Vol. 32 No.9 September 2026

Sunshine Thoughts

St. Peter's United Church of Christ
7014 Darmstadt Road Evansville, Indiana 47710 812-909-4391

Pastor's Letter to the Congregation

Hello Members of St. Peter's UCC! If we have not met yet, I am Rev. Shane Ranschaert, your new Bridge Pastor! I am very excited to be with y'all and to do ministry side-by-side with you.

A little about me.

I am a lifelong Kentuckian, born and raised in Louisville. In June 2020, I moved to the Evansville area and have made this community my home ever since.

I grew up Southern Baptist and was ordained in the Southern Baptist tradition. I began ministry when I was a sophomore in high school, teaching a middle school Bible study and occasionally preaching. When I was ordained, I was serving as an Associate Pastor, overseeing youth, evangelism, sports, and Vacation Bible School ministries.

I am a firm believer that each of us travels our own unique path of faith. After much pain and heartache, my path led me to leave the church in 2017. Along that journey, there were times when I was angry with God and times when I doubted whether God even existed.

But God was not finished with me.

In the middle of a pandemic and while living in a new city, I found Bethel UCC and Pastor Sam. Through radical encounters with God in unexpected people and through the extravagant welcome they offered me, my faith became new again, and I began growing closer to Jesus.

A little over a year ago, after officially becoming a member of the United Church of Christ, God revealed to me that God's plans for me in ministry had not changed. I began pursuing ordination through the UCC's Member in Discernment process, which I expect to complete by next summer.

My partner, Joe, and I live in Henderson with our Coonhound, Charlie. In my free time, I enjoy being outdoors—hiking, kayaking, swimming in a lake, or simply enjoying nature. I also enjoy a good book, movie, or TV show, and occasionally I will play a video game. In addition to serving St. Peter's, I work full-time for one of the largest college fraternities in the United States.

I will have regular office hours at the church Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please feel free to stop by, contact me to schedule a meeting, or invite me to grab a cup of coffee or lunch. I want to spend time getting to know you, hearing your stories, and learning more about what St. Peter's means to you.

I look forward to getting to know each of you and becoming more fully part of this small but mighty church family. I am excited to see where God leads us as we worship, serve, grow, and do ministry together.

Blessings,

Rev. Shane Ranschaert

Cell: 502-650-6493
Email: Shane.Ranschaert@gmail.com

Search Team Update

Over the past few weeks, Rev. Shane Ranschaert has been busy "settling in" as the Bridge Pastor for St. Peter's. His office is organized and he likes his new office chair! He attended the recent Central High School Team meeting with Dr. Freeman, Principal and staff, the Worship and Music Committee, August Council meeting and QPR Training. When he returns from vacation (Sunday, August 31st), he will continue to meet with standing committees and ministries to better understand how a small church functions.

As Bridge Pastor, he has requested the Council help him set a few goals that he can accomplish over the next five months. He has made good suggestions to improve the Order of Worship during the Sunday service and made some hospital visits. Soon, he will post office hours for this half-time position.

Rev. Shane's presence allows the Search Team and the Worship/Music Committee to step back from planning individual services every Sunday. We are very grateful to the ordained pastors who have filled the pulpit since November 2025. But we also look forward to continuity over the next few months. We are very grateful to have Rev. Shane with us.

During this time, the Search Committee will continue to interview candidates for the settled pastor position. It has

been a quiet summer for interviews. If you have any questions about Rev. Shane's position or the Search Committee's progress, please feel free to contact Sharon Durkee, Council President, Suzie Hobbs, John Gentry, Kaleb Herke, Tom Ryder, Kurt Simpson, Search Co-Chair, or Cheryl Whitmore, Search Co-Chair.

Submitted by,

Cheryl Whitmore,

Co-Chair, Search Committee

Council Update

Hello Friends,

Welcome Rev. Shane to your first council meeting! August 18 was a busy night with a lot to discuss for the business of the people of St. Peters.

