

The Bethlehem STAR

Pride in Our Past - Faith in Our Future

November 2024

Give Thanks

Psalm 107

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Pastor's Perspective



It's an annual tradition: "How is it already the end of October?!" "Where did the fall go?" "HOW many weeks until Advent?" This year is no exception. We've been saying this to each other in the office, marveling that so much time has passed and 2024 is now winding down.

Well, I'm going to make it worse.

Because in Sunday worship, Advent is coming early. Oh, we won't hang the greens until the usual time (November 24 after worship), but I will begin an Advent sermon series on November 17 with a message about the beginning of Matthew's Gospel.

Go ahead and grab a Bible or Google Matthew 1.1-18a. I'll wait.

Riveting, isn't it? :-P

Most of the time, we start reading "The Christmas Story" according to Matthew at verse 18. Who wants to wade through all those difficult names anyway? (Please go ahead and begin praying for our liturgist now!). **But for us to understand who Jesus is and why Jesus matters, we must understand where Jesus comes from.** Jesus does not just fall out of the sky. He comes as the Jewish Messiah to the Jewish people.

If you take some time to read through the genealogy, you'll notice there is something peculiar about Matthew's version (not present in Luke's, which you can find in Luke 3). Matthew's list includes some women—four to be exact (five, if you count Mary). Most of the genealogy is just the men who "begat" other men. But four separate times, Matthew includes women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah's wife (we know her name is Bathsheba, though curiously Matthew doesn't use it).

This Advent season, we will hear their stories and think about why Matthew felt it was important to highlight them in a genealogy where so many other women are left out. What do the women of Jesus' genealogy have to tell us about who Jesus is? Join us on Sunday mornings or online to find out.

Note that Pastor Doug will be preaching the lectionary through November and December on Saturday nights with the exceptions of November 16 (see below) and December 14, when I'll offer the Cliff Notes version on the Women of Jesus' Genealogy series.

Upcoming Sunday Sermons

November 3: Totenfest: Scars Worthy of Remembrance

November 10*: The Election is Over. We are Still Neighbors.

November 17: There are Skeletons in Even Jesus' Closet

November 24: The Righteous Prostitute Part One: Tamar

December 1: The Righteous Prostitute Part Two: Rahab

December 8: Visiting the Threshing Floor: Ruth

December 15: The Queen Who Had No Say: Bathsheba

December 22: Mary: Mother of Jesus, Mother of God

*will be preached also on Saturday night, November 16

~Pastor Emily



Sunday, November 24

The youth will serve at UCS on Sunday, November 24. We will meet at the Shelter at 3:45. After we serve together, we will have a Friendsgiving meal. Location TBD. RSVP to Margaret at margaret@bethlehemucc.org.

Sunday, December 1

The youth (6th-12th) Christmas Party will be held on Sunday, December 1, at 5:00 pm. The Traveling Artist will guide us in painting ornaments, we will have dinner, and a "favorite things" gift exchange. Please RSVP to Margaret.

Sunday, December 15

Family Night will be held on Sunday, December 15. Our theme this year will be Old Time Radio Classic: A Christmas to Remember. There are opportunities for solo performances, instrumental ensembles, speaking and non-speaking parts, and a nativity display. Youth and adult helpers are encouraged! Please contact Margaret Eberhart to sign up! More details to follow!

November Sunday School Overview

What we're teaching!

Pre-K - 6th Grade

ALONG THE WAY: A 4-Week Series from the Old Testament on Ruth

SERIES OVERVIEW: Superheroes aren't heroic only when they feel like it—they're brave each and every day. The best heroes can even inspire the people around them to be brave, faithful, and hopeful in their own lives, too. In this 4-week series, kids will learn more about what it looks like to see God as the hero



of our story as they hear the story of Ruth and Naomi. They'll see how **God gives them companions, opportunities, boldness, and hope** so they can be heroes, too!

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



November Sunday School Overview

What we're teaching!
7th-12th (not in confirmation)

ON REPEAT: A 4-Week Series from the Book of Mark on Loving Like Jesus

SERIES OVERVIEW: Have you ever found a playlist that felt like it was made exactly for you? When music connects with us, we'll want to play the songs on repeat because we never get tired of hearing them. When Jesus taught his followers what it looked like to live for God, he wanted them to get that same feeling, too. In this 4-week series from the book of Mark, we'll take a look at how we can make loving like Jesus a daily part of our lives. He shows us that **listening, loving others, caring** for their needs, and offering **encouragement** are worth repeating.

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

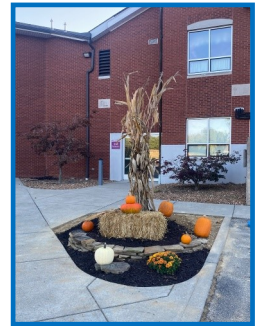
[DOWNLOAD THIS MONTH'S PARENT DEVOTIONAL](#)



Youth (and adult leaders) at Holiday World



Disaster relief supply buckets filled for Church World Service.



