



The STAR of Bethlehem



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

An LCMS Congregation

902 Hitchcock Drive SW, Aiken SC 29803

Pastor John Engwall, 803-649-6417, blcaikensc@gmail.com

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

https://www.facebook.com/BLCAikenSC/?ref=nf_target

Redacted Website Edition

February 2026

PASTOR'S MESSAGE: See pp. 2-4



Remember man
that you are
dust and into
dust you shall
return.

LENTEN SCHEDULE

Ash Wednesday – February 18

Services with imposition
of ashes at 11am and 7 pm
(No meals)

Wednesdays during Lent:

Feb 25, March 4, 11, 18, & 25

11am service followed by lunch
7pm service preceded by 6pm dinner
Potluck sign-up sheets will be posted.

Palm Sunday – March 29

10:30 Divine Service

Maundy Thursday – April 2

7pm Service

Good Friday – April 3

7pm Service

NOTE:

- Tuesday Women's Bible study ends Feb. 17 and resumes April 14.
- Wednesday evening Bible study ends Feb. 11 and resumes April 15.



EASTER – APRIL 5

9:00am Breakfast

10:30am Divine Service

Pastor's 2025 End of the Year Report to the Parish Council, Voters, and Elders

For the period beginning on 01-01-25 and ending on 12-31-25

1. Worship:

2025 average attendance: 43	2025 average communed: 39
2024 average attendance: 39	2024 average communed: 33

Special holiday services for 2026 will be according to our usual schedule:

Ash Wednesday: February 18th; services at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Lenten Wednesdays: Feb. 25th; Mar. 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th

Meals at 11:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; services at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Palm/ Passion Sunday: March 29th

Maundy Thursday: April 2nd; 7:00 p.m. Communion Service

Good Friday: April 3rd; 7:00 p.m. Tenebrae Service

Easter Sunday:

April 5th; 9:00 a.m. breakfast

10:30 a.m. Divine Service (outside, weather permitting)

2. Membership:

Current baptized membership: 91 2024 membership: 96 Net loss: (5)

Of our membership, twelve members, or 13%, are Shut-Ins

Gains:

by transfer: 5 by Baptism: 1 by Confirmation: 1

Total Gains: 7

Losses: by self-exclusion: 7 by decease: 3 by whereabouts unknown: 1 by transfer: 1

Total losses: 12

3. Official Acts:

Baptisms: 1 Confirmations: 2 Weddings: 2 Funerals: 2

4. Teaching:

Average Bible Study attendance: Sunday: 8 Tuesday: 5 Wednesday: 9

Summary:

Our losses reflect the fact that in 2025 we reconciled the church roster, resulting in a much more accurate census of our membership. The church roster ought to be reconciled on a regular basis, in order to maintain an accurate reflection of our parish. An in depth reporting of our parish statistics is available at lcms.org under the church locator feature; type in any church in the synod and you can download its profile, often for the past three years. Our statistics reflect that our membership is predominantly older, and also reflects a very stable parish.

/S/ Rev. John B. Engwall

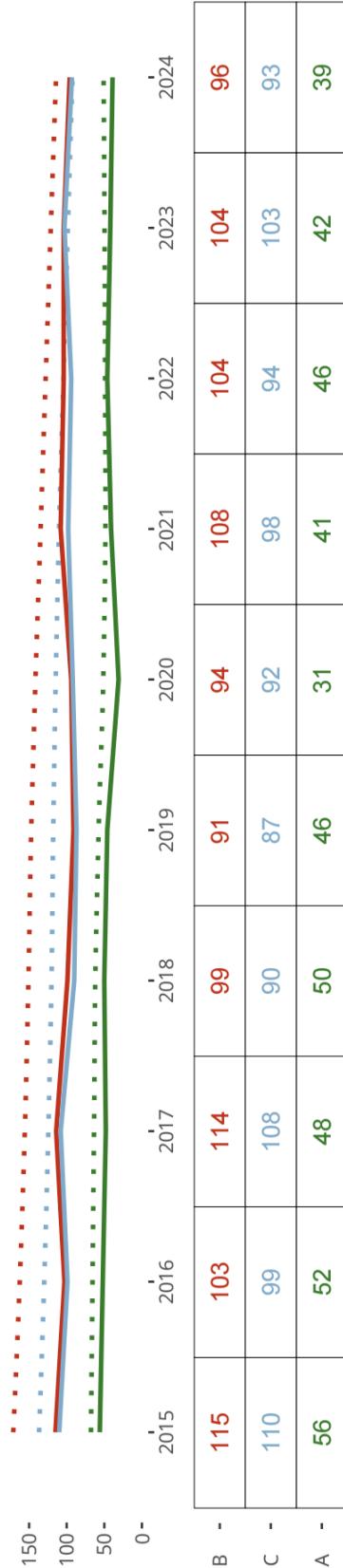
Statistical Profile for: Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Aiken, SC | Southeastern District | Last Reporting Year: 2024

*Based on annual statistics reported by the congregation.

