

The Visitor

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
October 2016

an invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy



“In This Place I Will Bring Peace”

Rev. John L. Kennedy

Then the LORD sent this message through the prophet Haggai: “Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins? This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: Look at what’s happening to you! You have planted much but harvest little. You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put on clothes but cannot keep warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes! “This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: Look at what’s happening to you! Now go up into the hills, bring down timber, and rebuild my house. (Haggai 1)

The Book of Haggai consists of two short chapters (in my Bible it’s 2 pages long). Our Biblical prophets are not so much fortune/future tellers as they are “forth tellers,” meaning they speak a word of truth about the current state of affairs. Haggai is diagnosing a set of symptoms. Symptom one is that the people have confused their priorities. They have been focusing on their own priorities and not God’s priorities, and they are floundering. Nothing seems to satisfy their deepest needs because they are trying to fill their deepest needs with stuff and fluff. Haggai is also giving a prognosis; if their priorities are not changed, they will cease to have any identity or be a

people of God. Symptom 2 is that the temple lies in ruins, which is also an outward sign of their weakened spiritual health.

Israel, the Northern Kingdom of God, has already been captured by Assyria. The people of Israel have been taken into captivity and blended in with the prevailing pagan culture. The people of Israel cease to exist forever. The Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, was captured by Babylonia in 605 BCE and held in captivity. In 539 BCE, Babylonia was conquered by Persia under the rule of Cyrus the Great, and the people of Judah were allowed to go home.

(continued on page 4)

IN THIS ISSUE



Rev. John Kennedy	Page 1	CROP Walk Thank You	Page 8
Letter to the Congregation	Page 2	Outreach Opportunities	Page 9
Upcoming Events	Page 3	Memorials and Gifts	Page 10
Bazaar	Page 5	Parish Records	Page 10
Golf Outing Pictures	Page 6	Church World Service	Page 11
Bach Benefit Concert	Page 7	Community Rewards	Page 11
A Bit of History	Page 7	Covenant of Welcome	Page 12
Veterans’ Breakfast	Page 8	Mission and Staff	Page 12

A LETTER TO THE BETHLEHEM CHURCH CONGREGATION

September 25, 2016

Dear Bethlehem Church Members,

This letter supplements the information that was shared last week regarding the elimination of the Associate Pastor position from our current staff.

The future direction of Bethlehem continues to be an urgent matter. Our congregation has been in transition for more than five years. The new governance structure and the Bylaws that this congregation adopted on October 19, 2014, charge the Leadership Council and the pastor with the responsibility of setting the strategic direction of the church.

As we worked to accomplish this, it was clear that we needed to establish a new course. With this as our goal, we are focusing on new models of staffing which may include creating one or two part-time positions. We have identified two basic fundamentals of our mission that require immediate attention. One is to have a staff member whose only duty is to develop engaging programs for our children and youth. The person(s) hired for this position will be expected to work closely with staff and lay leaders to implement ideas that enhance our vision and goals. We also need a staff member whose entire task is to broaden the scope of offerings that allow every member to increase and strengthen their faith. When these areas are strong, they offer a natural pathway for the congregation to grow.

Preliminary discussion around how to achieve these two goals has occurred. However, we will create opportunities for every member to share their ideas and desires.

Three members who have played a large part in leading the youth program, Sarah Herwick, C.J. Slotten, and Jesse Wilcox, volunteered to continue the program that is set up for this year. They are committed to this until we are able to fulfill staff changes.

Greg has been with us through some difficult times—Martha's sudden departure, Don's term as interim, and our search for a settled pastor. We appreciate the continuity and leadership he provided during this period. We recognize that Greg is a passionate, devoted leader; we wish him all the best as he seeks his next position. Because of the many strong relationships Greg had in the congregation, Leadership Council again encourages that individual expressions of thanks and appreciation be extended to Greg. These can be sent directly to him or brought to the office where Carol will forward them to Greg. Any checks should be written directly to Greg Briggs.

We look forward to your presence and assistance as we reinvigorate Bethlehem's mission.

Rev. John Kennedy, Pastor

Sue Buday, Chair Leadership Council

Members of Leadership Council

Michelle Loukotka

Shannon O'Reilly

Cresson Slotten

Sue Wortman

Kris Lovelace

Karen Samford

November Visitor Deadline



The November Visitor
will be available
on Oct. 30.
Please submit your
articles by
Oct. 24.

BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
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 & Information

Community Outreach Opportunities are detailed on page 9.



**FRESH PRODUCE COLLECTION
FOR FOOD GATHERERS
STARTS UP AGAIN
NOVEMBER 18**

(and takes place the third Sunday of each month until spring)

Please bring your donations of fresh produce to either service and place on the altar.