Our financials continue to be good thanks to your generosity, and our next project will be the replacement of the kitchen ceiling tiles. They are not able to be cleaned and are now a potential health and safety hazard. Our building and grounds team will manage this project after fall festival and burgoo.

Behind the garage of the rental house is an area that has washed out creating a water problem. Brett will see about getting it straightened up with rip rap. There is still some leftover work to be done on the playground that is on the building and grounds list too. The door in the lady's restroom has been repaired.

Our OCWM offering has been completed. Next will be NIN in the first part of October, and then we move into our stewardship season after burgoo. Also in the fall, a budget committee will come together to work on our 2027 budget.

The new computer in April's office is working great. She is very appreciative to St. Peters for doing this.

Rev. Shane's pastor report provided us with a fruitful discussion on service flow, new ministries, faith formation classes, and setting goals for St. Peters. He will be putting together a survey of interests for faith formation classes and sermon topics. One idea that council liked was getting a peel and stick doorbell for the south door to allow him and April to know if there is a visitor. Where their offices are located, a knock on the door cannot be heard. At Rev. Shane's recommendation, council agreed to dissolve the Mission Committee, and a new Committee for Community will be formed. This will focus on our neighbors near St. Peters within a three-to-five-mile radius. It will be a nice addition to our Central High School ministry. We discussed music options going forward. We also took a tour of his office, which is coming together nicely.

We wish to establish a pastoral care team. This has been deferred to the Search Committee and Rev. Shane to organize and present to council.

I apologize that we did not participate this year in the Annual Gathering or the Cultivating Generous Congregations. Time slipped by unnoticed and we promise to be more attentive next year.

I normally list who will be doing announcements, but Rev. Shane will now welcome everyone to service and go over announcements. The service flow is in a process to further enhance a meaningful service for all. He is working with the Worship/Music committee on this.

Kurt provided an update on Search. One candidate who expressed interest had to withdraw, but we have an introductory interview with another candidate on August 23.

The Fall Festival committee is hard at work in preparing for our largest fund raiser. There are a many moving parts and it is a well-oiled machine thanks to the many volunteers. We couldn't do this without you! We were provided with the list of tasks that have to be completed and it's a lot! We approved raising the price of the grapes from $3 to $4 and raising the kuchens from $8 to $9.

We had a discussion on CAJE and the part we play in this justice ministry. We joined CAGE in the fall of 2021 with Rev. Brian at the helm. With his departure, David Patterson and I stepped in to be co- leaders for our congregation. Since then, the staff at CAJE has seen several changes, along with changes in the issues in our community. We are grateful for the 11 committed team members that we have at St. Peters who support this ministry that include two people from another church. We look forward to again having pastoral support with Rev. Shane and his own passion for justice ministry and his involvement in CAJE.

We discussed our Central High School ministry with an update from their meeting with Dr. Freeman on August 8. Rev. Shane joined as well. Cheryl and Julie are working to welcome the kids at CHS who need community hours such as the National Honor Society to help out for fall festival. Rev. Shane also expressed interest in having youth volunteers at UCS. The committee will continue to provide the staff

with healthy snacks in January, kuchens, and three themed raffles for Teacher Appreciation Week. Dr. Freeman said the staff is excited and grateful of our ministry. Suzie works with the school nurse for the needed personal care and other items. The committee is excited about another ministry through Central High School. With Grandin Evolution closing its doors, St. Peters will participate in Central's "Beary" Christmas. Similar to Grandin, we will adopt of child & siblings to give them a Christmas. They currently have about 50 students in need. The social worker will provide us with our lists. Wrapped gifts will be collected in October, so they can be organized and distributed by their Dec 14 final exams. This is very exciting for St. Peters! All in all, we are developing a solid relationship with Central High School.

The Worship/Music committee provided us with a report on pastor supply and music coverage. They are working on new banners, ideas for service flow, choir rehearsals, and other items. Rev. Shane attended this meeting. They are also a busy committee.

We discussed our tech team not being able to participate in service from the pews. This includes in the nest and on Zoom. They are always needing volunteers and new ideas. Please consider volunteering.

