

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

What is a Vicar

On Tuesday, April 28th, after an Executive Council meeting, I checked the messages on my phone. I was elated when I heard the words: "Hello, Pastor Brones, this is Micah Cumming. I'm your new Vicar." I called Micah immediately as we began to make plans for his "vicarage" experience which would begin three months later.

Vicar Micah is vicar number sixteen for Bethlehem. He follows in the footsteps of some of the best vicars in the LCMS. Many new members have joined our BLC family since our first vicar (John Rasmussen) back in 2010, and many have asked, "what is a vicar?" Therefore, in this article I will give a brief definition of what the church calls a "Vicarage" (internship) and tell you a bit about what a "vicar" does.

Vicars are not pastors yet, but the vicarage year is a great and valuable time for the formation of a pastor. Vicars serve as they learn, and in doing so, they learn how to serve.

Vicarage is a joyous, challenging, risky venture for student, pastor, and congregation. There's rejoicing over the growth of a man for the office of the ministry and the difference he makes in the life of a congregation. Yet, the development of needed relationships - and then letting them go at the end of the year - is demanding of everyone involved. And who knows how the year will go? We pray for the best and trust God's care and guidance. But we also know our weaknesses and faults, and vicarage makes vicar, supervisor, and people vulnerable to those human frailties. Still, we give thanks and praise to our great God for this opportunity.

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What is a Vicar (Cont.)

The following formal definition of vicarage was offered during the accreditation process at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1993:

“Non-resident field education, referred to as vicarage in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, is a twelve-month internship, normally occurring in the parish setting. As stipulated in Synodical bylaw 2.09c, this in-service education is required by all seminary students before graduation, ordinarily in the second year before graduation. Vicarage is, therefore, a mandated part of the seminary curriculum.

The purpose of vicarage is to continue the theological training of the student by providing him supervised practical experience and opportunity to reflect upon that experience with a practicing pastor as mentor. Like internships at hospitals for future physicians, congregations thus provide a formative context for future pastors. At the same time, service is provided to the congregation in which the student is assigned. However, the primary objective is that vicarage be a learning experience for the student.”

The years since that definition was written have only underscored the essential nature of vicarage. The vicarage year is educational first and foremost. But it also involves the student in the ministry of the congregation and, therefore, provides service to the people and pastor of the parish.

Yet a formal definition seldom captures the dynamic possibilities of what goes on in vicarage. So, consider these aspects as a brief depiction of this year long experience.

For the Student: excitement, a break in the rigor of classroom studies, finally putting knowledge into practice day in and day out, opportunity to serve, scary first-time activities, making a difference in the life of a congregation, being significantly formed for ministry by a mentor, growing in faith and love for the Savior and God’s people. The vicar serves under the supervision of the senior pastor and must come with a willingness to learn and desire to serve.

For the Pastor: energizing, the privilege of forming a man for the ministry, an opportunity to share the joys and fears of the office, thinking through what is done and why, keeping eyes open for additional learning experiences, demanding of time and energy, the satisfaction of seeing a man mature in pastoral identity and practice, growing in the knowledge and peace of God.

For the Congregation: edifying, vision turned outward toward Seminary and Synod, developing mission eyes, opportunity to love a future pastor, helping to shape a future pastor’s life and ministry, a time to express faith by opening hearts and lives to the student, receiving assistance in many more areas of the congregation’s life, growing in Christ’s forgiveness and hope.



What is a Vicar (Cont.)

Vicarage is a dynamic interaction of student, supervisor, seminary, and church, all growing in the grace of God, to further the personal, spiritual, pastoral, and theological formation of a man for the office of the ministry. Risky-yes! Challenging-indeed! Joyous-most definitely!

No, vicars are not pastors yet, but the vicarage year is a great and valuable time for the formation of a pastor. Vicars serve as they learn, and in doing so, they learn how to serve. This is such a wonderful blessing for Bethlehem, and everyone involved in the training and development of each year's new vicar. We pray this same blessing upon Micah and his beautiful family.

