

The Visitor

October 2020

Bethlehem United Church of Christ



Questions and Answers Regarding Re-opening For In-person Meetings and Services

Many members of our congregation have been asking “when will we re-start in-person services and other church activities?”

Shortly after the decision was made by our Leadership Council, with input and support from many of our ministry teams, to shut down our building for all church related activities our Leadership Council convened a small group to monitor local, State and Federal regulations and guidelines. The charge to the Covid-19 Re-opening Task Force was simple; provide recommendations to the Leadership Council to support and comply with the rapidly changing regulations. The task force and Leadership has continuously kept abreast of changing recommendations and regulations.

Current regulatory status (as of 9/25/2020)

This past week, Governor Whitmer issued new executive orders which expanded the number of people related to indoor congregating. The current State restrictions allows for groups of less than or equal to 20% of their indoor seating capacity. We are currently looking at our sanctuary space to determine the maximum allowable seating capacity. However, the city of Ann Arbor still maintains a local restriction limiting indoor group sizes to 10 or less. Once indoor group restrictions exceed 50-100, we could consider moving back to restricted in-person services. The personal mitigation recommendations of face coverings at all times, social distancing unless in a family group, hand washing or sanitizing, and sanitizing/disinfection of all space and surfaces will remain in effect regardless of group size restrictions.

(continued on page 2)

**Deadline for the
November Visitor is
Monday, October 26**



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Office Hours
Due to the
COVID-19
Pandemic, the
office is currently
closed.

(continued from page 1)

Why are some churches holding services and BUCC is not?

Our Leadership Council adopted the position at the beginning of the pandemic that we would not hold in-person services unless local, State and Federal recommendations allowed. Given the current local and State restrictions, we have not reached a point which allows us to hold in-person services. Some local churches have decided to ignore local and State guidelines while others have implemented services which meet the expectations for size and protective mitigation plans.

Can any areas currently be used by church members, groups, or ministry teams?

The answer here is yes. Leadership has designated our Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall and gym as open spaces with restrictions. That means that any of these spaces can be used provided all current restrictions are met by everyone using those spaces. Other spaces, such as the Schmale Lounge, can be used but requires review and approval by our Leadership Council prior to the requested use date(s). If you are a member of a ministry team or church social group who would like to hold in-person meetings, you can submit your request to our Parish Administrator (Julie) who will appropriately process it through our task force and Leadership Council.

Can any areas of BUCC be rented by outside groups?

Again the answer is yes but renters must also meet the expectations and requirements for mitigation procedures. Those expectations will be outlined for each request and the renters must attest to their understanding and ability to meet those expectations. So weddings, baptisms, funerals can all be scheduled in one or more of our "open" spaces provided all mitigation steps are adhered to.

Is BUCC ready to resume in-person services when restrictions allow?

Various members of Leadership Council and ministry teams have heard from numerous church members, some who are very willing to resume in-person services immediately while others are more reluctant to re-open services. Once we reach a point where we are not restricted by group size, more information will be sent out to determine the overall interest amongst our congregation and provide explanation of the requirements for ongoing personal expectations.

Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Congregational members can contact members of the BUCC task force (Pastors John and Lilly, Parish Administrator- Julie, BUCC Vice-President Ron Dechert (rdechert@umich.edu)), or members of our Leadership Council.

Ron Dechert
BUCC Vice President
Covid 19 Task Force (Lead)



September 2020	Year to Date	YTD Target	2020/2021 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$143,329	\$139,486	\$418,458
Expenses	\$145,308	\$158,159	\$474,477
Net	(\$1,979)	(\$18,673)	(\$56,019)

From Your President's Desk

Pulling into the church parking lot recently made clear that “fall has fallen” (well, if “spring has sprung” is a thing...) At any rate, the tiny golden leaves had fallen, paving the lot entrance with gold.



That golden hue is appropriate as we look toward trying to rent more parking spaces 24/7, rather than the previous practice of week-day “business” hours. As the church continues to underutilize the lot, due to Covid closure, we have an opportunity to provide more parking to the paying public, at least for a while. Leadership Council authorized our Parish Administrator to pursue this “golden” opportunity, trying to fill the “historic” spots. Many thanks to those who have already directed folks to rent our parking (looking at you, Bob

Loukotka!)