IT'S PRETZEL TIME!
Plan now to be a pretzel roller!

HOLY ROLLERS PRETZELS - Oct. 6
Rolling 9 a.m., sales 10:30-12



PARKING LOT PRETZELS - Oct. 28
Rolling/baking, 7 a.m., cleanup begins about 11 a.m.



**HERITAGE SUNDAY
WORSHIP SERVICE**
Sunday, October 9, 10 a.m.

Please join us as we celebrate our heritage during the 10 a.m. worship service with special music and readings.



**FOOTBALL PARKING
HELP NEEDED**

Earn \$700 for Bethlehem in just a few hours.

- Sign up online at Bethlehem-ucc.org
- Sign-up sheets on the Youth Board (by the office)
- Call the office at 734-665-6149

REMAINING DATES: October 22; Nov. 5 & 19



SAVE THE DATE
**FRIDAY,
NOVEMBER 11
FOR BETHLEHEM'S
STAR BAZAAR
AND LUNCHEON!**



**THE FLU VACCINATION CLINIC
WILL BE RESCHEDULED.**

We will let you know as soon as we have a date in place.

TOTENFEST MEMORIAL SERVICE **Sunday, November 6**

At this service, everyone will be invited to come forward and light a candle in memory of loved ones who have passed away. In addition, we will have a special insert remembering all who have passed away since our last Totenfest Service on November 1, 2015.

Please contact the office to let us know of any immediate family members you would like listed in our Totenfest memorial bulletin.

In Memory.....



***“In This Place I Will Bring Peace” Rev. Kennedy
(continued from page 1)***

When they returned home the great temple of Solomon was in ruins. The people began to rebuild their homes and they didn't just rebuild their homes, many began to add one lavish luxury after another. They were acting as separate individuals each with their own personal agenda instead of uniting in solidarity behind God's bigger vision. God blesses nations only when they were willing to be a blessing to other people and nations.

Then I will take pleasure in it and be honored, says the LORD. You hoped for rich harvests, but they were poor. And when you brought your harvest home, I blew it away. Why? Because my house lies in ruins, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, while all of you are busy building your own fine houses. (Haggai 1)

Haggai tells his nation that God is not against them but wants them to flourish but that only happens when they put their priorities in sync with God's priorities. While they rebuild the temple, they will be united as a people by a bigger purpose and relearn what it means to be filled in their hearts and souls. Haggai tells them that they will not be alone, God will be with them, and God ignited the enthusiasm and morale of the whole people. Nothing is as contagious as hope, a meaningful vision, and a sense of progress.

Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, gave the people this message from the LORD: "I am with you, says the LORD!" So the LORD sparked the enthusiasm...of the whole remnant of God's people. They began to work on the house of their God, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, on September 21, of the second year of King Darius's reign.

Sometimes when the work begins it can seem overwhelming. When workers set out to do a job and find that there is far more work involved than it first seemed. As many of you know, the parsonage has been undergoing major repairs. Not luxury items but things like a new driveway, electrical repair, heating and air conditioning, and siding. When

Randy Schneider and his crew began removing the old aluminum siding, they found extensive sections of rotten wood throughout the house and garage. The wood floor joists were so rotten that the garage was not even attached to the concrete slab and the garage shook when it was hit with just a hand. Old wooden windows were so rotted out that the entire frames had to be completely rebuilt. The heating and air conditioning was 38 years old, and the electrical panel was considered a fire risk. One church member made a comment that "I was in the parsonage for the Christmas party and it seemed fine to me." Often what is out of sight is out of mind, yet the workers are the ones who can see the true condition beneath the service. So can God and prophets.

Our beautiful church complex was built in three stages: the sanctuary in 1895 (126 years ago), the 1933 addition (83 years ago), and the 1966 addition (50 years ago). Our sanctuary is absolutely beautiful, but our newest section is a half a century old. Many have worked hard on repairing and maintaining our facility, yet there are many needs inside the beautiful granite exterior. The issues involve major infrastructure repairs in a world that has changed dramatically in the past 83 years and even 50 years ago. When our church complex was built, it was in a neighborhood of children, families, yards, and schools around the corner. Today we are in the city and hoping for children in a neighborhood where there are few. In our world, fully heated and air-conditioned and handicapped-accessible buildings are expected, and so are convenient parking and green spaces for activities.

On any given week many of us only see a fraction of our building, but our Facilities Ministry Team is aware of the growing list of issues and the Finance Ministry Team is aware of the expenses every month that new bills come due from unbudgeted repairs. Our church facility is meant to serve the ministries of the church and of the members who participate in the life of our faith community.

