

The Visitor

November 2018

Bethlehem United Church



"Welcoming the Child" by Rev. John Kennedy

"The people brought children to Jesus, hoping he might touch them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus was irate and let them know it: 'Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in.' Then, gathering the children up in his arms, he laid his hands of blessing on them". Mark 10: 13-16

"Teach Your Children" is a song by [Graham Nash](#). and first appeared on the album "[Déjà Vu](#)" by [Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young](#) released in 1970. The first words go like this;

"You who are on the road
must have a code that you can live by
And so become yourself
Because the past is just a good-bye.
Teach your children well..."

(Continued on page 4)

DECEMBER DEADLINE

Articles and photos need to be submitted by Monday, November 26 in order to be published in the December Visitor.



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www.bethlehem-ucc.org
www.facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2

From the President's Desk:



Lots of exciting things have been and are happening around BUCC! The project to renovate Willimann Fellowship Hall began October 22 as workers began to demolish the basement ceiling. As is typical with improvement projects, we've encountered the unexpected: asbestos wrapped pipes. That's why we have contingency funds and time built into the plan!

The contract with Phoenix Contractors is about to be signed, having been reviewed and refined. Once it is in place, we'll close on the construction loan with Bank of Ann Arbor.

Before we begin to draw against that loan, we'll first use funds donated specifically for these projects and then undesignated funds. Payments will be made monthly based on progress made.

To retire the loan, we're launching a Capital Campaign for which folks are to soon receive giving envelopes. The sooner we pay the loan off, the less interest we pay!

Sunday October 21 saw the kick off of a special Stewardship Campaign for the five month period from January 1 through May 31, 2019, after which we'll go to a Fiscal Year running June through May. Members received a mailing including a 5 month pledge card, to be dedicated in worship on Sunday November 18. A 5 month budget will be presented at a Congregational Meeting January 27.

Our local UCC Covenant Association, covering the middle section of the lower peninsula, south of Clare and north of Indiana, meets in Jackson on Saturday November 10. Besides being a place for lower Michigan UCC leadership to gather, this meeting honors "5 for 5" churches, like BUCC. Being 5 for 5 means that your church is a leader, supporting Our Church's Wider Mission and the Special Mission Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors In Need and The Christmas Fund. I'm going to take the artist's rendering of our Fellowship Hall for the display they've requested of "what your church is up to." Please let me know if you'd like to accompany me.

Yet another Congregational Meeting will be held November 11 after ten o'clock worship to make changes Leadership Council recommends to our bylaws in order to facilitate the new fiscal year flow.

I'd like to thank all those who have been helping out with football parking this fall; at this writing only one home game remains uncovered: the Indiana game on Saturday November 17. Please consider signing up!

Looking ahead to next year, the world renown Nordic Choir from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa will present a concert at BUCC Saturday February 2, 2019. Their trip to Ann Arbor is co-sponsored by Zion Lutheran Church who will help us in providing lodging for the 72 student singers. Please put this special event on your calendar and consider putting up a couple students.

As we dive into Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas, I wish you serenity.



Interfaith Round Table
of Washtenaw County
irtwc.org

24th Annual

Interfaith

Thanksgiving Celebration



Sunday
November 18
7 pm*

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
423-4th Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

*Celebrating Compassion
& Beauty*

For more information gbrides@umich.edu

Sign up by the office to help us host this event! 

Events not highlighted elsewhere in the Visitor

Totenfest Memorial Service

Sunday, November 4, at both worship services

A service to remember our loved ones who have passed away. All are invited to come forward and light a candle in memory of loved ones who have passed away. A special insert will list those who have passed away since our last Totenfest Service in November 2017.

Let the office know of any immediate family members you would like listed in our Totenfest memorial bulletin.



PRETZELS AND BAZAAR REMINDERS



Due to the construction in the Fellowship Hall, the Star Bazaar and Luncheon and November/December Pretzels will NOT be taking place. Thank you for your support!

AUXILIARY/MOTHERS STUDY

Wednesday, Nov. 14, at 1 p.m. gallery

Our program this month will be our annual Totenfest gathering, plus a special program with Barb Marshall, Bella and Nugget "Experiences with Therapy Dogs". Please join us!



