



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 2026

*Lord, help us ever to retain The Catechism's doctrine plain
As Luther taught the Word of truth In simple style to tender youth.
Help us Your holy Law to learn, To mourn our sin and from it turn
In faith to You and to Your Son And Holy Spirit, Three in One. (LSB 865; v1-2)*

Back to School! Back to Catechism! Bethlehem will be restarting our formal, intentional catechism instruction shortly, for youth and for adults.

It's time to start planning for youth catechism instruction. At Bethlehem, we teach Luther's Small Catechism over a two-year cycle. We recommend that instruction begins around 6th or 7th grade. However, if parents feel that their child is ready to receive catechism instruction at an earlier age, please inquire with Pastor Witte.

Students enrolled at Bethlehem Lutheran School (BLS) receive catechism instruction beginning at 6th grade as part of the regular curriculum. Church members and visitors who homeschool their children may request that their children join the BLS catechism classes on Monday and Wednesday afternoons (12:30-1:15pm OR 1:20-2:05pm). BLS catechism classes will begin 31 Aug 2026 and finish 19 May 2027.

For youth who cannot participate in the BLS catechism instruction, Pastor Witte will offer a congregational youth catechism class, usually meets on Sundays after the 10:45 service. This year, we will start on 12 Sep 2026 and finish 30 Apr 2027.

Some families intentionally and systematically teach Luther's Small Catechism in their own households. If a child or teenager has a solid working knowledge of the catechism, an examination can be given to check their progress and/or readiness for receiving the Lord's Supper. The examination is a 20-minute conversation with Pastor.

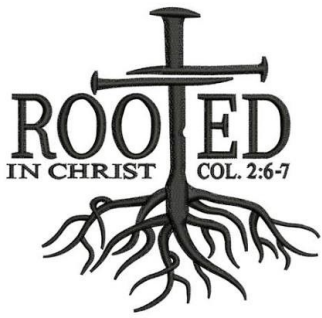
For high school age and older, Pastor offers adult catechism instruction that usually meets 1 session per week, 60-75 minutes per session, for 7-8 sessions. Are you or someone you know might be interested in becoming a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod? Was the last time you took a catechism class more than 25 years ago? Has your life or the world changed dramatically since the last time you studied the Small Catechism? If so, contact Pastor Witte to inquire. Those who sign up first give input on when and where the class meets.

If you have any questions or would like to enroll in a catechism class, please contact Pastor Witte by Sunday, August 16. Email: pastorwittel@gmail.com OR call the church office: (937) 878-0651.

Your dear pastor,

Pastor Witte





Bethlehem Lutheran School 2026 –2027 School Year News

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

As we anticipate a new school year, there is a wonderful excitement building on our campus. While the summer months offer a blessed time for our staff, students, and families to rest, rejuvenate, and find refreshment, there is an undeniable joy that comes with returning to the meaningful work of helping young people grow in grace and knowledge.

This year Bethlehem Lutheran School will be celebrating its 27th academic year of providing Christ-centered education to Fairborn and the surrounding communities. For nearly three decades, this school has been a beacon of faith and learning, and we are grateful for the prayers and support that has made it possible.

Each year, we anchor our school community in a central theme. For the 2026–2027 school year, our theme is "**Rooted in Christ**," which comes from Colossians 2:6-7:

"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

Our focus for the entire year will be discovering how we can remain grounded in Jesus Christ, grow in faith, and abound in gratitude. (I spent some time trying to find a third "G" word to complete the tagline, but "abounding in gratitude" captures the sentiment we want to cultivate in our students!) In a changing world, we want our students to know that they have a firm, unshakable foundation in the love of Jesus.

We hit the ground running in August with several opportunities to prepare for the year and welcome our families back:

August 9: Back to School Bash (at Community Park): We kick off the year with this fun event for our entire preschool through 8th-grade community. It is a fantastic time for kids to play, and for adults to chat, reconnect after the summer, and get to know other parents and staff.

August 10: Teachers Return: Our dedicated educators officially kick off their year on this day, stepping back into the building for professional learning, collaborative planning, and the meaningful work of preparing their classrooms to welcome their new students.