Resurfaced and striped the north parking lot, gutter guards installed, and decorations added.



WEB bake sale. Confirmands filled hygiene kits for CWS. Outdoor worship service.

Celebrating 25 Years!

In October, we celebrated Sheri Schenk's 25 years of music ministry at Bethlehem.



Annual Reports Committee Reports Due

Attn: Committee Heads — Reports Due
Deadline December 5

With the end of the year drawing near, it's time to submit Annual Report articles. Please take the time to review in the article the wonderful work your committee, social group, or Sunday School class has been doing. Remember, our Annual Report is our 'history in the making'.

Please help make the Annual Report process as seamless as possible by submitting your **Annual Report no later than December 5**. You can submit your report by sending me a Word document (patty@bethlehemucc.org) or by submitting it via link [here](#) any time between now and December 5th. Please don't wait until the last minute so that we can all enjoy the Christmas holiday season!

Thank you in advance!

Patty Oglesby



November 9th and 10th are the dates of our Habitat for Humanity Weekend at Bethlehem. Please bring your Habitat banks of cash to the service and funnel them into our large Habitat House. Your donations provide future homeowners with a step up in their journey. Your help is important to the progress of providing opportunities for

affordable, high-quality, energy-efficient homes.

**Chance to win a \$200
Amazon Gift Card!**



Deadline November 14

Bethlehem has been asked to participate in a survey to help better understand the ways congregations were impacted by the pandemic. Please consider using the link below to take the survey (it should take 10-15 minutes) or reach out to Pastor Emily if you'd like a paper copy. Once you've completed the survey, let Pastor Emily know, and your name will be entered into a drawing to win the \$200 Amazon Gift Card our Congregation will receive for participating in the survey.

This Attender Survey is a part of the Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations (EPIC) project and Faith Communities Today (FACT) research initiative in which the United Church of Christ participates. EPIC is a 5-year research project studying changes in the religious landscape since the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can learn more about the project by watching this two minute video: [2024 Attender Survey: Intro Video \(youtube.com\)](#)

Link to the survey: https://covidreligionstudy.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9GYI89a3NMOwuFw?congregation=12834

Directory Updates

Gale and Marlys Blalock
2730 Thornhill Dr.
Evansville, IN 47725



Ed and Linda Luker
5939 Porterfield Drive
Evansville, IN 47711

Collecting Silverware for UCS

In November, the WEB group is coordinating the collection of plastic silverware, paper towels, and dinner napkins for the United Caring Shelter. The plastic silverware can be packaged; however, forks are most needed. Place donations in the boxes located in the Welcome Area and church office vestibule (open 24/7).



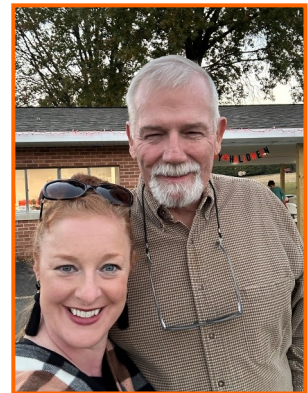
We rejoice with church family members who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this month. A full list of birthdays and anniversaries can be found on our website at bethlehem/estar or by contacting the church office (867-2497) for a printed list.

CHURCH COUNCIL

This month in Council, we finally decided how to distribute the Council portion of the Voigt Trust. We decided to follow the three themes of VBS during the sabbatical: justice, arts, and memory making.

For our justice portion, we made a donation to CASA. For arts and memory making, we are supporting several needs and projects throughout EVSC, covering everything from art supplies to school trips.

As the year is winding down, we are starting to work on next year's budget and getting ready for the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting coming up in January.



Altar Flowers

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

Remaining available 2024 date:

December 1



Financial Recap

September General Account

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Monthly Beginning Balance	\$ 158,133.53	\$ 62,862.85
Monthly Pledge Deposits	45,267.21	27,749.80
Monthly Other Deposits	1,037.34	1,567.87
Monthly Operating Disbursements	(36,752.09)	(44,766.07)
Monthly Other Disbursements	1,699.60	806.28
Transfer Funds to 3-month CD	-	100,000.00
Monthly Ending Balance	<u>\$ 169,385.59</u>	<u>\$ 148,220.73</u>

YTD General Account

Beginning Balance	\$ 182,223.60	\$ 323,301.95
Pledge Deposits	333,567.35	292,425.19
Other Deposits	10,425.66	15,902.61
Operating Disbursements	(376,330.02)	(346,483.08)
Other Disbursements	19,499.00	13,074.06
Transfer Funds to 3-month CD	-	(150,000.00)
Ending Balance	<u>\$ 169,385.59</u>	<u>\$ 148,220.73</u>

Dear Bethlehem Family,
Thank you for the beautiful flower arrangement at my sister's funeral, and for all the cards and prayers we received. Despite the horrible circumstances, we have felt such an outpouring of love from everyone around us! It is such a blessing to be surrounded by such wonderful friends.