NOVEMBER AT BETHLEHEM

- Nov 1 Hops & Hallelujah, Conor O'Neills
- Nov 1 Bethlehem Prayer Circle
- Nov 2 Veterans' breakfast, Classic Cup
- Nov 3 Football parking at Bethlehem
- Nov 4 Totenfest Memorial Service
- Nov 4 Volunteer day at Delonis Center
- Nov 6 ELECTION DAY—Go vote!
- Nov 8 & 14 UCC 101, with Lily
- Nov 11 Congregational Meeting
- Nov 13 Mary Martha Bible Study
- Nov 14 Auxiliary/Mothers' Study
- Nov 15 Bethlehem Prayer Circle
- Nov 17 Football parking at BUCC
- Nov 18 Stewardship Sunday
- Nov 18 Interfaith Thanksgiving service at BUCC
- Nov 18 Fresh Produce Collection Sunday
- Nov 18 Walk and Talk Youth outing
- Nov 22-23 OFFICE CLOSED—Happy Thanksgiving!
- Nov 27 Peace Neighborhood volunteer day
- Nov 30 Living Nativity at Bethlehem

LOOKING AHEAD TO ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

- Dec 1 Hanging of the Greens
- Dec 1 Ann Arbor Youth Chorale concert
- Dec 6 Coffee Break Concert, sanctuary
- Dec 13 Blue Christmas Service
- Dec 16 Children's Christmas program
- Dec 16 Advent Workshop after service
- Dec 24 & 25 OFFICE CLOSED



SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN'S PREMIER CHILDREN'S CHORUS
FOR OVER 30 YEARS

Winter Concert

at Bethlehem Church

Tickets available
at the door.

\$10 adults ❄️ \$5 seniors/children

Saturday, December 1 ❄️ 4 pm

"Welcoming the Child"
by Rev. John Kennedy

(Continued from page 1)

We are always teaching our children. Every word, action, and failure to act, is observed by our children. Our behavior and words can be blessings or wounds. **Blessings and Wounds in childhood casts long shadows in later life...Teach your children well.**

I have wonderful memories from my childhood that involve my family and church. One of my favorite memories is falling asleep on my mother's lap in the candlelight of the Midnight Christmas Eve service as a 6 year old. I felt safety and beauty in the splendor of families singing Christmas Carols. This is a blessing and it still casts a beautiful light. I also remember as a 4 year old boy sitting in church with someone else, who was not familiar to me. My mom was in the choir, and my dad, the preacher was sitting up front as well. It was a communion Sunday, and as the tray of bread was passed down the aisle, I reached to take the little cube of bread that looked like a white Chicklet (the gum), and as I did, the woman smacked my hand and pulled the try away while telling me "No", in a stern voice. I remember that as a wound. Even at 4 years old, I knew it meant I was not welcomed as a full person and that the women did not understand how to teach me with kindness. That experience cast a shadow that I still remember, and said to me I could not necessarily always trust worship as a place of safety. If Mom or Dad spanked me, at least I knew why and I knew I was loved.

Many of us look back nostalgically on days past. We often remember far more children in the pews, but children were expected to sit still, and stay quiet. How many of you remember getting a dirty look from someone because you sat in "their pew" or made a noise? I can remember how mothers with crying babies were given the "evil eye" for the audacity to let a baby cry. Also, in the 1970's and earlier, how many people remember being able (as a child) to take a "Busy Bag" of books and toys into the sanctuary.

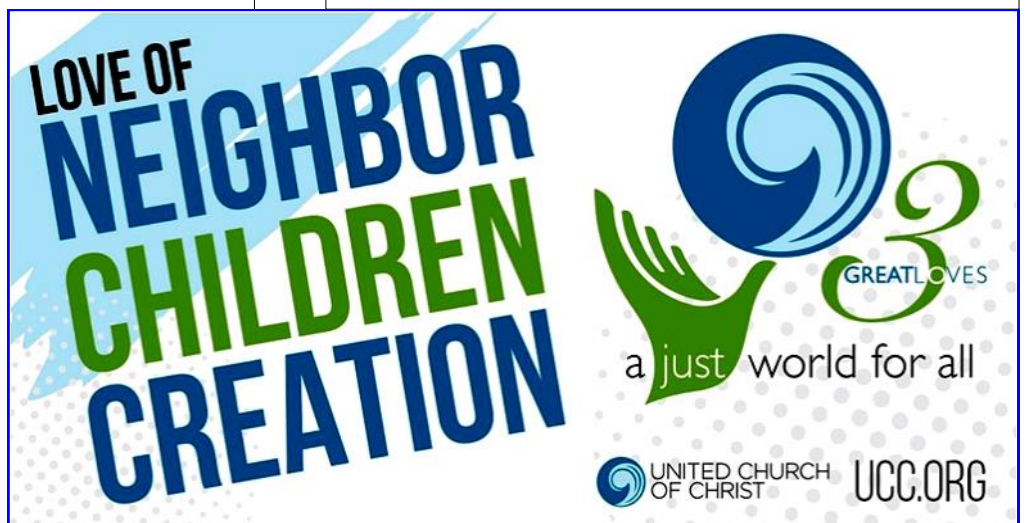
I would venture to say that in our current culture our children are more fit for the Kingdom of God than we adults are. The Kingdom of God (on EARTH as is in heaven). Making our houses of faith is not just about how we treat children, it's about how we treat other adults in front of our children. We can be sweet to a child but if a child overhears adults talking about other adults they will realize that the welcoming bit is all a thin veneer. If our children overhear us watching "news" programs where hosts shout, bully, yell, and insult others, our children will pick up on that behavior. They will know we are not authentic. Jesus will know we are not being authentic. If one minute we *sing*

"Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world, red, brown, yellow, black, and white they are precious in his sight; Jesus loves the little children of the world.

and the next moment they hear us listening to "news" programs calling red, brown, yellow, black children, and immigrant children horrible names or calling to end programs to feed and educate children then they will either know that we are rejecting God's children or they will become the next generation of adults that will violate Jesus' words "Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom" (Mark 10:15) .

We adults are children of God too! How do we welcome all God's children but especially the most vulnerable and impressionable? It's not do we pat a child on the head but do we lift up children in need.

(Continued on page 5)



"Welcoming the Child"
by Rev. John Kennedy

(Continued from page 4)

This November there will be many opportunities to welcome our children. Do you have ideas on how to welcome children of all ages? I know you all can be very creative! Some of these opportunities may be at church and some may be at home, school, or with family and Friends.

"Three Great Loves" is a response to the United Church of Christ's newly articulated purpose, mission, and vision statement which reads:

- We will love the Lord our God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength; and our neighbor as ourselves.
- United by the Holy Spirit and inspired by God's grace we love all, welcome all, and seek justice for all.

We are inviting and calling Bethlehem UCC into focused mission. We are challenging our entire Church Family to engage in Three Great Loves: (Love of Children, Neighbor, and Creation.)

Over the coming months we are going to focus on all three but we are going to begin with

"THE LOVE OF CHILDREN"

We are going to discover ways in which we can engage the members of our faith community, as well as our wider community, in mission that serves the needs of children. We will find a way to narrate the impact of our commitment and to tell the story.

You are a child of God, and God will always love us with no take-backs!

Pastor John

♥ Youth Led Mission - Blessings Baskets ♥

Our newest youth-led mission project is to collect items for Alpha House. Each family that passes through Alpha House is given a basket full of things that a family would need when they are moving into a home. We will be collecting items through the end of the year and our goal is to fill 6 baskets. **All items must be new.** The following items are listed on the Alpha House Site:

- Pillows
- Twin Sheet Sets (flannel or regular) / Youth Twin Sheet Sets (eg Disney, Superheroes, etc.)
- Twin Comforters (adult and children's)
- Twin Blankets
- Twin Mattress Covers or Pads (plastic zip-around or quilted)
- Bathroom Mats/Rugs
- Towels (bath, hand and wash cloths)
- Shower Curtains & Rings (fun colors/patterns would be a treat!)
- Pots & Pans Sets
- Dish Sets
- New Glassware Sets
- Place Settings (for 4)
- Kitchen Supplies (baking sheets, measuring cups & spoons, can opener, etc.)
- Travel coffee mugs and plastic tumblers with straws (adult & child sized)
- Tool Kits
- Mop / Broom/ Dustpans
- Cleaning Supplies (Lysol, Windex, Dish Soap, Sponges, Laundry Detergent, etc.)
- First Aid Kit (family size)



Our goal this year is to learn more about the Poor People's Campaign. As we do this together, we are putting our beliefs into action and helping the neediest. Our mission projects this year are all meant to align with the other outreach mission projects for Bethlehem. Together we can do more!

