



The Bethlehem STAR

Pride in Our Past – Faith in Our Future

September 2026



Annual FISH FRY

SEPTEMBER 26
4-7:00 PM

Pastor's Perspective



Rally Day is one of my favorite days of the whole year. As I walked around the Fellowship Hall during breakfast, I was delighted to catch up with so many folks, hear about your summer, and ask the children about the new school year. It brought me indescribable joy. Many have commented on how striking it was to see all the children up on the chancel for the student blessing.

Nobody likes to be told “You don’t know how good you have it.” It suggests we should feel guilty for our blessings or that we aren’t performing gratitude up to someone’s arbitrary standards. I know how obnoxious it is to have someone point this out, but. . .do you know how good we have it here at Bethlehem?



We have 53 active children and youth in our church. I know, because I counted them from our database. A critical mass of young people like this rarely—if ever—exists in a church like ours (mainline denomination, traditional building and traditional worship, theologically diverse). It is a blessing to these kids that they have peers as companions on their faith journeys. But it is also a blessing for our entire church family.

Children and youth bring contagious vitality to a congregation, granting energy, excitement, delight, and hope for the future. Their presence gives us a sense of purpose, that there are those who come behind us who depend on us for encouragement, guidance, and an example of what it means to be people of faith.

Now, you might be reading this thinking I’m asking you to be grateful for our youth. Well, yes, let’s do that. **But I am really writing this to say THANK YOU to our congregation.** Because these children and their families

call Bethlehem home in part because you have been intentional about creating space for them and investing in them.

You invest financially through providing paid staff and resources like curriculum, supplies, and lots and lots of pizza and taco bars. But even more importantly, you invest yourselves. You do not expect that the children will be whisked away to another part of the building for “their” programs. You are so generous in allowing them to be full participants in the life and fellowship of this church.

You go out of your way to speak to the children, you remember their names, you ask them about school, you thank them for being a reader, or tell them they did a nice job with their solo. You smile (rather than glare disapprovingly) at the fidgety kid in the pew behind you. You help the acolytes get where they’re supposed to be with their candles lit. All of this matters. Thank you. Sincerely.

I have said over and over again that if I weren’t Bethlehem’s pastor, this would still be the church where I’d want to be raising my children. I guess I am asking myself: do I know how good I have it?

Parents, I’m inviting you to join me in this same question. Do we really **see** what we have going on here at Bethlehem? Do we really **see** how much effort goes in to connecting with our children?



Our Sunday School program is led by dedicated teachers who are serious about teaching the stories of our faith and about getting to know the children as individuals. During worship, Margaret and I preview the service’s theme during the Children’s Chats to help kids follow along in the service. We also work to identify opportunities for kids to help lead. For those who need something to occupy busy hands, we have a cart full of activities and fidgets to borrow during the service. *continued*

We are doing all that we can to make Bethlehem a place where children feel welcomed and engaged.

Like I said, I find Rally Day so exciting, but as the years have passed, it also comes with the sense that I need to manage my own expectations. Because I know that high of Rally Day frequently gives way to the busyness and demands of the school year routine. And on Rally Day, you glimpse the potential—what if we had this kind of attendance (and excitement!) every week.



I know how much Bethlehem has to offer to our children and youth, but we can't offer that if the kids aren't here. Both Sunday School *and* worship with the wider church family are important to the life of this church and the faith development of children. What is more, we want you here. We need you here.

So, to be obnoxious one more time: on those Sundays when it's a challenge to get everyone out of bed or when you are tempted to cut out after Sunday School, because you know how restless your kids will be during worship, **take a moment to remember just how good we have it.** It's worth the effort to get your family here where they are welcomed, loved, and supported, and where together we are learning more about what it means to be followers of Jesus.

Thank you, God, for this church family! We are so lucky to be part of something so good.

