

The Bethlehem STAR

Pride in Our Past - Faith in Our Future

March 2025



Pastor's Perspective



I recently preached on the miraculous catch of fish from Luke 5. When I prepare a sermon, there are many different ways the message could go, but at some point I must choose a lane, which means there's often plenty of "good stuff" left on the cutting room floor. This time, something that didn't "make the cut" has really stuck with me.

You'll remember that in this story, Jesus instructs Peter to let down his nets in deep water, even though Peter and his crew (experienced fishermen!) had fished *all night long* and caught nothing. Think about that for a moment. A full workday (worknight?) and absolutely nothing was accomplished. Have you ever had one of these days at your work? Where you get to the end of it and you're like, "How did I really get nothing done today?" We can imagine how frustrated Peter must have been.

But when he follows Jesus' direction, suddenly his work becomes incredibly lucrative and worthwhile.

I am struck that the soon-to-be-disciples (though they don't know it yet!) fished and fished and fished and caught nothing. They were well-trained and hard-working. But they caught nothing.

Likewise, we can keep ourselves very busy doing all kinds of work without ever actually accomplishing what benefits God's Kingdom. It's a terrifying thought! Being busy is not a sign that we are doing the things that bear fruit in God's economy. It is not until we listen to the instructions of Jesus that we channel our energies (our "busy-ness") and our efforts result in a meaningful "catch."

continued

Jesus' instructions are all over the Gospels: love your enemies, sell your possessions and give to the poor, love your neighbor as yourself, whatever you do unto the least of these. . . , not to mention the lessons gleaned from his many parables.

This is not easy stuff to be busy with! But it is the “deep water” Jesus calls us to.

Jesus invites Peter and company to no longer fish for fish, but to fish for people. And they leave that miraculous catch right there on the shoreline. What I am spending a lot of time thinking about these days (and especially as we approach the Lenten season) is whether or not I am busy with the right things. Is the church busy with the right things? And if we are not, are we prepared/willing to put out in the “deep water” and pursue those things that are closest to the heart of Jesus?

Are we willing to trade the “busy-ness” that may come most easily to us for the slow, difficult work of following the one who, just a chapter before this miraculous catch of fish, proclaimed his mission statement in the synagogue?

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Luke 4.18-19

March Sunday School Overview

What we're teaching!

Pre-K - 6th Grade

BIG PICTURE: A 5-Week Series from the Gospels on Jesus' Teachings



SERIES OVERVIEW:

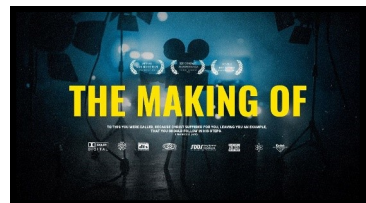
Every great movie tells a great story. When we see those stories played out on the big screen, we can learn a little more about ourselves and the world around us. Jesus knew how powerful stories could be, and he made them a big part of how he taught his followers. In this 5-week series, kids will hear some of the stories Jesus shared that can help them see the big picture of a life spent following God. Kids will see that **God helps us know what's true**, the ways **we can give back to God**, how **God sends us helpers**, and how **God gives us second chances**.

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

Youth

7th-12th (not in confirmation)

THE MAKING OF: A 4-Week Series from the New Testament on Spiritual Formation

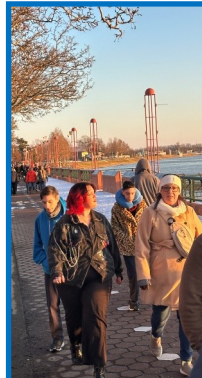
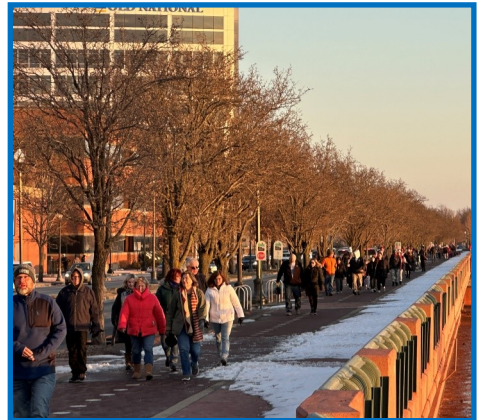


