

THE MESSENGER September 2025

The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Proclaiming Christ. Nurturing Faith. Restoring Hope.

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

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

Email: bethfw@yahoo.com Web: www.bethlehemlcms.org



From the Pastor's Desk

Devoted Together

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. - Acts 2:42

In Acts 2:42 we hear this simple but powerful description of the early church. They devoted themselves to the teachings of the apostles and fellowship with one another. They broke bread and prayed together as a tight knit community of believers. The first Christians weren't running big programs, they were in hiding. They didn't have polished buildings or complex strategies, they had their homes. What they had was a deep devotion to Jesus and to one another. They gathered around the Word, they prayed, they shared meals, they carried each other's burdens. It was in those ordinary yet beautiful rhythms that the Spirit of God grew His church and gave hope to a weary world.

This fall, we have an opportunity to step into that same pattern of devotion. On September 21st, we'll begin a church-wide Bible study and sermon series where we'll gather in small groups to encourage one another in faith and life. These groups aren't meant to be just another item to add to your calendar—they are intended to be spaces for fellowship, prayer, and growing in Christ together. They are meant to help us give a small glimpse of the early church in your life today. You might consider joining a group, opening your home to host one, or even stepping out in faith to help lead. Each role matters, and each one is a way for us to devote ourselves together to God's Word and His people. If you are homebound, think about how you might gather in other ways. If you are home by yourself, even if you go through this book and study alone, think of ways to extend what you learn into the lives of others. Find some way to grow in community and mutual encouragement in this six week series.

Our study will be based on the book *Gentle and Lowly* by Dane Ortlund. This book invites us to slow down and take a long, loving look at the heart of Jesus. Again and again, it shows us that Christ is not distant or harsh, but gentle and lowly. He welcomes the weary, the burdened, the sinner, the struggler. His heart beats with mercy for us. It's a book that doesn't just inform the mind but nurtures faith—helping us trust more deeply in the Savior who came not to condemn us, but to lift us up in His compassion. It also helps us see each other through the eyes of Christ.

That's why this study connects directly with our mission at Bethlehem. One part of our mission statement is "nurturing faith." We believe that faith is not something static—it's something that grows as we hear God's Word, as we see Christ's mercy, and as we walk with fellow believers who encourage us along the way. Small groups are one of the best ways to nurture that kind of faith. It helps us grow in relationship with one another and strengthen this body of believers at Bethlehem. They give us space to wrestle with questions, to share life, to pray with and for one another, and to remind each other that Jesus is near.

So I encourage you: don't miss this chance. Be part of a small group. Step up to host or lead if you're able. It won't be difficult! I'll have easy study guides to walk through each week following the sermon. Books are \$10 and will be available on September 7th, if you don't order them on your own. Take this season to devote yourself to the Word, to prayer, and to fellowship. Just as in Acts 2, God will meet us there, in the simple and the ordinary, with His extraordinary grace. I'm looking forward to it!

In Christ,
Pastor Ben



Ways to watch WORSHIP ANEW:

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

Sunday at 6:30am on (WISE-TV Channel 33)

Sunday at 7:00am on (EPTA channel 21.2)

Sunday at 11:30am on TCT (WINM channel 12)

**September 7, 2025 – Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Being Totally Committed - Luke 14:26**

Rev. Scott Zeckzer

Being a disciple of Jesus is more than just contributing; it is being totally committed to Jesus. How far are you willing to be committed to Jesus? How far is Jesus committed to you?

Featured Choirs: St. Paul Lutheran School, Munster, Ind.; Lincoln Lutheran High School, Lincoln, Neb.; Holy Cross Men's Chorus, Fort Wayne, Ind. **Featured Art and Architecture:** Rivercliff Lutheran Church, Sandy Springs, Ga.

**September 14, 2025 – Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Zealous for Your Salvation - Ezekiel 34:11-16**

Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

That you have been brought to faith in Jesus and have forgiveness and everlasting life is not by coincidence. No, this is because God is zealous for your salvation. God wanting you to be saved is seen in the history of Israel, in the earthly life of Christ, and in your own life. All this shows that you are precious to the Lord. **Featured Choirs:** St. Paul Lutheran School, Concordia, Mo.; Concordia Lutheran High School, Fort Wayne, Ind. **Featured Art and Architecture:** Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gainesville, Ga.

