



# The Visitor

December 2019

Bethlehem United Church of Christ

## POSSIBILITIES IN IMPOSSIBLE TIMES

PASTOR JOHN KENNEDY

*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for Mary to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in*

*bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)*

On Christmas Eve we will celebrate the impossible possibility of this story. God always uses unlikely people and impossible times to make miraculous possibilities become realities. In the Hebrew Scriptures, all of God's faithful have come from an unlikely cast of characters in the stories of: Abraham and Sarah; Isaac and Rebekah (the Syrian); Jacob (the con man); Joseph (the one left for dead); Hot tempered Moses (a murderer) and his black Ethiopian wife Zipporah; and the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, etc.

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**Deadline for the  
January Visitor is  
Monday, January 6**



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**BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
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**Office Hours**  
 Monday—CLOSED  
 Tuesday—Friday OPEN 9-3

*(Continued from page 1)*

But what could be more miraculous than the Christ event? First, God uses Zechariah and Elizabeth (already members of AARP and taking Geritol) to bring John the Baptist into the world. These childless, elderly parents for whom having children is impossible, deliver the one to prepare the way for Christ. Was that even possible?

God chooses Mary and Joseph to bring Christ the Messiah (The Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace) to live, and die as one of us, all while defeating sin and death. Wow! The Gospel story tells us that Mary is a pregnant unmarried teenager, and Joseph is a fiancé, that overcomes suspicion and doubt to be a father and unite the family.

Immanuel “God with us” is being born in an animal trough in a livestock stable, not in a palace. The Jewish leaders in power (like Herod, and the Sadducees) are getting it wrong, and are planning to kill Christ. Meanwhile, sweaty low-wage shepherds are leaving their fields and traveling to Bethlehem, to see the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay. Three royal astronomers (Asian, African, and Arabic, and pagan) are traveling thousands of miles from Eastern lands to bring gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the one whose star has risen. The Magi risk their lives and betray Herod to save the life of Christ.

Today, with all of its impossibilities, there are unlikely people in Bethlehem (like you and me) being called and led to take risks of love towards other unlikely people. Joy to the World the Lord has come!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year of possibilities to all the beautiful unlikely people!

Pastor John

## **CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES**



**Tuesday, December 24**

**Christmas Eve**

**5:00 PM**

A family-centered Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols featuring an interactive telling of the Christmas story

**7:30 PM**

A Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols and a musical celebration featuring the Bethlehem Chancel Choir, Chamber Orchestra featuring the Solid Brass (7 p.m.)

**11:00 PM**

Candle lighting, Communion, Choir, Handbell quartet, and Harpist Deborah Gabrion

# Happenings

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



**Sunday, January 5**

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



**Bethlehem Prayer Circle**

Please join us!

**December 19**

**January 2 & 16, 11:30 am–12:15 pm**

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



**Gentle Yoga at Bethlehem with Lily**

*Selected Tuesdays & Thursdays, in the gallery*

**Thursday, Dec. 12 & 19, 3:00**

**Tuesday, Dec. 17, 5:30**



**Bethlehem Veterans'**  
**Monthly Breakfast**  
**Friday, Jan. 3, 8:30 a.m.**

Classic Cup Café, Jackson Rd.  
*Questions? Contact Tom Ziesemer.*



**HOLY ROLLERS PRETZELS**

**Saturday, December 7**  
**Saturday, January 18**

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



**PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**  
**AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM**

**Tuesday, January 28, 2:45–4:45 p.m.**

*Please sign up in the office hallway.*



**CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE AT THE PARSONAGE**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 4–7 p.m.**

After the pageant and potluck on December 15,  
Pastor Kennedy and family  
invite you to the Parsonage Open House.

*Hope to see you there!*



## ADVENT GIVING OPPORTUNITIES AT BETHLEHEM

*Many thanks to our Education and Outreach Teams  
and Bethlehem Youth for organizing our  
2019 Advent giving opportunities.*



### HAT AND MITTEN TREE



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

### WEEKLY GIVING



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

**DECEMBER 8 AND DECEMBER 22:** Bring gift cards (\$10  
denominations are the best) for local organizations,  
such as Peace Neighborhood Center.

