



# BETHLEHEM STAR



NEWSLETTER OF BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
PEMBERVILLE, OHIO

## Pastor's Message

By Pastor Tim Philabaum - December 2025

Oh, I know it is only Advent! As you read this we are just in the beginning of the Advent Season, that 4 Sunday prep both for the coming of Christ the King at the end of time, and the coming of Christ the Babe in Bethlehem. During this time we get our hearts ready so that Christ may take up residence. Advent is the time to pause, reflect, and prepare. To be quiet and listen to the voice of God. I love the Advent waiting, the Advent hymns, the Advent promises.

But, Christmas is coming! Even before Thanksgiving the goods were up in the stores, and now the music is coming through the radio. The beauty of the cold, the delights of the lights, the joy of the songs, the gathering of families - - it's all awesome!

So, what happened more than 2000 years ago? Somehow, in the mind of God, way back

in the forever before, God knew that God's creation was going to fall into trouble. God knew and decided that Jesus, fully God and part of the Godhead, would enter into history, become one of

God's creatures, and spend His life preaching, healing, loving, forgiving. Then, the day would come when the



powers of this world and the authority of empire grew tired and offended by such love and put Him to death. There, the God of grace and love, crucified by those whom He loved.

But, we know the full story. Sunday morning came, and Jesus was raised from the dead, alive forever more, calling us into God's kingdom. Awesome!

As the contemporary song goes, "Mary, did you know?" Yes she knew that the angel had told her she would bear a son, without the presence of a husband. Yes she knew that He would be called, "Emmanuel - God-with-us." Yes she knew that there was something different about her son, visited by

shepherds, angels, and Magi. But I don't know if she knew the fullness of Jesus had to bring.

Maybe you, but certainly I, we get caught up in all the finery and bustle and activity of Christmas and the Christmas-prep that I miss the song of the Angels, I miss the promise of the

God Who will make all things new.

So, this year will be different. Like Scrooge waking up from his dreams of visitors, this

year will be different. "I will keep Christmas in my heart forever!" I will take the time to be with those who are in need. I will take time to be quiet and listen to the voice of God. I will have the place in my heart ready for Christ to be present, knowing that He has always be present. I will be the forgiving gift of God to those around me. And even when I fail, I know that Jesus never fails, always loves, and will bring everything to the good conclusion. Yes, when I don't make it, Jesus does. Thank you!

Blessings to you this year as you prepare for the grace of Jesus' birth!

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#### President

Susie Rahe

#### Vice-President

Luann Snyder

#### Treasurer

Renee Farmer

#### Secretary

Brenda Graham

220 Cedar Street

PO Box 344

Pemberville, OH 43450

419-287-4182

[bethlehempemberville.org](http://bethlehempemberville.org)

#### Office Hours:

Mon. - Thurs.

9:00am - 2:00pm

Friday: 9:00am-Noon

If you need to update your contact information including if you have a PO Box, please call the office

## Children's Christmas Program

The children's Christmas program is scheduled for Dec. 14, 2025 during the church service. Please join us following the service for fellowship and light refreshments in the fellowship hall.



## ELCA Good Gifts:

In Christ, we receive the gift of God's love with others. ELCA Good Gifts are a fun, meaningful way to honor friends and family with Christmas gifts that go on to make a difference in the world. Choose from more than 50 gift-giving options (goats anyone?), each with the ability to make a real difference in the life of someone in need. Give in honor of someone special and you can print, mail or email a card to let them know.

Catalogs and order forms are available outside the office. Complete an order form and submit your payment to the office with checks made payable to Bethlehem

Lutheran Church with ELCA Good Gifts in the memo line. We will send the orders to ELCA as a group with a goal of sending at least \$500. Please submit your order forms by Sunday Dec. 14, 2025.

## Climate Weather

As we enter the winter season, we want to ensure everyone is informed about our inclement weather policy and knows what to expect should hazardous conditions arise.

**Level 2 Weather Advisory** - If Wood County is placed under a Level 2 snow emergency the church will remain open for those who can travel safely. Please use your best judgment and do not take unnecessary risks on the roads. Church services will proceed for those able to attend.

**Level 3 Weather Emergency** - If a Level 3 emergency is declared, all church services and activities will be cancelled. In those situations, local authorities prohibit non-emergency travel, and your safety is our top priority.

We will do our best to share updates regarding any closure.

## Sunday Service Survey

The results of the Sunday Service Survey have been reviewed by Church Council. Thank you to all who participated. Copies of the results are available in the office. There are several topics Council would like to investigate further by creating sprint teams. The sprint team would be given a specific job to research and it would involve a limited time of perhaps 2 months. It is not a long-term commitment. The two areas we would like to research is the type of music during the church service and also investigate alternatives for small children during the church service. Anyone interested in serving on a sprint team, please give your name and contact information to Stephanie in the office.

