



# *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](mailto:blcaikensc@gmail.com)

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

[https://www.facebook.com/BLCAikenSC/?ref=nf\\_target](https://www.facebook.com/BLCAikenSC/?ref=nf_target)

Redacted Website Edition

February 2026

**PASTOR'S MESSAGE:** See pp. 2-4

## **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



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

#### **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](http://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.

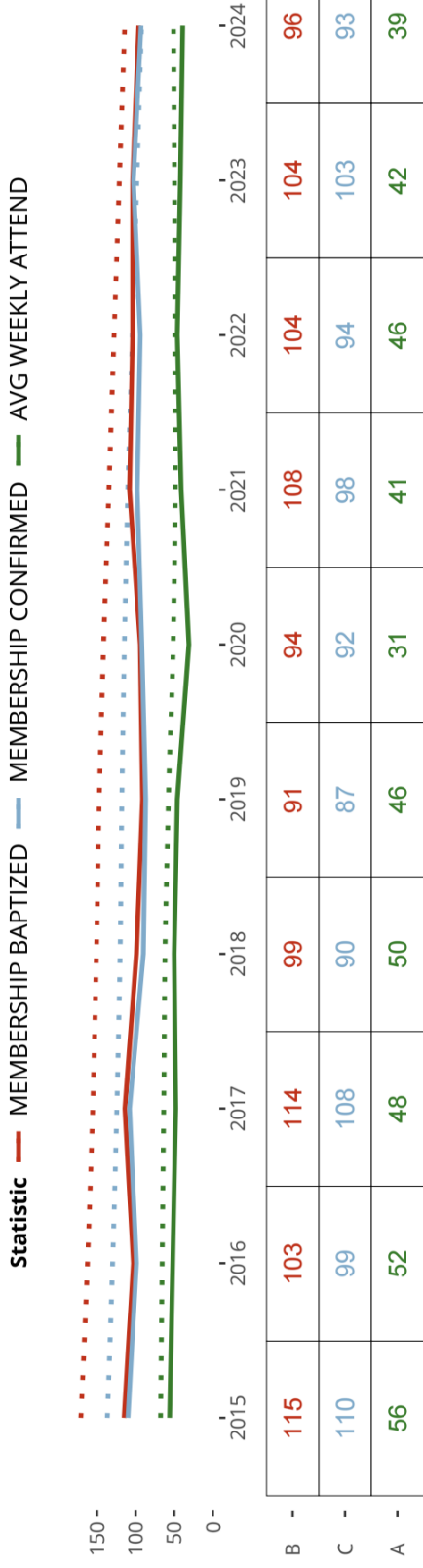
/S/ Rev. John B. Engwall

Statistical Profile for: **Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

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

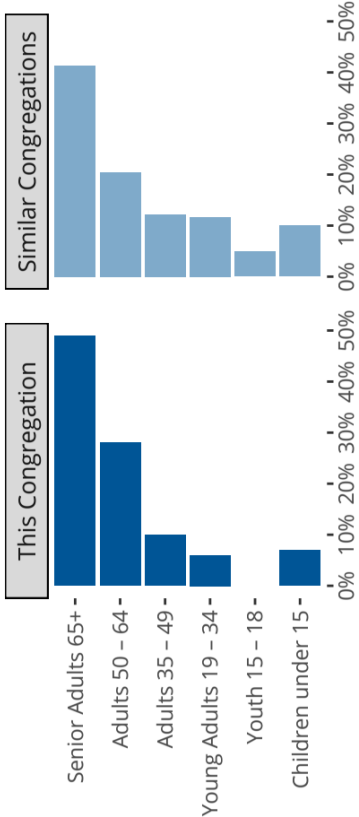
\*Based on annual statistics reported by the congregation.

Ten Year Trends for the Congregation in Membership and Attendance

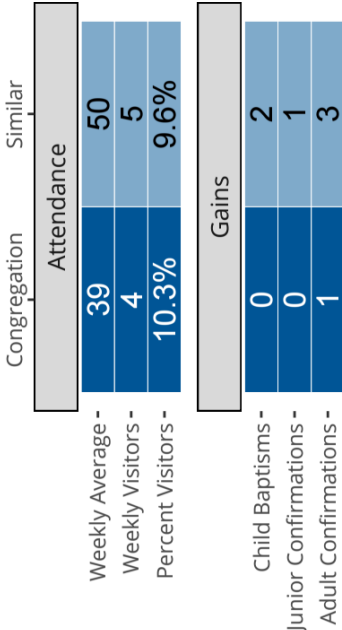


The dotted lines represent the average statistics of congregations with similar Confirmed Membership today.

