

High Street UMC

Tower Topics



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Our Vision

High Street United Methodist Church nurtures disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, **love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously** in our local communities and in worldwide connections.

Office Hours

Mon-Thurs: 9am - 3pm

Closed Friday

You will need to be buzzed in the door

765-747-8500

High Street United Methodist Church
219 S. High St., Muncie, IN 47305

Join Us For Sunday Worship

10am Traditional Worship Service

And livestream on Facebook and YouTube

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com>

HighStreetUMChurch

YouTube: [bitly.videohighstreet](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bitly.videohighstreet)

From Pastor Teri

Pastor Life: Behind the Curtain – Part 1

“Well, you work only one day a week, right?” – followed by raucous laughter.

Your pastor(s) may smile - weakly - at this age-old joke, and may even respond with a witticism of their own. But in their hearts, it hurts to have this even joked about. Because pastors work very hard, every day of the week. So, I’m pulling back the curtains on a pastor’s life, and we’re going to start with the most visible part: preaching.

Preaching is what most people most closely associate with being a pastor. It’s probably the most visible part of a pastor’s life; it happens every week – sometimes more often, like when there are special holidays such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, or Christmas Eve; and it’s very, very public. Nearly everyone is convinced they could do it – and many are certain they’d do it better than the preacher they currently have! Everyone has an opinion on the sermon, the delivery, and even what the preacher wears (trust me on this one).

To deliver a good sermon takes several hours of research on the biblical passage being preached upon. Then a good pastor will pray about what the passage and God are saying, and what the congregation needs to hear in this time and space. After that, the pastor will draft, re-draft, and refine a sermon as many times as it takes. A good pastor – even those who preach with only notes or without notes at all – almost always starts by writing out their sermons.

That brings me to manuscript preaching vs. preaching with notes vs. preaching without notes. There are pros and cons to each approach, but preaching experts agree that pastors should use the method that brings them the greatest peace and clarity. I don’t know what the pastors at High Street did before me, but I know both Pastor Colin and I are manuscript preachers, as were Pastors Mackenzie and Daryl. I don’t know their reasons, but I can explain mine.

First, some argue that a preacher should prepare, but take no notes into the pulpit, relying instead on the Holy Spirit to guide the message. I’ve seen and heard A LOT of sermons (good and bad); and unfortunately, my experience is that most preachers who use no notes tend to ramble and wander somewhat aimlessly in their sermons. Those who use only notes or outlines often have sermons with a lot of verbal fillers, such as

“Uh ... uh ... mmmm,” – because they haven’t thought through their transitions. I’ll be honest: I deeply dislike a sermon that wanders, rambles, meanders, or is otherwise disorganized.

On the other hand, preaching with only an outline, notes, or with nothing other than a Bible in hand tends to lead to greater eye contact, and a feeling of greater direct engagement with the congregation. The sermon is almost always simpler – it has to be. But for it to be good, it still requires enormous preparation.

You all know I was a lawyer and an English major. Words and ideas are important to me. I am precise in the words I choose, the concepts I want to convey, and the ways I want to get them across. That’s why I’m a manuscript preacher. I’m extremely careful about how my sermon is crafted. I want all of you to experience my best. Others choose a different approach. None are wrong.

Sometimes people think a manuscript preacher is reading the sermon to them. This is absolutely not true. We’ve practiced the sermon multiple times – out loud – before we proclaim it in the sanctuary. We know it, internalize it, and embody it before we preach it. And we seldom preach exactly what we’ve written – even if we’ve practiced it multiple times.

Every pastor has a different approach for preparing and preaching a sermon, but it takes me several hours of research and prayer, more for writing and re-writing, time to refine, and time to practice before I’m close to finished. I allow time between each stage so I can think about it between each stage. And most of this time is not during office or work hours of the church.