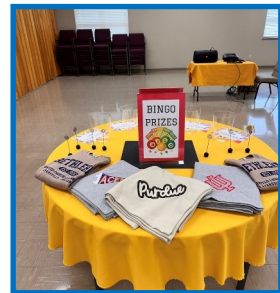
SERIES OVERVIEW:

Good movies capture our imaginations and transport us to other worlds. As we watch our favorite movies with popcorn in hand, we may not realize all of the work, edits, and rewrites that went into making the cinematic masterpiece. The same is true of our faith, too. We might expect our relationship with God to look like a finished product, but really, our faith and relationship with God are still in the making. In this 4-week series from the Gospels and Epistles, we'll explore what can happen when we invest in spiritual formation. *continued*

We'll see how **spending time with God** can make us more like Jesus and how **when we face temptation**, we can ask God for help. We'll also discover how **with God**, difficult moments can help our character grow and how **we grow** when we make things right with God.

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





**Ash Wednesday
Communion Service**

March 5 at 6:30 pm



Please join us for a time of prayer, song, imposition of ashes, and communion as we begin the season of Lent.

Lent

Ash Wednesday Service, March 5, 6:30 pm

**Palm Sunday Weekend, April 12, 5:30 pm
April 13, 10:15 am**

Maundy Thursday, April 17

Easter Worship, April 20, 10:15 am



Confirmation Sunday



April 27



All-Church Lunch

Be sure to save the date for our annual Pi(e) lunch on Sunday, March 9, immediately following worship. Along with delicious pie, vegetable and potato soups, and sandwiches will be served. Free-will offerings will be accepted.

If you would like to donate a pie (13 more pies needed) for the event, please contact Debbie Havens prior to the lunch at dkhavens49@gmail.com.

We look forward to a great turnout!



Bethlehem United Church of Christ
**ANNUAL METAL
RECYCLING DRIVE**

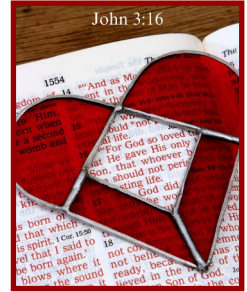
March 15 9AM - 12PM

**Any metal item is welcome
except those containing Freon.**

LENTEN BREAKFASTS

SATURDAYS MARCH 8 - APRIL 12

Both men and women are encouraged to attend and participate in the annual weekly Lenten breakfast. The breakfasts are a wonderful opportunity for fellowship and worship. This year's theme comes from John 3:16, "For God so loved the world..."



Breakfast begins at 8:00 am, with the service to follow at 9:00. Freewill offerings benefit United Caring Services and Tri-State Food Bank.

March 8 at Christ Church UCC, 3601 Washington Ave, Evansville

March 15 at Immanuel UCC, 5812 Ford Rd, Mt Vernon

March 22 at Bethlehem UCC

March 29 at St. Lucas, 33 W Virginia St, Evansville

April 5 at St Paul's UCC, 7700 Middle Mt Vernon Rd, Evansville

April 12 at St. Paul's German Township UCC, 8701 Big Cynthiana Rd, Evansville

Directory Update



Please contact church office.



Marvin was born and raised in Evansville, graduating from Reitz High School in 1956 where he was a member of the football and tennis teams. He attended Purdue University and majored in agriculture, which is a testament to his passion for the outdoors. For his entire career, Marvin was always associated with the agricultural industry. Whether

*In
Loving
Memory*

helping farms or golf courses, Marvin had an enthusiasm to improve the quality of their operations through chemical products and fertilizers. He started his career with McCarty Seed Co and eventually worked as Vice President of Seedkem Inc, where he made an everlasting mark on his customers. As a natural outdoorsman, Marvin found great joy in hunting, whether goose at Hovey Lake on New Year's Day or duck on the Ohio River. He was also known to be quite the gardener with a penchant for raising large vegetables and his delicious sweet corn at the family farm on Hitch and Peters Road in Evansville.

