BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

# The Bethlehem Star

Volume 20 Issue 2 November 2026

## Worship Schedule

**Sunday**: Divine Service 9:00 a.m. with Holy Communion
**Chapel**: Wednesday – Matins 10:00 a.m.
**Midweek**: Wednesday Spoken Service 7:00 p.m.
**Thanksgiving** – Thursday November 26th 9:00 a.m.

## Upcoming Dates: November

**1** Swiss Steak Dinner - Christmas Market
**7** WOB Book Club - Crimson House 8:00 am
**10** Visual Faith 6-8pm
**15** Elders Meeting - 11:30 am
**22** Voter's Assembly Meeting
**26** Thanksgiving Service 9:00 am

**SUBSCRIBE:**
Subscribe to individual calendars on our website:
BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

### CONTACT INFO

**Senior Pastor**
*Rev. Samuel Wirgau*
260-273-7595
Samuel.wirgau@gmail.com

**Associate Pastor**
*Rev. Anthony Dodgers*
616-648-6489

**Kantor**
*Richard Brinkley*
260-705-4105

**Deaconess**
*Deac. Wendy Boehm*
260-415-8526

**Church & School Secretary**
*Heidi Kleppinger*
260-597-7121
bethlehemossiansec@gmail.com

YouTube

# Message from Pastor Wirgau

A Lutheran Look at the Ecumenical Creeds

As we continue our look into the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions we turn to those confessions that came before the documents of the 16th-century, the Ecumenical Creeds, namely the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds. The following comes from the introduction to the Ecumenical Creeds in Concordia: the Lutheran Confessions (CPH, 2005)

"Lutheranism is not a new faith, but a continuation of the historic, Christian faith of all times and places. In this sense Lutheranism is catholic, a word that comes from two Greek words, meaning 'according to the whole.' With Christians of all times, and in all places, we confess what God's Word teaches—nothing more, and nothing less.

"For this reason, it was important for the Lutheran laymen at Augsburg to make it clear to the emperor that they fully accepted the ancient creeds of the Church. The Augsburg Confession [which will be looked at in our December newsletter] refers to 'the Fathers,' a reference to formative teachers in the history of the Church, most notably the Early Church Fathers who lived and worked between the first and fifth centuries. Lutheranism embraces this history as its own—but with discernment. Lutheranism does not regard the traditions and teaching of the Fathers of the Church as equal to Scripture, but always subject to evaluation in light of Scripture.

"Neither Martin Luther nor any of his colleagues ever claimed to be starting a new church. Such a thought was the farthest thing from their minds. They regarded those on the sectarian side of the Reformation as radicals and revolutionaries. They continually condemned almost everything these radicals stood for. Lutheranism is not about revolution, but reformation. It is not about throwing away the past, but about retaining and preserving the best, while filtering out whatever covers and contradicts God's Word.

"The Lutherans never wanted to reject and rebel against the Roman Church. They were, however, held captive by the force of the clear truth of God's Word. They refused to compromise that truth. They denied the claim by Rome that it was in fact the 'true Church.' They regarded Romanism to be a deep corruption of the genuine Church catholic (universal) of the New Testament and of the Early Fathers of the Church. The claim of 'catholicity' was reserved by the Lutherans only for that which was biblically true, not what was merely a long-honored tradition within the Roman Church. Many years after being forced out of fellowship with Rome, Martin Luther finally let his name be associated with his teachings by speaking of 'Lutheranism.'"

"The most ancient of all Confessions of faith in the Western Church are the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed."

# PLEASE JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

**Please join us for our regular Sunday Divine Services at 9:00 am.**
**Followed by Adult Bible Class and Sunday School for ALL ages!**

As we celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday, please join us
Thursday, November 26th at 9:00 a.m. for The Service of Matins.
As we begin the Advent Season on Sunday, November 29th we will also have Evening Prayer and Holy Communion on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. beginning December 2nd up to the Nativity of Our Lord on December 25th.

**Movie & Discussion** – The Most Reluctant Convert: The Untold Story of C.S. Lewis On Friday, Nov. 20, join Pastor Dodgers for a viewing and discussion of the docu-drama that tells the story of C.S. Lewis's conversion from atheist to the most renowned Christian writer of the past century, including the children's classic The Chronicles of Narnia. We will begin the movie at 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall (runtime: 1 hr 13 min) and wrap up with a discussion. Please let Pastor Dodgers know if you plan to come so we can plan for snacks: pastordodgers@blcsossian.org or 616-648-6489.