As Pastor Lily is vacating the house next to the church, (something about wanting to live with her husband), it too provides an opportunity we can explore.

Last month I wrote we would hear the outcome of our application to the Michigan Small Business Restart Program. We heard: we didn’t get it. There is not yet word on the other application for a Workplace Safety Grant.

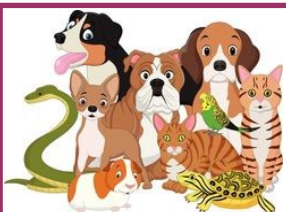
On that last topic (which would help finance supplies necessitated by Covid), as the State of Michigan has begun to allow gyms to open (with appropriate restrictions), Council authorized allowing our gym to be rented. This allowance may bring in some revenue, but requires extra work on everyone’s part.

Rentals were one of several topics covered in the mid-September review of our first quarter of fiscal year 2021 presented after worship via Zoom. The gist was that we have “hit our numbers,” both for giving (pledged and non-pledged) and were even a couple percent less than the expected 25% of expenses. This financial review was so well-received, folks asked it continue each quarter. Since the next quarter ends at the end of November, with the numbers having to be crunched thereafter, we may have to wait until the new year (anybody tired of this one and ready for a new year?)

In case you missed it, I recorded a “radio spot” which was included in worship in mid-September, asking those who listen to our radio broadcasts to let the office know of their listenership. We have no easy way of telling how broad our radio reach is (maybe a contest offering free salvation for the first ten callers?) If you listen to BUCC’s Sunday morning broadcast on WAAM, please let the office know. And if you want to contribute to help finance these broadcasts, either visit “giving page” on our website or send a check to the office, noting its intent. Thanks!

John Samford, President

October, 2020



Virtual Blessing of Pets October 18

On Sunday, October 18, we will hold a blessing of the pets during worship. Please email photos of your pets to: photos@bethlehem-ucc.org by Thursday, October 15 at 12:00 pm to have them included in the worship service.

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!



Mental Health during COVID-19



This is a difficult time for everyone. Take some time to take care of your mental health in addition to your physical health. We're in this together. Below are resources put together by the Washtenaw County Health Department that you are encouraged to take advantage of to help cope in this challenging time.

Reach out for support

- Connect with the Washtenaw County Community Mental Health CARES team at 734-544-3050 for support and resources about ANY mental health question. The CARES line remains fully staffed and available 24/7 during the COVID-19 response.
- Text SHARE to the Crisis Text Line at 741741
- Even if you can't be together physically, let trusted people in your life know about your worries, fears, frustrations, and plans for self-care.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255

Stay connected to your loved ones and community as we engage in social distancing to keep each other safe.

- Call or video-chat family or friends. Science shows that hearing a loved one's voice comforts the brain.
- Join virtual gatherings, like community meetings or free fitness classes and concerts.
- Notice if you're not reaching out because of low mood rather than social distancing reasons.
- Check in with someone you trust for a few minutes every day.

Routines help us feel more grounded when things feel out of our control.

- Staying active with things that feel productive and fun can help us manage the extra stress and anxiety.
- Make a schedule for how you'll structure today to balance work with time for self-care, relaxation, and (safe/virtual) social connection.

Limit information overload.

- Set a time limit for focusing on coronavirus anxiety and plan mental health breaks to allow your body and mind time to recharge.
- Get the information you need from the links below. Moderate other news intake and limit exposure to mass hysteria online.
- Most accurate and up-to-date Washtenaw information: www.washtenaw.org/COVID19
- Michigan information: www.michigan.gov/coronavirus
- Washtenaw County Health Department social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram @wishyouknewwashtenaw is sharing coronavirus mental health tips on Instagram.

Practice deep breathing exercises, mindfulness or other methods of meditation.