**September 21, 2025 – Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
The Buck Stops Here - Luke 16:10-13**

Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

Material riches are a wonderful thing ... rightly understood and ordered. Jesus teaches us to love the right things in the right order. Understanding this, we can faithfully say, "The Buck Stops Here!"

Featured Choirs: St. Paul Lutheran School, Munster, Ind.; Holy Cross Junior Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind. **Featured Art and Architecture:** All Saints Lutheran Church, Blairsville, Ga.

**September 28, 2025 – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Heaven and Hell - Luke 16:31**

Rev. Shayne Jonker

So, who would you rather be? The rich man or Lazarus? We are all Lazarus: Helpless and hopeless in our poverty, sick unto death, and longing to even eat the crumbs that fall from God's table.

Lazarus is each of us, and unless we see ourselves in him, we cannot be saved. In fact, we won't want to be saved. **Featured Choirs:** St. Paul Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Holy Cross Men's Chorus, Fort Wayne, Ind. **Featured Art and Architecture:** St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Dahlonaga, Ga.



LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

www.lhm.org

To find airings near you, check the broadcast guide at lhm.org/guide.

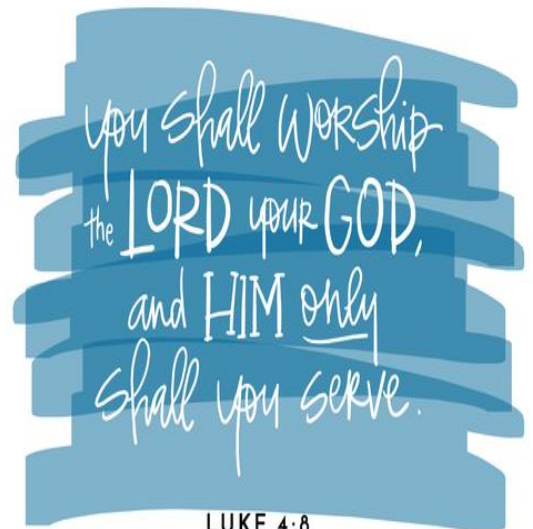
The Lutheran Hour is available today in many other ways beyond traditional radio. From the American Forces Network, Sirius XM satellite radio, lutheranhour.org, the Connected by LHM mobile app, Amazon Alexa, Spotify, iHeartRadio, YouTube, dialing in on your phone, and more, listeners can hear the weekly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

For more information about Lutheran Hour Ministries, visit lhm.org.

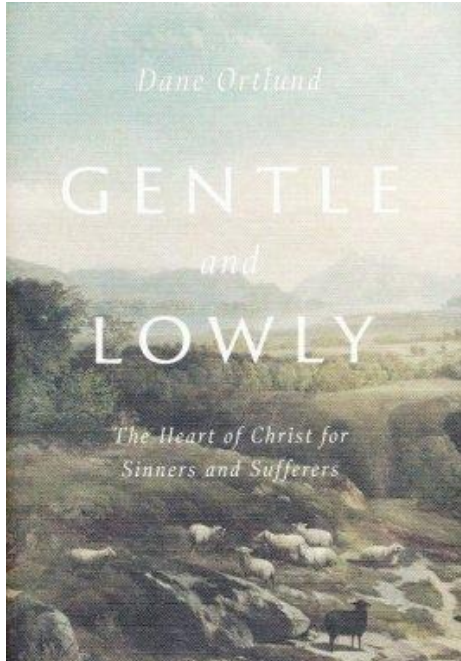


www.myfwl.org

AND JESUS ANSWERED HIM,
' IT IS WRITTEN,



small GROUPS



**We have a
Church-wide Bible
Study starting
9/21/25 thru
10/26/25.**

Groups are to meet on a weekly basis thru the course of the study to discuss the assigned chapters for each week.

The books cost \$10 and will need to be purchased by those who want to participate and don't already have a copy.

The study guides will be provided.

To get an idea as to how many books we'll need to purchase and when people can meet, look for **sign-up sheets at both Church entrances.**



We appreciate our volunteers for the Rescue Mission.
Thank You!

Food Bank Report

By Sharon Shediack

July

We provided food to 386 individuals. They included 168 children under the age of 18, and 38 individuals over the age of 60.

