

Bethel United Church of Christ
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DECEMBER 2023 Bethel Record/Newsletter

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Monthly Mission: UCC Christmas Fund

Communion Sunday → December 3rd

Winter Musical → December 7th - 10th

Wassail → December 17th

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE → December 20th

Christmas Eve Service → December 24th @ 4 PM

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY - THURSDAY 8AM - 2 PM, FRIDAY CLOSED

OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED DECEMBER 24th & 25th



**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.

MISSION FOCUS - DECEMBER 2023 UCC CHRISTMAS FUND



Rev. Don Bernhardt and I have been fortunate to serve as Annuitant Visitors for the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ, staying in touch with about 30 retired clergy or their surviving spouses in the Evansville area. I have also served on the Florida and the Indiana-Kentucky Conference staff.

In these positions, I have realized how blessed I have been to serve churches that pay a living wage. I've also been fortunate not to have a catastrophic illness or a life-changing/finance-draining situation. Not so for all my colleagues. Not so for many clergy who have served those most in need.

The Christmas Offering for Veterans of the Cross is the response of the church to clergy who have sudden unmet financial needs or who have not been fairly compensated for their ministry. This year's theme is "Grace Upon Grace. Our offering last year was \$1245. The inflation rate as of Nov. 14 was 3.2%, meaning it would take \$1284.84 to do the same good work in 2023.

God has been generous to us. The Christmas offering is our opportunity to respond to God's graciousness, with grace. What do you say we round up and set a goal for 2023 of \$1300? With gratitude and hope, Stephanie Weiner



ANNUAL REPORTS: Please remember that reports to be included in the annual report are due in the church office by December 29th 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.

Please join us for an Advent/Christmas-tide Bible Study in the Fellowship Hall, at 9 AM on these Sundays:

December 3: Don't Forget the Ancestors: Matthew 1

December 10: Guess Who's Coming! Luke 1

December 17: The New, Old Story: Luke 2:1-40

December 24 and 31: No gathering

January 7: The Good News/Bad News: Matthew 2



It will be helpful if you will read the Bible portions before you come. Please bring your ideas and questions. Want to do some background work? The First Christmas by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan is excellent and available on order for \$5, used; \$11, new.

Rev. Stephanie Weiner will present and facilitate. We hope you will join us as we prepare the way.

WASSAIL

Everyone is invited to enjoy the Christmas Wassail on Sunday, December 17 in Fellowship Hall, immediately following the 10:15 AM worship service.



FRIDAY FRIENDS

The Friday Friends meet on the first and third Friday at 11 AM every month in Fellowship Hall. We each bring our own sack lunch, and someone brings dessert for all of us. Then we play cards or dominoes or "Apples to Apples." Sometimes we just chat, solving world problems or our own! We sure would like to make more friends! Everyone is welcome! How about having lunch with us on December 1st or 15th!?

WISE GROUP

WISE group led by Letta Fraccaro meets every other Tuesday.

Group will begin at 4 pm with others joining as they can. **December Dates: 12th (No meeting on the 26th)** Call Letta at (812) 454-2158 with any questions.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE


Because Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, there will be only one service that day, December 24th, at 4 PM. This will be our annual Christmas Eve Candle-Light Service.



Bethel Buddies

Child Care & Preschool



In December: The Early Childhood Committee is helping out with **Hot Cocoa & Coffee** for our Preschool families. 

We still need people for our Special Guest Calendar and would love to add anyone who would enjoy reading, doing a presentation, or crafting with our preschoolers. We schedule our guests from 10 am to 10:30 am except on Thursdays each week, when we have music. Any other day so far is available.

★Come and see us on Sunday, December 17th as we will be performing and dressing up for a Manger Scene.★

CAJE: Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment

16 members and friends of Bethel UCC attended the recent CAJE Community Problems Assembly. We heard stirring reports of the difference CAJE has made for affordable housing (10.5 million for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund), energy for all, safe neighborhoods/gun violence intervention (reducing city gun deaths from 21 to 8) during the past year), the Diversion Center (it's open after 7 years of planning), and the Neurodevelopment Center for Children.

After a close vote to decide the one new issue to take on, CAJE will concentrate on educational services. The study group is being formed. Interested? Let Rev. Buehrer or Barry Burleigh know. They were elected to the Board; Pastor Sam as co-chair and Barry Burleigh as member-at-large. Hurray! Want to join the 33 members and friends who are part of the Bethel Justice Network? Let Stephanie Weiner or Barry Burleigh know at stephanieweiner4@gmail.com.



Congratulations to our own Rev. Sam Buehrer and Barry Burleigh for being elected to the CAJE Executive Committee for 2024

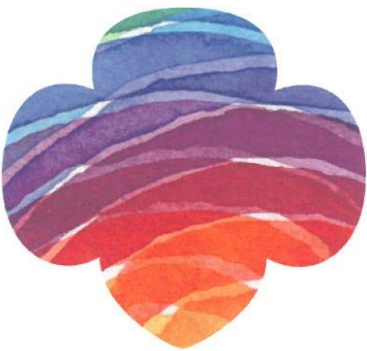
A Specific Way to Respond to the Hamas/Israeli Conflict



Feel helpless and hopeless about the devastation in the Middle East? Here is something that we can do. How about attending Lennon Night: on Dec. 8 from 6 to 9 PM at the Bokeh Lounge, 1007 Parrett St. This annual event is sponsored by Veterans for Peace. VFP uses the funds raised to repair damages caused by war. This year the funds will go to "Combatants for Peace" a group of combined Israeli and Palestinian military vets jointly promoting a peaceful resolution to the situation between their countries. It is an evening of fun live music and poetry in memory of John Lennon who penned the iconic peace anthem "imagine." The suggested donation is \$10 per person.

