

The Visitor

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
July 2017

an invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy



Our relationship with Washtenaw Refugee Welcome continues to grow!

Our relationship with Washtenaw Refugee Welcome (WRW) continues to grow! We are grateful that Rita Toderan and Lamia Sharmeen joined us for worship on Sunday, June 11 and talked with our children during the Children's Message. As this letter goes to press, we're excited that a group of Bethlehem youth and members from the broader congregation will attend WRW's World Refugee Day potluck on Thursday, June 29.



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SMALL THINGS, GREAT LOVE

BY LILY TINKER FORTEL

"What I do, you cannot do; but what you do, I cannot do. The needs are great, and none of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things with great love, and together we can do something wonderful."

-Mother Teresa

As UCC members gathering in Baltimore for General Synod this week aspire to embody a "formal church witness" to the needs of our world and to "the Still-speaking God," we here at Bethlehem are seeking to do the same. Each month, in our own ways, we work to support and grow a Bethlehem that answers the call of Jesus – a community that meets the needs of individuals, celebrates the gifts of community members, and supports the manifestation of love and justice in our world.

Sometimes the needs we face in our individual lives, our communities, and our world seem overwhelming. We have hopes and dreams that are sometimes muted by laments and grave concerns. Where we *know* community and love *could* exist, we see division and hatred. We know Jesus came to profess a different way – an alternative to oppression, division, and inequality. We believe in that way of Love; we have committed ourselves to it. Still, the realities can seem so daunting.

Sometimes when things seem daunting, I find comfort in 1 Corinthians 12. In First Corinthians, Paul is writing to an early community of Jesus followers.

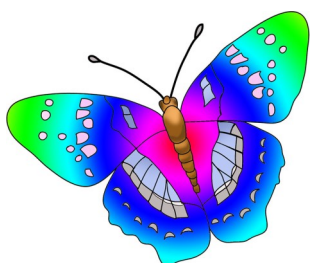
The community ("The church of God that is in Corinth") is situated in the context of the City of Corinth, a city, which the Roman Empire destroyed and then colonized, and where the outcasts of Rome had been sent. The community addressed in Paul's letter is in conflict.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul affirms the "varieties of gifts" we find in communities: "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:4; 12:7). Paul uses the analogy of the body to explore community: "Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many" (12:14). Members of the body – foot, hand, ear, eye, head. Even if we deny we are members of the body, we are still part of it (12:15). Our diversity and uniqueness is essential: "If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is there are many members yet one body" (12:19).

Scholars I admire believe that, because this exploration of community precedes the famous exploration of love found in 1 Corinthians 13, it is important to understand that exploration of love not only as an instruction for how we treat one another in interpersonal relationships, but also – and, perhaps, especially – for how we are to treat one another in community. Community where nobody is excluded (12:15); community where God gives "the great honor to the inferior member" (12:25); community where "if one member suffers, all suffer together with it" (12:26).

(Continued on next page)

August Visitor Deadline



Deadline
to submit
articles and
photos is
July 24.

BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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www.bethlehem-ucc.org

www.facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2

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So, this text comforts me in several ways:

- It reminds me that conflict is not new. It affirms that we can build loving, liberating community – even in struggle – in the midst of injustice and oppression.
- It assures me that my gifts and talents are critical to building the loving world we seek; but no more critical than the gifts and talents everyone else has. I can take my piece and I must strive to do my best, but I don't have to do it all.
- It affirms coming together in community – family, Bethlehem, civic organizations and non-profits, the UCC Synod in Baltimore, the global church – to witness to the needs of the world.
- It reminds me that love isn't always easy, but it is beautiful!
- It proclaims that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves, and that our gifts and talents are critical in the collective work of manifesting love and justice in the vast and interconnected web of existence.

I've seen some of the many talents and gifts you bring to your families and friends, to our community here at Bethlehem, and to our world.

I've been inspired by the ways you live into your faith and your love of Bethlehem, honor your hopes for Bethlehem, and embody your visions for our world.

May we find comfort and inspiration this month. May we be loved and honored for the fullness of who we are. May we love and honor others for the fullness of who they are. May our talents shine, and our needs be met. May our fears be honored, and our joys be celebrated. May we bring joy and comfort to those who fear. May we find connection where we might otherwise be lonely. May we be connection for those who feel isolated. In the spirit of Mother Teresa, may the small things we do with great love have ripples beyond our wildest imagination - and, together, may we do something wonderful.



