



The Visitor

June 2020

Bethlehem United Church of Christ



The next edition of the VISITOR will be a combined July/August Newsletter
Please email your submission to: churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org by July 10, 2020

Just Mercy film discussion with Youth Group (Thursday, June 25) 6:30-7:30



All are invited to join Bethlehem's Youth Group for a discussion of the movie *Just Mercy*, which is streaming for free on multiple platforms. <https://www.justmercyfilm.com/>. Zoom meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/97711275775?pwd=NIJTSdJeGpVSTZWNIHYTRLN3I2QTO9> (Meeting ID: 977 1127 5775 Password: 097589)

**Deadline for the
July/August Visitor is
Friday, July 10**



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

Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel passes Ecclesiastical Council!

“My call is to be an organic leader who supports others in engaging in joyful, sustained struggle for peace, justice, and holistic healing in our world.”

– Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel

It's official. At a well-attended Zoom Ecclesiastical Council, on Thursday June 4, our own Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel was examined and unanimously approved for ordination in the United Church of Christ!

Among those attending was Covenant Association Moderator Kendal Brown, who ran the Council, Associate Conference Minister Rev. Cheryl Burke, Committee on Ministry Chair Joe Jeffreys (mentor), Host Pastor Rev. John Kennedy (advisor and member of Committee on Ministry) and representatives from twenty area UCC churches, totaling some sixty folks. All clergy and designated delegates from each church had “voice and vote;” other had “voice.” Rev. Brown commented he'd never seen such a large gathering when Ecclesiastical Councils were “in person!”

Of course, there were a multitude of Bethlehem folk in attendance, including members of Pastor Lily's Local Church Discernment Committee, Bethlehem leadership and other congregants.

Pastor Lily was a trailblazer in her path to this Council. As she began her work as a “member in discernment,” the rules changed! Change is good (usually), but in this case, both she and the Committee on Ministry had a fresh new set of guidelines they had to delve into together and apply. Pastor Lily approached them with her usual enthusiasm and rigor; beyond “checking the boxes” she prepared a thoughtful and inspiring Ordination Paper along with an on-line portfolio.

The Council heard her opening statement after Rev Jeffreys' introduction and those with “voice” followed up with thoughtful questions. Before Council discussed and voted, Pastor Lily and her invitees were “dismissed” into a Zoom breakout room and then asked to return to a joyful forest of thumbs up!

An Ecclesiastical Council can either be for an “Ordination” or “Privilege of Call” (if the candidate does not yet have a called position.) Because she has a “job lined up” at Bethlehem, Pastor Lily was examined for the former. The next steps are services of Ordination and Installation, generally at the church in which the candidate was “in care.” Sometimes these services are combined; sometimes not.

We all wish we knew more of what the future holds, now especially. Alas, we do not. Watch for announcements about these and other joyful matters in the life of Bethlehem.

I recognize ordination as a tool, a credentialing of the leadership and knowledge I continue to acquire as I seek to support the realization of a just world for all. It bears great weight and responsibility. It is one means to that call of my journey. I now believe it is time to acquire the credential to support the call.

– Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel

MAY 2020	Year to Date	YTD Target	2019/2020 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$496,597	\$479,406	\$479,406
Expenses	\$515,914	\$532,136	\$532,136
Net	(\$19,317)	(\$52,730)	(\$52,730)

From Your President's Desk



Little did we know what this year held in store when it began! Saturday June 1 2019 saw the Holy Rollers prepare their pretzels (a dozen sits in our home freezer, to be doled out on special occasions); our gym was rented that afternoon by a basketball group. We were looking forward to the next day's Communion during worship when Church School teachers were honored, followed by an end-of-the year picnic in our backyard. We were muttering about the inconvenience of the Dexter- Ann Arbor run.

"Simpler" times? Well, at least "different!" Things went along mostly unremarkably until March 15, 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic closed Michigan. Our recent congregational experiences have taken place electronically: Facebook Worship, Zoom meetings, Zoom Happy Hours, Zoom Ukuleles, etc. If we'd only bought Zoom stock June 3 2019! I admit I haven't been completely able to stay away from BUCC; I've pulled some weeds and raked some leaves while wearing a mask. (The anonymous gardener!)