SISTER JOANNA'S TABLE

Bethel folks contributed the pies and served at the Thanksgiving meal for Sister Joanna's Table, hosted by St. Paul's Episcopal. We joined people from Bethlehem, Immanuel (Ford Road), and St. Paul's (German Township). Many thanks to Gene Well, our liaison to the UCC churches of the Evansville Association that serves every other month.



Thank You

Thank you for letting us use your facilities for our Girl Scout troop meetings! The safe and consistent space makes the experience even better. Thank you for all you do to allow girls the opportunity to make the world a better place.

We appreciate you!

Sincerely,
megan stillwell

UCC/DOC Team,

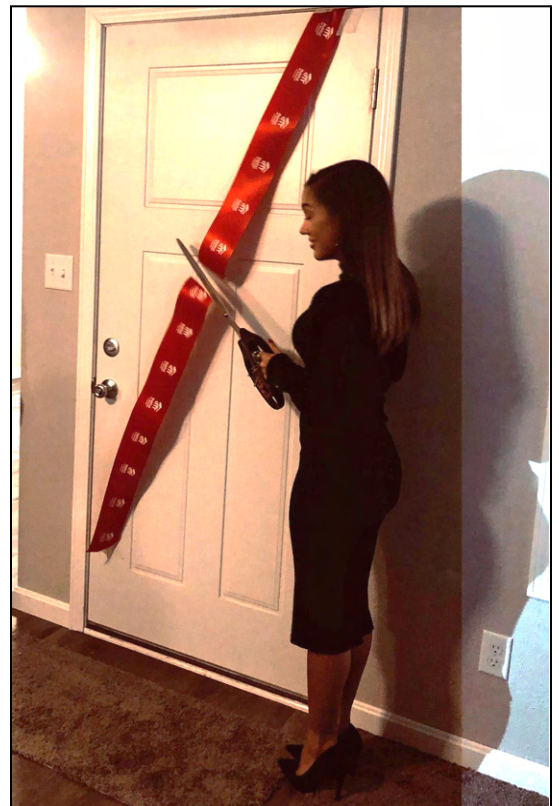
Thank you so much for all that you do! We had a wonderful time celebrating Cameron and her family at the dedication on Tuesday! It was a beautiful event and a testament to Cameron's hard work, as well as each of yours! Thank you for the gift of your time, talent, and treasure. Because of you and your congregations, a wonderful family's journey has forever been changed for the better. It is an honor and privilege to be able to work alongside you.

In other great news, we have reached our goal and the next UCC/DOC house is fully funded! I will let you know when a new family has been paired with UCC/DOC and when volunteer dates will begin.

On to the next one!!!



Billy Thompson
Faith Relations Manager
Habitat for Humanity of Evansville
Cell: (812) 598-2087
Office: (812) 423-5623 ext. 227
560 E. Diamond Ave., Evansville 47711





Happy December Anniversaries to:

12	Barry & Dorris Burleigh	21	Reese & Abby Thomas
15	Sam & Mackenzie Schentrup	27	Bruce & Joan Roth
18	Wilder & Janel Allen		

Happy December Birthdays to:

1	Pat Pricher	18	Emily Webster	27	Linda Hape
3	Deb Vannatter	19	Doris Glesige	27	Carmen Mazick
16	Jack Kuykendoll	19	Michael Schentrup	29	Victor Luhring
18	Doylyn Neiswinger	26	Linda Williams		

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

* Jacob Swanson, Army, grandson of Ruth Willis.

Memorials: A donation was made in memory of Cameron White from Stephanie Weiner

Notes: Congratulations to Luke and Ashley Lawson on their marriage.

Nursing~Rehab~Retirement Home~Homebound

Celebration Villas of Newburgh
(Previously Atria Assisted Living) 618-9685
5311 Rosebud Ln., Newburgh IN 47630

Georgia McRae (205)
(812)704-0059

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

Victor Luhring (149)

Holiday Village
1200 W Buena Vista Rd., Evansville, IN 47710

Harriet Anderson (103)

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

Nancy Westbo (159)

Primrose Retirement Community
9800 Lincoln Ave., Newburgh, IN 47630

Letta Fraccaro (102)
Linda Garrett (117)
Marianna & Jim Vogel (226)

Protestant Home 476-3360
3701 Washington Ave., Evansville, IN 47714

Jeanette Plane- South

River Pointe 475-2822
3001 Galaxy Dr., Evansville, IN 47715

Sandra Altheide (316)
Ritchie Taylor (528)

Cathedral Health Care
520 West 9th St, Jasper IN, 47546

Jana Bonifer

Brickyard Healthcare/Woodlands Care Center
4088 Frame Road, Newburgh IN, 47630

Doris Rohlfer (108)

Walnut Creek
525 Bente West Ct., Evansville IN, 47715

Nita Voorhees (?)

**“I No Longer Pray for Peace”
by Ann Weems**

On the edge of war, one foot already in,

I no longer pray for peace:
I pray for miracles.

I pray that stone hearts will turn
to tenderheartedness,
and evil intentions will turn
to mercifulness,
and all the soldiers already deployed
will be snatched out of harm's way,
and the whole world will be
astounded onto its knees.

I pray that all the “God talk”
will take bones,
and stand up and shed
its cloak of faithlessness,
and walk again in its powerful truth.

I pray that the whole world might
sit down together and share
its bread and its wine.

Some say there is no hope,
but then I've always applauded the holy fools
who never seem to give up on
the scandalousness of our faith:
that we are loved by God...
that we can truly love one another.

I no longer pray for peace:
I pray for miracles.

*From Advent's Alleluia to Easter's Morning Light: Poetry for Worship, Study, and
Devotion. Ann Weems.*