

Bethlehem Lutheran Church . William Penn, Texas



# Ghost Town Gazette

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
William Penn, Texas

Vol. 4, No. 4, April 2026

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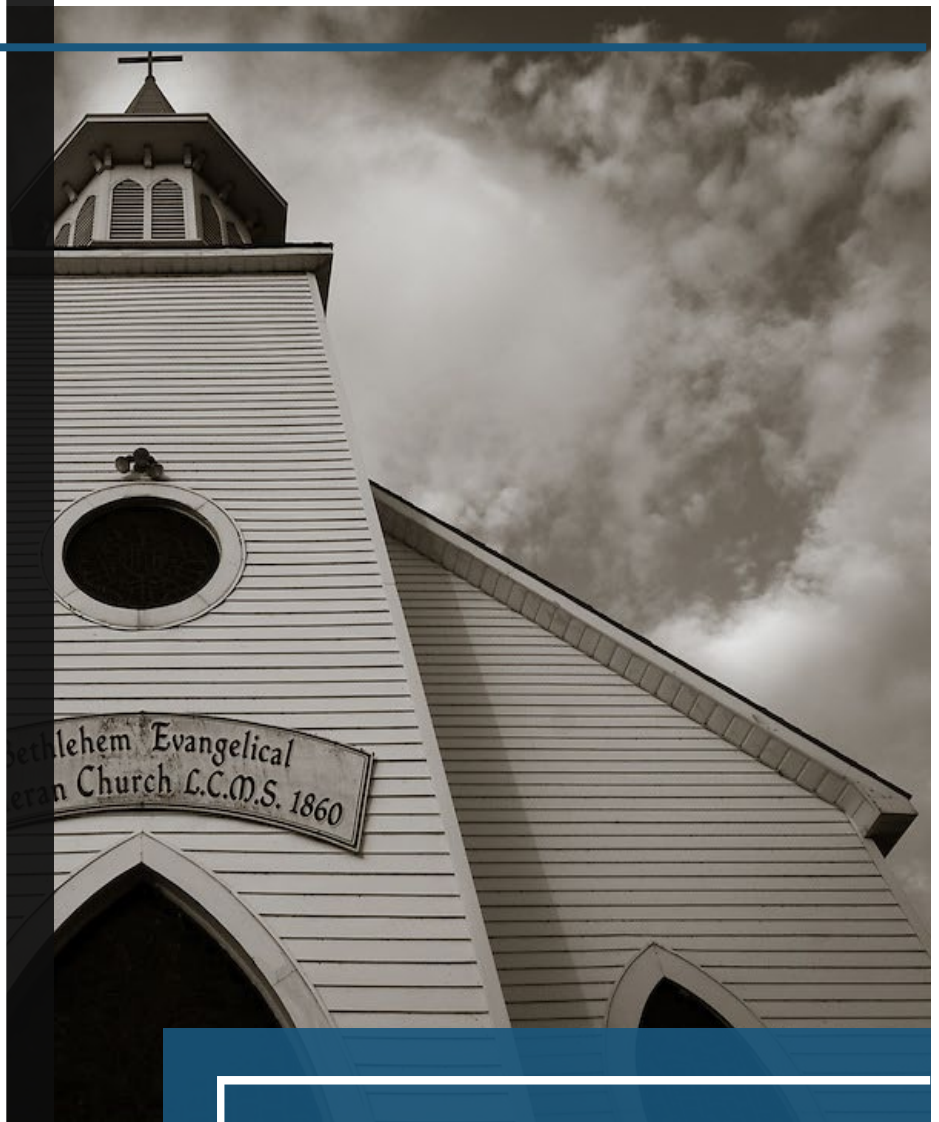
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“The Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid.”

- Martin Luther

## RAISED FOR YOUR JUSTIFICATION



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!” This is not a mere seasonal greeting or a poetic way of speaking. It is the very heart of the Christian faith. As St. Paul writes, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:17). But Christ has been raised, and that changes everything.

From a Confessional Lutheran perspective, Easter is not simply about new beginnings, moral improvement, or the triumph of life in a general sense. It is about the concrete, historical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ for sinners. The same body that was crucified under Pontius Pilate, that bore the full weight of God’s wrath against sin, is the body that walked out of the tomb on the third day. This matters because it means that the atonement is complete. Your sin is paid for. Death has been defeated. The devil’s accusations no longer stand.