(continued on next page)

Bethlehem's Star Bazaar



Friday
November 11
10:00 am - 2 pm

Luncheon
11:00 am-1:00 pm

Beef or Turkey, Assorted Salads, Pies
\$10/\$5 for children
Tickets on sale at Church Office beginning October 9
Call 734-665-6149 to reserve tickets

Fundraiser for Peace Neighborhood Center, Food Gatherers,
Property Improvement & the Women's Treasury

**Bethlehem United
Church of Christ**

423 S. FOURTH AVENUE
ANN ARBOR, MI 48104
734-665-6149

**Open at
10:00 am**

★BAKE SALE
★CHRISTMAS
RECYCLED
★CRAFTS
★QUILT
DISPLAY

**We will again be looking for
people to donate:**

- Christmas decorations for re-sale
- Regift items
- Handcrafted items
- Pies, baked goods, especially German cookies

How can you help? This year we will again have a room for outside artists.

If you know someone who would like to reserve a table, contact Debbie Karr at 734-730-4229.

We are not meant to serve the building, but the building is meant to serve God as we serve others, too.

God is not done with Bethlehem UCC. There is much left to experience and do. God is calling out to us to rebuild the temple and not just our facilities. God is calling us to rebuild our faith family, our vision, and our ministries. Let us be strong and go to work, for God is with us. The future glory of Bethlehem can be greater, and in this place God will bring peace to us and through us.

Then on October 17 of that same year, the LORD sent another message through the prophet Haggai...to the remnant of God's people there in the

land: 'Does anyone remember this house—this Temple—in its former splendor? How, in comparison, does it look to you now? It must seem like nothing at all! But now the LORD says: Be strong, all you people still left in the land. And now get to work, for I am with you, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. The future glory of this Temple will be greater than its past glory, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. And in this place I will bring peace. I, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, have spoken!' (Haggai 2)

God's grace and peace,
Pastor John



Pastor John enjoyed his golf get-away after a busy Sunday service.

Bethlehem's Annual Fellowship Golf Outing was again a big success



Harriette Ehnis was the 2016 recipient of the "Prayer Shawl Award."

Matt Perros and the gang enjoyed lunch together at the golf club.



Jim Stadel took a much needed break on #7, the toilet-seat hole.



Pastor John Neumann, 1877 - 1903

On January 4, 1845, a building site had been purchased at the northeast corner of First and Washington streets. In 1849 the congregation dedicated the building, and it was given the name of "Bethlehem Church."

Pastor John Neumann from Bethel Church in Freedom Township came to Bethlehem Church in 1877. He was born March 21, 1841, in Imbsheim near Strasbourg in Alsace. Neumann studied at the Basel Mission House in Switzerland and came to America in 1867.

A lot was available on Fourth Avenue, and the hope that the congregation might someday build a new church here motivated the congregation to build a parsonage on a part of this site. In our church at the northeast corner of First and Washington in 1883 Bethlehem Church celebrated its 50th anniversary. A report for the Friedensbote, official publication of the Evangelical Synod, wrote, "May the Lord preserve and increase this hunger for the Word of God at Bethlehem Church...with all of her descendants here on earth still faithful to their calling."

BACH AT BETHLEHEM

Sunday, October 23, 4 p.m., Bethlehem Church Sanctuary



*A freewill-offering concert to benefit
Religious Action for Affordable Housing
featuring organ, chamber orchestra,
and the
Ann Arbor Youth Chorale/Descant Choir
With Darlene Kuperus,
organist and artistic director*



This year's CROP Walk was once again a great success. We would like to thank the following for walking on September 25, 2016:

Monique, Margy, Jamie, and Alex Hunter, and friend; Marjorie Alber; Jamie Dylenski; and Tom Ziesemer.

We would also like to thank ALL of YOU who graciously contributed donations.

Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice hosted the 42nd Annual Ann Arbor CROP Hunger Walk. CROP Hunger Walks are community-wide events sponsored by Church World Service and organized by religious groups, businesses, schools and others to raise funds to end hunger in the U.S. and around the world. More than 1600 walks take place across the U.S. annually. ICPJ has managed this historic Ann Arbor walk since 1975 and has raised a total of \$3.2 million. Last year, over 400 individuals walked and raised almost \$50,000.

Seventy-five percent of funds raised are granted to Church World Service and their partner agencies. The remaining 25% are granted to various local hunger and poverty relief organizations.

Thank you. Tom Ziesemer



2016 Bethlehem Veterans' Monthly Breakfasts
October 7, November 4, December 2
8:30 a.m.
Classic Cup Café on Jackson Road

A breakfast with our veterans will be held on the first Friday of every month, beginning in October, at the Classic Cup Café.

This breakfast is open to all of our Bethlehem vets. If you would like to bring a friend (fellow vet), please let me know so we have a proper head count.