English Folk Dancing Event – Sunday, November 15th from 3-4:30 pm in the Bethlehem School Gymnasium. Adults and children are invited to attend. No experience is required. Instructions will be given before each dance. Admission is $1.00 per person or $5.00 per family. For questions, please contact Kantor Brinkley. Please join us for this fun event!




ATTENTION SCRIP BUYERS – There is now a new location for purchasing SCRIP in person. Please be sure to visit Jill Holtzclaw in the Fellowship Hall after church TODAY! Also available will be a 3 ring binder of all the certificates available from Raise Right that can be ordered. Come check it out! For questions or for placing an order, please contact Jill Holtzclaw 260-301-1965.

# Church Membership

## Membership Changes

Current Membership Count
Baptized 491
Communicant 369

## Wedding Anniversary

Nov. 3 David and Michelle Bowman (47)
Nov. 4 Brad and Amanda Meyer (8)
Nov. 14 Kim and Gina Graft (46)
Nov. 16 Jay and Cheryl Louison (35)
Nov. 20 Rory and Tina Geiger (33)
Nov. 20 Stan and Pat Meyer (44)
Nov. 23 Landon and Emily Sands (7)
Nov. 25 Neil and Susan Stoppenhagen (37)
Nov. 27 Brian and Janice Scheumann (27)
Nov. 28 Lane and Jeni Harkless (28)
Nov. 28 Seth and Natalie Wanner (11)
Nov. 29 Steve and Clara Conrad (30)
Nov. 29 Ted and Denise Schumm (40)
Nov. 29 Leon and Arlene Werling (51)

## Church Officers

**Chairman** - Dave Flesch
**Vice Chairman** - Stan Meyer
**Secretary** - Josh Boehm
**Treasurer** - Ed Black

| | |
|---|---|
| **Board of Elders** | Steve Conrad, Jeff Gresley, Brian Scheumann, Mike Schumm, Dan Springer, Andrew Stoppenhagen |
| **Board of Trustees** | Dan Kleppinger, Gary Oliver, Todd Ottinger, Darrin Werling, Jay Werling, Lee Werling |
| **Board of Finance** | Brian Bauermeister, Dan Buchinger, Rory Geiger, Collin Laley, Jason Laley, Jay Louison |
| **Board of Education** | Aaron Anthony, Jeff Holtzclaw, Nathan Householder, Jacob Meyer, Darren Patrick, Brandon Schumm |

## happy BIRTHDAY November

02) Whitney Smith
03) Raeann Stoppenhagen
04) Nora Geiger
Andrew Roembke
06) Brian Scheumann
Dalene Springer
09) Victoria Bennett
Ashley Bultemeier
Shalynn Saalfrank
10) Amber Corwin
11) Joyce Bauermeister
12) Lucas Haiflich
13) Rev. Anthony Dodgers
Evan Springer
Ryan Werling
14) Nyla Miller
15) Bruce Bultemeier
16) Laura Meyer
19) Tonya Frey
Austin Miller
Greg Mishler
Tiffany Roose
Dean Scheumann
Ben Schueler
21) Kathy Nahrwold
22) Dan Buchinger
24) Jeff Holtzclaw
25) Jerry Meyer
26) Addison Roembke
27) Lydia Harkless
28) Haley Green
29) Michael Laley

# Endowment

**The Bethlehem Endowment Committee thanks the Lord and our congregation for the generous gifts to thee School Endowment Fund.**

Here is the monthly report for the Bethlehem Lutheran School Endowment Fund by the Lutheran Foundation. The following information is accurate as of August 31, 2026:

$381,427.82 - Amount Bethlehem sent in since 2009
238,283.00 - Amount the Lutheran Foundation matched
469,198.17 - Amount generated since 2009
-219,500.00 - Amount disbursed to Bethlehem since 2009
$869,408.99 - Value of the Endowment Fund as of August 31, 2026

Dr. David Nahrwold Fund
$ 90,078.93 - Amount sent in since November 2024
17,842.35 - Amount generated since November 2024
-10,000.00 - Amount disbursed to Bethlehem since 2024
$ 97,921.28 - Value of Dr. David Nahrwold Fund as of August 31, 2026

Library Fund
$5,000.00 - Amount sent in since March 2026
331.47- Amount generated since March 2026
$5,331,47 - Value of the Library Fund as of August 31, 2026

# E-Giving

Enjoy the convenience of the Electronic Giving Option!!