The resurrection of Christ is God’s public declaration that the sacrifice of His Son is sufficient. As our Lutheran Confessions state, Christ “was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25; cf. Augsburg Confession IV). This means that Easter is not just about what happened to Jesus, it is about what has been given to you. In Christ, you are declared righteous. In Christ, death is no longer your end. In Christ, you have the sure and certain hope of your own resurrection.

This promise is not something you must strive to grasp by your own strength. It is delivered to you through the Means of Grace. In Holy Baptism, you were united to Christ’s death and resurrection (Romans 6:3–5). In the preaching of the Gospel, the risen Christ speaks forgiveness into your ears. In the Lord’s Supper, the very body and blood of the risen Lord are given for you for the forgiveness of sins. Easter is not distant, it is present, here and now, for you.

This is especially important in a world still marked by suffering, sin, and death. The resurrection does not deny the reality of the cross; it confirms its purpose. We live under the theology of the cross, bearing our own afflictions, yet always clinging to the promise that Christ’s victory is already won. The empty tomb assures us that no suffering, no grave, no sin will have the final word.

So the Church continues to confess boldly: Christ is risen. Not as an abstract idea, but as the living Lord who has conquered death for you. This is your comfort, your hope, and your life. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

In Christ’s Service and Yours,  
Pastor Krieg

**“Why do  
you seek  
the living  
among the  
dead? He  
is not here,  
but has  
risen.”**

**Luke 24:5-6**



## THROUGH THE LITURGY: THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

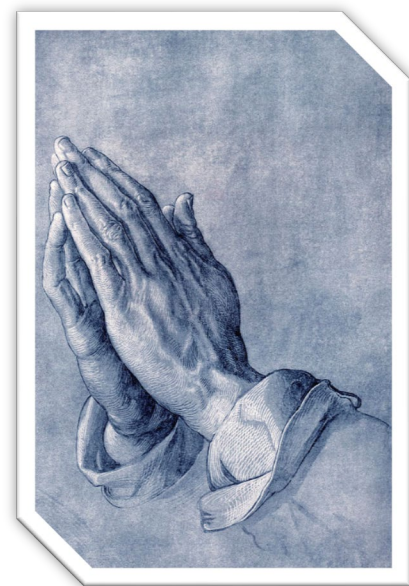
### What is the "Prayer of the Church"?

The Prayer of the Church, sometimes simply called "the Prayers", is the portion of the Divine Service in which the pastor leads the congregation in a series of petitions offered on behalf of the whole Church and the world. These prayers are spoken in a pattern of petition and response: the pastor bids the prayer, often saying, "Lord in Your Mercy," and the congregation responds, "hear our prayer." In this way, the entire assembly participates, not as spectators, but as those baptized into Christ who together call upon the Lord in faith."

### Why do we do this in the Divine Service?

The Prayer of the Church is not an add-on to the service but a natural expression of the Church's life together in Christ. Having heard the Word of God and confessed the faith, the Church now responds by interceding for others. This reflects the apostolic exhortation that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people."

In these prayers, we are reminded that the Church's concern extends far beyond herself. We bear one another's burdens before the throne of grace, trusting that the Lord hears and answers according to His good and gracious will. For this reason, it is rightly called the Prayer of the Church, not the prayer of an individual, but of the whole body of Christ lifted up together.



“Finally, brothers,  
whatever is true,  
whatever is honorable,  
whatever is just, whatever  
is pure, whatever is  
lovely, whatever is  
commendable, if there is  
any excellence, if there is  
anything worthy of praise,  
think about these things.”

Philippians 4:8



## HEROES OF FAITH: CRANACH & DÜRER, ARTISTS

Each month, we will highlight one of the many heroes of the Christian faith who have stood firm in the truth of Holy Scripture. We will look at the apostles who knew our Lord Jesus Christ personally, his friends who were witnesses to His miracles, the faithful ancestors of the Old Testament who patiently awaited His first Advent, as well as the many other Godly men and women who have been bold witnesses throughout the years, to the one true faith. We look to them not as people to be worshiped or prayed to but as ordinary sinners, like us, to whom the Holy Spirit gave faith to be extraordinary. They are holy because the blood of Christ forgave their sins. They are holy because the Holy Spirit gave them a living faith in which the love of Christ shone through.