As I write this report, Michigan may be beginning to open back up. But, of course, it will be a long time before we see a schedule like that first weekend of June. We must balance our desire to return to all those things we used to take for granted with the knowledge that the pandemic is not over, that folks, especially those at higher risk, are still threatened, if we proceed with abandon.

Leadership Council had a significant agenda for May's meeting. We were glad to have the Confirmation Class of 2020 as our guests at Leadership Council. Council considered recommendations to the Governing Body at our Annual Meeting, June 14: another Zoom meeting. Council examined the Finance Ministry Team's proposed FY2021 budget. We heard the Stewardship Campaign results: they decided to extend the Campaign until June 12. We received the slate of those accepting positions offered by the Nominating Committee. We received proposed changes to our Bylaws from the Member Care Ministry Team, refining church membership requirements and periodic review of the roles. Council also appointed a Task Force to guide our efforts to reopen our building with care.

April 26 2020, we had our first Congregational Zoom meeting, approving expenditure of up to \$60,000 to repair leaks in our building's mortar and flashing. That work began in mid-May and will help preserve the church building we love. Initial indications are the amount approved is tens of thousands of dollars more than will be required!

The University of Michigan Nurses' COPD study which rented our building until mid-March when Michigan shut down, prepared a plan to resume the rental, with appropriate precautions. That plan is being reviewed by the University of Michigan's Institutional Review Board. The Task Force will piggy-back off that planning, expanding it to a phased re-opening of the church, as conditions allow.

Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel is scheduled for an Ecclesiastical Council (yet another Zoom event!) to determine whether to authorize her ordination, pending an approved call. (I suspect I know the results!) We congratulate Pastor Lily and wish her well in her called ministry! The Ecclesiastical Council has been called for Thursday, June 4, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

John Samford, President
May 28, 2020

HAPPENINGS



Grunwell-Cashero began the roof repair work which was approved during our virtual Congregational Meeting on April 26.



FROM THE BETHLEHEM CEMETERY BOARD

Once again this year, American Legion Post 46 donated and placed over 400 flags at the grave sites of our veterans for Memorial Day. They are a reminder to all of us of the sacrifices made for our country. If your loved one is a veteran and did not receive a flag we apologize. Please let a member of the Board know and we will attempt to secure a flag for the grave.

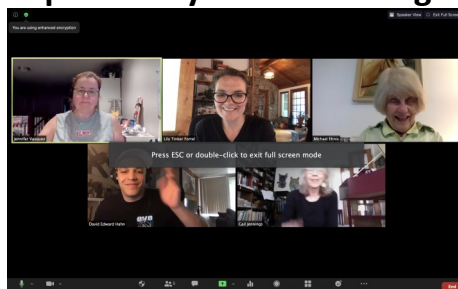


OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES Food Distribution Program Fridays, 9:00 am—12:00 pm

Volunteers needed to help sort and distribute fresh produce, provided by Food Gatherers, to families eligible to take part in this program. No signup necessary...just come when you can!



Worship Ministry Team Meeting June 8



Annual Congregational Meeting June 14



Save your Cans & Bottles!

The Education Ministry Team will continue raising money for *Easy Water for Everyone*. Please keep collecting your coins for when we're back together in church. Until then, we ask you to consider savings your bottles and cans (and the deposits when you're able to get them) for this effort!



Let's Learn About Racism

- On Wednesday 6/17 and Thursday 6/18 from 7:00-8:30pm, Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis will be leading "The Call of This Moment: An Anti-Racism Workshop." I deeply respect Dr. Lewis, who is Senior Minister of Middle Collegiate Church in Manhattan. I am registered to attend. I would love to attend and process this workshop with you. The cost of the workshop is \$20. SG&D can cover the cost of this workshop for up to 10 BUCC members, or you can register on your own. Please email Lily if you plan to attend, and/or if you would like me to register you.

