

# THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

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## Joy in the Journey

As I write this I am just returning from a three-week vacation. About four days into my vacation, I realized how much I needed it. I hadn't taken much personal time since my last one-week vacation in April, so I was ready for a time of renewal and refreshment. With five funerals and a wedding in the previous couple of months, I wanted this retreat to provide an opportunity to recharge and refresh, guiding me forward in my own spiritual journey and commitment to the pastoral office. In an increasingly busy world, it was a blessing to intentionally set aside time simply to be with Diane, family, close friends, and embrace God's offer of rest. *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* - **Philippians 4:6-7**

While away, I had time to be with family in Colorado (including my mother and her two sisters - all in their nineties), meet up with Bethlehem church members in Montana, do a little fly fishing, and then visit our granddaughters in Venice, Florida (including the newest addition to our family that Diane and I were meeting for the first time). All of this gave me a chance to reconnect with God in ways that rejuvenate our spirits. It was an invitation to let go of distractions and be refreshed by the Holy Spirit. This renewal was not just about physical rest; it was also about spiritual revival and inspiring a fresh passion for my journey ahead. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"* - **2 Corinthians 5:17**

During my time away I realized anew the power of community. Coming together as believers strengthens our faith, and we draw encouragement from one another. Meeting up with Bethlehem members in Montana gave Diane and me an opportunity worship with them, to pray with them, and to share each other's burdens and joys. In the same way, our unity as a Bethlehem congregation allows us to support each other through prayer, shared experiences, and witness.

### Other stories this month:

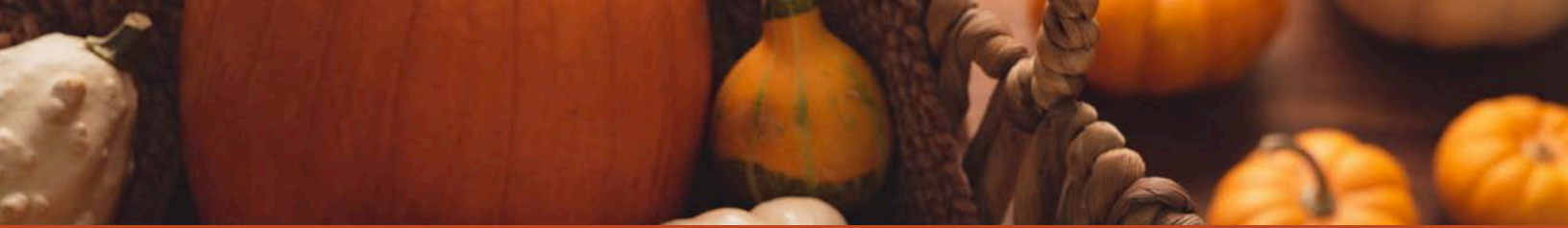
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#### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- DID YOU KNOW ABOUT LWML?
- WHAT'S HAPPENING AT BLC





# Joy in the Journey

## (Continued)

We remember that we are not alone in our journeys; together, we can lift each other up and grow closer to God. It is through our connections in Christ that we discover the richness of God's love and purpose for our lives. *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* – **Hebrews 10:24-25**

I hope all of us will take time to appreciate our God-given sabbaticals. In seeking peace, experiencing love, renewing our spirits, uniting in faith, listening to God's voice, embracing forgiveness, and stepping boldly into our journeys, the Creator engages us in ways that will resonate in our lives moving forward.

My vacation was a reminder that God renews us in our times of rest. I personally feel strengthened and inspired to take on the challenges that come my way, and I am blessed to face them in community with you – in a church called Bethlehem.

In His service . . . and yours,

*Pastor Dana Allen Brown*



***Rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS!***  
***And again I say rejoice!***



# The Two Kingdoms – Distinction Not Divorce

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed....”

Thus begins one of Paul’s more famous passages in Romans chapter 13, where he goes on for six more verses describing the nature of the Christian’s life under civil government. With so much recent civic chaos (like politically motivated murder and violence), I figured it would be a good time to rework this old newsletter article I wrote four years ago. Much more could be said, of course, but this is, at least, a very basic introduction to the Lutheran Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms.

Based largely on Romans 13, the basic idea of “The Two Kingdoms” is this: God is Lord over all. All! But He has two different ways of reigning: hence “two kingdoms” or “two realms.” In the “kingdom of the left hand,” the temporal, civic sphere, He rules by the power of the sword. He rules through earthly, governmental authorities. And He does this for the good of humanity. On the other hand (pardon the pun), in “the kingdom of the right hand,” he also rules: this time, through the Church. Here, He rules not by threat of jail time or civic punishment, but by His Word. This “kingdom” or “realm” is characterized, first and foremost, by the Gospel. By grace. (But of course, the Law is preached, too.) God rules in this realm, like He does in the “left-hand kingdom”, for the good of humanity. Indeed, for our ultimate good – our eternal salvation! (Your governor or senator can’t deliver you that!) Anyway, the key, “must-take-this-away” concept for talking about the Two Kingdoms is this: Christians our citizens of both. At the same time.

