



The STAR of Bethlehem



**Bethlehem Lutheran Church
An LCMS Congregation**

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<https://sites.google.com/view/blcaikensc/home>

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Redacted Website Edition

June 2026

THE ELDERS'



CORNER

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER IN FAITH

While our former pastor accepted another call, our True Shepherd—Jesus Christ—remains the same yesterday, today, and forever. This season of vacancy is not a time to pause, but a time to draw closer to one another and to God. We see this truth in action through our thriving congregation. Our recent monthly members' night out at the Metro Diner had a wonderful turnout, and Bible study groups remain robust, deeply rooted in God's Word. Even during this transition, the Holy Spirit continues to work powerfully among us.

This ongoing vitality was clear as we recently celebrated the Day of Pentecost, remembering how the Spirit equips the Church. That same Spirit carries us directly into our upcoming celebration of the Holy Trinity, anchoring our hearts in our almighty God who remains in complete control. To bless us during this season, a visiting pastor will lead our Divine Service and administer Holy Communion. We encourage everyone to draw close to the altar to receive Christ's gifts. **Now, more than ever, we need your active presence. Please make every effort to attend our crucial upcoming Voters' Assembly on Sunday, June 14, as we discuss our future. We also need your hands and your hearts to help with Sunday duties and fellowship events.**

**VOTERS' ASSEMBLY
JUNE 14 after the service
PLEASE ATTEND!
Packets will be available by May 30.**

Above all, our most critical work right now is prayer, prayer, prayer. We ask for your unceasing prayers for our congregation during this transition. Please lift up our call committee daily, asking God to grant them unity, wisdom, and clear discernment as they work to find our next pastor. Let us also pray for the man God is already preparing to lead us. We move forward with eager anticipation, confident that God has always provided for His church and will continue to do so here.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." — Philippians 4:6

Blessings,
The Elders

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Debbie C., Recording Secretary

All items for the newsletter are to be submitted to Debbie C., editor, no later than noon on the 23rd of the month and, upon approval, may be edited for space or clarity.

Early submissions are appreciated.

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Lutheran Resources

LCMS- Free to be Faithful
www.lcms.org/socialissues/freetobe-faithful

Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty
www.LCRLFREEDOM.org

Lutheran Hour Ministries
<https://www.lhm.org/>

The Lutheran Witness
<https://witness.lcms.org/>

Southeastern District, LCMS
<https://se.lcms.org/>

Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
www.lcms.org/

Concordia Publishing House
www.cph.org/

International Lutheran Council
www.ILCouncil.org

Information is found throughout the *Star*.

Please plan on attending the Voters' Assembly after the service on June 14. We'll consider the 2025 Financial Review Report and get an update from the call committee. The Voters' Packets (agenda and copy of above-mentioned report) will be distributed no later than May 30. Check your email. Those without a known email address will find it in their file folders. If you didn't receive yours let me know. We will have a limited number of copies available at the meeting, it's best if you bring your own if desired (we're trying to avoid printing items that will go unused.)



CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

The call committee met, via Zoom, on May 22 with LCMS South Eastern District President Harmon who gave us an overview of the call process. That meeting was recorded and is available by request. This will only be available through June 14.

Our first "official" meeting was Thursday, May 21, where we discussed the process and what we, both as a congregation and as a call committee, need to accomplish. One of the key items is, while the process may take time, we as a committee don't want to be the rate-limiting step. Meaning we need to work as quickly as possible on those things we have control over. And that's where the congregation plays its part.

I have talked about participation; we sent out the "Personal and Pastoral Skills Ranking Worksheet" and we have received a fair number of responses. If you have not completed one, you can still turn one in. We then sent out the congregational self-assessment. I have received a few responses and would like more returned as soon as possible. Why is this important? We as a committee would like to complete the Congregational Profile, prior to the Voters' Assembly on June 14th. This is important because we would like to present it to the congregation for approval prior to sending to the district. We are somewhat ahead of the game, since we have already started on the Profile, with the objective data (statistics, demographics, etc.) already gathered. A demographic survey of the Aiken area was also requested for the call process. [Con't. p. 2]

But a survey was completed a couple of years ago and is still valid. So, we have already started working on the process.

The Voters' Assembly on June 14 is also where we would like congregational input on which path we would like to follow, either a seminarian or an active pastor. Each path has its advantages and disadvantages, and we may only pursue one at a time. If you have questions, please let me or a member of the committee know. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the June 14 meeting.

Lastly, while we want to continue having meetings right after service as usual, we may need to have meetings at other times. Part of this is to accommodate Pastor Harper's (the Circuit Visitor) schedule. We also may have information we need to get out or a decision we need to distribute quickly. So, if you see a call committee meeting announcement that is at an odd time, that's why.

Yours in Christ,
Joel



JUNE STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Most generally, when the topic of stewardship comes up, most people think only about raising funds for the church's budget or a specific need. Although this is one aspect of stewardship, I think we have all heard the terms of time, talent, and treasure. God wants us to offer up our time (volunteering, prayer, and Bible study), talents (skills, expertise, and spiritual gifts) and, treasures (financial resources).

The source of our Christian stewardship comes from being saved and redeemed so we can live with the knowledge all things belong to Him. We are called to be stewards of everything God has entrusted to us. Although the 10% tithe directive does appear in the Old Testament (Duet. 26: 12-14), the New Testament does not strictly follow that rule. I believe 2 Corinthians 9:7 describes it best; "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." The Bible tells us the money that we have and all the things that we own are all gifts from God. The Apostle Paul tells us, "We brought nothing into this world and it is certain that we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. 6:7). Some have more, some have less, but we all the opportunity (some call it a privilege) to support the work of the church through our financial offerings.

