



# The Visitor

Bethlehem  
United Church of Christ  
November 2017

*invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy*

## “Rebirth & Renewal”

Rev. John Kennedy

A Just World for All—United in Christ’s Love  
We Are Bethlehem UCC!

*But forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. For I am about to do **something new**. See, I have **already begun**! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness.*

—Isaiah 43:19

God’s love is an “always creating” love. One thing that always stays the same is that God is always doing something new! God created life in such a way that it never ends but simply transforms into a new way of being! To embrace God’s love is to embrace

and participate in continually being reborn and renewed. In the story of Jesus and Nicodemus, we hear their exchange:

*There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.” Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of*

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Submission Deadline

Articles and photos need to be submitted by Monday, Nov. 27 in order to be published in the December Visitor.



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UNITED  
in Christ’s love,  
a JUST world for all.

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](http://www.bethlehem-ucc.org)  
[www.facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2](https://www.facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2)

## 3 GREAT LOVES

### A UCC CAMPAIGN FOR 2017-2019

By Lily Tinker Fortel

At General Synod in July, UCC president and general minister John C. Dorhauer introduced the “3 Great Loves” campaign of the United Church of Christ. The campaign identifies “3 Great Loves” as a call to love of neighbor, love of children, and love of creation. It is meant to unite UCC congregations around the world over the next two years as we move toward the UCC’s vision of “A Just World for All” by “embodying and incarnating” love of neighbor, love of children, and love of creation.

Here at Bethlehem, we are already doing many things that connect with this campaign! The 3 Great Loves Campaign gives us the powerful opportunity to connect the things we’re already doing under a common frame with our UCC siblings around the world! The campaign also invites us—and all UCC congregations—to deepen our commitments to neighbor, children, and creation over the next two years. The campaign has three phases, each with a specific call to action:

- Now through Spring 2018 - Love of Neighbor - Denomination-wide drive to provide basic human needs to shelters, and to housing refugees, and the homeless.
- 2018-2019 - Love of Children - Denomination-wide school-supplies drive to address inequalities in our education systems.
- Spring 2019 - Love of Creation - A sponsored 5k that will raise money and awareness for the Earth.\*

In our Wednesday evening worship service last week, I had the joy of learning with members of Bethlehem as we discussed love. We explored 1 Corinthians 13:13, one of the key scriptures of the 3 Great Loves Campaign. [BOX “13 And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love.” 1 Corinthians 13:13] We talked about how Jesus invites us to love-in-



action, which honors our faith in Love and our hope in the possibility of a Just World for All. Perhaps the scripture doesn’t mean to imply that love ranks higher than faith and hope, but that faith and hope are deeply connected to, and intertwined with, love. We talked about the famous description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 [BOX: 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not

envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7]. Although this beautiful scripture is most often heard at weddings describing love of partners at an individual level, it is also a description for how we are called to love everyone with whom we find ourselves in community. I like to think of it as an invitation to the beautiful and comprehensive spiritual practice of love. We can live love, faith, and hope in every aspect of our daily lives; in so doing, we begin manifesting “Heaven on Earth,” and we experience life more fully.

“3 Great Loves” invites Bethlehem, as a community, to love neighbor, children, and creation through shared work of giving, acting, and connecting. I look forward to the ways we will embrace this invitation! This month, I invite us to also embrace 3 Great Loves not only as a goal for Bethlehem but also as joyful encouragement to embody love of neighbor, children, and creation in our daily lives.

Together, under the frame of “3 Great Loves,” we can unite with Bethlehem and the global UCC community in our collective and individual efforts to love neighbor, love children, and love creation!

\*You can learn more at [www.3greatloves.org](http://www.3greatloves.org).

**LOOKING AHEAD  
TO THE HOLIDAYS**



**Christmas Wreaths**

It's not too early to think about ordering a wreath in honor or memory of a loved one. The sign-up sheet will be by the office.