- It's easy for our worries to get ahead of the current moment. As we face uncertainty it's important to stay grounded in the present.
- Michiganders can access a specially-curated collection of guided meditations, at-home workouts that guide people through mindful exercises, sleep and kids content to help address rising stress and anxiety. Available for free at www.headspace.com/MI
- There are also many other meditation and mindfulness apps and online resources. We are not endorsing any products, but here is a list of some free apps:

Insight Timer - mindfulness to reduce stress, anxiety, improve sleep & relaxation through guided meditation, talks, and music

Aura - improve sleep and reduce stress, anxiety through meditations, stories, music, and more

Breethe: Meditation & Sleep – De-stress, sleep better, be healthier with meditations and music

Smiling Mind - guided meditations and mindfulness exercises for kids and adults

Stop, Breathe & Think - stay tuned in with your emotions and de-stress through mindfulness and compassion exercises



CROP Walk goes virtual!

October 11, 2020

This year's walk will be virtual (no in-person component at Bethlehem). As of 10/1, we've raised \$1,575 toward our \$2,000 goal! Thanks to all who have support thus far! **Please join the**

Help us reach our goal of
\$2,000!

Bethlehem Pillamas using our CROP Walk page! <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/annarbormi/pllamas> (scroll down to the 'Join Our Team' button on the right side to register).

Can't make ZOOM Yoga on Tuesday evenings? Try this "Yoga Flow for Anxiety and Stress" Yoga Flow from Activated You. *Remember to do the poses on both sides!



RADIO BROADCAST SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP

Please remember that a lot of folks count on the weekly Radio Broadcast of our 10 o'clock worship service. This program is funded by weekly radio sponsorships, memorials, and special donations.

Have you sponsored a Radio Broadcast lately?

Are you looking for a way to honor or remember a friend or family member? A weekly Radio Sponsorship is \$230. In addition, general donations of any amount are appreciated. Thank you for supporting this important ministry.

- Click [here](#) to go to Sign-Up Genius and choose a date, and how you want your sponsorship to read.
- You can donate online at: bethlehem-ucc.org or leave a message at the church office (734) 665-6149 and someone will get back with you.

MAKE YOUR VOTING ACTION PLAN

FIVE MINUTES FOR FOUR YEARS

CHECK YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION

Each state has different rules for voter registration. Visit the Our Faith Our Vote Action Center at <https://p2a.co/zv3KyIE> to make sure you're registered to vote.

FIGURE OUT HOW YOU'RE GOING TO VOTE

MAIL-IN BALLOTS

- If you can, request a mail-in ballot. Each state has different deadlines for this so take five minutes to check it now: <https://www.usa.gov/election-office>
- Find out when early voting starts in your state!

IN PERSON VOTING

If you're going to vote in person find your polling place here: <https://www.vote.org/polling-place-locator/>.

- Make a safety plan with a mask, gloves, sanitizer and other protection.
- Check on the location of your polling place.
- Decide when you're going to vote.

BE PREPARED TO PROTECT THE ELECTION

Save the Election Protection Hotline in your phone or write it down so if you encounter problems with voting you are ready.

- 866-OUR-VOTE ((866) 687-8683)
- State by State Election Protection Contacts: <https://866ourvote.org/state/>

GET OTHERS INVOLVED

Share why voting is important to you and ask those in your life to make their own voting plan.

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
FOR MORE RESOURCES VISIT:

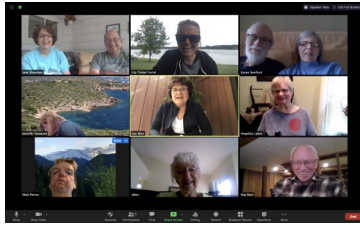
<https://www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote>



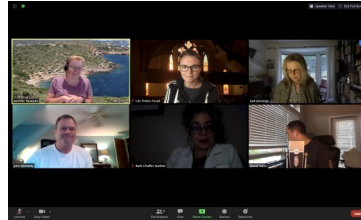
Spiritual Growth and Development

Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel, Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development

~ ~ HIGHLIGHTS ~ ~



BUCC Fellowship
9/6/2020



BUCC Worship Creative
Planning 9/8/2020



BUCC Fellowship
9/13/2020



BUCC Worship 9/15/2020



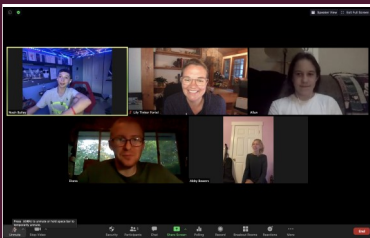
Education Ministry Team
Meeting 9/22/2020

Covenant Association Fall Meeting

On September 26, 60+ clergy and church members gathered on Zoom for our Covenant Association fall meeting. The meeting included a keynote address from Transitional Conference Member Phil Hart, small group sessions for connecting with one another, a business meeting, and two worship services. Bethlehem's BUCCuleles recent video projects of "Kumbaya" and "Count On Me" were featured in the two worship services! Pastor Lily was part of the planning team, and was part of the leadership team for the worship services.