Our congregation provided 554# of food. We went to Community Harvest twice this month to purchase 831# of food in the amount of \$564.

Our 17 volunteers gave 120 hours of their time.

We could use soup, peanut butter, boxed baking mixes, pasta sauce and tomato products.

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

URGENT NEEDS

**Soup, peanut butter,
boxed baking mixes, pasta
sauce and tomato
products.**

Bethlehem Mission News and Prayers

By Jane Miller

I have more news I would like to share from Tim and Michelle's last newsletter, concerning opportunities God has given their Khon and Shi teams already in 2025:

* First, the Shi team, with help from Khon SE team, recently finished crafting a third set of 24 stories from the Old Testament in their language. They are currently using these audio recordings to create slideshow videos to upload to their YouTube channel and are working to put them into a phone app than can be distributed to villages where the internet signal is weak.

* Twice a month, the Shi team visits a drug rehab center in the capital to tell and teacher the stories they've crafted to encourage and disciple Shi villagers who are rehabbing from meth addiction. Whole families from their village area have come down to receive this assistance, and are being blessed through these bible stories in their language by our Shi coworkers' special ministry! Sophia told the story of Moses commissioning Joshua in his stead to lead God's people across the Jordon River. One Shi listener was impressed by the pile of stones Moses commissioned the Israelite leaders to put in the middle of the river as a memorial of God's miracle and His ongoing care for His people for future generations!

* Michelle recently led two afternoon training sessions to develop literacy materials. The Shi interns have started to create resources to teach kids and young people to read stories in their language. They've been having a lot fun doing this!

Besides praying for the above projects in Southeast Asia with the Miller team and for Zack Anderson's classes in linguistics in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Please be praying also for the work happening in closed countries and sensitive areas in other parts of the world that the Word may take root and the Church may flourish!

Our New Life Lutheran friend, Jeanne Burger, asks us to pray for the nursing students in Leogane, Haiti who serving as school nurses, providing much needed health care for the children who attend there. This also helps the students' future as they are better able to listen and learn when they are healthy. Pray that these nursing students will continue to grow in their skills and that God will bless all that they do!

Pray for missionary Heidi Wilkinson who has arrived safely in Ethiopia, as she settles in her new home quickly and begins her work teaching English to students at the seminary there. Pray also for Heidi's adjustment to the culture and work.

Pray also for New Life's Walt Fisher, who goes to the Allen County Juvenile Center to lead worship, share his faith, and encourage the youth who are being held there. Please pray that God's gracious hand will guide and protect Walt as he does this work, and ask the Holy Spirit to be at work in the hearts of the youth as they hear the Word of God through music, message, and prayer.



THANK YOU

August 4
Dear friends at Bethlehem,
It was a joy to be with
you on Sunday. We walked
away with a powerful
reminder about keeping
perspective in the midst
of our lives in this
world.

Your partnership with us
in the Gospel means so
much as we seek to
make Jesus known in the
world. You have encouraged

us from the very beginning
until now and we give
thanks to the Lord!
May the Lord continue to
guard you, keep you and
push you out to serve
those around you.

Many blessings,

Joe & Suzy

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



IN CHRIST ALONE

Sonshine Club 2025 - 2026

Children ages 3 yrs - 5th 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.

Sonshine Club begins September 21st



Choirs Resume Sept. 10!

Sanctuary Choir 6:00pm-7:00pm

Handbell Choir -7:15pm-8:15 pm



The Bethlehem Men's Prayer Breakfast will be held Saturday, September 27, in the cafeteria starting at 8:30am. Breakfast will be served followed by a devotion by Bill Ihssen, time for prayer, and a study of God's Word from the Book of Obadiah with its message of judgment for Edom, the descendants of Esau. All are welcome to join us.

"We have heard a message from the LORD: An envoy was sent to the nations to say, 'Rise, and let us go against [Edom] for battle.'" Obadiah 1 NIV.

Let Everything that has breath, Praise the Lord.

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.

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

RECOVERY. HOPE. HEALING.