*The wreaths will beautify  
Bethlehem throughout Advent.*

Small wreath is \$20  
Large wreaths are \$25

## Bethlehem's Star Bazaar

Last day to buy  
or reserve  
tickets is  
November 5

**Friday  
November 10  
10:00 am - 2 pm**

**Luncheon  
11:00 am-1:00 pm**

Beef or Turkey, Assorted Salads, Pies  
\$12 Beef or Turkey-\$8 Salad only-\$5 child  
Tickets on sale at Church Office beginning October 15  
Call 734-665-6149 to reserve tickets only 50 sold at door

Fundraiser for Peace Neighborhood Center, Alpha House,  
Property Improvement & the Women's Treasury

**Bethlehem United  
Church of Christ**

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

Open at  
10:00 am

- ★BAKE SALE
- ★RECYCLED  
CHRISTMAS  
SCARVES
- ★JEWELRY
- ★CRAFTS
- ★QUILT  
DISPLAY

## Fellowship Ministry News

I'd first like to thank my amazing committee for its outstanding help in planning the Oktoberfest. The members are Jan Eadie, Cheryl Grant, Susan Irwin, Kris Lovelace, Michelle Loukotka, Sue Muir, and Tom Ziesemer. Harriett Holzapfel, along with Mike Ehnis, Larry Katz, Bob Loukotka, and Jim Lutz, were the spatzen makers. Bob Walker was our chef. Assisting him in the kitchen were Debbie Belcher and Paul Marshall. Jane and Kurt Schmerberg and Paul were our grill masters. Sue Muir provided all the posters/fliers and area publication for us. Along with all these folks, we had over 31 volunteers who helped make this event a HUGE success. There were approximately 200 adults and children in attendance. Stevie D and the Wannabes once again set the tone for the evening along with the amazing decorations provided by the creative mind of Kris Lovelace. We certainly felt like we were at a Bavarian Festival. THANK YOU, one and all!

We had a net profit of \$2124. Ten percent or \$212 will go to the Fisher House, which is a place for veterans' families to stay while their loved ones are being treated at Veterans' Hospital. The remaining \$1912 will go to the Facilities Ministry. Please refer back to the October Visitor for more information about the Fisher House.

Jane Ziesemer, chair



Oktoberfest 2017

**“Rebirth & Renewal”** Rev. John Kennedy  
(Continued from page 1)

**God without being born of water and the Spirit.** Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' —John 1:1-7

In this text, when Jesus says “you cannot **see** the kingdom of God” and “you cannot **enter** the kingdom of God,” Jesus is not referring to a “heaven—up there,” he is referring to “the kingdom of God **on earth** as it is in heaven.” In other words, when we are continually being reborn into the new things God is doing, and truly **“United in Christ's Love,”** we are naturally participating in **“A Just World for All”** (on earth as it in heaven). Being “reborn” is not about getting into heaven. It is about seeing what God is doing and entering into what God is doing. God already loves us with no take-backs!

Bethlehem UCC has already experienced significant transitions and transformation in the past year (**“See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?”**). These transitions include:

- Our commitment to being a welcoming congregation by becoming an Open and Affirming Community, and other initiatives by our Welcome Team and ONA.
- Comprehensive ministerial transition aligned to our vision and new programmatic outreach, spiritual formation, and ministerial initiatives.

Some of these programs and initiatives with and for members and friends of BUCC include:

- Increased member care via Stephen Ministry, home communion, etc.
- Increased services for children, youth, and young adults.
- Increased educational and spiritual practices—meditation, Bible study, focus groups.
- Maintenance and renewal of our building and expanded community outreach.
- Focused and increased participation with Peace Neighborhood Center, Alpha House, Food Gatherers, SafeHouse Center, Habitat for Humanity, CROP, Washtenaw Refugee Welcome, and advocacy.
- National and international outreach with the UCC world network, including relief efforts for natural disasters, refugee welcome, clean water, air, etc.

*“Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’” **“And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’”** —Matthew 25:37-40*

BUCC is also experiencing participation decline (for about 20 years) that is statistically comparable to that of the vast majority of Protestant denominations (per Pew Research Surveys). However, there is a significant (and inspired) core of committed members and friends.

Our Stewardship Pledge Campaign is inviting you to support and continue Bethlehem's newly energized programs that are in the spirit of our core values and the freshly articulated vision of **A Just World for All—United in Christ's Love**. Your individual contributions make all of this possible.

In the next week, you will be receiving a package with a compelling brochure outlining the programs mentioned above, along with other materials, to see the new things God is already doing through Bethlehem UCC and you! November 12 will be the kick-off of our 2018 Stewardship Pledge Campaign.

