



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

September 2026

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But you do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:13-15)

Who is Jesus? Simon Peter confessed the truth, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Flesh and blood (our mere reason and senses, popular opinion and man-made computer algorithms) do not reveal this truth. God reveals this truth. Like Peter, we get to hear and see Jesus, as we hear the Scriptures, especially the Gospels. Towards the end of the Gospel, John summarizes the purpose of the book, *"These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name"* (20:31).

As I've been teaching in Adult Bible Class, the Gospel according to Matthew really focuses on the question, "Who is Jesus?" I think there are 3 ways we can answer this question. The first, and favorite of Lutherans, is to focus on what Jesus has done. And for good reason! Ultimately, our salvation is established, and our faith is founded, upon what Jesus has done for us, not upon what we have done.

Jesus' identity can also be explored in 2 more ways. Next, we can focus on literally, who He is, the person of Jesus. There's a reason that the Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds spend the most material on God the Son. Over the first few centuries (and continuing today) there has been much confusion and false teachings on who Jesus is. Answering this question can either validate the effectiveness of what Jesus has done for our salvation or the answer can undermine what Jesus has done. In the words of Peter, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Our catechism explains, "Jesus Christ, true God begotten of the Father from all eternity and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord."

(over)

And finally, the least popular way to explore Jesus' identity is to focus on His character. As Lutherans, the first two ways are most important for our salvation. However, we often neglect this third way, which can help with our sanctification, or holy living. We follow Jesus. But what does this mean? What does this look like? How does Jesus inspire us and guide us? How does Jesus provide a model for us to imitate? Jesus is true man, perfectly holy, perfectly obedient to His Father. Why not learn from the best?

As your dear pastor, I will not neglect preaching and teaching on what Jesus has done and who Jesus is as true God and true man. Otherwise, I'm going to have to forfeit my "Lutheran Card" and my "Orthodox Christian Card." However, for the rest of the Church Year, in my Sunday preaching, I also intend to showcase Jesus' character as it is revealed to us in the Gospel readings.

*Your dear pastor,
Pastor Keith Witte*



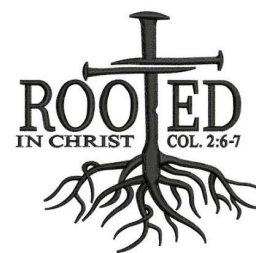
The seventh grade class is excited to be back at school and ready for another year of learning, growing and building friendships. As students settle into their new routines, they are looking forward to discovering new ideas, taking on challenges and making lasting memories together. We are grateful for the support of our school and church community and look forward to a wonderful year filled with leaning, encouragement and opportunities for our students to grow both academically and spiritually.

*Thank you,
Mr. Zaage*

Bethlehem Lutheran School

2026 –2027 School Year News

Greetings in the name of our Risen Savior Jesus Christ!



The school year is off to a wonderful start here at Bethlehem Lutheran! After a quiet summer, our hallways are once again full of activity and energy. It has been a joy to watch our students from preschool through eighth grade settle into their routines, reconnect with friends, and begin growing in grace and knowledge.

Our Christian character focus for the month of September is being “Respectful”, grounded in Romans 13:7: *"Pay to all what is owed to them...respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed."* Throughout the month, we will be discussing with our students what it means to show genuine respect to our Lord, our parents, our teachers, and one another in our daily lives.



As we take time off for Labor Day, we pause to commemorate the work that God has given us to do and celebrate all the ways He provides for His people through our daily callings. We thank God for the work He performs through each of you to benefit His world and His kingdom, and we pray that this holiday weekend brings restful refreshment to all.

Toward the end of September, we look forward to our Parent-Teacher Conferences. A core part of our mission statement at Bethlehem is partnering with parents, and these conferences are a vital part of fulfilling that promise. They offer a dedicated opportunity for us to formally sit down in person, celebrate successes, address concerns, and work hand-in-hand to support every one of our learners.



Finally, I ask that you continue to lift up our school community in your daily prayers. If you are looking for a specific way to pray, I encourage you to pick a particular grade level to adopt in your personal prayer time. Join us in praying that our teachers are granted wisdom and discernment as they shepherd the hearts and minds of the students in their care each day.

Thank you for your support and prayers for the students, families, and staff at our school,

Rooted In Christ, Mr. Ferguson

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.