SUNDAY SCHOOL RALLY DAY





YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

LEARNING, SERVICE, & FELLOWSHIP

EVERY SUNDAY

Join Mr. Mike and Mrs. Niki in the youth room for Sunday School at 9 am. It was so fun to see such a large group for our first week back! Keep up the good work and don't miss the opportunity to grow in faith, build relationships, and have fun with your church family! You will be working in class to earn attendance and participation "stars" to win some fun prizes!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6



Join Mrs. Margaret in the youth room to craft some spirit items for the Bosse Football Team and make personal pizzas. We will meet at 4 pm and should finish up around 7. A few adult volunteers are needed to help with this event! Please contact Margaret to volunteer!



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1

The youth will be serving dinner to the Bosse Football Team at Bosse (Time to be Announced). We will get Chick-fil-A for dinner but will need youth to help set up, serve, clean up, and hand out the goodies we put together at our craft night.

CHILDREN'S NEWS

Children's Sunday School classes meet each week at 9:00 a.m. Teachers are establishing classroom routines, setting goals, and building meaningful relationships with their students. Together, students are learning what it means to be the church—not just to attend, but to participate, serve, and find ways to make a difference in the life of our church and community.

The Journey Begins Confirmation 2027





Drumroll please: The August Metal Recycling Day resulted in \$746.50 for the Green Team to use for Bethlehem. It was a Metallica, make that magical, and long day. Many thanks to Manfred Stahl, our recycler extraordinaire, Rick Klass, Steve

Worthington, and members of the Green Team who showed up, and of course, to you and your friends and neighbors, who care enough about the earth to make this happen.



An invitation: There is a lot going on at the local, state, and federal level that has, is, and will affect the health of the earth. We, on the Green Team, often receive word of a seminar, hearing, and encouragement events. Our environment is a non-partisan issue. If you'd like to receive notice of such events, please let us know via stephanieweiner4@gmail.com.

A tip: It started as a conversation about laundry sheets that don't have parabens, phosphates, added dyes, or chlorine and are just as effective as other laundry detergents. Plus, they keep 700 million plastic jugs out of the landfill every year. And, they reduce CO2 emissions by 94% because they use 94% less truck fuel. Not to mention, they are lighter, easier to carry, and easier on the back!

Just as one of us was feeling a bit self-righteous for using them, we learned that Jenny Reising makes her own laundry detergent! Here's the recipe:

Homemade Laundry Detergent

This detergent is perfect for use in the new high-efficiency washers as well as traditional washers. You may notice the need to either reduce or eliminate the amount of laundry softener you use. Preparation takes only a few minutes—I typically can make a batch and have it in bottles within ½ hour. Also, I've noticed that the consistency of the liquid detergent is not consistent-sometimes it is runny and almost clear (or slightly yellow) and sometimes it is gloppy with lumps of whitish stuff; my experience is that it doesn't matter because it washes the clothes just fine either way. I usually shake a newly prepared detergent bottle really well a day or so before I begin using it and then leave it at that. I saved up a few gallon-sized detergent bottles, and I rinse them out and reuse

continued

them over and over to hold the detergent I make. Note that the detergent does not make suds. I have never made the powdered detergent. My personal preference is for liquid.

Liquid Laundry Detergent:

- 3 pints hot water
- 1/3 bar Fels Naptha Laundry Bar Soap, grated (available at Schnucks)
- ½ cup Arm & Hammer Super Washing Soda (Rural King)
- ½ cup 20 Mule Team Borax (Rural King)
- 1-quart hot water
- 2-gallon bucket



Mix grated soap in a large saucepan with 3 pints hot water and heat on the stove over low heat until dissolved. Do not allow to boil. Stir in Super Washing Soda and 20 Mule Team Borax. Stir until thickened. Remove from heat. Add 1-quart hot water to 2-gallon bucket. Add soap mixture and mix well. Fill bucket with more hot water, leaving a few inches at the top and mix well. Set aside for 24 hours or until mixture thickens (I go ahead and put the mixture in my detergent bottles and leave them uncovered for 24 hours while they cool and thicken). Use ½ cup per load of laundry... You can double the recipe if you use a 5-gallon bucket.