## BY THE NUMBERS

From The Financial Office

November, 2025	<i>Beg Balance</i>	<i>Deposits</i>	<i>Expenses</i>	<i>Balance</i>
Operating	\$245,826.90	\$22,381.59	\$204,808.64*	\$225,699.85
Memorial	\$31,654.68			\$31,654.68
Benevolence	\$19,968.04	\$2,161.00	\$6,072.00	\$16,057.04
Outreach	\$58,643.03	\$1,693.11	\$368.00	\$59,968.14
Pass Through				

\*Transferred in from CIP Fund \$162,300.00 for roof and chimney removal expenses.

## End of Year Offering and 2026 Offering Envelopes

Any end of the year contributions should be in the office no later than Tuesday Dec. 30, 2025.

Offering Envelopes for 2026 are available for pick up. Please do not use until Jan, 2026.

## Tithe.ly QR Code

Anyone is welcome to make a one time or reoccurring donation by using the QR code that links to Tithe.ly, Bethlehem's online giving portal. When you scan the QR code, you will be required to set up an account, which only takes a few minutes. There is a small transaction fee for the use of the app. The app will prompt you to indicate your choice to pay the transaction fee or have it deducted from your donation. Thank you for supporting the ministries at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.





YOU ARE  
INVITED  
*Carols & Beer*

Sunday, December 14, 2025

6:30PM-8:30PM

@ Pemberville Legion Hall

Pemberville, OH

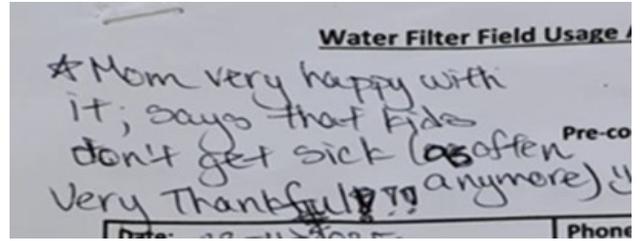
Sponsored by Bethlehem Lutheran  
Church in collaboration with Sonfire By  
The River

Please join us for an evening of singing  
good old Christmas Carols and  
refreshments. Snacks will be provided  
and drinks are available for purchase.

### **Event Opportunity's**

In addition to the Beer and Carols at the Pemberville Legion on Dec. 14 th , at 6:30pm, there is a Beer and Carols event scheduled in downtown Toledo on Nov. 30 from 7:00-8:00pm at Hannon's Block, 619 Monroe St. and will also be entertaining at Carols and Cocktails Cookies and Coffee on December 19, 2025 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 428 N. Erie St. from 5:30- 6:30pm.

## Mission Honduras Buckeye Sale



Last week, our team—Churri, Tango, Dr. Amy, Dr. Angel, and Alejandro—completed 223 filter checks across five villages in Honduras. We are pleased to report most of the Sawyer filters continue to function well. A few Sawyers required extra care, using vinegar to remove calcium buildup inside the filter. About 30% of the filters at the brigades were our original “Filters of Hope”, which will be replaced during our January brigade, as they have now reached the end of their useful lifespan.

From microbiology testing conducted last summer, we discovered that some clean water storage containers were contaminated with *E. coli*. To address this, every family attending our brigades received a small container of soap to wash their storage buckets. Why soap? Because many families simply cannot afford to buy it. During their visits, our team spoke with families about how often they wash their water containers and what methods they use. Some shared that they were cleaning with unfiltered water, which unfortunately can bring contamination back into the very buckets meant to hold safe water. For us in the United States, using clean water feels effortless—just a matter of turning on the tap. In rural Honduras, however, it is a daily challenge. We are also encouraging families to adjust long-standing habits, and that kind of change doesn’t happen overnight. It requires patience, persistence, and ongoing education.

Our filter surveys show that families continue to experience better health thanks to the filters. One mother shared, “My children do not get sick as often, and I am very thankful for our filter.” (top right photo)

Keep our ministry in your prayers as we prepare for the January brigade. Please let me know if you have any questions.  
Darla

# Terra State Community College Concert

**December 16th at 7:00pm**

@ Bethlehem Lutheran Church

All are welcome to attend this free event

Terra State Community College Concert Choir is directed  
by Stacey Depner and has 70 members.  
A free will donation will be accepted.



