



The Bethlehem STAR

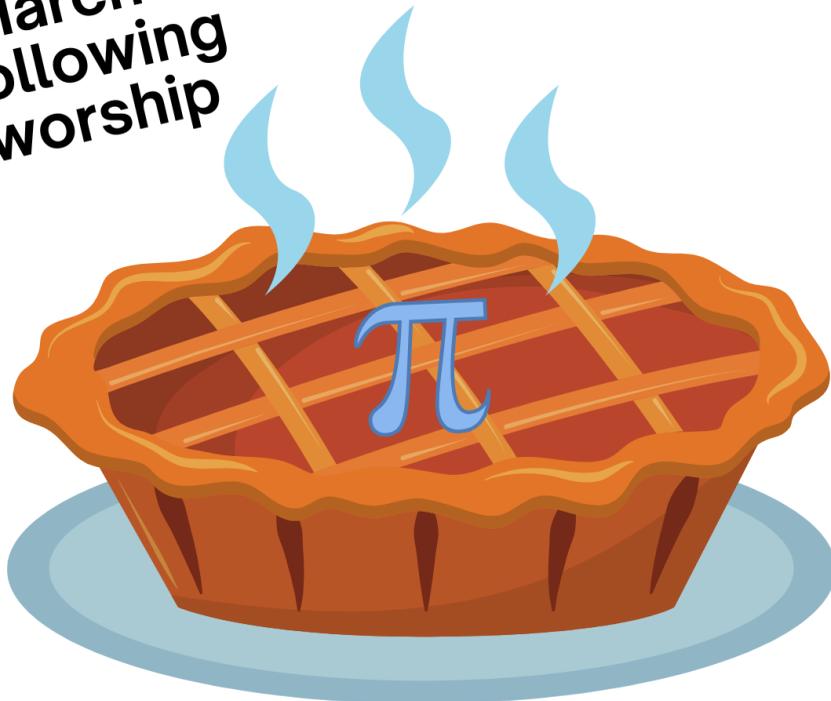
Pride in Our Past - Faith in Our Future

March 2026

Pi(e) Day Lunch

An All-Church Event

**March 8
following
worship**



Pastor's Perspective



I am part of a group of UCC pastors who take turns preaching at Envive Healthcare of Evansville (formerly the Good Samaritan Home) on Wednesdays at 2:00 pm. This year, I was scheduled to preach on Ash Wednesday.



I was a little anxious about how this would go. Because of mobility, I knew I would need to approach *them*. (I'm more accustomed to people actively coming forward to receive ashes—their presence before me a clear indication of their desire to be marked.) I wondered if I would be able to understand clearly each person's wishes about receiving the ashes.

What is more, the service takes place right after lunch, which for many of us is just a tired hour of the day. Understandably, some rest their eyes through my message. What if, when it was time for the ashes, I couldn't get their attention to ask if they wanted them?

What if they didn't understand what I was asking?

Beforehand, I made a mental note to ask not to be scheduled for Ash Wednesday again. It was too far out of my comfort zone. But by the time the service was over, the opposite was true.

The service clearly meant something special to the residents, who surprised me by being eager and proud to receive the ashes. They received them with smiles in their eyes that I've never seen the other times I've led worship there.

The experience reminded me why faith practices are so important. Those gathered may have heard thousands of sermons in their lifetimes, with only a few (if any) sticking with them past the benediction. And on any given

Wednesday, they may not even be able to hear the preacher well in the large room with less-than-stellar audio.

But when the piano starts, signaling the beginning of a hymn they've sung all their lives, their attention is piqued. When I start with "Our Father. . ." they know just what to do. And when they see the ashes in the preacher's hand, they sit up a little straighter. Why? Because they have an active role to play. It's a role they've played so many times before, perhaps as a child, teenager, young adult, and middle aged.

These practices tie our life of faith together. They connect us to Christians worldwide, through time, and to our younger selves at other seasons of our faith. When the mind becomes impacted by age or illness, the preacher's sermons fade long before these practices do.

There is an important lesson here for those of us who are not yet to the age where these practices serve as important anchors: the only way practices can hold that kind of meaning late in life is for them to have held meaning earlier in life. We engage these practices now, in part, to hold us in the years to come.

I will anxiously check the 2027 schedule with hope I might get to preach Ash Wednesday at Envive again. But either way, I will not soon forget the gift of this year's service.

" . . .you are dust, and to dust you shall return." -Genesis 3.19

Did you know that our own Susan Worthington plays piano for the services at Envive every Wednesday? Thank you, Susan!



