

Bethlehem
United Church of Christ

The **Visitor**

April 2016

an invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy

“EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED”

REV. JOHN L. KENNEDY

“But someone may ask, ‘How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?’

When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it dies first.

And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a dry little seed of wheat or whatever it is you are planting.

Then God gives it a new body, just the kind he wants it to have.

A different kind of plant grows from each kind of seed.”

It is the same way for the resurrection of the dead.

Our earthly bodies, which die and decay, will be different when they are resurrected,

for they will never die.

But let me tell you a wonderful secret God has revealed to us.

Not all of us will die, but we will all be transformed. And then we who are living will be transformed so that we will never die.

For our perishable earthly bodies must be transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die.

*1st Corinthians 15:35-53
(selected verses)*

Wow, what happened to the rest of winter? This winter was so unpredictable compared to our expectation.



Did we have winter and just go from a cold autumn into spring? I have lived in eight states and in each state have heard the cliché, “If you don’t like the weather, just wait.” Well, for the record, Michigan has bragging rights! It really is true in Michigan: the weather changes, surprises us, and is a thing of wonder. Blooming trees, shrubs, and flowers; green lawns begging to be mowed; and sneezing and watery eyes when we usually expect
(continued on page 4)

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Congregational Meeting

Sunday, April 17, 2016

A Congregational Meeting will take place on Sunday, April 17, following the 10:00 Worship Service. Please plan to attend this meeting to vote on the following items:

- The Facilities Ministry Team is asking for approval to repair the critical maintenance issues at the parsonage.
- The Finance Ministry Team is seeking approval to enter into a loan with the Bank of Ann Arbor to temporarily finance the parsonage repairs until a capital fund-raising campaign is completed.
- The approval of the Annual Report.

(Copies of the report are now available at church and via email.)



**Join us for an
All-Church
Work Day,
Saturday,
April 30, 9 am**

The Facilities Ministry Team will be hosting an all-church work day on Saturday, April 30, beginning at 9 a.m. With help from the ministry teams, church groups, and Leadership Council, we have identified several areas in our building that need our attention.

We are asking members/attendees of our congregation to help by pointing out areas you notice that we need to repair, remove, and clean up. We will have sign-up sheets available on April 10. Please choose an area where you would be comfortable working.

To date, we have sign-up sheets for the sanctuary (woodwork), Sunday school rooms, the youth room, Fellowship, storage areas, painting needs.

Please contact Tom Ziesemer in person or by email: ziesemertn@gmail.com.

EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS 2016/2017 DEADLINE IS MAY 29

Scholarship



Members of Bethlehem are eligible for Educational Scholarships. These are open to any qualified member attending full-time at an approved accredited University, College or Seminary for work on either the undergraduate or graduate level.

Application forms may be obtained in the Church Office, downloaded from the website, or by emailing Carol Leyshock at: CarolLeyshock@Bethlehem-UCC.org

May Visitor deadline



**Deadline
April 25**

**To be printed
April 28**

BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Phone 734-665-6149 Fax 734-665-3399

www.bethlehem-ucc.org



www.facebook.com/bethlehemucca2

www.pinterest.com/bethlehemucca2

www.youtube.com/user/BethlehemChurchA2

Upcoming Events



ROAD CLOSURES (AGAIN), SUNDAY, APRIL 10
(DUE TO THE UM BIG HOUSE RUN)
 State Street closed Stadium to E. Washington.
 Best choice is to take Stadium or Huron to Main St.

FRESH PRODUCE COLLECTION FOR FOOD GATHERERS



Sunday, April 10,
 is our next fresh produce collection.
 Your donation is greatly appreciated.
 Please bring your donations
 to either service.

April Pretzels



April 16 and 17 Holy Roller Pretzel sales
April 29 Parking Lot Pretzel sales

Please consider being a Pretzel Roller!!
Order yours now by calling the church office.

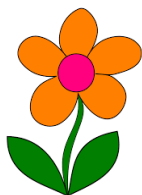


We are having an
All-Church Work Day
Saturday, April 30, 9 am
 There will be jobs for all ages
 and all skill levels!
See page 2 for more details



BETHLEHEM BRIDGES
CONCERT SERIES
Ann Arbor Camerata
April 10, at 7:30 p.m.

See page 8 for more details



Mary Martha Bible Study
April 12, 10:00

Auxiliary/Mother's Study
April 20, 1:00

CPR TRAINING – April 14/15

Calling all staff, ushers, greeters,
 volunteers, teachers!
 A CPR class is coming to Bethlehem:
Thursday, April 14, 7 pm
 and again on **Friday, April 15, 10 am**



Signup sheets are located on
 the bulletin board outside
 the church office. Please
 direct questions to Harriette
 Ehnis or the church office.