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



## CAROLING - FRIDAY, DEC. 20, 6:30-8:30

All Bethlehem members are invited to join in  
caroling at Evangelical Home  
and Brecon Village on Friday,  
December 20.

We'll meet at 6:30 at Evangelical  
Home and carol until 8:30.

Questions: Cress Slotten or Lily  
Tinker Fortel. All are welcome to a gathering  
following caroling at the Slotten home.



## Come Celebrate Christmas With Us

You are invited to join Auxiliary/Mothers' Study's  
Annual Christmas Gift and Cookie Exchange on  
December 20 at 1:00 pm

Admission is a \$5 wrapped gift and 2 dozen cookies.  
You go home with a gift and delicious  
Christmas cookies.

See you there!



## From Your President's Desk



### "If we do not hear...we will have no alternative but to file a civil lawsuit."

One never knows what's coming next as your President! This quote is from a letter sent to our church by an attorney who is not associated with but can be found in the same Google search as "Call Sam!" It's doubtful anything will come of this situation and I won't go into details here (I'm happy to share more personally) but the experience brings to mind the old adage "No good deed goes unpunished!"

Appearances are important. Certainly, our church's appearance makes a striking first impression. With its imposing stonework, soaring belfry, and welcome banners, Bethlehem UCC sticks out. Beyond its solid, reassuring presence, our building gives an air of means. I doubt we could afford to duplicate it today! To a grifter, it might imply we would settle a nuisance lawsuit for an easy payday. Not on my watch!

More importantly though, let's talk about our congregational life. At this past year's Annual Meeting, members had the opportunity to take a survey covering many aspects of our church. Please be assured the next time we offer a survey, it will be more widely publicized so more folks respond. Those who did respond had the following strong beliefs (less strong beliefs have been omitted for brevity: again, ask me if you want a fuller story!)

Statement	Definitely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Unknown/NA
I believe that in our congregation prayer is regularly offered for our church, community, and world-wide needs.	36	3	0	0
I believe our church banners and signs are clearly visible to the public	34	5	0	0
I believe prayer is important in our congregation's life and ministry	33	3	3	0
I believe our spiritual leaders encourage me to pray for members of my church family	32	5	2	0
I support numerical growth in our congregation	30	8	1	0
I believe that BUCC is progressing, and I am excited about the future of my church	13	10	14	1
I believe our congregation is open to evaluating its strengths and weaknesses	6	19	13	0
I believe the preaching cultivates a growing edge and spiritual understanding in my spiritual life	10	15	13	1
I believe our congregation uses various opportunities to promote our church's mission through the media	4	21	13	1

(Continued on page 5)



(Continued from page 4)

What has Leadership Council learned from these results? Prayer is important to us. We want to grow. We're not so sure we're making progress, evaluating ourselves honestly, nor growing spiritually.

Our Bylaws mandate the Leadership Council:

1. **Is responsible to the Governing Body.**
2. **Shall, in consultation with the Pastor, engage in strategic planning for the future of the Church and, in collaboration with the various Ministry Teams, set the overall policy and direction of the Church.**
3. **Shall work with the Pastor, other staff, the Ministry Teams, and other laypersons to implement that strategic direction.**

As a means of planning strategically, Leadership Council intends to consult with the Center for Progressive Renewal, whose self-description says:

*The Center for Progressive Renewal seeks to renew Christianity by training entrepreneurial leaders, supporting the birth of new congregations, renewing and strengthening existing churches, and growing a network of progressive ministries that support and nourish each other and bring about a more just and generous world.*

The Center for Progressive Renewal has been useful to many churches, including UCC. At our January meeting, we will have a video conference with one of their coaches who has been supplied with information about our church and intends to conduct interviews, administer a survey and tailor a plan for us to execute. We ask you to cooperate with these efforts as we move forward, adjusting our "2020 Vision!"

