



EMILY'S EDITION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Amy Spurling (2026 Church Council President) asked me to share this devotion I wrote for our September Church Council meeting. Though it was written for Council, it can apply to any meeting here at church, but also simply to the way we relate to one another within this congregation. It's a good reminder that being Christian isn't only about the work we do "out there," but also the way we handle matters within this unique community Christ has called us into.

Church Council Devotion, September 2026

"Ecclesial" is an adjective that means "relating to a church, its organization, functions, or teachings." You may remember Brian Newton's "Ecclesiastical Council." The Greek root word, *ekklesia*, means literally, "called out." We are the Church—those who are called out from the world and into God's Kingdom. We may be called out from the world, but we still have to spend a lot of time out there in it!

Those who attend both Sunday School and worship spend 1% of their week in church. If you serve on Church Council, maybe that bumps you up to closer to 2%. Regardless, it's not much time. So, when we gather as the Church, it can be difficult to pivot our mindsets and our approach to decision making. It can be easy to continue operating under the values of the world in which we live the other 99% of our week.

"Out there," our lives are governed by optimization, efficiency, and profits. But the church's values are different. Our work is slow and often wildly inefficient. We value the search for a single lost sheep—who knows how long or if we'll even find it? We wait, scanning the horizon, for the Prodigal who just might return home today. We listen—really listen—to the children, because Jesus told us that to become like one of them is the key to entering the Kingdom of Heaven. We feed the homeless again and again and again, even

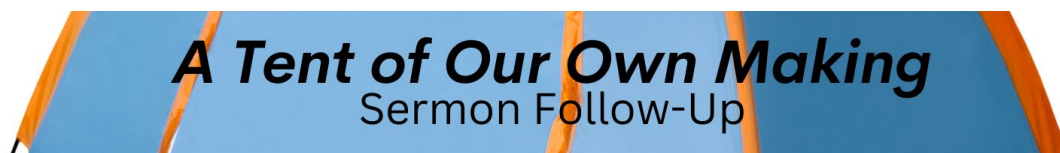
though the one who eagerly takes the lunch tray today will be there and hungry again tomorrow. These are the things that matter to God—no matter how much time or how many resources they take.

When we gather as a Church Council, we may be tempted to treat our agenda like a punch list to get through (we're all eager to get home for supper, after all). But to be faithful to the Kingdom to which we've been "called in," means to slow down, ask questions, and discern faithful solutions. It means discussing and thinking through details until everyone understands and is heard. Called-out-ones are not about optimization. We are not about knocking stuff off the list so we can move on to the next task. We are about community and discipleship. We are about formation and faithfulness.

Now, disciples of Jesus are meant to be living 100% of our lives according to this alternate way. I don't know how well that's going for you, and I'm not sure I want to confess how well it's going for me. But, if we can't get it right during this 1-2% of our weeks when we are among other "called out ones," we're never going to be able to carry it out into the world. . . into a world that desperately needs these counter-values.

At the very least, let's start here around this table. Let us be those who ask questions, who think slowly, who take the time to listen thoughtfully to the words of others.

Pastor Doug will lead both services this week, looking at the Parable of the Banquet in Matthew 22.1-14. We will not have Sunday School for children, confirmands, or youth this Sunday because of Fall Break. All classes will meet again on the 18th.



A Tent of Our Own Making Sermon Follow-Up

You might be interested in this article from the United Church of Christ General Minister and President, Rev. Dr. Georgia Karen Thompson, that elaborates on some of the themes mentioned in my message from this past Sunday: [No Judgment Zone - United Church of Christ](#)

In my message Sunday morning, I shared some helpful slides with statistics. Be sure to take a look at them here!

Watch it here!

When I return from some time away for Fall Break, I'll look forward to sharing more about "A Tent of Our Own Making." We'll look at the role a specific tent—the Tabernacle—played in Israel's history, and we'll think about what that form of shelter reveals about the God who still calls us into service these thousands of years later.



Avery Jordan (Currently being treated at Crosspoint, grandson of Leigh Ann Mindrup and Kim Owen)

Jason, Danielle, Ted, and Heidi Viers (Ted is facing surgery, friends of Harmony Gratzner)

Jerry Points (recovering from surgery, Erin Longwell's stepfather)

Suzy Picking (sciatica pain)

Brian Newton (recovering from surgery)

Cathy Gumpert (several injuries due to fall, sister of Sally Vogl-Bauer)

Mike Dean (chemo treatments)

Bill Kreighbaum

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

Students and Teachers



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



ALTAR FLOWERS

The arrangement on the altar is provided by the Altar Guild in celebration of the fall harvest

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

Altar Flower Sign Up

Serve 

Sunday Worship Acolyte

Sunday Worship Liturgist

CAJE UPDATE

CONGREGATIONS ACTING FOR JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

The work of Justice continues, we now move into the Discernment process for sharing Justice issues that you have identified or experienced in the Evansville Community and sharing them at one of our listening sessions.



