



# The Visitor

## November 2019

### Bethlehem United Church of Christ

#### NOVEMBER GRATEFUL

##### LILY TINKER FORTEL

November provides an opportunity to reflect on the things for which we are grateful. As always, our lives are full. Life brings ups and downs, tragedies and triumphs. Our faith reminds us that we are embraced and loved in the fullness of our humanity.

In November, I invite you into a daily gratitude practice. Take a few minutes each day to write down two or three things for which you are grateful. If you have an existing daily prayer or devotional practice, you could incorporate this. If you've been wanting to renew or begin a daily practice, this could be a good place to start. Studies have found a correlation between giving thanks and improved well-being (<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>).

On November 21 at 3 p.m., we'll have the opportunity to reflect on our gratitude journeys with one another.

Our faith also invites us to give joyfully for the well-being of others and realization of Heaven on Earth. I find that my giving is all the more joyful when it is rooted in gratitude for what I have received. This November and December, we will have many opportunities for giving at Bethlehem. In November, we'll collect supplies for Church World Service school and hygiene kits. The United Church of Christ is leading a denomination-wide "Giving Tuesday" fundraiser on December 3, which will help alleviate medical debt for families. Throughout December, we'll collect hats, mittens,

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**Deadline for the  
December Visitor is  
Monday, December 2**



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**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)

**Office Hours**  
 Monday—CLOSED  
 Tuesday—Friday OPEN 9-3



## CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2019

**Sunday, December 15  
10 A.M. Worship Service**

This year's Christmas Pageant is *Heaven and Nature Sing* by Children's Ministry Deals. It will take place on Sunday, December 15, during the 10 a.m. worship service.

In the coming weeks, director Sarah Herwick and members of the Education Ministry Team will be working with families and children to assign roles and begin rehearsing for the pageant.

**Our final rehearsal will be Saturday, Dec. 14.**

**Following the Christmas Pageant, join us in the fellowship hall for an all-church potluck.**



## CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE AT THE PARSONAGE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 4-7 p.m.



**Keep the Advent joy going! After the pageant and potluck, join the Kennedy family for their annual Parsonage Open House.**



### From Your President's Desk



As I type, I'm in the church office following Chuck Raab's funeral. If you Google Chuck's name, Google automatically adds "Michigan" following it! With a recessional of "Hail to the Victors!" Chuck was sent to the real "Big House," and I feel privileged to have been in the sanctuary to hear the bagpipe/organ duet of "Amazing Grace," which brought me goosebumps. It seems to have been a season of loss, with the passing of Chuck, Barb Fisher, Arlene Schmid, and Barbara Seyfried. Such events can draw us together as a community, despite the obvious sadness. I was amazed to see the "well-oiled" machine that is Bethlehem spring into action for Chuck's funeral on Monday, November 11, a day which our office is not usually open. A bulletin was prepared, a luncheon arranged, vocal and instrumental soloists were obtained, the first significant snow was cleared (and cleared some more as it continued to fall), off-site parking was arranged (since the street was not available due to the city's snowplows), the pastors met previously with the family, caring for them and eliciting their memories to weave a meaningful service.

One would expect no less, and I hope those who knew Chuck were comforted with all the details. It's part of what Pastor Lily described as Chuck's encouragement. A part of being "family."

At this time of the year (the "fall/winter eating season," as I call it), I commend you to seek out your family and friends, to reach out to them and remind them (and you) how much they mean. Since our family is actually every being on earth and beyond, how can we feel alone? Be joyful!

## HANGING OF THE GREENS

Join us as we prepare the church for the Season of Advent.



**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 6 PM**

**Dinner + Hanging of the Greens preparations**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 9 AM**

**HANGING OF THE GREENS**

*Advent*

The Fellowship Ministry Team will begin preparing for Christmas early this year due to the home UM vs. OSU football game.

Please save Thursday, November 21, starting at 6 p.m. for pizza and salad in the gallery, before distributing the decorations and assembling the sanctuary Christmas Tree.

Then on Saturday, November 23, Hanging of the Greens will begin at 9 a.m. Many hands are needed to "Deck the Halls."

## CHRISTMAS WREATHS

It is time to green up the church with our beautiful Christmas wreaths!