## pastor Lily's Commissioning

On Sunday, November 17, Lily was commissioned to "Lay Ministry Standing." This "standing" authorized Lily to officiate weddings, funerals, and lead/bless the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion at Bethlehem UCC at the request/direction of the pastor. Congratulations Pastor Lily.





# Totenfest



## Children of God at Play



## CARING CUTS

**Caring Cuts from Renew Salon** in Saline coming to Fellowship Hall after worship Sunday January 19



The founder of **Renew Salon** in Saline, Jeffrey McLaughlin, is bringing a number of his salon's stylists to Bethlehem Church the afternoon of **Sunday January 19** to our Fellowship Hall for "**Caring Cuts**," an opportunity for those in our community unable to afford hair cutting and spa treatment to relax, enjoy a simple meal, fellowship and pampering. No one will be turned away and all those who come will be served until none remain.

BUCC is providing space, but also has a part in greeting the guests, preparing some soup, and providing donuts and coffee. Saline Area Social Services is providing 200 gift bags containing hygiene items. Jeffrey has suggested BUCC might want to solicit donations of winter outer-wear: coats, hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, etc. We'll be contacting our partners in mission (Delonis Center, Alpha House, Peace Neighborhood Center, Ruth Ellis Center, Ozone House, etc.) to publicize this opportunity. Jeffrey hopes to repeat this event several times during the year.

If you are interested in participating, or have items to donate, contact President John Samford.

## Christmas Gift Cards for Peace Neighborhood Center

Eighty-five percent of the families registered in Peace's Adult and Family Services are classified as the working poor - adults working hard every day and still finding it hard to make ends meet. Approximately 300 families were helped last Christmas with assistance from Peace during their Holiday Assistance Program. Gift Cards give families options as what to purchase for the needs of their children. The following places to purchase gift cards (in any denominations) would be greatly appreciated:



- Food (Kroger, Meijer, Busch's)
- Gas (Speedway, Shell)
- Multi-Purpose (Target, Sears, Meijer, Walmart, Visa)
- Toys (Target, Meijer, GameStop)
- Clothing (Target, Old Navy, Forever 21, Kohl's)
- Shoes (Foot Locker, Dunhams, Famous Footwear)
- Entertainment (iTunes, Quality 16, Rave Cinemas)

**Cards can be or left at the Church Office or  
taken directly to Peace Neighborhood Center  
1111 North Maple Road, Ann Arbor**

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.

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

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).



### ~ ~ NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS ~ ~

#### CROP WALK UPDATE

We received official word from the 2019 Ann Arbor CROP Walk committee that the Bethlehem Pllamas raised \$2,484 this year!! We far exceeded our \$1,000 goal! Way to go, Bethlehem! Thanks again to everyone who walked, donated, and cheered us



#### AUXILIARY/MOTHER'S STUDY LEARNS ABOUT SACRED SPACES

On November 20, Jamie Dylenski presented Sacred Spaces at Auxiliary/Mother's Study. It was a wonderful presentation informed by Jamie's research and travels.



#### ON FIRE - BOOK DISCUSSION.

In October and November, Bethlehem members and friends gathered to discuss *On Fire: The Burning Case for a Green New Deal* by Naomi Klein. We'll reconvene in January to continue our explorations of how Bethlehem can address the climate crisis. All invited!



#### NOVEMBER GRATEFUL - CHURCH WORLD SERVICE KITS

Thank you to all who contributed items for our Church World Service hygiene and education kits during November. On Sunday, November 24, Bethlehem's youth and children assembled our kits. When all is said and done, we will have 40 school kits and 35 hygiene kits for Church World Service! A special thank you to Auxiliary/Mother's Study for stewarding this tradition at Bethlehem, and for extra donations of supplies for this year's kits.



#### ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

We have a few advent devotionals from the Stillspeaking Writer's Group available! Please see Lily if you'd like a copy.



#### YOUTH GROUP MEAL TRAIN

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

#### THANK YOU!

A huge thank you to Jennifer Vasquez, Aaron and Chris Bailey, and John and Karen Samford for providing Youth Group/Confirmation Meals in November!!!