**Rebirth & Renewal!**

A Just World for All—United in Christ's Love  
We Are Bethlehem UCC!

*For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? —Isaiah 43:19*

Special thanks to our consultant, Roy Muir!

God loves you with no take-backs!  
Pastor John



## LIVING NATIVITY AT BETHLEHEM

### Friday, December 1

As you may be aware, Midnight Madness is an annual event in downtown Ann Arbor that this year will be held on Friday, December 1. With this fun event taking place, we thought it would be a great opportunity for Bethlehem UCC to have a **Living Nativity on December 1**.

The nativity will have several animals, including a real camel named Ophelia. We will have readers to tell the Christmas story and a cast to act out the characters. With all this excitement, we are asking for help from the congregation.

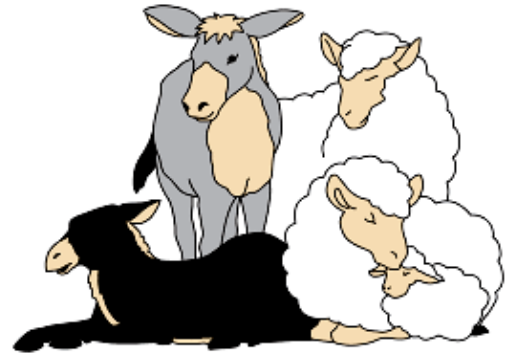
We would like our Youth, Young Adults, and the young at heart to help by taking some of the parts like:

- Mary and Joseph
- 2-4 shepherds
- 3 Magi (kings)
- 3-4 angels
- An innkeeper

We are also asking for a group of singers to make up a choir to sing Christmas carols during the presentation.

- Readers to tell the Christmas story.
- Volunteers to help the actors get ready with their costumes.
- Volunteers to help Fellowship serve hot chocolate and hand out pretzels to everyone who stops by.

This should be a great opportunity to share our story with the community. ***Please contact Tom Ziesemer if you would like to be a part of the Living Nativity, or sign up outside the church office. There will be an online sign-up as well. Please mark your calendars and sign up! Thank you for your participation.***



## NATIVITY DISPLAYS IN THE SCHMALE LOUNGE

Once again, the glass cases in the lounge will be used to showcase nativity sets or crèches throughout December. We welcome any sets from members who would like to share them with others. Please contact Susan Irwin (734-255-5661) if you have one (or more) you'd like to have included in the display. Set-up in the cases will take place the week after Thanksgiving.



## Women's Advent Evening, December 7, 6-8 p.m.

We have been making plans for our 4th Women's Advent Evening scheduled for Thursday, December 7, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. For those who haven't attended before, it is an evening of fellowship, good food, and inspiration. You'll enjoy sitting at a beautifully decorated table and a nice selection of appetizers and desserts, followed by a short program.

If you wish to attend, we'll have a sign-up outside the church office beginning Sunday, November 5. There will be seating for 96 women, so please sign up early to ensure you have a spot.

In the past, the hosts have provided the appetizers and desserts. This year, we are asking for your help by providing an appetizer or a dessert. Please note what you plan to bring on the sign-up sheet so we don't have lots of duplicates. We ask that you prepare your dish for 20 and bring it ready to place on the serving table complete with serving utensil and hot mat if it is a hot dish. Please arrive about 5:45, as 6:00-6:30 is a social time and we would like to be all set up by then.

This has always been a wonderful way to start the holiday season. Hope to see you there!  
Jane Ziesemer, chair, Fellowship Ministry Team

# Spiritual Growth and Development - October Highlights



## CROP Walk

Thanks to the awesome Bethlehem Fjords team that walked to end hunger on Sunday, October 15! And thanks to those who donated to help us blast past our \$1000 fundraising goal!

## Blessing of the Pets

Thanks to those who came out to celebrate and bless our pets on Sunday, October 22!



## Faith and Hope Spirituality Discussions

Thanks to all who gathered to discuss "faith" and "hope" in October! We had engaging discussions about these two inter-related themes that are central to Christianity.

We began with an exploration of the two terms. We challenged ourselves to understand the differences and connections between the two. Then we talked about what it means to live "faith" and "hope" in our daily lives, especially in the midst of challenges. How do we turn these two concepts into practices - as we seek to realize the vision Jesus professed of the "Kingdom of Heaven on Earth" and the UCC's vision of "A Just World for All"?