BETHLEHEM UCC

NOVEMBER 2018

Outreach Ministry



BUCC's Outreach Ministry donates \$7,500 to 3 local agencies in 2018

This year the Outreach Ministry Team selected three local nonprofit agencies to receive monetary contributions to further their work in the greater Washtenaw

community. We are pleased to be able to donate \$2,500 to each of the following organizations: Alpha House/IHN, Food Gatherers, and Peace Neighborhood Center. Bethlehem members and friends also participate in volunteer activities with these partners on weekly, monthly and quarterly bases. These funds will help each of the organizations continue the specialized programs and services offered to help families and individuals in need of food, shelter, and safety net services. For example, the funds given to Alpha House offer support to the wrap-around services provided to families and children during their transition to permanent housing; the contribution to Food Gatherers has been designated to upgrades at the Community Kitchen located in the Delonis Center; and the donation to Peace Neighborhood Center supports a variety of youth and adult programs as well as resources and direct services provided to families in times of crisis. All of these agencies are very appreciative of the support from BUCC.



BETHLEHEM'S OUTREACH MINISTRY TEAM

The Outreach Ministry Team identifies opportunities for and inspires involvement in demonstrating Christian love by supporting our neighbors near and far. It also coordinates with and support other church groups with respect to their outreach activities.

From the Church Governance page of the BUCC web site.

DESIGNATED DONATIONS

Did you know that you can designate a donation to the Outreach Ministry? Just note it in the memo line of your check or on the general envelope available in the church pews.

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR TIME, TALENT AND TREASURES WITH OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED HERE AT HOME AND WORLDWIDE!

1

HELP FILL BLESSING BASKETS WITH SUPPLIES FOR ALPHA HOUSE/IHN FAMILIES

2

DONATE GIFT CARDS TO PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER OR ALPHA HOUSE/IHN

3

BRING PRODUCE TO THE 3RD SUNDAY COLLECTIONS FOR FOOD GATHERERS

2018-19 OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

at

PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



Peace
Neighborhood
Center



Friday Food Distribution
starts September 14!

2018

9/25
10/23
11/27



2019

1/22
2/26
4/23
5/28



PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD 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 p.m. Signup is outside the BUCC office.

Peace Neighborhood Center
1111 N. Maple Road, Ann Arbor 48103

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

PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD 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 a.m. and noon. No signup necessary. Just come when you can!

Location: Peace Neighborhood Center

Peace Neighborhood Center volunteers Sue Muir and Mike Ehnis serve nutritional snacks to school kids on their way to a tutoring program.

Bethlehem takes part in this program monthly from September to May. Sign up near the office if you can donate some time to this wonderful program.



As you may be aware, Midnight Madness is an annual event in downtown Ann Arbor that this year will be held on **Friday, November 30th**. Once again Bethlehem UCC will hold a ***Living Nativity*** made up of volunteers. The nativity will include 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, I am asking for help from the congregation.

I would like our Youth, Young Adults, and the Young at Heart to help by taking some of the parts like:

- ♦ Mary and Joseph
- ♦ Shepherds - 2 to 4
- ♦ Magi (Kings) - 3
- ♦ Angels - 3 to 4
- ♦ Innkeeper

I am also asking for a group of singers to make up a choir to sing Christmas carols during the presentation, and Musicians to play.

We also will need:

- ♦ Readers to tell the Christmas story.
- ♦ Volunteers to help the actors get ready with their costumes.
- ♦ Volunteers to help Fellowship/Welcome to serve hot chocolate to everyone that stops by.

*This should be a great opportunity to share our story with the community. Please email me if you would like to be part of this Bethlehem UCC event. **There will also be a sign up sheet by the church office and online.***



Living Nativity

During Midnight Madness
Friday, November 30, 6-8:30 p.m.

Come to Bethlehem
(United Church of Christ—423 S. Fourth Ave.)

♦ *Live Animals* ♦ *Camels* ♦ *Donkeys* ♦ *Sheep* ♦ *Goats* ♦
 ♦ *Hot Chocolate* ♦ *Pretzels* ♦ *Caroling* ♦ *Free* ♦

CHRISTMAS STORY PERFORMANCES at 6:00pm; 6:45pm; 7:30pm; and 8:15pm.
 Stop by anytime for warm snacks, animal petting, and Christmas cheer!

Children's Christmas Program A Star is Born December 16 at the 10:00 Service.



This year we will be doing a play called *A Star is Born*. This fun play will be by the same playwrights as the previous years. We will have speaking parts for any child that wants to participate including opportunities for a narrator and some scripture readings. Sarah Herwick will be our director. Watch the Refrigerator Page as plans evolve. **Casting will start mid-November.** We will have some simple songs for all-age youth. Any youth that wants to be a part or wishes to be a manger animal, we want you! Any youth that wants to perform a musical piece, we want you.

