

# The Bethlehem STAR

Pride in Our Past – Faith in Our Future

May 2025

Graduation  
Sunday  
May 18

# Pastor's Perspective



I'm writing this on the day after Confirmation Sunday. I am simultaneously exhausted and energized, which is a paradox only made possible by God's gift of meaningful work. I love teaching Confirmation class and cannot put into words what an honor it was to lead this class this year.

In my message for the Confirmands Sunday, I referenced what I like to call "panic parenting." As parents notice time growing short with the kids still at home, they urgently offer life lessons ("always clean the lint trap," "a credit card isn't free money," etc).

I felt a bit of that pressure as Confirmation Sunday neared. I wanted to be sure I got in everything I wanted to tell them about what it means to join the church and what it means to follow Jesus. How ridiculous, right? First, they are just *beginning* their lives as church members and as disciples of Jesus. They have so much time left to learn. Secondly, *I myself* still don't know everything there is to know about what it means to follow Jesus! We are all on this journey together.

Still, I felt all year like we were running out of time. I shared with them two things in our final hour together before service—the last things I wanted to be sure they knew before this all became official.

First, I told them that this day may mean more to them in the future than it did in the present. So, I urged them to take a deep breath and make a mental impression of all that was happening, because some day they may wish to recall these very moments.

Second, I told them to tune their ears (and eyes and hearts!) to hear the way people were saying “we love you.” I pointed to the paraments changed to red just for this one Sunday, to the flowers on the altar in their honor, to the reception being prepped as I spoke, to the collages whose pictures were lovingly taken and curated by their parents and then arranged in our office. I told them there were many more actions taken behind the scenes (that maybe even I did not know!) to make Confirmation Sunday happen. And each one of those actions was meant to show love and support for this important step in their faith journey.

This last-minute “panic pastoring” might benefit all of us, actually. The moments we live are often even more meaningful in hindsight. Let us slow down long enough to let them impress upon our memories and our hearts. Also, the work done around the church week in and week out is a certain kind of “I love you.” It’s an “I love you” to the God revealed to us in Jesus Christ and also to the rest of this congregation. When you see that the lawn is mowed each week or the storage closet has been organized or that someone has seen to it that the organ is tuned, can you hear “I love you?” Let us all tune our ears (and eyes and hearts!) to honor one another’s offerings in this way.





### Children Calendar notes from Ms. Margaret

May 18 - Last Day of Sunday School

June 22-24 - Vacation Bible School

August 17 - Rally Day (first day of Sunday School)



### Youth Calendar notes from Ms. Margaret

May 4 - New Sunday School Unit 6th-12th

May 18 - Graduation Sunday  
(Last Day of Sunday School)

June 22-24 - Vacation Bible School  
**(Activities and Volunteer Opportunities for Youth)**

**Parents of Confirmands:** Teachers Niki Traylor and Mike Slade are excited to welcome your young adult to the YOUTH GROUP and share our fantastic youth curriculum for May. Please help us keep the momentum of Confirmation going by making Sunday School a priority for your teen!

## May Sunday School Overview Children

*Continued*

## What we're teaching!

### Pre-K - 6th Grade

**BIG PICTURE:** A 4-Week Series from Acts on The Early Church

#### SERIES OVERVIEW:

Puzzles don't come with step-by-step instructions for solving them. That's what makes them so much fun! You have to try to figure out the next best step to take. When Jesus left Earth, his followers had to wonder the same thing - "What's next?" In this 4-week series about the Early Church, kids will see how Jesus' followers solved the puzzle of what to do next and the ways we can follow in their footsteps. As kids discover what to do next, they'll learn they can **follow Jesus, pray for others, love like Jesus did, and share the good news.**