Notes from the June Leadership Council Meeting

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Three Stephen Leaders will be attending training in August. Classes for Stephen Ministers will be held in the fall. ◆ Lily is working to set up an intergenerational mission trip for August. Next year there will be an intergenerational mission trip as well as one for youth only. ◆ Pastor John informed us the church has received a substantial bequest from Lois Haeussler. ◆ The Leadership Council accepted recommendations from the Finance Team to use Hutzel funds to cover Groundcover rent for July to December and authorize Ken Tappe and Jeff Wortman to direct Bank of Ann Arbor regarding our Investment Account. ◆ The sanctuary lighting project will move forward as approved by the congregation in Jan 2016. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Capital Improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Facilities Team should obtain bids for all structural issues. * Prioritization of capital projects will be done by representatives from the Leadership Council and the Facilities Team, with final approval by the Leadership Council. * The main hallway and entry will be painted. * The two restrooms on the first floor in the office hallway and the one on the sanctuary level will be renovated. * The Leadership Council along with members of the Facilities Team will be working on a plan for renovation of the fellowship hall. ◆ Website changes: Ministry teams will send any changes for their pages to the office. ◆ Pastor John will form the Stewardship Team with the help of Sue Buday. |
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EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM & YOUTH GROUP



Backyard BBQ

Thanks to all who came to our Backyard BBQ on Sunday, June 4! We had a wonderful time with great food, fun, and games!

Thanks to those who brought big yard games

from the Ann Arbor library and to those who helped with setup and food preparation!



Youth Group in July!

We'll continue Youth Group in July!
Here are important dates!

Thursday, July 6 – 6:30 p.m.

Youth Group BBQ/hang out at church

Tuesday, July 11 – 2:00 p.m.

Youth Group meetup

Thursday, July 13 – 6:30 p.m.

Youth Group outing TBD

Wednesday, July 19

Pre-Art Fair Youth Group BBQ/
hang out at Bethlehem

Thursday, July 20

NO Youth Group, but Art Fair parking
throughout the day (see July 19)

Thursday,

July 20 – Sunday July 23!

Art Fair Parking Fundraiser for
Youth Group. Please sign up
to help!

Thursday, July 27

Youth Group outing TBD



Lake House Party
Swimming, BBQ,
Campfire!

On June 22, the
Youth Group
gathered at the
Schmerberg's lake
house in Saline for a
fun evening outing!

Youth Group Lock-In
Friday, June 2
Thanks to Jesse Wilcox and Jamie
Raab for your leadership at the lock-in
and to Jane and Kurt Schmerberg for
coming early Saturday to cook a deli-
cious breakfast for our tired group!



From Lily: Events & Spiritual Growth



A 2017 Habitat Trip Is in the Works!

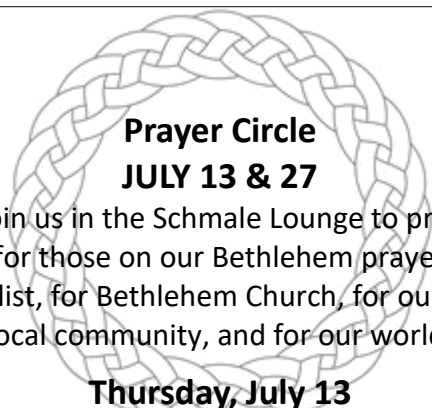
We're planning a 3-day Habitat Trip for August. We'll leave on a Sunday after church and return Tuesday evening.

Please contact Jamie Raab (jmraab05@gmail.com) or Lily Tinker Fortel (lily@bethlehem-ucc.org) if have questions and/or you'd like to be involved in the planning.

Cake Auction!

We'll also be planning a cake auction fundraiser for the Habitat Trip for sometime in July.

Watch weekly emails and bulletins for more details about the Habitat Trip and the Cake Auction!



Prayer Circle JULY 13 & 27

Join us in the Schmale Lounge to pray for those on our Bethlehem prayer list, for Bethlehem Church, for our local community, and for our world.

Thursday, July 13
11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Thursday, July 27
11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

If you can't join us at church, consider marking these times on your calendar and joining us in spirit.

