

The Bethlehem STAR

Pride in Our Past - Faith in Our Future

February 2025

February 22

coldest
*night
O F T H E Y E A R

A church-wide effort to
raise funds for
United Caring Services

Pastor's Perspective



Welcome to the first Bethlehem STAR of 2025! As we look ahead to our ministry together this year, I want to reiterate a few questions I posed during this past weekend's sermon, ahead of our Annual Meeting:

It's tempting to evaluate the effectiveness of our church by considering how it's meeting our needs and our members' needs. Is attendance up? Is giving up? Are members happy? But if we are following the way of Jesus, if we are truly about being the church of Jesus Christ, our reflection and planning should be guided by the same purpose that drove his ministry. We should ask not about dollars and how full the pews are. We should instead ask questions like: Is the work of Bethlehem United Church of Christ good news for the poor? Does the work of Bethlehem United Church of Christ advocate justice for those who are mistreated by the systems of our world? Does Bethlehem United Church of Christ proclaim the Lord's favor to all? And does all really mean all? Does Bethlehem United Church of Christ tend to the ones with the head wounds ahead of ourselves?

These are the questions we must reflect on because this is really why we are here, to continue the work of Jesus Christ in this world. I hope these questions will guide our church in 2025 and however many more years the Lord sees fit to give us.

--Message from January 25-26

I'd like to say all my decision-making is informed by these questions, both personally and professionally (but it's probably best to be truthful in the church newsletter). The truth is, I often spend more time and energy caught up in my own concerns, the concerns of my family, the needs of our own members, and the day-to-day issues that come up leading a church. I want to dedicate more time in 2025 running my decisions and actions through this

Continued

series of questions. (Is what I am working on good news for those on the margins?) I invite you to do the same.

Black History Month

February is Black History Month, a time when we lift up Black history as a corrective to the fact that much of our American History has been told from the white perspective. I always try to read something during this month that will deepen my understanding of the history of (and the continued need for) justice-seeking for African Americans in our country. This Black History Month, I will be reading *The Color of Compromise*, by Jemar Tisby. This work focuses specifically on the white church's role in racism in our country. I anticipate it will be a challenging read. What are you reading this February? I'd love to hear about it!

Here are some other books by Black authors and/or about Black History that I have found helpful and challenging:

How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery by Clint Smith

You Have to Be Prepared to Die Before You Can Begin to Live by Paul Kix
Half American: The Epic Story of African Americans Fighting World War II at Home and Abroad by Matthew F. Delmont

King: A Life by Jonathan Eig

March by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell (this is a series of graphic novels)

In addition to doing personal reading, there are other opportunities to engage with Black History Month. In both services the weekend of February 8-9, Bethlehem will join congregations across the city in observing BRIDGE's* Racial Equity and Social Justice Sunday. You are also invited to join others in our community for the Community Racial Justice Prayer Service sponsored by the University of Evansville at Eykamp Hall in the Ridgway University Center on Sunday, February 9 at 2:00 pm. The service will be about one hour with five speakers providing a faith perspective on taking action for racial justice followed by moments of personal reflection.

*BRIDGE stands for Building Respect and Integrity in Diverse Greater Evansville.



BUCC FEBRUARY “FUN” DRAISER

A church-wide effort to raise money for United Caring Services

THE MANY WAYS YOU CAN GET INVOLVED:

- Join the BUCC Team as a walker in the Coldest Night of the Year Walk held on February 22. One or two-mile walk along Evansville riverfront. (Walkers will meet at the First Presbyterian Church, 609 SE 2nd St, at 4:30.)
- Sponsor the Bethlehem Walking Team by making a financial contribution.
- Buy Bethlehem Spirit Wear. (**Deadline to order is Sunday, February 2.**)
- Worship in the Welcoming Area on Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 5:30 (Held concurrently with the CNOTY Walk).
- Join us for a Soup and Sandwich Dinner and Bingo on February 22 at 6:30 in the Fellowship Hall. (Freewill offering for meal and \$5 Bingo).