## Youth

### What we're teaching!

**7th-12<sup>th</sup> (WOHOO, including new Confirmands!)**

**INVITED:** A 4-Week series from the New Testament on Righting Wrongs

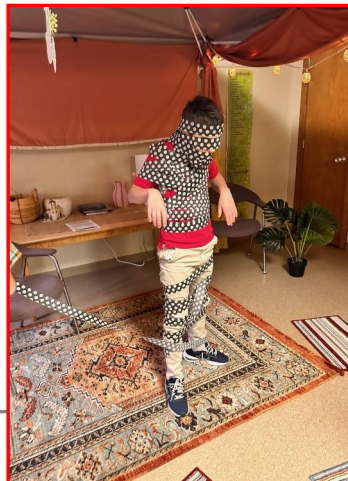
#### SERIES OVERVIEW:

Some of the most incredible pieces of art were created when the artist wondered, "What if I ... ?" Their curiosity inspired them to look at what was in front of them to imagine something entirely different. As we grow closer to God, we realize that God asks us to do something similar—to look through the hurt, pain, and evil in the world and wonder what it might look like for things to be different. In this 4-week series from the New Testament and Prophets, we'll wonder about what it might look like to be a part of making a difference as we explore questions like **what if God wants you to meet someone's needs, rest, help others heal, or make wrong things right?**





In Sunday School, our kiddos learned the parable of the Good Samaritan. They then tried their hand at “bandaging” their classmates with two minutes on the clock. The most covered patient won!





The Baptism of Ava Marie Klass  
and Hudson Ray Klass

## Graduation Sunday May 18

We will be celebrating our High School Seniors on Sunday, May 18th. CYMT (Children & Youth Ministry Team) will be hosting a breakfast for seniors and their families in the Welcoming Area from 9:00-10:00 am.

Seniors will also be recognized during worship at 10:15 and in the June STAR newsletter. Congratulations to Aubrey Inman, Audrey Kuhlenschmidt, Nathan Longwell, Emily Ozete, Emily Shreffler, Marshall Traylor, and Owen Zausch!



The 2025 UCC/DOC Habitat house is located at 652 E Louisiana St. The home owner is Deysheona and she and her daughter Kamilya are excited to move in soon. Deysheona says about Habitat, "No one has to do any of this, but they chose to do it. It means so much to me that they chose to do this for me." May 3 is the landscape day for the house and dedication will be in June or July.

## Save the date!

This year's Bethlehem Habitat BBQ Dinner and Ice Cream Social will be bigger and better and will include a Cruise In. The date for the **Social will be Sunday, July 13, from 4-7:00 pm**. Mark your calendars and plan to attend and support Habitat.



BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

&

CONGREGATIONS ACTING FOR JUSTICE EMPOWERMENT - CAJE

Grass-roots Democracy in Action through Faithful Congregations is how we bring the love of God and the way of Jesus the Christ into the decision making process for the priorities and allocation of public resources for our community.

**Please take advantage of this opportunity to participate.**

**MAY 5<sup>TH</sup>** – Nehemiah Action 6:30pm at Bosse High School,  
Washington Ave & Highway 41

This is the gathering at which our request for a sustainable funding stream for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund will be presented to our elected officials who have the capacity to allocate public funding and political support for this ACTION that We The People have determined will benefit our community.

**We need at least 1000 community members present**

This event will be well organized, well scripted, and Respectful of all participants.

Please plan to be present representing the Faith and Vision of Bethlehem United Church of Christ.



# Easter Sunday



# Confirmation Class Lock In and Confirmation Sunday





**Bill Spurling**

Warren William “Bill” Spurling, Jr., age 81, of Stuart, FL, formerly of Evansville, IN, passed away peacefully in his home with family by his side, on Wednesday, April 9, 2025.

