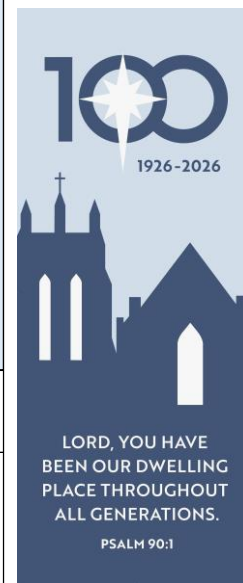


Address: 3705 S. Anthony Blvd. Fort Wayne, IN 46806

Phone: 260-744-3228 Fax: 260-744-3229

Email: [bethfw@yahoo.com](mailto:bethfw@yahoo.com) Web: [www.bethlehmlcms.org](http://www.bethlehmlcms.org)



## From the Pastor's Desk

Living in the Present Tense of God's Faithfulness

*Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.*

*Psalm 90:1*

Anniversaries have a way of turning us around. As we celebrate Bethlehem's 100th year, it's natural—good, even—to look backward. To remember saints who built, served, prayed, taught, and gave. To tell the stories again. To feel gratitude, maybe even a bit of longing. Nostalgia can be a gift. It reminds us that God really has been our dwelling place throughout all generations. And as Christians, we are also a people who look forward. We live with our eyes fixed on Christ's return. We pray, Come, Lord Jesus. We ache for the day when sin is finally undone, when death is swallowed up, when all that is broken is made whole. Hope pulls us forward.

But sometimes our looking backward or forward isn't just hopeful—it's protective. The present can feel overwhelming. Grief lingers. Confusion weighs on us. The world feels unstable. Even our own lives can feel uncertain or fragile. When the "now" feels heavy, it makes sense that we would escape to memories of what once was, or to dreams of what one day will be. Those directions can feel safer than sitting in a moment that hurts. And yet Scripture meets us right there.

Psalm 90, where our anniversary theme comes from, does not deny the weight of the present. It is a prayer spoken by people who knew wandering, loss, and uncertainty. And still it dares to confess: "Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations." Not because life was easy—but because God remained faithful in the midst of every circumstance. That confession anchors us in the truth that God is not absent from this moment. He is not waiting for things to improve before He draws near. He is our dwelling place now—in grief, in confusion, in weariness, in days when hope feels thin. This is the tension Christians always live in—the "now and not yet" of God's kingdom. Christ has come. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Which means even now—especially now—He is present with His people.

God's work today often doesn't look impressive. It looks like endurance. Like faith that holds on when it doesn't understand. Like tears shed in prayer. Like a community that keeps showing up for one another. Like Word and Sacrament quietly delivering Christ's promises to people who desperately need them. That is not wasted time. That is holy ground.

This month, I want to invite you not to minimize the weight of the present—but to notice where God is meeting you in it. Where He is sustaining you. Where His mercy is enough for today, even if tomorrow still feels uncertain. Living in the present doesn't mean pretending things are fine. It means trusting that the same God who carried His people in the past, and who promises a glorious future, is also carrying us now.

The saints before us lived in this same tension. They did not see the whole story. They simply trusted that God was their dwelling place in their days. We are invited to do the same. So as we move through this anniversary year, may we be a people who remember with gratitude, hope with confidence, and live with honesty and trust. Because God's faithfulness is not only something behind us or ahead of us. It is something that holds us—even here. We are in this all together, with Christ at the helm. May that bring us peace in the midst of our storms—not because the past no longer matters or the future no longer calls to us, but because Christ is here, standing boldly with us right now.

In Christ,

Pastor Ben

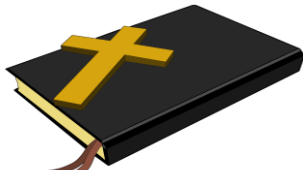
# BETHLEHEM FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commands that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)*

## EDUCATION HOUR

\*\*\*\*\*

10:30am-11:30am



## ADULT BIBLE STUDY

During the Gentle and Lowly series, Pastor Ben will be doing a study on the Characteristics of Jesus during the Education Hour in the cafeteria.