## Advent/Christmas Schedule

- ◆ November 30, Advent 1, 9am Worship
- ◆ December 7, Advent 2, 9am Worship
- ◆ December 14, Advent 3, 9am Sunday School Christmas Program and 6:30 Carols and Beer @ Legion Hall
- ◆ December 21, Advent 4, 9am Worship and 6pm Blue Christmas at 1st Presbyterian, Pemberville
- ◆ December 24, Christmas Eve Worship, Carols, Candles, and Holy Communion. 6pm and 10pm
- ◆ December 28, Christmas 1, 9am Worship and 11am, additional Worship at 1st Methodist, Pemberville
- ◆ January 4, Christmas 2, 9am Worship

## Reverse Advent Calendar

Here's a suggestion for you to gather a food item each day in Advent, put it in a container, and then donate these items to the Eastwood Area Food Bank on Christmas. It's just a little way for you to give on this great season of God's giving.

December:

1. box of cereal
2. Peanut butter
3. Stuffing mix
4. boxed potatoes
5. Macaroni and cheese
6. canned fruit
7. canned tomatoes
8. canned tuna
9. dessert mix
10. jar of applesauce
11. canned sweet potatoes
12. cranberry sauce
13. canned black or pinto beans
14. box of crackers
15. package of rice
16. package of oatmeal
17. package pasta
18. spaghetti sauce
19. chicken noodle soup
20. tomato soup
21. canned corn
22. can of mixed vegetables
24. can of carrots
25. can of green beans

# NOVEMBER COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



**Approval of Agenda:** Guests will be coming to the December Council meeting  
Move to accept agenda by Roger Burtchin second by Dean Schuerman

**Approval of Minutes** from October 16, 2025

## **Observations of Bethlehem living our mission**

1. 318 Christmas Child Boxes
2. Amazing Gathering for Sunday with Dawn Dumke
3. 30 children in Children's message
4. Nice Gathering for Ukraine family
5. Make and Take it Craft
6. Rolling of Buckeyes

## **Reports of Officers:**

a. Pastors report:

Pastor's report reviewed

Idea suggested of bringing back Pastors, interns and sons of the church to celebrate anniversaries of: The Declaration of Independence 250 years, Bethlehem 165th anniversary and Pemberville incorporation 150 years

b. Treasurer's report: Report reviewed

c. Trustee Report- Roof is completed, Working on Windows- has price from Andersons and considering Integrity , The Cross in front of the Church is rotting and falling apart- discussed options with cross recommendation to remove the cross made by Roger Burtchin second by Corey Bettenbrock

## **Committee Reports:**

A. Strategic Planning-

I. Discussed Sunday Service Feedback Survey

-37 responses were received. Overall satisfaction remains very high across nearly all categories. The survey highlighted two specific areas where ratings were lower compared to others. These categories represent, "Where should children spend most of the service?" and "What style(s) of worship music do you prefer?" Beginning of the year we will identify 2 "Sprint Teams" to discuss these categories further.

B. Call Committee-

Nothing to update at this time

C. Long Range Planning -

Next meeting set for January, 2026

D. Personnel- Position title change & job description for Music Director

The Music director asked for title change to be "Director of Music Ensembles", which is a combined job description of the organist, bell and Chancelor choir.

## **Old Business:**

a. Insurance Update provided - Quotes were either much higher, or several carriers were unwilling to quote. Will check to see if the new roof and windows will have any effect on the current premium.

b. Terra Choir from Terra college in Fremont- 12/16 and 3/1/26 @ 7:00pm

c. Carols & Beers -12/14/2025 at the Legion 6:30-8:30

d. Christmas Program on December 14, 2025

## **New Business:**

a. New Member(s)

i. Kyle, Kathryn, Hazel, Hattie & Lydia Brueggemeier

ii. Matt Thomford

**Next Meeting: December 18, 2025**

**Respectfully submitted,  
Brenda Graham  
Council Secretary**



# Happening This Month: December

## December Mission Action Project: Food Pantry

Community Food Pantry is housed here at Bethlehem. We accept non-perishable food items such as canned fruits and vegetables, boxed potatoes and meals, cereal, condensed or chunky style soups, tuna fish, canned meats, crackers, noodles, canned pastas, condiments (ketchup, mustard, etc.), peanut butter, jellies/jams. We also accept Kleenex, toilet paper, paper towels, household cleaners, laundry detergent, fabric softener and basic personal items (soap, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes and toothpaste). Food for the pantry can be left in the Mission Action Room (111) any time. The bins are right inside the door on a table. Cash donations are also accepted. Thank you!



## Food Pantry Needs Your Help

Please help the Food Pantry stock these needed items in

### December:

- **Soup of any kind**
- **Hamburger helper**
- **Noodles or Spaghetti**
- **Canned Fruit**
- **Toilet Paper**
- **Body Wash**

The Food Pantry always accepts non-perishable food items such as canned fruits and vegetables, boxed potatoes cereal and soups. They also accept facial tissues, toilet paper, paper towels, household cleaners, laundry detergent, fabric softener and basic personal items (soap, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner).