In His service . . . and yours,

Pastor Dana Allen Brown





Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum

Fancy Latin. In English? "The Word of the Lord Endures Forever." The motto of the Lutheran Reformation. Sometimes you'll see the Latin phrase communicated with just four letters: VDMA.

I used to have a very nice, cork bottom coffee tumbler that says "VDMA" on it. (I think you can still order them from cph.org.) Of course, I don't drink coffee, so Erica long ago "requisitioned it." This phrase is a great reminder that no matter what difficult things may transpire, no matter what losses you may endure, (even if you spill your coffee!) the Word of the Lord endures forever. VDMA.

This is more than our theological heritage. This is our Christian identity. This is our great hope. The motto is based on Isaiah 40:8, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of Our God will stand forever."

It's all gonna go, folks. None of it will last. Ultimately, nothing is untouchable. Everything is "subject to change." I think the longer one lives and the more one "goes through" the clearer that truth becomes.

Weekend schedules and plans for the kids – who's doing what and where? Best to have a flexible attitude there. Savings accounts? They can quickly become the victim of an unplanned air conditioner or vehicle repair. Or both at the same time, because that's usually how things go! How about career plans? Great to have, I'd recommend having them... but do our plans always turn out like we thought they would? One of my favorite bands, Twenty-One Pilots, has a line in one of their songs where they acknowledge that. "Since we know that dreams are dead/And life turns plans up on their head/I will plan to be a bum/So I just might become someone." Ha! Well, I wouldn't recommend that, exactly. But the point stands. Life often turns things upside down.

Nothing in life is ironclad. It can all be delayed, derailed, denied, or defunded. The grass withers, the flower fades. Even our health and our life is never as sure a thing as we think it is. It may be hard but it is good to remember: the mortality rate for life is 100%.

But on the other hand... the Word of the Lord endures forever! In shaky times, we have something stalwart. In times that call us to be flexible, we have something firm. In times of illness or death we have the Word of God's promise – resurrection! If anyone is poised to weather the uncertainties of life... it's the Church! Because the Church is the place where the Word of the Lord is proclaimed – in sermons, Sunday School, homes, even on Zoom Bible studies! And where the Word of the Lord is there is endurance. The Word of the Lord endures. Forever.



Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum (Cont.)

We have more than a passing fad here. We have more than feeling a religious high for a week. We have the Word of the Lord. We have what the whole world needs! Something to get through this crazy life. Something that will endure.

Hiccups will come. Things will happen. Things you wouldn't prefer. Things that may be very, very hard. But through it all, God's Word is imperishable. This we know. This we trust. So, stuff the Word of God into your ears. It won't disappoint. It'll endure.

Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum,

Pastor Nate McCarty





Greetings from Micah, Eleanor, and Gideon Cumming,

We are honored to be here and surrounded by you all. I have been so grateful for all the warmth you have extended in everything you do. From our move-in, to our red box, to our house, to the warm invitations, and to the friendly conversations, we have been touched. Thank you so much for providing for us not just financially, but emotionally, spiritually, and taking me in during this year as I learn so many things. Thank you.

I am deeply invested in serving you all this year. I desire to bring you Christ and His eternal gifts from Heaven: forgiveness. And I have your back: please do not hesitate to share how you're doing. No amount of stress or headaches can break God's undeserved love for you in Christ Jesus our Lord. If you need to be reminded of that, please reach out to me or one of your pastors. Eleanor and I are extremely excited to get to know more about you, and we know how hard life can be.

As you might have heard, I grew up in Dallas, Texas. I went to school at a Classical Lutheran School in Plano, Texas, where I also received my high school education. My mom helps as a substitute teacher there, and my dad serves as a structural engineer in Dallas.

Eleanor and I met at Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) through Church services, piano, and choir. Eleanor and her siblings were raised in Evansville, Indiana, where her dad was the church Director of Music. Her older brother is also studying at Concordia Seminary, St Louis, and so it has been awesome to talk with him about his experiences at seminary.

