

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Fruit of the Spirit? Indeed!

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" Mt. 5:5

Have you ever noticed how frequently the concept of "meekness" is mentioned or insinuated in the Bible? Numbers 12:3 tells us that Moses was "very meek," if you can believe that. You also get the idea that Jeremiah wasn't particularly pushy when he was dealing with "all the officials" (Jer. 26:12-14). Simon Peter, years later, recalled the meekness of Christ and could hardly believe it (1 Peter 2:23). Even St. Paul, instructing Timothy in the skills of ministry, calls for it (2 Timothy 2:25, KJV).

Meekness is always a positive thing when you come across it in the Bible. In fact, Jesus says the meek "*shall inherit the earth*" (Mt.5:5). And yet, have you noticed how little of it there is, even in the church? Meekness is seen by many as weakness. We are often more apt to applaud boldness. We excuse the overbearing and self-important in admiration of the way in which they seem to get things done.

The dictionary says meekness is patience and mildness, disinclination to anger or resentment, gentleness, kindness. You won't find many words like that, or related notions, in secular leadership and management books. But you do find them in the Bible's catalog of fruits of the Spirit: "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*" (Gal. 5:22-23 KJV).

Meekness! Funny, isn't it? We'd probably get a lot farther down the road with our assignments on the job, our efforts in the church, or our goals in life, accomplish a great deal more of what we have been commissioned to do, if we practiced a little bit more of it. People may not always regard meekness highly or covet it much. Few have, most likely, prayed for it. But the Bible does regard meekness highly, and Jesus includes the blessing of being meek in His sermon on the mount. In the Bible it is an honored "fruit of the Spirit." Perhaps it is time to include this request in our prayers and be blessed by it.

Other stories this month:

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- SPECIAL EVENTS THIS MONTH
- SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING



Fruit of the Spirit? Indeed!

(Continued)

Indeed, the Bible's teaching about meekness is countercultural because it goes against the world's emphasis on power and dominance and instead teaches that true greatness comes from humility, meekness, and gentleness under the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus says we will be blessed by it, and I want that blessing. I am sure you do too.

In meekness,

Pastor Dana Allen Brown

A Prayer for Thanksgiving Day

Heavenly Father, you created us in love to be in fellowship with you. Though sin broke that relationship of love and trust, you have restored it through your promised Messiah, your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for welcoming us home into your presence of love and peace. We recognize that you are the ultimate provider of the food we are about to receive, and for this food we offer You our gratitude. We also recognize those who have worked to prepare this meal in any way. We ask that you give them the blessings of their service to us, that all those partaking today appreciate the time and energy they have put into this meal. Now, Father, we ask you to bless the food we are about to receive, that it would nourish and strengthen us to serve you with our lives until we share that glorious and eternal banquet which you have prepared for us through your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

Thankful for Fido

As we approach the Thursday of Gratitude, I wonder. What are you thankful for?

Last month I held the first ever “Blessing of the Animals” for our Preschool kids. It was a wonderful success, bringing a good number of parents and grandparents into our church courtyard, as well as the students. Maybe next year I’ll hold it in the sanctuary and get them further “into church!” Anyway, as I mentioned, it went very well. It was endearing to see the little children receive a word of blessing over photos of their pets (turns out you can’t really bring 60 dogs and cats into the school building). Others brought along their favorite stuffed animals to be prayed over. It made me appreciate God’s good gift of creation more. He gives us so much. Even though it is fallen, the world around us is still so good and dear. I’m including the little devotion I put together below. I thought you might want to adapt it and share the experience with your kids or grandkids – and those members of God’s creation who are dear to them.

FIRST: Sing the song “My God is So Big”. (*Google it if unfamiliar.*)

NEXT: (*Be seated.*)

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I want you to remember two things today. Jesus loves you and Jesus loves all the animals. Even elephants like in our song. Even the pets in your home, that He has placed in your care.