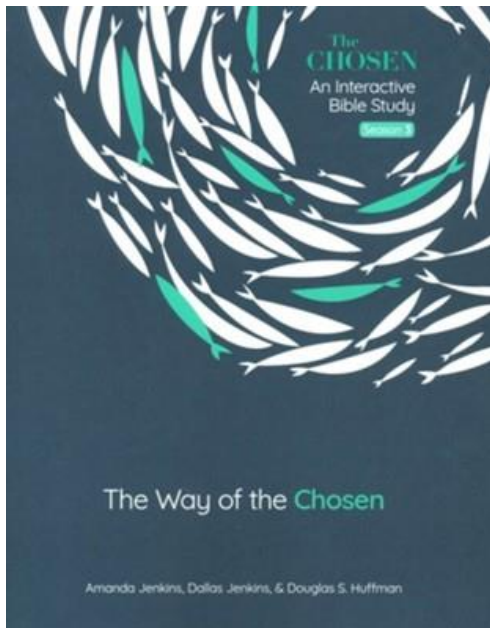
## IN CHRIST ALONE

*Sonshine Club 2025 - 2026*

Children ages 3 yrs - 5<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to join us in the Sonshine Club room during the Education Hour after Sunday worship. Our theme this year will focus on stories of Jesus and how we can live in Him. Parents are always invited to join us and even children under 3 are welcome to participate with a parent present.

## Women's Saturday Morning Bible Study

Season 3 of The Chosen meets in Room 1 at 9:30am every other Saturday on February 14 & 28, March 14 & 28, and April 11.



## MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST FEBRUARY 28

As we continue in this centennial year of our congregation under the Men's Prayer Breakfast theme of "100 Years of Life Together at Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church," on Saturday, February 28, we will look at the book *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer to consider ". . . that Christian brotherhood is not an ideal, but a divine reality." Please join us in the cafeteria starting at 8:30am that day as we have breakfast together followed by a devotion, prayer time, and our study of God's Word. All Bethlehem members, friends, visitors, and neighbors are welcome. *"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of our partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. . . ."* Philippians 1:3-4 NIV.



**Ways to watch WORSHIP ANEW:**

**Online - <https://worshipanew.org/>**

**Watch Worship Anew locally on**

**WPTA 21.2 (NBC) at 7:00 AM Sundays**

**WPTA 21.3 (MyNet) at 8:00 AM Sundays**

**February 1, 2026 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany**  
**The Power of God - 1 Corinthians 1:18-31**  
**Rev. Paul Shoemaker**

In the early church, Christians were being challenged by people who said the Christian faith was foolish. Today, the faith of Christians is still challenged as foolish. We know the “word of the cross ... is the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:18 ESV

*Featured Choir: LWML Indiana District Choir*  
*Featured Art and Architecture: Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Arcadia, Ind.*

**February 8, 2026 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany**  
**Salty Christians - Matthew 5:13-20**  
**Rev. William Mueller**

In His “Sermon on the Mount”, Jesus pulls us deeper into an understanding of our relationship with Him. He uses the metaphor of salt and light. Just a little bit of salt brings some great flavor. In complete darkness, even a small light will change everything. Yet in all this, Jesus still has a surprise for us!

*Featured Choir: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Decatur, Ind.*  
*Featured Art and Architecture: Zion Lutheran Church, Decatur, Ind.*

**February 15, 2026 - The Transfiguration of Our Lord**  
**The Wrong Mountain - Matthew 17:1-9**  
**Rev. Scott Zeckzer**

There are times in our lives where we have “mountain top experiences.” The problem is that they do not last; they are forgotten. There is one “mountain top experience” that changed everything. Tune in to “Worship Anew” to find the right mountain.

*Featured Choirs: Choir of the Council of Presidents of the LCMS; St. Paul Lutheran School, Munster, Ind.; St. Michael Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.*  
*Featured Art and Architecture: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Mason City, Iowa*

**February 18, 2026 – Ash Wednesday**  
**The Great Exchange - 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10**  
**Guest Pastor - Rev. Joe Hoem**

Lent isn’t about improving ourselves but about seeing what Christ has done for us. The One who knew no sin became sin in our place, bearing our guilt on the cross. In Him, we are made righteous, forgiven, and free to live as God’s beloved.

*Featured Choirs: Lincoln Lutheran High School, Lincoln, Neb.; St. Paul’s Lutheran School, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School, Centralia, Ill.; St. John Lutheran Church, Indianapolis, Ind.*  
*Featured Art and Architecture: St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

**February 22, 2026 – First Sunday in Lent**  
**Jesus Also Was Tempted - Matthew 4:1-11**  
**Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III**

The bad news is that we will be tempted by Satan throughout our earthly lives. The good news is that Jesus also was tempted by the devil in all the ways that we are, yet He never once sinned. He defeated Satan for us and now helps us overcome temptations of the devil.

*Featured Choir: Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.*  
*Featured Art and Architecture: Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Soest), Fort Wayne, Ind.*



**[www.myfwl.org](http://www.myfwl.org)**



# Bethlehem Lutheran Church

## Celebrating 100 years

Lord,  
You have been our  
dwelling place  
in all generations.