**Sign up by the office** to order a wreath in memory or in honor of a loved one.

**Small Wreaths are \$25**

**Large Wreaths are \$30**



## LIVING NATIVITY AT BETHLEHEM

**Friday, December 6, from 6:00 to 8:30 PM**

Once again, Bethlehem will host a Living Nativity. The nativity will have several animals, including a real camel. We will have readers to tell the Christmas story and a cast to act out the characters and a choir to sing the carols. With all this excitement, I am asking for help from the congregation. Everyone is encouraged to participate: youth, young adults, and the young at heart!

This is a great opportunity to share our story with the community. Please sign up next to the office, or talk to Tom

Ziesemer. **Tell your family and friends about our Living Nativity and mark your calendars for December 6!!**

## *Living Nativity*

*During Midnight Madness*

*Friday, December 6, 6-8:30 p.m.*

*Come to Bethlehem*

*(United Church of Christ - 423 S. 4th Ave.)*



Christmas Story Performances

6:00pm; 6:45pm; 7:30pm; 8:15pm


Stop by anytime for warm snacks, animal petting, and Christmas cheer!



a just  
world  
for all  
ucc.org

**Bethlehem**  
**United Church of Christ**  
423 S. 4th Ave.  
Downtown Ann Arbor  
734.665.6149  
[www.bethlehem-ucc.org](http://www.bethlehem-ucc.org)






**SACRED SPACES**  
by Jamie Dylenski

Come hear an inspiration program on SACRED SPACES by our own Jamie Dylenski, based on her travels and research.

**Wednesday, Nov. 20, 1 PM, Gallery**  
(followed by refreshments)

*Many thanks to the  
AUXILIARY/MOTHER'S STUDY  
for hosting this program*



**ALL CHURCH, ALL AGES**  
**Dinner and Board Game Night,**

Hosted by  
Bethlehem Youth  
Thurs., Dec. 12  
6:30–8:30  
youth room



**Service Day at the Food Gatherers Warehouse**  
**Saturday, Dec. 21, 2–4 PM, 1 Carrot Way**

EVERYONE is invited to this fun service opportunity. Sign up by the office, or contact Lily.





**PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**  
**AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM**  
**Tuesday, November 26, 2:45–4:45 p.m.**  
*Please sign up in the office hallway.*





**HOLY ROLLERS PRETZELS**  
**Saturday, December 7**


Rolling at 8 a.m., sales from 11–1  
(Call 734-665-6149 to preorder.)

**Sunday, December 1**  
**Food Gatherers Volunteer Day, Delonis Center**  
**12–2:30 p.m. Sign up near the office.**

**Bethlehem Veterans' Monthly Breakfast**  
**Friday, Dec. 6, 8:30 a.m.**  
Classic Cup Café, Jackson Rd.  
*Questions? Contact Tom Ziesemer.*

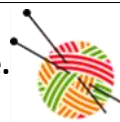


**Bethlehem Prayer Circle—please join us!**  
**November 21, December 5 & 19**  
**11:30 am–12:15 pm**

Join us in the Schmale Lounge as we lift up prayers and share a spiritual exercise.



**PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY**  
**Wednesdays from 1–3 in the lounge.**  
**A weekly gathering—join us!**



**Gentle Yoga at Bethlehem with Lily**  
*Selected Tuesdays & Thursdays, in the gallery*

**Tuesday, Dec. 3, 5:30**  
**Thursday, Dec. 5, 3:00**  
**Tuesday, Dec. 10, 5:30**  
**Thursday, Dec. 12, 3:00**  
**Tuesday, Dec. 17, 5:30**  
**Thursday, Dec. 19, 3:00**




**Ann Arbor Youth Chorale**  
SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN'S PREMIER  
CHILDREN'S CHORUS FOR OVER 30 YEARS

**Winter Concert**

510 adults and 55 seniors/children

**Sunday, December 8, 4 pm**

Bethlehem United Church of Christ  
423 S 4th Ave, Ann Arbor



**Youth Group MEAL TRAIN**



If you're able to support the Youth Group by preparing or ordering a dinner, please sign up here! We hope you'll join us for dinner so we can chat and get to know you better! [mealtrain.com/k7d4mr](http://mealtrain.com/k7d4mr)

## OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS

### Food Gatherers Volunteer Opportunities

Thanks to those who volunteered at Food Gatherers on Saturday, October 19. Mark your calendars for our upcoming volunteer days on Saturdays December 21, February 15, and April 18 (from 2-4 pm).

