



The STAR of Bethlehem



**Bethlehem Lutheran Church
An LCMS Congregation**

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Redacted Website Edition

August 2026

THE ELDERS'



CORNER

A Message from Your Elders: Our Help Comes from the Lord

As we continue through this season of pastoral vacancy, we give thanks to God for His faithful provision. Although we await the pastor whom the Lord will provide for Bethlehem, Christ has never ceased caring for His Church. Through the faithful preaching of His Holy Word and the **right administration of His Holy Sacraments**, our Lord continues to nourish, strengthen, and preserve His people in the one true faith.

We look forward to welcoming **Rev. Timothy Sandeno** on **August 2**. Rev. Sandeno and his wife, Lisa, serve as LCMS missionaries in Germany, sharing the Gospel with U.S. military personnel and English-speaking residents. As Rev. Sandeno leads us in Divine Service and celebrates the Lord's Supper, we are reminded that the same Gospel proclaimed here at Bethlehem is carried throughout the world. We give thanks that the Lord continues to send His servants to proclaim **Christ crucified and risen**, calling sinners to repentance and faith through His saving Gospel.

We also rejoice that the Lord continues to guide our pastoral call process. Through the work of our South Carolina District President, **Rev. Dr. Bill Harmon**, the Call Committee has received a pastoral call list and will soon begin its prayerful deliberations. We trust the Lord to provide according to His perfect wisdom and timing. As we wait upon the Lord, let us remain steadfast in worship, prayer, and Christian service. **Strengthened by Word and Sacrament**, every act of kindness, every helping hand, every word of encouragement, and every prayer offered in faith reflects Christ's love among us. Each member of the Body of Christ has been given gifts to serve, and through God's Word the Holy Spirit strengthens and unites us as we encourage one another.

Please continue to pray for our Call Committee, for the pastors whose names have been placed before them, and for God's guidance throughout the call process. Above all, let us place our confidence in our ****Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—****who has faithfully sustained His Church and promised never to forsake His people. As He has provided for us in the past, so He will continue to provide in His perfect time.

**"I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?
My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth."**

— Psalm 121:1-2

**In Christ,
The Elders**

[FROM THE EDITOR:]

We have a new contributor this month. Please see the article by our own Henry S. Given timing, photos from the July 26 potluck will be in the September edition. Do you miss having the Lutheran sources side bar? Let me know. August announcements are found on this page. Hoping to resume activity pages next month.

~DC

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Debbie C., Recording Secretary

The Council met on July 12.

- Treasurer – donations are keeping apace with budgeted needs. Thanks!
- Stewardship - 27 of 30 baby bottles were returned providing \$783.11 for Life Choices. An approximately 15% increase over 2025 contributions. Thanks for your generosity. The remaining bottles may be dropped off at BLC or directly to Life Choices on Pine Log Rd., near McDonalds.
- Property - The parsonage has been cleaned and is supplied with the necessary items to enable visiting pastors to stay there comfortably. If you have any questions about what may be needed in future, please speak with Property Manager Jonathan Hesse.
- Elders –
 - Thanks to a donation, the wax chancel candles will be replaced with refillable oil-candles.
 - Pastor Harmon of Mt. Olive is providing Communion to our shut-ins once a month.
 - Visiting pastors are being scheduled as often as possible- watch for announcements for dates.

Our next meeting will be September 13, after the service. At that time, we will be appointing the annual nominating committee to help seek volunteers to serve on the Council. Please prayerfully consider how you can serve the Lord in this way. For the 2027-2028 term we will need: president, vice president, recording secretary, stewardship chairman, and fellowship chairman (some of the currently serving council members are term-limited!) On top of that, we need volunteers to complete the final year of the vacant chairmanships for education and mission & evangelism. Are you willing? If not you, who? Please consider who would do well with these jobs. If you would like to serve on the nominating committee or have ideas of potential volunteers for these positions, please speak to any current council member. This fall, to make any nominations, please be sure to get the nominee's permission prior to submitting his/her name.

[I suppose if volunteers don't step up, we can "cast lots". Wouldn't that be interesting! 😊]

FELLOWSHIP

- August 18 – BLC Night Out – watch bulletin for details
 - August 30 – Potluck, meat provided

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.

AUGUST STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Mark Z., BLC Stewardship Director

Who doesn't like a good Top 10? Sometimes, I switch over to ESPN Sports Center in the morning near the top of the hour when they run their Top 10 sports plays of the previous day just for fun. I got to thinking one day, what would God's Top 10 Miracles look like and I realized just being alive is a miracle.

Here are my favorites of God's Top 10 Miracles, in no order of importance, except for the last two. Your favorites may differ and that's just fine.

1. **Raising Lazarus from the Dead** (John 11:1–44) — Jesus demonstrates power over the grave by commanding Lazarus to walk out of his tomb four days after his death
2. **Feeding the Five Thousand** (Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:30–44, Luke 9:10–17, John 6:5–14) — The only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. Jesus miraculously multiplies five loaves of bread and two fish to feed a massive crowd, providing abundantly.
3. **Walking on Water** (Matthew 14:22–33, Mark 6:45–52, John 6:16–21) — Jesus walks across the stormy Sea of Galilee at night, demonstrating divine authority over the laws of nature.
4. **Calming the Storm** (Matthew 8:23–27, Mark 4:35–41, Luke 8:22–25) — With a simple "Quiet! Be still!", Jesus instantly halts a terrifying tempest, revealing His power over creation.
5. **Changing Water into Wine** (John 2:1–11) — At the Wedding in Cana, Jesus performs His first public miracle, turning jars of water into choice wine to save a host from embarrassment.
6. **Healing the Man Born Blind** (John 9:1–41) — Jesus restores sight to a man blind from birth, using mud and instructing him to wash in the pool of Siloam.
7. **Healing the Paralytic at Capernaum** (Matthew 9:1–8, Mark 2:1–12, Luke 5:18–26) — Lowered through a roof by his friends, the paralyzed man is healed both physically and spiritually when Jesus forgives his sins.
8. **Healing the Centurion's Servant** (Matthew 8:5–13, Luke 7:1–10) — Displaying His authority over distance, Jesus heals a Roman centurion's servant through spoken word alone, praising the centurion's great faith.