Recovery Month celebrates the gains made by those in recovery, just as we celebrate health improvements made by those who are managing other health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and heart disease. This observance reinforces the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

There are millions of Americans whose lives have been transformed through recovery. Since these successes often go unnoticed by the broader population, Recovery Month provides a vehicle for everyone to celebrate these accomplishments. Each September, tens of thousands of prevention, treatment, and recovery programs and facilities around the country celebrate Recovery Month. They speak about strides made by those in recovery and share their success stories with their neighbors, friends, and colleagues. In doing so, everyone helps to increase awareness and foster a greater understanding about mental and substance use disorders.

Recovery Month will continue to educate others about substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders, the effectiveness of treatment and recovery services, and that recovery is possible. All of us, from celebrities and sports figures to our co-workers, neighbors, friends, and family members, throughout our lives have experienced peaks and valleys, both big and small. But with strength, support, and hope from the people we love, we are resilient.

*Behold, I will bring to it health and healing,
and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security.* Jeremiah 33:6

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.



What Is GriefShare?

GriefShare is a supportive, compassionate group designed to help individuals navigate the difficult journey of grief. It offers a safe and welcoming environment where participants connect with others who understand the deep and often overwhelming emotions that come with loss.

**GriefShare will be held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church,
3705 S. Anthony Blvd., Fort Wayne
in Room 1 on Tuesdays from 5:30pm-7:00pm.**

BETHLEHEM'S 100th ANNIVERSARY

"Throughout All Generations"

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

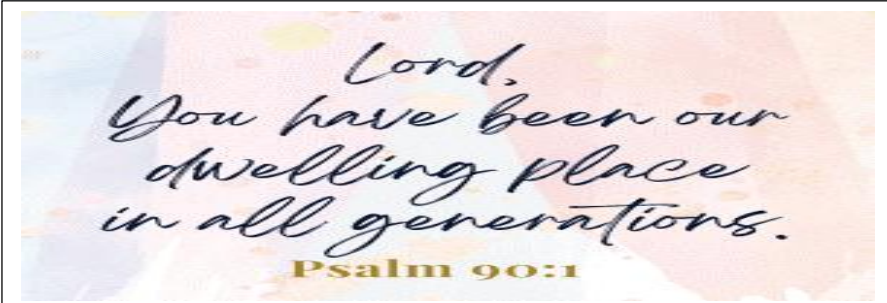
Our theme is **"Throughout All Generations"** Psalm 90:1 *"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations."*

This is a tentative plan schedule.

- January 11, Sunday: Kick-off with sit-down meal
- February 22, Sunday: Organ Recital
- March 27, Friday: FISH FRY
- April 18, Saturday: Great America Clean Up with the City event
- May 31, Sunday: Church Potluck Picnic
- June 20, Saturday: Neighborhood Walk – including 3205 Alexander Ave.
- July 18, Saturday: Community Fest w/clubhouse
- August: LSUS clean up
- September 12, Saturday: Alumni Dance
- September 13, Sunday: Education & Alumni Celebration with History of Education and recognition of Confirmation classes (a Charcuterie Table)
- October: Missions featured the entire month
- November: Collect food bank items the entire month
- December: Wrap up with a special musical event TBD Organ recital, song fest, etc.

The next 100th Anniversary Committee meeting: Sept. 18, at 6:00pm in Room 1
Volunteers are still needed and appreciated!

Volunteers are still needed! Please pray and consider using your skills and talents and join one of the following committees: Please contact Rhonda in church office for questions or you may contact a member of the steering committee—Pastor Ben, Rachele Dance or Sharon Dietrich.



VIDEO RECORDING

We'll be conducting interviews **on Sept. 7 from 1-4 p.m.** in the sanctuary. This will be the **FINAL AND ONLY CHANCE**, so please mark your calendar!

These 5-minute videos will consist of three questions:

1. When and why did you come to Bethlehem?
2. What are a couple of your favorite memories?
3. What has Bethlehem meant to you?

These recordings will be played before services throughout the anniversary year. Also, those being interviewed do not need to be current members. The main requirement is having some great memories about our church!

If you are interested, please consider emailing Blake Sebring at blakeds@frontier.com so we can get a rough estimate of those wishing to participate. Seating will be available in the Fellowship Hall, and we will not schedule appointments, but we'll start a line and keep going until we are finished. Hopefully this will be a fun time of reminiscing.

