

Dear Parents and Members of Star of Bethlehem,

As you may know, Star of Bethlehem has made the decision to enter the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. This decision was made at the Voters Assembly meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup>. As you may also know, some of the events leading up to the meeting, along with some events at the meeting itself, have led to damaged relationships and mistrust within our Star community.

We regret that certain interactions at the meeting did not display an attitude of Christian love. There were heated and emotional comments that caused offense to some in attendance, leaving individuals and families with a sense of inequality and hurt. We are deeply sorry. Those statements do not accurately reflect our feelings toward our church and school families. Please know that we value the input from all of you. Whether you are a member or not, whether you are new to school or not, you are valuable to Jesus and so you are valuable to us as well. We know what an important role you play within our Star of Bethlehem community, and we recognize this is not to be taken lightly. We acknowledge and regret that this was not clearly communicated at the Voters Assembly meeting. We also recognize that it is important for us to not allow the devil to gain a foothold here at Star of Bethlehem, because he would love for nothing more than to tear our church, our school, and our Christ-centered ministry apart.

According to God's direction in Scripture, and out of love for all the souls that make up Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School, we must make every effort to repair these damaged relationships. We want nothing more than to move Christ's kingdom forward by bringing God's saving message of love to all people. Ephesians 4:2-3 tells us, *"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."* With this in mind, we will hold an **Open Forum on Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm**. This Open Forum will give all in attendance the chance to openly discuss their thoughts about the way things were handled throughout this process and during that Voters Assembly meeting.

We invite you to reach out to us at any time between now and December 4<sup>th</sup>. We are eager to talk about these things with you and to find peace together in the cross of Christ. Whether personally or at the Open Forum, we look forward to the opportunity to find forgiveness for mistakes that were made, to better explain to you the ministry of our church and school, to hear your feedback, and to express to you our desire to serve our Savior and to serve you. It is our prayer that through these discussions we can all move forward and grow in our understanding and trust of one another while maintaining our goal of giving glory to God in our thoughts, words, actions and ministry.

In Christ,

*The Executive Leadership Team of Star of Bethlehem*

*Pastor Jonathan Nitz  
Pastor Jacob Schwartz  
Pastor John Gawrisch  
Principal Tim Mueller*

*President Gene Szaj  
Vice President Dave Schoeneck  
Treasurer Cal Patterson  
Secretary Mark Gerhard*