

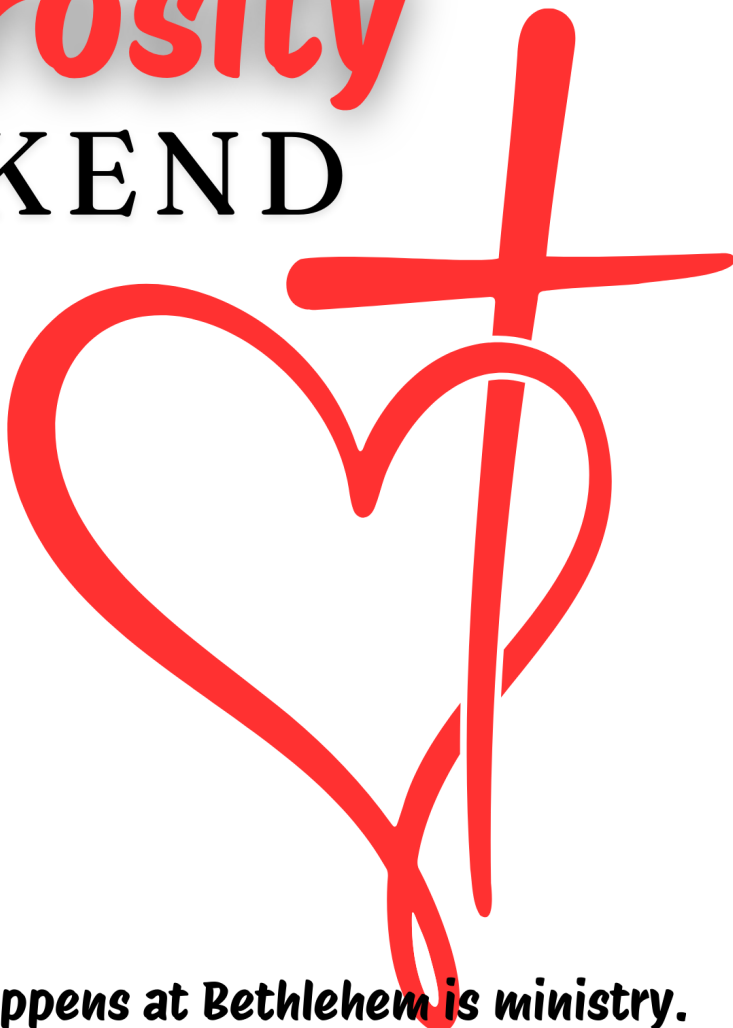


The Bethlehem STAR

Pride in Our Past – Faith in Our Future

October 2025

Generosity WEEKEND



Everything that happens at Bethlehem is ministry.

Pastor's Perspective



I don't care too much for change. I like the familiar and predictable. I like to know what to expect and what's expected of me.

Not everyone is that way. I have a friend who thrives on the new and finds change exciting. She sees it as opportunity for creativity and discovery.

To each her own, I suppose.

Except, it's not that simple. Because no matter how much I don't prefer change, it does not ask my permission to show its face. Change is part of life. Children grow, adults age, crises and blessings alike show up unexpectedly. And all we can do is roll with it.

Despite my preference for stability, my favorite season is fall, the season of change—cooler weather, turning leaves, and shorter days. But there are other things we can always count on in the fall: chili, hoodies, beautiful leaves (red, orange, yellow - so lovely!), and of course, the Bethlehem Pumpkin Patch.

Wait.

What?

I'm being told there is no more Pumpkin Patch? Nooooo!

For a variety of (good) reasons, the leadership of Bethlehem has decided the patch no longer serves the purpose it once did. The Pumpkin Patch has been my family's very favorite part of October since we came to

Bethlehem in 2013. We sure will miss it. But we can all give thanks for the ministries it has funded over the years, the way it has connected us with neighbors, and the lovely memories we have made along the way as a church family.

Churches are generally much better at adding things than letting go of them. But, as the leaves on the trees demonstrate for us this time of year, nothing is meant to last forever. And letting go can be important for overall health.

In the years ahead, we'll likely be faced with other long-standing ministries and events that may need to adapt or even go the way of the patch. When we come to those difficult decisions, we will do well to remember that we are a resurrection people. Our losses are never the last word.

Whether it's burgoo or pumpkins (or the car keys, or living alone, or sending the kids to college, or. . .) or whatever we need to let go of next, we know that each was only ever meant to last a season. But God still brings about new from the old, and we must be ready to respond.