It’s been estimated that preaching a sermon consumes the same energy as running a mile race. It’s way more exhausting than most people would believe – especially since they think we’re just “standing up there, talking.” Keep your pastors in your prayers, friends. They’re working hard – for God and for you.

February 2026 Financial Update

As previously announced, the Church Council approved a 2026 budget of \$544,554, which again was a “meet-the-needs as is” budget. We’ve received \$330,134 in pledges for 2026.

We'll report our monthly income, which will include any one-time gifts, as well as money provided by the trustees from their accounts to cover some of our building expenses, and any of the money used from the Foundation grant, against both numbers.

We're starting 2026 in pretty good shape. Our giving trends are unusual, because so many give through RMDs, QCDs, and other annual tax-minimizing means – usually at the beginning or end of the year. Our income for February again reflected that trend, and was \$64,061. This included a significant one-time extravagant gift. This means our February income was \$18,680 more than the \$45,380 that's 1/12 of \$544,554. Our expenses were up in February again due to weather. They were \$43,399. This meant our monthly expenses were \$20,662 less than our income.

Year-to-date, we're doing ok so far. Our YTD income (including the one-time extravagant gift in February) is \$128,599, which is \$37,840 more than the \$90,759 we have budgeted YTD. Expenses YTD are \$98,800, which is \$29,799 less than our YTD income, but \$8041 more than we had budgeted for YTD. We believe this is due to weather-related utility costs, as well as some of the beginning of the year expenses relating to some of our annual fees.

We encourage you to keep up your support as 2026 continues. You may give online at www.highstreetumc.breezechms.com/give/online . You may also text your offering to 765/222-5007, or mail your checks into the church at 219 S. High Street, Muncie, IN 47305. As always, you may bring your offering or pledge form into the church in person; we'd love to see and talk with you. If you're able to give extra, please prayerfully consider doing so. Your support means everything.

February 2026 Financial Snapshot:

Budgeted: \$45,380 (1/12 of \$544,554)

Pledged for 2026: \$27,511 (1/12 of \$330,134)

Actual income: \$64,061*

Expenses: \$43,399

Net Income (Feb): \$20,662

YTD 2026 Financial Snapshot:

Budgeted YTD: \$90,759 (2/12 of \$544,554)

Pledged YTD: \$55,022 (2/12 of \$330,134)

Income YTD: \$128,599*

Expenses YTD: \$98,800

Net Income YTD: \$29,799 (Budget v. Income)

*Includes one-time extravagant gift in February

Church Mouse Needed

Our current Church Mouse, Marilyn Peña, has let us know that she will not be returning next year. While we are saddened by her decision, we understand that the young people who fill this position move on with their lives and careers. We're fortunate to have had Marilyn with us both as a choral scholar and as our "Mouse" for as long as we have. We certainly wish her well.

But this means we will need a new Church Mouse come summer. If you know of anyone who might be interested in the position, please have them contact Pastor Teri or Diana Smiley. This requires someone who is responsible and mature. It's an ideal position for an accountable undergraduate or a graduate student who needs housing. More information about the position is available.

Upcoming Sermon Series

Although I plan to cover worship planning in my "peek behind the curtain" articles on a pastor's life, I thought you might like to know about some of what I'm planning for the rest of the year (yes, we plan that far forward):

- During Eastertide, we'll look at "Stories That Matter," using the gospel lessons from the lectionary
- In June, we'll again follow the gospel lectionary readings, with "Open Our Eyes," following our call to *See All the People* as part of our mission as a church and as disciples of Jesus Christ
- It's highly likely we'll go with a series on The Apostle's Creed during the summer, beginning in July
- I'm working on a series on The Lord's Prayer that may work well for the fall
- October is our stewardship month
- November, with All Saints, our "Thanksgiving" Sunday, Christ the King Sunday, and the beginning of Advent, always tends to feel a bit disjointed – but it will all come together
- And December is Advent & Christmas!
- There will be a few "one-off" Sundays in the midst of these series as well

As you might be able to tell, the series through the beginning of July are written, planned, and “locked.” The ones following July 1 are still in various stages of development. So, stay tuned – good things are coming!