See page 9 for more details

Confirmation Retreat
Tower Hill, April 22 - 24



Human Foosball Fundraiser
April 22 at Bethlehem
See page 7 for more details

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARD UPDATE
April is time to renew your Kroger Community
 Rewards for Bethlehem. **Food = Money!!!**
See page 11 for more details



CAKE AUCTION AND BRUNCH
Sunday, May 1, following the
 10:00 service. The Cake Auction
 is a fund raiser for this year's
 Mission Trip, and the Brunch is
 sponsored by Fellowship.
See page 6 for more details



Peace Neighborhood Center
Outreach Day, April 26
See page 11 for more details

“Expect the Unexpected”

by Pastor John (Continued from page 1)

to still be wearing hats, coats, and gloves. What should we expect next?

What are you expecting next? I’m not asking about the weather; rather, I’m asking what are you expecting next out of life, your life? Are you expecting something that goes beyond the expected? Are you open to what Paul is saying to the 1st Congregational Church of Corinth? Paul is saying, because of what God has done in Christ Jesus, you will never die. He is saying that your physical body will be discarded like a caterpillar’s cocoon so that your spiritual body can be released into its new transformed state of living. God’s plan has always been that life is an eternal gift that changes “form” or rather is “transformed.”

To really experience life, we must allow ourselves to continually be open to the process of transformation from the old to the new. Transformation is not just meant to be something that happens when we go from life to death to eternal life. Transformation is meant to be something we experience here in this earthly life, not just once, but again and again. It has been a thing of wonder to

witness transformation happening right here in the members of our church family. Although I can’t share names and details, I am privileged to witness those who are being transformed. All around us there are lives, relationships, and life situations that at first glance seemed to be at a “dead end” or on the “critical list” but then transform into lives, relationships, and life situations that are reborn into new possibilities, opportunities, and new beginnings. “Dead ends” become “launch pads,” and the names of those on the “critical list” become the names of those listed on the first-round draft choices in the game of life.

And this transformation can happen by trusting that our God is the God of the unexpected. When you think about God, remember to expect the unexpected. Our God has a way of selecting the least likely people in the least expected places and at the least expected time to make the Easter message a reality. Our God is in control, Jesus Christ is risen, and the Holy Spirit is loose in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and in our world! Alleluia!

God’s grace and peace always, Pastor John

Veterans’ Luncheon

To all Bethlehem Armed Forces Veterans:
Please mark your calendar for a special luncheon on your behalf on Wednesday,

May 25, at 11:30

a.m. in the Fellowship Hall
sponsored by
the Fellowship
Ministry Team.

We will have

special military music provided by Gary Maki, and Pastor John Kennedy will be the keynote speaker. We welcome any photos or memorabilia from your military days. Please RSVP by contacting Tom Ziesemer at 734-663-0378 or ziesemertn@gmail.com.

**Giving Envelopes**

If you are not receiving the Bethlehem giving envelopes in the mail and would like to, please call the church office: 734-665-6149. If your major giving is done electronically and you would like to *opt out* of receiving the personal offering envelopes in the mail, please let us know and we would be glad to take you off the list. Thank you for supporting Bethlehem financially!

Notice of Contribution Statements

A note from the Finance Ministry Team concerning your Contribution Statements: Bethlehem Contribution Statements will be mailed out just after April 30, September 30, November 30, and December 31. This is slightly different from past practice. One may always call Carol in the church office if there are any questions.



Christian Education Easter Cookie Sale

We frosted, decorated, and sold 48 dozen cookies. Thank you to Paul and Barb Marshall for helping bake and prepare the cookies. Thanks to our wonderful youth who frosted and decorated. Thank you to the folks who bought our cookies. We raised \$400 for our youth mission projects. Awesome!

The youth are going to put together snack packs for veterans from the donated goods from Lent. We also collected socks, underwear, and T-shirts. We will use some of our cookie money for this. We are also working toward buying some fencing for the Evangelical Home garden to help keep critters away.

WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

Harriette Ehnis



It is the hope of the Worship Ministry Team that you were spiritually moved as we experienced the activities from Palm Sunday through Easter. We rejoiced and waved palms on Palm Sunday followed by a lovely brunch. On Maundy Thursday, we reenacted the last supper in the transformed Gallery. On Good Friday, the labyrinth, the DeGrazia exhibit, and the prayer vigil provided several opportunities for us to meditate and witness. Good Friday services with lay participants at noon and at 7 pm. rounded out the true meaning of Holy Week.