Comparing Age Demographics of Members

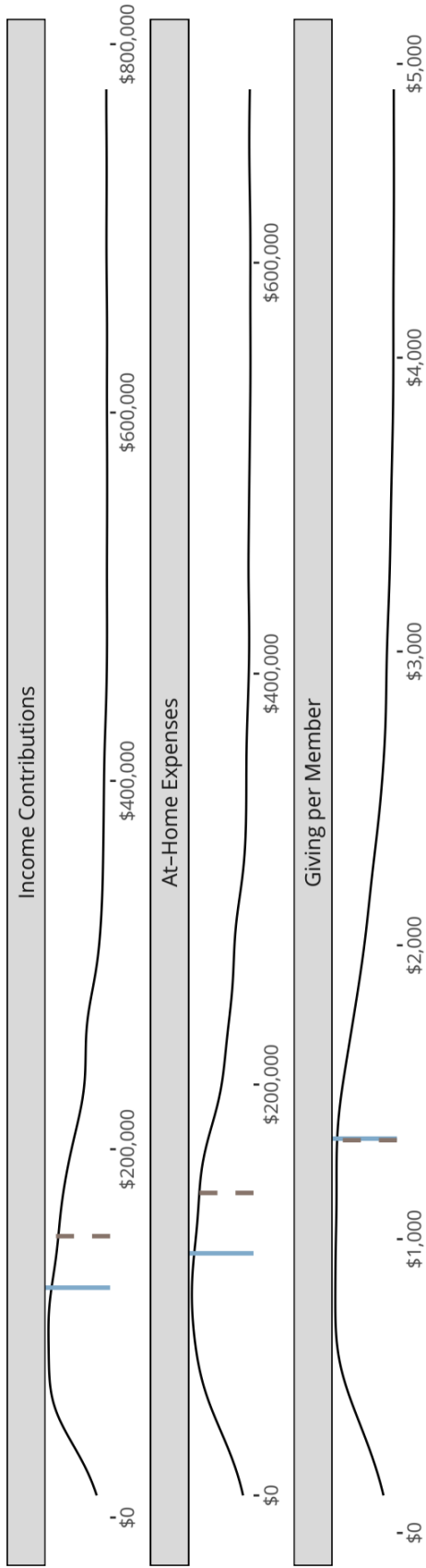


Attendance and Annual Gains



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

	People			Financials		
	Value	Percentile District	Percentile Synod	Value	Percentile District	Percentile Synod
Baptized Membership -	96	38%	34%	Contributions -	\$124,823	36%
Confirmed Membership -	93	41%	39%	Contribs per Cnf. Member -	\$1,342	30%
Worship Attendance -	39	32%	34%	At-Home Expenses -	\$117,857	32%
Attendance : Baptized Ratio -	41%	39%	52%	Expenses per Bpt. Member -	\$1,228	37%

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.

All items for the newsletter are to be submitted to Debbie C., editor, no later than the 23<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.lcms.org/socialissues/freetobe-faithful)

Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty  
[www.LCRLFreedom.org](http://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/](http://www.lcms.org/)

Concordia Publishing House  
[www.cph.org/](http://www.cph.org/)

International Lutheran Council  
[www.ILCouncil.org](http://www.ILCouncil.org)

### **[From the Editor]**

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

### **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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucsukL1eNEs&list=RDucsukL1eNEs&start_radio=1)

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

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LFe8b2U7wc&list=RD1LFe8b2U7wc&start\\_radio=1](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](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=RD TfZgP1c\\_6Js&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfZgP1c_6Js&list=RD TfZgP1c_6Js&start_radio=1)

#### February 8

**825** Rise, Shine You People **WOJTKIEWIECZ**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnpEyAYdkvM&list=RD FnpEyAYdkvM&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnpEyAYdkvM&list=RD FnpEyAYdkvM&start_radio=1)

**578** Thy Strong Word **EBENEZER**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiGVwbBCv9Q&list=RD LiGVwbBCv9Q&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiGVwbBCv9Q&list=RD LiGVwbBCv9Q&start_radio=1)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ET hLBMeTnDM&list=RD ET hLBMeTnDM&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ET hLBMeTnDM&list=RD ET hLBMeTnDM&start_radio=1)

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

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EV6ywa1PJl&list=RDEV6ywa1PJl&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EV6ywa1PJl&list=RDEV6ywa1PJl&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](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](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](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](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](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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgJJaNyrfhE&list=RDWgJJaNyrfhE&start_radio=1)