**On April 6<sup>th</sup>, the Church rejoices in remembering Lucas Cranach and Albrecht Dürer, artists.**

The Church gives thanks for Lucas Cranach and Albrecht Dürer, artists who served Christ during the Reformation through their craft. Their work was more than beauty; it was confession.

Cranach, a close friend of Luther, used his paintings to teach the distinction between Law and Gospel, showing how Christ restores what was lost in sin. Dürer's engravings likewise reflected a deep reverence for Scripture, directing sinners to Christ crucified.

In a time when many could not read, their art proclaimed the Gospel to the eyes. We remember them not merely as artists, but as servants of the Word, whose work points us to Jesus, who bore our sin and gives us His righteousness.

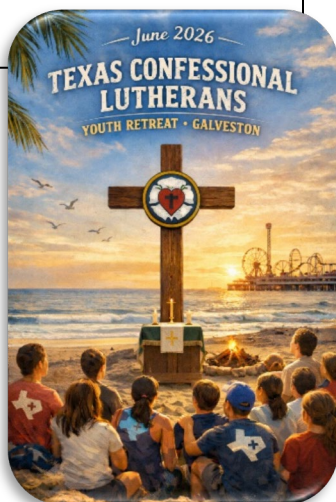


## NEXT MEETING



On Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, the Youth League will meet after church. We will be discussing our summer trip, our next outing, and preparing for our next fundraiser.

If you are going to attend our **summer trip** to Galveston in June, you need to let Pastor Krieg know so we can get the accommodations lined up for everyone.



## YOUTH LEAGUE UPDATE

### Summer Trip - Galveston

**Who:** Any student who has graduated 8th grade through and including any student who has graduated 12th grade by the time of the trip.

**Date:** Monday, June 29, 2026, through Thursday, July 2, 2026

**Lodging:** Beach Houses on Galveston Island

**Where:** Worship, Plenary Bible Study, and Break-Out Sessions at St. John's Lutheran Church, Galveston, TX

**Activities:** Schlitterbahn Waterpark, walking the Strand, and plenty of beach fun!

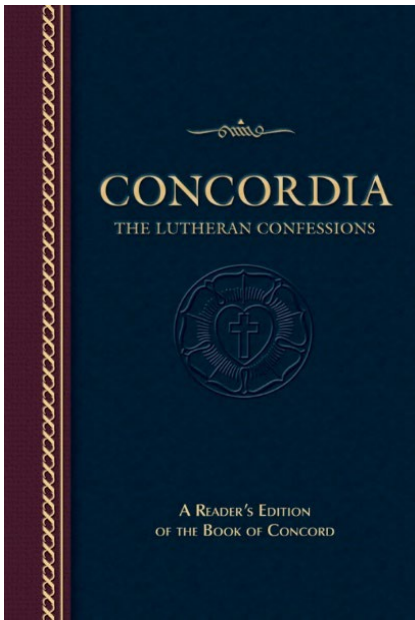
**Cost:** Registration is covered through our Youth League fundraising efforts.

This four-day youth retreat contains worship and fun without blending the two. Confessional, liturgical worship will happen daily, as will sound teaching flowing from Scripture and our Confessions. Fun fellowship with other Lutheran young people is a given. Currently, four great congregations are involved in this: Memorial-Houston, Our Savior-Houston, Bethlehem-William Penn, and Grace-Brenham.

We will have a parent meeting to discuss our plans and the trip on April 12, 2026, immediately after church. If you have any questions about the trip, please reach out to Pastor Krieg.

# THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS: ARTICLE XXI

## THE CULT OF THE SAINTS



Article XXI is entitled “The Cult of Saints” and draws attention to the abuses of the Roman church in regard to the role of departed Christians in the lives of Christians still in this earthly life.

ACXXI begins by pointing out the positive example the saints have for us: *“Our churches teach that the history of saints may be set before us so that we may follow the example of their faith and good works, according to our calling. For example, the emperor may follow the example of David in making war to drive away the Turk from his country. For both are kings.”*

Scripture clearly sets before our eyes the faithful example of the saints as a blessing for us. The book of Hebrews states: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation” (Hebrews 11:1-2). The rest of Hebrews 11 sets before us the example of specific saints and their lives of faith: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, and many more. Then we read: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1).