As we celebrate and maybe even grieve the old, may we also keep our hearts and minds open to the new. Because just as fall comes around from time to time, so does spring. . .

*Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.*

Children and Youth Curriculums for October

TOP SECRET: A 5-Week Series from the Old Testament on Esther



SERIES OVERVIEW: Can you imagine if Esther and Mordecai were spies sent on a mission to infiltrate the palace and thwart Haman’s plot to harm the Jewish people? It might sound like a stretch, but God was working behind the scenes the entire time, even though God’s name is missing from the official records! In this 5-week series, kids will learn that **God gives me a mission, nothing will turn me away from God, I can stand up for God and others, I can follow God even when nobody’s watching, and God can send me to make peace.**

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

EVEN STILL: A 4-Week Series from Jeremiah & Lamentations on Hurt & Pain



SERIES OVERVIEW: When life feels dark—like nothing is going right and nothing ever will—it’s easy to feel lost and hopeless. But just like the sun, moon, and stars light up the darkest sky, God’s light shines in our lives even in the hardest moments because God’s presence carries us, no matter what we face. In this 4-week series from Jeremiah and Lamentations, we’ll explore how God meets us in our pain and brings light to guide us through. We’ll learn that, **even still, God’s promises are true, God is good, God is with us, and God gives us hope.**

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

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



Stewardship Update

Our financial gifts make ministry and mission possible at Bethlehem. In September, we heard stories on the church's impact on the lives of our members, friends, community, and beyond.

As the church's fiscal year comes to an end, one responsibility of the Finance Ministry Team and Church Council is to carefully review the current year's budget and standings, to investigate the potential needs of the church for the following year, and to set the 2026 budget prayerfully and thoughtfully.

The graphic on the following page helps us understand our expenses at Bethlehem, dividing our budget into four categories: Benevolence, Worship, Education, and Fellowship. Every dollar spent at Bethlehem is crucial to our church's mission and well-being.

In September, a stewardship letter and pledge card were mailed to the wider church family inviting you to support our mission into 2026 through pledging.

On October 4 & 5, we invite you to prayerfully consider the amount to pledge for 2026 and place the card in the offering plate during worship. Additional pledge cards are available in the Welcoming Area, narthex, office-entrance vestibule, and outside the church office.

Everything that happens at Bethlehem is ministry, and your pledge enables us to continue this mission in 2026 and for years to come.

Budget Breakdown

Do you ever wonder how your tithes and offerings are being put to use for the Bethlehem United Church of Christ congregation and the wider community? Below, we break down each pledged dollar into four categories:

Benevolence, Worship, Fellowship, and Education



BENEVOLENCE

23%

Twenty-three percent of the budget is spent on benevolence, or doing good for others. This includes money we give directly to organizations we support, like Back Bay Mission and United Caring Services. This percentage also accounts for the benevolence activities performed by Bethlehem staff members.



EDUCATION

14%

Fourteen percent of the budget funds educational activities, including Confirmation and Adult, Youth, and Children's Ministries. This funding also accounts for the time that staff spend planning and engaging in these activities. Many educational activities are provided by volunteers, which helps keep spending low in this category.

WORSHIP

53%



Fifty-three percent of the budget funds worship services and congregational care. This includes music and technology support for worship services, and it also accounts for the staff time spent preparing and participating in worship services and providing pastoral care to the congregation.



FELLOWSHIP

10%

Ten percent of the budget is used to fund fellowship opportunities for the congregation. In addition to funding church events, this category also includes activities like Campus Connection and Called to Care. Many fellowship events are planned by volunteers, which allows for spending in other areas.



BETHLEHEM
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

• STEWARDSHIP CELEBRATION •

PICNIC

IN THE

Pavilion

Sunday, October 5

Following Worship Service

The church will provide fried chicken and drinks. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Dishes may be dropped off in the kitchen before worship. Some seating will be available—lawn chairs are encouraged.

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

BY

HAIDEN HART



All-Church Workday

Join us!

It's time to fix, organize, and tidy up some things around the church. Join us on **Saturday, October 4, from 8:00 am until noon** with indoor and outdoor task options. Workdays are always a fun fellowship time and new faces are always welcomed. Remember, many hands make light work for all!