Single OR reoccurring gifts can be attributed to a particular fund(s).
More information can be found on our website, www.blcsossian.org
OR
through our third-party provider-Vanco Payment Solutions.
Online giving may be done as a credit card payment or ACH bank transfer.

*Please note, the church will incur a processing fee on each online transaction. You may your also elect to increase your gift to cover the cost of the transaction fees.*

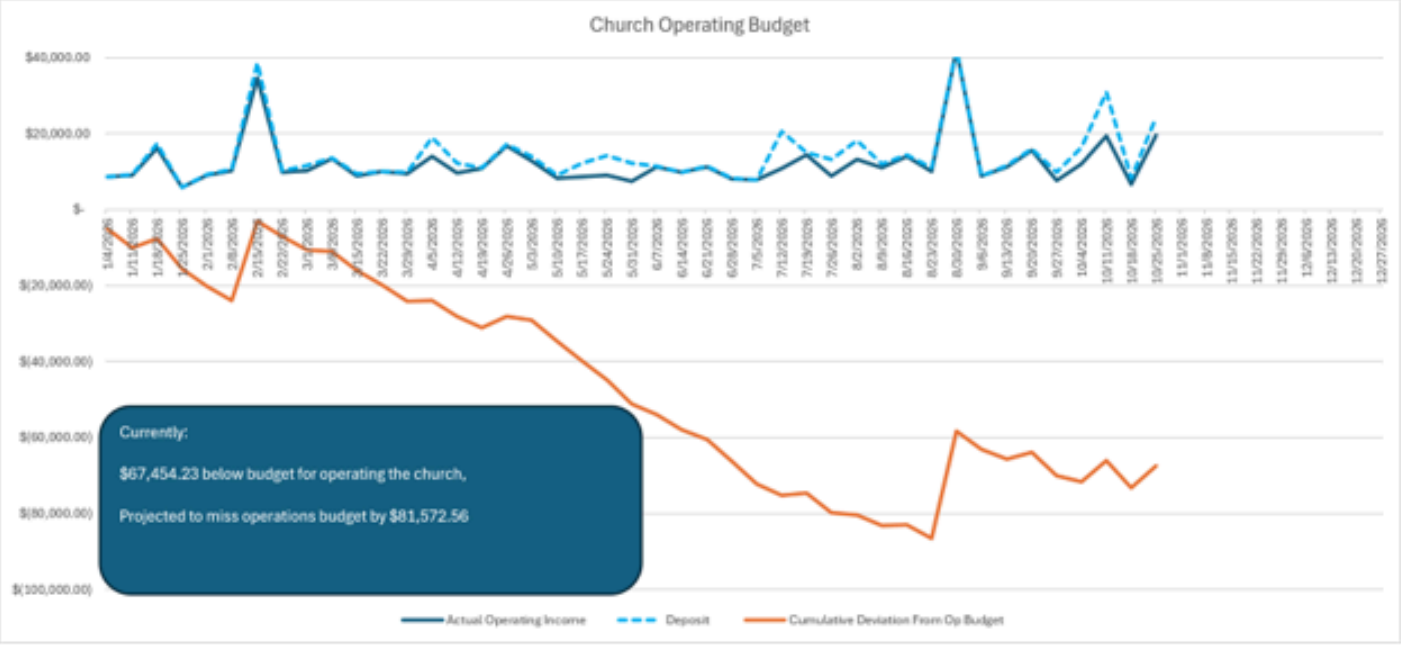
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# Financial Report

**NOTE:** The Church has the following expenses hitting the books in the next few weeks:

1. Parsonage Roof $20,200 – Improvement
2. HVAC unit $10,500 – Improvement
3. Parsonage Plumbing - $5,500 – Trustee expense

