



The STAR of Bethlehem



Bethlehem Lutheran Church
An LCMS Congregation

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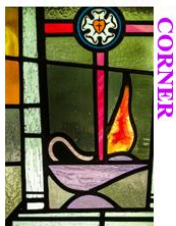
<https://sites.google.com/view/blcaikensc/home>

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REDACTED WEBSITE EDITION

September 2026

THE ELDERS'



FAITHFUL IN THE WAITING

As we enter another month in this season of pastoral vacancy, we are reminded that waiting upon the Lord does not mean standing still. Bethlehem continues to gather around God's Word and Sacraments, encourage one another in Christian fellowship, and carry out the work God has given His Church to do.

Our call committee continues its important work. We ask that you continue to keep our current candidate and his family, our district president, our call committee, and our entire congregation in your prayers. We trust that the Lord will guide this process according to His wisdom and in His time.

We also have much for which to give thanks. On **August 30**, we will gather for our congregational potluck—an opportunity not simply to share a meal, but to strengthen the bonds of Christian fellowship that unite us as brothers and sisters in Christ. During September, we also look forward to welcoming **Pastor John Rickert on September 6 and September 27** as he serves us in Divine Service.

As this vacancy continues, each of us has an important part in the life of Bethlehem. We encourage you to remain faithful in worship, prayer, service, fellowship, and financial stewardship. The ministry and responsibilities of our congregation continue during this time of transition, and the faithful support of God's people allows that work to continue. Our giving is more than meeting a budget; it is part of our response to the many blessings God has first given us and supports the proclamation of the Gospel and the work of His Church.

Above all, let us guard the unity we have in Christ. There may be uncertainty about when our next pastor will arrive, but there is no uncertainty about **Who leads His Church**. Christ remains our Good Shepherd. His Word remains true. His promises remain certain. Through His Word and Sacraments, He continues to forgive, strengthen, and sustain His people.

Let us therefore continue together—not anxiously, but prayerfully and faithfully—trusting the Lord to provide for Bethlehem according to His gracious will.

“Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!” — Psalm 27:14

**In Christ,
The Elders**

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/freetobefaitiful

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

[FROM THE EDITOR:]

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.

How quickly time passes. The next edition, October's, makes 6 full years for me serving 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're interested.

Hopefully, you know that if you are unable to attend a service you can watch it via our Facebook page. Did you know, you can also download both bulletin and sermon from our BLC website? <https://www.bethlehemplutheranaiken.org/> You can access all of these via the Divine Services tab. Questions? Speak with Carolina C.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

No "Council Highlights" this month. We're taking August off- but all business continues as per usual. ~DC

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

We received a Call List of ten names from the district. After Pastor Harper contacted these pastors, six removed their names from consideration. One name was removed after consideration. I contacted three. One asked to have his name removed and I set up interviews with the remaining two. One later contacted me and said he accepted a call from another church. We interviewed the remaining pastor, but due to limitations of Microsoft Teams, the interview was cut short. I have arranged another meeting with this pastor on September 1. Since we believe in giving the church more than a single option, we have requested a second call list from the district and we are awaiting that list.

Continue praying for the call committee and for Bethlehem as we work our way through this process.

In Christ,
Joel

SEPTEMBER STEWARDSHIP LETTER TO THE CONGREGATION

Mark Z., BLC Stewardship Chairman

This month, I want to challenge you to evaluate where you are with respect to your church giving. What do you think about financial stewardship?

Here are some questions for self-reflection:

1. Why do you give? For some, there are a variety of reasons: our values, upbringing, position of leadership, a sense of obligation or love. I want to believe for most church goers, the motivation is a thankful response to everything God has done for us, most importantly, sacrificing his Son for our salvation and eternal life.
2. Why do you give the amount you give? Do you tithe? Do you and your spouse or partner agree on these matters and how do you make those decisions? The Old Testament concept commanded a strict 10% to fund the nations and temples. The New Testament encourages generous, cheerful, and proportional giving with no percentage stated.
3. Why do you give where you give? Do you give most of your tithe or other charitable giving to the church, or do you divide it up? How do you respond to those phone calls and mailings for donations?
4. What did you learn from your family about giving when you were growing up? Was the concept of giving a certain amount to your church and/or other charitable organizations discussed within the family?

These questions can only be answered individually, but above all, seek God's guidance in giving through prayer, Bible study, and regular worship.