Welcome our newest acolyte, Camden Capps! (pictured with grandfather Jerry Brandenberger)

Altar Flowers



Donate Sunday morning altar flowers to celebrate a special occasion or remember a loved one. Prices are \$40 for two vases and/or \$35 for one centerpiece. To view available dates and sign up, see our [website](#). Paper forms are always available in the vestibule (office entrance open 24/7), church office hallway, Welcoming Area, children and youth entrance, and narthex.

Available upcoming dates: March 8, 15, & 22 and April 12, 19, 26

If you have any altar flower questions, please contact Carol Kolb at carolrkolb@yahoo.com.

Elder Recruitment

The Spiritual Council has adopted a new policy related to elders who transfer to Bethlehem from other congregations. Moving forward, if someone who comes before the Spiritual Council for membership has also previously served as an elder elsewhere, they will also be considered for active eldership here at Bethlehem. (Mainly, this means they will be eligible to help with serving communion.)

We recognize that there may be some members of our congregation who were elders at their previous church. If that is you, please reach out to Steve Worthington or Pastor Emily, so that we can bring your name before Spiritual Council for consideration to become an active elder at Bethlehem.

Tuesday Evening Bible Study

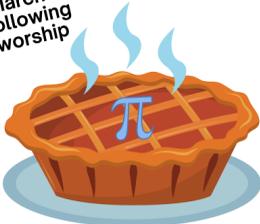
Join the evening Bible study at 6:30 pm on any or all of the first and third Tuesdays of every month. See the schedule below listing the dates and scriptures covered. Please contact Pastor Doug with any questions.

March 3	Exodus 17:1-7 Romans 5:1-11 John 4:5-42	April 7	Acts 2:14a, 22-32 I Peter 1:3-9 John 20:19-31
March 17	Ezekiel 37:1-14 Romans 8:6-11 John 11:1-45	April 21	Acts 2:42-47 I Peter 2:19-25 John 10:1-10

Pi(e) Lunch

An All-Church Event

March 8
following
worship



Be sure to save the date for our annual Pi(e) Day lunch on Sunday, March 8, immediately following worship. Along with delicious pie, vegetable and Chicken Plantation soups and sandwiches will be served. Free-will offerings will be accepted.

If you would like to donate a pie for the event, please contact Debbie Havens **prior** to the lunch at dkhavens49@gmail.com.

Directory Update

Jo McDonald
New number 812-431-1911



Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment

“And what does the Lord require of you?

But to Do Justice, Love Kindness and Walk Humbly with your God”

Micah 6:8

The season of Public Action is upon us:

March 4th at 6:30 pm is the Bethlehem UCC CAJE Network meeting with our CAJE Organizer, Kimberly Dillman. We will learn of progress on the research into the issue of Mental Healthcare in our community and the planning process for a great turnout at the Nehemiah Action. All Network members are expected; all interested folks are invited. This will be a 1.5 hour meeting.

April 13th at 6 pm is the CAJE Rally, a gathering of all the 27 congregations to get final details on the Nehemiah Action; Access to Mental Healthcare. We will gather to build enthusiasm for turning out people power, to let our elected officials know how they can serve the best interest of the people of our community.

May 11th at 6pm is the Nehemiah Action when we will gather over a thousand strong, to present our research and our solutions, to those who have the power and the responsibility to listen and act, in implementing a course of action that we will prescribe for them.

In this season it is prudent to remember the words of Jesus in Mathew 23: *“Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law; Justice and Mercy and Faithfulness.*

Participation in CAJE provides an opportunity to “Walk the Walk” in service to God’s Purpose as revealed to the Prophet Micah; a path for Loving Our Neighbor in the context of creating a community in which every person can thrive into the image of God, by Whom and in Whom, we were all created.

Wishing you all Grace, Peace and Justice.

Rev. Kimron Reising

Youth Evening of Service and Fellowship

All youth are invited to join Mrs. Margaret on Friday, March 13th from 5:30-8:00 in the Youth Room for a special evening of service and fellowship. We'll be assembling Easter baskets for the Evansville Psychiatric Children's Center, sharing God's love and bringing joy to children in need. After we finish our service project, we'll celebrate with pizza and games. Come ready to serve, have fun, and make a difference—we can't wait to see you there! Please RSVP to Margaret at margaret@bethlehemucc.org.



