have received.

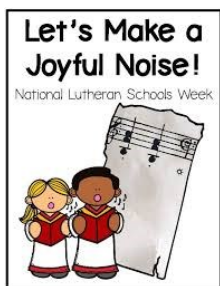
Whether or not it is holiday or special festival, we have a reason to gather and make a joyful noise unto God every Sunday. Christ comes to us in Word and Sacrament on Sunday mornings (8:00am; 10:45am). And we have the opportunity to learn and grow in God’s Word together in Sunday School and Bible Study (9:30am). The Book of Hebrews puts it this way:

(continued on page two)

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

See you Sunday (if not, before) to make a joyful noise unto the LORD,

*Looking to Jesus,
Pastor Chaplain Keith Witte*



Bethlehem Lutheran School 2025 -2026 School Year News

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

As May begins, we come to the conclusion of our school year with hearts full of gratitude and joy. This season is a time to honor God's blessings and reflect on the incredible journey we have shared during the 2025-2026 school year.



At Bethlehem, we know that every interaction matters. This year, from May 4th - 8th, we are celebrating Staff Appreciation Week. We are taking this time to honor all 26 individuals who pour their hearts into our students and families in ways both large and small. Whether in the classroom, the office, or the hallways, these devoted staff members guide our students to grow in grace and knowledge. We thank God for the gift of their diverse talents and dedication!

May 14th | 7:00 p.m. | First Presbyterian Church, Fairborn Under the expert leadership of Dr. Beeker, our Beginning Band (4th grade) and Advanced Band (5th-8th grade) will perform their Spring Concert. This year's performance is particularly special as the entire Bethlehem community joins together to celebrate America's 250th birthday with songs from our country's rich history. Come and rejoice in the beauty of music and the unique talents God has given these young musicians.





May 17th | 3:00 p.m. | Bethlehem Lutheran Church We invite our entire congregation to join us for the annual Baccalaureate service. This is a sacred time to look back at how God has worked in the lives of our 8th-grade students and their families. As they prepare to encounter the joys and challenges of high school, we commend them to God's care, trusting in the promise of Jeremiah 29:11: *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

The Grand Finale: May 22nd

Our final day of the academic year is a whirlwind of milestones and memories:

Kindergarten Graduation: Our youngest learners celebrate their first year of full school days by debuting their own dance moves to the 1980 classic, "Celebrate!"

8th Grade Graduation: We celebrate as our graduates receive their diplomas—some having spent a full decade growing within these walls.

Final Chapel: Before dismissal, we gather as one body to worship our Eternal Lord, who has faithfully brought us through the peaks and valleys of this school year.

As the school year closes, it is inevitable that we will say "See you later" to staff members who have poured their energy into our families. We are deeply grateful for their time as part of our ministry and are excited to see them join other missions doing important work.

We also rest in the confidence that God has already set apart and prepared new individuals to join our ministry. We look forward to how we will all continue to grow together in grace and knowledge.

While the hallways will soon grow quiet, our hope is that the learning never stops. We pray that our students continue to explore God's creation and its people—past and present—throughout the summer months.

As Psalm 111:2 reminds us, *"Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them."*

In His Service,

Mr. Ferguson

News from Fourth Grade



Hello from 4th grade! We have a lot of exciting things going on in our classroom. We just wrapped up our math chapter on operations with fractions. Students aced this test and demonstrated how much they had learned. In social studies, we are currently working on our Goods and Services project. Students select a good or service business that they would like to create. The students then get to make their own business website. They also have to create a budget and determine how much to charge for their item to make a profit. Seeing the students' creativity come to life has been amazing! As we approach the end of the year, we are reviewing and preparing for the state tests. We are excited to finish this year out strong!



Christmas In Action
Building Hope in Your Community



FAIRBORN, OHIO CHAPTER
Building Hope in Our Community

ATTENTION FAIRBORN HOME OWNERS

Now Accepting Applications until July 6, 2026

Applications available at the Fairborn Senior Center

www.christmasinactionfairborn.org

FREE

Home Repairs!