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



The risen, reigning Lord Jesus said:
“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” Rev. 2:10

ST. LAWRENCE: THE SAINT WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR

By Henry S., Jr.

August 10 is the feast day of St. Lawrence who is remembered as one of the heroes of the Christian faith by both Catholics and Protestants. He went to Rome from his home in Spain in the mid-3rd-century where he became a protégé of Bishop Sixtus II who ordained him deacon and appointed him chief (archdeacon, “ruling deacon”) of the Seven Deacons of Rome. (At one period in Church history, they had the power of electing the Bishop of Rome, the Pope.) Deacons assisted the bishops, were in charge of the money and Church property, and had the responsibility of distributing to the poor and needy Christians and others.

The heathen Roman emperor, Valerian, issued an edict against the Christians in the year 258 A.D. ordering the Christian leaders to death and confiscating Church money and property. Sainly Bishop Sixtus II was among the first Christians arrested and tortured. When he would not disclose the whereabouts of the church money and property, he was beheaded. The death of Sixtus made Lawrence the *de facto* head of the church in Rome even though he was a deacon and thus not authorized to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice (the Mass, the Lord’s Supper) and even though he was a young man.

When Lawrence was arrested the prefect, Cornelius Saecularis, ordered him to hand over the “treasures” – the money and property – of the Church. Lawrence obtained the prefect’s permission to be released from jail for three days to give him time to gather the church treasures together. Lawrence sold the church valuables, such as the sacred gold and silver communion vessels, and turned them into cash. Then, he gave it all away to the poor and disabled people of Rome. When Lawrence appeared before the prefect, the prefect demanded to know, “Where are the treasures of the Church?” With a sweep of his hand, Lawrence indicated the motley crew of repulsive-appearing humanity he had brought with him into the prefect’s courtyard – the poverty-stricken, deformed, decrepit, crippled, helpless, useless crows- and said, “Here are the treasures of the Church!”

The prefect was so enraged that he ordered Lawrence executed by the most fiendish method he could devise: to be roasted on a grill like a hamburger over a low flame. At one point during his extreme suffering, Lawrence said something like this, “I’m done on that side, it’s time to turn me over and cook me on the other side.” Through his agony, Lawrence remained faithful to Christ and poured out prayers imploring God’s mercy for the conversion of Rome.

A century later, Emperor Constantine built a grand basilica over his grave [pictured]. Five other churches in Rome were dedicated to him, as were 228 in England, Lund Cathedral [Church of Sweden (Lutheran)], the Escorial in Spain, and many others.

Gracious Lord, in every age You have sent men and women who have given their lives for the message of Your love.

Inspire us with the memory of those martyrs for the Gospel like Your servant Lawrence whose faithfulness led them in the way of the cross, and give us courage

to bear full witness with our lives to Your Son’s victory over sin and death; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (LBW, p. 27).



JULY 26 POTLUCK

BLC CELEBRATES!

BIRTHDAYS

Hannah G
Jack N
Wade S
Chad B
Joyce C



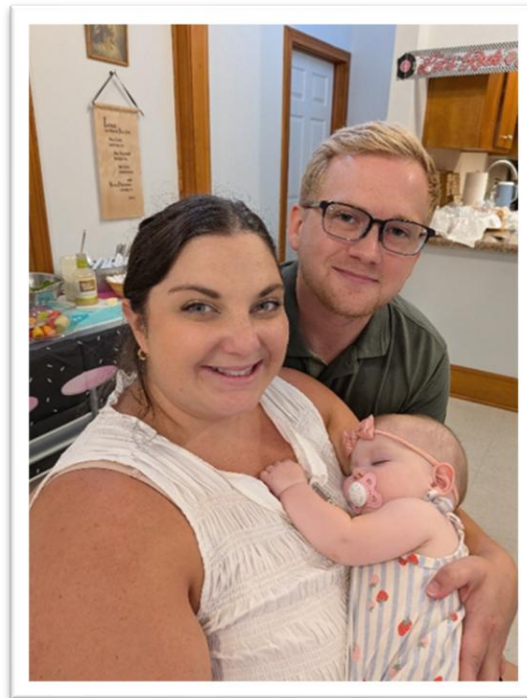
ANNIVERSARIES

Dana & Tammy A
Steve & Marie W
Carl & Colette B
Mark & Louise Z

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







(FYI: August 30 Potluck will be in October Star)