August 16: Teacher Instillation: Our teachers will be at both the 8:00am and 10:45am services. Join us for a short presentation and a time for conversation during the normal Bible study time at 9:30am

August 17: Meet the Teacher: An exciting day of anticipation! Our preschool families will visit in the morning, followed by our K-8 families in the afternoon and evening to see their classrooms, and say hello to their teachers.

August 19: The First Day of School: We officially open our doors for the first day of the 2026–2027 school year. We eagerly await the hallways being filled with the sounds of learning again.

It is a major goal of ours this year to increase the opportunities for members of the congregation to interact with our students. We want to build stronger bridges between the Sunday morning pews and the weekday classrooms. Please keep an eye on the weekly bulletin and future Bethlehem Star articles over the next few months for specific ways you can get involved, share your wisdom, or simply share a smile with our students.

One of the most powerful gifts you can give us is your prayers. We humbly ask that you join us in praying for our staff, our parents, and our students as we all prepare for the triumphs and challenges of the upcoming school year. While we may not know exactly what will happen this school year, we know that if we remain “Rooted in Christ” we will be able to overcome any obstacle.

Thank you for being the soil in which Bethlehem Lutheran School is rooted,

Rooted In Christ,

Mr. Ferguson

Call for Youth Catechism Instruction (up to 8th grade)

It's time to start planning for youth Catechism instruction. At Bethlehem, we teach Luther's Small Catechism over a two-year cycle. We recommend that instruction begins around 6th or 7th grade. However, if parents feel that their child is ready to receive catechism instruction at an earlier age, please inquire with Pastor Witte.

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For youth who cannot participate in the BLS catechism instruction, Pastor Witte will offer a congregational youth catechism class, which usually meets on Sundays after the 10:45 service from September through April.

If you have any questions or would like to enroll in the BLS or the congregational youth catechism class, please contact Pastor Witte by Sunday, August 16. Email: pastorwitte1@gmail.com OR call the church office: (937) 878-0651.

2026-2027 Dates:

**BLS Catechism instruction: Aug 31, 2026
through May 19, 2027**

**Congregational youth instruction: Sept 12,
2026 through Apr 30, 2027**

Youth Confirmation: Sunday, May 7, 2027



Call for Adult Catechism Class (High School age and older)

Are you or someone you know might be interested in becoming a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod? Was the last time you took a catechism class more than 25 years ago? Has your life or the world changed dramatically since the last time you studied the Small Catechism? If so, contact Pastor Witte by Sunday, August 16.

Email: Pastorwitte1@gmail.com OR call the church office: (937) 878-0651 to inquire.



**BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN
SCHOOL**

Bethlehem Staff for 2026-2027

Please pray for these people as they have prepared to be the hands, feet and voice of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School to the children whom God has sent to our school for this new school year.

Scott Ferguson	Principal
Michelle Zulfer	Vice Principal for Admin and Human Resources
Amy Mattern	Preschool 3 & 4
Melissa Florea	KinderReady
Amy McCormack	Kindergarten
Kassie Puterbaugh	Elementary Aide
Cheyenne Hanvey	1st Grade
Riley Zulfer	2nd Grade
Serena Ford	3rd Grade
Gabby Brock	4th Grade
Lisa Murphy	5th Grade
Rebecca Strong	6th Grade
Scott Zaage	Grades 7-8 (Math, Science & K-8 PE)
Jessica Ellington	Grades 7-8 (ELA, Social Studies & 1-8 Spanish)
Keith Witte	Catechism, grades 6-8
Kelly Snyder	Art, grades K-8
Tommy Beeker	Band, grades 4-8
Alex Fry	Music, grades K-3
Tiffany Knapp	Librarian
Kara Crawford	Reading Tutor
Donna Oda	Extended Care (AM & PM)
Barbara Skean	Extended Care (PM)
Jeremy Adams	Custodian
Aaron Phillips	Maintenance

Upcoming Fellowship Events:



Bible Study Luncheon – Sunday, September 6 | 12:30–2:00 p.m.

Join us for an afternoon of fellowship as we talk about what it takes to start or become part of a Bible study group at Bethlehem. Whether you're interested in leading, hosting, or simply joining a group, we'd love to have you there! Sandwiches, chips, drinks, and more will be provided.