Event sign-up/clothing order forms are available [online](#), at church entrances, through a link in Emily's Edition, or by calling the church office.



February Sunday School Overview

What we're teaching!

Pre-K - 6th Grade

MIRACULOUS: A 4-Week Series from the Gospels on Jesus' Miracles.



SERIES OVERVIEW:

When we visit an aquarium, we find a whole world filled with sea creatures, plants, and more. Some of the discoveries we've made about what lives underwater can seem almost like a miracle. But it's not just under the sea where miracles happen—Jesus used water in some of his most well-known miracles! In this 4-week series, kids will learn about some of the incredible miracles Jesus performed to help people grow closer to God. As they do, they'll learn how **Jesus does everything out of love, calls us to follow him, knows what we need, and most of all, that Jesus can do anything!**

[DOWNLOAD THIS MONTH'S PARENT DEVOTIONAL](#)

Youth

7th-12th (not in confirmation)

ON YOUR OWN: A 4-Week Series from the Old and New Testament on Godly Friendships



SERIES OVERVIEW:

Game shows can reveal the real strength behind friendships. Whether we're asking for help, solving puzzles, or overcoming challenges, quality friendships can help us move on to the next round of competition. So, what does it look like to develop game-winning friendships? In this 4-week series from the Old and

Continued

New Testaments, we'll explore how godly friendships can make a difference when we're in the hot seat. We'll see how God's words can help our friendships grow, how our friends can help our faith grow, the ways God can help us choose our friends wisely, and how God can help repair broken friendships.

[CHECK OUT THIS MONTH'S STUDENT DEVOTIONAL](#)

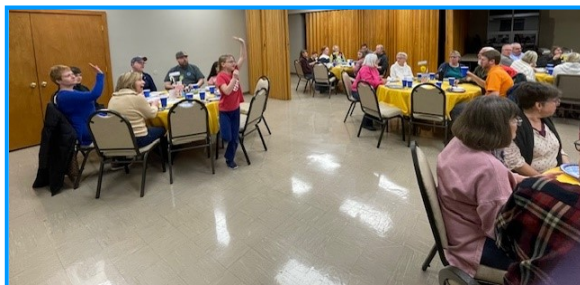
[DOWNLOAD THIS MONTH'S PARENT DEVOTIONAL](#)



1st Place - Swiftly Winning



2nd Place - Steve's 7 Smarties





3rd Place - Tim & Amy





Winter
Wonderland?





Bobby Glen Harrison, 94, of Evansville, Indiana, passed away on Sunday, January 5, 2025 at the Linda E. White Hospice House. Bobby was born on March 15, 1930 in Alabama City, Alabama to the late Wilbur and Minnie-Belle Harrison. He graduated from Princeton High School in Princeton, Indiana in 1948 and honorably served in the United States Navy from January 1949 until December 1952. Bobby was a department head in Engineering at Whirlpool until his retirement. Throughout his work life, Bobby attended the University of Evansville, nights and weekends, until he received his undergraduate and graduate degrees.

*In
Loving
Memory*

Bobby was an avid golfer and especially enjoyed playing with his Princeton buddies at the Princeton Country Club. He could also often be found shooting billiards at home with his two sons, Brad and Keith. Faith was very important to Bobby. He was raised as a Baptist and later in life was a faithful member of Bethlehem United Church of Christ in Evansville.

Above all else, Bobby loved his family, especially his beloved wife of over 70 years of marriage, Doris Jean (Anthis) Harrison, who passed away in January of 2024. He is survived by his son, Bradley Alan Harrison (Robin Renee) of Chandler, IN; grandchildren, Daniel Harrison, Jennifer Thomas, Mitchell Harrison and Blair Brooks; and great-grandchildren, Joseph, Eleanor, Wesley, Palmer, Layton, Payton and Landon. Bobby was preceded in death by his wife and parents; and by his son, Keith Harrison.