Did you know Jesus loves kids? Jesus loves everyone, but He especially loves young children like you. Not everyone loves to have children around all the time. Sometimes young children – not you, but other young children – can be noisy or too silly. But Jesus loves all the children of the world. Even noisy and silly and crazy ones! The Bible tells us that one time, “children were brought to Jesus so that He could lay His hands on them, to bless them and pray.” But the disciples didn’t like that, and they tried to keep the kids away! But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t keep them away. Because the Kingdom of heaven is for people just like these kids here.” And then can you guess what Jesus did? He laid His hands on the children and prayed. And we’re going to do that here today – one by one. I’ll pray for you.

But not just for you – for your pets, too! Or if you don’t have any pets even a special stuffy maybe. Did you know that God loves all His creatures? Of course He does! He made everything. The Bible tells us that God knows and cares about every single bird way up in the sky. That means that He loves and cares about your pets, too. The things that are special to you are special to Him. Because you are special to God. And so sometimes He gives us special pets to take care of, or special stuffies to hug. And He teaches us important things with our special pets... Do we have to be gentle with our pets, or should we be rough with them?? Yeah, God teaches us gentleness with our pets. He teaches us how to love and take care of them.

Thankful for Fido (Continued)

So just like we thank God for you and pray for you, today we'll thank God for our pets and pray for them.

We'll make a line and take turns, one by one, but first, let's all pray together. Repeat after me. (Dear God) (Thank you for giving me life.) (Thank you for our pets) (And special things.) (Teach us to be good and gentle like You.) (And help us take care of your creatures.) (In Jesus' name: AMEN)

THE BLESSING: (*Child's Name*), may the Lord bless you and (*animal's name*) and keep you both. May He protect you and (*animal's name*) from all harm and danger. May God give you a heart that rejoices in His good creation, and keep you always close to Jesus, who loves you now and forevermore. Amen.

The Lord bless and keep you,

Pastor Nate McCarty



**Teenage Pastor
Nate & his dog,
Buddy**

Christ at the Center

It is officially November, which means you might already be thinking or looking ahead to Thanksgiving! I think after three months of being here on vicarage, I'm finally starting to get the swing of things around here. I'm starting to understand the flow of work around here, get a feel for Florida weather, and I'm just starting to get a sense of the daily schedule around here; what Mondays look like, what Tuesdays look like, etc. Every once in a while, there might be a curveball that's thrown into the mix, but I'm starting to get a sense of what life is like here, and I couldn't be any more excited to partake in it. Maybe you recall your own busy schedule, and you know how hard it can be to try to free up just a little more time. Yet, I was talking to one person recently, who was telling me about his daily schedule, and without knowing he would inspire the theme of this article, as he told me, "My day wouldn't be the same unless I start in the Bible."

This person really hit it right on the money. These simple words left a profound impact on me, as these words reiterate how much of a difference God's Word makes in our lives. A prayer we read, a promise God fulfills for His people, a significant character from the Bible, all these stories shape and form us even today. As God's Word and his story of salvation tells of His love and mercy for us, our lives are transformed. Even amidst our busy schedules, there's one thing that never changes, and that is the person who is at the center for our lives, Christ. Christ is our sure foundation that keeps us standing firm, even in the toughest and roughest moments of our lives. As we build our lives upon Christ and his promises, everything we do stems from Him. With our lives and our faith centered upon Christ and his promises, eternal life is secure, as our Heavenly Father speaks his Words of forgiveness, life, and salvation day in and day out. As Christians, our lives are centered upon His promises (Christ is even in our name - CHRISTian).

So, I invite you throughout your schedule to take just a little time each day to focus on God and his Word, whether it's as simple as saying a prayer to start each day, reading a couple verses before you go to bed every day, or listening to a Christian podcast/sermon. Every day, take time to center your life upon the Incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1) He is, after all, the center of who we are as God's children, and Christ is the center of all we do! "For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things were created through Him and for Him. And he is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:16-17). So I invite you to take just a moment to do this short word search on Christ. Don't look too hard! Remember Christ at the center.