Financial Statements

Year-end statements were mailed in January. If you have not received yours in the mail, please contact the church office. Likewise, if you received yours and found a discrepancy, contact Patty Oglesby at patty@bethlehemucc.org.

Church Directory

Great news! A digital version of the 2026 Church Member Directory is available online by clicking [here](#). For those unable to print their own copy, a limited number of printed directories will be available in the church office.

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.



UPDATES FROM OUTREACH

Tri-State Food Bank

Thank you, Bethlehem, for donating 122 items in January! We will continue collecting canned fruit in 2026. If possible, we encourage you to look for cans with pull tabs, but any and all types of cans are welcomed. Donations may be brought to the Saturday or Sunday worship service on weekends communion is served. The next collection weekend is March 7 and 8. Your generous support helps the Tri-State Food Bank carry out its mission of feeding the hungry in our community.



One Great Hour of Sharing in March



For over 75 years, the One Great Hour of Sharing offering (OGHS) has been helping Christians bring God's hope and healing to hurting people both in the U.S. and around the world.

OGHS's mission is to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences, bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by national disaster, provide advocacy and resettlement assistance for refugees and displaced persons, and combat injustice in its many forms. OGHS provides funding and hands-on assistance in collaboration with local and international partners.

Bethlehem will collect this offering in March. Special donation envelopes will be available in the pews and at church entrances. Gifts may also be made online at bethlehemucc.org.

you are invited to a

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY WORKING LUNCH

MARCH 17 AT NOON

BUCC FELLOWSHIP HALL

RSVP TO MARGARET 859-576-1442



There may not be pots of gold, but there will be joy and fellowship. Join us as we stuff Easter eggs for our annual hunt and share a light St. Patrick's-themed lunch. It's a wonderful time to serve, connect, and prepare for this special celebration in the life of our church.

Save the Date! The Easter Egg Hunt is Easter Sunday, April 5, following worship.

Visitor of the Week Committee Update

As Chairman of the Visitor of the Week committee for the last 20 some-odd years, I want to personally thank each and everyone that has volunteered to be a part of this wonderful group.

The Visitor of the Week has played such an important role in the life of Bethlehem, and I have been blessed to be a part of a long list of people who each week either visited the sick and shut-ins or sent cards out to the Bethlehem family.

As of April 1st, this committee is being dissolved. The Spiritual and Church Councils are trying to combine committees that do the same work as Called to Care and Altar Guild.

If this is something that is important to you, and that you have time to give, please reach out to me and I will see that you are included in one of the other committees.

Again, thank you so very much for all that each one of you has done and for being so faithful to the Visitor of the Week.

Pam Small



Pickleball Doubles Tournament Benefiting United Caring Services

Saturday, April 11 at Wesselman Park

Start time to be announced

\$50 per team, 4 matches guaranteed

Teams are limited, so be watching for your opportunity to sign up!

Holy Week

**Palm Sunday Weekend, March 28, 5:30 pm
March 29, 10:15 am**

Maundy Thursday, April 2, 6:30 pm

Easter Worship, April 5, 10:15 am



Financial Recap

January General Account

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Monthly Beginning Balance	\$ 168,584.96	\$ 170,535.44
Monthly Pledge Deposits	30,921.49	22,918.77
Monthly Other Deposits	6,569.78	1,973.02
Monthly Operating Disbursements	(47,160.78)	(48,886.72)
Monthly Other Disbursements	7,824.51	4,205.00
Monthly Ending Balance	<u>\$ 166,739.96</u>	<u>\$ 150,745.51</u>

YTD General Account

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TIME AND TALENT LIVE AUCTION

Sunday, April 26

**Mark your calendar for the Outreach Team's
brand-new fundraiser for the 2026 Bucket Blitz!**

Following the Sunday worship service, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a lasagna lunch, including salad, breadsticks, and dessert. A freewill offering will be collected.

Next comes our first-ever "Time and Talent" live auction, featuring items and services donated by Bethlehem members and friends. A few of these were listed in the February STAR, and here are more:

- 8 hours of weed pulling and/or planting donated by Shirley Starks
- A white chicken lasagna dinner for 6 donated by Andrea Gander
- Pork butts, sides, bread, and dessert for 12 donated by Barry Jones
- \$100 gift certificate and a design consult from Grateful Threads, donated by Tresa Miller
- A truckload of firewood, delivered and stacked, donated by Dave Hunt and Denis Hirsch
- 100 tulip bulbs, donated and planted by Jerry Hollis

Do you have a talent or service you're willing to donate to our fundraiser?