This is a congregation-wide activity, so families and friends are invited to join. Meet at Food Gatherers around 1:50 pm (Carrot Way, off Dhu Varren Road).



### CROP Walk

This is a huge thank-you to you all for being a part of the Bethlehem Pillamas! Some of you walked at the CROP Walk; some of you asked for pledges; some of you pledged/donated; some of you did all three; and some of you cheered us on with well wishes! It takes a village. Thanks to all for making this year's CROP Walk a huge success!

If I count correctly, we had 22 Bethlehem Pillamas who participated in CROP Walk on Sunday, and four who weren't able to walk but still collected donations. We definitely surpassed our \$1000 fundraising goal!

Bethlehem, you've done it again!! Thank you!



### Youth Group Halloween Lock-In

We had a wonderful time at the Youth Group Halloween lock-in on Friday, October 25! We shared dinner and decorated for Bethlehem's Halloween festivities on Sunday, 10/27. We made over 100 popcorn balls to raise funds for Easy Water for Everyone. Then the youth successfully puzzled their way through an escape room in the library. They also completed a 16-clue scavenger hunt, discovering meticulously hidden clues in the gym, library, gallery, sanctuary, fellowship hall, youth room, and more! Some of the clues from our scavenger hunt are below. Ask the youth if you need help solving them! A huge thank-you to Eileen Koprowski, Nancy Nicholson, Kurt Schmerberg, Jennifer Vasquez, Donna Whitney, and Julie Rhodes, who helped in a variety of ways before and during the lock-in!

Here's a sampling of the scavenger hunt clues. Could you find them?

- "\_\_\_\_\_"-ego. Clark Kent = Superman. Dr. Jekyll = Mr. Hyde.
- You might think I'm named after popcorn. Find your next clue under my plaque.
- We meet here before we meet the camels. The North \_\_\_\_\_ guided the Three Wise Men to Jesus.
- I'm so blue because my heart is broken into so many pieces. \_\_\_\_\_ to be exact. I sing my blues away wearing this.
- REJOICE! You're almost done!





## NOVEMBER GRATEFUL

### LILY TINKER FORTEL

(Continued from page 1)

and a variety of other items for donation to area organizations. You can learn more about these opportunities on this page and on page 7.

Bethlehem, I am ever in awe of how generously you give! I'm reminded of a hymn from my childhood called "Freely, Freely": "In Jesus' name, I come to you, to share his love as he told me to. He said, 'Freely, freely, you have received. Freely, freely, give. Go from this place and because you believe, others will know that I live.' " It is a joy to journey with you as we work to share God's extravagant love and realize a "just world for all."

## NOVEMBER GRATEFUL GATHERING

Please join us on Thursday, November 21,  
3 PM in the lounge

Join Lily for a time of reflecting on that for which  
we are grateful, and to reflect with one  
another on our gratitude journeys.



We will also make "INTENT BRACELETS."

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=aN2vBMpyiFo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aN2vBMpyiFo)

The Education Ministry Team's 2019  
"November Grateful" service project is

## CHURCH WORLD SERVICE HYGIENE KITS AND SCHOOL KITS



### 3 ways to donate supplies:

- Bring items to Sunday services throughout November and place on the altar.
- Bring items to the church office during office hours.
- Order online and have items shipped directly to Bethlehem.

Kits will be assembled Nov 24. Thank you !

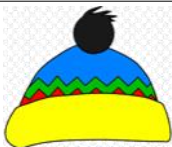
### CWS school kit supplies:

- Blunt scissors (round tip only)
- 70-count spiral notebooks
- Rulers (12 in/30 cm)
- Pencil sharpener (hand held)
- Large eraser (not pencil caps)
- Pencils (unsharpened)
- Crayons (24 count only)
- Cotton or canvas bag with handles and no logos (12"x14" up to 14"x17")



### CWS hygiene kit supplies:

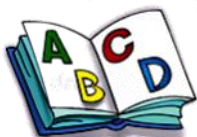
- Hand towels, 15"x28" up to 16"x32" (no microfiber, bath, or dish towels)
- Wide-tooth combs
- Finger or toenail clippers
- Bar soap (bath size) in wrapper
- Toothbrushes (in package)



## ADVENT GIVING OPPORTUNITIES AT BETHLEHEM

### HAT AND MITTEN TREE

Fill up our "Mitten Tree" (by the 4th Ave. door) throughout December with warm hats, scarves, and mittens. They'll be donated locally to Peace Neighborhood, Alpha House, and Delonix Center.