We incorporated scripture, literature, art, and web searches as a way of further informing our explorations. Although we didn't come away with all the answers, each of us identified areas in which we aspire to practice/live "Active Hope" in our daily lives as part of our faith practice. All are invited to join future discussions like these!



# Youth Group - October Highlights

October was a full month  
for Youth Group!

## Bonfire

Friday, October 13 - Pumpkin Carving, Hot Dog Roast, and Bonfire - Thanks to the Schmerbergs for opening up their cottage to us and to all who joined in the fun!

## Christmas Fundraiser

BUCC Mugs and Hot Cocoa - We began working on our Christmas fundraiser - Youth-designed mugs and hot cocoa. You'll be able to purchase these during the month of December.

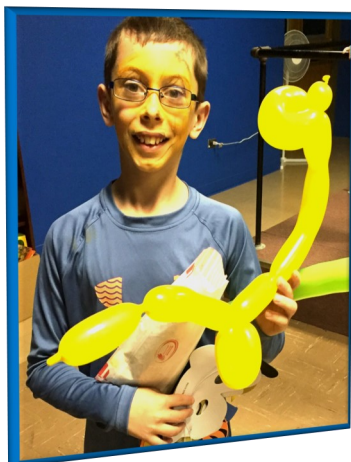
## Halloween Lock-in - October 27

Scavenger Hunts, Scarecrow Building, Dirt Cakes, Haunted House Construction, Sardines, and great times! Thanks to Jesse and CJ for volunteering as youth leaders and to all the youth who came!

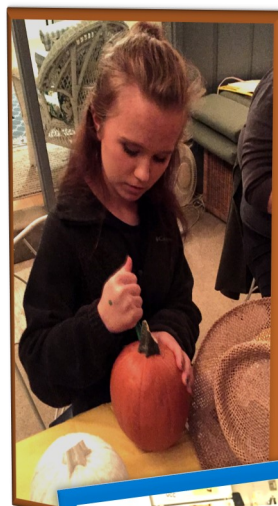
## Halloween Haunted House - October 29

We had an awesome time celebrating Halloween at Bethlehem on Sunday, October 29. Thanks to the Youth Group for constructing the Haunted House and to the Education Ministry Team for making the fellowship hour so much fun! Bethlehem's bravest members (ages 0-10) helped the Scaredy Cat through the Haunted Woods; and Bethlehem's adults made it through with only a few jumps and screams

## Family Fun Night



Thanks to all who came out for Family Fun Night on Friday, September 29! **We had a great evening together.** Pizza, face painting, balloon animals, and watching *Secret Life of Pets*! Keep your eyes out for our next Family Fun



# Spiritual Growth and Development - Looking Forward



## Prayer Circle

Please join us in person or in spirit as we lift up our prayers for one another, members and friends of the Bethlehem Community, and our world.

## Evening Worship November 29, 6:00-7:00, chapel

Join fellow Bethlehem members for this casual and organic evening worship that blends traditional worship elements, pop culture, and discussion about life experience.



**Thursday  
November 16  
11:30**

**Thursday  
December 14  
11:30**

## OPRAH & DEEPAK MAKING EVERY MOMENT MATTER

## 21-Day Meditation Experience

Want to know more about meditation? It's not too late to join the Bethlehem Meditation Group for the 21-Day Meditation Experience. Hosted by Oprah and Deepak Chopra, this 21-Day Meditation Experience is themed *Making Every Moment Matter*. This includes the opportunity to do a 20-minute daily meditation exercise.

**We'll gather as a group on:**

**November 7, 5:30-6:00 p.m.**

Meditation Group Check-In, phone or video

**November 15, 6:00-7:00 p.m.**

Meditation Group Check-In and Potluck - gallery

**November 21, 12 noon**

Meditation Group Check-In, phone or video

## Youth Group in November

**Theme:**  
Gratitude as a  
Spiritual Practice

Join us for Youth Group in November!  
**Thursdays,  
November 9, 16, and 30  
from 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