Vicar Caleb Gustafson



Christ at the Center

Word Search

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

Christ

Salvation

Forgiveness

Faith

Peace

Love

Cross

Life



*Our preschool is full of life, laughter, and the light of Christ—and we're ready to share it with you! Each month, BLC Preschool Lights will shine a spotlight on the incredible things happening with our little ones, from classroom moments to ministry milestones. With our exciting new building project on the horizon, there's never been a better time to see how God is growing this vital part of our church family. Stay tuned... big things are coming from our smallest members!



THE BLESSING OF THE PETS



THANKSGIVING DINNER

This coming November, our Preschoolers and their families will participate in a Thanksgiving Feast & Thanksgiving program. It is a wonderful time for our young scholars to be with their families and share the blessings from God!

Did you know...?

The Altar Guild in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) plays a crucial role in preparing and maintaining the worship space.



Their responsibilities focus on enhancing the worship experience through careful attention to the altar and its elements.

The key responsibilities of the Altar Guild include the preparation for worship.

- **Setting Up Communion:** Prepare the vessels and elements for the Lord's Supper, ensuring everything is in place for each service.
- **Care of Communion Vessels:** Remove and properly store vessels and elements following the last worship service of the day.
- **Linen Care:** Launder and iron altar linens to maintain cleanliness and presentation.
- **Changing Paraments:** Regularly change altar paraments according to the church calendar and liturgical seasons.

Membership and Participation

The Altar Guild is open to all members of the congregation interested in learning about Lutheran worship practices. Training and guidance are provided to new members to help them fulfill their roles effectively. Members of the Altar Guild at Bethlehem Lutheran church (ideally) serve once a month *following* their preferred worship service or setting up the altar for worship on Saturdays or prior to special worship services. Altar Guild members may also assist in the changing of the altar paraments and decorating the sanctuary for the various church seasons.

We Need You!

If you are able to serve on the Altar Guild once a month (the schedule is flexible depending on each member's availability), please contact Valerie Gruhn at ValerieGruhn@gmail.com or (904)536-2912.

FIRST COAST LCMS CIRCUIT YOUTH EVENT:

Sykes' Family Corn Maze & Pumpkin Farm



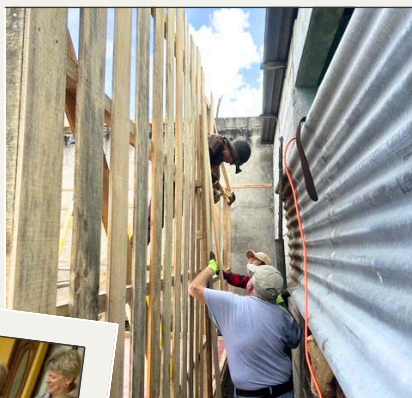
BLC ANNUAL TRUNK OR TREAT:

TRUNK OR TREAT 2025



BLC MISSIONARIES:

2025 Guatemala Mission Trip



Coming Soon at BLC

KNOTS FOR LOVE



We will be assembling blankets for the Cancer Specialists of North Florida to give out to patients getting chemo infusions on **November 15th** at **1pm** in the Fellowship Hall. If you can work a scissors and/or tie a know please come and help. I know the people that receive these blankets greatly appreciate them.



Please join us on **Sunday, November 23rd** for a Thanksgiving Potluck at **12:00 PM**. The turkey will be provided by the Fellowship Team at BLC. Please sign up for listed items on the sign-up sheet in the Narthex in order to avoid duplicate items. We cannot wait to share in the blessings of the Lord with our Bethlehem family!

The Cookie Walk is back! On **December 14th** the LWML will be hosting a Cookie Walk with all proceeds to be given to the Food Bank at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Buying cookies is a great way to have treats on hand for holiday guests and the money helps in supporting our seminary students. And if you like to bake please consider donating 2-3 dozen cookies to the Cookie Walk.



cookie walk 2025

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT BLC

SAT
NOV
1

BLC FALL CLEAN-UP

9-12 PM

Help us get the Bethlehem campus ready for fall and Advent this year!