**There will be a rehearsal on Saturday December 15 at 10:00 with a pizza lunch to follow.
Mark your calendars!**

Fun in Sunday School Cookies and Jello!

Our Sunday School teachers sure do know how to have a good time!

Bethlehem's younger students learned about Jonah with by digging into the slimy (Jello-y) belly of the beast (vase).

The older students learned about Esther and Purim by making Hamantaschen (yummy cookies) in the youth room.



Walk and Talk

Walk & Talk is a monthly outing to a local coffee shop that is close to church. It is an opportunity for our middle and high-school youth to get together and talk about anything they choose. We meet in the sanctuary during the 10:00 service and leave after the Children's Moment. Drinks and treats are on us, and friends are welcome.

**We are meeting the third Sunday of each month.
The next outing is planned for November 18. Please join us!**

BETHLEHEM ADVENT OUTREACH

The season of Advent begins the First Sunday in December. During this season please come to Bethlehem bearing gifts. The Outreach Ministries Team and the Education Ministries team have opportunities to share with our community and help those most in need. Christmas donations will be collected through Sunday December 16, because they need to get distributed that week. These are ways that you can help.

BLESSINGS BASKETS DONATIONS (see page 5)

With this youth-led mission project, we are collecting items for the blessings baskets to give to Alpha House. These baskets are filled with things that a family needs when moving into a new home. Our goal is to fill 6 baskets by the end of the season. The baskets will be in the manger. Let's fill them!

GIFT CARDS FOR ALPHA HOUSE AND PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Gift cards allow the families to choose the things that they need. They can buy gifts or food for the holidays. While you shop, pick up gift cards for places such as Kroger, Meijer, Buschs, Speedway, Shell, Target, Walmart, Game Stop, Old Navy, Famous Footwear, Quality 16 Movies, Rave Cinemas, VISA gift cards, etc. Denominations between \$5 and \$25 will allow multiple families to make purchases they need for their families. **Please drop off your gift cards by December 16.** During Lent there will be red and green envelopes designating Alpha House and Peace Neighborhood. The cards and envelopes can be dropped at the office in a designated box, put in the offering plate, or brought up to the manger on Sunday mornings.

THE MITTEN TREE

As always, our mitten tree will sit in our Fourth Avenue entrance. Please fill it with mittens, hats and scarves for all ages. We will deliver the items to Peace Neighborhood Center and Washtenaw Refugee Welcome. WRW was a past mission project and they loved our hats, mittens and scarves from before and we told them we would keep giving!

TOYS FOR PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

There will be a collection box in the library for toys for youth of all ages. Area families can come to Peace Neighborhood where the gifts are distributed.

PRODUCE SUNDAY

The Third Sunday of November and December (11/18 and 12/16) we will have our fresh produce collection for Food Gatherers. Please help other families have food for the holiday season. Be generous!



Christmas is coming!
The manger will be ready
to receive your gifts on
Sunday, December 2, 9, and 16.

*Come to Bethlehem
bearing gifts.*



YOUTH GROUP

October was a fun month for the Youth Group, and we wrapped up this month with our annual Halloween Lock-In on Friday, October 26.

Thanks to help from Jesse and Jim, we've nearly completed the first phase of our comfy space improvements. We painted, purchased new furniture and carpet, and installed new lights!



More improvements to come!

We had our inaugural Escape Room game, thanks to our new breakout box from Breakout.EDU! Here are pictures of the youth working hard to decipher the codes needed to unlock the box and "escape" the room!



Della di Pietro came to youth group on October 18 to share about Michigan Helps and her experiences participating in their annual service trip to Guatemala. The youth group is excited to support Michigan Helps by raising money to install stoves. That evening, we also learned about world wealth distribution. Using the maps of the world, we learned about the distribution of the planet's population and wealth. Population was represented by 100 Sour Patch Kids, and wealth was represented by 100 M&Ms or Skittles!