## Additional Youth Group events for November:

**November 19**  
Youth Group activity - TBA

**November 19**  
5:00-6:00 p.m. - Pre-Interfaith  
Thanksgiving Gathering at  
Bethlehem - details TBD

**November 29**  
6 - 7 p.m. Evening Worship, chapel

# Week-by-Week

## November at a Glance



- Nov. 4 Football Parking - Church-wide fundraiser - Please sign up to help!
- Nov. 3 9:00 a.m. Peace Center produce distribution - Outreach MT
- Nov. 5 12:00 p.m. - Food Gatherers at Delonis Center - Outreach MT
- 
- Nov. 6 1:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl Ministry - lounge
- Nov. 7 5:30-6:00 p.m. Meditation Group Check-In - phone or video
- Nov. 8 5:30-7:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry Bible Study led by Pastor John - Gallery
- Nov. 9 6:30-8:30 - Youth Group at Bethlehem
- Nov. 10 Fall Bazaar - Women of Bethlehem
- 
- Nov. 13 1:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl Ministry - lounge
- Nov. 15 6:00-7:00 p.m. - Meditation Group Check-In and Potluck - gallery
- Nov. 16 11:30 a.m. - Bethlehem Prayer Circle - lounge
- Nov. 16 6:30-8:30 p.m. - Youth Group at Bethlehem
- Nov. 17 9:00 a.m. - Peace Center produce distribution - Outreach MT
- Nov. 19 Youth Group activity - TBA
- Nov. 19 5:00-6:00 p.m. - Pre-Interfaith  
Thanksgiving Gathering at Bethlehem - details TBD
- Nov. 19 7:00 p.m. - Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration at  
Beth Israel Congregation, Washtenaw Ave. →
- 
- Nov. 20 1:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry - lounge
- Nov. 20 Gratitude Journaling as a Spiritual Practice - Time TBD
- Nov. 21 12 noon - Meditation Group Check-In - phone or video
- Nov. 23 NO Youth Group - Happy Thanksgiving!
- Nov. 25 Football Parking - Churchwide fundraiser -  
Please sign up to help!
- 
- Nov. 27 1:00 p.m. Prayer Shawl Ministry - lounge
- Nov. 28 2:45 p.m. Peace Neighborhood Volunteer Day - Outreach MT
- Nov. 29 6:00-7:00 - Evening Worship - chapel
- Nov. 30 6:30-8:30 - Youth Group at Bethlehem



Interfaith Round Table  
of Washtenaw County

23rd Annual

## Interfaith

Thanksgiving Celebration



### Sunday

## November 19th

### 7 pm

*6 pm - Beth Israel Open House  
with Rabbi Dobrusin*

Beth Israel Congregation  
2000 Washtenaw Ave  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

***In Gratitude For  
Our Sacred Diversity***



Thank you  
to our  
Youth Group  
for the  
awesome  
scarecrows.



# NEWS FROM THE EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM

## • New Preschool Teacher

We are excited to have to have Kelsey Postler as our new preschool teacher. Kelsey is a freshman at the University of Michigan. She tells us she loves our children. She will be joining us each Sunday morning between 9:30 and 11:30. Please stop in the preschool room and meet Kelsey!



Welcome our new preschool teacher Kelsey Postler. She loves our kids!

## • Youth Mission Project

Each year our youth have a mission project where we partner with the church and our community and the world. This year our youth suggested the Ruth Ellis Center and Ozone House to help marginalized and homeless youth. The youth thought this would be a way to put into action our ONA commitment, as these centers not only help all youth but have been havens and support for LGBTQ youth.

Our first project is collecting clothes for the Ruth Ellis Center. Many of the youth arrive with nothing. The center provides them with clothes, food, supplies, and health care. They asked if we could help stock their closet with:

1. Sweatshirts (preferably new but can be gently used)
2. Socks for men and women
3. Underwear for men and women
4. Sweatpants, leggings, and jeans

Please help us fill our boxes in the library. We will be collecting clothing through the end of the year. Thank you again for all your donations. Together we can do so much!

## From the

### Ruth Ellis website:

"The Ruth Ellis Center (REC), incorporated in 1999, is a youth social services agency with a mission "to provide short-term and long-term residential safe space and support services for runaway, homeless, and at-risk lesbian, gay, bi-attractional, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth." As LGBTQ youth continue to be disproportionately affected by homelessness, the Ruth Ellis Center remains dedicated to ensuring that these vulnerable youth and young adults receive the services and inherent protections available to all citizens. While the center emphasizes serving LGBTQ youth who are often ostracized, shamed, and denied services by other agencies, no youth, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation is turned away or denied services.