Psalm 90:1



### Bethlehem Lutheran Church 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1926-2026

*"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations." Psalm 90:1*

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 3705 South Anthony, kicked off its 100-year celebration as a congregation on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, recognizing a memorable century of faith and community. The Rev. Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch, president of the Indiana District, preached at the 9:00 a.m. service, encouraging Christians to continue with a steady exercise of loving our neighbors by serving others in our church community and neighborhood. Before the luncheon at 11:30am, there were opportunities to view the 30-minute 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary video clip, peruse historical displays and become aware of the church's outreach projects. More than 150 people enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by the Women of Bethlehem. The cost of a ticket was \$1, the price of a meal in 1926. Nathan Bienz, archivist for the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod district, enlightened attendees with Lutheran history in Fort Wayne and area from the 1920s. The day was filled with warm memories and hope for the future.

The public is warmly encouraged to attend a Musical Celebration which will be held Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm at Bethlehem. Featuring: Organist, Michael Hollman (Zion Lutheran Church), Pianist, Kasey Hapner (Bethlehem Lutheran Church), Soloists, Kasey Hapner and Mary Snow, The Bethlehem Handbell ringers and a Congregation hymn sing. Followed by light refreshment.

As part of Bethlehem's 100<sup>th</sup> celebration, Big-Eyed Fish will prepare a 3-piece fried fish meal on Friday, March 27, from 4:00-7:00pm. Adult tickets are available for \$15, child tickets for \$5. Carry-out meals will be available.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### SATURDAY, APRIL 25

Clean up for Shepherd's Hand Walk

#### SUNDAY, APRIL 26

Preacher: Rev. Eli Voigt

#### SUNDAY, MAY 31

Service 9:00am – Preacher: Rev. Phil Rigdon

#### **Education Celebration / Church Potluck**

Blake Sebring – "Bethlehem Memories"      Talk: Mr. Ron Oetting

## Order your 100th anniversary shirts today!

Use the QR code to order shirts.



## BETHLEHEM TRIVIA

- In August, 1927, Rev. M. E. Reinke was installed as Bethlehem's first pastor.
- January, 1928, Betty Jean Grote was the first person to be buried as a member of Bethlehem.
- In April, 1929, Leonard Bearman and Myrtle Harris were the first couple to be married at Bethlehem.
- In 1976 Rev. Dr. Armin C Oldsen gave the address for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet.
- On February 21, 1965, three tower bells weighing 1 ton, half-ton and quarter-ton were installed. They were cast in Holland, Denmark, and Cincinnati and were made of red copper and tin.
- In 1966 a new organ was installed.

## TAKE AND SHARE PICTURES

As part of Bethlehem's 100th anniversary celebration, we are compiling a yearbook/church directory which will be published at the conclusion of the year. We ask you to send us any photos appropriate to our 100th anniversary, maybe even wedding, events, school activities or baptism photos from the past. We can't promise we'll use them all, but we'll do our best!

We are also going to be collecting comments we can include in this yearbook. Instead of signing this yearbook, we'd like to ask you to consider contributing a comment by answering one simple question: What has Bethlehem meant to your life?

Thank you!

You can submit them by emailing the church the office at [bethfw@yahoo.com](mailto:bethfw@yahoo.com).



*Blessed* by **God** for 100 Years



## The new 2026 Rescue Mission Sign-up sheet is up.

We have openings for volunteers as well as bakers for February on. The sign-up sheet, as well as additional Mission information, is located on the bulletin board outside the Book Nook Library. Take a look to see what time slot might fit for you! We serve and donate desserts every 4th Sunday of the month.



CHANGING LIVES FOR GOOD™

## Attention September Small Groups!

If you enjoyed our Church wide September Bible study, the "Gentle and Lowly," perhaps your group would consider getting together again and doing another study, with a focus on the upcoming Lent season. See either Ruth Bates or Randy Hapner for ideas and resources.

IN LOVING  
memory



## Food Bank Report

By Sharon Shediack

December

We provided food to 3351 individuals. They included 142 children under the age of 18, and 41 individuals over the age of 60. Our congregation provided 607# of food. Peace Lutheran donated 300# of food and Footsteps donated 415#. We went to Community Harvest three times this month to purchase 1480# of food in the amount of \$496. Our 15 volunteers gave 133 hours of their time.

We could use **boxed potatoes, noodles mac & cheese.** Thanks to ALL of you for all your many volunteer hours, dedication and the financial support you give to help provide this mission at Bethlehem.