Private services were held at Bethlehem United Church Christ. Burial followed at the church cemetery where the Retired Veterans Memorial Club will perform military honors.

*In
Loving
Memory*

James "Dwight" Markwell, 74, of Haubstadt passed away Thursday, December 12, 2024. He was born May 23, 1950 in Evansville to the late James and Virgie Markwell.



He was an active member of Bethlehem UCC, where he was a member of the EOSIN group. Dwight enjoyed mission trips to Biloxi, MS and Joplin, MO for tornado relief. He was a member of Lessing Lodge, Hadi Shrine, Drum and Bugle Corps (Past President), and Hadi Car Club. Dwight enjoyed being a Shriner and worked the ticket office and front door during the circus. He coached baseball and softball for his children and was a bleacher umpire for his grandchildren. Dwight loved spending time at Kentucky Lake. He retired as Project Manager from INDOT Vincennes District after 35 years. He was an avid IU fan.

Dwight is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Barbara Markwell of Haubstadt; daughter, Heather Schroeder (Eric) of Grayville, IL; sons, Rodney Markwell (Kristin) of Evansville and Jeffrey Markwell (Rebecca) of Evansville; grandchildren, Ella Schroeder, Kennedy, Klaire, and Khloe Markwell, and Miley and Makenzie Markwell; sister, Debi Powell (Dave) of Haubstadt; niece, Stacie Inman (Donald); and nephew, Spenser Powell.

A funeral service was held at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, December 17, 2024 at Bethlehem UCC, officiated by Rev. Emily Slade, with burial to follow in the church cemetery. Friends and family visited from 3:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Monday, December 16, 2024 at Alexander North Chapel and from 10:00 a.m. until service time at church on Tuesday. A Masonic walkthrough was held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday with a Masonic Service to follow.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Hadi Shrine Foundation or Bethlehem UCC Memorial Fund.



Kenneth B. Widick, age 84, of Evansville, IN, passed away Saturday, December 21, 2024, at Deaconess Gateway Hospital.

*In
Loving
Memory*

Kenneth was born July 21, 1940, in Springfield, TN, to the late Jessee and Flora M. (Edens) Widick. He graduated from Reitz High School in 1958. Kenneth proudly served in the United States Army Reserves during the Vietnam War. He then went on to graduate of the University of Evansville in 1962 and from IUPUI School of Social Work in 1970. He made a career as a Certified Social Worker for 35 years, licensed in both Indiana and Kentucky to practice. Kenneth was a member of Lessing Masonic Lodge 464, Scottish Rite, Hadi Shrine Temple and Germania Maennerchor. He was an active member of Bethlehem United Church of Christ where he was also a member of the choir. Kenneth loved coins, stamps, and older cars. He thoroughly enjoyed being around other people.

Kenneth is survived by his sister, Retha Buente (Daryl); nieces and nephews, Kimberly Brandt, David Widick (Carrie), Jeremy Buente (Samantha) and Jeffrey Buente; great niece and great nephew, Morgan Widick and Joseph Widick; and numerous cousins.

Kenneth is preceded in death by his parents, Jessee and Flora Widick; loving wife of 52 years, Katherine "Kathy" (Whetstone) Widick; and brother, Donald Widick (Mary Jo).

Funeral Services were held at 1:00 p.m., Saturday, January 4, 2025, at Boone Funeral Home East Chapel – A Family Tradition Funeral Home, 5330 Washington Avenue with Reverend Emily Slade officiating. Entombment was in Oak Hill Mausoleum where American Legion Kapperman Post #44 performed military rites.

Friends visited from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., Saturday, January 4, 2025, with a Hadi Shrine walk-through at 12:15 p.m., and a Lessing Masonic Lodge Service to follow at Boone Funeral Home East Chapel.

