



# *The STAR of Bethlehem*



**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**  
**An LCMS Congregation**

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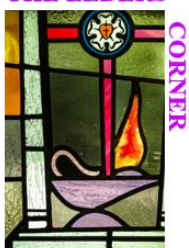
<https://sites.google.com/view/blcaikensc/home>

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

Redacted Website Edition

October 2026

## THE ELDERS'



*Grace, peace and mercy be to us from God the Father and Jesus Christ.*

2 John 1:3

While a vacancy can seem to be somewhat intimidating, we must all remember that we are of one body in Christ. We are Christ's Church at Bethlehem.

During this search for the pastor our Lord has set aside for us, we as a church must still function. Within this body known as Bethlehem, "...each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us". (Romans 12:4-6) We are thankful for those who have stepped up and taken on roles they might not have envisioned themselves fulfilling. Yet, we still need individuals to fill roles on the church council. If approached, we ask that you prayerfully consider your part in serving Bethlehem. Most of all, remember that none of us are perfect. We are all doing the best that we can. In Matthew 16, Peter asks Jesus how many times he must forgive his brother. Jesus says seven times seventy. Jesus did not mean literally 490 times, but endlessly. So, if someone steps on your toes remember, they are doing their best and just as Christ has forgiven us, give them your forgiveness.

While the initial call list, wasn't as desirable as we may have liked, the second may prove to be more fruitful. Give the call committee time to review and speak with potential candidates. Again, you may be asked for your help or advice on a matter where you may have experience. Some of you were here during the last vacancy. You may have an insight that may prove valuable. We are striving to be as open and inclusive as possible with this search.

Lastly, continue to pray. Pray for Bethlehem. Pray for the church council. Pray for the call committee. Pray for the pastor our Lord has for us. "... also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. (James 5:8)

In Christ,  
Council President and Head Elder Joel C.

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:]

The Elders' Corner article on page 1 includes the call committee update.

Please note the addition of this symbol to the calendar:  I've started using it when we know we'll have a visiting pastor who will provide Communion during the Divine Service.

We're updating the list of those who receive printed copies of the *Star*. Please let me know if you require a printed copy and if you prefer regular or large print. Thanks!

Similarly, please let Carolina know if you need a large-print service bulletin printed each Sunday. We want to have enough, without making excessive unused copies. Thanks.

I've served for six years as the *Star's* editor. While I'm happy to continue, I'm also quite willing to step aside if someone else wants a turn. Speak to me, Debbie C., if you are interested.

## CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Debbie C., Recording Secretary

At our Sept. 13 meeting, we appointed Mark Z. as nominating committee chairman\*. The 2027-2028 slate will be elected at our Dec. 6 Year-End Voters' Assembly. **(Save the date!)** All nominations must be made by Nov. 19 to allow time to prepare and distribute the voters' packets according to the Bylaws' 15-day advance notice requirement. Remember, last-minute floor nominations on the day of the assemblies are not accepted. If you have a nomination, please be sure to get the nominees' permission first.

Treasurer Dana A. was appointed as chairman for the annual financial plan (budget) committee\*. If your BLC volunteer position includes managing a piece of the budget, please let him know your anticipated needs no later than the end of October so there is time to fully prepare the proposed budget to present at the November council meeting, and then for approval at the above-mentioned Voters' Assembly.

Kathy S-y and Eileen A. have been appointed as co-financial secretaries. Thanks to Angela for helping during the transition.

Other highlights are found on the elders' or announcements pages. Out next meeting is Oct. 22 at 6 p.m.

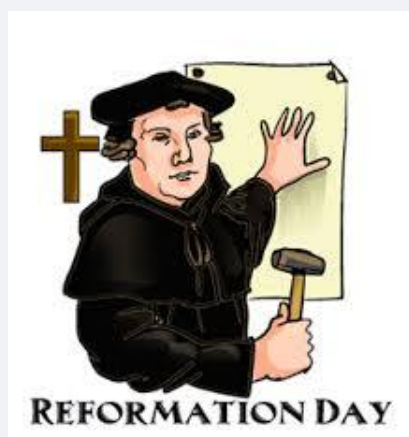
\*At the time of publication, other members for the two committees were still being sought.