NEW MEMBER SUNDAY

On October 12, we will have a New Member Sunday at Bethlehem. If you're interested in learning more about what it means to join Bethlehem, please reach out to Pastor Emily (emily@bethlehemucc.org).

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.



Committee Information & Committee Annual Report

Now that fall is officially here, it's time to start thinking about the ***Bethlehem Annual Report!***

To prepare for the Annual Report, I will soon be emailing all Committee Heads. This will assist you in reporting on current committee members, ***future committee leadership***, and what your committee needs to share with the congregation for the year 2025. This information is essential for the **2026 Standing Committees, Elected Boards, Delegates and Representatives** section of the Annual Report. The deadline for submission of the committee information is **November 15th**. [[HERE](#)]

The **articles** for the **Annual Report** will be due on **December 5th**. If you are in doubt about whether you should submit an article, please consult the current Annual Report, or contact the church office. You can submit your report by sending me a Word document via email to patty@bethlehemucc.org, or by submitting it via link [[HERE](#)] any time between now and December 5th.

Please take time to review the wonderful work your committee, social group or Sunday School class has been doing. Remember, our Annual Report is much more than just an annual publication. It is our 'history in the making'.

Thank you in advance.

Patty Oglesby
Administrative Coordinator

Great News!



In September, we presented a check to Billy Thompson, Faith Relations Manager at Habitat for Humanity Evansville, for over \$15,000 from the Barbeque Dinner and Ice Cream Social. Thank you again to all the individuals who donated items for the silent auction and to all the volunteers, without whom the event wouldn't have been possible.



Have dinner at Chipotle on North Green River on October 18 and benefit the United Caring Services. When you mention UCS at checkout or enter this promo code in the online app:



L7CTM39, 25% of your order will go directly to UCS to help support programs and services. Have some chips and salsa and benefit a great cause!

Pastor Emily lent a helping hand to acolyte Tessa Head with the lighting of an altar candle.



WEB is having an October bake sale with great fall treats including cookies, muffins, snack mixes, and breads on October 25 & 26 after worship services. Proceeds will go toward projects in our community. Cash or check only, please.



Washington, D.C. Trip

Pastor Emily and her daughter, Natalie, had a memorable and meaningful trip to Washington, D.C. They met staffers from Senator Banks's and Representative Messmer's offices and asked them to do what they can to address climate issues including supporting federal subsidies to help those in our community who are struggling to pay high utility bills. They actually got to meet and address these issues with Senator Young himself (along with staff). They had a great trip and learned a lot about how our government works.





a note from medical professionals within our church family



Dear Members of Bethlehem UCC,

As we approach the flu season of 2025-2026, we wanted to reach out with a friendly reminder about the importance of getting your annual flu vaccination. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that the yearly flu shot is a really good way to help prevent the flu and its more serious complications.

For this upcoming season, the vaccines are trivalent, designed to protect against the most common flu strains and recommended for just about everyone 6 months of age and older, unless there's a specific medical reason not to. If you have more wisdom than 65 years, ask for the high-dose flu vaccines (like Fluzone High-Dose) or adjuvanted flu vaccines (like Fluad) because they create a stronger immune response.

You might also find it convenient that you can get both your updated flu vaccine and your COVID-19 vaccine at the same time this season. It's an easy

way to get protection against both respiratory illnesses. We encourage you to chat with your healthcare provider to figure out the best approach for you.

Let's all consider taking this opportunity to look after our health and show our care for one another. Getting vaccinated is a simple way we can contribute to the well-being and community spirit of Bethlehem UCC.

In good health and faith,

Lora Alvey Perry, MD (OB/GYN)

Kelley Felt, Doctor of Pharmacy

Carleen Grossman, BSN, RN

Sean D. Harper, MPAS, PA-C

Jean Hunt, MSN, RN, AGCNS

Kim Johann, RN

Carol Kolb, RN, BS, retired

Brian Newton, PharmD

Ryan Palmer, DO

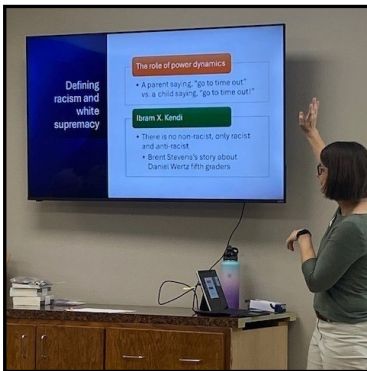
Tracy Perry, PharmD (Pharmacist)

Amy Spurling, FNP-C



In September, Fish Fry extraordinaire Glenn Heseman shared all the dinner details of the 18th annual Fish Fry.

