



# BETHLEHEM STAR



NEWSLETTER OF BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
PEMBERVILLE, OHIO

## Pastor's Message

By Pastor Tim Philabaum - April 2026

I have by the front door of my house some green and purple. Because the house wall faces west and the sun has been warm in that somewhat protected spot, grape hyacinths have blossomed and bloomed. In my place, that's the first sign of growth in spring. Coming from Perrysburg to Bethlehem I see the green carpet of the wheat that is showing up – spring is coming!

I wonder what Mary Magdalene was thinking when she walked up to the Tomb on Easter morning. Surely, grief was in the forefront! Her close friend and teacher, Jesus, had just been killed in an agonizing way, and placed in this borrowed tomb. I'm sure a bit of fear, wondering who she would encounter, and what she would do when she came to the Tomb with its stone rolled in at the entrance, and the guards standing watch. I doubt there was any hope, yet.

It's kinda like when we go to the cemetery. We know the emptiness of death, and we expect the

quiet of the place. We don't expect to see our loved one when we arrive. It's just a long good-bye.

But you know the story! Mary sees an angel, who tells her that Jesus was risen! Turning around, she thought the guy near her was the gardener, but when He spoke her name, she knew that truly and completely it was Jesus.

Something about that name. When I am surrounded by people and noise, I can still hear my name when someone calls. "Grandpa" or "Tim" or "Dad" cut through the noise, because those names mean something to me.

There's something about that name. When I was baptized, I was given the name, "Christian." That's embossed on my forehead in the shape of the cross and emblazoned in my heart. Nothing or nobody can separate me from the love of Jesus (Paul in Romans 8). With all the other names and titles I have, this sign of the cross identifies me with you, with Christians all around the



world, with all those faithful ones who have come before, even with Mary herself. We are blessed to be in the Body of Christ, blessed with the name (and person) that Jesus knows and loves.

The time will come, after I have died, that Jesus will return. Again then He will call my name, and I will live in His glory and joy forever! His sacrificial gift on the cross and the conquering of death on Easter has changed the whole trajectory of history – and we are in those hands of grace, always.

Brothers and sisters, as you enter into this Easter season, and into the beauty of spring, hold onto the Name of Jesus, trusting in His grace and love, knowing that He holds you in awesome arms, knowing who you are, loving who you are, and bringing you into His joy! Alleluia!

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#### President

Luann Snyder

#### Vice-President

Susie Rahe

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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 or email [office@bethlehempemberville.org](mailto:office@bethlehempemberville.org)

## Endowment Fund Forms

If you or your organization sees a need in the community or the world, please complete a request for funding from the Endowment Fund, identifying how you or your group would use the money. The Long-range Planning Committee will review submissions and disburse money as deemed appropriate. Money will be distributed into categories such as poverty, global missions, congregational support, leadership, and disaster relief. Forms are available in the office and the deadline for submission to the office is May 30, 2026. The decision on disbursements will be made by the end of July.

## Mission Honduras

**Thank you brunch:** We would like to invite everyone to a light brunch on Saturday, April 18 at 9 AM in the fellowship hall for a light brunch. Pastor Tim, Gayla Sholey, Eric Corns, and I will be sharing photos and our experiences from the January 2026 brigade. We will also give an update on the progress of our filter ministry, reflect on lessons learned along the way, and talk about plans for our upcoming brigades. It will be a wonderful chance to celebrate what we've accomplished together. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Rummage Sale:** On May 2, we will be holding a rummage sale in the fellowship hall. Proceeds from the sale will be used to purchase filters and support our follow-up visits to each distribution site during our upcoming brigade. To help make this event a success, we are accepting donations of very gently used items such as kitchenware, home décor, small appliances, tools, craft supplies, toys, and games. All items should be clean, functional, in almost-new condition, and easy for one person to carry. We are unable to accept large pieces of furniture or large appliances. Donations will be accepted in the fellowship hall from 1PM-5PM on Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are unable to bring the donations at that time, please text/call at 419-575-0078.

We will need lots of volunteers (including students needing community service hours) to help organize the donations on Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> from 3 PM to 6 PM as well as Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 1:30 PM to 4 PM to box any unsold items. Lastly, volunteers are needed to help transport these items to organizations such as Goodwill or Grace's Place since all remaining items must be cleared from the fellowship hall by Monday afternoon. If you can help us out, please let us know by calling/texting 419-575-0078 or emailing [missionhonduras.bethlehem@gmail.com](mailto:missionhonduras.bethlehem@gmail.com)

**Thank you for your support of this ministry.**

## BY THE NUMBERS

From The Financial Office

February, 2026	Beg Balance	Deposits	Expenses	Balance
Operating	\$240,723.45	\$27,077.66	\$33,834.85	\$233,966.26
Memorial	\$33,099.68	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$33,099.68
Benevolence	\$14,189.04	\$2,095.00		\$16,284.04
Outreach	\$61,505.78	\$2,920.81	\$3,598.62	\$60,827.97
Pass Through				