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| As of | October 29, 2026 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| **BETHLEHEM FINANCIAL REPORT** | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| **Cash** | | | | | **Special Accounts** | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Checking | $ | 31,328.50 | | | Improvement Fund: | $ | 57,267.44 | | |
| Savings | $ | 124,038.27 | | | Scholarship Fund: | $ | 17,996.10 | | |
| | | | | | Music Fund: | $ | 4,419.00 | | |
| ***Total Cash*** | ***$*** | ***155,366.77*** | | | Relief Fund: | $ | 1,681.83 | | |
| | | | | | Organ Fund: | $ | 8,492.96 | | |
| Operating Loan | $ | - | of $30,000 max available | | Endowment: | $ | 245.00 | | |
| | | | | | Synod/Seminary Fund: | $ | 390.00 | | |
| | | | | | Reserved (Sing, Pray, Praise) | $ | 4,547.64 | | |
| Special Account | $ | 85,572.51 | | | Special Account - Vicar Program | $ | 40,287.35 | | |
| (Pavilion) | | | | | Reserved (TBD): | $ | 2,469.26 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | ***Total*** | ***$*** | ***137,796.58*** | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | ***$*** | ***13,758.31*** | added to checking account from special accounts to operate church | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Bills Due: | | 10/26/2026 | $35,000.00 | | | | | | |
| | | 11/2/2026 | $11,000.00 | | | | | | |



**LWML Mite Boxes:** Just a reminder that mite boxes are located by the church bulletins in the church entrance. When a mite box is filled, it can be dropped off in the LWML slot in the church office.

*These mite boxes (for small offerings) are used to support mission outreach, church worker scholarships, and humanitarian aid projects. Thank you!*

# VISUAL FAITH MINISTRY

**Create Your Own Faith Journal: A Visual Faith Workshop**

Have you ever wanted a special place to write Scripture, keep sermon notes, record prayers, and remember God's faithfulness? Join us November 10th for a hands-on Visual Faith workshop as we begin creating our own faith journals!

We'll explore ways to incorporate Scripture writing, sermon notes, prayer, gratitude, and other meaningful faith practices into a personalized journal. Using simple materials, paper, and creative elements, you'll begin building a journal that reflects your own faith journey and gives you a place to return to God's Word throughout the week.

No artistic experience is necessary! And several beautiful kits to choose from. Whether you love crafting or are simply looking for a fresh way to engage with Scripture, you're welcome to join us. Come enjoy fellowship, creativity, and time in God's Word as we get started togetl

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10 from 6-8pm.**

Sign up at https://blcsossian.org/visual-faith-minis
reach out to Deann Oliver at 616-894-0144

St. Paul, Preble Ladies Aid BAKE SALE AND BAZAAR on **Saturday, November 14, 2026 from 10:30-1pm at St. Paul, Preble,** at the corner of 450W and 750N Decatur in Adams County. We will serve a luncheon which includes homemade soups, sandwiches, and desserts as well as drinks. We will also offer a cookie corner, decorated Christmas Cookies, bake sale items, craft items, and homemade noodles!

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Grief Share “Surviving the Holidays” - Holiday grief can be tough, emotionally, relationally, physically and spiritually. In this two-hour gathering, we will explore how the holidays can be both manageable and meaningful...

- how to respond to social invites
- how to balance solitude and fellowship
- how to remember your loved one
- how to be grateful for blessings

“Surviving the Holidays” will take place on **Saturday, November 14 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at Emmanuel Lutheran Church**. Please RSVP to Emmanuel's church office at 260.423.1369 by Sunday, November 8. A brunch will be provided, and books will be gifted by Thrivent. Feel free to bring a Christmas culinary treat of your own to share.

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St. Peter-Immanuel Lutheran School is having a Dan’s Famous Fish and Tenderloin Dinner & Bake Sale on **Saturday, November 7th from 4:00-7:00pm with dine-in or drive thru service.** The school is located at 3845 E 1100 N Decatur, IN 46733. Cost is $15.00 per meal and includes AYCE fish and or tenderloin, also serving cheesy potatoes, applesauce or homemade coleslaw, cookies and a drink. All proceeds are going towards tables and chairs storage racking.