National:

lwml.org

State/Local:

lwmlindiana.org



Lutheran
Women
in Mission

WOMEN of BETHLEHEM

"Lettuce" Gather

**WOMEN OF
BETHLEHEM
FALL GATHERING**
Saturday, September 20th
10:00am - Fellowship Hall.



Our LWML service project will be "Crosses for Benny" - assembling a cross necklace to be sent to Forged by Fire Ministries. The crosses will be given out with meals served to disaster victims. More information on this ministry at fbf501c3.com. We will then enjoy a salad potluck followed by Games and prizes!

LWML SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5

All women are invited to join the LWML Choir for October 5th. We will be learned a beautiful and short piece called "Write Upon My Heart" by Joseph Martin. We will have a group practice on Saturday morning, Sept 27 from 9am-10am. Questions, contact Kasey, kaseyneedham92@gmail.com.



2025 CTSFW DONATION DAY/ LWN

You are all invited to join us for a fun day of fellowship with our sisters in Christ on the Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne (CTSFW) campus on Tuesday, October 14!

Activities begin at 8:30am. This annual tradition provides an opportunity for friends and supporters to bring donations, attend chapel, eat lunch, and hear about the impact of Co-op donations on the lives of the seminary students and their families. To learn more, visit ctsfw.edu/donationday or contact events@ctsfw.edu.

In the afternoon, you are invited to sing with us in the 2025 LWML IN District choir that will be recorded for the Worship Anew broadcast at the Worship Anew Studio. Rehearsal will be at 1:30pm and the recording will begin around 2:30pm.

Registration is required to participate in the choir. The deadline to register is September 22. To register to sing in the choir, please email reneeschullerlwml@gmail.com with LWML Choir in the subject line and indicate if you sing Soprano 1 or 2 or Alto.



The Women of Bethlehem provided T-shirts for the LSUS Staff. The shirts were designed by LSUS school secretary, Allison Cheng.

RISE UP & SOAR

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:28-31

The Joyful Corner

God Has a Sense of Humor

By Lori

May 5, 2007 Faith, Inspirational, Life

So many times while reading the bible, and in my own life God has an awesome sense of humor. Have you been in a stressful situation then all of sudden something happens that makes you bust a gut? I am convinced God loves laughter, and he loves those who look for it also. And if you learn to look for the humor in all situations, I believe God will bring some just to make you a laughter.

In the bible I have two examples of bible stories that make me laugh each time:

The first one is Balaam's donkey. Here the donkey saw the angle of the Lord and the donkey tried to get Balaam's attention to make him aware he was going the wrong way. No matter what the donkey did Balaam got angrier and angrier. Finally as a last straw the Lord had to make the donkey talk to communicate to Balaam.

The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?" And he said, "No." Numbers 22:30

How many of us are just as thick headed, that God has to do something so obvious to get our attention. I can just imagine God up in heaven shaking his head saying "Goodness when is she going to get it?" This story makes me laugh at our humanity each time.

Second story is when Saul was after David to kill him. God did promise David, he would deliver his enemy into David's hands. Saul was in the wilderness tracking David. David was in a cave hiding from Saul. Saul saw a cave and needed to use the bathroom.

And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. I Samuel 24:3

The Lord had Saul go the bathroom in the same cave David and his men were hiding out. I find this absolutely hilarious!! God did indeed deliver David's enemy right into his hand, and caught him with his pants down! Hey it is ok to laugh, I am sure God was.

I love God's sense of humor. David knew God's promise but never in his wildest dreams did he think his enemy would be delivered in this manner.

I have tons of stories in my personal life also, where God had made me stop in my tracks and just laugh. So be on the lookout for something funny, and it is ok to bust a gut. God loves laughter from the ones He loves.

He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. Job 8:21

Heavenly Father,

Thank you so much for the gift of laughter. We can find laughter in all situations, even during times when we think we will never laugh again. Father I love you so much, thank you for filling up my mouth with your joy and laughter. May you bless us with laughter today.

Amen!

*He will yet fill your mouth with laughter
and your lips with shouts of joy. Job 8:21*

CLHS NEWS

Concordia Lutheran High School Homecoming Game and Festivities Friday, September 26

Join in the homecoming festivities with everyone from the Concordia Lutheran High School family! Festivities, including the **Alumni Social**, start at Zollner Stadium at 5:30 p.m. Then, come root on the Football Cadets as they take on Bishop Luers in the homecoming game which starts at 7 p.m.