Mostly, Marvin will be remembered as a kind soul with a sense of humor and deep love for his dogs. With a big heart, he was always looking for the good in any person he met in life and extended that sentiment through his involvement in the community. Marvin was active in many organizations, including Ivy Tech, Masonic Lodge, and the Hadi Shriners. Notably, he and his wife were nominated by the American Red Cross for founding the military support group "United We Stand" for the families and service members of the Gulf War.

Marvin is survived by daughters, Cindy (Marc) Fine of Evansville, IN and Lisa O'Hair of Carmel, IN; son, Eric (Dianne) Peter of Indianapolis; grandchildren, Joel (Jordan) Fine, Jessica (Logan) Bitter, Jacob O'Hair and Grace (John) Delaney; and great-grandchildren, Isabelle Bitter, Bo Bitter, Eloise Fine, Jacob Fine, Avery Delaney, and Caroline Delaney.

continued

Marvin was preceded in death by his wife of 64 years, Margaret “Ann” Peter, his parents, and son-in-law, David O’Hair.

The family would like to thank the staff of River Pointe Health and Heart to Heart Hospice for their ongoing love and compassionate care.

There was a private graveside service with family Monday, February 10, 2025, at Bethlehem United Church of Christ Cemetery with Reverend Emily Slade officiating. The arrangements were handled by Ziemer Funeral Home East Chapel.

Memorial contributions may be made to: Hadi Shriners, 6 Walnut Street, Evansville, IN 47708 or a charity of your choice.

CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council is continuing monthly Council Chats. We encourage anyone with questions or comments for the Council to stop by the Welcome Area the last Sunday of the month to speak to a Council member.

The next Chat is Sunday, March 30, following worship.



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



2025
Tri-State Creation Care Conference

“Building Resilience Together”

Saturday, March 8, 9 am - Noon CST
CK Newsome Center, 100 E. Walnut St., Evansville

The event is free.



All are welcome.

Readying Our City for the Future:

- How will climate change impact our area?
- What is our city’s plan to become more green and resilient?
- How is our city prepared for severe weather events?
- What is our role as individuals and faith/civic organizations?

Our Presenters:



Dr. Beth Hall, Indiana State Climate Office Director

“Climate Trends and Considerations for Reducing Risks”



Lauren Norvell, Evansville’s Climate Action Director

“Taking Action to Build a Resilient Community”



Cliff Weaver, Evansville /Vanderburgh EMA Director

“Evansville’s Severe Weather Preparations and How Communities Might Play a Role”

Pre-registration is not required but appreciated.

Register to tristate.creation.care@gmail.com

Doors will open at 8:30 am for registration and exhibits.

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 Cindy Carwile at ckcarwile@gmail.com. Paper forms are available outside the church office.

Available dates in the coming months:

March 2, 16
 April 6
 May 18, 25
 June 1, 8, 22



Financial Recap

January General Account

	2025	2024
Monthly Beginning Balance	\$ 170,535.44	\$ 182,223.60
Monthly Pledge Deposits	22,918.77	24,417.97
Monthly Other Deposits	1,973.02	1,336.31
Monthly Operating Disbursements	(48,886.72)	(39,483.16)
Monthly Other Disbursements	4,205.00	52,691.89
Monthly Ending Balance	<u>\$ 150,745.51</u>	<u>\$ 221,186.61</u>

YTD General Account

Beginning Balance	\$ 170,535.44	\$ 182,223.60
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Other Deposits	1,973.02	1,336.31
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Other Disbursements	4,205.00	52,691.89
Ending Balance	<u>\$ 150,745.51</u>	<u>\$ 221,186.61</u>

Dear Bethlehem UCC Family:

I am filled with gratitude for your generous contribution towards our year-end matching challenge, helping us not only reach, but exceed, our goal of \$100K. Your \$2,000 gift has had an immense impact on the lives of the families we serve in Appalachia and those affected by Hurricane Helene. Thanks to your support, they are not alone.



