



The Bethlehem Star

August 2026



Dear Bethlehem family,

There is a particular feeling that comes with August in DeKalb, and if you have lived here for more than a year, you know exactly what I mean.

The corn is tall — taller than a person now, taller than the roof-lines of the farmhouses you pass on Route 38 heading west out of town. It has been doing what corn does: growing in the dark, in the heat, in the silence of fields that look the same from day to day until suddenly they don't. By the end of the month, Corn Fest will be back on Lincoln Highway — August 28 through 30 this year — and there will be music and the smell of sweet corn boiling and that particular feeling of a community pausing together to say: *look what grew here*.

At the same time, Lincoln Highway is filling up with moving trucks. The U-Hauls are backed up to residence hall doors on the NIU campus. New students are hauling mattresses and mini-fridges and futons up stairwells, their parents trying to hold it together in the parking lot, their faces doing that particular thing faces do when love and grief and pride are all happening at once.

And somewhere in that same August week, a family will slip quietly out of town — a job transfer, a new chapter — and another will appear for the first time in a back pew, not sure yet whether this is their church, not sure yet whether DeKalb is home. A teacher is spending these last August days in a classroom getting ready for students she hasn't met yet. A farmer is watching the sky, calculating, hoping the rains hold off until after harvest. A retiree is staring at a September calendar that looks different from every other September of his life, because this year there are no school schedules to organize around, no familiar rhythms — only open space, which can feel like freedom or like falling, depending on the day.

August in DeKalb is a month of transitions. It always is.

The church has a word for seasons like this: *faithfulness*.

Not certainty. Not a guarantee that the next chapter will be better than the last, or easier, or what we expected. Faithfulness is something quieter and more durable than that. It is the practiced habit of showing up — to God, to one another, to the life we have been given — even when we are not sure how things will turn out.

The farmers who have tended these DeKalb County fields for generations understand something about this. You plant. You cultivate. You do what you know how to do, and then you wait on things you cannot control — the rain, the temperature, the timing of a harvest that has its own schedule regardless of yours. Faithfulness in farming is not the absence of uncertainty. It is the commitment to keep tending in the middle of it.

I think the life of faith works the same way.

In August, some of us are planting — new relationships, new routines, new chapters that haven't yet shown us what they will become. Some of us are harvesting — gathering the fruit of years of patient work, relationships that have deepened, faith that has been tested and has held. And some of us are in the in-between, which is maybe the hardest place to be: not quite finished with what was, not quite begun with what will be, standing in the field not sure whether to look behind or ahead.

To all of us, in all of these places, the same word: *be faithful*. Show up. Keep tending. Trust the One who was here before this transition began and will be here when it settles.

To students heading to NIU this fall — whether new to DeKalb or returning after a summer away — this congregation would be glad to have them here. They are members of the body, and we need what they bring: questions, energy, willingness to see things freshly. The doors are open. Come as you are.

To the families who are sending a child or grandchild to college for the first time, or watching them leave home for any reason this month — you are not alone in the particular ache of that goodbye. Bring it here. This is a community that knows how to hold grief and gratitude at the same time, because we practice it every week.

To those who are new to DeKalb and new to us — welcome. I know full well that this town has a way of becoming home, quietly and then all at once. We hope this congregation becomes part of that for them.

To those who are leaving — your place in this community does not end because your address changes. You carry something with you. We will pray for you so be in touch.

And to those who have been here for decades, who have weathered every kind of August this town has offered — thank you for being the memory of this congregation, the ones who know where we came from, the ones who keep showing up so that everyone else has somewhere to show up *to*. Your faithfulness is a form of ministry you may not always see.

This is, I want to say plainly, a difficult time in the world. The news this summer has been heavy — wars resumed, natural disasters, a sky so full of Canadian wildfire smoke that we couldn't see the horizon clearly for a few days in mid July. August can feel like an attempt to go on with ordinary life in the face of things that are anything but ordinary.

That is not avoidance. That is faithfulness.

Going on with ordinary life — sending children to school, gathering for worship, showing up for neighbors, sitting down together for a meal — is one of the most quietly defiant things human beings do. It is a declaration that the world's brokenness has not had the last word. It is what the community of faith has always done in hard times: *gathered, sung, prayed, broken bread, and gone back out*.

The corn doesn't ask whether it is a good year to grow. It just grows, because that is what it was made to do, and because the God who made it keeps providing what it needs.

We were made for something similar.

May this August be, for each of you, a month of faithful tending — in your families, in your work, in your life with God and with one another. Whatever is beginning, whatever is ending, whatever is somewhere in the uncertain middle: you are not navigating it alone.

We want to see you in worship, make it a priority. We will see you at Corn Fest. We will see you in the ordinary and extraordinary moments that make a community — and we will keep showing up together, which is, in the end, what faithfulness looks like from the outside.

Thanks be to God for every August we are given.

— *Pastor Sharon*

Invitation to Lutheran Global Mission Presentation

When: August 16 from 2-4 pm

Where: First Lutheran Social Hall
324 N Third Street, DeKalb

Pastor Bob and Lynn Hansen have recently participated in two ELCA sponsored mission trips. They will share stories, pictures, and uplifting information about the work of our brothers and sisters of the Lutheran Churches in these countries.

Light refreshments will follow the presentation.

The presentation is being sponsored local retired clergy.

Pulpit Schedule

August

2 Pastor Sharon Rogers

9 Pastor Sharon Rogers

16 Pastor Bob Hansen

23 Pastor Bob Hansen

30 Pastor Sharon Rogers

August Birthdays

8 Eldon Miller

14 Rhonda Huffman



Feed My Sheep Food Pantry

The JUNE clients served are as follows:

	2026	2025
Households	478	399
Individuals	1464	1185
Children	387	319
# of Pantries	9	8

AUGUST 2026

Monday thru Thurs 8-1
 Phone: 815-758-3203
 Website: bethlehemdekab.org
 Email: belcdekab@comcast.net
 Facebook: bethlehemdekab

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						¹ 8:30/9:30 FMS Pick-up
² 9:30 Worship Pentecost 10	³ 7:30 FMS Delivery 8-1 Office Open 12:30 Cut-Ups	⁴ 8-1 Office Open 3-5 FMS Pantry 7:00-9:30 HarmonEssence	⁵ 8-1 Office Open 10:30 FMS Pick-up Noon-VAC Lunch	⁶ 8-1 Office Open 8:30 FMS Pick-up 9:30-11:30 FMS Pantry 10:30 Martha's Sisters	⁷	⁸ 8:30/9:30 FMS Pick-up
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