Homecoming Alumni After-Party

Following the homecoming game, enjoy yourselves at the Alumni After-Party at Fort Wayne Turners beginning at 8:30 p.m. Come have some food, fun and fellowship with fellow members of the Concordia Lutheran High School family!

Worship, Connect, and Celebrate: A Day of Alumni Events at CLHS Sunday, September 28

Alumni Worship Service

Join us in the CLHS Auditorium for a special service led by Pastors Steve Schlund, Daniel Dahling, and Steve Ensley as we celebrate the 50th reunion of the Class of 1975. All alumni and friends are welcome. RSVP by September 20.

School Tours

After the service, take a guided tour of the high school and see what's new on campus, including exciting updates about our future.

Homecoming Music Showcase

Enjoy performances from the CLHS Band and Choir in the gym. Open to all friends and families of CLHS.

Visit clhscadets.com/alumni-weekend for more information.

1 John 4:19

We Love Because He first loved us.

there is no greater love...

LSUS NEWS

**WELCOME
BACK TO
SCHOOL**

*Our
2025-2026
School theme is based on
Isaiah 40:28-31*

**RISE UP
AND SOAR!**

HAVE YOU NOT KNOWN? HAVE YOU NOT HEARD? THE LORD IS EVERLASTING GOD, THE CREATOR OF THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. HE DOES NOT FAINT OR GROW WEARY: HIS UNDERSTANDING IS UNSEARCHABLE. HE GIVES POWER TO THE FAINT, AND TO HIM WHO HAS NO MIGHT HE INCREASES STRENGTH. EVEN YOUTHS SHALL FAINT AND BE WEARY, AND YOUNG MEN SHALL FALL EXHAUSTED: BUT THEY WHO WAIT FOR THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH: THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS LIKE EAGLES: THEY SHALL RUN AND NOT BE WEARY: THEY SHALL WALK AND NOT FAINT.

ISAIAH 40:28-31

1st Annual LSUS Golf Outing: A Hole-in-One!

Our first-ever LSUS Golf Outing was a huge success! This 18-hole Florida Scramble brought together 10 teams of 4 players, 12 amazing sponsors, and raised \$3,000 for the LSUS Sports Program! We're already looking forward to next year!

A huge THANK YOU to:

- Our dedicated staff for serving a great meal catered by Melvia Culpher
- McMillen Golf Course for hosting
- All our hole and cart sponsors for making this event possible



Winning Team

Dan Fink, Adam Plummer, Tim Webb, and Matthew Erb – *(who generously donated their winnings back to the school!)*

2nd Place

Dean & Rod Rodenbeck, Dennis Herman, and Mark Neubacher



Closest to the Pin (Men)

Bob Michael

Closest to the Pin (Women)

Hannah Fink

Longest Drive (Men)

Adam Plummer

Longest Drive (Women)

Erin Martin

Draft, not yet approved by the Board
Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Board of Directors Regular Monthly Meeting
Aug. 12, 2025

Members present: Pastor Ben Ahlersmeyer, Evans Branigan, Dan Bates, Rachele Dance, Blake Sebring, Greg Shediack, David Schult and Brian Bates Members absent: John Stafford Guests: Dena Schult

The August regular monthly meeting of the Board was opened at 6:28 PM by President Greg Shediack. Pastor Ben provided a devotion that talked about the sermon he is writing for his father's final service at Holy Cross. It was based on a reading from Psalm 118, choosing to honor the Lord and cut off things from the world, including, "This is a day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."

The minutes from the Board's July 2025 regular monthly meeting were unanimously approved as submitted, after being reviewed previously online.

The Soul Accounting report as forwarded from the Board of Elders included the passing of Joan Domrow on July 14 and Nancy Kruger on July 15.

Brian Bates presented the monthly Financial Report. Monthly income for June was \$23,608 compared with a budgeted amount of \$26,833.33. Year to date income from offerings is \$203,320.68 and total income including miscellaneous receipts and extraordinary income totaled \$224,534.51 which is 55.6% of budget. Monthly expenses for July totaled \$42,117.04, compared with a monthly budget amount of \$33,668. This included an organ tuneup and a window repair and camera placement. Expenses for the year through July totaled \$239,309 or 59.2% of budget. The balance in the Endowment Fund at the end of July was \$1,386,938. That portion of the Endowment Fund resting with the Lutheran Foundation was current through May as we had not yet received the July statement. That endowment is \$1,337,235. The month-end balance in the SSMG Fund was \$26,344.