## 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.





**Every child deserves a bed**

# ST. JOHN'S STONY RIDGE BUILD-A-BED EVENT

**Come and be a part of this  
wonderful  
mission opportunity**

- **Breakfast and Lunch will be available to all volunteers**
- **Service hours available for youth**
- **Donations appreciated**
  - *We need to raise \$14,000 to meet our goal of building 70 beds*
  - *Twin comforter/sheet sets also accepted*

To register contact:  
St. John's Church Office at 419-837-5115  
or send us an email

**SATURDAY,  
MAY 9**

**8:30 A.M. SAFETY  
MEETING**

**9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.  
BED BUILDING**

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
ALL AGES!!**

**DONATIONS MAY BE  
SENT TO ST. JOHN'S  
LUTHERAN CHURCH,  
STONY RIDGE, OH**

**ST. JOHN'S  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

5520 Fremont Pike  
Stony Ridge, OH 43463

419-837-5115

officeadmin@StJohnsStonyRidge.  
net

# MARCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



## Reports of Officers:

- **Pastor's report:** Pastor's report was reviewed. He noted that eight children from Bethlehem and three from New Rochester received First Communion. Pastor Tim also shared that he will continue serving one week per month at St. Paul's in Toledo throughout the summer.
- **Treasurer's report:** The treasures report was reviewed.
- **Trustee report:** The septic system was pumped; wipes should not be disposed of in the system. Window replacement options are now available. The Trustees will review the quotes and bring their recommendation to the next council meeting. A folder has been established in the office for routine trustee maintenance needs.

## Committee Reports:

### Strategic Plan

- **Youth:** Shelly Albright met with FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletics) advisor Becky Fork and representatives at EHS. When asked how Bethlehem could assist, several requests were
- presented, with the top priority being providing Bibles for students who do not own one. The council agreed to donate 20 NIV Bibles at a cost not to exceed \$10.00 each. Shelly will follow up with Becky regarding the specific Bible selection.

The council also approved donating ten \$10 gift cards to be used as prizes for an FCA-sponsored pickleball tournament

Additionally, the group requested assistance with a second printing of FCA t-shirts. Shelly will discuss details with Becky, including implementation, vendor selection, and keeping costs as low as possible.

- **Sunday School:** Weekly Sunday School attendance is growing, and plans are in place to split the class at the start of the next school year, pending sufficient volunteer teachers. An update was provided on the Sunday School meeting held March 1 following the service; Corey Bettenbrock reported that the meeting went well. A curriculum search is underway to identify a program that will help volunteers feel more comfortable assisting with Sunday School. Another meeting is scheduled in April.
- **Sprint teams: Worship Music:** Corey Bettenbrock provided an update from the sprint team committee and shared several initial ideas. Additional time is needed to complete brainstorming and determine how to move forward with this adjustment.
- **Security System:** The subcommittee met with Denise Corns and reviewed proposals from Northwood Door. Nate Ritcher provided input on the access control system, including the potential addition of cameras in classrooms and around the exterior of the building. The group is working with Kleinfeller on CAD drawings and indicated that an egress permit will be required.

Corey reported that the preschool has already raised \$60,000 toward the project, including \$50,000 from a secured grant. He also requested clarification on the project scope—specifically whether the initial focus is securing the preschool area, with a long-term goal of expanding security measures to the entire church. Council agreed that, at this time, the focus should be on the preschool.

# MARCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



## Old Business:

- St John's Build a Bed date changed to May 9.
- Insurance: Underwriting is required for the church to increase the limits on its employee liability insurance. The underwriters require that employee handbooks be reviewed by an attorney at least every three to five years. It has been over 10 years since the church's handbook was last reviewed. Susie will work with Denise Corns to have both handbooks reviewed by Doug Ruck.
- Memorial projects:
  - \*The family of Jane Kohlenberg has requested that memorial funds be used to update the Financial Secretary's office. Denise Pickerel will meet with Ashley Skowron, an interior design specialist, to review options and ideas.
  - \*Prayer garden and furniture: The tree stumps need to be removed. Options for removal will be evaluated. Once completed, volunteers will be sought to update the garden, potentially through plant purchases or a plant sponsorship program.
  - \*Outdoor sign facing Cedar: The sign is in need of major repair, and options for replacement are being explored.

## New Business:

- Fair book advertising: Completed for this year.
- Mission Honduras garage sale: May 2
- Meeting with Synod representative: Pastor Tim, Luann, and Susie met with Sherry Krieger, Synod representative, to discuss the decline in pastors and traditional attendance, along with new approaches to ministry, including "fresh expressions" that engage the community outside of traditional settings. The Synod also shared available resources, upcoming opportunities, and offered support with the pastoral call process.
- Boy Scouts Storage Request: Due to water damage at the old elementary school, the Boy Scouts are seeking new storage space and have inquired about availability at the church. Several items currently stored in the basement may be discarded or sold. Affected groups will be contacted, and a time will be arranged for cleanup.
- William's Syndrome Donation Request: Approved a \$500 donation to support an upcoming 5K/walk fundraising event.
  - \*Floor/hall cleaning: The church was contacted regarding professional cleaning of the church hallways, similar to last year during spring break. It was agreed to utilize the service again, with cleaning limited to the main floor and upper level this year; the basement will not be included.
- Motion Picture licensure renewal: A request was made to renew the church's motion picture license to allow movies to be shown at the church.

