

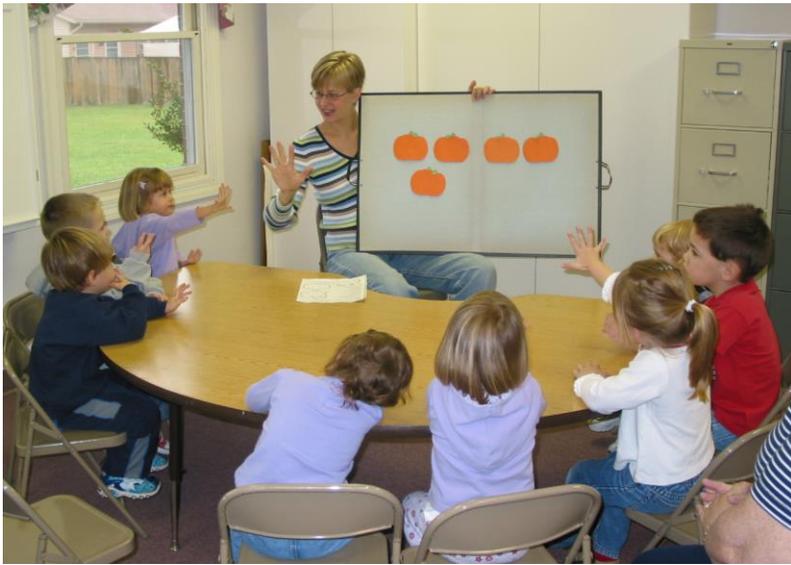
“Not by might
nor by power,
but by my
Spirit...”

Zechariah 4:6

Celebrating 40 years
rooted in faith!

June 27, 2021





"Blessed is the one ... whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers" (from Psalm 1:1-3).

Join with us to rejoice in God's goodness! In love, He sent Jesus to save us from our sins. In love, He gives the Church her mission to share that good news and to spread that good news. In love, God has blessed Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church with forty years of ministry.

This booklet is a brief biography of our history as we celebrate the founding of our congregation on June 21, 1981. Our theme for the celebration is "Rooted in Faith for 40 Years and Growing in God's Word" based on Psalm 1. We thank God for your participation in this celebration. We pray that together we continue to delight in God's Word and yield fruit in our community for many more years to come.

In Christ,
Pastor Clayton G. Welch
2019-Present



Pastor Clayton Welch and his wife, Danielle,
with children Elijah, Jane, Anne, and Matthew

Pastor Paul
Ziemer
and his wife,
Donna and
daughter, Mindy



Pastor Scott
Mielens
at his
Installation



Pastor
Mielens
and his wife,
Jacque

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church held its first worship service in Manassas on Trinity Sunday, the third Sunday in June 1981 at Seton School in downtown Manassas. There were 41 people present: Pastor Paul Ziemer, our four original member families and friends from Grace, our sister church in Falls Church. By the end of our first year, we had grown to a total of 33 communicants and 55 souls. During these early years, Pastor Ziemer was also holding services in Winchester and Richmond. It was a busy time, a growing time.

By the summer of 1981, the Ladies' Circle was organized and was meeting informally. Our Sunday School had its beginning in the fall of 1981, with three teachers leading the classes. Our first Confirmation Class of two Confirmands graduated in May 1982.

We celebrated two seasons of our Lord's Nativity at Seton Hall, warmed spiritually by God's Word and physically by strategically located kerosene heaters. In December 1983, worship services were moved to the Ben Lomond Community Center on Sudley Manor Drive. We worshipped there until the summer of 1987.



Bethlehem's first
worship location
at
Seton School

Bethlehem's Sign
at
Ben Lomond
Community
Center



Plans for a new church building began in the spring of 1984. One year later, we broke ground for our church at our present location. In June 1985, however, we were saddened by the news that our building plans were too expensive. While we worked steadily toward solving this problem of matching our needs to the available funds, we experienced a growth spurt that not only helped us to qualify for the funding but exceeded the size specifications of our original plans for the structure. God indeed works in mysterious ways, especially when we put Him in charge of the project! We signed building contract agreements in July 1986 and the construction began in August. At its completion, we held the Service of Dedication on June 21, 1987, the third Sunday in June, exactly six years after our first worship service in Manassas. At that time, Bethlehem numbered 110 communicants and 53 children for a total of 163 souls.



Ground Breaking ~ 1986

In 1990, Pastor Ziemer accepted a call to Rock Springs, WI. Pastor Scott Mielens of Bay City, MI, a 1990 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, succeeded him. In November 1990, we purchased a home to become our parsonage. The address is 9878 McGill Court, Manassas, VA 20109. While Pastor Mielens served us, we decided to start a daughter congregation in the Woodbridge-Lake Ridge area. In 1992, Pastor Timothy Unke was called, and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized that same year.

Pastor Mielens served Bethlehem until May 1995 and was succeeded by Pastor Jonathan Kehren of Marshall, MN, a 1995 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. In 1994, Bethlehem purchased a new organ for its sanctuary. In 1996 a Fifteenth Anniversary service was held with Pastor Ziemer as the preacher. At that time, the congregation numbered 165 communicants and 56 children, for a total membership of 221 souls.