The yearly totals are expenditures of \$239,309 of \$404,019 or 58.2% of the annual budget.

The treasurer's report was accepted unanimously.

In the Pastor's Report, Pastor Ben talked about his recent trip for a week to St. Louis to visit Bethlehem Lutheran Church. They have a lot of experience reaching out to their neighborhood, and fundraising. They have 37 students in their micro-school. They have 8-10 streams of revenue coming in on top of \$60,000 in offerings, including things such as rentals and childcare. Pastor Bolling will speak soon with our Community Center Committee.

A representative from Camp Restore (a Missouri Synod non-profit) whom he met on his previous trip to Detroit's Bethany Lutheran talked to our Community Center Committee in July about how to engage the neighborhood.

There are future plans to update our Bethlehem website and looking at possibly using other forms of hymns.

GriefShare starts a 12-week cycle starts Aug. 19. Theresa Lightning is taking over the leadership role for the late Richard Pierce.

We are starting a small group Bible study based on the book Gentle and Lowly running six weeks Sept 21 through Oct. 26. It talks about Jesus' love for sinners, who he is taking care of and why. Sermons will lead into the small group sessions.

An email was sent out to Bethlehem's members about the need for school board representatives from Bethlehem at LSUS. We currently have one sitting, Theresa Lightning, and we need two more. None of the students at LSUS are members of the four core churches. Greg asks what this means for Bethlehem going forward, and we need to have a larger discussion about this as a board and congregation. He asks us to pray for guidance. Ninety-nine percent of the school's money comes from the state through the voucher program.

The Community Center is still waiting to hear from Sacred Places on our grant status. We're waiting to hear on that so we can make our next steps forward. We continue to reach out to potential non-profit partners.

New business: Advent Tea will be held Dec. 7.

The next voters meeting will be on Dec. 14 which will include elections.

Pastor said we are in line to receive another field worker soon.

After a motion by Evans Branigan and a second from Rachele Dance, Pastor Ben led us in prayer to close the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Sept, 9 at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted in His service,
Blake Sebring, fill-in secretary

As we look forward to celebrating 100 years of God's mercy and love at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in the year 2026, we have set the goal of raising \$100,000 as a sacrificial "thank you" to God for all He has done in and through Bethlehem over the years. We have spent significant time as a committee considering what might be the best things to put that money toward. We wanted it to both benefit our people and those outside our doors. We wanted it to be both a blessing to our members and an effort toward welcoming new members into our building as well. Through much deliberation we have created a list of things that we will put our thank offering toward. As we meet each goal, we will jump to the next item until the list is complete.

The first item we decided would benefit both Bethlehem members and visitors alike is cushions for our pews. Our worship space is beautiful and services uplifting but to give a little comfort to those in attendance is a welcoming gift to all who enter our doors. The project will cost around \$27,000 and is the first benchmark set for fundraising. The committee has come up with a list of options and design choices for this project that will be presented and decided upon at our December 14th voter's meeting. Please make it a point to attend and give your input!

Our second project that we will tackle after that is new signage and awnings for outside and inside our building. If you have been a member at Bethlehem for a long time you know exactly where to go for each activity. We need to provide clarity for those visiting us for the first time. We also need to update the names of rooms to what they currently are rather than what they used to be. This effort will make both member and visitors confident in their navigation of our beautiful building.

The final project will be a pavilion for our green space across Euclid Avenue. We've moved outward from our worship space, to our halls and now outside where we interact with our neighborhood. We will put forth plans for dimensions and specifications for this structure so that we have an outdoor space to meet and grow with our neighborhood. This space will be used for outdoor worship, barbecues and block parties. It will be funded after we've raised the money for the previous two projects. The stretch goal beyond these three projects would be beautifying the space more around the pavilion so that it is an enjoyable, beautiful and peaceful place for us to enjoy with our neighbors.