Memorial Contributions may be made to: Shriner's Children's Hospital at 4400 Clayton Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63110 (or c/o Hadi Shrine Temple at 6 Walnut Street, Evansville, IN 47708) or Bethlehem United Church of Christ .



Be sure to stop by the fellowship hall soon. The property committee has been busy freshening up the space with new paint, lighting, and window treatments!



Our Saturday evening music leader, Haiden Hart, performed at the United Caring Services Christmas party! (pictured with his mom, Shannon)



California Wildfires Appeal

On January 7, 2025, wildfire activity began in Los Angeles County, California. Fires continue to this day. Buildings are destroyed and people displaced from their homes. The devastation and destruction are historic.

Altadena Community Church UCC has been lost. Their building provided a home for a Montessori preschool, choral and theatre community groups, a food pantry, and more. Two other faith communities in the immediate neighborhood were also destroyed.

As recommended by the Outreach Committee and approved by council, Bethlehem will be collecting an offering for the UCC's California Wildfires 2025 Appeal beginning this weekend and continuing for the next four weeks. Your gifts will support immediate needs and long-term recovery efforts. Checks can be made to Bethlehem with "Wildfires" in the memo line and placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church. Gifts can also be made online at bethlehemucc.org.



We rejoice with church family members who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this month. A full list of birthdays and anniversaries can be found on our website at bethlehem/estar or by contacting the church office (867-2497) for a printed list.

BUCC
FAMILY NIGHT
OLD TIME RADIO
CHRISTMAS
SPECIAL





CHURCH COUNCIL

January Meeting Highlights

1. We welcomed new members to the 2025 Council: Elders Dee Carithers and Mike Head and Deacons Marti Bass, Dan Carwile, Bob Kolb, and Leigh Ann Mindrup.
2. The Council approved the usage of the online giving app for two new fundraising events, California Wildfire Recovery and Coldest Night of the Year.
3. A snow removal policy will be written to ensure we have a plan in place for when snow events, like the one we had in January, occur so we can address them quickly.

Save
THE
Date

Pi(e) Lunch

An All-Church Event



March 9
following
worship

Undie Sundays



During the month of February, the Eosin class will be collecting underwear for the K-12th grade students who come to Hangers, EVSC Clothing Resource and Culver Clothes Closet.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

You can purchase items from the list below and place them in the bins located at the entrance to the Welcoming Area, by the elevator on the children's level, or in the vestibule by the office.

OR

If you prefer someone shops for you, Pam and Lino Wiseman are happy to find the best deals on needed items. Monetary donations may be given online at bethlehemucc.org, to Linda Goebel, or a check may be made payable to Eosin (indicate Undie Sundays) and placed in the offering plate. Please contact Pam Wiseman with any questions.

ITEMS NEEDED

Boys' boxer briefs - all sizes

Girls' briefs - all sizes and styles

Men's boxer briefs - (S-L)

Women's briefs - all sizes

Men's t-shirts - sizes S, M, & L

Girls' bralettes (training bras) - all sizes

Boys' t-shirts - sizes S, M, & L

Girls' socks - shoe sizes (1-10 adult)

Sports bras - all sizes

Since each student will receive a minimum of 5 pairs of new underwear, nothing says you care like new underwear!

It's easy to be an altar flower donor to celebrate an anniversary or birthday or remember a loved one. Prices are \$40 for two vases and \$35 for one centerpiece.

View all available dates and online sign-up instructions are at bethlehemucc.org. To streamline the process, please sign up online if at all possible or contact the church office. Paper forms are available outside the church office.

