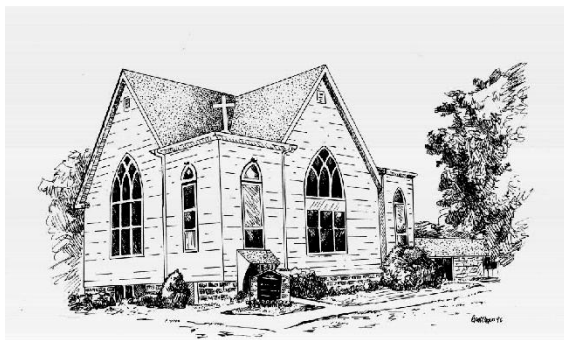




Helmar Lutheran Church
Newark, IL
Sunday, September 20th, 2026
16th Sunday after Trinity

Prelude

Welcome

Vision Trip to South Africa report

Hymn: "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

Scripture reading: John 17:1-3

I John 5:11-13

Confession of Faith: 2nd Article with explanation

Pastoral Prayer

Praise Team: "Blessed be Your Name"

"Indescribable"

"What a Beautiful Name"

Sermon: "A Bleak Beginning"

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

Benediction

Hymn: "Because He Lives"

Postlude

Members of Helmar's Prayer Team will be at the front of the sanctuary following the service to meet with those who desire to receive Christ as Lord and Savior, those who wish to renew their relationship with Jesus, or those who need prayer for specific needs. Anointing with oil, according to James 5:14 is available upon request.



September 20th, 2026
“A Bleak Beginning”
Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

We are beginning a series of sermons from the Book of Ecclesiastes titled, “Life is Worth Living.” This book, written 3000 years ago, has much to say to us today. A “Preacher”- (Hebrew Qoheleth, Gr. Ecclesiastes, when the Old Testament was translated into Greek) provides us with his sermons. Let’s listen to them!

I. A Matter of _____ v. 1,2

II. A Matter of _____ v. 3

III. A Matter of a _____ v. 3

Upcoming Events:

Mon: 7pm Mathre Life Group (Yorkville)

Wed: 9:30-2pm Quilting
2pm Adult Bible Study
6:30pm Christian Life Group (Newark)
6:30pm BLAST, JAM, HS

Th: 9:30am Ladies Bible Study
6:30pm Gengler Life Group (Yorkville)

Fri: 9am Ladies Prayer Hour
7:30pm Pilon Life Group (Minooka)

Sun: 8:30am Fellowship
9am Sunday School
10am Worship

Life Group Study Questions are available on the ledge outside the sanctuary, or online.

We are still in need of some items for our **Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes**. If you would like to shop, there are suggested items on the Christmas tree outside the sanctuary, which you may purchase on Amazon (or locally). Or you may contribute financially by writing "OCC" on the memo line or envelope and placing it in the offering. Please see Stacy if you have questions.

Mark your calendars for an **Autumn Worship Night** on October 9th. This event is for **Everyone!** 5:30pm Games & Prizes, 6:30pm Food, 7pm Worship around the bonfire.

September 20, 2026

I'm so thankful that the LORD redirected my post high school plans. He changed my circumstances to change my heart. Instead of going right to college for sports, I landed at AFLBS. It was not a haphazard drop. God in His loving faithfulness knew just what I needed—

concentrated time in His Word and the fellowship of His people.

I came to the Bible School without clear direction for the future. The classes required concentrated time reading and memorizing the Bible. I learned to read the Word prayerfully. I learned to love its Author. My heart and prayers began to plead with God to direct my decisions. This pattern I learned at Bible School, seeking God through His Word and prayer, has shaped the turns of my life.

At AFLBS (now FLBC) God answered my earnest prayer, "*What do You want me to study next?*" Through time in Scripture and the impact of observing the day school in the basement of the girl's dormitory (*Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy*), I was given a call. Teach.

After graduating from Oregon State University, I thought I would serve in public schools, and I did teach in Oregon, Idaho, California, and Minnesota. Yet most of my educational career was spent in the very Christian school God used to lead me into education in the first place: *MLLA* (now *Heritage Christian Academy*). God has been gracious in allowing me to serve Him in the field of education, wherever He placed me.

It has taken me too long to understand that any endeavor undertaken with an earnest desire to love God and love our neighbors is the highest vocation. Work, paid or unpaid, pleases God if it is done with this intent. Work itself is a gift from God; He does not need human accomplishments.

At AFLBS we memorized the great Shema: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind . . ." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Now, as I approach the end of my professional career, those verses continue to assure me that God will give me ways to serve Him in every chapter of life, if I seek Him. When what we do is motivated by love for God and love for others, our lives have eternal significance.

Mrs. Gwen Berge

FLBC (AFLBS) Alumni, Class of 1984

Anoka, Minnesota

AFLC Promotion for September is the Bible College