Pastor Jonathan Kehren
and his wife, Ginny



Pastor Heath Butler and his wife, Sara, with
daughters Lauren, Mia, Tessa and Kaitlin

Together with Christ our Savior Lutheran Church, Sterling, VA, Bethlehem helped start the congregation, Shepherd of the Hills. In 2001, Pastor Arthur Faught of Siren, WI was assigned to this Winchester mission. In 2002, Pastor Kehren accepted a call to Eagle River, AK.

Pastor Heath Butler of Bancroft, MI was installed on May 11, 2003. In 2004, a Toddler Time with Jesus program began with Sara Butler instructing. We also received a set of Chromatic Tone Chimes which were put into use immediately. On December 2, 2004, we sold the parsonage to the Butlers. We began a community outreach event, the Fall Festival, in September 2005 and held our first KidsCamp in December 2005. A 25th Anniversary service was held in 2006 with Pastor Ziemer as the preacher. At that time, the congregation numbered 155 communicants and 35 children, for a total membership of 190 souls. A new wooden cross was installed at the front of the church facing Copeland Drive and our church sign was updated in October 2006. Pastor Butler began a mid-week worship service at Sudley Manor, a nearby assisted living community, in 2006.



PHASE I: 4,428 S.F. ADDITION
630 S.F. RENOVATION



New education wing, dedicated September 2012

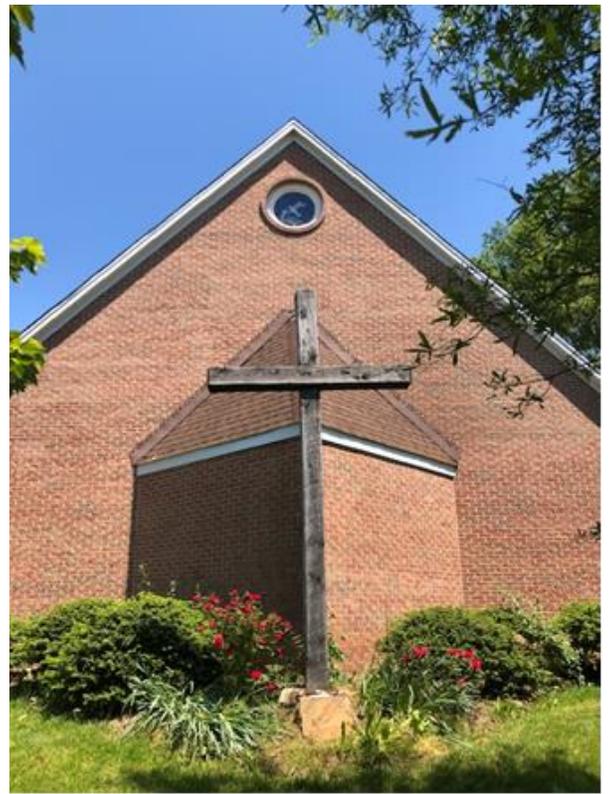
In 2011, the congregation began an expansion of the building that would mark the beginning of its early childhood ministry. In September 2012, the new education wing was dedicated, more than doubling our facility size. There are five classrooms with two bathrooms, an office for the Early Learning Center Director, a conference room outside the expanded pastor's office, a workroom, and bigger bathrooms with a nursery room. The Little Stars of Bethlehem Early Learning Center opened its doors in September 2013 with two classrooms of students. Cheryl Vergara served as Director with Laura Letiecq on staff.

We began a Jesus Cares Ministry program in 2013. Bethlehem received a new Roland digital piano and a new set of candelabras in 2016. We added new storage cabinets in Classroom Five and the Education Wing hallway in 2017. At the end of 2017, the congregation had 206 baptized souls with 174 confirmed members and 32 children. In 2018, Pastor Butler accepted a call to serve at Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Wauwatosa, WI.

On January 13, 2019, Pastor Clayton Welch of Tucson, AZ, a 2005 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was installed as pastor.

**Through the years, the purpose of Bethlehem has remained unchanged: "We want to grow in grace by the Word of God and go by grace with the Word of God to the world."
To God alone be glory!**





Seasons of Bethlehem



Bethlehem Building Committee





Fall Festival 2005-2019



Jesus
Cares
Ministry
2013-Present





Vacation Bible Camps





Little Stars of Bethlehem
Early Learning Center

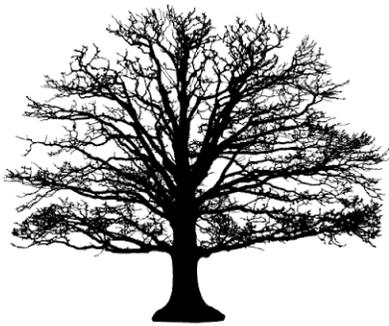




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Celebrating
40 years
rooted in faith!



"I am the vine, you are the
branches. If you remain in
me and I in you, you will
bear much fruit; apart from
me you can do nothing."

John 15:5



Many thanks to our
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Pastor & Danielle Welch