### WEEKLY GIVING

*Bring to church on Sundays or to the office weekdays.*



**December 1:** Bring board games and books for kid-centered local organizations, such as Alpha House.

**December 8 & December 22:** Bring gift cards for local organizations, such as Peace Neighborhood Center.

**December 15:** Bring donations of nonperishable food and personal care items for Food Gatherers.

# #GIVINGTUESDAY™

## DECEMBER 3 is #GivingTuesday

Celebrated on the Tuesday following U.S. Thanksgiving, and fueled by the power of social media and collaboration, Giving Tuesday inspires millions of people across the globe to show up and give back to causes and issues that matter to them.

To participate, go online to: [www.ucc.org/giving\\_tuesday](http://www.ucc.org/giving_tuesday)  
Click the DONATE BUTTON

Please join us #GivingTuesday, December 3, 2019. Your donation to the United Church of Christ #GivingTuesday campaign will be used to erase crushing medical debt for people living below the poverty level who are facing insolvency, and for whom medical debt is 5% or more of annual income.

### Did you know?

- Medical debt contributes to more than 60% of all bankruptcies
- 43 million Americans owe about \$75 billion in past-due medical debt
- 75% of all individuals in medical bankruptcy had health insurance coverage
- Medical debt is an economic justice issue, which causes people to cut back on non-medical necessities, cuts people off from needed medical services, and sinks people into a health-poverty trap.

### WITH YOUR DONATIONS, WE WILL ERASE MEDICAL DEBT FOR THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

- The United Church of Christ will work in partnership with conferences and congregations to abolish medical debt for those living at or below the poverty level in the communities served by our churches.
- **This #GivingTuesday, the UCC has set a goal of raising \$50,000 with your help.**
- \$50,000 will erase some \$5 million in medical debt. The United Church of Christ works with RIP Medical Debt, a New York-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that identifies and purchases medical debt for pennies on the dollar and then abolishes unpaid and unpayable medical debt as a benefit to recipients and society.

## 2019-2020 Mission Project

**Announcing the Educational Ministry Team's 2019-2020 Mission Project:**  
**Easy Water for Everyone.**

***Curing disease from drinking infected water in poor villages in Ghana, Africa***

easy water   
for Everyone®

*by Bethlehem member Dr. Fritz Port*

I recently traveled to Ghanaian villages by the large Volta River, where infected drinking water causes diarrhea and other sickness. These illnesses can lead to deaths in children. Being a nephrologist (kidney doctor), I know that dialysis filters do not allow bacteria or viruses to get across the filter membrane. As a board member of the charity "Easy Water for Everyone," I visited Ghana for the installation of devices that use dialysis filters to provide whole villages with clean drinking water. I helped analyze monthly recordings of diarrhea in four villages during the months before and after initiation of the Easy Water device. The results were dramatic: The occurrence (incidence) of diarrhea was suddenly reduced by an average of 70%, while no such change was observed during the same months in villages without this device.

Our group reported these findings at several international meetings and published a scientific paper. Our hope is that this proven success will allow a big expansion to many more villages in Africa through an increase in financial support. In Ghana, 17 villages with no electricity now have clean and uninfected water through the Easy Water devices with dialysis filters.

Bethlehem's Education Ministry Team has identified Easy Water for Everyone as the 2019-2020 Service Project. We will also identify an agency/organization that works to ensure our local and regional water is protected. In the New Year, we will have opportunities to learn more about Easy Water for Everyone and support the amazing work the organization does. In the meantime, you can learn more at [www.easywaterforeveryone.org](http://www.easywaterforeveryone.org).





Purple Pride Sunday

# Oktoberfest Fun



# Halloween Silliness







*Thank you to our  
Youth leaders*

**More  
Halloween  
FUN!**



## MEMORIALS & GIFTS

### CHURCH SCHOOL FUND

Lily Tinker Fortel Honorarium

### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

Marie Slotten Memorial

### PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

John O'Reilly Memorial

### RADIO BROADCAST SPONSORSHIP

**October 20** In memory of **Frederick and Lela Keppler** on their 78<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on October 19, from the children.

