

Bethel United Church of Christ
3029 N Green River Road
Evansville, IN 47715
812-473-0135
www.bethelucc.org

December 2021 Bethel Record/Newsletter

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Wassail, Sunday, December 19, after 10:15 a.m. worship
Christmas Eve Service, Friday, December 24, 8:00 p.m.



OUR VISION IS TO BE UNITED IN SEEKING GOD'S WILL AND SERVING ALL PEOPLE.

Because we affirm the face of God in all, we fully welcome and include people of all abilities, ages, cultures, gender identities, races, sexual orientations, and socio-economic backgrounds, into our life and ministry.

From the Pastor . . . Rev. Sam Buehrer

“A Season of Thanksgiving”

With the festival of Thanksgiving falling in the month of November, my thoughts turn to the spirit of Thanksgiving. When I talk to some of my colleagues and I hear the struggle their churches are facing as a result of the pandemic and the ongoing decline in attendance and support for ministry, my heart aches for them. As one said, given the decline of the church he is serving, it is depressing and harder to be in a spirit of Thanksgiving.

I contrast his situation to ours here at Bethel UCC. Although we have seen a decline in attendance due to the pandemic, on any given Sunday now we are seeing new faces in the pew. Often times these new faces are younger faces as well. This gives me reason to offer thanks.

We also have reason to give thanks when it comes to our preschool ministry. We reached full enrollment at least six months ahead of our projections from when we started the preschool. Not only that, due to the pandemic and the shortage of quality preschools and many preschools closing, many young parents have been forced to leave the workforce. In response, the State of Indiana has stepped up and is offering financial grants to support preschools across the state. We applied for one of those grants and received just shy of \$73,000 from the state. This is almost a quarter of our budget for the year. When we started the preschool, we budgeted for a deficit during the startup period which we figured would be about two years. Although we are in the black on a monthly basis now due to full enrollment, the start-up deficit did reach to slightly over \$63,000. We expected to absorb this loss. But now due to receiving the grant, not only has our deficit disappeared but we are also now able to consider some upgrades to some of our aging equipment in the preschool. All of this is reason to be in a spirit of thanksgiving.

Another reason for offering thanks in this season is the new Youth Choir/Musical Theater program that we are now starting. With the approval and financial support of the congregation, we recently hired Abby Thomas as the director of the program. She currently has 25 youth enrolled in a Christmas musical that is scheduled to be performed on the weekend of December 10-12. You will want to mark your calendar to attend. We are also currently in the process of purchasing the necessary computer and digital equipment to allow us to create a digital choir. If all goes well, we might be able to see some of the fruits of this labor sometime prior to Christmas.

Adding to the above, in our church service on Sunday November 21, we will have the opportunity to express our thanks to Debra Kempf, who has faithfully served as our Program Associate this past several years. Debra not only served our youth well but also stepped up and assisted us greatly with

recording and getting our worship online when we had to close due to the pandemic. We wish her the best in her next endeavor and we will miss her.

And one more reason for thanksgiving. On Monday, November 15, Bethel UCC was officially welcomed into membership with CAJE (Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment). As a member of CAJE, the justice portion of our ministry has just taken a big step forward.

Again, there is much for which to give thanks here at Bethel UCC. May God continue to bless Bethel and our ministries.

Peace, Pastor Sam



THE CHRISTMAS FUND has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. United Church of Christ congregations have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. There will be envelopes in the pews if you want to contribute to this worthy cause. Thank you.

CAJE Update: Members of the Bethel Justice Network met with more than 250 other CAJE supporters at the Community Problems Assembly on November 15. Pastor Sam addressed the assembly with a reflection about justice and Mayor Winnecke reported on positive progress related to the issues of (1) Jail Diversion and Crisis Intervention; (2) Safe Neighborhoods; and (3) the city’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Representatives voted to research three areas of community concern in the coming months with the goal of selecting one issue to pursue in 2022. The new research issues are (1) Unsafe Housing; (2) Rising Utility Costs; and (3) Predatory and Absent Landlords. The many and diverse congregations of CAJE, including Bethel, continue to work for justice for all in our community.



ANNUAL REPORTS: Please remember that reports to be included in the annual report are due in the church office by December 30 so that there is time to compile the report for the meeting in January. If you have any questions, please call 812-473-0135. Thank you.