MON
NOV
3

CARDS, CARDS, CARDS!

9:30 AM

Join the Senior Shufflers for our monthly game of Hand and Foot!



WEDS
NOV
5

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

9:30 AM

All women welcome to join us for digging deep into God's word together!

THURS
NOV
6

YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY

5:30 PM

Join us for our YA Bible Study in the Upper Room. See FB page for more details.



FRI
NOV
7

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH LEAVE FOR THE LCMS FL/GA MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GATHERING!



FRI
NOV
9

REGISTRATION OPENS FOR ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT 2025!

SAT
NOV
15

KNOTS FOR LOVE

1:00 PM

Work with your BLC family and work on making blankets for cancer patients in need.



THURS
NOV
20

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

6:00 PM

Meet with fellow brothers in Christ to be in the word of God and enjoy a great meal!



SUN
NOV
23

BLC THANKSGIVING POTLUCK

All are welcome to our BLC Thanksgiving Potluck- after the 11 AM service. Sign-up in the Narthex on your favorite dish to bring! Lots of good food to be eat!



WEDS
NOV
25

THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE

7:00 PM

Worship and celebrate the Lord's bountiful blessings with your family at BLC!

SUN
NOV
30

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



BLC VOLUNTEERS!

COUNTING

NOV 2

Holly/Allan

NOV 9

Bob/Barbara

NOV 16

Barbie/Diane

NOV 23

Paul/Holly

NOV 30

Paul/Gordon

ELDERS

Nov. 2nd

8 -Paul-EIC

Gordon

9:30 - Joe-EIC

John

11 - Dan-EIC

Brandon

Nov. 9th

8 - Jamie

Gordon

9:30 - Joe-EIC

11 -Alex-EIC

Al

Nov. 16th

8 - Gordon-EIC

Jamie

9:30 - Joe-EIC

John

11 - Dennis-EIC

Allan

Nov. 23rd

8 - Paul-EIC

Jamie

9:30 - Joe-EIC

11 -Dan-EIC

Bruce

Nov. 30th

8 -Jamie-EIC

Gordon

9:30 - Joe-EIC

John

11 - Al-EIC

Allan

ALTAR GUILD

SAT. NOV. 1

Set Up - Tami

SUN. NOV. 2

8 - Nancy

9:30 - Nina

11 - Diana

SAT. NOV. 8

Set Up - Dee R

SUN. NOV. 9

8 - Susan

9:30 - Barbara

11 - Beth

SAT. NOV. 15

Set Up - Carol

SUN. NOV. 16

8 - Valerie

9:30 - Tami

11 - Kathy

SAT. NOV. 22

Set Up - Dee R

SUN. NOV. 23

8 - Susan

9:30 - Brenda

11 - Carol

WEDS. NOV. 26

Set Up -Valerie

7 PM -Valerie

SAT. NOV. 29

Set Up - Valerie

SUN. NOV. 23

8 - Valerie

9:30 - Barbara

11 - Diana

SCREENS

Nov. 2nd

8 -Patrick

9:30 - Brenda

11 - Gina

Nov. 9th

8 - Victoria

9:30 - Chris

11 -Toni

Nov. 16th

8 - Val

9:30 - Kristine

11 - Roy

Nov. 23rd

8 - Susan

9:30 - Romaine

11 -Lloyda

Nov. 30th

8 -Greg

9:30 - Tami

11 - Carol

STREAMING

Nov. 2nd

Bob

Nov. 9th

Jerry

Nov. 16th

Jeanie

Nov. 23rd

Brandon

Nov. 30th

Brandon

BLC APPRECIATES YOU!