The last scheduled listening session is **Sunday October 18th, 1pm – 2:30pm at the BUCC Conference Room**. Please [make a reservation with Rev. Kimron Reising at reisingsun@gmail.com](mailto:reisingsun@gmail.com)

The Justice issues shared will be gathered from these sessions occurring across all of our CAJE sister congregations during October. The results of these sessions will be collated and refined to two or three issues which will be presented to the CAJE Community at the **Community Problem Assembly on November 9th. Let's do Justice together!**

SAFETY AND SECURITY TEAM

As you are aware, early this year there were a couple of incidents at our church that led us to form an ad hoc Safety and Security Team. This team, along with local law enforcement, identified crucial safety needs which have now generated numerous projects. Some we have implemented; some we are in the process of implementing, and a few others we are still working toward. We thank the Safety and Security Team for addressing these issues. Moving forward, concerns related to safety and security will come under the umbrella of the Property Committee. We will continue to implement these projects and evaluate any further needs. If you have any questions, concerns, or projects that you feel need evaluated, please contact Dave Hunt, Property Committee chairperson.

• JOIN US FOR A •

PICNIC

IN THE

Pavilion

Sunday, October 18

Following Worship Service

The church will provide fried chicken and drinks. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Dishes may be dropped off in the kitchen before worship. Some seating will be available—lawn chairs are encouraged.

QUESTIONS?

MARGARET EBERHART

859-576-1442

Mrs. Margaret will have painting supplies available and small pumpkins to decorate. Feel free to bring a larger pumpkin to paint. Haiden Hart will share his musical gifts with us, too!



Join
Us!

The Women of Bethlehem

BOOK & BAKE SALE

Great selection in
all categories!

Saturday, October 24
2:00 - 5:00 pm

Sunday, October 25
following worship

Bethlehem UCC Fellowship Hall
Open to the Community!

Proceeds benefit
future mission-
related projects.

6400 Oak Hill Rd., Evansville

To help us with a successful sale, we are asking Bethlehem friends to clean out their bookshelves and **donate gently used books and puzzles!** Collection boxes are in the Welcoming Area, the Youth lobby by the elevator, and office entrance vestibule. Please contact [Lee Ann Shafer](#) with any questions.



Apple Pies

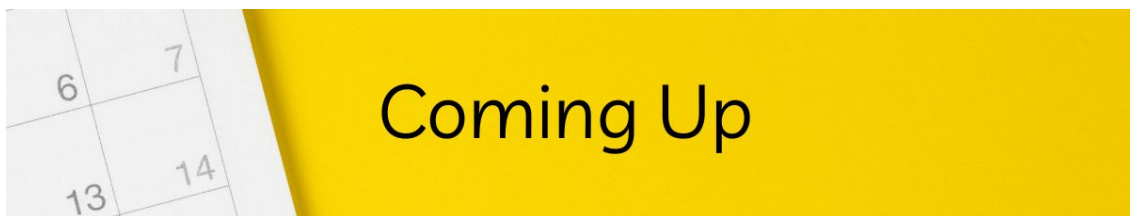


It's Harvest time – time for picking and enjoying apples! The Eosin Sunday

School Class will be selling our famous Dutch Apple Crumb Pies to benefit missions. We will be taking PREPAID orders once again this year. **To be assured of getting pies, please complete the form available at church entrances and deposit in the Eosin mailbox (by elevator), the secured mailbox in office entrance vestibule (open 24 hours), or leave in the church office.** Please make your checks out to Eosin. The pies will be made on Thursday, November 12, this year. Plan to pick up your pies between 2:00 and 5:00 PM that evening. Pies are \$12 each, and checks should be made out to Eosin.

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 on 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!



Thursday, October 8

6:30 – 9pm

Welcoming Area Rsvd (Wiseman)

6:30 – 7:30pm

Bell Choir Rehearsal

Sanctuary

7:30 – 8:30pm

Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Music Room

Saturday, October 10

5:30 – 6:30pm

Worship

Welcoming Area

Sunday, October 11

9 – 10am

Sunday School Classes - All Ages

Monday, October 12

8:30 – 10am

Conference Room Rsvd. - Worthington

Tuesday, October 13

STAR Newsletter Materials Deadline to publishing@bethlehemucc.org

Thursday, October 15

6:30 – 7:30pm

Bell Choir Rehearsal

Music Room

7:30 – 8:30pm

Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Music Room

Saturday, October 17

5:30 – 6:30pm

Worship

Welcoming Area

Sunday, October 18

9 – 10am

Sunday School Classes - All Ages

10:15 – 11:15am

Worship

Sanctuary

11:15am – 12:15pm

Picnic in the Pavilion

1 – 2:30pm

CAJE Listening Session

Conference Room

5:30 – 7:30pm

Eosin Monthly Dinner

Barry Jones & Mike Dean's Home



Bethlehem United Church of Christ

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bethlehemucc.org