THANKS FOR THE MEALS! A huge thanks to everyone who brought meals for youth group in October! The Bowers Family brought dinner on Sept. 27; The Kennedys brought dinner on October 4 Sue Muir brought dinner on October 11; Katie Rowan brought dinner on October 18

LOOKING FORWARD - YOUTH GROUP IN NOVEMBER

- Thursday, Nov. 1** Youth Group at Hops and Hallelujahs - Meet at Bethlehem at 5:45 OR meet at Conor O'Neill's at 6pm.
- Thursday, Nov. 8** Youth Group at Bethlehem - Breakout Box!
- Thursday, Nov. 15** Youth Group at Bethlehem - Maker's Night/Service Night!
- Sunday, Nov. 18** Walk and Talk for grades 7-12
- Sunday, Nov. 18** Interfaith Roundtable Thanksgiving, BUCC - 7pm
- Thursday, Nov. 22** No Youth Group - Happy Thanksgiving!
- Thursday, Nov. 29** Youth Group - Christmas Decorations and Pizza/Movie Night
- Friday, Nov. 30** Youth Group at Living Nativity! 6pm-8:30pm

OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS

The Bethlehem Pillamas had a great day at CROP Walk on Sunday, September 30!! We had 21 official Pillamas, and 19 who walked! The Bethlehem Pillamas far exceeded our fundraising goal of \$551. According to my current tally, we raised over \$1100! The money raised goes to [Church World Service](#) and seven area service agencies. Thanks to everyone who supported the Pillamas, and to all of our walkers! Way to go, Bethlehem!



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE KITS

Led by the Auxiliary/Mother's Study Circle, Bethlehem gathered enough supplies to make **137 CWS Hygiene Kits** and **60 CWS School Kits**! On October 14, Bethlehem's Sunday School students each assembled a kit; on Wednesday October 17, Auxiliary/Mother's Study gathered to finish the job! Thanks to everyone who contributed to this effort, and to Auxiliary/Mother's Study for leading this important Bethlehem tradition!



Some Thoughts on Faith and Climate Change

Lily Tinker Fortel

Psalm 103: 25-30

- 25** *There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number—living things both large and small.*
26 *There the ships go to and fro, and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.*
27 *All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time.*
28 *When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.*
29 *When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.*
30 *When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.*

This year, some members of the Facilities Ministry Team formed a working group to explore the possibility of installing solar panels at Bethlehem. I'm grateful for the research they've done, and I'm hopeful for the possibilities moving forward. At the group's request, I compiled some of my thoughts about how our faith calls us to respond to the crisis of climate change. I honor Bethlehem's history of working to be more sustainable (especially the Green Team), and I look forward to what will happen in the years to come!

I. Working to address climate change is a moral imperative of our times, and an imperative of our faith.

I believe that living in right relationship with other humans, other living beings, and the planet is a moral imperative, and an imperative of our faith.

Humans - Environmental Justice. All humans are threatened and impacted by climate devastation; AND poor people, people of color, and people living in the developing world are more severely impacted. *As people of relative privilege, the Bible calls us to take action where we can to support our fellow human beings.*

Animals - Animals are dying because of climate change. *We are called to live in right relationship with other living beings.*

Planet - Earth is our home, and we are destroying it. Though we, at Bethlehem, might not yet experience climate change in our daily lives, if we think of ourselves as part of a global collective of living beings ("Creation," to use a Biblical term), *our* most basic survival needs (air, clean water, agriculture) are presently, actively threatened. *We are called to care for - to be stewards of - our home.*

If we believe in the prayer we pray every Sunday, we have a responsibility to do all we can to make Earth heaven-like; and we believe our actions matter in our lives, in the lives of fellow humans, and in relationship with God.

II. Working to address climate change is one way to strengthen our connection with the UCC, and support UCC initiatives.

While the UCC's commitments to addressing environmental justice and climate change are too vast to explore in this article, there are two initiatives that seem particularly relevant.

3 Great Loves Campaign - I explored this campaign in a previous *Visitor* article; and we'll continue exploring it in worship and other spaces at Bethlehem. The Campaign was announced at the 2017 Synod and identifies love of children, love of neighbor, love of creation as the "3 Great Loves." You can learn more about this ongoing campaign of the UCC at <http://www.ucc.org/3greatloves>.

Creation Justice Churches - Bethlehem could follow the steps to be recognized as "Creation Justice Church" by the UCC. The UCC has a Minister of Environmental Justice on national staff, who helps guide congregations that wish to become Creation Justice Churches: http://www.ucc.org/creation_justice_churches.



UCC 101

UCC 101 with Lily is underway! We had a great first class. Everyone is invited to join us for the next sessions of the class:

Wednesday, October 31 - 1:30-3:00

Thursday, November 8 - 1:30-3:00

Wednesday, November 14 - 1:30-3:00

**TIME TO THINK ABOUT HOLIDAY SERRV ORDERS!**

Though we won't have a Serrv Shop this year, we will be placing an order with Serrv, a wonderful source for fair trade gifts. Those interested should visit www.serrv.org and peruse their products. If you'd like to purchase their famous chocolate advent calendars, please sign up on the church bulletin board. If you have any questions, contact Lily Tinker Fortel or Diana Slaughter.