## BLC CELEBRATES!

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### BIRTHDAYS

Juanita R  
Steve W  
Bob A  
Angela S  
Joanne M  
Benton B  
Mike O  
Roger B  
Noah D  
Betty B



### ANNIVERSARIES

Theron & Kelli R  
Bob & Eileen A  
Matthew and Dana W

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

## STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

### By Mark Z., Stewardship Chairman

Winston Churchill reportedly said, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” According to Churchill, our lives are defined not by what we have gotten, but by what we give away. Although this is a very noble statement, the struggle we have with this concept as Christians, is we need to remember we cannot “buy” or “earn” our way into Heaven.

When we are singularly focused on making a living, we become singularly focused on what we get. That mindset begins to bleed into all areas of our relationships with friends and family, with neighbors and coworkers and with the Lord. It shifts our focus from asking the questions, “How can I be a friend, family member, neighbor, and servant to others?” or “What have they done for me lately?” We become more selfish instead of selfless.

How many of us have had heard Jesus’ words from Acts 20:35, “It is more blessed to give than to receive?” If we are honest with ourselves, we should admit that giving of one’s time, talents and/or wealth does tend to make us feel better. When we give, we do not have less, nor do we become less; rather, we have more and become more. When we give, we join in the bond of friendship and family along with the bond of service to those around us out of love for them.

Luke 12:48 says, “To whom much is given, much is required.” God does expect us to use our unique talents, time and wealth to help others and support our community rather than just serving ourselves.

Our Lord gave His life in order fulfill God’s plan to save us from sin, death, and hell. How can we not return our first fruits in thankfulness for all He has done for us!

And remember,

**WE’VE GOT THIS, WITH GOD’S HELP!**

Advise Mark Z. if you want to receive offering envelopes for 2027. The ordering deadline is approaching so don’t delay. Thanks!

**POTLUCK  
AUGUST 30**



## ST. ATHANASIUS

By Henry S.

### Jesus said, *“The Father and I are one.”*

(John 10:30)

St. Athanasius was one of the most important theologians of the church, honored by all Christians, East and West. The theme of his life and teaching is the Divinity of Jesus Christ: the human man Jesus was truly and completely GOD.

Born of a Christian family in 295AD in Alexandria, Egypt, he received a fine classical and Christian education. Bishop Alexander took him into his household and appointed him Reader when he was 17 and Deacon at 18, and made him his private secretary.

Athanasius' life and contribution cannot be understood without reference to the heresy of **Arianism**. Arius was a popular priest in Alexandria who taught that God the Son was a created being who had not existed from all eternity, and therefore was not equal to God the Father. Arius' teaching began spreading like wildfire throughout the Roman world.

To Athanasius (and Bishop Alexander), Arius' teaching was shocking and horribly wrong. They felt that through the Fall of Mankind, sin had infected humanity so deeply that there could be no salvation without a Savior who was Himself God.