Ten Year Trends for the Congregation in Membership and Attendance

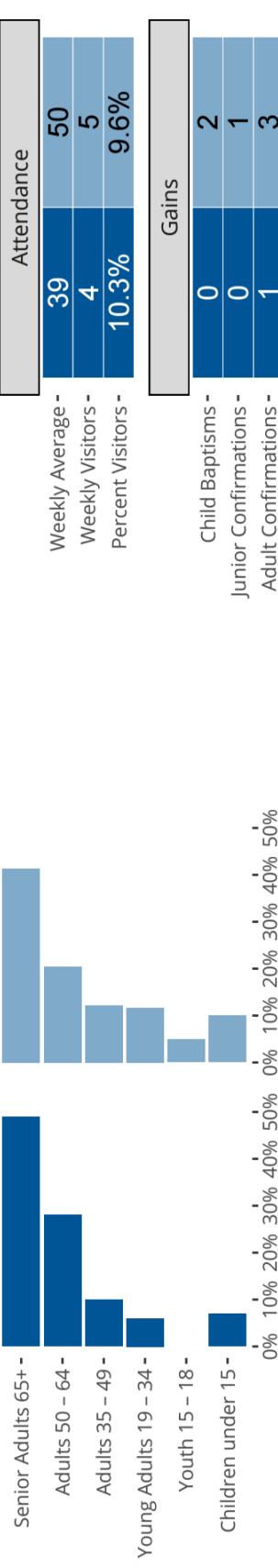
Statistic — MEMBERSHIP BAPTIZED — MEMBERSHIP CONFIRMED — AVG WEEKLY ATTEND



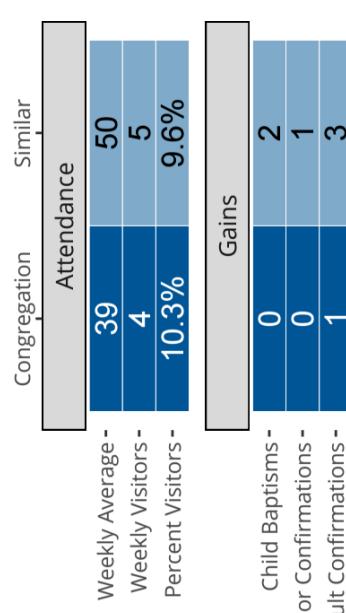
The dotted lines represent the average statistics of congregations with similar Confirmed Membership today.