*In  
Loving  
Memory*

Bill was born September 10, 1943, in Fort Wayne, IN, to Bonnie (Lindemuth) and Warren William Spurling, Sr. He graduated from New Haven High School in 1961 and earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting from the University of Evansville in 1969. Bill was a member of Bethlehem United Church of Christ. A natural entrepreneur, he established a car business that he operated for 20 years before establishing a successful real estate development and property management company – developing many retail, office, and apartment properties in Evansville. He was very proud of the company he established and shared a special bond with many longtime employees. Bill was a pilot and had a hangar at Evansville Regional Airport for many years. He enjoyed owning and flying World War II-era planes. He was a member of EAA, AOPA, and NATA. He was an extensive classic car collector and was a member of the Cadillac LaSalle Club. He was an avid boater and enjoyed touring the waters of South Florida and The Bahamas, and he was a member of Stuart Corinthian Yacht Club. He also enjoyed shooting and belonged to the South Florida Shooting Club.

Bill’s greatest pride, however, came from his family. He was immensely thankful and quick to brag about his children and grandchildren.

He was a down-to-earth, yet larger-than-life man who cultivated friendships with ease. His ability to connect with people from all backgrounds was an admirable quality. Bill was generous with his resources and enjoyed contributing to many worthy causes. He was an Angel Flight volunteer for many years, helping to transport patients in need of critical care via his personal airplane.

*continued*

Bill is survived by his loving wife, best friend, and partner of 18 years, Ann “Patti” (Kennedy) Spurling; daughter, Tracey Stevens (Brent); sons, Tim Spurling (Amy), Andy Spurling (Nicky), Rollin and Austin (Amelia) Reisinger; grandchildren, Nate (Bryanna), Will, and Maddie (Niko) Stevens; Caleb, Jacob, Hallie, Jackson (Theresa), Tyler, and Audrey Spurling, as well as countless friends. His presence will be greatly missed, but never forgotten.

In addition to his parents, Bill is preceded in death by his sister, Rebecca Eastman; and infant son, Toby Spurling.

Funeral Services were held at 11:00 a.m. CST, Saturday, April 19, 2025, at Bethlehem United Church of Christ, 6400 Oak Hill Road, Evansville, Indiana, with Reverend Emily Slade officiating. Burial will be in Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery immediately following the funeral service.

Friends visited from 2:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. CST, Friday, April 18, 2025, at Boone Funeral Home East Chapel and from 10:00 a.m. until service time CST, Saturday, April 19, 2025, at Bethlehem UCC.

A celebration of life will be scheduled in Stuart, FL at a date to be determined.



## **All-Church Church Workday**

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It's time for spring cleanup, and the Property Committee needs lots of helping hands of all ages for an All-Church Workday on Saturday, May 17, from 8 am to noon.

The Committee has a variety of indoor and outdoor tasks and looks forward to welcoming everyone with bagels, donuts, and coffee as early as 7:00 am.

The workdays are a fun opportunity to meet new people while deepening the meaning of caring for our creation and church campus. We are looking forward to a great turnout, as many hands make light work for all.

## CONNIE and AUGUST KOCH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

### Now Accepting Applications Application Deadline - May 31, 2025

The CONNIE and AUGUST KOCH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND is administered by Bethlehem United Church of Christ. A \$1,000 scholarship may be awarded to anyone living in Vanderburgh County, Indiana in 2025 for the 2025-2026 academic year. Preference will be given to applicants if they are members of Bethlehem and pursuing a course of instruction leading to a degree in a health or education-related field.

Detailed instructions and guidelines are available with the applications and may be obtained on the information wall outside the church office or by scanning the QR code.

Please return the completed application, **including a certified copy of your academic transcript, to the Memorial Committee mailbox (by the church elevator), no later than May 31, 2025.**

Koch Scholarship Form



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](http://bethlehem/estar) or by contacting the church office (867-2497) for a printed list.