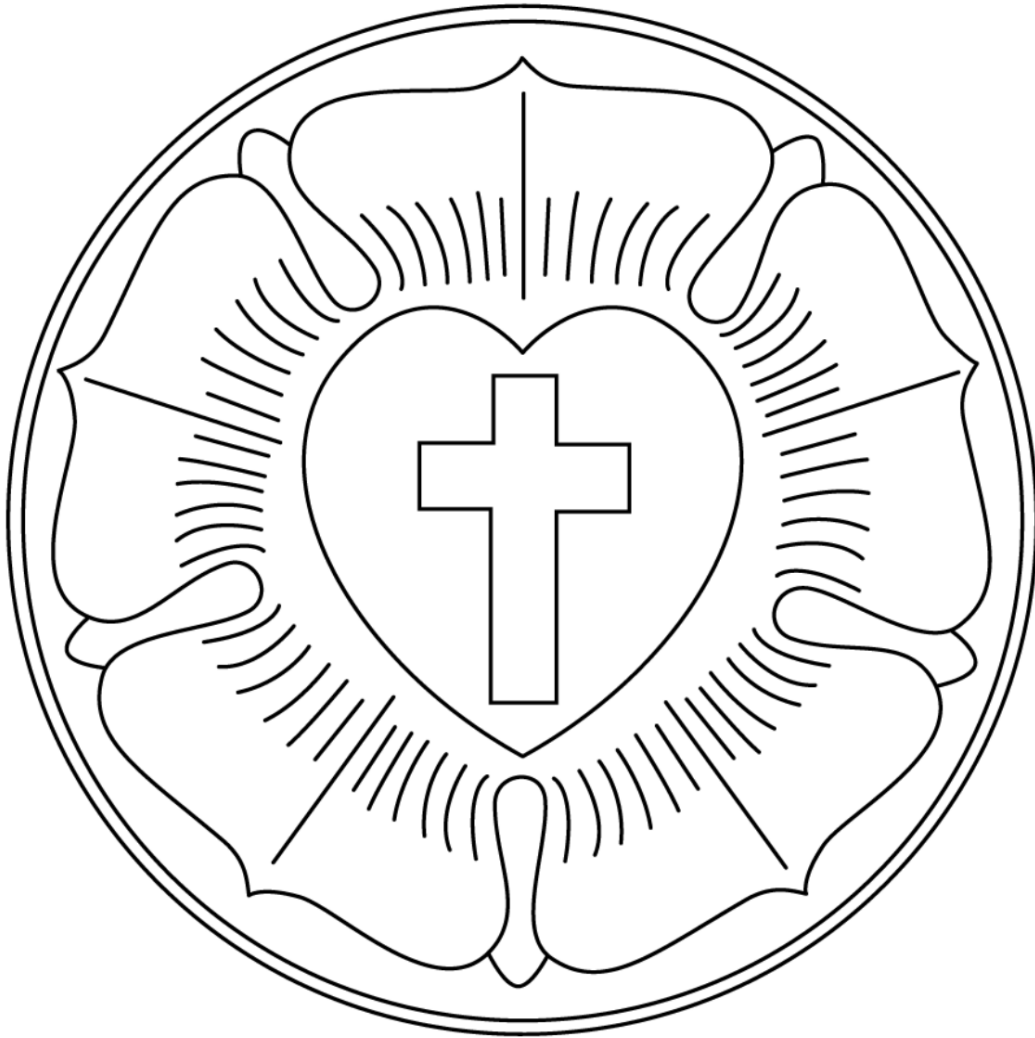
The Christian church throughout the Roman Empire became deeply divided over the issue of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Emperor Constantine had recognized Christianity as the religion of the entire Empire, and the unity of the Empire was threatened by the division in the church. So, in 325AD he called a council of all the Christian bishops at Nicaea (now Iznik, Turkey). Present were 318 bishops and others. Athanasius was present assisting Bishop Alexander. At the young age of 28, Athanasius was the theological star of Nicaea. After prolonged debate, the council condemned Arius' views as heretical and adopted a creed which is the basis of what we know as the Nicene Creed, spelling out that Jesus Christ is truly and fully God as well as fully human: “begotten, not created; of one substance (nature) with the Father; true God from true God, who for us and for our salvation came down from Heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the virgin Mary and was made man, etc.”

However, the Council of Nicaea was not the end of the Arian movement. The issue became all entangled in politics and created problems for the church for centuries. The Arians were vicious and focused their hostility on Athanasius, who succeeded Alexander as Bishop of Alexandria. They persecuted him unmercifully, causing the emperors to banish and exile him **five times**. Death threats were issued against him; once the emperor issued a warrant for his arrest “dead or alive” and he had to flee for his life to the Egyptian desert. The Arians slandered him dreadfully, falsely accusing him of stealing the church's money and of murder. Athanasius persevered through it all, by God's grace, and after many struggles, long after his death, his teaching triumphed and all Christians acknowledge and worship Jesus Christ as the Divine Son of God, co-equal with the Father from all eternity.

*Thank you, Lord God, for Your servant Athanasius who held firm to Your truth. Grant that we in our day will be bold in witness to Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God. Amen.*

# THE LUTHER SEAL: Summary of the Gospel

The most enduring symbol of the Lutheran Reformation is the seal that Luther himself designed to represent his theology. By the early 1520s, this seal begins to appear on the title page of Luther's works.



Here is how Luther himself explained its meaning:

First, there is a **black cross** in a heart that remains its natural color. This is to remind me that it is faith in the Crucified One that saves us. Anyone who believes from the heart will be justified (Romans 10:10). It is a black cross, which mortifies and causes pain, but it leaves the **heart its natural color**. It doesn't destroy nature, that is to say, it does not kill us but keeps us alive, for the just shall live by faith in the Crucified One (Romans 1:17). The heart should stand in the middle of a **white rose**. This is to show that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace—it puts the believer into a white, joyous rose. Faith does not give peace and joy like the world gives

(John 14:27). This is why the rose must be white, not red. White is the color of the spirits and angels (cf. Matthew 28:3; John 20:12). This rose should stand in a **sky-blue field**, symbolizing that a joyful spirit and faith is a beginning of heavenly, future joy, which begins now, but is grasped in hope, not yet fully revealed. Around the field of blue is a **golden ring** to symbolize that blessedness in heaven lasts forever and has no end. Heavenly blessedness is exquisite, beyond all joy and better than any possessions, just as gold is the most valuable and precious metal.