Interior & Exterior Painting

Roof Repair

Deck Repair

Light Plumbing

Handicap Ramp Repair and
Installation

Landscaping

Screen doors and windows

Who Is Eligible?

Owner of a single family home

Low Income Fairborn Residents

Low Income Fairborn Homeowners

House is insured

Taxes are current

Income: Less than \$39,900 Single

Income: Less than \$54,100 Couple

The 2026 Christmas in Action of Fairborn, OH, Inc. work day is scheduled for August 1, 2026

Rain Date August 8, 2026

Christmas in Action of Fairborn is a volunteer organization of Fairborn Citizens dedicated to improving the City and Neighborhoods of Fairborn.

Christmas in Action of Fairborn is a 501c3 organization

If interested in volunteering or donating, stop by the Fairborn Senior Center

Or call 937-878-4141



Christmas In Action
Building Hope in Your Community



FAIRBORN, OHIO CHAPTER
Building Hope in Our Community

2026 HOMEOWNER REQUEST FORM FOR FREE HOME REPAIRS

This program is for low-income City of Fairborn Residents living in a single family, owner occupied residence. No rental homes can qualify for this program. House is insured and taxes current. Single resident income less than \$39,900 and for two resident's income less than \$54,100. If you need assistance filling out this form go to the Fairborn Senior Center 937-878-4141. Web site www.christmasinactionfairborn.org

Applicant Information:

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Marital Status: _____

Names and ages of individuals living in the house with the applicant:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Age: _____

Applicant's Income per month:	\$ _____
Co-Applicant's Income per month:	\$ _____
Other individual's contributions to Household income:	\$ _____
Pensions, Annuities, Social Security, A.D.C., Public Assistance, Food Stamps:	\$ _____
Earnings from savings, interest, rent:	\$ _____

Monthly House Payment:	\$ _____
Are property Taxes and Homeowners Insurance included in the house payment? YES ___ NO ___	
If not included, what are annual Property Taxes?	\$ _____
If not included, what is the annual Homeowners Insurance premium?	\$ _____

List all Assets: Bank Accts, Savings Bonds, Securities, Real Estate, Etc:

List all Liabilities: Car Loans, Charge Cards, Personal Loans, etc:

Length of time in current home (years): _____	Name & address of Mortgage Co./Land Contract Holder:
Age of present home: _____	Name: _____
Are your property taxes current? (circle) Yes No	Address: _____
Description of home (circle):Ranch/2-story/3-story	Phone Number _____
Number of bedrooms (circle): 1 2 3 4 5	Contact person: _____
Number of bathrooms (circle): 1 2 3 4	
Basement (circle) Yes No Garage (circle) Yes No	

List any physical disabilities we should be aware of while we are working on your house: _____

What home repairs would you like made to your home (be specific)? _____

Will any of your family members be present to assist with your home repairs? _____

Emergency contact information:

Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Phone #: _____

Supplemental Documentation you may be asked to supply if you house is selected for repairs:

- Copy of recorded deed or land contract
- Copy of a Social Security Check or Award Letters
- Copy of a Pension Check
- Copy of Welfare Assistance (Food Stamps, ADC, etc.)
- Most recent Mortgage Statement
- Employment verification
- Homeowners Insurance Policy

Act of Worship, Financial Transaction, or Both?

“On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper.” (1 Cor 16:2)

When the COVID disruption forced us to limit physical contact, Bethlehem began offering online giving as a safe and practical way to continue supporting the church. It was easy and convenient, and it ensured that the church would continue to be funded through that challenging time. It remains convenient and popular today, with a little over half of our members—including myself—using this option instead of placing an offering in the plate on Sunday.

The convenience for me is undeniable. I rarely write checks anymore. Most of our expenses are scheduled in advance and paid automatically. All I have to do is ensure there are sufficient funds available to cover them. Online giving also makes it simple for us to give consistently, whether we are in town or not—and these days it seems we are not in town a lot.

