



# *The STAR of Bethlehem*



**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**  
**An LCMS Congregation**

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

[https://www.facebook.com/BLCAikenSC/?ref=nf\\_target](https://www.facebook.com/BLCAikenSC/?ref=nf_target)

**Redacted Website Edition**

**August 2025**

## **PASTOR'S MESSAGE:**

May 30, 2025 / Letter from the President

Suffering Produces Endurance

by Matthew C. Harrison

(LCMS.org)

*"We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame" (Rom. 5:3–5).*

Do you ever feel like quitting? Quitting friends? Quitting family? Quitting a class? Quitting sports? Quitting school? Quitting church? Quitting life? Of course you have. We all have, and the reasons vary. Life is painful and complicated. It's a good thing to get out of toxic situations or at least take steps to right them.

And yet, Christians have a unique view on "quitting." We know that suffering is good — and not just in the sense of "no pain, no gain." We believe that God works profound blessings through suffering, even when those blessings may not be at all evident to us.

On the road to Emmaus, a couple of Jesus' disciples spoke the greatest words of irony ever recorded. They said to Jesus (whom they did not recognize), "Jesus of Nazareth ... was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. ... [Our] rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:19–21). The irony is this: It was precisely by being put to death that Jesus did "redeem Israel." He "was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). Jesus' suffering on the cross was the greatest good in history, and yet to His followers who saw it happening, it was scandalous and devastating. It appeared to them that God hated Him and them. But the opposite was true: On the cross, suffering worked the ultimate good. My sins and yours are paid for.

Jesus taught, "Take up [your] cross and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24). In this life, we suffer. We suffer sins against us. We suffer illness. We suffer family problems. We suffer our own failings and weaknesses and those of others. St. Paul — who himself suffered terribly — wrote these comforting words:

Continued on page 2

All items for the newsletter are to be submitted to Debbie C., editor, no later than the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month and, upon approval, may be edited for space or clarity. *Early submissions are appreciated.*

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## Lutheran Resources

LCMS- Free to be Faithful  
[www.lcms.org/socialissues/freetobe-faithful](http://www.lcms.org/socialissues/freetobe-faithful)

Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty  
[www.LCRLFreedom.org](http://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/](http://www.lcms.org/)

Concordia Publishing House  
[www.cph.org/](http://www.cph.org/)

International Lutheran Council  
[www.ILCouncil.org](http://www.ILCouncil.org)

Continued from page 1.

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Rom. 5:1–5)*

We have peace with God in Jesus. Our sins are forgiven, all of them.

In Jesus, we have access to the Father by faith because of His love and grace.

We can rejoice even when we suffer, because suffering helps us tremendously. We learn to endure. And enduring, our character grows strong. And as our character is forged, we learn to hope, to look beyond the present, knowing that in Jesus the future belongs to us. We bend, we even break sometimes. We doubt. We fear. We fail. We cling to Jesus; but more importantly, when we have nothing left, Jesus clings to us. What Jesus said to His apostles, He says to you: "I chose you. You did not choose Me" (see John 15:16).

Love is forged through these trials. Paul says it's poured into our hearts. God loves me, and ironically, its (sic) precisely in trials that I learn that. God loves those around me, and by my suffering I learn to be compassionate and love those suffering around me. And that includes just about everybody I know. "Suffering produces endurance."



## [FROM THE EDITOR:]

How did you like the idea of including the Mid-Year Voters' Assembly packet in the *Star*? Did that work well for you, or would you prefer future voters' packets to be sent out separately? Please provide feedback. Thanks.

On another note, due to unforeseen circumstances, the photo directory project has been postponed slightly. I hope to get it started by September. Stay tuned.



~ DC

## CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Debbie C., Recording Secretary

Our building is in good repair. Finances are stable. Activities are happening. Help is needed.

We'll be appointing a nominating committee for the 2025 Council elections next month. If you would like to help with this committee or already know you'd like to serve on the council, please speak to Council President Joel C. For this odd-year election we'll be voting for: treasurer, property manager, education chairman, and evangelism & mission chairman.