**YOGA FOR ADVENT WITH LILY, 2-3:30, YOUTH ROOM.
FRIDAYS NOV. 30; DECEMBER 7, 14, 21, 28**

As part of her Yoga Teacher Training, Lily will offer a 5-week yoga class during Advent. All are welcome to this beginner-level class! The class will also explore some key themes of Advent. Sign up on the bulletin board. Wear comfy clothes that allow you to move! If possible, bring a yoga mat (but we'll have them if you don't!).

**ADVENT DEVOTIONAL FROM THE STILL-SPEAKING WRITERS GROUP
MORE COPIES ON ORDER!**

We've ordered more copies of the Advent Devotional! Sign-up sheet is on the church bulletin board!

Some Thoughts on Faith and Climate Change, continued

III. Working to address climate change is one of the ways churches will demonstrate their commitment to ongoing relevance in our world.

The Church is struggling to show its relevance in our world. Bethlehem has demonstrated commitment to showing that we understand the needs of the moment and are responding to them.

Doing what we can to show our commitment to caring for Earth (or, minimally, to curbing/offsetting our harm of Earth) is one way of living into this commitment. As one example, adding solar panels to the church building would be a visible display of our commitments to visitors, and passersby. Also, Bethlehem leading in this area could inspire others to do the same.

IV. The need for a new bottom line when it comes to sustainability.

Because of the money-mindedness of our world, the case for installing solar panels and living more justly with the planet is often made on economic terms. How often have we heard "Solar panels will pay for themselves?" It seems they will. Still, I would offer that this is not the most important measure in discerning whether or not to install solar, or implement other sustainability measures at Bethlehem. Even if we can't go 100%, I think something is better than nothing.

Rather than asking "Will this pay for itself in the long term?" I might offer that we ask, "What percentage of our annual operating (or facilities, or major renovation project) budget do we think adequately demonstrates our faith commitment to living in right relationship with the rest of God's creation?"

Here's an article with other beautiful Bible verses about sustainability: <https://www.thoughtco.com/bible-verses-about-protecting-the-environment-712753>

*Some organizations that have informed my thinking about this include: The Center for Earth Ethics at Union Seminary; 350.org; and an organization called Green Faith.

OKTOBERFEST THANK YOU

From Jane Ziesemer,
Fellowship Ministry Chair

I'd like to first thank my amazing committee once again for their outstanding help in planning the Oktoberfest. They are Jan Eadie, Sue Irwin, Kris Lovelace, Sue Muir, and Tom Ziesemer. Harriett Holzapfel along with Mike Ehnis, Larry Katz, Bob Louktoka and Jim Lutz were the Spatzen makers. Bob Walker was our chef assisted by Paul Marshall that evening. Jane and Kurt Schmerberg and Paul were our grill masters. Along with all these folks, we had over 28 volunteers who helped make this event a HUGE success.

There were approximately 150 adults and children in attendance. Thanks Kris for always setting your creative mind into motion. We certainly felt like we were once again at a Bavarian Festival. THANK YOU one and all.

The profits from this event are going to the Fisher House, a home for our Veterans' families while they are receiving medical attention. As of this Visitor, we have \$1981.

FISHER HOUSE

For more than 25 years, the Fisher House program has provided a "home away from home" for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and VA medical centers. These homes offer free, temporary lodging to military and Veterans' families, enabling them to be close to their loved ones during medical crises with the healing love only a family can provide. Michigan will have its first Fisher House in Ann Arbor with groundbreaking scheduled for 2019.

Bethlehem UCC has been involved in raising funds with our own Veterans donating funds, as well as fundraisers like last year's Veterans' Luncheon and Oktoberfest and at this years Oktoberfest where we raised almost \$2000. BUCC also let them they use our sanctuary last year to rehearse for their annual fundraiser "Stories of Service", an Evening with Veterans, which is takes place at Hill Auditorium on November 5th with free admission.

Thank You for your support.
Jane Ziesemer, Fellowship Ministry chair.



**November 5
7 p.m.**

**Hill Auditorium
in Ann Arbor.**

Admission is free.

FROM THE CEMETERY BOARD

It is November! A time for Thanksgiving and for giving thanks. The Cemetery Board would like to thank all the volunteers, known and unknown, who have given their time and energy to help us with the cemetery this year. If you have picked up a stick, pulled a weed, moved a fallen tree limb, or brushed leaves and debris from a grave site — **thank you.**

To Mike and Dindy Haab and Tom Ziesemer who identified the graves of our veterans — thank you.