I really want to tell you what has inspired me to study to be a pastor. My dad's dad served as a pastor for over 40 years, and he continues to preach where possible today. He would always lead in devotions after dinner, and he always served with joy and care. He has had a tremendous impact on me because he is always committed to helping people from schoolchildren to college students to outreaching to people to shut-ins. Watching Grandpa Cumming over the years has taught me dedication, persistence, and joy in the task of serving as a pastor. I pray that many of you have or will have people like my Grandpa that inspire you to do incredible things.

May God equip you with joy, peace, mercy, and grace wherever you are and whatever you are going through.

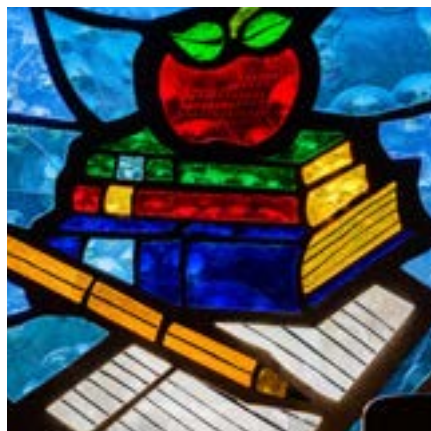
Vicar Micah Cumming



Did you know...?

Founding Lutheran Schools in America: 1838–1847

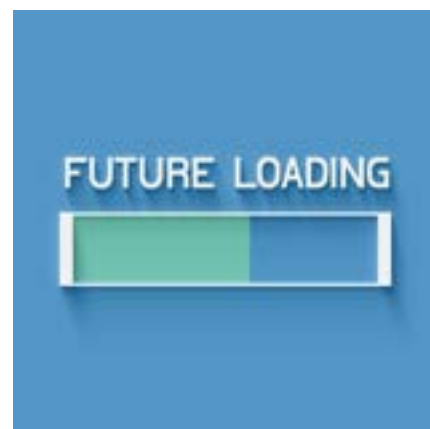
In 1838 five ships carrying over 700 German Lutherans set sail for America. The commitment to Lutheran schooling began immediately. On the trans-Atlantic voyage, as well as the steamer trip up the Mississippi, the school-aged children received daily lessons. Despite extreme poverty and hardships, one of the first things the settlers in Perry County, Mo., built was a log cabin schoolhouse.



Walking Together in Education: 1847–1890

Less than a decade after their arrival, the Saxon Lutherans banded together with other confessional German Lutheran immigrants to form a Synod. In the 1847 founding constitution, one of the requirements for membership was “Provision of a Christian education for the children of the congregations.”

Regardless of the size or shape of Lutheran schools in the century to come, they will be blessed whenever and wherever they teach children the riches of God’s Word. As they instill these enduring truths in young minds and hearts, they will prove to generations to come that faithful Lutheran Christian education remains now what it has always been: the greatest earthly gift we can give our children.





BLC Highlights:



A huge thank-you to all of our incredible volunteers who helped make the Tanner Olson and Josh Wilson event such a tremendous success! Your time, energy, and dedication made a real difference and helped create a memorable experience for everyone involved. We're so grateful for each of you and everything you did to make the event possible!



BLC VOLUNTEERS

ELDERS

September 6th
8:00 Paul B. EIC
Jon W.
9:30 Joe G. EIC
John H.
11:00 Dan R. EIC
Alex L.

September 13th
8:00 Jamie H. EIC
Gordon G.
9:30 Joe G. EIC

11:00 Dan H. EIC
Rob Harwood

September 20th
8:00 Gordon G. EIC
Jon W.
9:30 Joe G. EIC
John H.
11:00 Bruce D. EIC
Brandon A.

September 27th
8:00 Jamie H. EIC
Gordon
9:30 Joe G. EIC

11:00 Al W. EIC
Al C.