Get ready for a sweet and delicious fall treat! At the **Ultimate Apple Bar**, participants will create their own custom caramel apples using a variety of fresh apple choices, rich caramel, and an assortment of fun toppings. From colorful sprinkles and crunchy candies to chocolate drizzles and other tasty additions, the possibilities are endless! Whether you prefer classic flavors or want to build a one-of-a-kind masterpiece, this hands-on program is the perfect way to celebrate the season. All supplies are provided, and each participant must be registered.

Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 5:30 pm

Cost to attend is \$10 for Fairborn residents, \$12 all others. Register at Fairborn Parks and Recreation.



Our seminarian, Jacob Whitt, will be starting at the Fort Wayne Seminary soon (September 8th). The LWML has decided to sponsor him directly, rather than going through the “Adopt-a-Seminarian” program.



We thought a Back to School card shower would be a good place to start. Jacob plans to commute back here on weekends, so he would really appreciate gas cards (Kroger, Marathon, BP, Speedway are all close to campus). He can also use VISA, department store (Meijer, Target, Walmart) or restaurant cards. Please put them in his mailbox by the glass door or put them in the offering plate and we will see that he gets them.

This will be an ongoing need for Jacob throughout the academic year.

Annual Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School Picnic

***Sunday, September 13th starting at 1 pm
At Fairborn Community Park 691 E Dayton Yellow Springs Rd.***

Come and join for an afternoon of fellowship, food and fun. The church will provide hamburgers and hot dogs. Individuals and families are invited to bring a side dish or dessert to share. Please remember to include a serving spoon with your dish.

We look forward to spending a wonderful day together as a church and school community.



Bethlehem Widows' Support Group

Ladies, mark your calendars for the quarterly meeting of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Widows' Support Group on Thursday, September 17th from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Please bring your own lunch and beverage.



We will meet at Louise Durrenberg's home (213 Woodlawn Drive, Fairborn). Any lady who attends Bethlehem and has lost their husband is invited to attend for grief support and fellowship. Pastor Witte will speak on the interesting and informative topic, “Seeing our Loved Ones in Heaven.”

Please call Sherry Matsel if you have any questions or just need to talk. Spread the word of our meeting to other widows in the congregation.



September Birthdays

Holly Olcott	4
Steve Wolaver	
Maggie Geilenfeldt.....	7
Marilyn Scheu	13
John Zulfer	
Karen Denlinger	14
Ruth Saunders.....	16
Edison Tangeman	
Lucie Witte	
Robyn Shipman.....	17
Nancy Beaty	18
Larry Barnhard	20
Pat Nowicki	
Amanda Humphreys	21
Isaac White	
Erik Nelson	24
Lisa Thibeault	26
Jordan Spitler	27
Alex Fry	28
Hans Marlette	29



September Anniversaries

Paul & Zora Griffith.....	1
Joseph & Anne Ausserer.....	5
Brett & Dianah Williamson.....	7
Charley & Bobbe Houck.....	9
Jim & Sandy Hensley	14
Larry & Pauline Barnhard	20
Dave & Yuki Lauderbach	24
Dale & Nancy Meech.....	25

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, September 26th 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.

The Miami Valley Zone LWML executive board will meet Tuesday, September 22nd at 3:30 in the Fireside Room. We will be discussing upcoming zone events in the zone.



Erika Ewing	1
Sarah Tangeman.....	2
Rebekah Hitzeman	5
Karen Denlinger	11
Robyn Shipman	17
Sue Saunders	22

The Bethlehem STAR

September 2026

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



Church and School Picnic

Sunday, September 13 at ~ 1:00 pm

Fairborn Community Park
691 E. Dayton Yellow Springs Road

Church Office

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Web Page—www.Bethlehem7.org

School Office

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Email: bethlehemschool@aol.com
Web Page—www.mybethlehemschool.com
Mr. Scott Ferguson, Principal
Mrs. Michelle Zulfer, Vice Principal

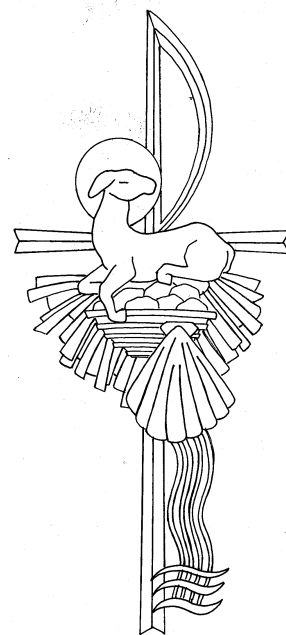
Sunday

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

October Star deadline: Sunday, September 20th.



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