Celebration of the resurrection on Easter Sunday was certainly inspiring. The sunrise service led by Pastor Greg at the cemetery was particularly meaningful. The joyous music with the choir, handbells, and instrumentalists at the 10 o'clock service stirred our hearts.

Pastor John's meditation asking us to look in the mirror and see Jesus standing beside us will long be remembered. Christ is ALIVE today—make room for him.

The Worship Ministry Team strives to provide worship opportunities that are inspirational and meaningful. Feedback from members and visitors is always welcome. This can be done by leaving a note in the offering plate or contacting any member of the ministry team.

A creative worship-team focus group is convening in April to explore new ideas to enhance our worship experience.

Mission Trip - Flint: an Immersion Experience

By Pastor Greg Briggs

Flint, Michigan, has been in the news a lot over the past couple of years, but as Michiganders know, the challenges faced by this city have been going on for decades. The water crisis has brought the city into unwanted prominence, but the hope is that the increased visibility will be the catalyst to bring about some much needed improvements to the city. Earlier this year, we held a special collection to help support organizations that are working to reduce the impact of this tragic situation.

However, a number of us want to do more than just donate money. This summer, our mission trip group will travel to Flint to serve and learn a bit more about what it is like to live in a town where you can't trust the water. We don't want to be tourists or gawkers. We want to be a part of the solution, and we hope to come away transformed by the experience.

The trip is scheduled for June 19-25.

This far out, it is hard to know what kind of volunteer work will be needed in Flint. We have signed up to work with Habitat for Humanity of Genesee County. They have received a \$60,000 grant and are soliciting 12 weeks of work crews for what they are calling their Apostle Build. They are also asking for \$3000 in donations as part of our work. This may require us to work different days than our usual Monday-to-Friday trip.

In addition to working for Habitat for Humanity, we have registered with the Flint Democracy Defense League, which is coordinating volunteer efforts for the water crisis. Most likely, our under-16 youth will not be able to work on the Habitat site. The type of work we could do includes canvassing communities, data entry, water and water-filter distribution, and phone

banking. In addition, we have offered our help to Woodside Church in Flint, our sister congregation. We would help them with their water efforts, or whatever else they need help with.

Every year on the mission trip, we have prayer partners and daily devotions. This year's devotions will be focused on the challenges of Flint and will help us better understand how this situation could have happened in the first place.

As always, the mission trip is sponsored by the Youth and Young Adult Ministries of Bethlehem, but we are not limiting participation to those age ranges. **If you'd like to give a week, we'd love to have you. Sign up on the youth bulletin board or talk to Pastor Greg or Isaac Wilcox.**

We will also hold the annual Cake Auction on Sunday, May 1, after 10 am worship. You can donate a cake to the auction or come ready to bid for some great cakes.

CAKE AUCTION and BRUNCH May 1, following the 10 a.m. service



Our fundraiser for Mission Trip is our annual **CAKE AUCTION**, this year on **May 1, 2016.**

Mission Trip volunteers and other church members decorate lavish cakes, pies, and cupcakes that are auctioned off to the highest bidder.

This year, there will also be a brunch sponsored by Fellowship. **You are invited** to donate a cake or baked good, or just come and join us for lunch and for a wonderful way to feed your sweet tooth, all for a good cause.

What's Going On with National Youth Event?

Bethlehem will be sending eight youth and three chaperones to National Youth Event on July 26-30. We have two families that are interested in attending, if there are still spaces available when family registration opens on May 1.

Our fundraising for National Youth Event is progressing well. In total, we've raised about \$3150, which is edging closer to our goal of \$4100. We raised just over \$1500 from the Paste E L'Arte fundraiser on March 5, and our envelope fundraiser has raised just over \$1650, with about 25 envelopes left to be filled. We are trying to raise enough to cover a third of the costs for youth and half the cost for chaperones. The regular youth account will also match these costs.

National Youth Event Fundraiser

*Help our youth get to the 2016 National Youth Event
by taking part in our
Numbered Envelope Fundraiser*



Envelopes are still available for this fundraiser,
and are located just outside of the office.

Please stop by, take an envelope, and return with your
donation matching the number on the front.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE DONATED!

Human Foosball – A Community Event and Fundraiser for Ozone House

The Youth and Young Adult Ministries is sponsoring a fun new community-wide event: "Human Foosball."

It is a life-size re-creation of a foosball table where people hold onto metal rods that span the width of the court and kick a soccer ball back and forth into a goal. Teams are made up of six people of any skill level—two forwards, three centers, and one goalie.

This event is tentatively scheduled for April 22, starting at 5 p.m. Registration is \$60 per team. All proceeds will go to Ozone House—a crisis, support, and housing agency for youth and families in crisis or conflict.