Art Fair Parking

It's that time of year again! Each year Art Fair Parking is a significant fundraiser for the Bethlehem Youth Group. Thank you to those who have already signed up!

If you are able to sign up to work a shift, please do so in the church office, or email Lily to get the link to the online sign-up form!

The online sign-up is also at bethlehem-ucc.org/current-events



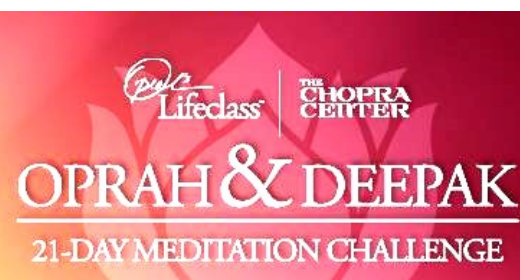
Spiritual Practices Series

Let's learn together! In August, Lily will lead a series of workshops in which we'll explore and discuss a variety of spiritual practices.

**This informal, experience-based series will take place
Wednesdays, August 9, 16, 23, and 30, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.**

Please let Lily know if you're interested in participating!
Mark your calendars and keep your eyes out for more information in the weeks to come.

21-Day Meditation Experience July 17 - August 6



A couple of times each year, Oprah Winfrey and Deepak Chopra offer a free, 21-Day Meditation Experience through the Chopra Center. For those interested in exploring meditation as a daily practice, these experiences can be a nice introduction. Each day, from July 17 thru August 6, the program will provide a 20-minute audio recording, which includes a reflection and a guided meditation.

We'll plan to do the daily meditation practice individually and have 4-6 check-ins for discussions, times TBD among participants.

If you think you might like to be part of an easygoing group of Bethlehem members experiencing and processing this program together, please contact Lily (lily@bethlehem-ucc.org).

General Synod of the United Church of Christ - At a Glance

For five days, from June 30 – July 4, The General Synod of the UCC will convene in Baltimore, Maryland. Here are some basics about General Synod for those of us following from home!

A summary of General Synod

“Every two years, General Synod brings together thousands of faithful members of the United Church of Christ for formal church witness, inspirational worship, and fellowship with friends (new and old).”
“In June 2017, thousands from across the country (and abroad) will gather for General Synod 2017 at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Maryland. Together, we will discern resolutions of witness, church structure, and function. We will stand up for issues that demand a faithful witness. And we will join together in worship each day to lift up the Stillspeaking God.”



“At General Synod 2017, we will ‘Make Glad!’ as we celebrate, debate, worship, and witness.”
—From synod.uccpages.org

Synod 101* — What Is Synod? Seven Things:

- I. The Church
 - a. Synod is one of the four components of The United Church of Christ. Synod “speaks to, and not for, other settings of the church.” The four components of the UCC are:
 - i. Local Churches
 - ii. Associations
 - iii. Conferences
 - iv. Synod
- II. An Occasion for Worship and Inspiration
 - a. Worship with famous and less known speakers, Bible studies.
- III. A Business Meeting
 - a. Synod is a business meeting governed by certain rules.
 - i. Business meetings include delegates and are open to the public and the news media, with a podium, a gavel, and votes on motions.
- IV. A Place for Leadership and Policy Setting
 - a. Synod sets policies for the work of UCC’s national ministries. While these policies are not mandates, they often “set a tone” by “urging, requesting, encouraging, or recommending” items for the UCC nationwide.
 - b. There are two types of resolutions considered at Synod:
 - i. Resolutions of Witness
 1. Resolutions of Witness address moral, ethical, or religious matters and require a 2/3 vote to pass.
 - ii. Prudential Resolutions
 1. Prudential Resolutions address policy, structure, or procedure, authorize programs, or request actions. They require a simple majority to pass.

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V. An Electing Body

- a. Synod elects several key leaders in the UCC, including:
 - i. Officers of the UCC, who are elected to staggered 4-year terms.
 - ii. Synod Moderator and Synod Assistant Moderator
 - iii. UCC Board of Directors

VI. An Experience

- a. Attendees hear speeches and sermons, experience worship and arts, attend workshops, and more.
- b. Those gathered respond to urgent matters of the world through service projects and actions.
- c. An opportunity to experience the “wholeness of the UCC and the global church on full glorious display.”