Church & School Picnic – Sunday, September 13

Join us after the late service at Fairborn Community Park for our annual Church & School Picnic! Bring your family, invite your friends, and enjoy an afternoon of food, games, and fellowship. Food and games will be provided, but you're also welcome to bring a favorite dish to share or a lawn game for everyone to enjoy.

Service Fair – Sunday, September 20

Join us during the Bible study hour to discover the many ways you can serve and become more involved at Bethlehem. Whether you're interested in hospitality, music, education, outreach, mission work, or behind-the-scenes support, this is a great opportunity to find where your gifts can make a difference.

Blessings,

Alex Fry, Parish Assistant



September Dates to Remember



Parables are stories and illustrations drawn from real-life experiences that teach a truth or illustrate a principle. Undoubtedly, most people are familiar with the subject of Parables in the New Testament. But did you know that there are numerous parables in the Old Testament?

In Scripture, parables are particularly characteristic of Jesus' instruction, but He is not the only figure in the Bible who used parables.

Pastor England will once again be teaching the Wednesday Morning Bible Class this coming school year. He has chosen the subject of the Parables in Scripture for this year's study. Beginning on September 9th, he will be teaching Parables from the Old Testament for 15 weeks.

Then beginning on January 6th, he will shift focus to Parables of the New Testament for another 15 weeks. The class will meet each Wednesday morning from 9:30 to 10:30 in the Church Library adjacent to the Fireside Room. Please contact Pastor England if you have any questions. He can be reached at e.l.England@att.net or by calling (937) 878-3152.



CHRISTMAS in Action

Saturday, August 1st, 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,

Over the last few monthly meetings, the elders have been reviewing the quarterly Matins and short communion services. There have been some concerns and practical issues with the short communion service. In their January meeting, Pastor Witte and the Elders unanimously agreed to make a slight change. In keeping with the recommendation of our Strategic Ministry Plan, we will still offer a quarterly Matins service at 10:45. On that same Sunday, the 8:00am service will be a full Divine Service.



We will celebrate Matins at 10:45 am on Sunday, August 30, 2026.

School Recycle News

Scrappers—We have a metal recycle program where the proceeds go to the school. Last year, we collected close to \$1,500 from aluminum cans, copper and brass.



Please bring any donations in bags to the bins at the back of the church (just off the Fellowship Hall). For larger donations, please see Paula Fiepke. We go every month or so.

If you can separate the pull tabs from the cans before you recycle them, we can donate them to the Ronald McDonald House of Dayton. Last year, we raised \$36 for them.



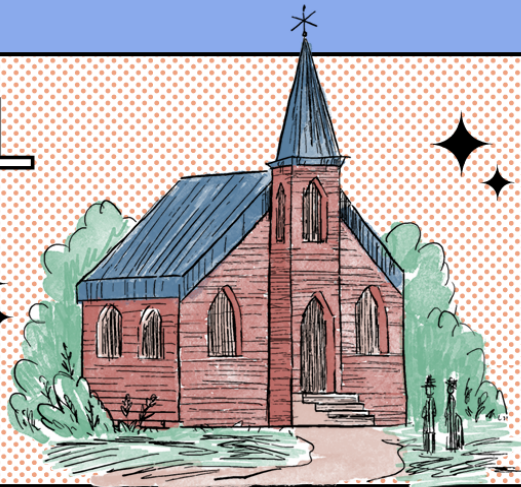
Ms. Taylor Kelley

and

Mr. Magnus Hayes

request the honor of your presence at their wedding ceremony on Saturday, August 22, 2026 in the sanctuary of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

OHIO WINKEL FOR LAITY AUG 8, 2026



Hear Great Speakers

Rev. Jacob Deal
St. Timothy, Huber Heights, OH

Rev. Noah Dunsmore
Zion, Mount Pleasant, MI

Rev. Dan Golden
St. Paul's, Parkersburg WV

Rev. Ross Gottschalk
St. Paul's, Columbus, OH (WELS)