Available dates in the coming months:

March 2, 16, 23
April 6, 27
May 11, 18, 25



Financial Recap

December General Account

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Monthly Beginning Balance	\$ 153,313.21	\$ 212,381.91
Monthly Pledge Deposits	47,245.84	54,959.90
Monthly Other Deposits	3,200.75	3,527.71
Monthly Operating Disbursements	(36,355.20)	(32,373.71)
Monthly Other Disbursements	3,130.84	(56,272.21)
Transfer Funds to 3-month CD	-	-
Monthly Ending Balance	<u>\$ 170,535.44</u>	<u>\$ 182,223.60</u>

YTD General Account

Beginning Balance	\$ 182,223.60	\$ 323,301.95
Pledge Deposits	452,665.55	435,596.74
Other Deposits	21,175.11	23,092.65
Operating Disbursements	(485,528.82)	(449,767.74)
Other Disbursements	-	-
Transfer Funds to 3-month CD	-	(150,000.00)
Ending Balance	<u>\$ 170,535.44</u>	<u>\$ 182,223.60</u>

Dear Bethlehem Outreach Committee,



Thank you so much for the recent donation to Culver Clothes Closet. We are located at the Culver Learning Center, but serve all 9 EVSC preschools and their families.

Students receive clothing, underwear, shoes, and hygiene products by applications through their school social worker or during our 3 Giving Days. So far this year, we have been able to help over 250 pre-school age children and their families.

Your donation will help with coats, shoes, and clothing needs as they arise. We appreciate your gift to further our mission of helping children.

Pam and Lino Wiseman and our volunteers

Dearest Bethlehem UCC members,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the Culver popcorn machine. It may seem like an odd request, but gives us access to our community. With regular popcorn days, our community will slowly become a community. Culver is on a path to greatness; this is a tool that help us achieve this. I can't wait to have our first popcorn day schoolwide. These students deserve the best; your gift will help us greatly.

Thank you,

Jenny Zahn
(Adopt-A-School program recipient)

Thank you for our A-Z Groceries set. We love it!

Students of Miss Amy, Miss Kensie, and Miss Stephanie
(Adopt-A-School program recipient)



Dear Bethlehem UCC,

Thank you so much for the donation of a stool on wheels. This helps the teachers reach all the students individually and on their level, in a comfortable way for everyone!

Your generosity is beyond measure and appreciated more than you can imagine.

Thank you, again.

Krista Hawkins, Lesley Heut, Morgan Apple
(Adopt-A-School program recipient)

Thank you for the visits and flowers. I enjoy seeing folks from Bethlehem Church.

Marilyn Freyling

Dear Bethlehem Friends,

Thank you for the many cards, calls, and other well wishes at the time of my recent surgery. Your thoughtfulness was sustaining during a difficult time!

Warmest regards,
Suzy Picking

My dad, an Evansville native, passed away recently. Although he lived on the East coast for most of his life and his wife/my mom (as do I), he was buried in his hometown. My cousins (Andrea and Wayne Gander) graciously obtained the use of your hall for a small family gathering I had after the funeral. It was perfect.



I completed an online donation as a thank you. Thank you very much for the use of your beautiful facilities!

Sincerely,

Angela MacLeod



Dear Rev. Emily,

I am writing to send a heartfelt thank you for your generous support. Your gift of \$6,000.00 is helping us build brighter futures!

Every day, families in Vanderburgh and Posey Counties find themselves struggling to keep a decent roof over their heads. Scarcity of affordable housing is one of the most serious challenges faced by families in our community right now. For many, the dream of homeownership is simply out of reach. By giving them a hand up - not a hand out - we can help our local families achieve greater safety, financial stability, and independence to pursue their dreams. Because of your donation, we will be able to give more local families and individuals hope for a brighter future by helping them build and buy their own decent and affordable homes.

Continued

Your generosity will not only construct homes but will also build hope, providing families with the foundation they need to succeed. Together, we are forging a path towards brighter futures, one home at a time.



On behalf of our staff, board, and future homeowners, THANK YOU! Your gift (\$6,000.00) is an investment in the lives of families and our community that will last generations.

Sincerely,

Dan Douglas
Director Development
Habitat for Humanity

P.S. Wow! Thank you for your support of the UCC/DOC build.

Dear Emily,

We extend our heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the entire Aurora team for your recent donation of \$2,000.00. Your contribution is greatly appreciated and will make a significant impact on our ability to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing for those in need.