## HELP KEEP THE FOOD BANK SHELVES STOCKED

Scour your pantries, include them on your shopping list. Bring a grocery bag of a few non-perishable items to the Saturday and Sunday services to the front pews during the Offering.



Every  
Donation  
Makes A  
Difference

# LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

The Mental Health Initiative at Bethlehem is under the direction of Joyce Knipstein. **Bethlehem seeks to be a caring community and to provide hope.**

## Grief Overload - The Emotional Toll of Multiple Losses

When you are hit with multiple losses, your emotional reserves are stretched thin. You may feel mentally and physically exhausted from the emotional labor of mourning. Each new loss may trigger feelings from previous losses, making it harder to cope with each individual event.

Grief overload often leads to feelings of helplessness, despair, and burnout. You may even feel disconnected from your emotions, finding it difficult to cry or express your feelings. It's important to recognize that grief overload is a normal response to extraordinary circumstances, and seeking support is key to managing it.

There are several causes of grief overload, and understanding these causes can help you recognize when you or someone you care about is experiencing it.

### Signs of Grief Overload

- **Emotional numbness:** You may feel disconnected from your emotions or unable to process your grief fully.
- **Irritability or anger:** When overwhelmed by loss, small frustrations can feel unbearable, leading to irritability or anger.
- **Fatigue or exhaustion:** Grief is emotionally draining, and when compounded by multiple losses, it can lead to chronic fatigue.
- **Difficulty concentrating:** It may be difficult to focus on daily tasks, work, or conversations when you are consumed by grief.
- **Withdrawal from social activities:** You may find yourself avoiding friends or family, feeling that no one can truly understand your pain.

If you are experiencing these symptoms, it's important to reach out for support.

#### 1. Take Things One Day at a Time

Take things one day at a time, and give yourself permission to rest when needed. It's okay to take a break from grieving and focus on self-care.

#### 2. Lean on Your Support System

Having a strong support system can make all the difference when dealing with grief overload. Lean on your friends, family, and community for emotional support. Talking about your losses and sharing your feelings with others can help lighten the emotional load.

#### 3. Honor Each Loss Individually

Finding ways to honor each person's memory is an important part of healing. Whether through personalized funeral services, memorial gatherings, or individual rituals of remembrance, taking the time to honor each loss can help bring closure.

#### 4. Seek Professional Help

If you find that grief overload is taking a significant toll on your mental health, it may be time to seek professional help. A grief counselor or therapist can provide the tools and coping strategies needed to navigate overwhelming emotions.



## BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY

If you feel you would also benefit from the care of our Stephen Ministry Bereavement program, please call Pastor Ben (989-907-9481), or Thresa Lightning (260-417-1450), our Grief Coordinators.

# Bethlehem Mission News and Prayers

By Jane Miller

It is my privilege this month to write a tribute to Barbara Netterville, one of the people most dedicated to bringing others to Jesus that I have ever known! She had not only the desire, but also the drive to promote missions in our community and on the foreign mission field! When I first rejoined Bethlehem church in 1983, after I had left to marry my husband Bob in 1963, becoming part of his family's downtown "Mother" church, St Paul's, Bethlehem had had many changes. But it was still a very vibrant, involved church in the surrounding community in southeast Fort Wayne! Bethlehem always reminded me very much of my home church in Saginaw, Michigan! When the Lord led us to transfer to Bethlehem, one of its pastors, David Schlie, had already been our neighbor down the street on South Anthony, and we were delighted to meet many members still there. We first got to know Barb Netterville when she started leading what was then called Family Hour! She was so full of love for Jesus and His people in both our community and overseas! As our now Pastor Ben expressed so well in her funeral sermon, she was all about not just the idea of missions, but also with definite plans to carry it out!

Whether it was making sure we sent certain gifts over to athletes in France for Joe and Suzy Schlie's athletes in Agape France, or seeing to it we supported Joe Boway's need for school supplies for poor children in rural Liberia, or that needs were met for Sunday school materials in Southeast Asia where our kids, Tim and Michelle Miller work, she was eager and persistent to carry out Jesus's call to be His hands and feet! Like many of us now older members at Bethlehem, Barb had her share of disabilities but she never let anything slow her down or hinder her working in God's Kingdom! Even the day she unexpectedly was taken home to heaven, she was buttoned up and sitting on the front porch ready to be taken out; she always had "unfinished business"! Well done, thou good and faithful servant!!!