Civil Rights Study & Trip Update



Good news! The Evansville Tri-State Association has agreed to contribute \$1,000 toward the ETSA Civil Rights Study and Trip. Also, the Indiana-Kentucky Conference awarded us one of their anti-racism grants (\$2,000) that will cover the cost of admission fees for all trip participants for the sites we will visit on our tour. Thank you also to the Bethlehem Memorial Committee that has pledged \$5,000 toward costs, which has already been put toward purchasing the two books we are using for all 42 study participants.

These gifts are helping to keep the costs down for all participants and will allow some who could not go otherwise to join us on the trip. We're so grateful for the support and excited to have so much support as we learn about this important history and the church's role in it.





All
Ages!



Please join us for a



Halloween
**FELLOWSHIP &
MOVIE NIGHT**

OCTOBER 25



5:30 PM

BUCC OUTDOOR PAVILION

Soup, hotdogs, and s'mores provided!
Pumpkin painting and games before
movie time!

**RSVP TO MARGARET
859-576-1442**

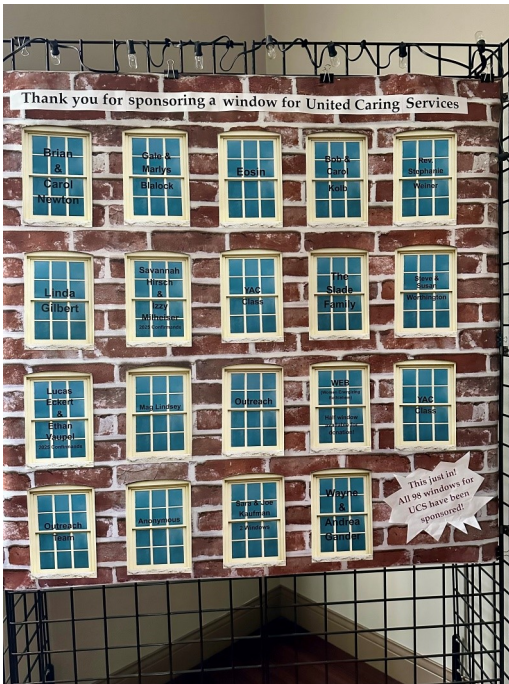




UPDATES FROM OUTREACH



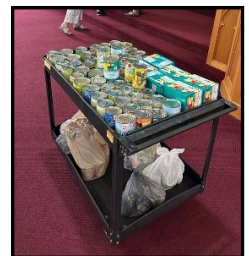
Windows for UCS



Heartfelt appreciation to all those who donated to the replacement window project at United Caring Services. Bethlehem members and groups were instrumental in helping to replace the 98 needed windows. Those who sponsored windows are: Gale & Marlys Blalock, Andrea & Wayne Gander, Linda Gilbert, Savannah Hirsch/Izzy Milheiser & Ethan Vaupel/Lucas Eckert (2 - 2025 confirmands), Sara & Joe Kaufman (2), Bob & Carol Kolb, Mag Lindsey, Brian & Carol Newton, The Slade Family, Rev. Stephanie Weiner, Steve & Susan Worthington, Anonymous, Eosin Class, Outreach Team (2), WEB (1/2), and YAC Class (2). It is hoped that the new windows will be installed by winter.

Tri-State Food Bank

Our first collection of canned fruit brought in 133 items! **Cans may be brought on communion weekends, the next being October 4 and 5.** The Food Bank is most appreciative, so please plan to pick up a few cans of fruit each time you grocery shop. Thank you for your generosity!



Bucket Blitz 2025



Bethlehem's Annual Bucket Blitz will be October 5. During the Sunday School hour, our children and youth will fill 40 five-gallon buckets with items needed to clean up after a natural disaster.

The filled buckets are taken to Indianapolis and then distributed by Church World Service to wherever they may be needed. In past years, Pumpkin Patch profits have been used to purchase the needed items. The Outreach Team is planning a new fundraising project, so stay tuned!

Neighbors in Need

This special mission offering of the United Church of Christ supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States. Two-thirds of this offering helps to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. The other third supports the Council for American Indian Ministry. This year, the Neighbors in Need offering will be collected October 11 - November 2. You may use special envelopes in the pews and at church entrances, or give online at bethlehemucc.org.