Comparing Age Demographics of Members

This Congregation — Similar Congregations



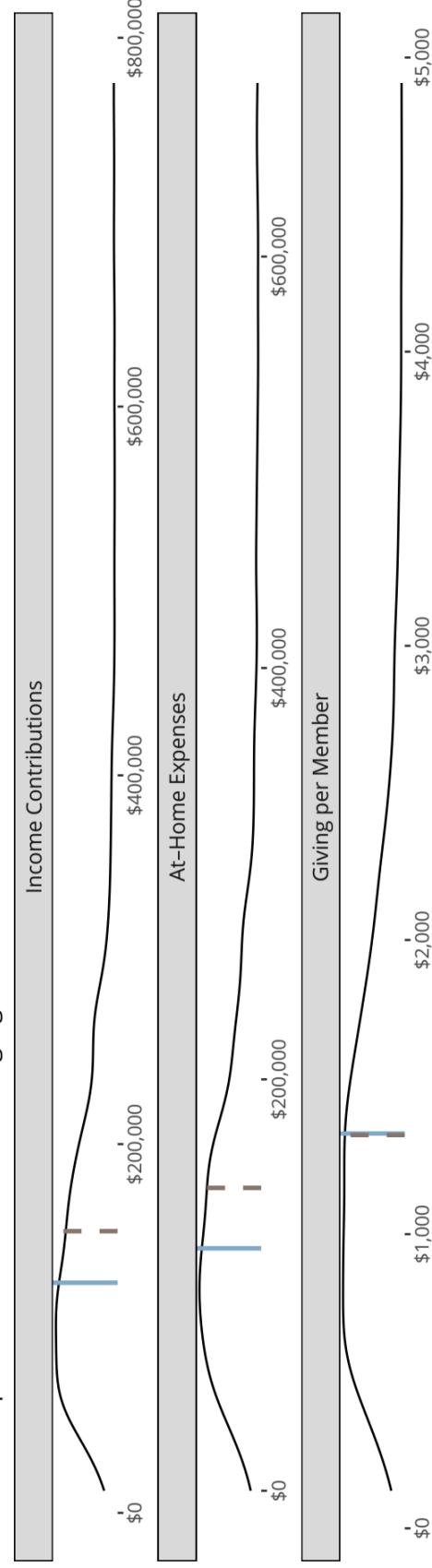
Attendance and Annual Gains



Similar congregations are other LCMS congregations with similar Confirmed Membership to this congregation.

*Based on annual statistics reported by the congregation.

Financial Comparison with Similar Size Congregations



*The curve represents the distribution of congregations with similar Confirmed Membership.
 The solid blue line represents the value of this congregation's current statistic.
 The dashed gray line represents the average value among similar congregations.*

Statistical Comparison With District and Synod

	Value	Percentile	District	Percentile	Synod
	People	People	Financials	Financials	Financials
Baptized Membership -	96	38%	34%	36%	38%
Confirmed Membership -	93	41%	39%	30%	53%
Worship Attendance -	39	32%	34%	32%	35%
Attendance : Baptized Ratio -	41%	39%	52%	37%	54%

Percentile is the congregation's rank as a percentage of the whole (e.g. 50% would be the middle ranking and 99% would be the highest).

If any data on this report is missing, it most likely means the data was not reported for the given year.

[From the Editor]

Some features rearranged this month. Photos of Jan. 25 potluck, if any, will be included in the March *Star*.

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

Early submissions are appreciated.

The STAR of Bethlehem newsletter is published monthly. The website and large print versions have been modified. The LCMS triple-cross logo is used with permission. All rights reserved.

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

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Debbie C., Recording Secretary

Our Jan. 18 meeting was postponed to Feb. 8. Nothing of note to report at the moment. FYI: Stewardship Chairman Mark Z. is still seeking volunteers for counting/witnesses and to serve on the committee in other ways.

BLC CELEBRATES!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Deb K

Herman L

Tom T



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Bill & Helga W

Chris & Liz S

Barry and Lana L

Ron & Linda W

MUSICAL NOTES

Rebecca W.

February Hymns and Listening Links Cycle A

February 1

592 Dearest Jesus We Are Here **LIEBSTER JESU, WIR SIND HEIR**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucsukL1eNEs&list=RDucsukL1eNEs&start_radio=1

842 Son of God, Eternal Savior **IN BABILON**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LFe8b2U7wc&list=RD1LFe8b2U7wc&start_radio=1

683 Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me **RYBURN**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NU8DzJjMKVc&list=RDNU8DzJjMKVc&start_radio=1

427 In the Cross of Christ I Glory **RATHBURN**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfZgP1c_6Js&list=RDTfZgP1c_6Js&start_radio=1

February 8

825 Rise, Shine You People **WOJTKIEWIECZ**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnpEyAYdkvM&list=RDFnpEyAYdkvM&start_radio=1

578 Thy Strong Word **EBENEZER**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiGVwbBCv9Q&list=RDLiGVwbBCv9Q&start_radio=1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EThLBMeTnDM&list=RDETbLBMeTnDM&start_radio=1

563 Jesus Thy Blood and Righteousness **ST CRISPIN**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EV6ywa1PJjI&list=RDEV6ywa1PJjI&start_radio=1

411 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light **HOUSTON**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PBSab0xF_M&list=RD5PBSab0xF_M&start_radio=1

February 15 (Transfiguration)

400 Brightest and Best of the Starts of the Morning **MORNING STAR**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iaXtBgSY3A&list=RD4iaXtBgSY3A&start_radio=1

415 Jesus on the Mountain Peak **SEWARD**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsP2oibl7bc&list=RDdsP2oibl7bc&start_radio=1

620 Jesus Comes Today with Healing **ALES IST AN GOTTES SEGEN**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADhBzhKMrmY&list=RDADhBzhKMrmY&start_radio=1