Our next meeting is September 22. Members are always welcome, just let us know ahead of time. We also welcome members to reach out to us with any questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Peace,

Sharon Durkee

Council President

Communion Sunday

Holy Communion will be celebrated on September 6th.

Sunday School

It's hard to believe summer is almost over! School will be starting soon!

We will resume our Sunday School class on September 27 at 9:00 a.m.

Everyone is invited, young and young at heart!

The hope is everyone had a nice summer!

Carl, Linda & Jaxson

July Finances	
Total General Offering*	$7,866
Building & Grounds	$142
*Need $9,467 monthly General Offering to meet budgeted amount of $113,604.	
Average Sunday Attendance	
In Person	36
Zoom	5
YouTube	13

Women's Guild

No Guild Meeting in September. See you in October for Halloween Bingo!

Men's Fellowship

Our next meeting has been scheduled at 6:00 p.m. on September 10th at the Church.

Church Office Hours

The Church office hours are:
Thursdays 7:30 am to12:00 pm

2026 Church Council

Sharon Durkee, President
Rose Gentry, Vice President
Kurt Simpson, Treasurer
Laura Medcalf, Financial Secretary
Debra Herke, Secretary
Mike Hobbs, Generosity
Bub Newman, Building and Grounds
David Patterson, Building and Grounds
Brett Vaught, Building and Grounds

Prayers of Healing and Concern for:

*Judy Allen
*Mary Ballard
*Bob Berfanger
*Phyllis Berfanger
*Bruce & Linda Briel
*Pat Brown
*Chris Cheshire
*Megan Clanton
*Alexis Dickerson
*Gary Gantner
*Lyn Hayden
*Mike Hobbs
*Suzie Hobbs
*Katie Hudson
*Toni Klueg
*Dala McDaniel
*Brandon Meeks
*Jennifer Meeks
*Katie Mullen
*Gayle Nelson
*Mark Noelle
*Charlotte Pointer
*Sue Anne Simon
*Brook Smith
*Jeff Sprinkle
*Dick Sprinkle
*Mandy Stock
*Carl Todd
*Brett Vaught
*Tom Wardrip

Book Club Happenings

September's read will be: My Friends by Fredrik Backman. We will meet on Sept 17th at 10:30 at St Peter's.

October's read will be: The Women of Oak Ridge by Michelle Shocklee.

Happy Reading,

Brenda Schell

Service Flow Change Update

Hello Church Family,

Over the next couple of weeks, you will begin to see a few slight changes to the flow of our worship service. The

purpose behind these changes is to help us maintain a continuous spirit of worship, prayer, and reflection throughout our time together.

The changes are outlined below:

1. **The service will begin promptly at 10:15 AM** with the ringing of the bell, followed by the prelude. During the prelude, the Silent Prayer of Preparation will be displayed on the screen as we prepare our hearts and minds for worship.
2. **In the future, an Acolyte will process down the aisle and light the Christ Candle**, helping mark the beginning of our time together in worship and reminding us of the presence of Christ among us.
3. **The Pastor will provide the welcome and announcements** and will offer an opportunity for any additional announcements from the congregation.
4. **The Pastor will lead the Call to Worship**, inviting us together into our shared time of worship.
5. **The Liturgist will read the Scripture** for the morning.

We are also exploring the possibility of having a lay leader provide a Children's Message or a "Message for the Young at Heart" as part of our worship service.

Additionally, a congregational survey will be included in the August 30 bulletin and will remain available for several weeks. The goal of the survey is to hear from you about opportunities for faith formation, topics you would like to explore, and ways we can continue expanding our outreach and ministry within the surrounding community.

These changes are not about changing who we are. They are about being intentional with the time we have together and creating a worship experience that helps us focus our hearts and minds on God from the moment the bell rings until we are sent back into the world.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to a member of the Council or to me.

There are exciting things happening in the life of our church, and I am excited to be here, serving alongside you as we together serve God and our community.

