

Helmar Lutheran Church
Newark, IL
Sunday, August 23rd, 2026
Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Prelude

Welcome

Hymn: “Jesus Loves Even Me”

Scripture reading: Hebrews 12:1-3

Matthew 12:33-37

Confession of Faith: Acts 22:6-15

Pastoral Prayer

Praise Team: “Yet Not I, But Through Christ in Me”

“In Christ Alone”

“Thank You, Jesus, for the Blood Applied”

Children’s Church dismissed

Sermon: ”Running the Race: Focused on Jesus”

Hebrews 12:1-3

Benediction

Hymn: “Living for Jesus”

Postlude

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Please Note: Pastor Lombardo will be out of the office August 11th-31st.

Upcoming Events:

Mon: 3-5pm Food Pantry

Wed: 6:30am Men’s Bible Study @ Southern Belle’s  
6:30pm Youth BYBS at Jacob & Lucy Rechsteiner’s

Fri: No Ladies Prayer Group in August

Sun: 10am Worship service—Don Davidson

The church Wi-Fi password is Helmar21

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Life Groups will resume the week of September 13th. The series will be “Ecclesiastes—Life is Worth Living”. Sign-up sheets are available at the Welcome Center. We are still in need of a host for the Yorkville area. Please see Dave Christian for more information. (815) 474-0440

Rally Sunday is September 13th! Sunday School and all of our fall activities will resume that week.

- Following the worship service, we will be having the Annual Church Picnic. It will be potluck. Last names ending in A-I can bring salads, J-P can bring hot dishes, and Q-Z can bring desserts. Of course, if you have a “signature” dish, you may bring that as well! The church will provide chicken, table service and beverages. Please sign up at the Welcome Center to help us know how much chicken to order.



August 23rd, 2026

**“Running the Race: Focused on Jesus”
Hebrews 12:1-3**

August 23, 2026

Nest-less Birds

How long are you able to live out of a suitcase before you're sick of it? Most people I know love leaving home for vacation but, within a week or two, yearn to get back and sleep in their "own beds." This desire for the comforts of home appears universal and timeless.

Jesus knew this when He responded to the scribe in Matthew 8:20. Scribes were among the most educated men in first century Israel. Their particular skill set—reading, writing, and teaching the law—made them highly valuable in Israelite society and afforded them a lifestyle of maximum security and stability. So, when the scribe boldly announces his intent to follow Jesus wherever He goes, Jesus colorfully reminds him of what he'll give up. Jesus says, "the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." In other words, if you follow Me, you're going to be living out of a suitcase.

Matthew 8:20 is the second time Jesus points out "the birds of the air" in Matthew's Gospel. The first time, Jesus cites birds as examples of freedom from worry. "Look at the birds of the air," He says. "They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them" (Matthew 6:26). Contemplating Jesus' instruction, we rejoice, imagining a delightful life of chipper morning songfests and blue-sky days feeling "free as a bird." Less enticing on the surface is the picture Jesus gives us of discipleship in Matthew 8:20. It's a life without the security and stability of a home base. Even "birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

Reading the two Matthew passages together, we see that Jesus is calling His followers to a life of freedom from worry but with no guarantee of conventional sources of security and stability. In short, Jesus is calling His people to a life of simple trust in Him.

One of the greatest examples of this trust is the Apostle Paul. He lived the second half of his life like a nest-less bird. For decades on end, he lived out of a suitcase. But listening to Paul describe his life following Jesus, we hear no complaint. Instead, we hear birdsong and sense freedom; we note tones of deep security and stability. As Paul joyfully tells the Philippian Christians, the secret Jesus taught him for such a free but secure life is this: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." It's the lesson Jesus will teach us, too, if we're willing to echo the scribe and say, Lord Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you [lead]."

Dr. Brent Olson
AFLC Schools Faculty
Plymouth, Minnesota

AFLC Promotion for August is the Seminary

Helmar Lutheran Church

(815) 201-3789 email: helmarlutheran@gmail.com
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Helmar exists to be a:

***Soul-Winning, Disciple-Making,
Burden-Bearing Church***

Pastor— Steven Lombardo

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Children's Ministry Director- Kristen Mathre

815-762-5320 Email helmarkids@gmail.com

Youth Ministry

Email helmaryouth@gmail.com

Music Director-Lisa Greven

815-508-1403 Email matthewgreven@hotmail.com

Secretary—Stacy Christian 815-201-3789 (call or text)

Email helmarlutheran@gmail.com

Spiritual Disciplines Sheet

8-23-2026

Hide God's Word in your Heart

“fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Hebrews 12:2