As we look in Scripture, in ancient church history, and even our own history, we find and remember many wonderful examples of faith in the lives of those who have lived and died before us. They can and do serve as an encouragement as we live our own lives of faith now. We also find many bad examples and many failures in their lives. The apostle Paul, citing the poor examples of the children of Israel, reminds us: “Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did” (1 Corinthians 10:6). We can learn from the bad examples of others as well as the good.

If we know the failings of the saints, it can help us to remember that they were not perfect. They were sinners, just the same as us. They were sinners who obtained the crown of life, not through their own works, but through faith in the work of Christ. For this reason, AC XXI continues by pointing out the errors taught concerning the role of the saints in the Roman Church: *“But the Scriptures do not teach that we are to call on the saints or to ask the saints for help. Scripture sets before us the one Christ as the Mediator, Atoning Sacrifice, High Priest, and Intercessor. He is to be prayed to. He has promised that He will hear our prayer. This is the worship that He approves above all other worship, that He be called upon in all afflictions. ‘If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father.’”*

## THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS: ARTICLE XXI – THE CULT OF THE SAINTS

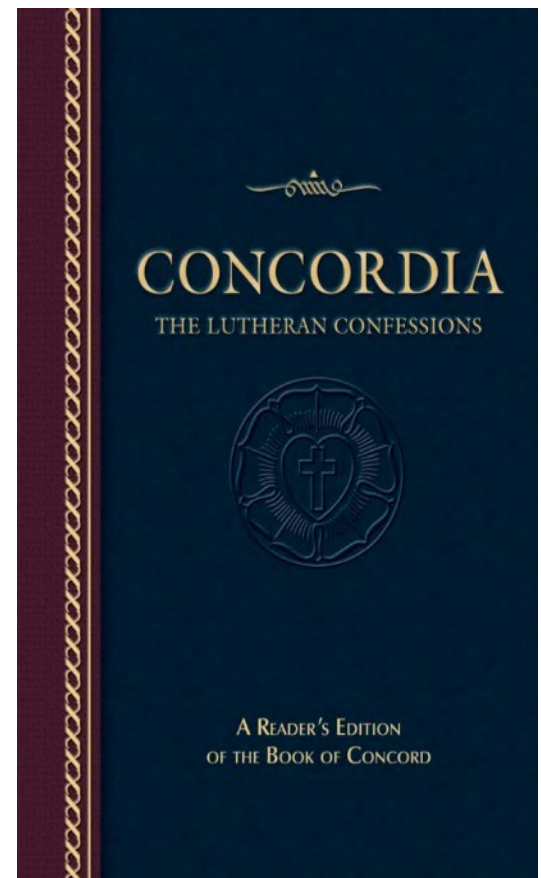
Scripture says that we should make intercession for one another, even for our enemies. James writes: “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (James 5:16), and Jesus told His disciples: “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). But these words were spoken to those who were alive, not to those who had been called from this earthly life.

These are very helpful points, but Scripture goes even beyond this. Concerning those who have died, Scripture tells us they have no knowledge or control over what takes place on earth: “For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6). “For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name” (Isaiah 63:16).

The biggest problem with the Roman teaching on the invocation of the saints was not in connection with prayer, but intercession. The Roman Church taught that certain saints oversaw certain parts of life. This may have been derived from pagan religions, which held that the gods had specific areas of power or influence.

Even worse, the Roman Church not only encouraged parishioners to pray to the saints but also taught that the merits of the saints could be passed on to others, in effect taking the place of Jesus and minimizing His work of redemption. Like Luther, many people considered Jesus a harsh and angry judge, and were taught to trust in the mercy of the saints rather than the mercy of Christ. But Paul writes: “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” (Romans 8:34).

It is in Christ alone that we turn to in every situation, for no one else took your sins, no one else died for your sins, no one else defeated sin, death, and the devil for you. And God speaks of no one else in all of Scripture who is our savior.



“Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”

Romans 12:13



## NEED A HAND?

The BMC would like to announce the formation of the Member Assistance Program (M.A.P.) This is not a new concept, but new for us. We would like to offer assistance to Bethlehem church members who might be in need of a little help around the house.