And now for the "biggies!"

9. **Creation** (Genesis chapters 1 & 2) — Simply stated, this is the account of how it all started.
10. **Resurrection of Jesus** (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20) — The foundational miracle of Christianity. Jesus conquered death, validating His teachings and offering salvation.

So, what does all this have to do with our Stewardship? Our God has done so many wonderful things for us all, right up to giving us the ultimate gift of his Death and Resurrection. How can we not respond with our gifts of time, talent and treasures. It's just that simple!

Please continue with prayer and patience as the LCMS call process moves forward.

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



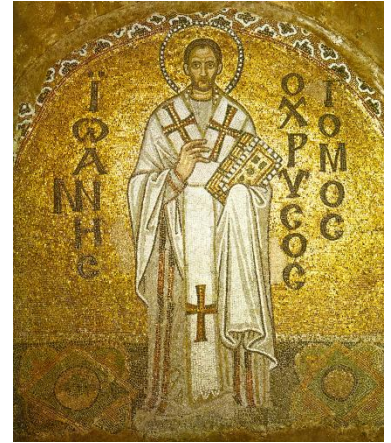
ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

By Henry S.

(St. Paul writing to Timothy:) *“Proclaim the message, be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching.”* (2 Tim 4:2)

Today the Universal Church, East and West, honors the greatest preacher among the church fathers: St. John Chrysostom. His nickname “Chrysostom” means “golden-mouthed” and it is said that when he preached the people were so intent on hearing him (the people stood during the entire worship service in those days), the pickpockets had a field day.

He was born about 347 AD in Antioch. His father, an army officer, died young and he was raised by his mother. He received a fine education in philosophy, rhetoric, and law and was preparing to be a lawyer. Deeply influenced by Bishop Melitius, John became fervent in faith and was baptized at age 18. He became a monk and ruined his health by severe discipline, fasting, going without sleep, and living as a hermit for two years in a damp cave. In 381 he returned to the city and was ordained a deacon, and in 386, a priest. He was assigned to preach at the cathedral in Antioch, and had a very productive period of 12 years during which he preached 90 sermons on Matthew’s Gospel and 86 sermons on John’s Gospel, sermons on other books of the Bible, and wrote a book *On the Priesthood*. His sermons are still available in print and on the internet.



In 398, John was appointed Bishop of Constantinople, then the capital of the Roman Empire. “From the first he gave offence to all: his uncompromising denunciation of vice affected the clergy as well as the rich; his refusal to parade in pomp, his ascetic practices, his profuse almsgiving, his selling of some marbles bought for one of the churches in order to provide a hospital for sick strangers - all earned him unpopularity. Entirely fearless, he fulminated against iniquity wherever he perceived it...” (J.G. Davies, *The Early Christian Church* p. 220) Empress Eudoxia especially hated and despised him, and he dared to attack her from the pulpit: “Again Herodius raves, again she dances, again she demands John’s head on a platter.” (*Eerdman’s Handbook, Hist. of Chr. P.* 191)

In 403 AD, he was deposed by a synod of 22 bishops under Eudoxia’s control without the opportunity of defending himself, but when an earthquake struck the empress had him recalled. The next year, she had the emperor order John to cease his official church duties. John refused, and the imperial soldiers drove John out of the church while he was baptizing catechumens on Holy Saturday 404 AD: blood stained the baptismal waters.

Again John was exiled in 404. His followers rioted and burned the senate, the forum, and the cathedral. Bishop John was treated harshly and cruelly in exile: in 407 he was forced to travel a long distance on foot, in bad weather, in poor health and exhausted, which caused his death.

In addition to the sermons and Bible commentaries, his greatest gift to the church was the magnificent liturgy he composed. It has been revised somewhat over the years, but “The Liturgy of St John Chrysostom” remains the standard worship service for the Eastern Orthodox churches, celebrated every Sunday to our own day.

“The Lord is glorious in His saints; O come, let us adore him.”

BLC CELEBRATES!

BIRTHDAYS

Carolina C
Kelli R
Judy S



ANNIVERSARIES

Chuck & Joanne M

Contact Debbie C. to
add your special occasions
or to make corrections.

Call Committee Update

I have received a Call List from the district. Pastor Harper is contacting these pastors to see if they are available for a call. Once he has a response from them, the Call Committee will review the candidates' profiles and decide which ones we may like to interview. I will then contact those pastors and set up interview times that are convenient for them and the Committee.

Continue praying for the Call Committee and for Bethlehem as we work our way through this process.

In Christ,
Joel

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 Aubel (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.

FREE - 42" round glass table top from outdoor patio table, no scratches, no hole, free delivery
Text or call Mark Z

For sale, help wanted, recommendation needed, etc...

Please participate in our classifieds.

August 2026

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH AIKEN, SC

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9am Bible Study 10:30 Service ✨	10am Women's Bible Study		7pm Bible Study			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	10am Women's Bible Study		7pm Bible Study			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	10am Women's Bible Study		7pm Bible Study			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	10am Women's Bible Study		7pm Bible Study			
30	31	Notes ACTS Collection: Canned Beans Watch bulletin for fellowship opportunities				
9am Bible Study 10:30 Service						