VII. Ongoing

- a. The work of Synod is ongoing throughout the year. The UCC Board of Directors meets at least twice yearly. The Synod Moderator and Assistant Moderator serve on the UCC Board of Directors.

Synod also includes a Youth Synod! For more information about Synod 2017, including speaker bios, agenda, and resolutions, visit www.ucc.org/synod.

We here at Bethlehem will try to post updates from Synod on our Bethlehem Facebook pages. Synod gatherings will be available to view via livestream at <http://synod.uccpages.org/live.html>.

**Lily compiled this summary of a YouTube video presentation by Hans Hoznagel titled “Synod 101.” The video is accessible at synod.uccpages.org.*

Bethlehem Church Ongoing Outreach Opportunities
Please consider joining in! Sign-up sheets are in the office hallway.



FOOD GATHERERS COMMUNITY KITCHEN

July 2 and August 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 Rd.)

Fresh Produce distribution, Fridays from 9–12.

FOOD GATHERERS FOOD BARREL

Place nonperishable food items in the food barrel in the library.



ALPHA HOUSE OUTREACH

August 10, 5:30 (dinner) & 6:45 (after-dinner kids' activities)

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

Women of Bethlehem

Marian Caswell

June 4, 1926–April 11, 2017

At our June board meeting for Women of Bethlehem, we spent some time together remembering Marian Caswell. She was a member of our women's board for many years, and we sorely miss her gentle nature, her wisdom, and her caring spirit.

Marian was most active on our board as the kitchen supervisor. She was the person who oversaw the kitchen in general and also recruited, over the years, hundreds of volunteers to help prepare and serve meals at our church. No matter what the occasion was, you could count on Marian to be in the kitchen or serving area giving direction to volunteers. She was also a member of the Holy Rollers pretzel group.

Marian was very active in the local Red Cross and promoted dozens of CPR training classes through the Red Cross for our congregation. She not only encouraged participation but also gave the training



herself. So many in our congregation learned this life-saving skill because of Marian.

Marian would give you the "shirt off her back." She was always ready to listen and then determine how she could help. She gave countless rides to members and friends to worship services and events. Her German potato salad and pecan pie were always sought out at church meals!

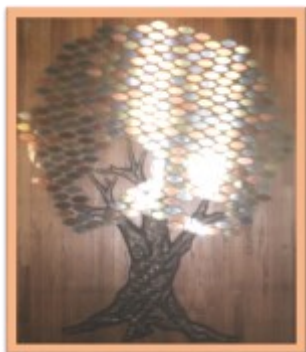
As we sat as a board and reflected on the many memories we have of Marian, the warmth of those memories filled the room. She will be sorely missed, and we are eternally grateful for the many years she was a part of our lives.

In the near future, the board will be placing a leaf on Bethlehem's Tree of Life as a small token of our gratitude for the life of Marian Caswell.

Women of Bethlehem Board

Sue Muir, Michelle Loukotka, Jacquie Katz, Debbie Karr, Laura Seyfried, Pat O'Reilly, Dindy Haab, Gert Eisele

Bethlehem's Tree of Life



If you are looking for a personal and meaningful gift for a special occasion or person(s), please consider the purchase of a leaf on our Tree of Life, located in the lobby of the 4th Avenue canopy entrance of Bethlehem.

Your leaf will commemorate what is important in your life and the lives of those you love and care about. It will also create a history of our times together here at Bethlehem and help to fund special projects and needs.

Order forms are available in the church office, at the 4th Avenue Welcome Center, or by emailing info@bethlehem-ucc.org.

Bethlehem Cemetery Update

bethlehemcemetery.net

Have you been to the Bethlehem Cemetery lately? What? You didn't know Bethlehem Church runs its own cemetery? Well, we do!

Bethlehem Cemetery is one of the oldest and prettiest cemeteries in Washtenaw County. It was founded in 1833 when Daniel Allmendinger gave Bethlehem Church one acre of land. Since then the cemetery has grown, and more than 8060 burials have occurred. In addition to traditional burials, Bethlehem Cemetery offers niches in the columbaria for ash interment and a memorial garden for those who wish to add ashes to the earth. And don't forget: Bethlehem Church members are offered a 20% discount on burial plots and niches; military veterans are offered 10%.