From Pastor Colin

Back in January, when the snow was deep and the roads were icy, a van slid into my car while I was at a stop sign. Can't blame the guy. He even did his best to slide around me, so he merely clipped my bumper with his door. Within 90 seconds, BSUPD happened to drive by and get us sorted out. Easy peasy. We were on our way within ten minutes. Sure, it was tedious working with insurance, but everything got fixed, and the body shop even threw in a free interior detailing that they obviously could see my car needed. No harm done.

I could have made the incident worse. I could have made a mistake had I reacted differently in the moment of the wreck. I had to take a deep breath before I stepped out of the car. I hadn't even seen him behind me. I was startled, to understate. As the pang of fear passed and I knew I was ok, I then had to figure out what happened. As I did, I saw it was trouble for me that I didn't cause. So also in that deep breath, I had to pause and think beyond my instant reaction. This other driver was probably scared and shaken. And hadn't I slid a little bit myself as I stopped at the sign? I could have made his and my day both worse by getting out of the car all bent out of shape and accusatory. I had only an instant to live into and demonstrate the grace that I say I believe in.

I don't know where the limit for grace ends, if anywhere, but it's certainly beyond a minor traffic incident. Happily, I have yet to be at fault in a vehicular accident; but good heavens, I'm at fault by several other measures in several other ways. In my faults, so many people have offered me grace and forgiveness. I try to honor the grace I'm given. If I do repeat my mistakes, hopefully I only sideswipe them rather than crash into them head-on.

As we finish Lent and prepare for Resurrection, we have had our 40 days to tap our brakes, slow down, and correct our steering. For the times when we have crashed, or crashed out, we're grateful that God has been kind to us. That's grace. Even when we've been the one at fault, we're offered forgiveness and a way forward. Praise God.

When we get to Easter, we have the promise that all of our brokenness and mess can and will be healed and restored. We can be cleaned up, no matter how much work it takes. Thank God for what Christ has done for us, and what the Holy Spirit can do in us. May we avoid as much trouble as possible. But when it hits, or we hit it, we know it's never the last word, and that we are never alone in it.

Men's Breakfast

Bunnies, Eggs, and Taxes! Oh my! Join us on April 15th at 8:00 am in Parish Hall for good friends, great fellowship, a delicious breakfast, and inspiring thoughts by Jim Carr. We hope to see you there!

Trivia Night

On Friday, April 10, from 7 to 8:30 pm, please join us in Parish Hall (the basement) for the return of Trivia Night!

This event is an opportunity to foster community and social connection through a little friendly competition. Come with friends as a team or on your own (and we can add you to an existing team). No registration is necessary, but we do ask that each participant bring at least one non-perishable item to contribute to the High Street Food Pantry. Check the list in the bulletin for what they need. Snacks will be provided and questions will be designed for ages 12 and up.

What a fun lunch

The High Street UMC held its first potluck of 2026 immediately after church on Sunday, March 15. An incredible selection of entrees, sides, salads, and desserts was provided, and the cooks at High Street UMC should be quite proud of their contributions. Thank you for the delicious and varied dishes!

Many attendees also enjoyed coloring on the spring-themed coloring sheets available at each table. A special thanks for displaying them on the wall in the Parish Hall so that everyone can appreciate them through Easter.

Even more remarkable than the food and the coloring was the fellowship among the community. We praise God for this church family, whose members truly enjoy being together and always welcome newcomers.