"The Ruth Ellis Center currently operates four core services: (1) our residential housing program—Ruth's House; (2) Second Stories Drop-In Center, providing low-barrier access to safety-net services like food, clothing, showers, laundry, and case management; (3) Second Stories Outpatient Mental Health Services; and (4) Family Group Decision-Making (FGDM). Through the application of positive youth development programming, facilitated psycho-educational peer support groups, structured mentoring programs, and the provision of core and adjunct services, either on-site or through referrals, we seek to provide life-enhancing and life-sustaining services designed to improve the health outcomes of homeless LGBTQ youth and encourage thriving behavior."



## Christmas Play and Advent Potluck on December 10

Our youth will be performing a play during the 10:00 service. Nancy Pieske will be setting up our Advent workshop extravaganza for after the service. Jan Eadie will be heading up an all-church potluck that day. Please make sure you put this on your calendar.

Sarah Herwick will be directing the youth program: STAR TRIP—Our Faith Awakens. This fun play combines elements of the traditional Christmas story with other characters including 3 wise men (Only One Kenobi, Luke Skywalker, and Yoda) and a King Herod who resembles Darth Vader.

We are in need of some actors, a narrator, and readers of the Bible passages of our Christmas story of joy, peace, and salvation. Please sign up with Sarah if you want to be a part of the team. We hope to get the cast chosen and scripts out before Thanksgiving. Contact Sarah Herwick or Jane Schmerberg (or call the office) if you can join us.



## The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation



On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther is said to have nailed his 95 points of discussion onto the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. He wanted to discuss the problem of indulgences with the Catholic authorities.

People were encouraged to contribute money to the Catholic Church so that their loved ones would spend less time in Purgatory after their death and get to Heaven sooner. Purgatory was thought to be an unpleasant place of purification of souls waiting to get to Heaven. Martin Luther challenged this practice and Catholic writers since have said that it was not a good practice.

He translated the Holy Bible from Latin, Greek, and Hebrew into beautiful German so that people could read it and understand it. Before this, he studied law and then was almost struck by lightning. He was so grateful that his life was spared that he vowed to become an Augustinian monk. This was similar to the life-changing experience of Saint Paul in Acts, chapter 9 in the New Testament. Martin Luther married a well-educated nun named Katharina von Bora and had a family. So now, many Protestant ministers have wives and families, as did some early disciples of Jesus. We owe a great deal to Martin Luther for God's gift of courage to him and the gift of translating the Bible.

*By John Schmale, for the Archive Committee,  
the other members of which are  
Mary Friend and Art French*

**Ann Arbor Youth Chorale**

**WINTER CONCERT**

**Sunday, December 3, 2017**

4:00 pm, Bethlehem United Church of Christ  
423 S. Fourth Ave, Ann Arbor

**Tickets available at the door**  
\$10 for adults  
\$5 for seniors, students & youth

*"You won't believe how beautifully  
the AAYC choirs sing!"*

Learn more at  
[annarboryouthchorale.org](http://annarboryouthchorale.org)

Find us on Facebook YouTube

## MEMORIALS & GIFTS

### GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Betty Akers Memorial  
Carolyn Ferri Memorial  
Martha Holliday Memorial

### PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Bill Fellenberger Memorial  
Hilda McLaughlin Memorial  
John O'Reilly Memorial

### RADIO FUND

Carolyn Ferri Memorial

### TREE OF LIFE

Marian Caswell Memorial

**Gifts listed were received through  
October 31, 2017**



## PARISH RECORDS

### WEDDING

**James Michael Korzuck  
&  
Michelle Theresa Young**



### DEATHS

**Elsie Lovelace  
October 25, 2017**

## Cemetery Board

Changes continue at Bethlehem Cemetery. Larry Sanborn has resigned the position of grounds maintenance and sexton. The board has hired Brad Bouchie to fill the position. Brad might be familiar to many of you as he has for many years done the grounds maintenance at church and at the parsonage. We welcome Brad and look forward to working with him. Recent updates to the grounds at the cemetery include repaving portions of the drive and correction of two areas previously repaired. The wiring of the cemetery building has also been completed.