## PRAY FOR US

Rhonda told me Barb had already submitted a mission's article that she was using for February; so I am just adding some new items for you to pray for the Missions trip that Joe Boway and a team of helpers in Illinois is on right now. Their leaving was delayed by bad weather and then Joe's daily prayer letter was delayed by the USPS in being sent to those of us who pray for the trip! So what else is new this strange winter? The team of helpers from IL was helping with teaching sewing classes and also helping Joe lead a women's retreat in Zwendu in rural Liberia. They flew there by way of an MAF airplane. As I write this that team will be returning to Monrovia by plane already this Friday the 30th, and after worshiping and sightseeing there, will be flying back to Chicago on February 1st and 2nd. If you read this by then, please pray for their safe travel and good connections, and pray that all that has been done on this trip and will bring God glory!

Pray for Joe as he makes arrangements in Monrovia to send a truckload of school supplies and building materials to rural Liberia, and that all those supplies arrive safely in rural Liberia! Ask God to bless Joe's meetings with church leaders in Monrovia, and pray for safety and protection as Joe travels to rural Liberia by road on February 9th. Thank God for all the committed prayer and financial partners who make this ministry possible On Feb-11-12 as Joe visits classrooms in the morning and meets with teachers and church leaders traveling to Zwedru for the Lutheran National Church convention. On Feb 13-15 ask the Lord to be present and to bless the convention and all the pastors, teachers, lay leaders and all the church members as they plan and seek God's guidance for His church. Pray for their safe travel newly elected leaders to have God's wisdom in their leadership. On Feb 16-18 pray for Joe as he makes the trip back to Monrovia by road, and then as he leaves Liberia, to arrive home on the 19th. Pray for a good time of rest and a joyful reunion with Glendora, Joe Jr. and Joshua. As always, ask God to bless the work done on this trip for His glory! Thank you for YOUR prayer work here; it is very important!!!

The work of our missionaries  
is a magnificent expression  
of the Lord's redeeming love.

# MISSIONS 2025 Recap

By Barb Netterville

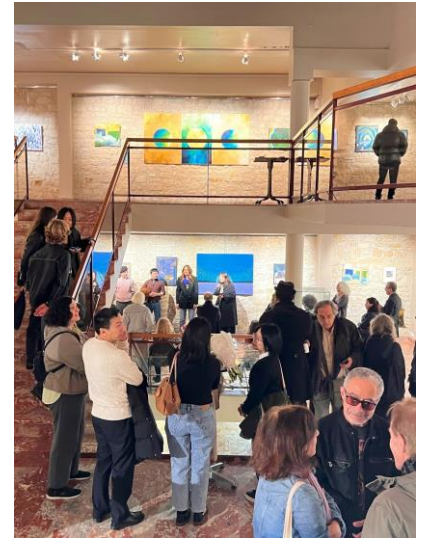
## ALASKA MISSION FOR CHRIST

Alaska Missions continues to bring the Word of Christ through their work in remote areas and villages in Alaska. They reach people through Bible studies, VBS, repair and building of homes, and ramps for the handicap. Their work is both practical and spiritual.



## CRU ARTS AND CULTURE

Cru continues to bring the love of Christ through their encouragement and support of artists and musicians. They also form Bible studies after shows where many artists express a need to know Christ. In addition to supporting shows and venues in this country. Joe and Suzy continue to support Agape Arts in France.



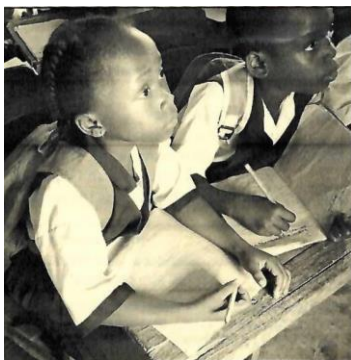
## SOUTHEAST ASIA

Tim and Michelle travel to many villages in Southeast Asia as they train leaders and take Bibles and other materials to the people. They have held cell phone classes as many people have cell phones. They recently held a Bible story telling class in a small village and were very surprised when 50 people showed up.



## LIBERA

several times a year to bring supplies for the schools and equipment and information for the staff. This year he was able to help open a preschool with 85 students. He recently brought supplies for girls and more internet information for the upper grades and staff. The love of Christ is taught in every lesson and kids are very glad to receive their own Bible



- Thanks to you we also donated to the following ministries:
- The Shepherd's Hand - \$500 plus several dozen diapers and feminine products.
  - Kings Global Ministry – We donated \$200 as Pastor King continues to give baskets and toys to the community.
  - Sarah and Zack Anderson – We donated \$200 to Jane and Bob Miller's granddaughter as they teach English to children in Southeast Asia.
  - LSUS – We were able to donate \$1,700 to the school as they minister to students in South Fort Wayne.

