

Bethel United Church of Christ  
3029 N Green River Road  
Evansville, IN 47715  
812-473-0135  
[www.bethelucc.org](http://www.bethelucc.org)

**January 2022 Bethel Record/Newsletter**

## **January 2022 Bethel Record Newsletter**

*Annual Congregational Meeting*

*Sunday, January 23*

*following 10:15 a.m. worship*



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**

One year ago when I wrote my report to summarize the year, I used the following quote from the novel, **A Tale of Two Cities**, by Charles Dickens with the phrase, “It Was the Best of Times; It Was the Worst of Times.” The year 2020 did seem like the worst of times as much of the normal ministry of the church had shut down due to the worst pandemic to hit us in over a century. I would be hard pressed to say that 2021 was the “best of times,” but compared to 2020 it very well felt like the best of times despite the pandemic still raising its ugly head as it began to cycle between times when infections increased and our local hospitals were overwhelmed to times when it seemed that we might finally be over the pandemic.

In May, we opened our church doors and returned to the sanctuary for worship. We continued to urge safe practices in an effort to keep the most vulnerable safe among us. Due to these safe practices, I am not aware that anyone caught the COVID virus through any of our ministries.

In 2020, when many institutions were shutting down various ministries, we took a leap of faith and opened up the preschool ministry that we now call Bethel Buddies Preschool. We opened our doors to children in September of 2020 and 10 months later we were fully enrolled with students and we were fully staffed. We had planned to invest tens of thousands of dollars in start-up expenses that we estimated would take several years to recoup. To our surprise, in the fall of the year the State of Indiana offered a grant to preschools like ours who worked hard to stay open during the pandemic. As a result, we received over \$72,000 to go toward our staffing expenses. This grant not only covered our startup expenses, it freed up some monies so that we could now dream of making other significant improvements in the program years ahead of schedule. I give thanks that we took that leap of faith.

As Bethel Buddies came on line and became fully operational, our leadership team shifted some of its energies to dreaming and planning for a music and theater ministry. During the pandemic, since it was not wise to sing in-person, we saw the rise of digital choirs. Believing that Bethel UCC was well situated to being a place where we could host a digital choir as well as a musical theater program, we designed a program and prepared a job description for a director of the program. By the fall of the year, we had hired Abby Thomas to be our director. In December, she directed 24 children in a Christmas musical. In December, she also began preparations to form an in-person choir as well as the beginning preparations for gathering a digital choir.

With the addition of the preschool ministry and the digital choir/musical theater ministry to the work of Bethel UCC we have grown our budget by over \$350,000 in just two years. Our operations have grown from over \$400,000 to now over \$750,000.

In addition to these two ministries, we also became members of the CAJE, Congregational Acting for Justice and Empowerment. By participating with the 25 plus congregations who form CAJE, we are able to more fully live into God's call on our congregation to be a people who work for justice in our community.

It has been quite a year. I look forward to where God is calling Bethel UCC to go in the future.

Samuel Buehrer,  
Lead Pastor

**Youth Group Resumes:** We had a great turnout on Sunday evening, December 19 for the youth group Christmas party. We enjoyed yummy leftovers from the Wassail earlier that day—a big thank you to all the amazing bakers of those delectable treats! We brainstormed on things we would like to do and study in the coming year.



Eight kids showed up altogether, with three having to leave for other activities, while five stayed to reconnect with each other, talk about the future, and do a small service project of filling treat bags for the children of Preschool, Dream Street, and those who will come to our Christmas Eve service.

**Youth Group** will be meeting on a weekly basis on Wednesday nights from 6:15-7:45 p.m., starting December 29! Any youth who cannot come at that time are welcome to contact Cynthia Jones to set up a small group of friends to meet at another time during the week.



**Early Childhood:** The children and staff of Bethel Buddies Preschool and Child Care have been busy enjoying the holiday season. Please check out the photos and videos on the Bethel Buddies page of the Bethel website to see the smiling faces and fun activities.

Cynthia continues to make a video with the children each month. The video from October was not shown during a worship service, but you can view it on the Bethel website. We are hoping that the video recorded on December 15, 2021 will be shown during a December worship service.

Bethel Buddies is on the Mission Team calendar for January. An article elsewhere in the Record explains that we have asked that donations raised by Mission for the Preschool be directed toward the cost of the musical playscape equipment. You can also see photos on the display in the Narthex. Hopefully by spring, the playground will have new musical experiences available for the children.



**Happy January Birthday to:**

3	James Jett	14	Tamara Payne	25	Steve Hape
6	Donna Mackey	16	Lucas Neidig		Harold Shafer
8	Lindsey Neidig	17	Deborah Neidig	27	Haley Schmitt
9	Mardell Puckett	18	Sarah Tabor	28	Aaron Krueger
11	Nancy Bullinger		Laurel Vaughn	30	Stetson Nance
	Ritchie Taylor	23	Jennifer Nance	31	Kalia Garvey
12	Clark Absher	24	Doris Burleigh		
	Craig Neidig		Keegan English		
	Maureen Parmar		David Willis		

**Happy January Anniversary to:**

2 Carolyn & Bob Bennett



**Congratulations** to Makenzie and Sam Schentrup on the birth of their son, Michael Wayne, born on December 19, 2021. Grandparents are Sharon and Bruce Lawson.

**We mourn the loss of** Doris Lamkin who died on December 28.

**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](http://www.bethelucc.org)    <https://www.facebook.com/BethelUCCEvansville/>

Rev. Sam Buehrer, Senior Pastor	<a href="mailto:sbuehrer@bethelucc.org">sbuehrer@bethelucc.org</a>
Cynthia Grassman, Director of Music	<a href="mailto:cgrassman@bethelucc.org">cgrassman@bethelucc.org</a>
Cynthia Jones, Program Associate	<a href="mailto:cjones@bethelucc.org">cjones@bethelucc.org</a>
Abby Thomas, Youth Choir/Theater Director	<a href="mailto:athomas@bethelucc.org">athomas@bethelucc.org</a>
Ruth Saalweachter, Office Administrator	<a href="mailto:ruths@bethelucc.org">ruths@bethelucc.org</a>
Christy Woywood, Financial Secretary	<a href="mailto:cwoywood@bethelucc.org">cwoywood@bethelucc.org</a>
Denise Carter, Preschool Director	<a href="mailto:dlane@bethelucc.org">dlane@bethelucc.org</a>
Sue Layman, Accompanist	Maddie Jones, Audio-Visual
Harold Golday, Custodian	Rev. Donald Bernhardt, Pastor Emeritus

## **Nursing/Rehab/Retirement Home/Homebound**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Transcendent Healthcare  
725 S Second Street, Boonville IN 47601

Woodlands  
4088 Frame Road, Newburgh, IN 47630

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

Gene DeForrest (135)

Darlene Neidig (801)

Victor Luhring (149)

Nancy Westbo (159)

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

Lloyd Caldemeyer (509)

Jana Bonifer (812)937-7073

Arlene Horton (214)

The deadline for the February newsletter is January 19th.

**The Mission Team's focus for January is the playground addition for our own Bethel Buddies Preschool.** Because the Preschool children love music, the Preschool has asked that Mission donations for January go toward the expense of adding the three outdoor musical instruments shown below. These are quality installations that should let children at Bethel make music for many, many years.