Many Blessings,

Rev. Shane Ranschaert

September Birthdays

Date	Name
09/10	Jack Buschkill
09/10	Bob Steele
09/11	Suzie Hobbs
09/11	Brandon Medcalf
09/13	Karen Vaught
09/15	Bryan Gardner
09/16	Andrew Newman
09/16	Jerry Schapker
09/20	Joanne Klueg
09/23	Gary Gantner
09/23	Julie Ryder
09/26	Thomas Wardrip
09/28	Carol Johnson

Prayers for Service Men and Women

-Caleb Coffman serving in the US Navy.

(Please contact the Church Office, if you know of other service men and women.)

Don't forget St. Peter's in your will!

Future Needs Fund

The St. Peter's Church Council has established a "Future Needs Fund" for the church. This fund will function primarily as an emergency fund to cover unanticipated expenses that arise from the operation of the church the including (but not limited to) emergency building and equipment repairs. In order to fund this account, we will be receiving a special "First Fruits" offering on the first Sunday of every month. We are asking members to consider giving an extra $5 each month towards this fund.

United Caring Services Monthly Lunch Volunteer Opportunity

The 1st Saturday of each month is the day for St. Peter's volunteers to prepare and serve a meal at United Caring Services. We would first like to thank the congregation for your continued support over the years of this great outreach program and invite you to join us when you can. It is such a rewarding experience!

The supplies we use for these meals are not provided by the shelter. That is why we rely on monetary donations or supply donations to help offset the overall expenses for these meals.

In an effort to keep our expenses down, we have come up with a menu that seems to be a big hit and is cost effective. However, the price of groceries are increasing and we have seen an increase in the number of people we are serving over the last few months: anywhere between 85-110 lunches each month.

Our monthly menu is pretty simple: pasta bake entree, a garlic breadstick, a vegetable, a

fruit, and a cookie/dessert. And while Angel & Julie shop around to try and keep expenses down, we are still spending between $110-$130 for the full meal, which is around $1.10 to $1.30 per meal.

So, we would like to ask for your help in donating items so that we can continue to provide a hot lunch each month at United Caring Service.

We will have shelf near the water fountain in the Fellowship Hall for you to place your donations for the non-perishable items and the frozen breadsticks can go in the large freezer. We typically buy the large cans (#10) of these items at GFS, but are open to whatever you are able to donate.

These are the items we are asking for:

Seasoned Green Beans
Use 3 cans each meal



Prebaked Breadsticks
Use 5 bags each meal



Spaghetti Sauce
Use 2 cans each meal



Pineapple
Use 3 cans each meal



Large package of napkins & packages of 100 forks

Please contact Angel Nelson or Julie Ryder if you have questions or will be a volunteer.

Thank You Again for Your Support

Angel & Julie

Sister Joanna's Table

It's been a great year of the ETSA working together to feed neighbors in our community. In a recent email I received from Reverand Emily Slade, Sr. Pastor at Bethlehem UCC and President of the ETSA (Evansville Tri-State Association), she noted that since beginning this joint mission in July 2023, we have served 15 meals. She also offered a thank you to the ETSA for financially supporting this work, and a thank you to each of you and the other volunteers from your church who have given of their time to this ministry.

Over the last 2 years, St. Peter's has joined five of our sister UCC churches (Bethlehem, Bethel, Immanuel (Ford Road), Zion Lippe and St. Paul's (German Township)) the 2nd Saturday every other month to provide free hot meals to those in need at Sister Joanna's Table, located at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 301 SE 1st St in DT Evansville.

St. Peter's began this mission project in 2024 and has had the opportunity to join these churches in providing meals 7 different times. I would also like to thank all of you that have supported this mission and outreach project by volunteering or providing food/desserts.

We will be serving our last meal for 2026 on September 12th.

As we get closer to this date, we will be asking for 2-4 volunteers to help serve at Sister Joanna's Table. Since we are participating with other churches, the time commitment varies depending on what our task assignment is, but it would be about 2 hours.