Evansville Rescue Mission

The Evansville Rescue Mission has requested that Bethlehem collect boxed cake mixes to be used as part of their 104th annual Thanksgiving food basket giveaway. All donations should be brought to the church by Sunday, November 16, and placed in either collection box located in the office entrance vestibule or the Welcoming Area.



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 at 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:

November 16, 23, 30
December 7, 14



Financial Recap

August General Account

	2025	2024
Monthly Beginning Balance	\$ 131,423.74	\$ 163,467.94
Monthly Pledge Deposits	28,563.52	44,881.14
Monthly Other Deposits	10,804.38	758.33
Monthly Operating Disbursements	(47,457.99)	(43,613.23)
Monthly Other Disbursements	(1,860.66)	(7,360.65)
Monthly Ending Balance	<u>\$ 121,472.99</u>	<u>\$ 158,133.53</u>

YTD General Account

Beginning Balance	\$ 170,535.44	\$ 182,223.60
Pledge Deposits	271,893.91	288,300.14
Other Deposits	21,908.51	9,388.32
Operating Disbursements	(349,652.23)	(339,577.93)
Other Disbursements	6,787.36	17,799.40
Ending Balance	<u>\$ 121,472.99</u>	<u>\$ 158,133.53</u>



We at United Caring Services extend our sincerest gratitude to you for your generous contribution. Every donation has a great impact on the guests that utilize our services on a daily basis.

We send our appreciation to you for helping United Caring Services continue to be a place in the community that shelters and provides services to our guests with dignity and compassion. Your commitment to our mission makes a profound difference in the lives of those we serve.

Together, we're creating a brighter future for our community!

Ryan Rigg
Executive Director

Dear Friends at Bethlehem United Church of Christ:

Thank you for your donation to the United Church of Christ of \$2,550.00 for the California Wildfires Relief Fund.

You are part of the United Church of Christ, uniting with us to give everyone a voice and working with the Holy Spirit toward a just world for all. As you stand with us, we confront the injustices of our day.

We offer extravagant welcome and radical hospitality to a world seeking lives of deeper meaning and greater value. Our churches are powerful in witness to Christ's love for all people.

continued



Our witness matters in the world, and your witness matters in this world. With your generous gift, we can do this work. If you have questions regarding your donation, please contact us at giving@ucc.org or 1-800-846-6822.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Karen Geogia Thompson
General Minister and President



Constitution and By-Laws Informational Session

On Sunday, November 9, after the 10:15 a.m. church service, we will hold an informational session about proposed changes to our Bethlehem Constitution and By-Laws in the downstairs conference room.

You may pickup a copy of these documents from the office. In the alternative, Pastor Doug Turner or Dan Carwile would be happy to answer questions.

Save the dates!

**cookie
Walk**
Bake & Treat Sale

December 13 & 14
following worship

Directory Update

New email address:
Debbie Kuebler
debkueb@gmail.com





Mark your calendars for November 9 at 2:00 pm as we celebrate the Ordination of Brian Newton, who was called on August 17 to be pastor of St. Peter's Wadesville. Congratulations, Brian, and may your ministry bear great fruit for God's Kingdom!



Thank you to this great group who quickly assembled the generosity mailing!

Motley Crew and their kids prepared and served a meal at United Caring Services.



CHURCH COUNCIL

- An Informational session will be held on November 9th for the congregation to review and ask questions about the proposed changes to the Constitution and By-Laws.
- The finance/budget committee will begin its review of the 2026 budget in October, following the deadline for pledges on October 5th. We encourage everyone to submit a pledge card to provide the committee with the necessary information on expected income to finalize our budget.
- We encourage you to bring any questions or concerns to our next Council Chat that will be held on Sunday, October 26th, in the Welcoming Area.



Apple Pies



It's Harvest time – time for picking and enjoying apples! The Eosin Sunday School Class will be selling our famous Dutch Apple Crumb Pies to benefit missions. We will be taking PREPAID orders once again this year. To be assured of getting pies, please 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. The pies will be made on Thursday, November 13th, this year. Plan to pick up your pies between 2:00 and 5:30 PM that evening.

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 13, between 2:00 and 5:30 PM.

Checks should be made out to Eosin and placed in the Eosin mailbox (2nd floor (church office floor) by the elevator)



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.***