Please contact Susan Worthington
(stevesusanworthington@gmail.com)
or Andrea Gander (agoose123@aol.com).

Check out the April STAR for a complete list of auction items,
and a link to let us know you're coming!



The Green Team encourages you to join us in a meatless meal a week during Lent. That will help with climate change. It will probably help with the grocery bill. It may even help with the waistline. Some of us started out with “Lentils for Lent.” Here’s a recipe for “Mushrooms in March.” It is Jay Picking’s favorite. Our thanks to Suzy for sharing it.

Rich Cream of Mushroom Soup

1 pound mushrooms
 4 tablespoons butter or margarine
 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 1/2 teaspoon of salt
 1 cup whipping cream
 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) ready-to-serve chicken broth
 1 tablespoon sherry, if desired
 Freshly ground pepper



Slice enough mushrooms to measure 1 cup; chop remaining mushrooms. Heat butter in 3 quart sauce pan until melted; stir in mushrooms. Cook over medium heat about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until mushrooms are golden brown. Sprinkle with flour and salt. Cook, stirring constantly until thickened. Stir in whipping cream and chicken broth gradually; heat until hot. Stir in sherry; sprinkle with pepper.

6 servings (about three-quarter cup each)

Primary source: *Betty Crocker's Old-Fashioned Cookbook*

Continued

If you are reading this before Saturday, February 28, there is still time to join us at the Tri-State Creation Cares Conference, "A Path Forward in Today's Environment." The speakers are Janet McCabe, former deputy director of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Steven Rhodes, designer and builder of green homes in Ohio. Ms. McCabe will address "Changes and Challenges"; Mr. Rhodes will help us know "How to Build Like We Care". The program is 9 AM to Noon, with the doors opening at 8:30 for registration and the exhibits. The location is the Islamic Center 4200 Grimm Road in Newburgh. The Center is a net zero facility, quite an accomplishment! Tours will be available at noon. Please come. You'll be glad you did.

LENTEN BREAKFASTS

SATURDAYS FEBRUARY 21 - MARCH 28

During Lent, the lay-led ministry of the UCC and DOC churches has conducted a weekly breakfast and worship for over 40 years. We hope you will help us continue this ministry by attending one, some, or all of the Saturdays. No need to RSVP. Breakfast is at 8:00 a.m., with the service to follow at about 8:45 a.m. The theme this year is "God Sent a Savior into the World" and the morning is open to all men and women, and all ages are encouraged to come. The charities we support are United Caring Services and Tri-State Food Bank.

March 7	Bethlehem UCC
March 14	St. Lucas, 33 W Virginia St, Evansville
March 21	St. John's East, 7000 Lincoln Ave, Evansville
March 28	St. Paul's German Township, 8701 Big Cynthiana Rd, Evansville

Bethlehem hosts the third breakfast. There will be a choir that morning, and we encourage other voices to join the approximately 10 to 12 men from the Bethlehem Chancel Choir, as the pieces we will sing will be familiar to all. Be on the lookout for more information about Bethlehem's hosting date.

TREVIA NIGHT







Work Day Challenge at Habitat for Humanity of Evansville



In Loving Memory

Alan Mason, 78, of Evansville, Indiana, passed away Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at River Pointe Health Campus.



Alan was born in New Albany, Indiana on July 27, 1947 to the late John and Mary Wilberta (Timmens) Mason. He earned his master's degree in education and devoted 35 years to Floyd Central High School as an English teacher, where he was also a swim coach and ran the after school chess club. Alan was a longtime member of St. Marks United Church of Christ in New Albany, where he served as a Church Council President, was a founding member of The Electives Class, and helped with countless projects. Alan loved his rural life in Greenville, Indiana; he and his loving wife Carolyn lived there for 40 years on 25 acres that included a rock quarry and "The Barn" he built for his workshop. After retirement, he combined his lifelong passions for woodworking and teaching by passing his skills on to helpers in his shop and volunteering with Habitat for Humanity. He ultimately incorporated his love of writing through a tutorial-style box building blog on lumberjocks.com, where he was known as BOXGUY. Later in life, as his wife's health declined, Alan set the woodworking aside and moved to Evansville, Indiana to be near his daughter and care for his wife through her journey with Parkinson's. He joined Bethlehem United Church of Christ in Evansville, where he enjoyed connections with ROMEOs and the U-10 group. He was a devoted father, husband, and grandfather. In the end, he said he had lived a full life and had no regrets.