Food for the pantry can be left in the Mission Action Room (111) any time. The bins are located right inside the door on a table.

Monetary donations are always welcomed so that the pantry can restock items as needed.

The Food Pantry is available every Tuesday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., as well as the second and last Saturday of the month from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (excluding holidays) for Eastwood community residents in need of food.



## Serving this month in Worship and Beyond

*Altar Flowers*  
Joanne Busdeker

*Altar Guild*  
Nancy Rife

*Office Window*  
Nancy Rife

*Service Org (Funerals)*  
Joan Slebos

## Help Members Celebrate Their 80+ Birthday!

Celebrate this joyous occasion with the members below by sending a card or give a greeting!

- ◆ 12/3 Joan Slebos
- ◆ 12/8 Eileen Schuerman
- ◆ 12/9 Jane Nowlin
- ◆ 12/19 Mary Kuhlman
- ◆ 12/25 Vic Schuerman
- ◆ 12/30 Ken Sieving

If your 80+ birthday is not included here, please contact the office at

419-287-4182 so we can update our records.



## Praying...

### FOR HEALING AND HOPE

Terri Reinhart, Eileen Schuerman., David Randall, Randi Parton (friend of Lois Hansen), Jean Ladd, Dave Richter

### FOR OUR BISHOPS

Elizabeth Eaton and Daniel Beaudoin

### FOR OUR MISSION PARTNERS

Sociedad Amigos de los Ninos Honduras,  
Missions International (Haiti), Redeemer Church,  
Operation Christmas Child

### FOR LOCAL MISSIONS

Snack Pack Program, Good Samaritan Fund, Community Food Pantry, Habitat for Humanity, Grace's Place, Bethlehem Lutheran Preschool & Extended Care, WCOAA Senior Care, Cub Scout Pack 344, Scouts BSA Troops 344 and 9344

### FOR ALL YOUTH

### FOR OUR MILITARY MEN & WOMEN

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Thank you for the  
birthday cards, well  
wishes, and goodies  
for my 98th birthday.

Mel Karns

# KIDS ACTIVITIES

## ADVENT CALENDAR (Nativity)



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# DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b> 6:45 pm Yoga 7:30 pm Dartball	<b>2</b> 6pm Bible Study	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 9:00 am Worship In-person and on Facebook/YouTube  10:15am Adult Bible Study  11:30 am Worship broadcast on 99.1 FM	<b>8</b> 6:45 pm Yoga 7pm Priscilla Circle 7:30 pm Dartball	<b>9</b> 11:00 am - 2:00 pm Food Pantry open  6pm Bible Study	<b>10</b> 6:30-8pm Cub Scouts  6:30 pm Bells 7:30 pm Choir	<b>11</b> 6-7:30 pm Girl Scout Meeting	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 8:00 - 11:00 am Food Pantry open
<b>14</b> <b>Christmas Program</b> 9:00 am Worship In-person and on Facebook/YouTube  10:15am Sunday School  11:30 am Worship broadcast on 99.1 FM  6:30 pm <b>Carols &amp; Beer</b>	<b>15</b> 6:45 pm Yoga 7:30 pm Dartball	<b>16</b> 9:00 am Knotting 11:00 am - 2:00 pm Food Pantry open  <b>7pm Tera Choir</b>	<b>17</b> 6-7pm Girl Scout Meeting  6:30 pm Bells 7:30 pm Choir	<b>18</b> 7pm Council Meeting	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 9:00 am Worship In-person and on Facebook/YouTube  10:15am Adult Bible Study  11:30 am Worship broadcast on 99.1 FM	<b>22</b> 6:45 pm Yoga 7:30 pm Dartball	<b>23</b> 11:00 am - 2:00 pm Food Pantry open  6pm Bible Study	<b>24</b> <b>Office Closed</b>  <b>Christmas Eve Worship 6:00 &amp; 10:00pm</b>	<b>25</b> <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>27</b> 8:00 - 11:00 am Food Pantry open
<b>28</b> 9:00 am Worship In-person and on Facebook/YouTube  10:15 am Adult Bible Study  11:30 am Worship broadcast on 99.1 FM	<b>29</b> 6:45 pm Yoga 7:30 pm Dartball	<b>30</b> 9:00 am Knotting 11:00 am - 2:00 pm Food Pantry open  6pm Bible Study	<b>31</b> <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>1</b> <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>2</b> <b>9-12pm Office Open</b>	<b>3</b>

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
PO Box 344  
Pemberville, OH 43450

*Return service requested  
Dated material. Do not delay*



# Worship

**9:00 AM**

**In person in the sanctuary and  
streaming on Facebook and YouTube**

**11:30**

**Broadcast on 99.1 FM**