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-call-of-this-moment-an-anti-racism-workshop-with-rev-dr-jacqui-lewis-tickets-106816549174?](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-call-of-this-moment-an-anti-racism-workshop-with-rev-dr-jacqui-lewis-tickets-106816549174?fbclid=IwAR1sMRfgj7QSR8yooc9_kO1E2ZZHpE0FY7XbObziUt7uK6vvCfqSp_SZwQ)

[fbclid=IwAR1sMRfgj7QSR8yooc9_kO1E2ZZHpE0FY7XbObziUt7uK6vvCfqSp_SZwQ](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-call-of-this-moment-an-anti-racism-workshop-with-rev-dr-jacqui-lewis-tickets-106816549174?fbclid=IwAR1sMRfgj7QSR8yooc9_kO1E2ZZHpE0FY7XbObziUt7uK6vvCfqSp_SZwQ)



•**Just Mercy film discussion:** *The film Just Mercy, based on the book by Brian Stevenson is available for free on streaming platforms through the end of June. Let's watch it at home and come together to discuss it with Bethlehem's youth on Thursday, June 25 from 6:00-7:30. Let Lily know if you have questions.*

•**Ongoing Group:** If you're interested in being part of an ongoing discussion group which might discuss books, articles, etc. please let Lily know.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND



COVID-19 Emergency Fund

The impact of Coronavirus is ongoing and our neighbors will need ongoing support as we move toward collective recovery.

Bethlehem is raising money to support community agencies helping those most in need in our community. Money raised will be distributed to organizations Bethlehem has ongoing relationships with. These agencies include Food Gatherers (Warehouse, and Community Kitchen at Delonis), Peace Neighborhood Center, Alpha House, and Groundcover News.

Funds may also be distributed to other agencies serving the community as needs arise.

Who: All of us. Bethlehem! Endorsed by Leadership Council.

What: COVID-19 Emergency Fund. We've set a goal of \$10,000.

When: Ongoing

How:

- * Donate online at <https://bit.ly/bucc-donate> select "COVID-19 Emergency Fund"
- * Mail a check to the church office with "COVID-19 Emergency Fund" in the memo line.

Why: Support our neighbors in need! Initial support & relief will decrease, but needs continues.

Spiritual Growth and Development

Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel, Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development

~ ~ HIGHLIGHTS ~ ~

Honoring our Confirmands

On Sunday, May 31, we recognized Bethlehem's confirmands for their confirmation journey thus far! Abby, Allan, Alton, Carrie, John-Matthew, Noah! Congratulations on all of your awesome work. We're looking forward to officially confirming you when we're back together for worship. Also! Huge thanks to this year's mentors: Sue Muir (Abby), Jesse Wilcox (Allan), Gary Kade (Alton), Diana Slaughter (Carrie), Jane Nicholson (John-Matthew), and Scott Buday (Noah).



Carrie



Alton



Abby



Allan



John-Matthew



Noah

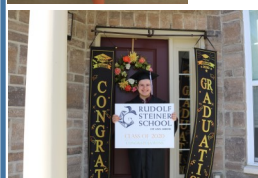
Congratulations Graduates!



On Sunday, June 14 we celebrated Bethlehem's Graduates! Congratulations to Ellie, Jenna, and Nadia.

Jenna Kim Slotten

- Graduated with a degree in Sport Administration from University of Louisville. She'll attend graduate school at the University of Louisville to pursue a Master's degree in Sport Administration!



Ellie Jennifer Vasquez

- Graduated from Rudolf Steiner High School. Eille will attend EMU and may pursue athletic training or other health profession.



Nadia Berenjian

- Graduated from Wayne State University with her Master's in Social Work. From Nadia: "My passion is working with children and advocating for them since they are among one of the most vulnerable populations. My end goal is to own my own private practice, but prior to that I'd love to do therapy with kids in the schools or work in some avenue of child welfare."

Thank you Teachers!

Our Sunday school teachers, Education Ministry Team members, Youth volunteers, and Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team members care for Bethlehem's youngest members! Thank you for all you do to make Bethlehem a loving, welcoming place for our children and youth.

Sunday School Teachers: Caroline Ashenfelter, Jenell Buday, Jan Eadie, Julie Feldkamp, Eileen Koprowski, Wanda Modica, Nancy Nicholson, Nancy Pieske, Karen Samford, Jane Schmerberg, Jill Schwartz, Diana Slaughter, Jennifer Vasquez, Christina Wilk.