(From: Letter from Martin Luther to Lazarus Spengler, July 8, 1530  
[WA Br 5:445]; tr. P. T. McCain)



# LUTHER 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.

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

Augustinian

Castle

Christus

Concord

Concordance

DeoGloria

DietOfWorms

Doctrine

Excommunicated

Fide

Fifteenseventeen

Gratia

Hymnodist

Justification

KatharinaVonBora

LargeCatechism

Married

Ninetyfive

Protest

Rose

Saints

Scriptura

Sermons

SmalkaldArticles

SmallCatechism

Truth

Vernacular

Wittenberg

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please see pp. 1-2 for more announcements.

**Church Work Day – Oct. 3, 8-12** See sign-up sheet or contact Jonathan H.



**ACTS Donation for October: Canned Meats**

### FELLOWSHIP

Oct 6 – **BLC Night Out** at Metro Diner, 5 p.m.

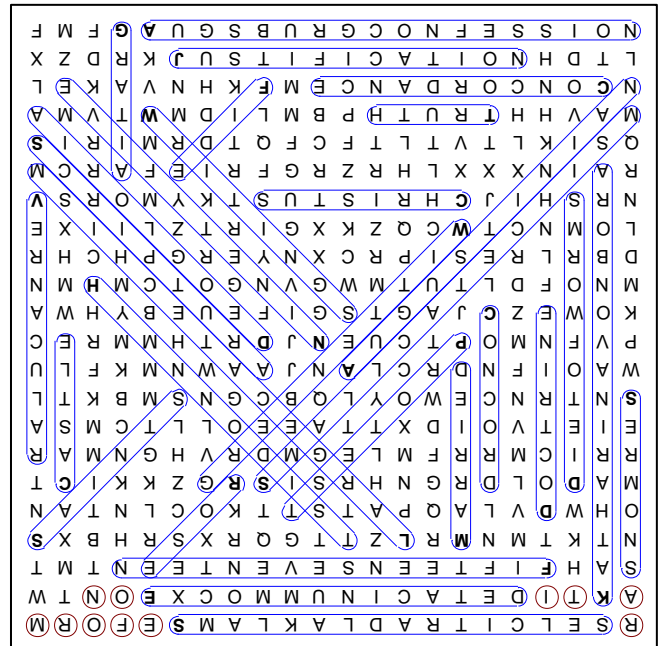
Oct 25 – **Oktoberfest/Reformation Potluck** after the service. Brats and hamburgers provided, please bring side or dessert.

**Psalms 23 Beads** - made in Women's Bible Study to go on the Angel Tree.

Let Rebecca W. know if you would like to make one for the tree.



White: Sheep  
Green: Green pasture  
Aqua: Still waters  
Clear: Soul  
Black: Death  
Brown: Rod and Staff  
Orange: Oil  
Gold: Goodness and Mercy



### BLC CLASSIFIEDS



To place a classified ad in the *Star*, please submit the information by 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") 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:

# October 2026

## BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH AIKEN, SC

| SUNDAY                                                  | MONDAY                                                                                                            | TUESDAY                             | WEDNESDAY       | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY        |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|--------|-----------------|
| 27                                                      | 28                                                                                                                | 29                                  | 30              | 1        | 2      | 3               |
| 4                                                       | 5                                                                                                                 | 6                                   | 7               | 8        | 9      | 10              |
| 9am Bible Study<br>10:30 Service                        | 10am Women's<br>Bible Study                                                                                       | 5pm BIC Night Out<br>at Metro Diner | 7pm Bible Study |          |        |                 |
| 11                                                      | 12                                                                                                                | 13                                  | 14              | 15       | 16     | 17              |
| 9am Bible Study<br>10:30 Service                        | 10am Women's<br>Bible Study                                                                                       |                                     | 7pm Bible Study |          |        |                 |
| 18                                                      | 19                                                                                                                | 20                                  | 21              | 22       | 23     | 24              |
| 9am Bible Study<br>10:30 Service                        | 10am Women's<br>Bible Study                                                                                       |                                     | 7pm Bible Study |          |        |                 |
| 25                                                      | 26                                                                                                                | 27                                  | 28              | 29       | 30     | 31              |
| 9am Bible Study<br>10:30 Service<br>Reformation Potluck |  10am Women's<br>Bible Study |                                     | 7pm Bible Study |          |        | Reformation Day |
| 1                                                       | 2                                                                                                                 | Notes                               |                 |          |        |                 |