**657** A Mighty Fortress **EIN FESTE BURG**

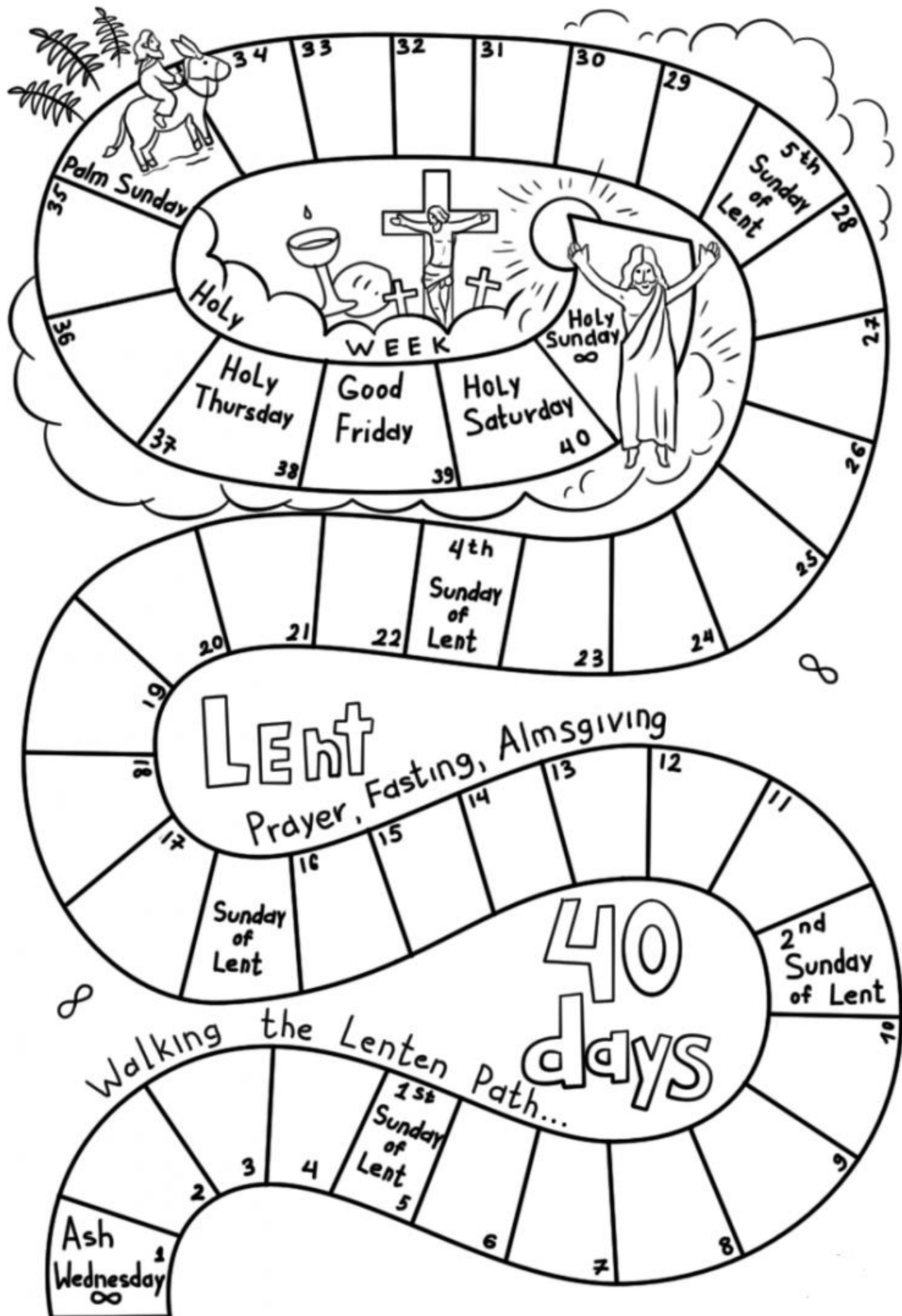
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTjmnGTs5fY&list=RDmTjmnGTs5fY&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTjmnGTs5fY&list=RDmTjmnGTs5fY&start_radio=1)

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

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYhgINT7TTk&list=RD IYhgINT7TTk&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYhgINT7TTk&list=RD IYhgINT7TTk&start_radio=1)

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

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1mYKnN84rc&list=RD o1mYKnN84rc&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1mYKnN84rc&list=RD o1mYKnN84rc&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 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the month.

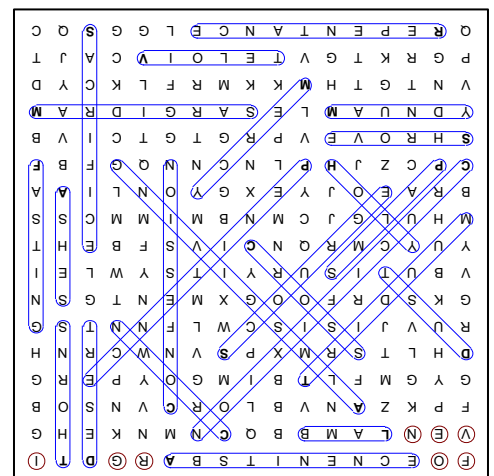
Please use your BLC Directory for contact information.

~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	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 7pm Bible Study	12 Pastor Shut-in Visits	13	14 Pastor's Day Off
15 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service Pancake Lunch	16	17 10am Women's Bible Study	18 11am Service 7pm Service Ash Wednesday	19 Pastor Shut-in Visits	20	21 Pastor's Day Off
22 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	23 Presidents' Day	24 10am Women's Bible Study	25 11am Service, lunch 6pm dinner 7pm Service	26 Pastor Shut-in Visits	27	28 Pastor's Day Off
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	<i>Notes</i> T and W Bible studies schedule change- see announcements ACTS- Macaroni & Cheese				