The board is pleased to announce that Jim Lutz has agreed to join the Cemetery Board. He will fill the vacant position on the board.

As the end of the year draws near, all spring and summer grave decorations will be removed and discarded as of November 1. Any fall or winter decorations may be placed on grave sites **after November 15.**

**Dear Bethlehem Friends,**

**As I write this I am surrounded by all the cards and kind words from my Bethlehem family. I want you to know that I am sure it is the power of all your prayers that has supported and carried me throughout this journey to wellness. Thank you from the bottom of my**

*thank  
you*

October, 2017	Year to Date Actual	YTD Target	2017 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$356,531	\$375,810	\$450,972
Expenses	\$440,082	\$461,280.83	\$553,537
Net	(\$83,551)	(\$85,471)	(\$102,565)

# Pastoral Relations Committee

Sunday, October 8, 2017, marked the annual Clergy Appreciation Day in the United States. One way in which Bethlehem Church appreciates our Pastor John Kennedy is by having a Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) that arose from the Pastoral Search Committee whose recommendation to call Pastor John was approved by the congregation Sunday, November 16, 2014.

Over the past two-and-a-half years, the PRC has met with Pastor John from time to time, discussing triumphs, concerns, and plans, advocating and praying for him and his ministry at Bethlehem. Although the PRC by its nature operates much less transparently than other church bodies, it's still important the congregation understand its purpose and charter. First and foremost, it's important to recognize what the PRC is *not*: a complaint department to which anonymous messages or observations can be delivered. That's not to say there cannot be complaints (or compliments!).

The Michigan Conference's document "Pastoral Relations Committee Member" has over two dozen bullet items, among which are:

- Working for improved communication, interpretation, and understanding between the congregation and the pastor.
- Defining areas of potential conflict between the pastor's ministry and that of the congregation and assisting in developing alternative solutions and possibilities for avoiding destructive conflict.
- Openly and honestly communicating feelings and reactions of church members to the pastor.
- Providing an opportunity for the pastor to reflect in confidence about personal concerns, hopes, ambitions, and frustrations

**The most obvious way to accomplish these goals is to encourage congregants to *speak directly and candidly with the pastor* about any concerns, conflicts, etc. We encourage all to feel welcome and empowered to speak directly with Pastor John!**

As we began our work as a PRC, we met with Conference Minister Rev. Dr. S.C. Campbell Lovett who warned us not to be "triangulated," i.e., not caught in the middle of conversations between congregants and pastor: a "they said/he said" situation. Rev. Campbell urged us to shepherd those who came to us with a list of things to "tell the Pastor" to speak directly with Pastor John, even going so far as to offer to accompany them if they wished.

To that end, we encourage any Bethlehem member or friend not feeling comfortable sharing a concern, feeling, or reaction with Pastor John to contact any member of the PRC. Current PRC members are: John Samford (chair), Mike Ehnis, Jen Foster, Kathy Warner, and Norm Wetzel. We'd be happy to arrange and facilitate meetings with Pastor John. It's our feeling these meetings work best one-on-one between congregant and pastor or in small groups of three or fewer congregants to allow each individual to be heard and understood.

As we look to a fourth year, we intend to be more intentional in our work: meeting more frequently, rotating membership, concentrating on areas of emphasis (remember: over two dozen bullet points!), and, most important, fostering productive pastor/congregation communication!

We appreciate your prayers and support,  
both for us and for our pastor.

# PRODUCE SUNDAY COLLECTION FOR FOOD GATHERERS

Bethlehem will once again be “gathering” fresh produce at the altar before both worship services for Food Gatherers on the third Sunday of each month beginning November 19 and continuing through the spring.

This produce is a great resource for many of our neighbors who find themselves facing hunger and food insecurity. In fact, people living in poverty face a much higher likelihood of having high cholesterol, diabetes, and other diet-related illnesses, so access to fresh fruits and vegetables is especially valuable. Over 150 food pantries throughout Washtenaw County are able to redistribute this nutritious fresh produce to low-income adults, seniors, and children in need. Recent statistics show nearly 15% of county residents struggle to have enough food on the table to live an active, healthy life.