Gifts listed were received through  
October 31, 2019



## HAVE YOU SPONSORED A RADIO BROADCAST LATELY?

A sponsorship is a great way to honor or remember a special person, a special day, or a special event.

A sponsorship is \$230 and is read on the radio and printed in the weekly bulletin and monthly Visitor newsletter. In addition, general donations of any amount are appreciated.

## PARISH RECORDS

### DEATHS

Arlene Hitt, October 5

Barbara Seyfried, October 12

Arlene Schmid, November 2

Chuck Raab, November 6

Barb Fisher, November 9

### WEDDING

Sharon Seay and Sandy Stafford  
November 9

### BAPTISM

Evelyn Rose Ashenfelter  
October 27

### *Bethlehem's Tree of Life*

If you are looking for a personal and meaningful gift for a loved one or a special occasion, please consider the purchase of a leaf on our Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is 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.  
Info & order forms are at the 4th Avenue entrance.



October 2019	Year to Date	YTD Target	2019/2020 Budget
<b>Offerings and Income</b>	\$179,625	\$199,753	\$479,406
<b>Expenses</b>	\$179,105	\$221,723	\$532,136
<b>Net</b>	\$520	(\$21,971)	(\$52,730)

### Making an end of the year Required Minimum Distribution withdrawal?

Please consider a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your RMD directly to Bethlehem Cemetery to lower your 2019 taxable income.



# From the Cemetery Board

Beginning January 1, 2020, there will be an increase in the price of lot sales, burials, and other services at the cemetery. This is necessary to cover the additional costs of operating Bethlehem Cemetery. Members of Bethlehem Church will still receive a 10-percent discount.

If you are considering additional charitable contributions for 2019, we hope you will consider donating to Bethlehem Cemetery. Funds can be donated in any amount and specified for any of the ongoing projects at the cemetery such as trees, granite benches, road maintenance, or even the general maintenance fund.



## Thank You!

I would like to thank the following people for helping with another successful Oktoberfest: First, my team of Jan Eadie, Sue Muir, and Kris Lovelace; Harriett Holzapfel and her daughter, Jim Lutz, Bob Loukotka, Mike Haab, and Dave Gilmore for making spatzen; Shannon O'Reilly for sauerkraut, spatzen, and brat prep; Pat O'Reilly for making the gravy; Jane and Kurt Schmerberg for grilling the brats; and Tom Zieseimer for shopping and running errands whenever anything was needed.

Along with all these folks, we had over 20 volunteers who helped make this event a HUGE success. They are: Sue and Brian Buday, Jamie Dylenski, Joe Eadie, Mike Haab, Susan and John Irwin, Jim Judson, Chuck Judson, Jacqueline Katz, Karen and John Kennedy, Sheila and Brian Paton, Sallie and Jim Stadel, Lily Tinker Fortel, Jennifer Vasquez, Kathy Warner, and Linda Young.

A final thank-you to all those who provided pies. There were approximately 99 adults and children in attendance. THANK YOU one and all.

The profits from this event totaled \$1220.36, with \$400.36 of this going to the Cemetery Garden and the remaining \$820.00 to Alpha House.

From Jane Zieseimer, Oktoberfest Chair





## 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  
**Financial Administrator:** Betty Clark  
**Parish Administrator:** Julie Rhodes  
**Parish Secretary:** Donna Whitney  
**Director of Music:** David Hahn  
**Organist:** Gail Jennings  
**Director of Handbells:** Jim Rowan  
**Sunday School Nursery Teacher:** Kelsey Postler

### MINISTRY TEAM CHAIRS

**Finance:** Karen Samford  
**Facilities:** Tom Ziesemer  
**Education:** Eileen Koprowski  
**Worship:** Harriette Ehnis  
**Member Care:** Jenny Foster  
**Welcome:** Kurt Schmerberg  
**Outreach:** Laura Seyfried  
**Fellowship:** Jan Eadie  
**Youth & Young Adult:** Katie Rowan  
**Bethlehem Cemetery:** Susan Irwin  
**Nominations Committee:** Cresson Slotten

### LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

**President:** John Samford  
**Vice President:** Ron Dechert  
**Secretary:** Sue Wortman  
**Treasurer:** Jim Rowan  
**At-Large Members:**  
 Judy Coucouvanis  
 Pat Huibregtse  
 Pam Rutledge  
**Ex Officio:** Rev. John Kennedy