Contact Julie Ryder if you have any questions or would like to volunteer.

CWS Kid Kits

God loves a cheerful giver. School bags are now called 'Kids Kits'. I've talked with Church World Service and as I expected the need is great. Last year because of our love and generosity 57 children of all nationalities had big smiles on their faces because they could further their education - yes, we sent 57 filled bags!

I know sewing is becoming a dying art, but if you do sew and want to make bags call Mary Ramsey, Susan Rudisill or Susie Hobbs for directions. If you would like to donate supplies, leave them in a marked box in the foyer.

Supplies needed for one bag:
1- Box of 10 Colored Pencils
1- 2 Pocket Folders
1- Glue Stick
1- Pair of Blunt Scissors
1- 70 Count Spiral Paper Notebook
1- 12" Ruler
1- Handheld Pencil Sharpener
1- Box of 24 Crayons
6- Unsharpened Pencils

We take these bags to Bethlehem in October and they take them along with their cleaning supplies to CWS to be given to those who need help anywhere in this beautiful world God gave us. We start collecting early because it takes time to make bags and also because school supplies go on sale in July. Bags can be filled fairly inexpensively. Those of us who sew will make bags for all supplies donated.

A processing fee of $2.00 goes along with each bag.

Who knows - one of our bags might help to educate a farmer who feeds us. A doctor who keeps us well or a Minister who tells us of God's love.

Mary Ramsey

Parish Nurse Update

I want to thank everyone who attended the recent QPR Training; we had great attendance. Lisa Myer and Julie Morrow, St. Vincent presenters, provided an excellent overview of suicide, the possible causes, the signs of suicide, as well as how to address concerns with a person who may be considering it. With this knowledge, we can be the "hope" for a person seriously struggling with mental health challenges.

Upcoming Events:

Ascension St. Vincent will be offering Wisdom for Wellness on **Tuesday, September 22 at the Ascension St. Vincent Manor Auditorium from 8AM – 1PM.** Topics include Financial Scams, Medication Management, Sleep and Energy as We Age, Building Brain-Healthy Habits, and Community Resources. If you are interested, call 812.485.5813.

The **St. Peter's – Bethany Annual Flu Clinic is Tuesday, September 29th at St. Peter's**. It will be a drive-thru clinic, unless it is raining. Paul's Pharmacy will provide the vaccines. Suzie Hobbs will schedule times for participants. If you know the time you want, feel free to contact Suzie at 812.449.6356. We anticipate COVID vaccine also being available and a person can receive both vaccines on that date. Anyone older than 11 years of age can receive their vaccine at this clinic. All insurances are accepted. If you have any questions, please contact Joanna Klueg (812.455.4155, Suzie Hobbs (812.449.6356), or Cheryl Whitmore (812.455.7536).

Feel free to contact any of the St. Peter's Parish Nurses for any questions about health and wellness.

Submitted by,
Cheryl Whitmore, Health Ministry Coordinator

Paper Goods Drive

Items needed:
Plates: all sizes, bowls,
Cups: coffee and drink cups, Napkins, Kleenex, plastic forks and spoons, storage bags: all sizes.

Place items in the fellowship hall. Thanks!

Would You Be Willing to Volunteer for our Tech Team?

The St. Peter's Tech Team is looking to expand our pool of volunteers that can help with operating our technology on Sunday mornings. Training will be provided, and you do not have to be a computer expert in order to help out. We are hoping to have enough volunteers in our rotation that your commitment would be no more than once a month. If you have questions—or would like to volunteer—please contact Laura Medcalf.

Church Calendar

The church is using Google calendar to schedule church events and meetings. You can view the calendar at https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=c3RwZXRlcnNoaWdobGFuZHVjY0BnbWFpbC5jb20Or scan the following QR Code with your smart phone.

Newsletter Deadline

The submissions deadline for the October 2026 Sunshine Thoughts is September 20th. The October edition will be distributed on September 27th. Newsletter items may be submitted via e-mail. Please send to rschell190@gmail.com

Join us for Online Worship at St. Peter's!