To Jan Burnham and Mary Friend who gave their time to help in the planning of the Memorial Garden update — thank you.

To the American Legion Post 46 who so generously give the cemetery flags each year to honor our veterans and who supplied us with a new flag for the cemetery entrance — thank you.

To Mike Haab who each year places the flags around the Veterans Memorial flag pole — thank you.

To John and Karen Samford and Carl Waltjen who have spent untold hours working on the cemetery records and the website — thank you.

To Karen Goforth, John Irwin and Jim Stadel for your help cleaning, painting, refurbishing signs, installing sign posts, hanging signs and so many other things you helped us with - thank you.



You have all helped us maintain the dignity and history of Bethlehem Cemetery, and we sincerely thank all of you.

MEMORIALS & GIFTS

OUTREACH MINISTRY

The Bethlehem Choir Honorarium
 Jamie & Bob Dylenski Honorarium
 John & Karen Samford Honorarium

PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

John O'Reilly Memorial

Gifts listed were received through
 October 23, 2018

RADIO BROADCAST SPONSORSHIP

October 7 From Marion Seyfried in memory of her husband, **Frederick Seyfried**, and their daughter, **Nancy Seyfried**.

October 21 In memory of **Frederick and Lela Keppler** with love from their family.

Coming soon Wreath sign up

Watch the bulletin board near the office for a chance to sponsor a wreath in honor or in memory of a loved one. The wreaths will grace the church through Advent and Christmas.



PRAYER & PRAISE CARDS

Have you seen the new prayer and praise cards in the pews? Please fill them out to share a prayer need or a praise.



There is a check box letting us know if you wish to share your card during the service, or have it should be seen only by the pastor. The Member Care Ministry Team collects the cards during each service. The cards will soon be available on-line so you can fill them out ahead of time.



From the Auxiliary/Mothers' Study Circle

The Auxiliary/Mothers' Study Group would like to thank the congregation for all their donations for the kits for Church World Service. This project would not be possible without your wonderful support year after year. We would also like to thank the church school children for their great help with the school kits.

This year we assembled 60 school kits and 129 health kits. These were mailed to Church World Service and will be sent from there to areas of need either in the United States or elsewhere in the world where there is a need.

Again, a big thank you, and give yourselves a pat on the back for a job well done that will bring help to people in need.

Annual Nativity Display in the lounge

Once again, Bethlehem is making plans for its annual Nativity Display in the Schmale Lounge. This wonderful display ranges from beautifully ornate nativity scenes, to rough cut wood or ceramic sets, to a really silly one make out of kitchen utensils.

So . . . dust off your Christmas boxes and bring in your favorite nativity sets to share with us. We will begin gathering them in the office in mid-November. You simply bring them to the church office and the set-up group will make sure they are displayed safely in the locked cases in the lounge.



August 2018	Year to Date	YTD Target	2018 Budget
Offerings and Income	342,609	335,049	446,732
Expenses	394,387	403,090	537,454
Net	(51,778)	(68,041)	(90,722)



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.

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.

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.

Bethlehem United Church of Christ

Staff, Ministry Team Chairs, and Leadership Council

STAFF

Pastor: Rev. John Kennedy
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Orval L.E. Willimann
Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development: Lily Tinker Fortel
Parish Administrator: Mary Cantor
Financial Administrator: Betty Clark
Parish Secretary: Donna Whitney
Director of Music: Thomas Burton
Organist: Gail Jennings
Director of Handbells: Jim Rowan
Sunday School Nursery Teacher: Kelsey Postler

MINISTRY TEAM CHAIRS

Finance: Jeff Wortman
Facilities: Steve Darr
Education: Jane Nicholson Schmerberg
Worship: Caroline Ashenfelter
Member Care: Jenny Foster
Welcome: Kurt Schmerberg
Outreach: Laura Seyfried
Fellowship: Jane Ziesemer
Youth & Young Adult: Katie Rowan
Bethlehem Cemetery: Susan Irwin
Nominations Committee: Della DiPietro

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

President: John Samford
Vice President: Ron Dechert
Secretary: Sue Wortman
Treasurer: Shannon O'Reilly
At-Large Members:
 Judy Coucouvanis
 Kris Lovelace
 Julie Feldkamp
Ex Officio: Rev. John Kennedy