Your gift is not just about repairing homes; it's about restoring hope and faith to those in need. By standing with ASP, you have exemplified the teachings of love, compassion, and unity that we cherish. It is only through friends like you that we are able to continue sharing God's love by providing shelter and security to those most vulnerable.

On behalf of the entire team here at ASP, I want to say thank you-families will be forever changed because of you.

Please know you are loved,

Melisa Winburn
President/CEO
Appalachia Service Project

Dear Emily,

On behalf of EVSC Foundation, we wish to thank you for your generous gift of \$299.00 to Lincoln Elementary.

continued

Your support of EVSC's academic and extra-curricular programs lights a path to life-long discovery and fulfillment for our students.



Like you, we are honored to play a role in helping schools and students thrive. We couldn't do it without you and others who share our commitment to young people.

Again, thank you for your generosity. You are making a difference in the lives of our students and their families.

With warm regards,

Melanie Atwood, EVSC Foundation President

Dear Emily,

On behalf of Aurora's staff, board, and clients, thank you for your generous support to the mission of Aurora this past year. There are many good causes to choose from, so we greatly appreciate that you have included Aurora in your giving. Your gift(s) to Aurora in 2024 helped house the most vulnerable in our community.

Aurora acknowledges your donation in the amount of \$2,000.00. We look forward to your continued support in 2025! To stay informed, you can sign up for our e-newsletter on our website (www.auroraevansville.org) OR like our Facebook page to get a weekly update. Some other ways to get involved are:

- Volunteer - check out our many volunteer opportunities (come visit us)
- Join a Committee - (Trivia Tonight, River City Wiffleball Classic, or Aurora's Golf Scramble)
- Become an "I BELIVE" monthly donor: set up a recurring gift on our website and receive a gift from Aurora.



If you have any questions or if you'd simply like to learn more about our mission of creating solutions to prevent and end homelessness in our community, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Sincerely,

Zac Heronemus, Executive Director

Dear Bethlehem United Church of Christ

GATHER Network wishes to thank you for your tax-deductible donation for the last year in the amount of \$ 400.00.

Your gift has helped our ministry grow and serve in areas of great need among those resistant to the Gospel and some unengaged by any effort of evangelization. Our efforts in Community Health Evangelism and Theology by Extension and indigenous Amazonian peoples have grown to reach remote communities in South America. Continued consulting in Africa and Central Asia has been possible through your generosity. We are blessed to share the news of an active ministry in India reaching remote Hindu tribal villages and ministering to street children and orphans.

Gratefully,

Virginia D. Grimm, President of the Board, Gather Network

Dear Pastor Emily,

My heartfelt thanks to you and your staff for the generous gifts to provide Christmas gifts and a very special day at United Caring Services. We were able to provide a lovely meal, a visit from Santa, and gifts for every guest—a backpack filled with hygiene items, hats, socks, etc.



Many thanks,

Lee Ann (Shafer)

Dear Friends of Tri-State Food Bank,

Here in the Tri-State, 1 out of every 8 individuals faces hunger - that's 113,310 of our neighbors, friends, and family.

At Tri-State Food Bank, we refuse to accept that anyone will go to bed not knowing where their next meal will come from. We are honored that you feel the same. Thank you for your generous support of \$1,500.00 to ensure members of our community who are facing hunger have access to healthy food.

So long as there are neighbors experiencing food insecurity in our region, we will be here to support them. And loyal support from donors like you will help us continue to supply over 12 million meals per year to our network of food pantries and feeding sites across the 33-county Tri-State area.

We invite you to stay engaged and learn more about how you can get involved with hunger relief by visiting our webpage www.tristatefoodbank.org and following us on social media.

Again, thank you for your continued support of Tri-State Food Bank.

Glenn Roberts
Executive Director



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.***