AUGUST 18 DINING OUT AT FERNANDO'S





Words from September 6 Gospel Reading

Find the words in the grid. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

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N T V R F V X K E L I T N E G N W Q W R
B R A N Y T H I N G D R O W N E D K M Z
W M H X B C R C J N I N E T Y N I N E V
I Y P T X K H V Y R R A S S E C E N X L
T A J L R U K L N K C F E E R E H T A F
N R J G R U N P E I R D R V V N W W T Y
E T T C K H L N F N I E W E I I G T F K
S S H E E R O Y W G P R P I S D E H T G
S A T A M T T Z R D P E L L E X E C N D
E Z V N S P K E H O L H X E L H G N E N
S E W L J C T R S M E T T B P C T Z C R
N H L W D E H A T N D A F M I Y S J T E
N I N C R N R I T L I G J T C U F K R P
M Y B N N E U G L I P A Z Y S N D K C J
F Y A L H V K O C D O T T E I D M F F N
P L L T E M F D B B R N J N D T W Z M K
H T O E M L D T N L J E S N U B P J C W
L R R S E L B M U H P T N N F O N W H D
B G K G R E A T E S T L X F X N M G M T
A M W G R O T C E L L O C X A T W Y Z C
  
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Agree
Anything
Astray
Believe
Bound
Brother
Children
Church
Crippled
Disciples

Drowned
Eternal
Evidence
Father
Gathered
Gentile
Greatest
Heaven
Humbles
Jesus

Kingdom
Millstone
Mountains
Necessary
NinetyNine
Receives
TaxCollector
Temptations
Truly
Witnesses

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACTS Collection – PB&J (glass jars discouraged)

No Women's Bible Study on Labor Day, Monday Sept. 7.

See **[From the Editor]** column for announcements regarding a printed version of the *Star* and large-print weekly service bulletins.

Fellowship Opportunities, details to be determined

- Sept. 15 – BLC Night Out
- Sept. 27 – Potluck

Reminders:

- If for any reason you don't bring a dish for a potluck, please stay! There is always plenty.
- Join us for Bible Studies. Be in the Word.
- ACTS food collection is the 1st Sunday of the month. Donations accepted any time.

BLC CLASSIFIEDS



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

Please use your BLC Directory for contact information.

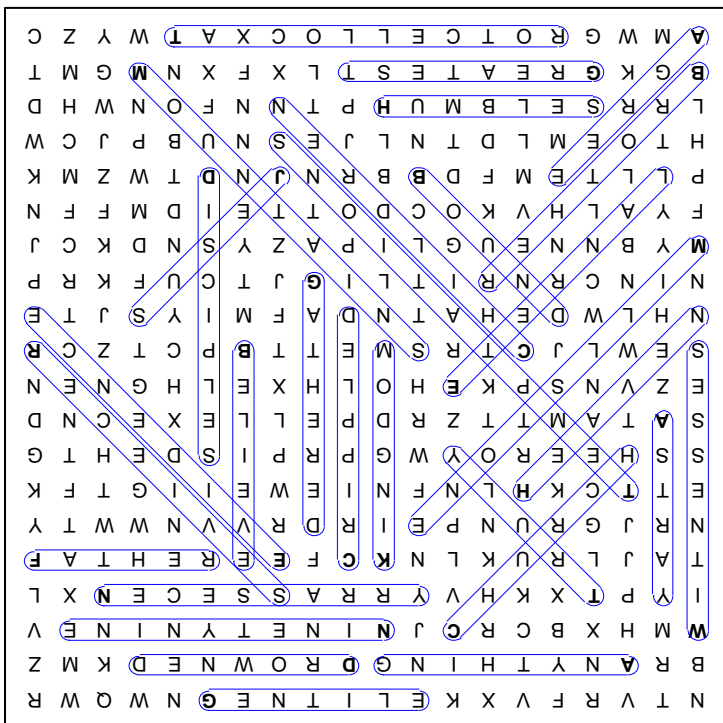
~DC

SERVICES OFFERED:

Dana A. (in his "semi-retirement") 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, WANTED, PERSONALS, ETC:

Your information here...



September 2026

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
AIKEN, SC

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service 	7 Labor Day	8	9 7pm Bible Study	10	11	12
13 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	14 10am Women's Bible Study	15 5pm Night Out	16 7pm Bible Study	17	18	19
20 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	21 10am Women's Bible Study	22	23 7pm Bible Study	24	25	26
27 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service Potluck 	28 10am Women's Bible Study	29	30 7pm Bible Study	1	2	3
4	5	Notes ACTS Collection: PB&J				