



EMILY'S EDITION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Last weekend's excitement has not yet worn off around here. I'll let Barry and Mike share the big news (see below), but for anyone who attended Sunday's social, you have a pretty good feel that it was a smashing success! "Success" is a word you'll rarely hear me use to describe ministry. As we will see with this weekend's Scripture reading (Matthew 13.31-32, 44-52—I'll see you in both services!), the Kingdom of God does not measure "success" as the world does. Even so, Sunday's event was filled with all the best things: community, fellowship, hospitality, JOY, friendly competition, food, commitment, and sharing time, talent, and resources for a cause that will put families in safe, affordable homes. Despite my hesitation at using the word, it seems the shoe fits: what a success! Thank you to all who contributed in one way or another.

As is always the case around here, we are on to the next thing. . .or things! Monday will begin the process of putting down new flooring in the Fellowship Hall and Library. Thank you to the Eosin group and other donors who have fully funded the Fellowship Hall. (The flooring for the Library is covered by Bethlehem's contingency fund.) We are indebted to the many folks who worked to make this project happen, as well as those who did the heavy lifting to clear out these spaces.

Finally, I want to update you on some upgrades to the basement level, where our children and youth meet. This past spring, an ad hoc group of Council members plus a few others began looking into ways to tighten up security on Sunday mornings at the church. Part of this work included consulting with various security and law enforcement professionals. We were looking specifically for minor changes that could elicit big gains in security. Throughout our conversations, we were mindful of the careful balance between the safety of our church family and faithfulness to our identity and mission as a welcoming body of believers.

You may have noticed some changes already: we have greeters (Security Ushers) at the unlocked doors on Sundays and one of them remains in the narthex during worship.

Additional items that were identified, approved, and funded by the Council include: purchasing walkie-talkies for our Security Ushers to use to communicate with one another as needed, retrofitting the basement classroom doors so that teachers can quickly lock children inside, adding locks to classroom doors where there previously were none, adding blinds to the classroom doors, and adding film to the exterior doors. You can see pictures of these changes below.

The blinds allow us to comply with our Safe Church practices during normal proceedings, but also allow teachers to quickly conceal visibility to the classroom in a lock down situation. The film to the exterior prevents those outside from being able to see in, but preserves visibility to the outside.

Each of these investments is a minor change, but each also allows us to be smart about keeping our children and youth safe in the event that we need to act quickly. There are a few other items that the Council is considering yet, including exterior cameras.

Your Council continues to take seriously the work you've elected us to do and will keep you posted as any additional decisions are made. Thank you for entrusting us with this critical work.





Reed Head (hospitalized)
Carol Kolb (recovering from fall)
Brian Newton (health concerns)
Annie Blackburn (recovering at home from automobile accident)
Mike Dean
Bill Kreighbaum
Jeff Hoffman (renal cell carcinoma, friend of Tim and Amy Spurling)
Chris Dugan (serious car accident, son-in-law of Hungates)
Rose Crockett (health concerns)
Those affected by weather-related disasters
Middle East
Russia/Ukraine Conflict
Victims of gun violence
All those battling addiction and facing the daily struggle to stay clean.
Our military



Whether giving to the church's general fund or a special offering, doing so

online (24/7) is a quick and easy alternative to check-writing or having cash on hand. Simply click the button below.

Give



The centerpiece on the altar is given by Janet & Jerry Hollis in honor of their parents, Melvin and Lillian Hollis and Bill and Faye Neufelder. The vases are given by Karen and Tim Walthall in memory of Mary Jo Walthall.

Please use the buttons below to view dates and sign up for altar flowers. If you prefer a paper form, they are always available in the vestibule (office entrance open 24/7), church office hallway, Welcoming Area, children and youth entrance, and narthex.

For altar flower needs, please contact Carol Kolb at carolrkolb@yahoo.com or (812) 589-8322.

Upcoming available dates

July 19, 26

August 2, 9, 23, 30

Upcoming Available Dates

Altar Flower Sign Up

Serve 

Sunday Worship Acolyte

Sunday Worship Liturgist

Listen to Last Sunday's Message



[Listen here!](#)

Thank You!

To the Congregation of Bethlehem United Church of Christ,

Barry Jones and Mike Dean and the Habitat Committee are so grateful for your thoughtful and heartfelt support and call to volunteer at the Bethlehem Habitat Summer Social held on July 12. Your support will make a substantial difference in the lives of those we serve, and through your contributions of food, gift cards, family activities, merchandise, and hard work during the social, we were able to raise \$25,000 to donate to Habitat for Humanity. Our contribution, when added to the next house build, will allow Habitat to begin building months ahead of schedule so that the next family will take ownership of their home.