There will be prizes for the winning team, and any group of six people can enter including groups from other churches, nonprofits, golf groups, roommates, or any other arrangement.

Be on the lookout for registration details via church email and Facebook.



FROM BETHLEHEM'S OPEN AND AFFIRMING TASK FORCE



During the past month, the ONA Task Force continued its efforts to engage the congregation in discussions and education around becoming an Open and Affirming congregation by offering two different types of activities for Bethlehem members.

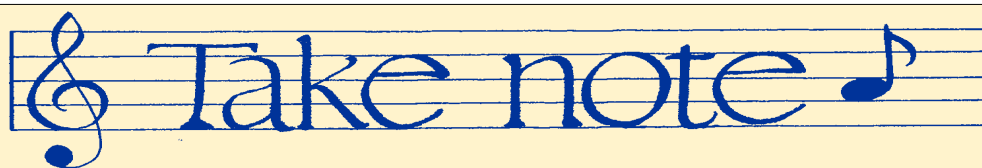
Bible study sessions examining the so-called "clobber passages" were held on February 12 and March 15. These sessions were led by task force co-chair Jessica Joslin and included good discussions concerning these passages and how homophobia has been read into the Bible, and not vice versa.



A panel discussion titled "ONA: Why or Why Not?" was held on March 13

A panel discussion titled "ONA: Why or Why Not?" was held on March 13 following the 10:00 worship service. Five panelists participated: ONA Task Force member Jessica Joslin; Pastor John Kennedy; Roger Meiller, Director of Religious Services & Church Relations for Evangelical Homes of Michigan; and Bethlehem members Marie Slotten and Andrew Keller. Andrew participated via video conferencing from Amsterdam in the Netherlands!

The panelists began by telling the group of approximately 40 audience members why it is important to them personally for Bethlehem UCC to become an ONA congregation. Conversation, questions, and answers among the panelists and audience rounded out this session.



2016 Bethlehem Bridges Concert Series

April 10, 7:30 pm Ann Arbor Camerata

Please come hear the Ann Arbor Camerata orchestra as they perform the Bach, Easter Oratorio and Mozart's Violin Concerto Number 5. This chamber orchestra is comprised of local professionals and students who together form an intimate, robust and thrilling ensemble. They perform old and new works, and collaborate with composers and artists at the University of Michigan.

May 15, 4:00 pm Gail and Andrew Jennings perform Music of Mendelssohn

CPR Training

Harriette Ehnis

**CALLING ALL STAFF, USHERS,
GREETERS, VOLUNTEERS,
AND TEACHERS**

A CPR CLASS is coming to BETHLEHEM

Thursday, April 14, 7 pm

&

Friday, April 15, 10 am



We are again offering the "Hands-only" CPR class at Bethlehem Church. This is also called "Citizen CPR" and will be conducted by a Red Cross instructor. This program teaches CPR and the use of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED). There will be hands on training only, NO TESTING, and no certification.

We believe this program will serve us well at Bethlehem and we are encouraging staff, ushers, greeters, volunteers, and teachers to take advantage of this opportunity. Even though you may feel that you aren't able to carry out every task, there is a role for each one of us.

What you learn may save a life.

The 1-1/2 hour short course will be held on Thursday, April 14th at 7:00 pm and again on Friday, April 15th at 10 am. Signup sheets will be located on the bulletin board outside the church office. Please direct questions to Harriette Ehnis or to the church office.

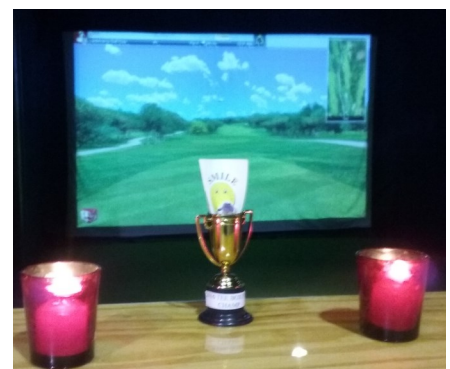
Tuesday Golf Group

The Tuesday golf group will move from the weekly indoor Tee Box golf to outdoors this month.

As we closed our winter golf we held a putting contest that was won by Scott Lovelace.



Harriette Ehnis provided the candles for the event.



If you are interested in joining us this season please contact Tom Ziesemer for the men's group and Barb Marshall for the ladies golf.