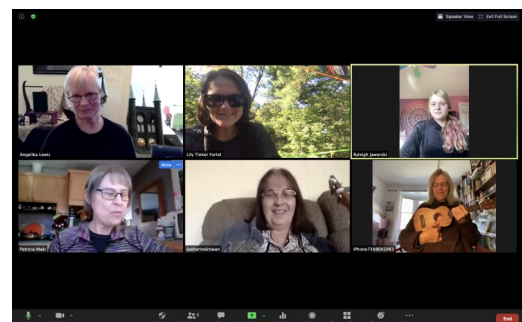
Youth Group



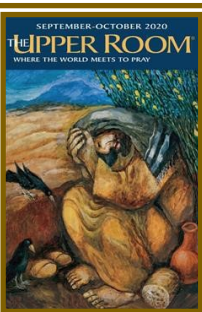
We had our first youth group meeting of the school year on 9/17. The Youth and YA Ministry Team is working on some fun, COVID-safe events for youth group in the coming months. More info on page 7.

BUCCulele Jam Session!

The BUCCuleles, Bethlehem's ukulele band, took a break in September, but we had a fun pop-up jam session on. BUCCuleles check your email for announcements on our upcoming jam sessions...and an opportunity to win a ukulele tuner!



The Upper Room



The Upper Room made their daily devotionals available as PDF for subscribing churches. Please email Lily at: lily@bethlehem-ucc.org if you'd like to receive a copy of the devotional via email.

Weekly Spiritual Growth & Development Activities

Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel - Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development

Sundays

- Fellowship Hour, Sundays at 11:00 am on ZOOM.

First Mondays

- Prayer Circle (November 5) at 12:00 pm via ZOOM.

Tuesdays

- Roundtable Pulpit, Tuesdays 12:00 pm.

Join your pastors for a study of the coming Sunday's scripture lesson. ZOOM link available upon request.

- Gentle Yoga, Tuesdays 5:30-6:00 pm. Join Lily for a gentle meditative yoga practice via ZOOM.

Wednesdays

- 2nd and 4th Wednesdays (10/14 and 10/28) from 5:00-5:30 pm join us for a virtual Happy Hour. Join others from the community for an informal midweek check-in via ZOOM.
- White Privilege: Let's Talk - Antiracism study and exploration. Through October 21 from 6:30-8:30 pm. *Must register in advance.* See information on page 8.

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.

***BUCCuleles Jam Session—Weekly. Time TBD.

***Second Sunday, Sunday School: 10/11 via ZOOM from 11:00-11:30 am. Details via email.

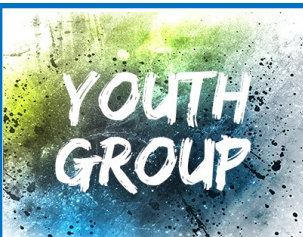
Sunday School This Fall!

- The Education Ministry Team is launching a plan to support Bethlehem's children and families in creative ways this fall. Families: check your email for details! And mark your calendars for....
- Second Sunday, Sunday school. 10/11. Zoom 11:00-11:30. Details via email.



Progressive Pumpkin Painting Contest!

Everyone's invited! Sign up to join a team for the progressive pumpkin painting contest! The pumpkin and paint will be delivered to your front door. You'll paint a new feature on your pumpkin and deliver the pumpkin and paint to the next person on your list. Finished pumpkins will be delivered to the church and the whole congregation will vote on the winner!! Email lily@bethlehem-ucc.org by October 10 with your name, address, and phone number if you'd like to be assigned a team! Or...you can build your own team of 5 and let Lily know.



Youth Group in October

The Youth and YA Ministry Team is working on some fun, COVID-safe events for youth group in the coming months. Mark your calendars and check your email

for additional information!