On Your Computer

Go to **https://zoom.us/j/850989470**

Zoom will download briefly to your computer and log you into the meeting

Using the Zoom App

Enter the meeting ID: **850 989 470**

Click "Join with a personal link name" and change how you are identified to others in the group

Click "Join Meeting"

On Your Phone

Call **1-312-626-6799**

Enter Meeting ID: **850 989 470#**

Follow the prompts

Fall Festival 2026 - OCTOBER 4th – OCTOBER 10th

Please review the information below and please sign up to volunteer!!

Beginning Monday October 5th through Saturday October 10th, our Booth 100 will operate on Franklin Street from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm

We will continue to offer our drive-thru and preorders pick up at the church (see below for details)

PRODUCTS & PRICES:

- Kuchen are $9.00 Each and Flavors available will be Cinnamon, Cherry, Apple, Peach or Pineapple
- Sour Grapes are $4.00
- Kookie Ice Scream Sandwiches are $4.00 (watch for a new flavor for 2026)

KUCHEN PRE-ORDERS:

- We will be taking pre-orders again this year from September 1st – September 27th.
  - **Pre ordered kuchen will be available for pick up on your designated date/time**
  - **Pre order pick up will only be available Tuesday October 6th through Friday October 9th**
- Kuchen pre-order calls will go to Judy Allen 812-424-5922, Julie Ryder 812-480-1165 or the church 812-909-4391
- Blank order forms are available with the bulletin and newsletter

DRIVE-THRU PROCESS:

- Drive-thru at the church will be open Monday, October 5th – Friday, October 9th from 1:00pm to 6:00pm.
- All orders will be fulfilled at the church in our drive-thru set up
- We will have 1-2 people in the parking lot area to take care of either the pre-orders and drive-thru. To allow for limited contact the customer will stay in their car and their order will be brought to them**.**
  - **Please make every effort to keep customers from entering the kitchen or Fellowship Hall unless there was an emergency.**
- Please see the sign up sheet to volunteer for either drive-thru or cashier
- Please contact Brenda Schell or Rose Gentry if you have any questions

BOOTH:

- Hours of operation will continue to be 10:00 am to 8:00 pm (2 x 5 hr shifts: 10 am to 3 pm and 3 pm to 8 pm)
- We will sell from the street-side
- Due to size of booth, it is recommend to have only 2 people in booth at a time.
- Julie or Tom Ryder will go down each night around 8:00 pm to do an inventory at end of night and pick up the money box
- All other processes for the booth will remain the same as past years **(instructions and phone numbers are listed inside the booth)**
- **Please see the sign up sheet to volunteer**

KUCHEN BAKING PROCESS AT CHURCH:

The FF committee has reviewed the steps and processes needed to make kuchen and feel that we would be able to accomplish baking each day with a crew of 9-11 people. The majority of these people would be inside either in the kitchen and/or fellowship hall. As stated above, we would have 2 additional people outside taking care of the customer orders and 1 person serving as cashier for the pre-orders. We will once again **have a daily shift leader that will oversee the process and answer any questions that come up. Those shift leaders include Julie Ryder, Cheryl Whitmore and Sharon Durkee.**

WORK SCHEDULE:

This will be determined once the pre-orders have been received and an assessment can be done of baking days / times. The plan is to start baking on Sunday (October 4th) so we have kuchen ready for Monday. We will continue to bake mornings & afternoons, (possibly at nights) Monday – Friday. There will be limited baking on Saturday. **See the sign up sheet to volunteer.**

Again please mark October 4th through October 10th on your calendars.

The Fall Festival committee will be contacting members and friends to ask for your help at both the church and the booth in support of the Fall Festival. We also need your help in spreading the word about our Fall Festival Fundraiser plans. We ask that you share this with your family, friends, co-workers, Facebook friends, neighbors….. anyone you know. Please direct any questions to Julie Ryder at 812.480.1165.

Thank you in advance,

Fall Festival Committee