416 Swiftly Pass the Clouds of Glory **LOVE'S DELIGHT**

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=LSB+416

February 22 (Lent 1)

569 In Adam We Have Been One **SAINTS DELIGHT**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgJJaNYrFhE&list=RDWgJJaNYrFhE&start_radio=1

657 A Mighty Fortress **EIN FESTE BURG**

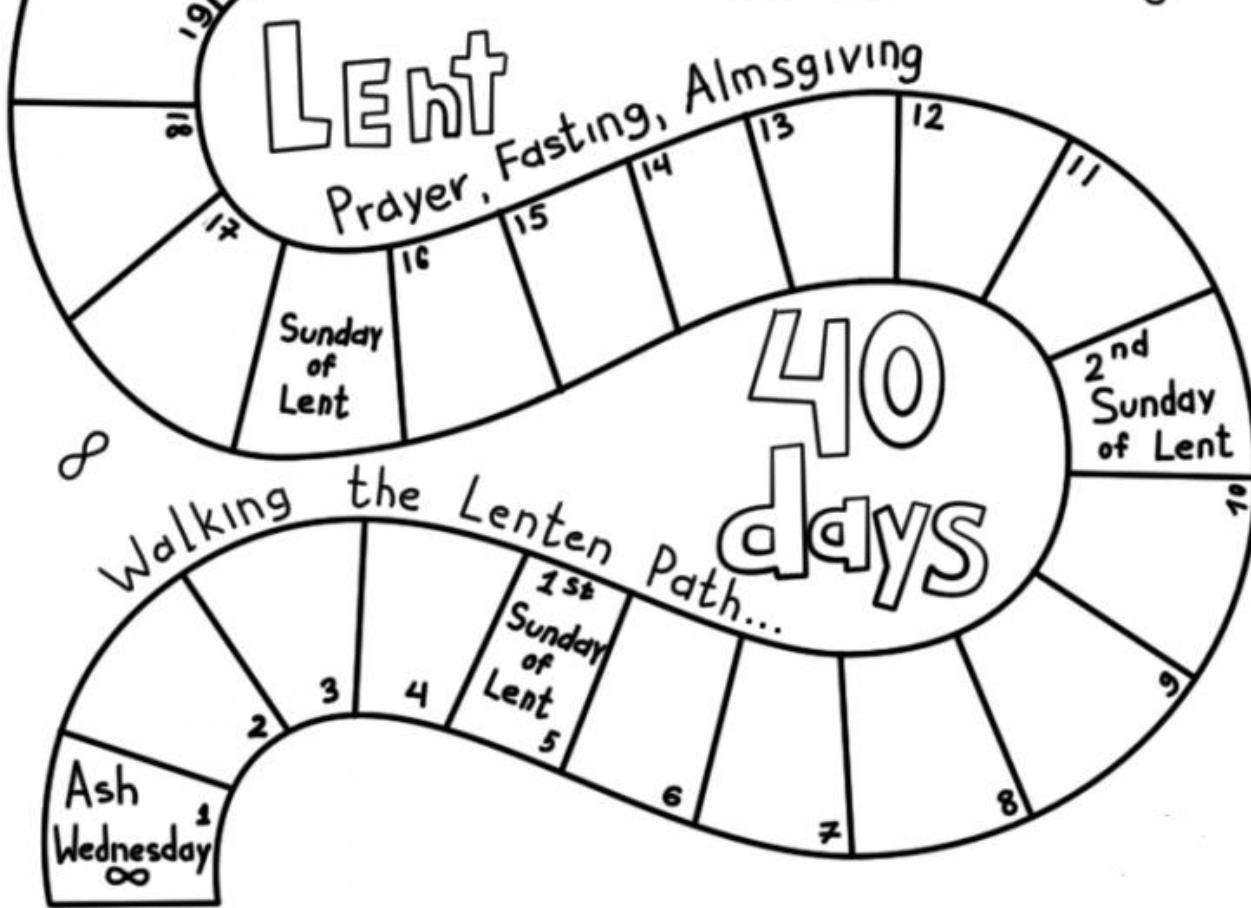
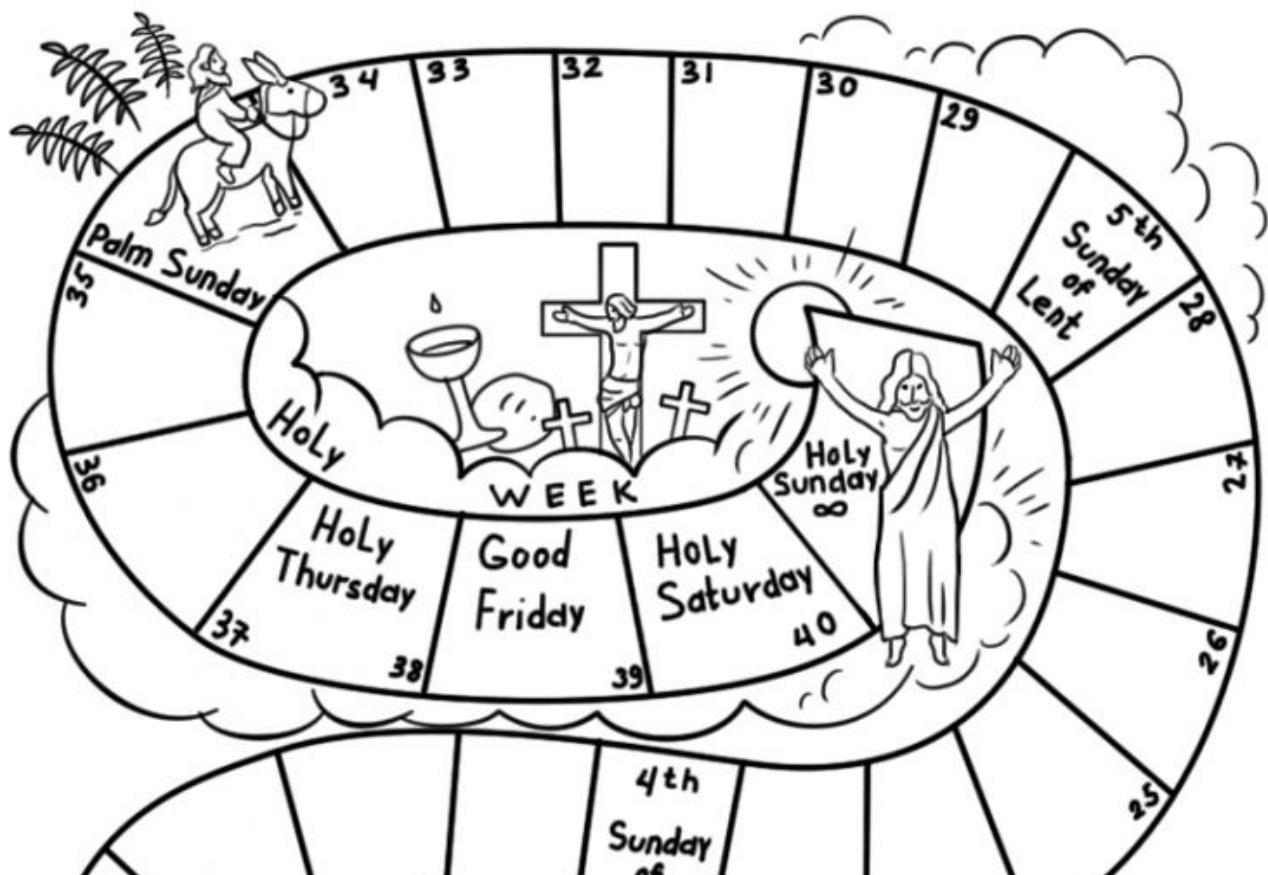
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTjmnGTs5fY&list=RDmTjmnGTs5fY&start_radio=1