- o 10/4. Zoom check-in 3:00-3:30pm
- o 10/11. afternoon. CROP Walk! Optional in-person socially distanced walk.
- o 10/18. Zoom check-in 4:00-4:30pm
- o 10/25. afternoon. Halloween activity.

easy water  for Everyone®

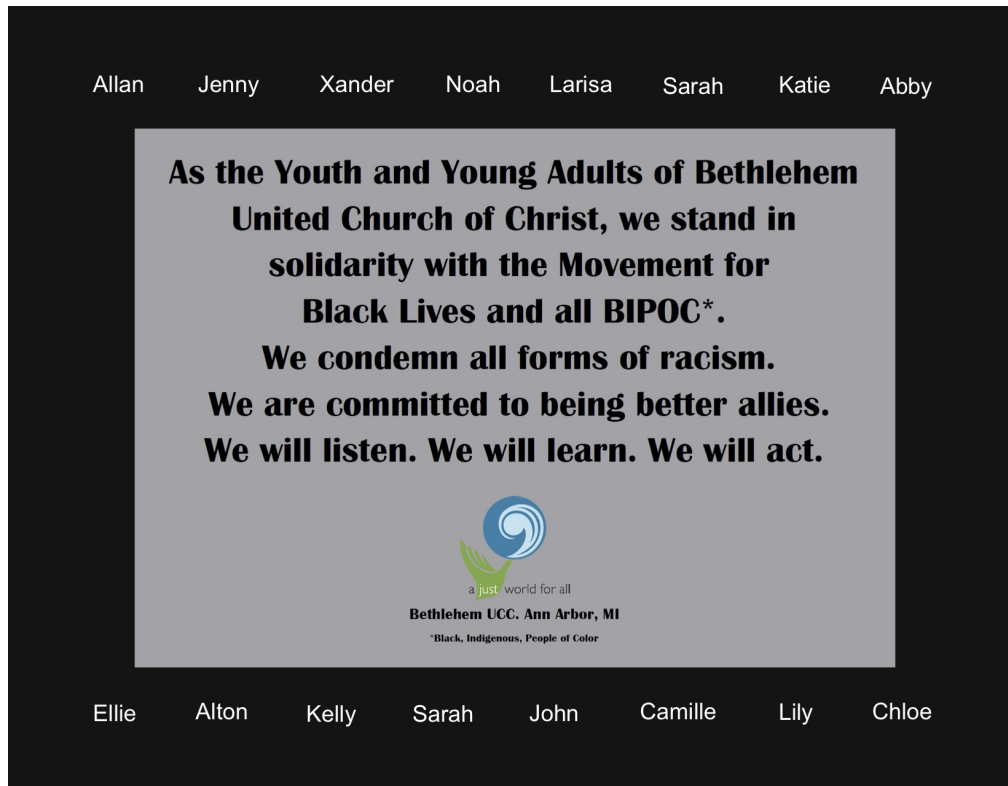
Thanks to everyone who has been collecting cans for this important cause! We're not done!

Following CROP Walk, Education Ministry Team will resume this campaign full speed! For now, please keep collecting those cans and bottles. We're willing to help return the cans, or you can do it yourself and donate the deposit to the "Easy Water for Everyone" fund.

ANTIRACISM WORK

Solidarity Statement.

"As the Youth and Young Adults of Bethlehem United Church of Christ, we stand in solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives and all Black, Indigenous, People of Color. We condemn all forms of racism. We are committed to being better allies. We will listen. We will learn. We will act." Original Signatories: Allan, Jenny, Xander, Noah, Larisa, Sarah, Katie, Abby, Ellie, Alton, Kelly, Sarah, John, Camille, Lily, Chloe. Additional signers: Barb, C.J., Cresson, Diane, Dindy, Eileen, Jane, Jenell, Jennifer, Jim, Karen, Kurt, Matt, Mira, Nancy, Rachel, Roy, Sallie, Sue M, Sue W, Tim, *The Leadership Council, The Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team, The Open and Affirming Committee.*



WHITE PRIVILEGE

let's talk

A Resource for Transformational Dialogue

26 Bethlehem members registered for our 6-part exploration of white privilege and antiracism. We gather weekly on Zoom. Our first session was Wednesday, September 16 and we will continue through Wednesday, October 21. We are using the UCC's curriculum "White Privilege: let's talk." Thanks to all who are participating,

and to Chloe, Tim, and Sue for your leadership in planning and facilitating our course!