Alan is survived by his daughter, Amanda Bultemeier (Josh) of Evansville, IN; son, Adam Mason (Julie) of Boston, MA; sister, Barbara Mason (Ron Christ) of Lawrence, KS; grandchildren, Grayson Bultemeier, Cian Cooney, Thomas Mason, and Maddox Mason.

In addition to his parents, Alan was preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, Carolyn (Geldbach) Mason and daughter, Megan Mason.

Services for Alan will be held on Friday, March 6, 2026 at 4:00 PM in New Albany, IN at St. Marks UCC and Saturday, March 7, 2026, at 2:00 PM in Evansville, IN at Bethlehem UCC. Visitation will be the hour before each service. Both service times are local.



Dear Friends at Bethlehem United Church,

Thank you so much for supporting (\$1,377.34) our New American community by contributing to the IWRC (Immigrant Welcome & Resource Center)! Whether through one-on-one case management conversations and referrals, summer camps and after-school programs, legal clinics, or the English Conversation Club, we are grateful to partner with you to make a positive difference in our community.

Support from individuals like you helps us carry our mission as a trusted partner and advocate for our immigrant neighbors in increasingly challenging times. We have served over 3,000 individuals in our community since launching the Center, through both direct services and advocacy events. From a 100% volunteer-led organization in 2024 to launching our physical office and hiring our first staff member in February of 2025, we are very proud of what's been accomplished so far thanks to you and our community partners.

As we look forward to a new year, we know we will face ongoing and emerging challenges. We look forward to partnering with you to continue making a positive impact in our community for years to come!

Ely Sena-Martin
Executive Director

Niti Moore
President, Board of Directors

Thank you so much for your support. Join us in praising the Lord for 41 new believers among Hindu Tribal people in India.

Dom and Gimma Grimm
Gather Network

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the incredible love and care you showed Ella and our family before, during, and after her recent surgery to correct scoliosis. We truly felt lifted up by your prayers, text messages, cards, and encouragement every step of the way.



Ella especially loved receiving the handmade cards and thoughtful gift baskets from her Sunday School class. Each one brought a smile to her face and reminded her how deeply she is loved by her church family.

We are overwhelmed with gratitude for your generosity and kindness. The time you graciously allowed me to step away from my responsibilities at church was a tremendous gift to our family. It gave me the freedom to focus fully on providing the care and attention Ella needed during her recovery.

Thank you for surrounding us with such faithful support. We are so blessed to be part of this church family.

With heartfelt gratitude,

The Eberhart Family

As a board member, I have been trying to contact donors to Weekday Christian Education. The Bethlehem United Church of Christ has supported our ministry, and we are just contacting our supporters to say, "Thank you!"

We are seeing nearly 900 students a week in the 23 EVSC grade schools through the 5th grade. Weekday has become some of these students' primary place of spiritual formation. We believe entire families are being affected by what these students are learning.

Thank you so much for your support. It means so much to us and to our students.

Tom Bryan, WCE Board Member



Order your Easter Lilies NOW. We have pre-ordered 30 lilies to save on our cost. First come, first serve. Order and pay online [HERE](#) or use available form at church.

The Altar Guild is taking orders for Easter lilies that will be placed on our altar on Easter Sunday, April 5th.

The lilies this year will be plants with multiple blossoms, in a foil-wrapped, six-inch pot, and will be \$13.00 per plant. (same as last year). We hope you will consider adorning our sanctuary on Easter Sunday. Copies of this form are available in various spots around the church. If you have questions, please contact Carol Kolb at carolrkolb@yahoo.com. Please don't delay filling out this form to place your order. A complete list of donors will be available at the sanctuary entrances.

Name of Donor/s (as you want it to appear on the donor list):

Wording for Easter Sunday bulletin:

("In Memory Of..." — "In Celebration Of..." — "To the Glory of God" — "In Thanksgiving For..." or Other Wording)

Number of Lilies (\$13.00 each) _____

Name, Cell #, Date, and Email

Please pay online [here](#) or make checks payable to Bethlehem UCC. Place this form and your check in an envelope, and leave in the Altar Guild mailbox outside the second-floor elevator, or place it in the offering plate and mark it ALTAR GUILD LILIES.

(Please plan to take the lily (lilies) you ordered after worship on Easter Sunday. Lilies not retrieved will be available in the church vestibule beginning Monday, April 6, for anyone who would like to plant one or more in their own yard to bloom the following spring.)



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.***