#### GIVING TUESDAY AT THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

For #GivingTuesday, the United Church of Christ partnered with an organization called RIP Medical Debt. UCC members across the country were invited to donate to help relieve medical debt.

# #GIVINGTUESDAY™

Gifts to the UCC's Giving Tuesday 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. Medical debt will be forgiven for some of the poorest people in our country. As of Wednesday, December 4, over \$74,000 was raised for the effort. Every \$100 donated relieves \$10,000 in medical debt. Learn more at [ucc.org/giving-tuesday](http://ucc.org/giving-tuesday)



Lily Tinker Fortel - Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development

## ~ YOUTH GROUP + LOOKING FORWARD ~

### CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AND ALL-CHURCH POTLUCK

**Sunday, December 15 @ 10AM**

Featuring Harold the Angel, who just wants to sing, and a whole cast of other angels!



All-Church Potluck with Advent Workshop following worship.

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2-4PM

It's time for our volunteer day at Food Gatherers! This is a congregation-wide activity, so families and friends are invited to join. Meet at Food Gatherers at 1:50pm. The Food Gatherer's Warehouse is on Carrot Way, off Dhu Varren Rd.



### YOUTH GROUP & CONFIRMATION IN DECEMBER - MARK YOUR CALENDARS

#### Friday, December 6

- Bethlehem's Living Nativity.
- Youth Group Lock-In.

#### Sunday, December 8

- Pageant practice at Sunday school.
- Confirmation from 11:30-1:30.

#### Thursday, December 12

- Board Game Night. 6:30-8:30pm.

#### Saturday, December 14

- Pageant practice, 11:00, Sanctuary.

#### Sunday, December 15

- 9am gather, pageant rehearsal.
- 10 am Christmas Pageant day!
- All-Church Potluck following worship and Advent activities

#### Thursday, December 19

- Confirmation. 6:30-8:30pm.

#### Friday, December 20

- Christmas Caroling. 6:30-8:30pm. Meet at Evangelical Home.

#### Saturday, December 21

- Food Gatherers Warehouse, 2-4

#### Sunday, December 22

- Confirmation 11:30-1:30

#### Thursday, December 26

- No YG. Merry Christmas!

#### Sunday, December 29

- Mich. Men's Basketball outing, 2pm.

#### February 7-9: WINTER FEST 2020

- Please mark your calendars & let Lily know if you're planning to be there!

**CARE PACKAGES** - The youth group will be preparing care packages for Bethlehem's college students.

If you know a Bethlehem college student, please send Lily their address by January 15.



### DECEMBER GIVING (see page 3 for details)

Bring your gifts to the manger during Advent!

- Sunday 12/1: Board games and books.
- Sunday 12/8: Gift cards for area organizations.
- Sunday 12/15: Non-perishable food items for Food Gatherers.
- Sunday 12/22: Gift cards for area organizations.

### SPIRITUALITY AND SONG: JANUARY -FEBRUARY 2020

Sign up now for an exploration of spirituality and song! Our exploration will include sessions at Bethlehem in January and February. On February 7, attend a performance by Carrie Newcomer at the Ark.

**About Carrie Newcomer:** *Carrie Newcomer weaves her life and her art together, with music, community activism, and personal concerns all playing a role. She's one of those people who exudes a spirituality that's all her own, and she has to be seen in concert to be truly appreciated. Says novelist Barbara Kingsolver: "She's a poet, storyteller, snake-charmer, good neighbor, friend and lover, minister of the wide-eyed gospel of hope and grace."*



## MEMORIALS & GIFTS

### AUXILIARY/MOTHER'S STUDY CIRCLE

Pat O'Reilly Honorarium

### BETHLEHEM CEMETERY MAINTENANCE FUND

Chuck Raab Memorial

### GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Barbara Fisher Memorial

### HAT & MITTEN TREE

Arlene Schmid Memorial

John Schneider Memorial

### OUTREACH

Lily Tinker Fortel Commissioning Honorarium

Jesse Wilcox Continued Recovery Honorarium

### PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Barbara Fisher Memorial

Mary Kay Maichele Memorial

John Nimz Memorial

### YOUTH FUND

Chuck Raab Memorial

Gifts listed were received through  
November 30, 2019

### RADIO BROADCAST SPONSORSHIP

**November 17** In memory of **Bill and Jean Wetzel**,  
from Norm and Sally Wetzel.

### 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. A sign up is located near the office, or simply call the office at 734-665-6149.