Rev. Wes Hromowyk
Zion, Columbus, OH

Rev. Christopher McCarthy
St. Paul's, Ashland, KY

Rev. Cody Schrepferman
Gethsemane, Marion, OH

Rev. Eli Shaw
Bethany, Columbus, OH

Rev. Adam Steinbrenner
St. John's, Dublin, OH

Rev. Andrew Twietmeyer
St. Paul's, Hillsdale MI

Rev. Keith Witte
Bethlehem, Fairborn, OH

Rev Terry Worst
New Hope, Grandville and Newark,
OH

**Info on presentations as
available at ZionLCMS.org**

Enjoy Fellowship

With plenty of time to
socialize with other
Lutherans, OWL offers a
great opportunity to
refresh yourself from the
cares of the world through
fellowship with like-minded
Christians.

Registration: 8:00
Speakers start: 9:00
Closing Service: 2:30
Young Adult Event: 3:00

Registration

Register by emailing the
name and home church of
any attendees to

**RegisterforOWL
@gmail.com**

Register by 8/1 to be
counted for food.
Registrants after 8/1
not guaranteed lunch.

Details

Location: Zion
Evangelical Lutheran
Church
766 S. High St. Columbus,
OH, 43206

Parking: See map
[https://
www.zionlcms.org/
conc8/about/contact](https://www.zionlcms.org/conc8/about/contact)

Cost: Free Will donation

Light Breakfast and
filling lunch provided

Unstaffed nursery and
outdoor play space
available. Children
welcome!



Questions? Email RegisterforOWL@gmail.com
This email address is run by volunteer labor, please be
patient :)



August Birthdays

Veronica Smith	1
Ethan Smith	3
Elayna Humphreys	4
Sandy Hensley	7
Sherry Matsel	10
Helga Clark	13
Susan Werner	
David Benoy	14
Henry Olcott	
Emilie Humphreys	20
Rebekah Hitzeman	21
Leslie Lindsey	
Joe Clark	23
Otha Lowe	24
Sarah Tangeman	
Todd Anderson	25
Erika Ewing	
Louise Durrenberg	31

August Anniversaries

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



Terri Thompson	1
John Nowicki	4
Zoe Witte	5
Roman Ewing	11
Mike Shipman	12
Susan Werner	13
Nancy Beaty	15
Teddy Green	20
Rachel White	21
Pat Green	25
David Hemphill	
Jamie Hensley	27
Leslie Lindsey	31

Larry Barnhard

Nancy Beaty

Norma Dupre

Jonathan Fiene

Erma Haggerty

Nesta Harris

Louise Hellickson

Helga Hemphill

Eileen Hitzeman



Doris Humphreys

Jean Robinson

Marilyn Scheu

Elaine Schultz

Robyn Shipman

Pastor & Lynda Viken

Sue Williamson

Alison Witte

Gladys Zink



The Men's Bible Study will meet on Saturday, August 22nd at 9 am in the Fellowship Hall. They are working on a series on evangelism. All men are welcome to attend. Feel free to bring breakfast/snacks. Please see Dalton Miller with questions or comments.



Pastor Witte will be at Warner Robbins AFB, Georgia from August 23-28, 2026. Please contact Kevin Green (937-581-5160) or call the church office (937-878-0651) for your pastoral needs.

The Bethlehem STAR

August 2026

Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School

1240 S. Maple Avenue, Fairborn, OH 45324

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Rev. Keith F. Witte, Pastor



Back to
School

Back to School Bash: August 9

Teachers return: August 10

School Begins: August 19

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

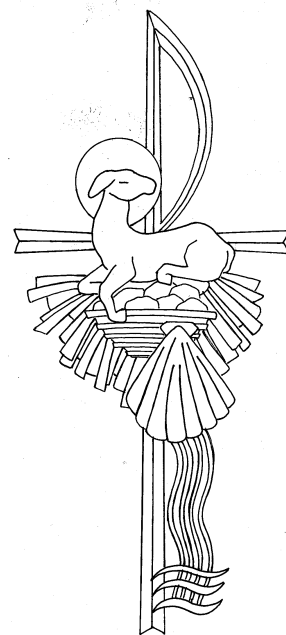
Mrs. Michelle Zulfer, Vice Principal

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 Star deadline: Sunday, August 16th.

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