Thanks also to you, in addition to the \$4,000 voted on to be used for missions, many of you donated additional funds (from your mission envelopes), and consequently we were able to donate \$3,000 along with the \$4,000. We thank God from whom all blessings flow.

# The Joyful Corner

Bethlehem has experienced several losses in recent months. In seasons like this, joy may look different—but it is still possible to find and hold. Here are some ways joy can gently emerge among us:

- **In being together.** Simply showing up, sitting side by side, and reminding one another that no one is carrying grief alone.
- **In shared memories.** Telling stories, laughing through tears, and honoring the lives that shaped our community.
- **In worship and prayer.** Singing, listening, or sitting quietly before God—trusting that God meets us exactly where we are.
- **In acts of care.** Meals prepared, notes written, hugs offered, and help given without being asked.
- **In small moments.** A kind word, a child's laughter, sunlight through a window—brief but real gifts.
- **In hope that holds.** Not a denial of pain, but a steady assurance that love and life are stronger than death.
- **In continuing to love.** Choosing compassion, service, and generosity even when our hearts are heavy.

**Joy does not erase our grief.**

Instead, it gives us strength to carry it—together.

*Fear thou not;*  
*for I am with thee:*

*Be not dismayed;*  
*for I am thy God:*

*I will strengthen thee;*  
*yea, I will help thee;*

**YEA, I WILL UPHOLD THEE WITH THE RIGHT HAND**  
*of my righteousness.*  
Isaiah 41:10

*Thank  
You*


Bethlehem Friends,  
Thank you for remembering me  
in your prayers. I know I was blessed  
by finding my cancer so early in the  
2nd stage. I would also like to  
thank you for the book you sent me  
In Christ  
Cathy Dykstra



# LENTEN MEALS

DURING LENT WE WOULD LOVE TO GATHER TOGETHER BEFORE MIDWEEK SERVICES TO SHARE A SIMPLE MEAL AND ENJOY FELLOWSHIP WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY. WE WILL NEED VOLUNTEERS TO SIGN UP TO SHARE FOOD ITEMS TO MAKE THIS MEAL POSSIBLE. PLEASE LOOK FOR SIGN UP SHEETS IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL.

**The Lenten Meal dates will be February 25th, March 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th.**



and distributes them to individuals who are homeless, affected by disasters, or otherwise in need. They are currently operating right here at Bethlehem and could use volunteers to help sort the many shoes they receive. If you can donate just a few hours a month, your help would make a big difference! For more information or to sign up to volunteer, please contact Cheryl at 260-341-0167.



CHANGING THE WORLD, TWO FEET AT A TIME

**WORK WILLINGLY AT WHATEVER YOU DO,  
AS THOUGH YOU WERE WORKING FOR  
THE *LORD* RATHER THAN FOR PEOPLE.**

**DRAFT, not yet approved by the board**  
**Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Board of Directors Regular Monthly Meeting**  
**January 13, 2026**

Members present: Pastor Ben Ahlersmeyer, Greg Shediack, Brian Bates, John Bates, Dan Bates, Rachele Dance, John Stafford, and Blake Sebring.

Missing: David Schult.

Guests: John Dize and Mark Blessing.

January's regular meeting started at 6:27 p.m. with Greg welcoming John Bates as the board's newest member. He replaces Evans Branigan who retired. John Stafford becomes vice president and Blake Sebring secretary.

Pastor started with a devotion based on Exodus 33, where Moses is interceding for the people, and asking for the Lords help and His presence. Moses was saying, If You aren't going to go with us, I don't want to go into the promised land. We need to understand that God has been with us in the past and will be with us in the future, but we especially need to know He is also with us right now, every step of the way. Pastor closed the devotion with prayer.

Mark Blessing, chairman of the community center committee, presented a detailed update. The hope is for the committee to become a bit more aggressive about sharing our plans with the public and those outside of the church, looking for help, guidance, advice, and looking for a partner as a main tenant of the building. We have not found the perfect partner yet, but we need to start moving ahead with plans.

The committee are looking at creating a name for the institution so people know what we are talking about, with a mission statement. Currently, we are using House of Bread as a placeholder name. The early version of the mission statement for the House of Bread Community Center is "Dedicated to improving the lives of the residents of Southeast Fort Wayne by coordinating access to facilities and provision of needed community services consistent with the Christian faith through partnering with Community Service Providers and Christian Organizations."