Next council meeting will be: Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shelly Albright  
Council Secretary



# Happening This Month: April

## April Mission Action Project: Cocoon Shelter

The Cocoon exists to provide safety, healing, and justice across the lifespan for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, their children, and all of those affected by abuse. Services are available to anyone in Wood County at no cost. Due to the changing needs and limited storage of this facility, money will be collected during a “noisy offering” at all church services in July and donated for shelter operations.

St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, Bowling Green manages a car donation and furniture bank for women in this shelter. Call St. Mark’s (419-353-6675) if you have items to share.



## Praying...

### FOR HEALING AND HOPE

Randi Parton (friend of Lois Hansen), Vic Schuerman, Joan Slebos

### FOR OUR BISHOPS

Yehiel Curry 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

## Food Pantry Needs Your Help

Please help the Food Pantry stock these needed items in

### April:

- **Stuffing Mix**
- **Cake Mix**
- **Hamburger Helper**
- **Canned Fruit**
- **Toothpaste**
- **Toothbrush**

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

Bev Gerwin  
Brenda Gerwin

### Altar Guild

Wendy Fisher  
Denise Pickerel

### Office Window

Sharon Nigh

### 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!

- ◆ 4/5 Mickey Gerwin
- ◆ 4/9 Paulette Bresler
- ◆ 4/10 Sheila Rahe
- ◆ 4/15 Evelyn Gerwin
- ◆ 4/17 Jerry Corns

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

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



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**EASTWOOD LOCAL SCHOOLS**  
HOME OF THE EAGLES  
PO BOX 837  
120 E. COLLEGE AVE.  
PEMBERVILLE, OH 43450  
P: 419.833.6411 F: 419.287.4245  
www.eastwoodschools.org

William B. Welker  
Superintendent  
Monica Leppelmeier  
Treasurer

3/16/2026

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
P.O. Box 344  
Pemberville, OH 43450

Dear Bethlehem Lutheran Church:

The Eastwood Board of Education would like to thank you for your generous donations of \$250 to Eastwood Local Schools to the High School After Prom.

It is people and organizations such as you that make Eastwood a better place for our children.

Sincerely,

Randy Rothenbuhler  
Eastwood Board of Education, President

Ashley Culp  
Eastwood Board of Education, Vice President

Denis Helm  
Eastwood Board of Education Member

Darlene Krukemyer  
Eastwood Board of Education Member

Eric Rutherford  
Eastwood Board of Education Member

Pastor Tim +  
People of Bethlehem, 3/11/26

It was a joy to return to Bethlehem this past week for Worship. You always offer such a warm welcome and have such a dedicated and creative team.

Thank you for your gifts to our foundation and Wolff Creek Chapel Fund. It is so powerful to have the support of our congregations in the ministry work done at Wolff Creek.

In Christ,  
Chloe Long

To BLCW,

2026

Sending a grateful Thank you to BLCW and to Sharon Rugh for the beant Birthday card and to all the members who signed it. Also a thank you to Luann Snyder for the personal visit - I miss seeing you all.

God bless Bethlehem Church  
Aroni

Evelyn Hagemeyer

# KIDS ACTIVITIES

## He Is Risen Coloring Page



# APRIL

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:00 pm Bells 8:00 pm Choir	2 <b>Maundy Thursday</b> 11am & 7pm	3 <b>Goof Friday</b> 11am & 7pm	4 8:00 - 11:00 am Food Pantry open
5 <b>Easter</b> <b>6:30 Sunrise@ Fish Cemetery</b> <b>9:00 am Worship</b> In-person and on Facebook/YouTube  10:15am Adult Bible Study  11:30 am Worship broadcast on 99.1 FM	6 6:45 pm Yoga	7 11:00 am - 2:00 pm Food Pantry open	8 6:00 pm Bells 7:30pm Choir  6:30-8pm Cub Scouts	9 6-7:30 pm Girl Scout Meeting	10	11
12 9:00 am Worship In-person and on Facebook/YouTube 10:15am Sunday School  11:30 am Worship broadcast on 99.1 FM	13 6:45 pm Yoga  7pm Priscilla Circle	14 9:00 am Knotting 11:00 am - 2:00 pm Food Pantry open  6pm Bible Study	15 6:00 pm Bells 7:30 pm Choir  6-7pm Girl Scout Meeting	16 7pm Council Meeting	17	18
19 9:00 am Worship In-person and on Facebook/YouTube 10:15am Adult Bible Study  11:30 am Worship broadcast on 99.1 FM	20 6:45 pm Yoga	21 11:00 am - 2:00 pm Food Pantry open  6pm Bible Study	22 6:00 pm Bells 7:30 pm Choir	23	24	25 8:00 - 11:00 am Food Pantry open  9-12pm BLCW Event
26 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	27 6:45 pm Yoga	28 9:00 am Knotting 11:00 am - 2:00 pm Food Pantry open	29	30		

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**