561 The Tree of Life **TREE OF LIFE**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYhgINT7TTk&list=RDIYhgINT7TTk&start_radio=1

575 My Hope is Built on Nothing Less **MAGDALEN**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1mYKnN84rc&list=RDo1mYKnN84rc&start_radio=1



LENT VOCABULARY 2026

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.

F	O	E	C	N	E	N	I	T	S	B	A	R	G	D	T	I
V	E	N	L	A	M	B	B	Q	C	N	M	N	K	E	H	G
F	P	K	Z	A	N	V	B	L	O	R	C	V	N	S	O	B
G	Y	G	M	F	L	T	B	I	M	G	O	Y	P	E	R	G
D	H	L	T	S	R	M	X	P	S	V	N	W	C	R	N	H
R	U	V	J	I	S	I	S	C	W	L	F	N	N	T	S	G
G	K	S	D	R	F	O	O	G	X	M	E	N	T	G	S	N
V	B	U	T	I	S	U	R	Y	I	T	S	Y	W	L	E	I
Y	U	Y	C	M	R	Q	N	C	I	V	S	F	B	E	H	T
M	H	U	L	G	J	C	M	N	B	M	I	M	M	C	S	S
B	R	A	E	O	J	Y	E	X	G	Y	O	N	L	I	A	A
C	P	C	Z	J	H	P	L	N	C	N	N	Q	G	F	B	F
S	H	R	O	V	E	V	P	R	G	T	G	T	C	I	V	B
Y	D	N	U	A	M	L	E	S	A	R	G	I	D	R	A	M
V	N	T	G	T	H	M	K	K	M	R	F	L	K	C	Y	D
P	G	R	K	T	G	V	T	E	L	O	I	V	C	A	J	T
Q	R	E	P	E	N	T	A	N	C	E	L	G	G	S	Q	C

© DeborahC. Made using 1-2-3 Word Search Maker™

Abstinence	Dust	Penitence
Almsgiving	Fasting	Repentance
Ashes	Holy	Sacrifice
Confession	Lamb	Scourge
Cross	MardiGras	Shrove
Crown	Maundy	Thorns
Crucifixion	Mercy	Triduum
Desert	Palms	Violet

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February ACTS Collection: Macaroni & Cheese (Questions – contact Mark Z.)

FELLOWSHIP

Reminder! We have a coffee “hour” (between Bible study and service, and after the service). Sandy is in charge of this and would like volunteers to bring treats. Please let Sandy know if you can help.

We are looking for Fellowship activity ideas such as: game day/night, a picnic, outings of any type... If you have an idea of something that we aren't already doing please let Kathy Sa. know. All ideas will be helpful.

FEBRUARY

- 10: BLC night out, 4:30 at Habaneros
- 15: Pancake lunch after the service. A sign-up sheet will be posted.
- 25: Lent meals – Sign-up sheets will be posted.
- TLC Meals on the 8th and 22nd. We are asking for volunteers to prepare and/or deliver.

SAVE THE DATES

MARCH

- Lent meals on 4, 11, 18, and 25
- No BLC night out but, we will have a potluck on March 22.
- TLC Meals on the 8th and 22nd.

APRIL

- 5: 9 am Easter Breakfast
- 21: BLC night out at Sukiya Japanese Steak House at 5 pm
(please notice the time change - it stays lighter later)
- 26: Potluck
- TLC meals on the 12th and 26th.

BLC CLASSIFIEDS



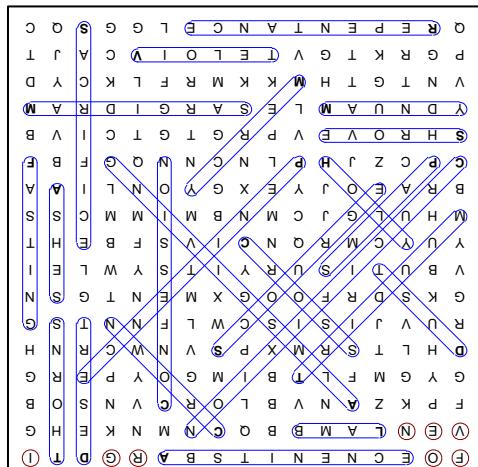
To place a classified ad in the *Star*, please submit the information to me by the usual monthly deadline- noon on the 23rd day of the month.
Please use your BLC Directory for contact information.

~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.

FOR SALE: etc...



February 2026

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH AIKEN, SC

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service ACTS & TLC Meals	2 3 10am Women's Bible Study	3 4 7pm Bible Study	5 Pastor Shut-in Visits	6	7 Pastor's Day Off	
8 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	9 10 10am Women's Bible Study 5pm Habaneros	11 12 7pm Bible Study	13 Pastor Shut-in Visits	14 Pastor's Day Off		
15 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service Pancake Lunch	16 17 10am Women's Bible Study	18 19 11am Service 7pm Service	20 Pastor Shut-in Visits	21 Pastor's Day Off		
22 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	23 24 Presidents' Day	25 11am Service, lunch 6pm dinner 7pm Service	26 Pastor Shut-in Visits	27 Pastor's Day Off		
1 8 9	2 3 4 Notes	5 6 7 T and W Bible studies schedule change- see announcements ACTS- Macaroni & Cheese				