Also, please note, we have not had a vice president for a couple of years. As a trustee position, this volunteer needs to be elected by the Voters' Assembly. We can do that at our December 14 year-end meeting. This would be to complete the current term – just a one-year commitment. It's a great chance to “get your feet wet” serving on the council and is a particularly useful idea for one who is willing to be the next council president (who will be elected for two years at the 2026 year-end Voters' Assembly.)

Speak to Joel, the nominating committee, or any council member if you are able to serve the Lord in this way.



## MUSICAL NOTES

Rebecca W.

### THE WORD IS GOING FORTH IN MELODY, IN HARMONY, IN TRUTH

Written by Chad Bird, author of upcoming book, *Untamed Prayer*.

Most Christian worship services don't just have one sermon—they have three, four, five, or even six. Here's what I mean: it's not just the pastor's message that preaches. The hymns and songs we sing together as a congregation are also proclaiming the Word of God.

Each hymn is a miniature musical sermon. As we sing, we're not just expressing emotion or filling space in the service—we are declaring God's Word to one another. Theology sings!

That's why the songs we sing matter. They express and shape our theology, form our faith, and encourage our hearts. They're not just warm-up or background—they are worship and proclamation.

Paul emphasizes this in his letters, urging the church to sing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” to one another (e.g., Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19), letting the Word of Christ dwell richly among us.

This isn't just a New Testament idea. Not only do we have the 150 psalms in the Old Testament, God commanded Moses to teach Israel a song. We know it as the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, which we read in *Bible in One Year*. God intended that song to be a witness to his people. It was, in that case, largely a warning, but still a proclamation of the Word through singing—meant to be remembered and passed on through the generations.

So, when you gather next time with the body of Christ and lift your voice in song, remember this: you're not only worshiping God—you're preaching to your neighbor. And as the person next to you sings, they're preaching to you too. The Word is going forth in melody, in harmony, in truth.



## "The Day After"

*1 Kings 19:1a, 2-3a, 4-8 - Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done .... Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not [kill you] by this time tomorrow." Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life .... But [Elijah] went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.*



You probably remember the story. The people of Israel had turned away from God to serve false gods, so the Lord sent Elijah to confront them. On that day, Elijah built an altar in front of everybody to the true God, and the idol worshippers built their own altar. And then everyone waited to see which god would prove he was the real God by sending down fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifice.

Of course, the Lord sent fire, and for a little while, it looked like everyone was going to turn back to the Lord. But now it's the day after, and the queen is threatening Elijah's life. It's like nothing has changed at all. And Elijah wishes he were dead.

It comforts me to see how gentle and patient God is with Elijah. He doesn't argue with him. He doesn't say, "Have you already forgotten the great miracle I did?" No, He sends him food. He gives him a chance to sleep and then more food to eat. He says nothing to him at all except to meet his needs.

Faced with this gentle, quiet kindness, Elijah comes back to life, just a bit. He decides to go to the mountain of Horeb, where the people of Israel met God long ago. Elijah will meet God there, too, and God will bring him back from the brink of despair.

God still shows us this same love and gentleness when we are at the end of our ropes—when we can't think what to do, because we are exhausted and sad and afraid. God comes to us and takes care of us. He knows we can't do anything for ourselves. That's why He came to us to be our Savior.

If you are at the end of your rope right now, Jesus is waiting for you. He will care for you with the same kindness He has always had. He loves you—enough to give up His life for you, enough to rise from the dead and go on caring for you forever. Let Him care for you.

**WE PRAY:** Lord, You see my situation. Please help me. Amen.

This Daily Devotion was written by Dr. Kari Vo. Received via email 8-6-24 from LHM