A little closer to home, as I monitor our recent trends in weekly offering, I feel I need to remind everyone the financial needs of the congregation have not decreased. While we temporarily lack direct pastoral salary and benefit commitments, those funds are still needed for potential candidate interviews, expenses, and ultimately, moving costs for our newly called shepherd. From my church life over the years, I have formed the opinion a pastoral vacancy can be a positive experience. Certainly, the pastor plays an important role, but during a vacancy, our congregation is reminded the church is US and operates effectively through the time, talents and treasures of its members.

During this time of pastoral vacancy, please continue to pray God will guide our congregation as we navigate the LCMS call process.

Remember, WE'VE GOT THIS, WITH GOD'S HELP!

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Z., BLC Stewardship Chairman



Call Committee Members

Elders

- Joel C.
- Steve W.
- Tom T.

Mark Z.

Joanne M.

Rebecca S.

Doug K.

**Pastor John Engwall's Installation at
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Sweet Springs, Missouri
May 3, 2026**

BLC CELEBRATES!

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Robert C
Eileen A
Lana L
Henry S
Joel C



ANNIVERSARIES

none



BLC Night Out on 5/19 at **metro**
-diner-



FUN
FOOD
FELLOWSHIP



DAD - Around the World

Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

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H A A P P D P O P S P Y F A
A B T O H E A R A P A B S P
A A S P D A Y D Y A R I G X
B B G F D Y A D D T P Z T Y
B D I Y A X D P B Y Y P P P
A P A H D A E A A M O P A H
I S P D D B P R Z P O W A M
L T I T A A N L D P P P D B
M M A R E R E P K A P M A B
G T S V E F Q M W A P B D A
A I R P H A D P P P A B D B
R K C N R J F A T H E R A B
N A M D L O M J P A P I C O
N A S - U O T O T A Y T A Y
  
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Abba	Dada	Padre	Pops
Appa	Dadda	Pai	Sir
Baba	Daddy	Papa	Sire
Baba	DaddyO	Papi	Tata
Babbo	Father	Pappa	Taytay
Bapa	Isa	PawPaw	Vati
Bapa	OldMan	Pere	
Da	Otou-san	Pop	
Dad	Pa	Poppy	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

As of May 20, there are still 10 spots available on the **altar flower sign-up** poster in the east narthex information center.

ACTS Collection for June – Canned Vegetables

Fellowship

- **June – Potluck after the Voters’ Assembly on June 14.** Sandwich fixings provided. Bring side or dessert to share.
- **Save the Date – Annual Independence Day Picnic tentatively scheduled for July 5**

Please **return your Life Choices’ baby bottle** by Father’s Day, June 21. Remember, make any checks out to “Life Choices”. Thanks!

BLC CLASSIFIEDS



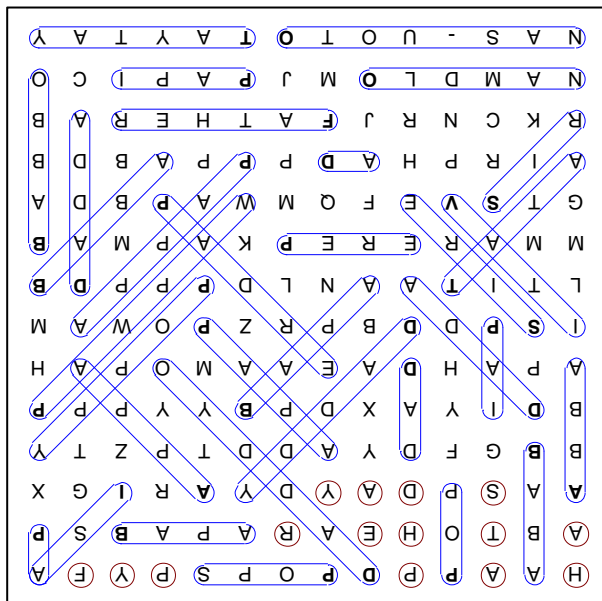
To place a classified ad in the *Star*, please submit the information to me by the usual monthly deadline- noon on the 23rd day of the month.

Please use your BLC Directory for contact information.

~DC

SERVICES OFFERED:

Dana A. (in his "semi-retirement") now is providing residential painting services, available to members and non-members alike. He offers great work at an affordable price, with MANY references available. Services include trim, ceilings, and cabinets.



NON-ENGLISH WORDS FOR DAD FOUND IN THE WORD SEARCH

- Abba (Aramaic, familiar)
- Appa (Korean)
- Baba (Arabic)
- Baba (Chinese)
- Babbo (Italian)
- Bapa (Indonesian)
- Bapa (Swahili)
- Isa (Finnish)
- Otou-san (Japanese)
- Padre (Spanish)
- Pai (Portuguese)
- Papa (Spanish)
- Papi (Spanish daddy)
- Pere (French)
- Tata (Hindi)
- Taytay (Filipino)
- Vati (German)

June 2026

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH AIKEN, SC

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
		10am Women's Bible Study	7pm Bible Study			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
9am Bible Study 10:30 Service		10am Women's Bible Study	7pm Bible Study			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
9am Bible Study 10:30 Service Voters' Assembly Flag Day		10am Women's Bible Study	7pm Bible Study			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
9am Bible Study 10:30 Service Baby Bottle ends Father's Day		10am Women's Bible Study	7pm Bible Study			
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
		10am Women's Bible Study				
5	6	<i>Notes</i> ACTS Collection: Canned Vegetables BLC Night Out / Activity - TBD				