Now, we want to be clear to distinguish these two kingdoms. Keeping them clearly distinguished prevents a lot of mischief. On the left hand, we don’t want the civic government to be in the business of dispensing grace, forgiving and absolving murderers, thieves, and vandals. We want structure! Order. Accountability. And punishment for wrongdoers. On the right hand, though, we don’t want the church to have a standing army. (It sure did in Luther’s day!) We don’t want to “spread the Gospel” at the point of the sword. We want to preach the word of Christ’s forgiveness and the freedom found in a life lived His way!

But now it gets tricky. While we want to distinguish the two kingdoms, we don’t want to divorce them. God is at work over and through both, after all! And it’s not like these two kingdoms don’t affect each other. Of course they do. And they should! The fire marshal enforces the rules about how many people our church building can safely hold. The city council determines the regulations behind our church parking lot. So clearly, there’s a relationship. Conversely, the Church has a clear word (The Word of God!) to speak to whatever temporal authorities we find ourselves under. An understanding of the Two Kingdoms does not result in a constantly quiet church, but a selectively vocal one.



# The Two Kingdoms-Distinction Not Divorce

## *(Continued)*

When the temporal government or its leaders go off the rails that God's Word provides, it is time for Christians to speak up. And while God's Word does not speak to many of our civic questions, it is exceedingly clear on several important ones! Innocent life matters. It's not ours to take. Holy marriage matters. It's not ours to toss out or redefine. God's created order of male and female matters. It's not ours to pervert. And how we treat one another in our civic life matters. More violence and hatred are not the answer to violence and hatred. God's Word is clear on these things, at least.

So, please don't think that your Lutheran tradition puts you into a quietistic corner. At the same time, please don't think that all your apples are in the basket of temporal politics or culture. Your identity as God's people, called into both Kingdoms, means that you have a different perspective. You don't have one citizenship on your mind. You've got two.

The Lord bless and keep you,

*Pastor Nate McCarty*



### CORN MAZE YOUTH DAY TRIP

On Sunday Oct 19th the 6th-12th grade youth of BLC are invited to come out for an afternoon adventure to Sykes Family Farm for fall fun with friends!

Youth from Holy Trinity (GA), St.Peter's (Middleburg) & Grace Lutheran (Jax) churches will join us there at the Farm. The farm boasts 4 phases (styles) in a 9 acre corn maze, hayrides, duck races, pumpkin patch & u-pick flowers (u pay), food & vendor market, barnyard ball zone, Gaga ball, bubble barn & more! We will meet at BLC at 12:30pm (eat lunch before you come or pack it/bring cash for food at event) to carpool down there. We will be at the farm from about 2-5pm & return to BLC at 6pm. Drivers wanted ~ parents, we will need carpool aid - please text Heidi Wuggazer (904-866-1552) to help.

BLC youth fund is generously covering our admission cost. Please bring your own cash for any pumpkins/flowers, food/vendors, or 'extras' purchases.



## THE END OF THE YEAR...

It is officially October! Everything is in full swing, school is in session, the weather is starting to change, and football is finally here! For me, there is nothing like spending a full Sunday in church and going home to watch football! There's no other way to spend a Sunday! From the game changing plays, to the hard hits, and the long passes, there's always so much action in the game. As time winds down, there's even more action. In the last two minutes of the game, every play matters. These last two minutes in the game can sometimes take over 15 minutes of real time. In these last two minutes everything the teams have been working so hard for is starting to come to fruition, everything is in full swing for the winning team. Time itself starts to slow down, as people conserve time by running out of bounds, or just taking more timeouts. Within our own lives too, everything can feel like it's coming into full swing. With things to do, and places to be, it can be a lot. Here in October you might even find yourself much like us at the church, already planning for Thanksgiving and Christmas!

As everything comes into full swing, and life gets even more hectic, I invite you to reflect with me with what's coming in the church, the end of the church year. Yup, that's right with Thanksgiving and Christmas right around the corner, we find ourselves nearing the end of the church year. At the end of the church year we often have readings in church that deal with the end of time, namely when Jesus will return. As the church year ends with the coming of Advent and Christmas, we all look to Jesus to come again (both now at the end of the church year, but everyday of the year too)! The end of the church marks a momentous occasion for us as Christians, as the end of the church year doesn't just signal Advent or Christmas, but it signals the day when Jesus will come again to create a new heavens and a new earth, where we will live with Him forever.