# 10 Ways to Go Beyond Recycling

## Small Changes Can Have a Big Impact



Photo by Sandra Harris on Unsplash

1. Drink from **glass or stainless-steel containers** instead of plastic bottles.
2. Switch to **reusable bags** to keep plastic bags out of landfills.
3. Use your leftovers for another meal and **help reduce food waste**.
4. Buy **loose items in bulk** and store them in reusable/resealable containers to cut down on single-use packaging.
5. Choose **frustration-free packing and group shipments** to reduce single-use packaging.
6. Switch to **machine washable/reusable face cloths** and ditch the disposable cotton pads.
7. Choose a **mop with a removable head** that you can machine wash instead of disposable cloth pads that don't degrade.
8. Switch to **LED lightbulbs** to save energy and reduce your bill.
9. **Keep your freezer full** so it runs more efficiently.
10. Keep **reusable to-go containers** and send leftovers home with guests after your Memorial Day party.

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](http://bethlehemucc.org). To streamline the process, please sign up online if at all possible or contact Cindy Carwile at 812-430-6953 or [ckcarwile@gmail.com](mailto:ckcarwile@gmail.com). If you prefer a paper form, they are available in the vestibule (office entrance open 24/7), church office hallway, Welcoming Area, children and youth entrance, and narthex.

### Available dates in the coming months:

May 18  
June 1, 8  
July 6, 20, 27  
August 3, 17, 24, 31



## Financial Recap

### March General Account

	2025	2024
Monthly Beginning Balance	\$ 174,030.14	\$ 208,770.26
Monthly Pledge Deposits	45,247.77	41,348.18
Monthly Other Deposits	1,709.37	2,735.07
Monthly Operating Disbursements	(34,301.02)	(44,828.85)
Monthly Other Disbursements	(8,636.88)	(1,000.00)
Monthly Ending Balance	<u>\$ 178,049.38</u>	<u>\$ 207,024.66</u>

### YTD General Account

Beginning Balance	\$ 170,535.44	\$ 182,223.60
Pledge Deposits	125,292.31	106,795.27
Other Deposits	4,363.67	5,319.53
Operating Disbursements	(123,430.47)	(119,089.39)
Other Disbursements	1,288.43	31,775.65
Ending Balance	<u>\$ 178,049.38</u>	<u>\$ 207,024.66</u>



Dear Bethlehem UCC,

Thank you for your recent donation to Weekday Christian Education. This school year we have nearly 800 students enrolled. If only Evansville knew the stories of some of the students we are reaching. Because of your donation, a little girl yesterday, who doesn't have a dad, was able to know how God is her father. When she heard that, she was so excited! She started saying, "So Wait! You're my sister? You're my brother?!" It was such a sweet moment. Your gift creates hope for the students, to know they are so loved by their teachers, and our heavenly father. Thank you so much for your support of this ministry.

Many blessings,  
Chelsea Hockensmith  
Weekday Christian Education

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Dear Bethlehem Friends,

Thank you so very much for the outpouring of support when Dad (Bill Spurling) passed away. Words cannot express the gratitude for the many cards, prayers, hugs, and funeral/visitation appearances. To all those participating in, or preparing for the service: Emily, Sheri, Troy, Kristen, Patty, Pam, Diane, and Gretchen, thank you so much for making everything beautiful and seamless. A huge thanks to the Eosin class, Y2K, and the many who brought snacks to the visitation, made food, or served the luncheon after the service. What a wonderful service you provide! We are so very thankful for our Bethlehem family.

Sincerely,  
Tracey Stevens and the entire Spurling Family

Bethlehem UCC,

There are many who your generosity has blessed. Only the Lord knows the eternal impact you are making. We thank you so much.



Gather Network



## Council Highlights

1. Constitution and By-Laws continue to be updated, with plans for Council review this summer.
2. We joyfully celebrate the courage, commitment, and deep desire for spiritual growth shown by our Confirmands, who officially joined our congregation on April 27.
3. We continue to hold Council Chats on the last Sunday of each month following worship. On May 25, Debbie Kuebler will be available in the Welcoming Area to speak to anyone who might have a question or concern.



**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](mailto:church@bethlehemucc.org)

website: [bethlehemucc.org](http://bethlehemucc.org)

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#### **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.***