Specifics for all of these projects will be coming soon. So keep an eye out for future communications. You can start giving to these projects right away. Please just write the words "thank offering" on the memo line of your check and it will get to the right place. Official envelopes specific to these projects will arrive in the new year. Although we don't have every detail yet, we wanted to communicate what we do know so you can begin thinking about how you might contribute to these things. As a response to God's faithfulness "throughout all generations" at Bethlehem, we will make these dreams a reality! Thanks for your love and care for our church and we look forward to what God will do throughout this centennial year of celebration!

The 100th Anniversary Committee

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3 – Dan Bates Eddie Pierce	16 – Kimberly Griggs 18 – Conner Bearman
4 – Charles Tharp	20 – Rafael Flores Elisabeth Magadan
6 – Alice Pion	Hung Tran
9 – Andrew Nelson John Stafford	24 – Douglas Howard
11 – Tiyona Griggs	25 – Joan Dressler Kathy Kalthoff
12 – Edward Johnson	26 – Kelly Bernabe
13 – Dorothy Jackson	28 – Laura Mgadan
14 – David Hille Sandra Linan	
15 – Leah Hutchinson Ashton Stevenson Zena Thompson	



**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.

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

6 – LT and Denise DeYampert
16 – Christopher Rigdon and Lilia Imelda Laird
18 – Evans and Loistene Branigan
21 – Derek and Dana Crane
28 – Gene and Linda Kalthoff
Anthony and Toni Mante

SAVE THE DATE!

Voters' Assembly
December 14, 2025



Bethlehem
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Give your tithes and offerings online.
It's simple and secure.

Visit

www.bethlehemlcms.org

Or hold the camera
of your smartphone
over this code then
click the link
provided.



Bethlehem
LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Facebook
Livestream**

Stream worship
weekly
9AM EVERY SUNDAY

Access the livestream by
visiting

www.facebook.com/bethlehemfortwayne



RIGHT TO LIFE
OF NORTHEAST INDIANA

**28th Annual
Fall Banquet**

October 14th, 2025

Keynote Speaker Kirk Cameron, Actor, Filmmaker
Allen County War Memorial Coliseum

SEPTEMBER 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>
6	Kim Ellison Sharon Shediack	Ed Ramos			Charlotte Ratliff	
7		John Bates	Ron Gallmeyer	Suzie Emley	Josiah Hapner	Josiah Hapner
13	Linda Stafford	Peter Schlie			Blake Sebring	
14		Greg Shediack	Evans Branigan	Dena Schult	Allison Cheng	Joshua Hapner
20	Mary Snow Allison Cheng	Michael Johnson			Carla Johnson	
21		Peter Schlie	Dan Bates	Donna Melcher Threasa Lightning	Aaron Brown	Dave Volmerding
27	Sharon Dietrich Suzie Emley Amber Herndon	Brian Bates			Charlotte Ratliff	
28		John Bates	Ron Gallmeyer	Peter Schlie	Josiah Hapner	Randy Hapner

*The greatest joy that I know in this life
is **SERVING** the Lord.*

September²⁰²⁵

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 6:00pm - Choir Potluck	4	5	6 8:30am Men's Bible Study 4:00pm Worship w/Comm
7 9:00am Worship w/Comm 10:30am Education Hour 1:00pm-4:00pm Video Recording Session	8	9 5:30pm - GriefShare 6:30pm - Bd. of Elders	10 6:00pm - Choir 7:15pm - Handbells	11	12	13 8:30am Men's Bible Study 4:00pm Worship w/Comm
14 9:00am Worship w/Comm 10:30am Education Hour	15	16 5:30pm - GriefShare 6:30pm - Bd. of Directors	17 6:00pm - Choir 7:15pm - Handbells	18 6:00pm – 100 th Anniversary Meeting	19	20 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am LWML Fall Fling 4:00pm Worship w/Comm
21 9:00am Worship w/Comm 10:30am Education Hour 10:30am Sonshine Club Gentle and Lowly Bible Study Begins	22	23 5:30pm - GriefShare	24 6:00pm - Choir 7:15pm - Handbells	25	26	27 8:30am Prayer Breakfast 4:00pm Worship w/Comm
28 9:00am Worship w/Comm 10:30am Education Hour 10:30am Sonshine Club	29	30 5:30pm - GriefShare 6:30pm - Bd. Of Property	 <p><i>The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Isaiah 40:8</i></p>			