And yet... I still feel a tension. While I know there is nothing *wrong* with online giving and I fully intend to keep using it, giving an offering the same way that I pay my water bill often feels more like a simple financial transaction than a genuine act of worship. Something important seems missing when my giving is a “one and done” decision scheduled for the year ahead rather than offered weekly as part of our gathered worship.

For me, the collection of the offering during the service has always been a liturgical response to all that has gone before it. After confessing our sins and receiving God’s gracious absolution, after hearing the Service of the Word and being nourished by the proclamation of the Gospel, gratitude is a natural response. The offering then becomes a tangible, embodied expression of that thankfulness—returning a portion of what God has first given us in Christ. Placing the offering in the plate feels like full participation in a sacred rhythm.

I haven’t fully resolved this tension for myself. The practical benefits of online giving are clear and helpful. At the same time, I miss the deeper sense of participation that the traditional offering provides. I believe both can be faithful, yet they seem to belong to separate realms. I’ve got to think about this a little more. Maybe do both?

However we contribute, may our giving—whether by plate or online—ultimately flow from hearts that are truly grateful for God’s abundant grace in Christ Jesus.

Steve Fugate

Elder

FYI: For those who may be interested but unfamiliar with giving your offerings online, as I said above, it’s easy. Just go to the Bethlehem7.org website, click the “Joyful Giving” link, and it will walk you through the whole process. S.F.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

May Birthdays

Sue Wolaver.....	1
Logan Green	2
Rick Thompson	5
Clayton Vail	
Mira Sadowski	8
Keri Johnson	9
Elaine Schultz	
Macia Vail	10
Gladys Zink.....	14
Annika Nelson	15
Chris Heed	20
Stella Holcombe	
Mary Smith	
Sam Walters	
Steve Fugate.....	24
Nathaniel Witte.....	29
Daniel Ausserer	30

May Anniversaries

Dave & Veronica Smith.....	9
Jack & Doris Humphreys	19
Chris & Maggie Nelson	22
Bill & Marilyn Scheu	
Todd & Carla Anderson	23
Jim & Charleen Carlson.....	25



Linda Hall.....	6
Erik Denlinger.....	10
Keri Johnson	
Paul Thibeault	
Christian Huffman	12
Maggie Nelson	
Charleen Carlson	14
Chris Humphreys	
Benjamin Ausserer.....	16
Tom Hitzeman	17
Jane Jones	18
Riley Zulfer	25

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

Alison Witte

Gladys Zink

Join us as we celebrate three youth confirming the baptismal vows made on their behalf when they were infants. The Rite of Confirmation will take place on Sunday, May 3, 2026.

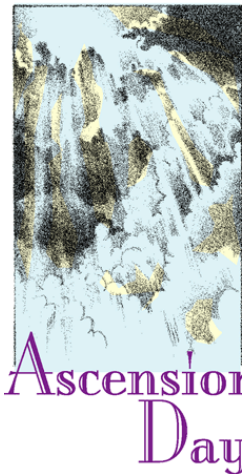


The confirmands are:

Mira Sadowski
Bible Verse

Molly Whitt
Bible Verse

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.
(Luke 24:50-53)



Please join us as we celebrate the Ascension of Our Lord on Wednesday, May 13th at 7 pm.

The Bethlehem STAR

May 2026

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



Celebration of the Ascension of Jesus to Heaven

Wednesday
May 13, 2026 at 7 pm

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

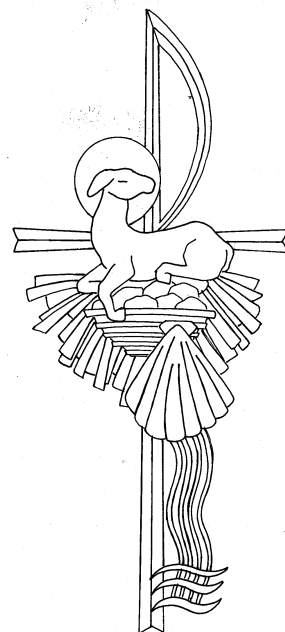
Sunday

Worship Services at 8:00 & 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

June/July deadline: Sunday, May 17th.



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