At Aurora, we firmly believe in the inherent value of every individual and are committed to our mission of addressing and reducing homelessness in our community. Your support propels us closer towards achieving this goal, and we are truly grateful for your partnership in this important work. *Continued*

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We invite you to stay connected with Aurora and stay informed about the exciting developments we have in store for 2024. Whether you are interested in touring our facilities, arranging a speaking engagement, or participating in our events, we are more than happy to accommodate your involvement.

Crystal Southern
Resource Development Officer
Aurora
Housing our Homeless

Dear Bethlehem Family,

Thank you for the flowers delivered to Dwight by Pam Hirsch and Pastor Emily when he was ill. The communion with the family was perfect. Thank you for the many cards, food, words of comfort, and visits to the funeral home and funeral. I was overwhelmed by all the love and support.

Barbara Markwell

The family of Kenneth Widick wishes to thank the Bethlehem family for all they have done for Kenneth over the years. He enjoyed singing in the choir, and we enjoyed talking with each of you at the funeral.

Thanks so much!

The Buente Family

On behalf of the District of Evansville of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, I thank you for your very generous gift of \$1,771.77, to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which will be designated to help those needing assistance with rent and utilities.



Since 2020, simply keeping one's head above water is becoming difficult. Affordable housing in Indiana is in high demand, making it easier for landlords to raise rental rates. Utility rates continue to increase as well. In the latest Indiana Utility survey, our local energy provider ranked highest among all utility companies in the state. Inflation brought increases to food prices, health insurance premiums and prescription copays, and gasoline prices, to name just a few. While we are all affected by rising costs, the low wage worker feels it worst of all. And that's why your kindness to those in need is so important.

Along with the temporary relief provided by your goodness is the message Vincentians bring to those they serve of Christ's love and hope. Your generosity opens the door for our Vincentians. Know that we remember both the poor and their benefactors in our prayers. Please remember us in yours as well.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Joseph Cook

The SIMA 100 organization would like to thank you and the church for your generous donation to better educate our future, which is our children. It truly takes a village to raise our children in this community. May God bless your church and the people of your church, may the blessings flow, shaken together pressed down and running over for "Bethlehem United Church of Christ".

Sincerely,

Bert Adams
CFO SIMA 100

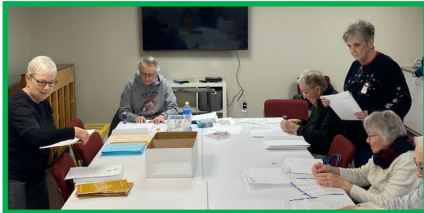
We would like to thank The Eosin Class for sponsoring the Cookie Walk. We couldn't have had a successful Cookie Walk without the Eosin members, all of the bakers in the church, and the buyers. Thank you everyone for making this Cookie Walk the best!



Patty Geske & Connie Crab

With sincere appreciation, thank you to the team of amazing volunteers who helped assemble the Annual Report mailing. In just a little more than an hour, the mailing bins were ready for the post office.

With gratitude,
Patty Oglesby



On behalf of the staff, thank you for your kind and generous Christmas gifts. The office has received thank you notes from so many of our staff, and rather than share each of them here (we have 14 staff members!), please accept our collective gratitude for your thoughtfulness. It is truly an honor to serve this congregation, and none of us takes that for granted.

With appreciation,
Bethlehem Staff



BETHLEHEM
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
6400 Oak Hill Road
Evansville, IN 47725

Please contact the church office if you are aware of any address changes.

(812) 867-2497 (Office)

email: church@bethlehemucc.org

website: bethlehemucc.org

Follow us on Facebook,
Instagram, and Twitter

Office Hours

Monday 12:00 - 3:00 PM

**Tuesday - Thursday
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

OUR VISION STATEMENT:

***Striving to welcome all who seek God; to grow in faith;
and to love neighbor as self through action.***