## Worship Anew

The Saint in the Sycamore November 1, 2026 – All Saints' Day Rev. Daniel Eggold – Guest Pastor Zacchaeus, the wealthy tax collector, climbed a sycamore tree just hoping to catch a glimpse of Jesus. But Jesus saw him first — calling him down, staying at his house, and bringing salvation to a sinner. On this All Saints' Day, rejoice that Jesus spots you too, wherever you are, and makes sinners His saints. Sermon Text: Luke 19:1-10 Readings: Psalm 130; Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Luke 19:1-10 Featured Choirs: St. Peter's Adult Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Holy Cross Treble Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind. Featured Art and Architecture: St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Does Jesus Know You? November 8, 2026 – Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost Rev. Scott Zeckzer Jesus is coming. Are you ready for His coming again? While it is important to know Jesus, it is more important that Jesus knows you. Sermon Text: Matthew 25:13 Readings: Psalm 70:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13 Featured Choirs: Zion Lutheran School, Decatur, Ind.; Holy Cross Sanctuary Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind. Featured Art and Architecture: Wellspring Lutheran Services, Monroe, Mich.

The Breastplate and Helmet November 15, 2026 – Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III Our spiritual enemies - the devil, the unbelieving world, and our own sinful nature - are constantly trying to put fear, worry, discouragement, and sinful anger into our hearts, and falsehood and deception into our minds. Thus, the apostle Paul urges us to put on the breastplate and helmet - equipment from God. With these we will be protected from our enemies. Sermon Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Readings: Psalm 90:1-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30 Featured Choir: St. John Lutheran School, Plymouth, Wis. Featured Art and Architecture: St. John Lutheran Church, Marysville, Ohio

We Are What We See! November 22, 2026 – Last Sunday of the Church Year Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer What are your eyes fixed upon? In Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats, two groups stand before the king equally surprised; yet their lives were shaped by entirely different visions. Discover how focusing on yourself blinds you to Christ, while focusing on Jesus opens your eyes to the people and needs He places before you. Truly, we are what we see! Sermon Text: Matthew 25:37, 44 Readings: Psalm 95:1-7a; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Matthew 25:31-46 Featured Choirs: Holy Cross Angelis Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School, Centralia, Ill. Featured Art and Architecture: Christ Our King Lutheran Church, Saline, Mich.

Come Lord, Come November 29, 2026 – First Sunday in Advent Rev. Scott Zeckzer Are you ready for the Lord's coming? He is coming on the Last Day in power and might, but until that time, He comes in humbleness and mercy. Sermon Text: Isaiah 64:1 Readings: Psalm 80:1-7; Isaiah 64:1-9; Mark 11:1-10 Featured Choirs: St. Peter's Adult Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Michael Adult Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Paul's Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind. Featured Art and Architecture: Emanuel Lutheran Church, New Haven, Ind.

## WholyFit™

WholyFit Classes Begin September 14!
WholyFit is a gentle, faith-centered movement practice that blends stretching, strengthening, and meditating on God's Word. Each class offers a calm, supportive space to care for your body while grounding your heart in Scripture. Movements are slow, intentional, and adaptable for all fitness levels.

Classes will meet **Mondays** and **Thursdays**
from **5:45 -6:30 PM**
in the school music room downstairs.

You'll experience guided breathwork, purposeful movement, and a brief devotional focus designed to help you settle your heart in Scripture as you end your day.

**What to bring:**
- **Comfortable clothing**
- **A water bottle**
- **An exercise mat**

If you have any questions,
reach out to Deann Oliver at 616-894-0144.



## FEDERAL SGO INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

**Who: School families, congregation members, supporters of Lutheran education who want to learn about the new FEDERAL SGO program.**

**When: Thursday, November 12 at 5:30pm OR Friday, November 13 at 8:30am. Same information, two options to attend**

**Where: Concordia Lutheran Church, 4245 Lake Ave, Fort Wayne, IN**

**RSVP: Reservations are requested, but not required. Light snacks will be provided. RSVP at https://thelutheranschools.org/events**

**Federal EFTC Tax Credit Scholarship Program**

**Starting on January 1, 2027, a new Federal tax credit scholarship program called the Education Freedom Tax Credit (EFTC) will be available, featuring a 100% Federal Tax Credit up to $1,700 for individual taxpayers or $3,400 for married couples filing jointly.**

**Scott Schumacher, the Executive Director of the Lutheran SGO of Indiana, will be presenting.**

**All are invited to attend this exciting presentation!**

## GOOD SHEPHERD INSTITUTE CONFERENCE

**The annual Good Shepherd Institute Conference at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), is November 8–10. This year's theme, "Our Living Heritage," remembers the forebears of previous generations, giving thanks for and learning from those who continue to inform the church and her practice.**