High Street Church Staff

Lead Pastor: Rev. Teri Crouse
tcrouse@munciehighstreet.com

Associate Pastor: Rev. Colin Cress
ccress@munciehighstreet.com

Church Administrator and Finance Director: Diana Smiley
dsmiley@munciehighstreet.com

Children's, Youth & Family Ministries Director: Joy Bricker
jbricker@munciehighstreet.com

Angels on High Preschool Director: Elisha Lynn
aohpreschool@munciehighstreet.com

Director of Music: Dr. Andrew Crow
andrew.crow.dma@gmail.com

Organist: Dr. Sally Kang
Soyeon.Kang@bsu.edu

Handbell Director: Dr. Ann Hicks
amhicks2@bsu.edu

Worship Schedule

April Worship

April 2	Maundy Thursday
Scripture:	1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35
April 3:	Good Friday
Scripture:	Various At Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
April 5:	Easter with Orchestra
Sermon:	Spread the Word
Scripture:	Matthew 28:1-10
April 12:	Holy Communion
Sermon:	Unless I See
Scripture:	John 20:19-31
April 19:	Stories That Matter
Sermon:	Astounded Us
Scripture:	Luke 24:13-35
April 26:	Stories That Matter
Sermon:	Knowing That Voice
Scripture:	John 10:1-10

Ruth Circle

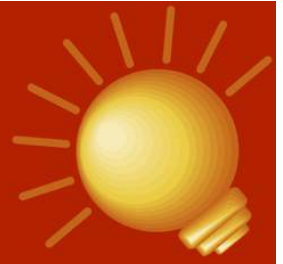
Will meet on April 14, at 9:30 am, in The Gathering Place. Devotions will be given by Donna McNary, and Jane Perry will serve as Hostess.



Marilyn Williams will be 96 on the 9th

Barbara Palmer will be 97 on the 22nd

High Street Trivia Night



Friday • April 10th
High Street Parish Hall • 7pm-8:30pm

No
Registration
Needed!

Please bring one non-perishable
item to contribute to the High
Street Food Pantry!

Snacks provided. Event is for ages 12 and Up!



Sunday, March 29 – Palm Sunday (with Palm Parade)

Thursday, April 2 – Maundy Thursday (at High Street UMC)
Pastor Jerry O'Neal preaching – 7pm

Friday, April 3 – Good Friday (at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church)
Pastor Colin preaching – 7pm

Sunday, April 5 – Easter! with Orchestra Sunday

Angels on High Preschool & PDO

A special ministry of High Street UMC



Contact Information

If you have any question or concerns please contact the Director, Elisha Lynn by email aohpreschool@munciehighstreet.com or by phone 765-216-7919.

Donations Needed:

- Gallon Size Ziploc Bags
- Plastic Spoons/Forks
- Paper Plates
- Bubbles
- Sidewalk Chalk

Thank you for your support!

Preschool Graduation is scheduled for Thursday, May 21 at 10 AM at High Street Church, with a reception to follow in parish hall. All are welcome to attend this special event as we celebrate our Pre-K students. Be sure to check out our AOH 2026 graduates in the display case throughout the month of May!

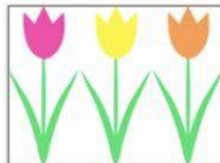
The Lotion Company fundraiser kicks off this month! All orders will back in time for Mother's Day. Order forms will be available in the church office if you would like to participate. This fundraiser will help us

purchase Bibles for preschool graduation and support our Muffins with Mom event in May.



Preschool Registration is in full swing and now open to the community. Spots are filling quickly! Our AM Pre-K class is full. Family and Friend referrals mean so much to us, and each year our goal is to have all preschool classes full! **Happy Easter!**

THANK YOU to Oakstone Property Care for refreshing our playground with new mulch. Fresh mulch not only makes the playground look



great, but it also helps create a softer, safer surface for our students to play on! **HAPPY SPRING!**

**APRIL
2026**

High Street UMC

Children, Youth, & Family

219 : YOUTH @ 5PM!

•APRIL 5:
HAPPY EASTER! NO YOUTH!

•APRIL 12:
GAME NIGHT ... BRING YOUR FAVORITE SNACK TO SHARE!

•APRIL 19:
SERVICE PROJECT!