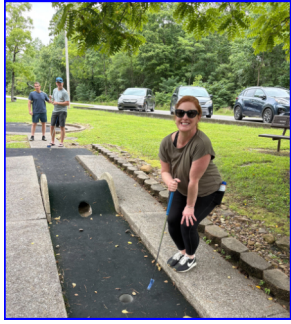
Powdered Laundry Detergent:

- 1 cup grated Fels Naptha Laundry Bar Soap
- ½ cup Arm & Hammer Super Washing Soda
- ½ cup 20 Mule Team Borax

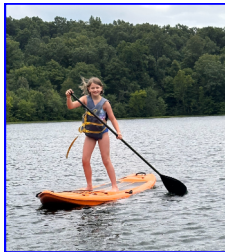
Mix and store in airtight container or bag. For light loads use 2 tablespoons. For heavy loads, use 3 tablespoons. To make a large batch, grate six bars of Fels Naptha Soap and then add 3 cups of Super Washing Soda and 3 cups 20 Mule Team Borax. Mix well and store in a covered container.

If you can't find the ingredients at your store, you can order all of them at www.soapsgonebuy.com or call 888-858-SOAP.

Good luck with the soap. I've had good luck using it and have saved a lot of money over the years, not to mention it being better for the environment and our septic tank.



PENNYRILE FOREST STATE PARK CHURCH RETREAT





Join Faith in Place for the 2026 Annual Environment & Spirituality Summit

About the Summit:

The 2026 Annual Environment & Spirituality Summit explores the theme Grounded Resistance, with four sessions focused on how we engage the world from a place of deep grounding, collective support, and sustained resistance. Find our entire agenda on aes-summit.org.

Featuring Keynote Speaker:

Bill McKibben

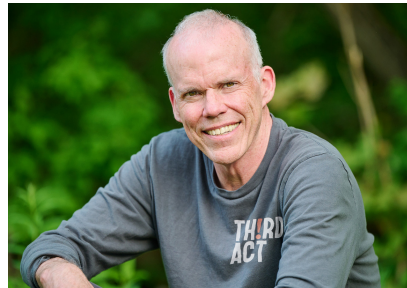
Bill McKibben is an author, educator, and environmentalist, who helped found 350.org, the first global grassroots climate campaign, and who has recently helped found [Third Act](https://thirdact.org), to build a progressive organizing movement for people over the age of 60.

He will deliver a keynote drawing on decades of organizing, writing, and movement-building to ground the Summit's theme of Grounded Resistance in the moral and spiritual stakes of the climate crisis. Houses of Worship and communities will be invited to harness the power of organized people of faith to confront the fossil fuel industry and advance climate and environmental justice.



*Scan the QR Code or
visit our website to register for the
watch party or to view at home.*

aes-summit.org



Join us for a Watch Party!

A Watch Party is a community gathering where local attendees come together to watch and discuss the Summit's keynote address featuring Bill McKibben — live via Zoom.

Date & Time

29 September, 2026

5:30 PM (CT)/6:30 PM (ET)

Location

Sts. Mary and John Parish

613 Cherry St, Evansville, IN 47713, USA

Faith in Place

www.faithinplace.org

Bethlehem STAR 11



UPDATES FROM OUTREACH



The next collection weekend for the Tri-State Food Bank is Saturday, September 12, and Sunday, September 13. In August, 53 items were donated. We hope you'll pick up some cans of fruit (with pull-tabs, if possible) and bring them to worship on the 12th or 13th. The cans will be displayed by the altar as a tangible symbol of feeding others as we are spiritually fed at the communion table. Upcoming collection dates for the rest of 2026:

October 3 and 4

November 14 and 15

December 5 and 6

Bucket Blitz



On Sunday, October 4, the Fellowship Hall will be filled with 5-gallon buckets, children and their Sunday School teachers, and items needed for cleaning up and recovering from various kinds of natural disasters. You are invited to stop in during the Sunday School hour to watch our annual Bucket Blitz!