**Each night of GSI features a music event in Kramer Chapel that is free and open to the public. We invite you to attend each event and join us in remembering significant figures in the history of LCMS church music.**

**GSI Organ Recital**
***Sunday, November 8, at 4:30 p.m. ET***
Dr. Kola Owolabi—The University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana

**Choral Vespers**
***Sunday, November 8, at 7:30 p.m. ET***
Bach Cantata 137, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"
Seminary Schola Cantorum
Kantor Kevin Hildebrand and Mr. Jonathan Busarow, directors

**Hymn Festival**
***Monday, November 9, at 7:30 p.m. ET***
*Celebrating the Hymns of Paul Gerhardt (on the 350th anniversary of his death) and Others*
Seminary Kantorei
Kantor Kevin Hildebrand, director
Mr. Jacob Weber, organist

# Sing, Pray & Keep His Ways

## GIRL'S ALTAR GUILD WORKSHOP

OCTOBER 8, 2026

## The Work of the Altar Guild

### Purpose

To Serve. Altar Guild service is spiritual work done for the Lord and His people, bringing glory to God and building up His Church.

### History

From the Old Testament Tabernacle (Exodus 35:25) to the early Church, God's people have used their gifts to prepare and care for the things used in worship. Throughout Church history, clergy, men, and women have shared in this service.

Today, the Altar Guild prepares and cares for the chancel and communion vessels, supporting the pastor's work and serving God's people. This is not just "women's work," but a ministry of service for all, done for the glory of God.

### Bethlehem Altar Guild

At Bethlehem, Ladies Aid was formed in 1923 and established an Altar Guild in 1946. Over the years, they have provided communion ware, paraments, candles, flowers, decorations, and other items for worship. In 2023, Ladies Aid became Women of Bethlehem, continuing this ministry through its Altar Guild and Decorating Committees, while also involving Junior Altar Guild girls in monthly service to teach them how to serve the church from a young age.

## Times & Seasons

We follow the historic One-Year Lectionary of The Church Year which organizes worship around God's saving work in Jesus Christ through three main seasons: **Christmas** (Christ's coming), **Easter** (Christ's death and resurrection), and the **Time of the Church** (His teaching and work in our lives). There are also other Feasts, Festivals and Occassions celebrated throughout the year. Liturgical colors, decorations, and symbols help teach the faith and aid in worship.

## The Workshop

Girls in grades K–8 participated in an after-school event where they enjoyed a snack, learned about Altar Guild history, the Church Year, liturgical colors, and symbols, and created fall banners to take home.

**Upcoming**: date TBD to decorate pew banners for Thanksgiving.

## Resources

"*What an Altar Guild Should Know*" by Rev. Paul H. D. Lang

"*The Altar Guild Manual*" CPH

BETHLEHEM & NEW HOPE LUTHERAN

95



# INDOOR TRICK OR TREAT

OCTOBER **31** 4-5 PM

VOTEFORYOUR FAVORITEINDOORTREATSTATIONS

LIGHT REFRESHMENTSPROVIDED

NEW HOPE LUTHERAN GYMNASIUM

8643-8691 IN-1, OSSIAN, IN 46777

# MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

## November

8 Bible Study

22 Bible Study

## December

2, 9, 16, 23 Advent Suppers

13 Bible Study/ Christmas party

27 Christmas Break

## REFRESHMENTS

**Donut Duty:**
Stoppenhagen

**Bible Study:**

Nov 8 Householder

Nov 22 Trammel

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*Save the Date*

WEDNESDAY
11 NOV 2026
2:00 PM

**ALL welcome to attend**
**RSVP to the school secretary**

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED.

CELEBRATING 250 YEARS

★ ★ ★

# VETERANS DAY *Presentation*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JoinusforaninteractiveVeteran'sDayexperience at Bethlehem Lutheran School.

- If you or someone you know would like to be recognized as a veteran, please contact the school secretary. We will have a **Veterans Recognition Wall** featuring stars with each veteran's name, branch of service, rank, and years served.
- Photographs, uniforms, medals, and other military memorabilia are also encouraged for our **display**! Students will have the opportunity to view these items, learn about military service, and ask questions.
- If you are a veteran or have stories about a veteran and would be willing to speak with our students or answer their questions, please contact Deaconess Boehm. We appreciate your help in honoring those who have served our country!