Things that we might be able to help with could include trimming a miscellaneous tree limb or bush, cleaning a gutter, relocation, or removing a piece of furniture, changing a lightbulb, etc.

Needless to say, we aren't able to commit to a whole-house remodel or long-term recurring projects, just simple, one-time "fix it" jobs. If we're not able

to help, we might be able to offer a few suggestions.

Please, NO EMERGENCIES. Leave these for 911. We will respond as soon as we can. Keep in mind that, like all of us, we have jobs and/or responsibilities to consider.

For now, if you have something in mind, just call the church office and leave your information. The BMC will be notified, and someone will get back with you as soon as possible.

Any member who might have a trade or specialty and would like to donate their ability to the cause, please let the BMC know so we can make a list.

We invite all men to Bible study and breakfast on the first Saturday of the month, beginning at 7:30 a.m. We also invite you to be a part of the BMC. We meet during the first part of the men's breakfast. If you have any questions, talk with Pastor Krieg or any BMC member.

In Christ – The Bethlehem Men's Club

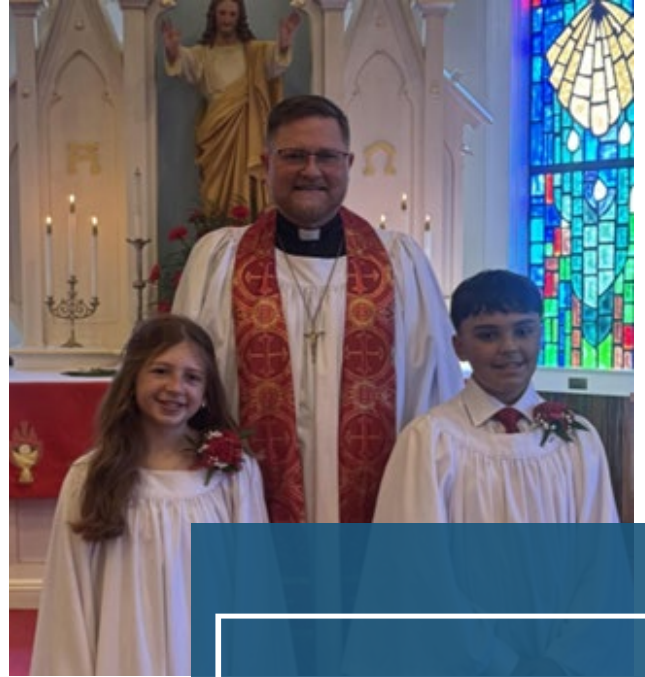
# CONFIRMED IN CHRIST

The Rite of Confirmation was celebrated at Bethlehem Lutheran Church on Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026. Two young confirmands stood before God and His holy people to confirm the faith they were taught and to promise to remain firm in their faith, even unto death. These young people have put in the hard work in preparing for this day.

Through the rite of Confirmation, these newly catechized Christians confessed the faith given to them in Baptism. The confirmands, with you and the church triumphant, celebrate the reception of the Lord's Word among them, and together are welcomed to the Lord's Table.

Please keep the confirmands in your prayers, as Confirmation is not a "Christian Graduation." These young Christians will continue to be attacked by the devil, the world, and their own sinful flesh. We pray that they may continue to live in their Baptism, a life of daily contrition and repentance.

What they said and did that day was just another step in the long walk to the Resurrection of all flesh. They have been pointed to the cross of Jesus, and they are protected by the Holy Spirit, who continues to bring forgiveness, life, and salvation by His Means of Grace. Continue to encourage them with your words and bolster them with the Word of God. Tell them that you are praying for them. Remember your confirmation and meditate on the texts of the Small Catechism. It is meant to be your prayer book and your guide. To God be the glory for the great blessings He has showered on our confirmands.