Bethlehem Cemetery has gone high tech with an online site for information about the cemetery and a feature to help you find the graves of friends and family. It can be accessed at www.bethlehemcemetery.net. Give it a try!

Recently, renovations have been undertaken including new water lines for outdoor faucets and repairs to the fence and uprooted trees. Some of these repairs were necessary because of the wind storm earlier in the spring. Additionally, repairs to the roadways in the cemetery and new tree plantings are planned.



All the renovations and improvements have cost money, of course, and this is where your help would be of assistance. Donations to help cover the cost of any of these projects may be made using the designated envelopes in your church envelope packet, the white envelopes in the pews, or through the Church office.

We hope you visit Bethlehem Cemetery soon and will consider helping us carry on the long tradition of the cemetery with your donations.

*Bethlehem Cemetery
is also the location
of our Faith and Food Garden.*



*Many thanks to our faithful gardeners
who make it possible for us to donate
fresh produce to Food Gatherers.*



MEMORIALS & GIFTS

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE FUND

David Zahn Memorial

GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Martha Holliday Memorial

David Zahn Memorial

MUSIC/CHOIR FUND

David Zahn Memorial

Gifts listed were received through
June 30, 2017

PARISH RECORDS

Deaths

David Zahn
June 5, 2017



RADIO BROADCAST SPONSORSHIPS

June 4 The June 4 Radio Broadcast was in memory of **Frederick and Lela Keppler** with love from the family.

June 11 The June 11 Radio Broadcast was in memory of **Frederick J. Seyfried** and **Nancy Lynn Seyfried** from Marion Seyfried.



*A sincere thank-you
to the members of Bethlehem
for the support and well wishes
as I recover from hip surgery.*

*All is well,
and I hope to rejoin the
garden group in the near future.*

—Kris Lovelace



Upcoming Events & Information

Community Outreach opportunities are on page 7.

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED

Monday, July 3, and Tuesday,
July 4, in observance of
Independence Day.



Bethlehem Veterans'
Monthly Breakfast
July 7, at 8:30 a.m.
Classic Cup Café
on Jackson Rd.



COFFEE HOUR CHANGES

We will have one coffee hour
between services in the lounge
from **July 2—September 3**.
This is a perfect opportunity
to spend time with people
attending both services!



Prayer Circle in July

Thurs, July 13

11:30 am – 12:15 pm

Thurs, July 27

11:30 am – 12:15 pm

See page 5 for details



Spiritual Practices Series

August 9, 16, 23, and 30

See page 5 for details

21-Day Meditation Experience

July 17 - August 6

Daily individual meditation plus
4-6 check-ins for discussions.

See page 5 for details

Park Cars

Get a FREE tan!

Bethlehem Fundraiser – Art Fair Parking

Sign up next to the office or call.

Parking cars in our lot is a
profitable and fun way to
fundraise for our church. **Lots of
help is needed parking cars!**
There are **many slots yet to fill**.
Please consider signing up!



******* July 20, 21, 22, & 23 *******

Adults and Youth needed for each shift:

Thursday, 7/20 8am, 11am, 1:30pm, 4pm (to 6:30pm)

Friday, 7/21 8am, 11am, 1:30pm, 4pm (to 6:30pm)

Saturday, 7/22 8am, 11am, 1:30pm, 4pm

Sunday, 7/23* 11:30am - 3pm, fair closes at 6pm

**On Sunday, we will need an attendant outside at
8 a.m. to monitor the lot for our church services.*

CALL FOR YOUTH MUSIC FOR SUMMER WORSHIP

If you would like to play or sing in an upcoming
summer service, please contact Arianne
at arianneabela@gmail.com.



**Thank you to Bethlehem Church, Washtenaw Dairy,
and the American Red Cross.**

**Together they organized a successful blood drive on
June 24 that collected 25 pints of blood!**



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.



Photo by Eileen Koprowski

Bethlehem's Ministry Team

Rev. John Kennedy

Pastor

Rev. Orval L.E. Willimann

Pastor Emeritus

Lily Tinker Fortel

Minister of Spiritual Growth
and Development

Carol Leyshock

Parish Administrator

Betty Clark

Financial Administrator

Donna Whitney

Parish Secretary

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.