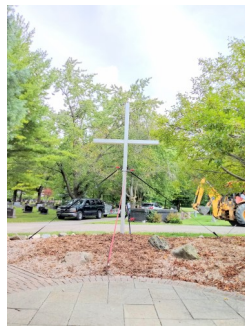
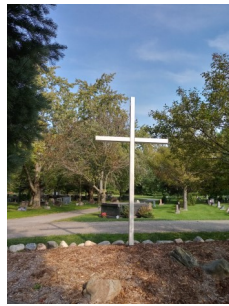
Why we're doing it:

- Bethlehem's Covenant of Welcome calls us to "celebrate God's extravagant love" and "welcome the diverse tapestry of all people."
- We will use our growth and knowledge to work towards becoming allies and advocates working for a just world for all.
- We will become more aware of our whiteness and privilege, and its impact in a diverse society.
- We will deepen connections within our church community.

BETHLEHEM CEMETERY REPORT

I wrote in the "Visitor" last month that we were near the completion of our summer project. The aluminum 16' cross was installed during the first week of September. The cross faces east and west catching the sun and casting a shadow on the Memorial Garden and the surrounding grave sites. Visitors to the cemetery have lingered in the garden to admire it and others have taken pictures of it.

Sue Buday



Memorials and Gifts

Gifts Received thru September, 2020

GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Norm and Helen Grob Memorial on the occasion of their 73rd wedding anniversary

RADIO FUND

Dr. Wallace D. Moore Memorial
John Schneider Memorial

Gifts listed were received through September 30, 2020



How to Join a Zoom Meeting 101

By Pastor Lily

1 MEETING ID ← *(Think of this as the location)*

Most of our Spiritual Growth & Development activities will use zoom Meeting ID

501 731 3201

2 A way to join

Phone

No computer, no problem!

Call: 312.626.6799
When prompted, enter meeting ID:
501 731 3201 #

Computer

Web Browser

Type:
<http://zoom.us/j/5017313201>



App

You can download the zoom app to your phone or computer and join that way.

Questions?

Ask Pastor Lily

734.999.0202

lily@bethlehem-ucc.org



Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel presents check to Susan Beckett, Director - GroundCover



Kurt Schmerberg, Board Member, presents check to Bonnie Billups, Jr., Executive Director - Peace Neighborhood Center



Katie Rowan presents check to Lauren Grossman, Communications Director - Food Gatherers



Laura Seyfried presents check to Susan Wyman, Board President & Ellen Schulmeister, Executive Director - Alpha House

THANK YOU, BETHLEHEM!

Your contributions to the Covid-19 Emergency Fund enabled us to give a check to each of these four agencies in the amount of \$3,250! The organizations were delighted to receive such a generous gift from our congregation.

On behalf of the Outreach Ministry Team, we thank you!

Outreach Ministry Team News



How the Walk helps:

**Peace Neighborhood Center
Message:**

As of September, Peace has openings for volunteers to help with our weekly Friday Food Distribution and Monday/Thursday Lunch Delivery.

If you are interested in volunteering with Peace Neighborhood Center Fridays from 8:30-11:30am, please click on the button below to view the online sign up sheet:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090544aaac2ea1fa7-friday>

If you are interested in volunteering with Peace Neighborhood Center Mondays or Thursdays from 10:45 to noon, please click on the button below to view the online sign-up sheet:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090544aaac2ea1fa7-aaps>

**CROP WALK 2020
OCTOBER 11
(Virtual)**

Please support the
BETHLEHEM PLLAMAS

Goal: \$2,000

[www.crophungerwalk.org/
annarbormi/pllamas](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/annarbormi/pllamas)

(Scroll down to the "JOIN OUR TEAM" button on the right side to register!)

We also will have a line on the church's website for contributions:

CWS-CROP WALK
www.bethlehem-ucc.org

THANK YOU!



**OUR FAITHFUL
VOICE IS NEEDED**

We rise by lifting others. -Robert Ingersoll



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.
- ◆ **Worshiping** 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: Sue Buday	
	Nominations Committee: Cresson Slotten	