## FROM THE ALTAR GUILD:

### BLC CELEBRATES!

#### BIRTHDAYS

Carolina C  
James K  
John S  
Patsy L  
Kelli R  
Judy S



#### ANNIVERSARIES

Charles & Joanne M

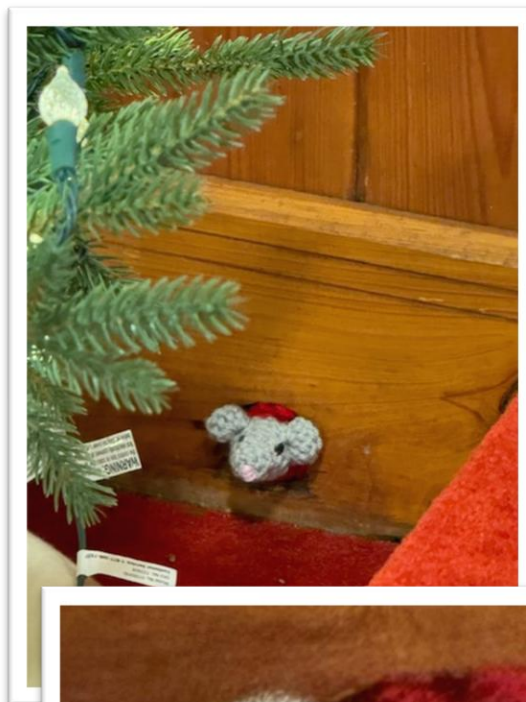
Let us know your special events to include: baptism, retirement, promotion, graduation...

Please notify the office of corrections and additions.

### AND THE WINNER IS...

Our church mouse finally has a name! The vote was close and all the names had supporters, but there was a clear winner. The winning name was contributed by Doug K. Congratulations, Doug, and thank you to everyone who contributed or voted for a name! It was a fun little contest and now, allow me to introduce our church mouse... (drumroll, please)

### Heidi Holy!





## Annual Church Picnic, July 13





## Dining Out at Olive Garden, July 17







# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTIVITIES AT BLC

Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

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I G P M C A N S N O I T A N O D S T C A H R
E N E L I L B I B L E S T U D I E S P K X U
L I C Z E S G J P S T E W A R D S H I P Q M
Z T N A F H S M Q P H O T O G R A P H Y T M
Q N A H L Q E I G N I V I R D D K R D R Z A
R I N R P T G C O K R O W D R A Y H K Z Q G
G R E G R T A M I N K E K P M L L L T K M E
N P T U E C Q R L F C V I B M D V N G T P S
I N N E H Q O L G N F H G Z N W H L L R A A
T I I S S R R F A U S O N R X M J I O Z N L
A T A T U K H N F W I T Z C G R F P P Z G E
R E M S M X I R O E G L C K K E E P M C E K
O L G P B F T L W Y E L D J C R Z C U M L L
C L N E D Z L K Z G E H P H T E T N S R T V
E U I A Q E T X K A N I O Y R D F L I Y R B
D B D K F Q V B N J H I C U P U H M C R E M
K N L E Y L Y I K S C A T D R C E L X L E R
H X I R N M N H R E R L P I P A Y T P R E F
Y H U S K G K O S E N R N Z S T X G A Y Z X
V M B J G M W K Z Y C M K G L I K R A N J K
T M C P O T L U C K F O O D P O V R C X O N
T U O G N I N I D Y T B N M C N P T P H D D
  
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ACTSDonations	Donate	Photography
Altar Guild	Driving	PotluckFood
AngelTree	Education	Prayer
BibleStudies	Fellowship	PropertyCare
BuildingMaintenance	Finance	RummageSale
Bulletin Printing	GuestSpeakers	Stewardship
Cleaning	LifeChoices	Usher
CoffeeHour	Mission	Visiting
Decorating	Music	Worship
Dining Out	OfficeHelp	Yardwork

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

To reduce waste and unnecessary expense, members who want to use **offering envelopes in 2026** need to specifically request them via a sign-in sheet which can be found in the East Narthex Information Center. Please speak to Financial Secretary Helga if you have any questions.

The Life Choices' Annual **Baby Bottle Fund Drive** is complete. 17 of the 25 bottles were returned yielding a total of **\$605.95**. This is down from the 2024 total, however a new option to donate online was available this year and there was no way for BLC to monitor those donations, if any. Life Choices reuses the baby bottles, so if you still have one, please return it (with or without money). *Thanks!*

### ACTS Collection for August – Canned beans

Reminder- can openers, cleaning products, and any shelf-stable food welcome at any time.