**Everyone is invited
to enjoy the
Christmas Wassail
on Sunday, December 19
in Fellowship Hall,
immediately following the
10:15 a.m. worship service.**

Happy December Birthday to:

1	Pat Pricher	15	Layla Nance	26	Lloyd Caldemeyer
2	Emily Schultheis	16	Jack Kuykendoll		Linda Williams
3	Deborah Vannatter		Richard Neiswinger	27	Linda Hape
7	Sarah Vannatter	17	Joe Harris		Carmen Mazick
10	Paul Vannatter	18	Doylyn Neiswinger	29	Victor Luhring
11	Todd Lamkin		Emily Schuff		
14	Warren McCullough	19	Doris Glesige		
	Brett Schultheis				

Happy December Anniversary to:

3	Robin & Noel McRae	15	Makenzie & Sam Schentrup
4	Debra & Charles Marx (50)	18	Janel & Wilder Allen (50)
10	Sue & Jack Kuykendoll (61)	21	Abby & Reese Thomas
11	Terri & Brett Schultheis	27	Joan & Bruce Roth
12	Doris & Barry Burleigh	31	Susan & Greg Gordon
	Simone & Hunter Nance		



Memorials: A donation was made in memory of Jay Perigo to the General Fund from Phillip Damm.

Family and Friends Serving in the Active Military - We hold in our prayers:

* Scott and Will Kirk, Air Force, grandsons of Carmen Mazick.

BETHEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STAFF (812) 473-0135
www.bethelucc.org <https://www.facebook.com/BethelUCCEvansville/>

Rev. Sam Buehrer, Senior Pastor	sbuehrer@bethelucc.org	
Cynthia Grassman, Director of Music	cgrassman@bethelucc.org	
Cynthia Jones, Program Associate	cjones@bethelucc.org	
Abby Thomas, Youth Choir/Theater Director	athomas@bethelucc.org	
Ruth Saalweachter, Office Administrator	ruths@bethelucc.org	
Christy Woywood, Financial Secretary	cwoywood@bethelucc.org	
Denise Carter, Preschool Director	dlane@bethelucc.org	
Sue Layman, Accompanist	Holly Beswick, Custodian	Harold Golday, Custodian
Rev. Donald Bernhardt, Pastor Emeritus		

Nursing/Rehab/Retirement Home/Homebound

Atria Assisted Living 618-9685
5311 Rosebud Lane, Newburgh, IN 47630

Sandra Altheide-Room 121
Georgia McRae-Apt. 313 (812)704-0059
Barbara Schmitt

Cypress Grove 853-2993
4255 Medwell Drive, Newburgh, IN 47630

Gene DeForrest (135)

Hamilton Point 858-5300
3833 Eli Place, Newburgh, IN 47630

Darlene Neidig (801)

Heritage Center 429-0700
1201 W Buena Vista Road, Evansville, IN 47710

Victor Luhring (149)

Newburgh Healthcare
10466 Pollack Avenue, Newburgh, IN 47630

Doris Lamkin

North Park Nursing Center 425-5243
650 Fairway Drive, Evansville, IN 47710

Nancy Westbo (159)

Protestant Home 476-3360
3701 Washington Avenue, Evansville, IN 47714

Barbara Krick (Apt 15)
Warren McCullough (4-ABN)

River Pointe 475-2822
3001 Galaxy Drive, Evansville, IN 47715

Lloyd Caldemeyer (509)

Transcendent Healthcare
725 S Second Street, Boonville IN 47601

Jana Bonifer (812)937-7073

Woodlands
4088 Frame Road, Newburgh, IN 47630

Arlene Horton (214)

The deadline for the January newsletter is December 21.



Dear Bethel UCC: We are so thankful for Bethel and their wonderful volunteers! We couldn't have done Fall Family Fun Night without you! You truly bless us! ~ **Stockwell Staff & Students**

Poinsettia Order Form

You may purchase red poinsettias (in memory or honor of loved ones) to adorn the sanctuary for Christmas. Plants are \$15.00 each. Please complete the order form below and place it in the collection plate or return it to the church office by December 5, with a check payable to Bethel UCC.



I want to order _____ red poinsettias @ \$15.00 each. Total _____

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Order placed by _____



Special Christmas Music Form



If you would like to contribute for special music, please complete the form below and return it to the church office by December 12. Make checks payable to Bethel UCC and place in the collection plate or mail to the church office.

I am contributing \$ _____ for special music for the season.

In memory of _____.

In honor of _____.

Gift made by _____.

Bethel Buddies Preschool and Child Care: The Bethel Buddies classrooms are full, and our wonderful teachers are providing engaging learning experiences every day. I hope you enjoy the videos that the children and Cynthia make each month. If you miss seeing a video in the Sunday service, please check out our website to see the children singing with enthusiasm.

You may have noticed our display in the Narthex showing photos of the musical playscape equipment that we would like to add to the playground. Our director, Denise Carter, has applied for a grant to fund half of the cost of the equipment, but we are asking for donations to provide the rest of the cost. If you would like to donate, please indicate “Other funds” on your donation and write in “Preschool.” Hopefully by spring, the children will be able to make music on the playground!



Bethel's Playground Expansion

We are wanting to add some musical playground equipment to enrich the play experience for children.



Our Preschool Director, Denise Carter, has written a grant that we hope will pay half of the cost of these instruments. If you would like to contribute to this project, donate to the “Other” category and mark your donation “Preschool”.



Bethel Buddies
Preschool