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

Travis	Hardy	1-Nov
Dee	Reichard	2-Nov
Travis	Berkey	3-Nov
Cyndi	Briggs	3-Nov
Julie	Gundian	3-Nov
Earleen	Shord	3-Nov
Kristen	Randolph	4-Nov
Nevaeh	Diekmann	5-Nov
Becca	Hill	5-Nov
Jamie	Mazzeo	5-Nov
Ron	Zarski	5-Nov
Joanne	Dengler	6-Nov
Danny	Barley	7-Nov
Emma	Bolyard	7-Nov
Maureen	Murphy	7-Nov
Abigale	Hardy	8-Nov
Cooper	Heisler	8-Nov
Theresa	Potratz	9-Nov
Sean	Cadet	10-Nov
Ava	Garner	10-Nov
Madilyn	Garner	10-Nov
Judy	TenBroeck	10-Nov
Summer	Porter	11-Nov
Dawn	Barrett	15-Nov
Elizabeth	Thies	15-Nov
Jackie	Thompson	15-Nov
Frue	McAvoy	17-Nov
Logan	Wortelboer	17-Nov
Robbie	Wortelboer	17-Nov
Jan	Aleschus-Runko	19-Nov
Dave	Horn	19-Nov
Isabella	Cadet	21-Nov

Owen	Carlson	21-Nov
Jerry	Kirkman	21-Nov
Loren	Sifferath	21-Nov
Ken	Carlson	
Angela	Smith	22-Nov
Nicole	Diekmann	23-Nov
Candace	Orr	23-Nov
Arleigh	Sherrill	23-Nov
Bob	Van Ness	24-Nov
Easton	Werhner	24-Nov
Alex	Limbaugh	25-Nov
Dan	Runko	26-Nov
Kyle	Hanratty	28-Nov
Jesse	Shimp	29-Nov
Janene	Swain	29-Nov
Randall	Wardin	29-Nov
Barb	McCombs	30-Nov
Candice	Moore	30-Nov
Brook	Porter	30-Nov



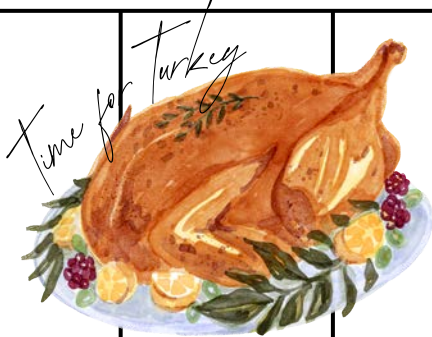
Anniversaries

Matthew and Candace Gray	11/03
John and Cheri Porter	11/07
Evan and Katie Satterfield	11/07
Logan and Jessica Skorusa	11/07
Greg and Anna Adams	11/17
Jeff and Robin Ford	11/23



NOVEMBER 2025



			Bible Studies Every Week: Mon: ECHO Bible Study 7 PM Weds: Limbaugh Bible Study 7 PM Thurs: Vicar's Bible Study 930 AM			1 9 AM Church Fall Clean-up 930 AM AA
2 8/ 930/ 11 AM Service 930 Sunday School	3 930 AM Senior Cards	4	5 930 AM Women's Bible Study	6 630 PM Young Adult Bible Study	7 FL/GA Middle School Youth Gathering 	8 930 AM AA
9 8/ 930/ 11 AM Service 930 Sunday School	10	11 7 PM Elders' Meeting	12 530 PM Confirmation & Youth Group	13	14	15 930 AM AA 1 PM Knots for Love
16 8/ 930/ 11 AM Service 930 Sunday School	17	18	19 530 PM Confirmation & Youth Group	20 6 PM Men's Bible Study	21 430 PM Mission House	22 6 PM BLC Young Adult Friendsgiving <i>more marshmallows</i> 
23  Thanksgiving Potluck 12 PM	24	25 7 PM Executive Council	26 530 PM Confirmation 7 PM Thanksgiving Eve Service	27 Happy Thanksgiving!	28 530 PM Family Game Night	
FIRST S. <i>30</i> in ADVENT						