MEMORIALS & GIFTS

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FUND

Martha Ebinger Memorial

GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Theresa Schmale Honorarium
Martha Ebinger Memorial

PARSONAGE RENOVATION FUND

Rev & Mrs Schmale Memorial

PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Martha Ebinger Memorial
Joseph O'Reilly Memorial
Al Paul Memorial

RADIO FUND

Berniece Lewis Memorial
Al Paul Memorial
Jacob Paul Memorial

*Gifts listed were received through
March 31, 2016*

RADIO SPONSORSHIPS

March 6

Paid for by the Bethlehem Radio Fund

March 13

Sponsored by **Alethea Helbig**, in honor of her new great grandson, **Craig Spolding**, born February 27.

March 20

Sponsored by **Sue Canfield**, in loving memory of her niece **Laura Ann Jaworowski**, and her friend **Wilma Wahl** (both born on March 17), and her brother-in-law **Ron Jaworowski**.

March 27

Sponsored by **Jamie and Bob Dylenski**, in loving memory of Jamie's grandmother **Bertha Hartley**, who was passionate about the role of radio in bringing the message to all of God's children.

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO MADE THIS LENT AND EASTER
A BEAUTIFUL AND BLESSED SEASON.**



Ongoing Outreach Opportunities at Bethlehem Church

Please consider joining in!
Sign-up sheets are in the office hallway.



FOOD GATHERERS COMMUNITY KITCHEN

(First Sunday of the Month)

Please sign up in the office hallway.

Cook 12-2:30, Clean 2:30-5

FOOD GATHERERS FOOD BARREL & PRODUCE

Bring non-perishable items at any time, and place them in the food barrel in the library. Fresh produce collection happens on the second Sunday of the month, November through April.

ALPHA HOUSE OUTREACH

Meals and activities for the families using Alpha House for temporary shelter, food and support services. **5:30 dinner, 6:45 activities**
(4 times a year - next date is June 9)

PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

(4th Tuesday, during school year)

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM 2:30 - 4:30

Serve nutritious snacks for kids in after school tutoring.

PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Fresh Food Distribution

Every Friday, from 9-12

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARD UPDATE

April is time to renew your Kroger Community Rewards for Bethlehem. **Food = Money!!!**

All shopper's **must re-enroll** during the month of **April** in the Kroger Community Rewards Program to designate BUCC as their organization to receive funds. Go to the Kroger.com website, click on Community, and then click on Community Rewards to update. Questions?

Contact Linda Young

[734-223-5105](tel:734-223-5105)



Peace Neighborhood Center Outreach 2016



Peace
Neighborhood
Center

Message from Sue Muir



I have posted the dates we need we need volunteers on the bulletin board outside the church office.

2 more volunteers are needed for May 24.

The commitment is from
2:30-4:45 pm.

Please consider volunteering!

Contact Sue Muir at 734-761-9795
or suemuir@comcast.net



Every Friday, February - June,
Food Gatherers provides fresh produce to families in need that we help distribute at Peace Neighborhood Center from 9-11 am.
No signup is necessary.



Visit Peace's website for more information about their programs and assistance to our community.

www.peaceneighborhoodcenter.org

Palm Sunday Brunch Thank-You

Our first Palm Sunday Brunch was a huge success.

There was a wonderful selection of food, the colored pancakes were a big hit, and there was a spirit of fellowship felt throughout the dining hall. I want to thank all those who helped with the event and/or contributed food, and anyone else who might not have been put on my list. Fellowship looks forward to making this a "new" annual event on Palm Sunday.

Again, many many thanks! Jane Ziesemer, Fellowship Chair



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

*Jan Eadie
Debbie Belcher
Gert Eisele
Patti and Chuck Judson
Dindy and Mike Haab
Gretchen Korzuck
Patti Maki
Jan Burnham
Paul Marshall
Jennifer Vasquez
Myrna Pancost
Wanda Monica
Sue Muir
Carole Katz
Barb Fisher
Tim Mumshaw
Mike & Harriette Ehnis
Jane Schmerberg
Jill Schwartz
Pamela Harris
Marj Alber
Karen Kennedy
Nancy Gentner
Sharon Edwards
Angelica Lewis
Betty Hills*

Bethlehem's Ministry Team

Rev. John Kennedy	Pastor
Rev. Greg Briggs	Associate Pastor
Rev. Orval L.E. Willimann	Pastor Emeritus
Carol Leyshock	Parish Administrator
Betty Clark	Financial Administrator
Donna Whitney	Office Support Specialist
Arianne Abela	Director of Music
Gail Jennings	Organist
Jim Rowan	Director of Handbells

The *Visitor*

is printed 12 times a year

Our Mission

To worship God,
To learn and live the
Word of God,
To engage in Christian
fellowship and service,
To invite others to join us
on our faith journey in the
ministry of Jesus Christ.