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation at the Outreach Team's Time and Talent Auction earlier this year, the Bucket Blitz is completely funded! Our children will be filling 40 buckets with emergency clean-up supplies for Church World Service, which will be transported to Indianapolis, and subsequently sent wherever they may be needed.

continued



Bethlehem also serves as a Bucket Depot, meaning that other churches may drop off buckets and various kinds of kits (hygiene items, school supplies, etc.) to our Burgoo Building.

The Bucket Blitz is one of Outreach's major projects seeking to fulfill our mission of "encouraging the congregation to carry out an active program of service, mission, and benevolence".



CHURCH COUNCIL

Greetings,

As we near the fall season, Bethlehem continues to stay very busy with moving parts! Thank you for showing your support during our stewardship season. If you missed some of the fantastic videos, they are still on our YouTube channel--Bethlehem UCC Evansville.

At the August Council meeting, we approved the allocation of monies from the Voigt Trust as well as funding for technology upgrades. We are so fortunate to have skilled and knowledgeable congregants willing to help us know how, why, when, and what to upgrade. These upgrades will include modernizing our networking Wi-Fi, security, and file storage to be more functional and more importantly, keep our information safer.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, please reach out to me in a text or email.

Blessings,

Amy Spurling
Church Council President

Tuesday Evening Bible Study

Join the evening Bible study at 6:30 pm anytime on the first and third Tuesdays of every month. See the schedule below listing the dates and scriptures covered. Please contact Pastor Doug with any questions.

September 1 *Exodus 12:1-14
 Romans 13:8-14
 Matthew 18:15-20

September 15 *Exodus 16:2-15
 Philippians 1:21-30
 *Matthew 20:1-16

*Denotes scripture covered by
Pastor Emily for the upcoming
weekend.

Altar Flowers

Donate Sunday morning altar flowers to celebrate a special occasion or remember a loved one. Prices are \$40 for two vases and/or \$35 for one centerpiece. To view available dates and sign up, see our website bethlehemucc.org. Paper forms are always available in the vestibule (office entrance open 24/7), church office hallway, Welcoming Area, children and youth entrance, and narthex.



Upcoming available dates: September 6 & 20

If you have any altar flower questions, please contact Carol Kolb or
carolrkolb@yahoo.com.

**CARRYOUT
ONLY**



Annual Fish Fry September 26



4-7:00 pm



On Saturday, September 26, Bethlehem will host its 19th annual Fish Fry from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. This year's event will again be carryout only; however, some outdoor seating will be available under the pavilion. Please feel free to bring a lawn chair if you are able.

Your \$15 ticket includes: 3 pieces of tasty fish, baked beans, potato salad, coleslaw, and a fudge brownie with caramel sauce.

Please consider purchasing a couple of extra dinners to share with friends and family. As always, all proceeds of the Fish Fry will go towards the Tri-State Food Bank and Gather Network.



No advanced ticket sales. If you have any questions about the Fish Fry, please contact Glenn Heseman (812-453-2135) or the church office at church@bethlehemucc.org.

Directory Updates



Please contact the church office for updates.



Thank You!

We thank you so much for your most recent donation to Weekday Christian Education. What a tremendous blessing and privilege it is to share the Gospel with so many students in Evansville. Reading from the Bible, memorizing Bible verses, singing worship music, and praying for one another are all part of our class time. May each student know of the great love that Jesus has for them.

Thank you and may God bless you!

Sincerely,

Lesley King, WCE Administrative Assistant

Greetings,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I'll like to thank your members for their support of Back Bay Mission this past year. Your generosity helps ensure that our neighbors on the Mississippi Gulf Coast have access to vital services and resources, as well as opportunities for stability and growth.

We are truly grateful for your partnership in His work and for the difference you make in improving so many lives.

Sincerely,

Shelia Schuette, President



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.***