Your generosity enables us to continue our mission at Bethlehem UCC, where we believe that our ministry (and God's love) exists beyond the walls of our church. Members of all ages support and participate in a variety of local missions, allowing us to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe those who have none, and care for our neighbors in need. We fulfil these needs by volunteering our time and using our financial resources to support those who do good works. Our work with Habitat for Humanity helps further assist the Evansville community by strengthening families through homeownership.

We truly appreciate your commitment, and again, thank you for your kind support.



A local TV station stopped by on Sunday at the Summer Social. Check out their news coverage of the event!

Read and watch!



An invitation from the Green Team

We invite you to join us for a video series, “Caring for the Earth: Stories from Faith Communities” from Blessed Tomorrow: Caring for Creation Today. We’ll watch these 20 minute films and discuss them through August, taking breaks for the church retreat and Rally Day.

Classes and groups will catch up with one another at 9 AM. All are welcome to join us in the Conference Room at 9:15 to watch and discuss the films, finishing at 10:00, in time for more catching up before worship.

Remaining topics in July are:

- July 19: Called By Faith: How Will You Answer?
- July 26: Seeds of Fire: Building Resilient Communities

It’s been said that no matter what today’s headlines are, the climate is the issue. We look forward to seeing you!



Submit a cause!



Don't delay your submission!

Last month, the STAR included a piece about legacy giving at Bethlehem. This month, the Church Council offers you an opportunity to engage with one of these gifts in a way that continues the generosity!

Each year, the church receives a disbursement from the Voigt Trust that is at the discretion of the Church Council. For 2026, in light of the church’s strong financial standing, the Council decided to give the entire amount away! And we want your help!

You can submit for consideration the cause or organization that is most

meaningful to you. Forms to submit your idea will be available at the entrances to the church and should be returned to the church office by July 26.

Help us decide to whom we extend the generosity that has been extended to us!



July 26

Please mark your calendars to join us for the next Semi-Annual Congregational meeting Sunday, July 26, following worship in the sanctuary. An agenda and information will be sent to members prior to the meeting. Additional copies will be available that morning. Looking forward to a great turnout!

PENNYRILE FOREST STATE PARK

CHURCH RETREAT



REGISTRATION OPEN NOW-JUNE 30TH SPACE LIMITED

JULY 31-AUGUST 2

Cottage and lodge rooms are available for reservation. Lodge rooms are offered in either two queen beds or one king bed configuration and are priced at \$150 per night, which includes breakfast.

One- and two-bedroom cottages are also available starting at \$200 per night. These cottages are located across the lake from the main lodge. Breakfast is included; however, please note that the cottages are a short drive or a longer walk from the main lodge, where all group activities and meal services will take place.

Festivities will begin Friday evening and conclude Sunday morning with an outdoor worship service.

To reserve your spot, please call 270-797-3421 and
reference group code 2709

Contact Margaret Eberhart for further info. 859-576-1442

R.O.M.E.O. CLUB

What is the Bethlehem R.O.M.E.O. Club? It is Retired Old Men Eating Out (just men gathering) every Tuesday for food, fellowship, and faith. ROMEO Club is open to anyone no matter your age! The Club will meet again this Tuesday at Hornet's Nest. If you would like to join the group for lunch, please RSVP to Barry Jones at Twinpapa02@yahoo.com by Monday morning. New faces are always welcome!



Thank you to everyone who
has agreed to serve as ushers. Choir
members are assigned to July.



Coming Up

Saturday, July 18

5:30 – 6:30pm

Worship

Welcoming Area

Sunday, July 19

9 – 10am

Sunday School - Adults Only

10:15 – 11:15am

Worship

Sanctuary

Monday, July 20

8:30 – 10am

Conference Room Rsvd. - Worthington

5 – 6pm

Executive Committee Mtg.

Library

6 – 8pm

Church Council

Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, July 21

5 – 9pm

Civitan Picnic

Pavilion, Kitchen & Welcoming Area (as back-up)

6:30 – 7:30pm
Evening Bible Study Group
Conference Room

Saturday, July 25
5:30 – 6:30pm
Worship
Welcoming Area

Sunday, July 26
9 – 10am
Sunday School - Adults Only

10:15 – 11:15am
Worship
Sanctuary

11:30am – 12pm
Council Chat
Welcoming Area

3:30 – 5:30pm
UCS DINNER - YAC
United Caring Services



Bethlehem United Church of Christ

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bethlehemucc.org