In this last age we live, while we wait for Jesus' second coming, life can get hectic, life can be so action packed, life can be overwhelming, and life can feel just like "going through the motions". Yet life is not in vain. The Lord of life gives new life, life is what Lord of life promises. Even with life so crazily busy, as everything comes into full swing, I invite you to remember the time of the church year we're in. Pentecost. It's the end of Pentecost, yes, but even so at the end of Pentecost, we as Christians live on a mission. A mission that started long ago with Christ, who came to earth to give his life up as a ransom for God's people. A mission the Holy Spirit shared with the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, a mission the Holy Spirit shares with you everyday under His baptismal promises to you, that you are a part of God's family. As a member of His family, God gives you new life every day, to live under His promises, until these promises become realized in Jesus' return. This time, He fulfills his promises to bring you to your heavenly home. Even with everything in full swing, this time of the church year points us forward to the end of the story, when Jesus will come again to bring us all home. Especially during this time of the church year, I invite you to pray with me, "Come soon, Lord Jesus!"

*Vicar Caleb Gustafson*



\*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!



Our preschool is so grateful for the church's generous school supply donations. Your support helps us nurture and teach our little ones every day- thank you for blessing our children in such a meaningful way!

## THE Blessing OF THE PETS

On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, Pastor Nate will be blessing the pets of our Preschoolers. (Well, blessing pictures of pets and beloved stuffed animals.) We worship a God who loves all His creations- especially His children and the pets they love.



## HALLOWEEN PARADE



Our Preschoolers will get to march around and show off their Halloween costumes. We cannot wait to see the cutest monsters and princesses in Jax Beach!



# Did you know...?

**The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod has had an active women's mission-focused ministry for over 83 years.**



In October we celebrate the work of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) also known as Women In Mission. But who are these women in mission? If you are a woman, IT IS YOU! Now some of you will say: "I never joined the LWML. I have never even been to a meeting." If you are a member of an LCMS congregation and are a women 18 years old or older you are part of the LWML.

The LWML mission is to 'Serve the Lord with Gladness.' The LWML is not about the meetings attended, although they are necessary for planning. The LWML is about serving. How do you serve? Some women serve the Lord by working in the church. There are so many ways to serve at Bethlehem I will not try to list them all. But it is more than working in the church. We serve the Lord when we take care of our family, help our friends and our neighbors. Others serve in the community, using their time, talents, and treasure. Women serve at work when they show their faith by action to their coworkers and employers. Some serve by participating in Mission trips and/or supporting those that go on the mission trips. Women serve the Lord when we encourage others in their faith and when we pray for others. We serve the Lord in many ways, most of the time not even realizing that we are serving because it is just what we do as Christians.

Now that you know that you are an LWML woman I encourage you to find out more about the LWML organization and the work that it does not only in our area but also in the FL/GA District, nationally, and internationally. I also encourage you to participate in the activities that the Bethlehem society has planned for this year. Watch your bulletin for the dates and time of these activities. If you have an outreach project that you feel would be a good project for the LWML to do next year come to the planning meeting that we usually hold the first part of the year. If you have questions feel free to contact Debbie Corbitt or Becky Bicknase.

## LWML PLEDGE

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In fervent gratitude for the Savior's dying love and His blood-bought gift of redemption we dedicate ourselves to Him with all that we are and have; and in obedience to His call for workers in the harvest fields, we pledge Him our willing service wherever and whenever He has need of us. We consecrate to our Savior our hands to work for Him, our feet to go on His errands, our voice to sing His praises, our lips to proclaim His redeeming love, our silver and our gold to extend His Kingdom, our will to do His will, and every power of our life to the great task of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him. Amen.

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT BLC

WEDS

OCT  
1

## WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

9:30 AM

Join us as we resume Women's Bible Study in the Cottage. All ages welcome!



THURS

OCT  
2

## YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY

5:30 PM

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

SUN

OCT  
5

## MUFFINS FOR MITES

Join us as we celebrate LWML Sunday! Our LWML will be hosting Muffins for Mites following the worship services.



MON

OCT  
6

## CARDS, CARDS, CARDS!

9:30 AM

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



FRI

OCT  
10

## HARVEST FOR HOPE

6:00 PM

At Gruhn Acres to benefit ARIZE and BLC South African Missions.



MON

OCT  
13

## CHURCH OFFICE AND PRESCHOOL CLOSED

THURS

OCT  
16

## MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

600 PM- Bible Study and Dinner

Join us for food and study as we delve into Veith's "Postmodern Times."



SUN

OCT  
19

## SYKES' FARM PUMPKIN PATCH YOUTH EVENT

2-5PM

More details to come.



SAT

OCT  
25

## BLC'S TRUNK OR TREAT

Mark your calendars for this year's Trunk or Treat. Please join us with your decorated trunks and enjoy fellowship, hotdogs, sno cones and games for the children.