The committee feels confident there are service providers out there and we hope they can provide guidance on contacts with organizations that might need the space Bethlehem offers. We have strict guidelines for partners so that they meet our mission. Mark presented a proposed legal structure, suggesting the center organize as a non-profit entity that is controlled by the church, with the entity's board making the decisions. This is done to protect the church and its tax-exempt status. The five-person BOD would be represented by three people from Bethlehem, and two from the partners.

Mark suggests the entity/church may want to consider hiring a person for outreach to the community. Would that be a called position? Who would pay for this? This is not seen to be something Pastor could take on in addition to his regular duties. That particular idea and those discussions are just starting.

The committee is suggesting the possibility Bethlehem will rent space to the center which would then in turn sublet space to the organizations who want to use it. Mark is studying all accounting aspects to make sure the church is protected going forward. We cannot necessarily rent to a for-profit entity. That's why the mission statement is so important.

Work continues by the committee members, who will continue to keep the BOD regularly updated.

The minutes from the December 2025 board meeting were presented. John Stafford made a motion to accept the minutes and Brian seconded. The vote was unanimous.

The soul accounting report forwarded by the board of elders included the death of Dan Scheerer on Dec. 14.

Treasurer Brian Bates presented his monthly report for December. The church was about \$28,000 over budget on offerings for 2025 and finished with the overall budget of \$350,231 in offerings, which was 8 percent over budget for the year. All told we brought in \$381,847 for the year and did not need to take any money out of the endowment for 2025. We were about 1.5 percent under budget on expenses for the year at \$398,020 on a budget of \$404,019. The Endowment Fund through the Lutheran Foundation stands at \$1,451,128, with the Wells Fargo fund at \$52,473, for a total endowment of \$1,503,602.

The treasurer's report as submitted was unanimously accepted on a motion by Brian and seconded by John Bates.

Pastor's report included a review of the Christmas and Advent seasons, and the low attendance at both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It was suggested that maybe a conversation needs to be held on the future of Christmas Day services and if we should consider possible changes.

Pastor is looking forward to Lent, with a theme of, "What are the things we are giving up for Lent, and looking at what Jesus gave up for Lent."

The 100th anniversary kickoff luncheon on January 11 was set up for over 200 people and was a huge, wonderful success. Thank you to all the ladies who did an incredible job with the meal. Hallelujah!

The board of property management – among others – did an outstanding job preparing the building for the opening weekend. The lights in the Narthex really make that portion of the building pop. The building and the event sparkled to set an outstanding example for the remaining anniversary events.

The church will hold installations of the elected board members and the school board representative Joe Nelson during the January 24 and 25 services.

The meeting finished at 8:15 p.m.

The next board meeting will be Feb. 10 at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted in His service,

Blake Sebring



## CLHS NEWS

### **Concordia's 24-Hour Theater Festival |Saturday, February 14**

Concordia's 24-Hour Theater Festival is a powerful celebration of student creativity and collaboration, challenging students to write, direct, rehearse, and stage four original short plays and one dance in just 24 hours. With more than 130 students involved and the support of dedicated faculty and volunteers, this fast-paced event showcases student voices, leadership, and talent as ideas come to life from Friday evening to Saturday night. The festival culminates in a public performance on Saturday, February 14 at 7:00pm, when the curtain rises on productions that did not exist just one day earlier. The cost to attend is \$2.00 or a canned good, with all donations supporting CanStruction. We invite you to join us for an inspiring evening of original student work and creativity in action.

### **CLHS Theatre Department Presents *Disney's The Little Mermaid* February 27-March 1**

Concordia Lutheran High School's Theater Department invites you to experience the magic of its winter musical, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, a hauntingly beautiful love story based on the beloved Hans Christian Andersen tale and the classic animated film. Featuring unforgettable music by eight-time Academy Award winner Alan Menken, including favorites like "Under the Sea," "Kiss the Girl," and "Part of Your World," this production promises an evening filled with heart, humor, and wonder. Directed by Fine Arts Chair Chris Murphy with musical direction by Isaac Weander, performances will take place on Friday, February 27 and Saturday, February 28 at 7:30pm, and Sunday, March 1 at 2:00pm. Join us for this enchanting celebration of student talent and storytelling on the Concordia stage. Tickets are available online or at the CLHS Auditorium Box Office starting 30 minutes before show time.