## Christmas Wreaths Memorials and Honorariums

IN MEMORY OF	FROM
Eldean & Lillian Hanson	Dick Hanson Family
Raymond & Elizabeth Lambarth	Jan Eadie
William & Aletta Kulenkamp	Paul & Nancy Thibault
Joseph & Laura O'Reilly	Pat & Shannon O'Reilly
John & Jean O'Reilly	Pat & Shannon O'Reilly
Virginia Seitz	Michael Ehnis Family
Ron & Julia Kennedy	Dave Kennedy & Dick Hanson Families
Burt & Betty Lutz	Jim & Mary Lutz
Chuck Raab	Bob & Jamie Dylenski
Waldemar & Marianne Pollee	Jack & Angelika Lewis
Jim & Kellie Goforth	Karen Goforth
Elida & Oscar Vasquez	Vasquez Family
Sylvia Weber	John & Karen Samford
IN HONOR OF	FROM
Donna Whitney	Mike & Harriette Ehnis

### Bethlehem welcomes Gwen Mayes

Gwen joined the Bethlehem UCC staff in December 2019 in the role of Administrative Assistant. Prior to joining Bethlehem, Gwen served as a Business Administrator, retiring after 33 years. Gwen and her husband Wayne live in Saline with their little dog Oliver. Their daughter, Hilary, lives in Grand Rapids. In her free time, Gwen enjoys reading and traveling.



November 2019	Year to Date	YTD Target	2019/2020 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$208,290	\$239,703	\$479,406
Expenses	\$225,922	\$266,068	\$532,136
Net	(\$17,032)	(\$26,365)	(\$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 BETHLEHEM CEMETERY BOARD

**Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a wonderful holiday season from all of us.**

***Sue Buday, Mike Haab, Susan Irwin, Jim Lutz, Sallie Stadel and Marty Seyfried.***

As mentioned in the November Visitor, there will be an increase in the price of lot sales, burials, and other services at the cemetery beginning January 1, 2020. 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.



## Honoring our Veterans Sunday, November 10



## STAR BAZAAR THANK YOU

A great big thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Bethlehem Star Bazaar a big success. We had more than 30 volunteers working together, providing donations, food and service to the church and the community. While I can't thank everyone individually, I do want to especially thank Paul and Barb Marshall for our delicious and professionally prepared turkey and roast beef for the luncheon. I also want to thank the board of The Women of Bethlehem for their gifts of time, salads and all the table decorations. They are the glue that keeps this event together and moving forward.

Because of the generosity of all our church members and friends we raised \$2,298.45. This amount enabled us to donate \$689.54 to the church property improvement fund, \$459.69 to Peace Neighborhood, \$459.69 to Food Gatherers, \$459.69 to Alpha House and \$229.84 to Women of Bethlehem. All these organizations will be grateful for the gifts our time and service provided.

My heartfelt thanks to one and all, Debbie Karr



## HANGING OF THE GREENS THANK YOU

Many thanks to the following wonderful people who helped decorate the church for Christmas.

- Tom & Jane Ziesemer
- Joe & Jan Eadie
- Cresson, Karen & CJ Slotten
- Marty Seyfried
- John Irwin
- Brian Paton
- Mike Haab
- Karen Goforth
- Jim & Sallie Stadel
- Michelle Loukotka
- Kurt Schmerberg
- Edgar & Jennifer Vasquez
- Jim & Katie Rowan
- Sally Wetzel
- Paul & Barb Marshall
- Pam Widmayer

If you helped out in some other way and your name was not listed, please know your efforts were appreciated.

**As is our tradition, the Christmas decorations will be taken down and stored away on January 4th, 2020 at 9 am. Please mark your calendars and plan on joining us.**





## 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