Thank you,

Kelley Felt

Dear Friends,

Pastor Doug and I are so grateful for the many kind words, cards, and even gifts we have received as part of Pastor Appreciation month. (You all give us way too much credit, though. What really makes this church work are the investments of our laity. Still, it's always nice to be recognized, and we are touched that you all have thought of us this month.) Thank you especially for the thoughtful reception and the gift card. Barnes and Noble, here I come!

Pastor Emily

I extend my thanks to everyone who sent me a card or a note, or who shared words of appreciation during October's occasion of Pastor Appreciation. It always feels good to know that the work I am doing makes a difference to people and hopefully inspires them along their journey of faith. Thanks again,

Pastor Doug

New Windows



The hallway outside the sanctuary will be receiving an upgrade. The existing windows will be fitted with stained glass inserts. These gifts come at the direction of Diane Gaffney, Judy Koch, and Lois Schultheis from memorial gifts given in memory of their late husbands, Mel Gaffney, Gene Koch, and Bud Schultheis.



With Advent around the corner, this year's devotional is an invitation to sit with the tension of a promise not yet fulfilled, to acknowledge the cracks in our lives, and to find the courage to believe that they can still be filled with light, love, and grace.

Paper copies will be available in the church office vestibule (open 24/7), Welcoming Area, and narthex as early as Saturday, November 16. Look for an electronic link in future Emily's Editions.



Apple Pies



AS AMERICAN AS APPLE PIE !

Once again the Eosin Sunday School Class will be selling Dutch Apple Crumb Pies. These delicious pies will be available for only \$12.00, just in time for your Thanksgiving gatherings. We are taking PREPAID orders at this time. If you want to be assured of getting your Thanksgiving pies – complete the form at the bottom of this page and put it in the Eosin mailbox or leave it in the office. Please make your checks out to Eosin. You may pick up freshly made pies on Thursday, November 14 in the church kitchen between 2:00 and 5:30 P.M. or get them frozen for pickup at your convenience. We will only save pies that have been prepaid.

Only 140 of the fabulous homemade pies, filled with fresh apples, will be prepared. All you need to do is purchase a pie (or several), take home, and bake. Instructions for baking are included on the label.

The profits from this project will be used to help fund Bethlehem's Missions. **This is a win/win project – help our church's missions and impress your holiday guests with homemade pies.**

EOSIN APPLE PIE SALE

Number of Pies _____ @ \$12.00 each total cost _____

Name _____ phone number _____

Email address

Remember to pick up your fresh pies on Thursday, November 14, between 2:00 and 5:30 PM.

Checks should be made out to Eosin.



Save the Dates!
Cookie Walk
Bake & Treat Sale
December 7 & 8 following
worship services.
Lots of bakers, treat makers, and
shoppers are needed.

Get your baking sheets ready to make this the best Cookie Walk ever! We will need cookies and candy to make the Cookie Walk a success. Mark your calendars for December 7 & 8 after church. If possible, we would like the goodies by noon on Saturday, December 7. The cost will be \$6.00 a pound, and bakers will get ½ pound free.

To be a volunteer, please email the information below to Patty Geske (psgeske@yahoo.com) or Connie Crab (conniecrab2901@gmail.com) or fill out the form below and place in the Eosin mailbox by elevator, offering plate, or drop at the church office. Thanks for making this holiday season special with your cookies and/or candy.

COOKIE WALK VOLUNTEER

We welcome makers and bakers of all ages. Please volunteer to make a batch (2 - 3 dozen) of holiday treats.

NAME _____

I plan to make a batch of:

_____ Cookies _____ Candy _____ Specialty item _____

Thank you in advance!



The Altar Guild will again be selling poinsettias to decorate the altar and chancel for Christmas. The cost is **\$15.00 per plant** in a 6 1/2" pot with gold foil cover and will be available in red or white. **The deadline for ordering your plant(s) is Sunday, December 8, and there is no exception to the deadline.**

The list of donors will be available on Sunday, December 22 and on Christmas Eve. The donor list will also appear in that week's Emily's Edition. Poinsettias can be taken home following the 9:00 p.m. service on Christmas Eve. Remaining poinsettias will be used on Sunday, December 29. **Any plants left after the service on December 29 will be discarded.**

You may place your order form and check (or pay online via bethlehemucc.org) in the offering plate, in the Altar Guild box near the office by the second-floor elevator, or email the information to Cindy Carwile at ckcarwile@gmail.com with payment info. Paper copies of this form will be available in the Church Office vestibule, Welcoming Area, and narthex. We purchase our poinsettias from Steve Worthington's Kiwanis organization, who uses their monies to support various community projects throughout the year.

Name of Donor _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Donor List Wording:

Total Number of Plants ordered _____ Cash _____

Check# _____

COLOR: Red _____ White _____ No Color Preference _____

Orders must be pre-paid with checks made payable to BETHLEHEM UCC.



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.***