## Michael Brennan Hinze

Born to Tyler Lane Hinze and Lyndsay (Couch) Hinze, Dec 29, 2011

Reborn through Baptism on May 10, 2015

***Fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and in faithfulness.***

**– Joshua 24:14**

## Taylor Marie Nowicki

Born to Dustin David Nowicki and Heidi Janette (Kettler) Nowicki, April 10, 2012

Reborn through Baptism on May 20, 2012

***Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.***

**– Proverbs 4:23**

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to  
save the lost.”  
Luke 19:10

## TOPICAL TREK VBS, 2026 JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> – 19<sup>TH</sup>



This summer we are going on an epic Tropical Trek! Where the kids will explore God's Word (the Bible) and discover how God finds and helps us in every situation we encounter in life. Our world is filled with exciting things to explore and enjoy. But there are also challenges and hardships we face along the way. Our loving and powerful God desires to help us. He seeks us out and leads us to faith. We can trust in Him! At Tropical Trek, kids will learn how Jesus seeks them and all people. He is the Son of Man, who came to seek and to save the lost!

Each night will last from 5:00-7:30 pm, with dinner from 5 -6 pm.

Pastor Krieg will offer a Bible class for adults during kids' activities, so there will be something for everyone.



We need adult volunteers to help lead music, crafts, games, and the kitchen. If you are interested, please contact the Board of Ed or sign up in the parish hall. Also, if you are interested in your child or grandchild participating in VBS this summer, please sign them up in the parish hall.



# April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Glenn Foster	2 Elvera Schroeder 6:30 – 8:00 PM Ladies Bible Study	3	4
5 Winston Krieg, Jo Ann Schwartz 9:00 – 10:00 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Class 9:00 – 10:00 AM Youth League Mtg 10:15 – 11:15 AM Worship w/ Communion	6 6:00 – 7:30 PM New Member Class	7 Taylor Hinze 7:00 – 7:30 PM LWML Social 7:30 – 8:30 PM LWML Meeting	8 8:30 – 9:30 AM Sonshine 7:00 – 8:00 PM Church Council	9 6:00 – 7:00 PM Elders' Meeting 6:30 – 8:00 PM Ladies Bible Study	10 Taylor Nowicki, Wyatt Schramme, Haleigh Seifert	11
12 9:00 – 10:00 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Class 10:15 – 11:15 AM Worship 11:30 AM – 12 PM Youth League Mtg	13 Kathleen Seimsglusz 6:00 – 7:30 PM New Member Class	14 Moriah Foster	15	16 6:30 – 8:00 PM Ladies Bible Study	17 Kaitlyn Holle	18 Eric Dieterich
19 9:00 – 10:00 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Class 10:15 – 11:15 AM Worship w/ Communion	20 Giuliana Krieg 6:00 – 7:30 PM New Member Class	21	22 7:30 – 9:00 PM Voters' Meeting	23 6:30 – 8:00 PM Ladies Bible Study	24 Joshua Ahasan, Christopher Holle, Marilyn Klussmann	25 8:30 – 9:30 AM Sisters in Christ
26 Jackie Kankel 8:00 – 9:00 AM Outdoor Amphitheater Worship 9:00 – 10:00 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Class 10:15 – 11:15 AM Worship	27 Charlie Boggan 6:00 – 7:30 PM New Member Class	28	29 Ryan Janner	30 Jacey Holle 6:30 – 8:00 PM Ladies Bible Study		