Hope to see you there! Tom Ziesemer (ziesemertn@gmail.com, 734-663-0378)





Bethlehem Church Ongoing Outreach Opportunities

Please consider joining in!

Sign-up sheets are in the office hallway.

ALPHA HOUSE OUTREACH

October 2, 5:30 and 6:45

Volunteers make dinner and help with activities for families using Alpha House for temporary shelter, food, and support services. Email Stacey Stites at rickandstace@comcast.net to help.

5:30 - Dinner

6:45 - After-dinner kids' activities

FOOD GATHERERS COMMUNITY KITCHEN

October 2 and November 6 (first Sunday of each month)

Please sign up in the office hallway. Cook 12-2:30, clean 2:30-5.

PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER (111 N. Maple Road) (see below)

October 25 (fourth Tuesday of each month, 2:30-4:45 p.m.)

After-School Program to serve nutritious snacks to school children prior to their tutoring.

Sign-up is located on the bulletin board by the office.

PLUS Fresh Food Distribution Fridays, 9-12. Please join us.

2016-17 OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES



Peace
Neighborhood
Center



AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Volunteers are needed on the 4th Tuesday of September through May to serve elementary school children nutritional snacks before going into a tutoring program.

Commitment is 2:30-4:45 pm

Please sign up on bulletin board by Office

Peace Neighborhood Center 1111 N. Maple Road
Ann Arbor 48103

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

FRIDAY FRESH FOOD DISTRIBUTION

September through May, volunteers are needed on Fridays to help sort and then distribute fresh produce, provided by Food Gatherers, to families eligible to take part in this program.

Commitment: Any time between 9am-12:00noon It's not necessary to sign up....just come when you can!

This also takes place at Peace Neighborhood Center



MEMORIALS & GIFTS

CHURCH SCHOOL FUND

Lois Haeussler Memorial
Sable Marshall Memorial

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE KITS

David Fisher 60th Birthday Memorial

GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Theresa Schmale 93rd Birthday Honorarium

PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Lois Haeussler Memorial

RADIO FUND

Lois Haeussler Memorial

**Gifts listed were received through
August 31, 2016.**

RADIO MINISTRY SPONSORSHIPS

- September 11** In memory of **Lois Haeussler** from her loving family and friends.
- September 18** From **Fritz and Evelyn Port**, with thanks for the outreach of the Radio Ministry.

RADIO BROADCAST REMINDER

There are still 2016 dates available to sponsor a Radio Broadcast. Our 10 a.m. service is broadcast every Sunday, on WAAM Radio (1600 AM).

Sponsor sheets in the office hallway.
Please sign up or call the office.

A weekly Radio Sponsorship is \$230. A sponsorship can be used to honor or remember a loved one. In addition, general donations of any amount are appreciated.

Thank you!

PARISH RECORDS

DEATHS

Geraldine Briegel - August 26, 2016
Wayne Larmee - September 16, 2016

NEW MEMBERS

*We welcome to Bethlehem Church
our two newest members,
Sherry Marcy and Nancy Quay.*

Nancy is a Master Gardener and is a private practice Psychotherapist and Sherry enjoys beekeeping, Tai Chi, and choir. Sherry and Nancy have been married for 32 years. They have a son Benjamin, who lives in Ithaca New York, and a daughter Jesha in Knoxville Tennessee.

Welcome Sherry and Nancy!





CHURCH WORLD SERVICE



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE KITS

We Are Collecting Now for Our October Shipment

Thank you for all the items you have contributed for Church World Service.
Assembly dates are October 18 and 19 in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us!

3 easy ways to support Bethlehem. All you have to do is shop!

Support Bethlehem through these Community Rewards Programs



Kroger
Busch's
amazonsmile

- For Kroger rewards, go to Kroger.com, click "Sign In," and follow the directions.
- For Busch's rewards, go to buschs.com, go to your MyWay account, and click the Cash for Education icon.
- For Amazon rewards, shop at smile.amazon.com (see info at right).
- See Bethlehem-ucc.org for complete information.

Welcome to
amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

- Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to **Bethlehem United Church of Christ** whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.

You can select a different charitable organization after signing in.

- AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.
- Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com

Covenant of Welcome

We, at Bethlehem United Church of Christ, declare ourselves an
Open and Affirming congregation where we celebrate Christ's extravagant love.
We covenant with God and one another to welcome the diverse tapestry of all people,
no matter their age, race, nationality, ethnicity,
economic circumstance, marital or family status, physical or mental ability,
sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
We invite everyone—believers and questioners, seekers and skeptics—
to share their gifts in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship,
sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings of our congregation.



Bethlehem's Ministry Team

Rev. John Kennedy	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
Paolo Debuque	Interim 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.