SUN

OCT  
26

## REFORMATION CELEBRATION AT OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

4:00 PM

Celebrate the Reformation with special speaker Pres. Rev. Rockey & meal to follow.

\*If you would like any information about the events listed above, please contact the church office at [officeadmin@bethlehemlutheranjaxbeach.org](mailto:officeadmin@bethlehemlutheranjaxbeach.org).

# BLC VOLUNTEERS!

## COUNTING

**OCT 5**

Paul/Allan

**OCT 12**

Bob/Barbara

**OCT 19**

Barbie/Diane

**OCT 26**

Greg/Holly

## ALTAR GUILD

**SAT. OCT. 4**

Set Up - Tami

**SUN. OCT. 5**

8 - Valerie

9:30 - Brenda

11 - Kathy

**SAT. OCT. 11**

Set Up - Dee

**SUN. OCT. 12**

8 - Susan

9:30 - Barbara

11 - Diana

**SAT. OCT. 18**

Set Up - Anna

**SUN. OCT. 19**

8 - Nancy

9:30 - Tami

11 - Beth

**SAT. OCT. 25**

Set Up - Anna

**SUN. OCT. 26**

8 - Valerie

9:30 - Barbara

11 -



## SCREENS

**Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>**

8 - Patrick

9:30 - Brenda

11 - Gina

**Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>**

8 - Victoria

9:30 - Kristine

11 - Toni

**Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>**

8 - Nancy

9:30 - Chris

11 - Roy

**Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>**

8 - Greg

9:30 - Romaine

11 - Blaine

## STREAMING

**Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Bob

**Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Jerry

**Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Jeanie

**Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>**

Brandon

# BLC APPRECIATES YOU!

# OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

## *Birthdays*

Brady	Gordish	10/3
Elyse	Matthews	10/4
Robert	Harwood	10/5
Luke	Smith	10/5
Erika	Williams	10/5
Michael	Gregor	10/6
Lloyda	Heilig	10/6
Nola	Tostovarsnik	10/6
Bernie	Brewer	10/7
Alex	Stubbs	10/7
Timothy	Taylor	10/7
Caitlin	Brauer	10/8
Ruth	Morrison	10/8
Nancy	Seal	10/9
Robert	Murray	10/12
Katie	Satterfield	10/12
Anthony	Mazzeo	10/14
Lorna	Boyajian	10/16
Maria	Case	10/16
Robert	Kickhofel	10/16
Laura	Gundian	10/17
Wynchester	Heilig	10/18
Frank	Swain	10/18
James	Shimp	10/19
Robin	Leaptrott	10/20
Romaine	Moore	10/20
Amelia	Vincelet	10/20
Jeannie	Hill	10/21
Brandon	Avery	10/22
Carl	Shafer	10/23
Shea	Skorusa	10/24
Megan	Huber	10/25

Wayne	Lorenz	10/26
Leila	Kverne-Nelson	10/28
Jasper	Richards	10/28
David	Huber	10/29
Kayla	Gruhn	10/30
Billy	Maxwell	10/30
Matthew	Gray	10/31
Pam	Kessler	10/31



## *Anniversaries*

Bob and Linda Van Ness	10/02
Nicholas and Ann Westfall	10/04
Greg and Amy Case	10/07
Bob and Jackie Fuller	10/13
Brady and Nina Gordish	10/15
Gordon and Val Gruhn	10/17
Mark and Lynn McGiveron	10/19
Jan and Loren Sifferath	10/20
Keith and Becky Bicknase	10/21
Scott and Jessica Harrison	10/22
Stephen and Lisa Smith	10/23
David and Cindy Huber	10/24





# OCTOBER 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

930 AM  
Women's  
Bible Study

2

630 PM  
Young Adult  
Bible Study

3

4

930 AM AA

5



Muffins for  
Mites Sunday

6

930 AM  
Senior Cards

7

8

530 PM  
Confirmation  
& Youth  
Group

9

10



6 PM Harvest  
for Hope

11

930 AM AA

12

8/ 930/  
11 AM Service

930 Sunday  
School

13

14

15

530 PM  
Confirmation  
& Youth  
Group

16

6 PM Men's  
Bible Study

17

430 PM  
Mission  
House

18

930 AM AA

19



Youth Event  
at 2 PM

20



21

22

530 PM  
Confirmation  
& Youth  
Group

23

6 PM  
Preschool  
Board  
Meeting

24

25



6 PM  
Trunk or  
Treat

26



4 PM  
Reformation  
Celebration at  
Our Redeemer

27

28

7 PM  
Executive  
Council

29

530 PM  
Confirmation  
& Youth  
Group

30

31



**BETHLEHEM**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH & PRESCHOOL