## FELLOWSHIP

Aug. 15 – **BLC Night Out** at Good Girl Brewery (Banks Mill Rd, next to Citizen Park)

Aug. 31 – **Potluck** after the service



Due to health reasons, Fellowship Committee Chairman Helga W. is **seeking volunteers** who are willing, able, and available. Specifically, someone is needed to cover one Sunday morning a month (make coffee, lay out snacks, clean-up afterwards, etc.) Additionally, another volunteer is needed to coordinate the monthly BLC Nights Out (choose restaurant, call to make reservations, announce information to members). Training provided! Please speak to Helga for more information.

1 Peter 4:10–11

[10] As each has received a gift, use it *to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace*: [11] whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (ESV)

Emphasis added





## BLC CLASSIFIEDS



To place a classified ad in the *Star*, please submit the information to me by the usual monthly deadline- noon on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the month.  
Please use your BLC Directory for contact information.

~DC

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

A while back I (DC) asked for recommendations for exterior house painting and received no replies after several requests. I'm now in the happy position to have a recommendation myself:

Erick Painting, 803.226.3752.

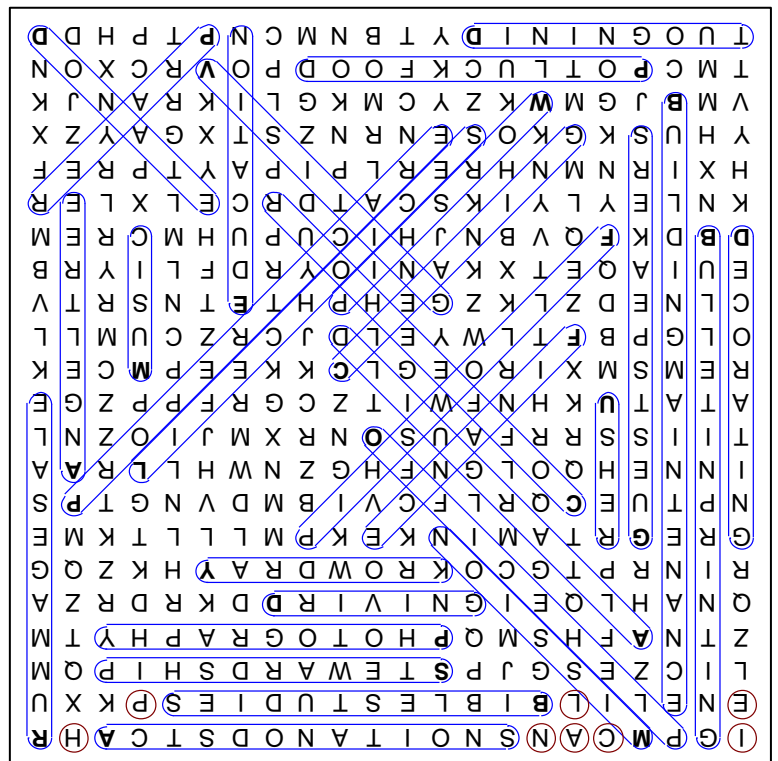
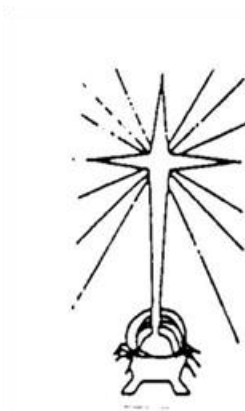
### SERVICES offered by BLC members:

Dana A. offers interior house painting.

### FOR SALE...

### WANTED...

### ETC.



# August 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	31	1	2 Pastor's Day Off
3 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service ACTS Collection	4 10am Women's Bible Study	5 7pm Bible Study	6 Pastor Shut-in Visits	7 8	8 9	Pastor's Day Off
10 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	11 10am Women's Bible Study	12 7pm Bible Study	13 5:30 BLC Night Out*	14 15	15 16	Pastor's Day Off
17 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	18 10am Women's Bible Study	19 7pm Bible Study	20 Pastor Shut-in Visits	21 22	22 23	Pastor's Day Off
24 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service	25 10am Women's Bible Study	26 7pm Bible Study	27 Pastor Shut-in Visits	28 29	29 30	Pastor's Day Off
31 9am Bible Study 10:30 Service Potluck	1 NOTES	14 - BLC Night Out at Good Girl Brewery ACTS Collection - canned beans				