The Outreach Ministry encourages you to contribute less perishable produce items that are “sealed in their own skin” like apples and oranges, potatoes and onions, and squash and pineapples. Other produce items (celery, carrots, etc.) are accepted as long as they are packaged well. If possible, bring your produce donations in (or with) mesh, plastic, or paper bags so the collection is easier for our volunteer, Mike Haab, to box up and transport to the Food Gatherers warehouse.

This is just one example of Bethlehem’s many Outreach activities making a positive impact on the lives of our neighbors in our wider community. For more information, visit Bethlehem’s Outreach Ministry page.

[www.foodgatherers.org](http://www.foodgatherers.org)

<https://Bethlehem-UCC.org/outreach>

## CHURCH WORLD SERVICE KITS

On October 18, the ladies from Auxiliary/Mothers’ Study circle and some “additional helpers” gathered to assemble health and school kits for Church World Service. This has been their major outreach project for more years than anyone can remember. But it would not be possible without the help of the congregation and your donations of supplies for both types of kits. This year we completed 160 kits (80 health and 80 school). **Wow! Great job by everyone!**

**We would like to give a very special “thank you” to the following:**

- ♥ Warren Fisher for sealing and labeling the shipping boxes.
- ♥ Jim Stadel for taking the boxes to the Mail Shoppe.
- ♥ Holy Rollers for their postage donation. They set aside \$25 from their sales each time they roll pretzels.



## Order now from the SERRV shop

**Order Advent calendars by November 12. Don't miss out.** We are now taking orders for Divine Chocolate Advent calendars and other food and handicrafts from SERRV by **Sunday, November 12.**

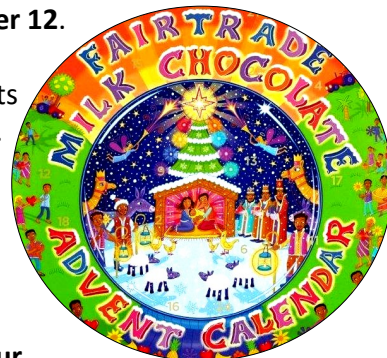
This will be your only opportunity to order for the Advent Christmas season.

Our total order must be at least \$300 list price, and at least half must be handicrafts (as opposed to food items) to qualify for our wholesale discount and free shipping. If we can meet this requirement, your order will be discounted at least 10-15%, and possibly more, depending on the size of your order. If our total order doesn't reach this threshold, Diana Slaughter will promptly contact those who have placed orders to inform you of your options.

**To see the array of products available, you can browse the SERRV web site at**

[www.serrv.org](http://www.serrv.org) or you can come to the shop on Sundays, Nov. 5 and 12. Email your

selections to Diana at [dlslder@umich.edu](mailto:dlslder@umich.edu) or leave a message for her at (734) 677-0747. For each product you want, make sure to include the item number, how many you want, and a brief description of the item.



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



**FOOD GATHERERS COMMUNITY KITCHEN**

**November 5 & December 3 (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.)**

**November 28 (fourth Tuesday of each month, 2:30–4:45 p.m.)**

*Fresh Produce distribution, Fridays from 9–12.*



**FOOD GATHERERS FOOD BARREL**

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

## 2017-18 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 2:45-4:45 pm. Please sign up on bulletin board by Office Peace Neighborhood Center 1111 N. Maple Road Ann Arbor 48103

**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 9:am-12:00noon. It's not necessary to sign up....just come when you can! This also takes place at Peace Neighborhood Center

Questions? Contact Sue Muir at [suemuir@comcast.net](mailto:suemuir@comcast.net) or 734-761-9795

## WANTED: MONDAY CHURCH-OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

We are in need of church office volunteers on the first two Mondays of the month. The office is open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. You could schedule a morning or afternoon shift or work all day! Bethlehem office volunteers are an important part of the daily operation of the church, providing assistance to the staff, as well as the members of our congregation. The job would include answering phones, greeting people at the window, stuffing programs or letters for mailings, and working with staff members. A staff member would always be present to answer questions. If you are interested, please contact Tom Ziesemer or call the office.

*Thank you for considering!*



### ***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 Church—Our Core Values**

- ♦ **Growing** spiritually in our faith journey together
- ♦ **Worshipping** together to seek and share God's love
- ♦ **Connecting** with God and each other in a supportive, nurturing way
- ♦ **Reaching out** to our members, community, country, and the world through support and service

### **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.