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2 – Ina Gaunt	17 – Donald Essex
3 – Karl Bernabe Amber Finner	Jeron Roland
5 – Paula Polston	Cecelia Snow
6 – Denali Mitchell Nancy Pierce	18 – Amanda DeLong
8 – Ruby Bonner	19 – Loistene Branigan Kole Mault
9 – Justin Geans	Kyle Mault
10 – Silas Hill-Roddy Terri Stewart	Michelle Stewart
11 – Stephen Melcher	20 – Evans Branigan
12 – Elsi Bernabe Reese Nelson Susan Ramos	21 – Elaena Harris
13 – Stephanie Davies Shirley Davis Delores Tharp	24 – Stanley Franke Victoria Ramos
14 – Joyce Simmons Clarence Williams	25 – Adrian Dance Janee Moore
15 – Nicholas Owen Morgan Stewart	26 – Demarlo Hill-Robinson
	27 – Steven Davies
	28 – Rita Rincon Dorothea Thompson

## FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

14 – Clarence and Ocleva Williams (33)



## LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

[www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org)

To find airings near you, check the broadcast guide at [lhm.org/guide](http://lhm.org/guide).

The Lutheran Hour is available today in many other ways beyond traditional radio. From the American Forces Network, Sirius XM satellite radio, [lutheranhour.org](http://lutheranhour.org), the Connected by LHM mobile app, Amazon Alexa, Spotify, iHeartRadio, YouTube, dialing in on your phone, and more, listeners can hear the weekly sermons whenever and wherever they are.

For more information about Lutheran Hour Ministries, visit [lhm.org](http://lhm.org).



**IS YOUR  
INFO UP  
TO DATE?**

If you have had a change in home address, home or cell phone number or email address, please be sure to let us know so that we can update our database.

If your children have moved out on their own please provide the office with their updated information.

**We want to stay in touch, so having accurate contact information is important to us.**

Please call, mail, or email the church office with any updates.



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LUTHERAN CHURCH

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[www.bethlehemlcms.org](http://www.bethlehemlcms.org)

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9AM EVERY SUNDAY

Access the livestream by  
visiting

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# FEBRUARY Servant Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Altar Guild</u>	<u>Elder</u>	<u>Head Usher</u>	<u>Lay Readers</u>	<u>Power point</u>	<u>Live Stream</u>
31	Sharon Dietrich Suzie Emley Amber Herndon	Brian Bates			Carla Johnson	
1		Greg Shediack	Evans Branigan	Donna Volmerding	Allison Cheng	Hapner Family
7	Kim Ellison Sharon Shediack	Michael Johnson			Charlotte Ratliff	
8		Peter Schlie	Dan Bates	The Hapner Family	Aaron Brown	Hapner Family
14	Linda Stafford	Ed Ramos			Charlotte Ratliff	
15		John Bates	Ron Gallmeyer	Kim Brooks	Josiah Hapner	Hapner Family
18 Ash Wed.	Mary Snow Allison Cheng			John and Linda Stafford		Hapner Family
21	Sharon Dietrich Suzie Emley Amber Herndon	Peter Schlie			Blake Sebring	
22		Greg Shediack	Evans Branigan	Glenn Emley	Allison Cheng	Hapner Family
25 Midweek						Hapner Family
28	Kim Ellison Sharon Shediack	Michael Johnson			Carla Johnson	
1		Peter Schlie	Dan Bates	Suzie Emley	Aaron Brown	Hapner Family

## HELP SHARE OUR WORSHIP BEYOND THE WALLS

We are in need of **Livestream operators** and **PowerPoint operators** to help support our worship services.  
If you're interested or would like more information, please contact the church office to sign up or for more information (260-744-3228).  
Thank you for prayerfully considering serving in this important ministry!

# February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 6:30pm – Bd. of Elders	4	5	6	7 8:30am Men’s Bible Study <b>4:00pm Worship w/Comm</b>
8 <b>9:00am Worship w/Comm</b> 10:30am Education Hour	9	10 6:30pm – Bd. of Directors	11 6:00pm - Choir 7:15pm - Handbells	12	13	14 8:30am Men’s Bible Study <b>4:00pm Worship w/Comm</b>
15 <b>9:00am Worship w/Comm</b> 10:30am Education Hour 2:00pm Music Celebration	16	17	18 Ash Wednesday 6:30pm <b>Worship w/Comm</b>	19	20	21 8:30am Men’s Bible Study <b>4:00pm Worship w/Comm</b>
22 <b>9:00am Worship w/Comm</b> 10:30am Education Hour	23	24	25 5:30pm Lent Dinner 6:30 Lent Service	26	27 4:00pm-7:00pm Big-Eyed Fish Fry	28 8:30am Prayer Breakfast <b>4:00pm Worship w/Comm</b>

*Let all that you do  
be done in Love*

1 Corinthians 16:14