# April 2026

## Birthdays

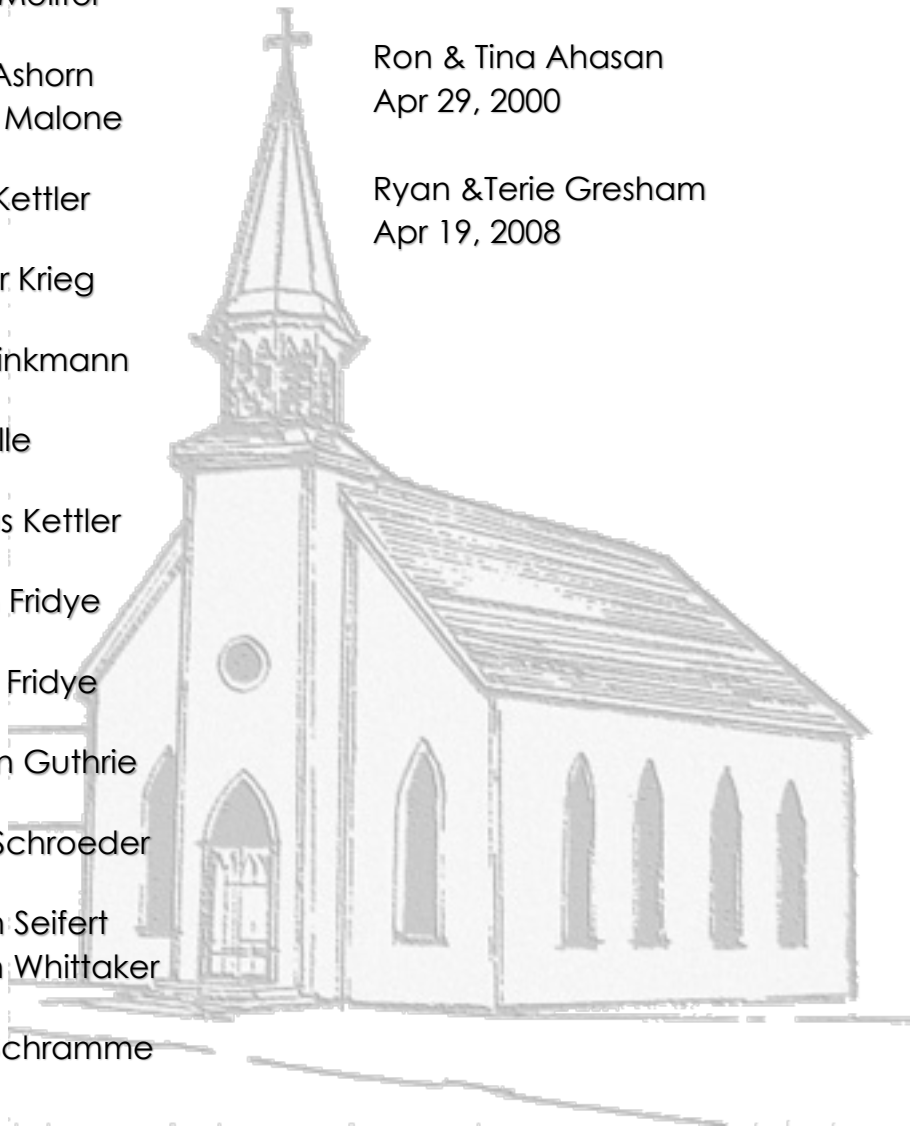
1 Glenn Foster  
 2 Elvera Schroeder  
 4 Peyton Glenz  
 5 Winston Krieg  
 Jo Ann Schwartz  
 7 Taylor Hinze  
 10 Taylor Nowicki  
 Wyatt Schramme  
 Haleigh Seifert  
 13 Kathleen Siemsglusz  
 14 Moriah Foster  
 17 Kaitlyn Holle  
 18 Eric Dieterich  
 20 Giuliana Krieg  
 24 Joshua Ahasan  
 Christopher Holle  
 Marilyn Klussmann  
 26 Jackie Kankel  
 27 Charlie Boggan  
 29 Ryan Janner  
 30 Jacey Holle

## Baptismal Birthdays

1 Tom Hayden  
 2 Ann Smitherman  
 3 Aliyah Ahasan  
 JR Kettler  
 Cheryl Straker  
 6 Brian Crabb  
 Beckett Molitor  
 8 Wendy Ashorn  
 Christen Malone  
 9 Pauline Kettler  
 12 Jennifer Krieg  
 13 Mike Brinkmann  
 16 Ken Holle  
 17 Douglas Kettler  
 19 Megan Fridye  
 22 Hadley Fridye  
 24 Jackson Guthrie  
 26 Elvera Schroeder  
 27 Haleigh Seifert  
 Waylon Whittaker  
 29 Chad Schramme

## Wedding Anniversaries

Ray & Rebecca Wellmann  
 Apr 3, 1976  
 Daryl & Stephanie Dahman  
 Apr 6, 1985  
 Kevin & Kelly Flisowski  
 Apr 8, 2000  
 Ron & Tina Ahasan  
 Apr 29, 2000  
 Ryan & Terie Gresham  
 Apr 19, 2008



BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH-  
WILLIAM PENN

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PASTOR KRIEG  
[PASTORKRIEG@BETHLEHEMWMPENN.ORG](mailto:PASTORKRIEG@BETHLEHEMWMPENN.ORG)

OFFICE HOURS: M-TH; 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

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