•APRIL 26:
PUTT-PUTT GOLF ... WEATHER PERMITTING!

• MAY 3: END OF THE YEAR PARTY!!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Every Sunday @ 9 am in Room G1

•APRIL 5:
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL ... EASTER ORCHESTRA PRACTICE!

•APRIL 12:
JESUS IS OUR PERFECT KING

•APRIL 19:
JESUS APPEARED TO THE DISCIPLES

•APRIL 26:
JESUS APPEARED TO THOMAS

Save the Date!
Acolyte recognition
will be May 10th @
10am service.

ACOLYTES: APRIL 2026

APRIL 5 •
LEO FURLONG
DEAN WERNER

APRIL 19 •
SAM ATKINSON
JOSIAH BRICKER

APRIL 12 •
JOSIAH BRICKER
JOSEPH BRICKER

APRIL 26 •
SOPHIA TAPY-HARRISON
ESTHER FURLONG

IT'S TIME!!

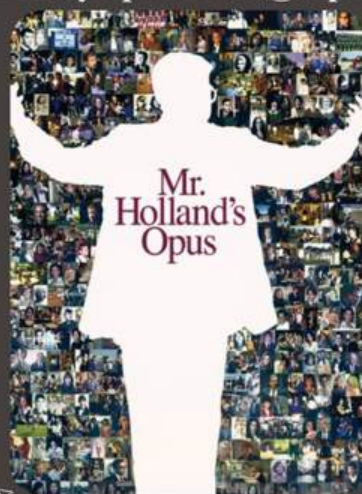
TO SIGN UP FOR
CHURCH CAMP!!



SEE MS. JOY FOR
INFORMATION!!

High Street Movie Night

Friday April 24th @ 6pm



\$5 per person • \$20 max per family
Pizza - Popcorn - Pop - Treat!

RSVP to Ms. Joy!

Last movie
of the season!

Rated PG:

Parent Note: There is some language in this movie ... please research this for your own use.
Visit Common Sense Media to see if this movie is a good fit for your family!



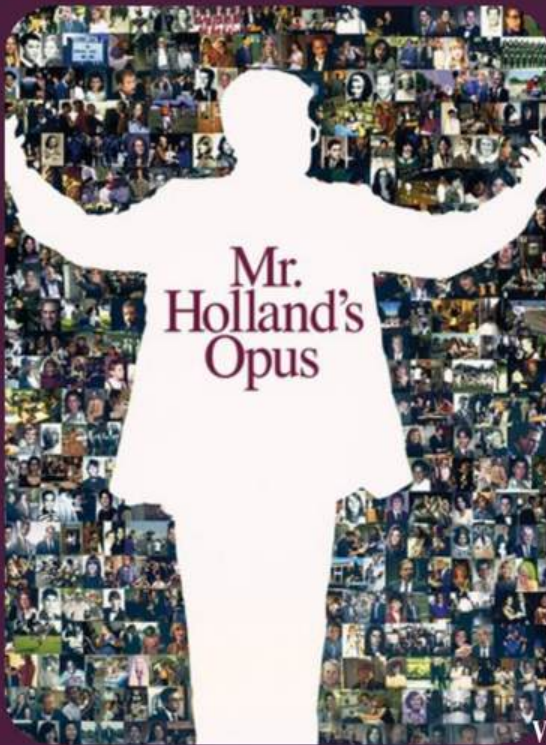
High Street VBS - June 7th - 11th

JBRICKER@MUNCIEHIGHSTREET.COM

HEY!! High Street ALL-Church Important Info!

April 2026

Need to contact Joy?
jbricker@munciehighstreet.com



High Street Movie Night Friday April 24th @ 6pm

← Last movie night of the season!
And it's a good one!!

\$5 per person • \$20 max per family
Pizza - Popcorn - Pop - Treat!
RSVP to Ms. Joy!

Rated PG:

Special Note: There is some language in this movie ...
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