ALTAR GUILD

Sat 9/5: Dee R.
9/6
8 AM - Valarie
9:30 AM - Nina
11 AM - Diana

Sat 9/12: Tami
9/13
8 AM - Susan
9:30 AM - Brenda
11 AM - Erica & Joy

Sat 9/19: Carol
9/20
8 AM - Valarie
9:30 AM - Barbara
11 AM - Beth

Sat 9/26: Anna
9/27
8 AM - Nancy
9:30 AM - Tami
11 AM - Carol & Judy

SCREENS

9/6
8 AM - Patrick
9:30 AM - Chris
11 AM - Gina

9/13
8 AM - Nancy
9:30 AM - Kristine
11 AM - Toni

9/20
8 AM - Val
9:30 AM - Romaine
11 AM - Lloyd

9/27
8 AM - Susan
9:30 AM - Brenda
11 AM - Roy

COUNTING

9/6
Diane/Barbie

9/13
Allan/Barbara

9/20
Gordon/Bob

9/27
Paul/Terry

STREAMING

9/6
11 AM - Roy

9/13
11 AM - Jerry

9/20
11 AM - Brandon

9/27
11 AM - Jeanie



SEPTEMBER

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

Kevin Perryman	Sept. 2nd
Logan Dellinger	Sept. 3rd
Reyeker Baskin	Sept. 5th
Anna Bookholt	Sept. 6th
John Porter	Sept. 7th
Salvatore Zingales	Sept. 7th
Colton Sweeney	Sept. 8th
Lindsey Treat	Sept. 10th
Vicki Green	Sept. 12th
Joy McCarty	Sept. 12th
Kathy Poe	Sept. 12th
Cathy Rangel	Sept. 12th
Lisa Cameron	Sept. 13th
Alexander Staudinger	Sept. 13th
Nori Tostovarsnik	Sept. 16th
Mark Boylard	Sept. 18th
Greg Adams	Sept. 21st
Janine Thiemann	Sept. 21st
Erik Willhelm	Sept. 21st
Susan Beaty	Sept. 22nd
Bob DeGroat	Sept. 22nd
Toni Skorusa	Sept. 22nd
Otto Gruhn	Sept. 23rd
Jamie Heimbach	Sept. 23rd
Eleanora Putnam	Sept. 23rd
Barbara Raddant	Sept. 24th
Johnny Corbitt	Sept. 25th
Joshua Gajdos	Sept. 25th
Kadence Perryman	Sept. 26th
Trevor Freeborn	Sept. 27th
Debbie Corbitt	Sept. 28th
Avery Williams	Sept. 28th
Landon Williams	Sept. 28th
Pastor McCarty	Sept. 29th
Diane Zellmer	Sept. 30th



Anniversaries

Tammi & Brad Moe	Sept. 2nd
Erika & Reese Williams	Sept. 2nd
Nina & Joe Gregor	Sept. 5th
Particia & Neil Robar	Sept. 9th
Lisa & Paul Cameron	Sept. 16th
Gina & Jeff Parsons	Sept. 19th
Diane & Dennis Reed	Sept. 20th
Theresa & James Emery	Sept. 29th



September 2026

		1	2 9:30 AM Women's Bible Study (Cottage) 	3 9:30 AM Vicar's Bible Study (Cottage)	4	5
6 8/ 9:30/ 11 AM Service 9:30 Sunday School	7 Church Office & Preschool Closed LABOR ★ DAY ★	8	9  Confirmation Orientation 5:30 PM Youth Group 6:30PM	10	11	12 10:30 AM Girl Scouts
13 8/ 9:30/ 11 AM Service 9:30 Sunday School	14 9:30 AM Senior Cards 	15	16 Confirmation Orientation 5:30 PM Youth Group 6:30PM	17 6 PM Preschool Board Meeting 6 PM Men's Bible Study (Disciples Hall)	18	19
20 8/ 9:30/ 11 AM Service 9:30 Sunday School	21	22	23 Confirmation Orientation 5:30 PM Youth Group 6:30PM	24	25 5:30 PM Family Game Night (Disciples Hall) 	26 10:30 AM Girl Scouts
27 8/ 9:30/ 11 AM Service 9:30 Sunday School	28	29 6:30 PM Executive Council Meeting	30	<i>Bible Studies Every Week:</i> Mon: ECHO Bible Study 7 PM Weds: Limbaugh Bible Study 7 PM Thurs: Vicar's Bible Study 9:30 AM		