Nursery/Toddler Sunday School Teacher: Kelsey Postler

Youth Group Leaders: Sarah Herwick, Eileen Koprowski, Nancy Nicholson, Jane Nicholson, Katie Rowan, Kurt Schmerberg, Jesse Wilcox.

Virtual Spiritual Growth & Development Opportunities during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel - Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development

Unless otherwise noted, all of the activities below can be accessed using the same Zoom Meeting ID: 501 731 3201

- ZOOM App on computer or smartphone: <https://zoom.us/j/5017313201> Meeting ID: 501 731 3201. Dial in by phone: 1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) Meeting ID: 501 731 3201#
- +13126266799,,5017313201# US (Chicago)



Sundays

- Fellowship Hour + Connect with Kelsey. Sundays from 11:00-11:30 am.
All ages invited. Kids and youth will have an opportunity to connect with Kelsey during the Fellowship Hour.

Tuesdays

- Roundtable Pulpit. Tuesdays 12:00-1:30 pm.
Pastor John and Pastor Lily will continue to host the roundtable pulpit via Zoom. Join us to explore the scripture reading for the upcoming Sunday.
- Yoga on Zoom. Tuesdays 5:30-6:00 pm.
Join us for a very meditative practice via Zoom.

Wednesdays

- Bethlehem Zoom Cafe/Happy Hour. Wednesdays 5-6 pm.
This is an informal community check-in opportunity. Drop in to say hi and see friendly faces. Stay for as long (or short!) as you want.

Thursdays

- First Thursdays: Prayer Circle. 12:00-12:30 pm Join us for our monthly prayer circle.
- Youth Group. 6:30-8:00 pm. (some Thursdays) Youth will receive information via email.

Fridays

- BUCCuleles Live Practice Session 4:00 pm. Check out our most recent video lessons: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLn9QnTKbYLMHncdnbktUWp1k1xV2izlip>

BUCCuleles Debut!

On Sunday, June 14, the BUCCuleles had their premiere performance during Sunday worship! If you missed it, you can watch it on Bethlehem's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/BethlehemUCCA2



Virtual Fellowship/Coffee Hour from 11:00-11:30am each Sunday.

Let's check-in! Join us this Sunday following worship from 11:00-11:30 for Fellowship on Zoom.

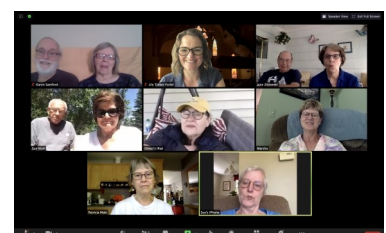
- Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83979636063?pwd=TmdTRnJyWEImbVViakFKZ3JlOHl5UT09>
- Meeting ID: 839 7963 6063# Password: 085015
- Call using smartphone: +13126266799,,83979636063#,,1#,085015# US (Chicago)
- Dial in by phone: Call: +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)



Fellowship Hour
May 31

June 7

Fellowship Hour





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

<u>STAFF</u>	<u>MINISTRY TEAM CHAIRS</u>	<u>LEADERSHIP COUNCIL</u>
Pastor: Rev. John Kennedy	Finance: Karen Samford	President: John Samford
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Orval L.E. Willimann	Facilities: Tom Ziesemer	Vice President: Ron Dechert
Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development: Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel	Education: Eileen Koprowski	Secretary: Tim Authier
Financial Administrator: Betty Clark	Worship: Jennifer Vasquez	Treasurer: Jim Rowan
Parish Administrator: Julie Rhodes	Member Care: Jenny Foster	At-Large Members:
Administrative Assistant: Gwenda Mayes	Welcome: Jane Schmerberg	Dindy Haab
Director of Music: David Hahn	Outreach: Sue Muir/Roy Muir	Pat Huibregtse
Organist: Gail Jennings	Fellowship: Jan Eadie	Pam Rutledge
Director of Handbells: Jim Rowan	Youth & Young Adult: Katie Rowan	Ex Officio: Rev. John Kennedy
Sunday School Nursery Teacher: Kelsey Postler	Bethlehem Cemetery: Susan Irwin	
	Nominations Committee: Cresson Sloten	