

*Welcome to  
Bethlehem United Church of Christ*



*November 29, 2020  
First Sunday of Advent*



## 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.



## CHURCH LIFE

No Bethlehem members were in the hospital  
as of Wednesday

We mourn the death of **Robert Dylenski** who passed away on  
November 21. A public celebration of life will be held in the spring.  
Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

## BUCC Worship Statistics during COVID Era

11/22/2020: Facebook Views – 59 complete views, YouTube Views - 24

### PRELUDE

Sleepers Awake, for Night is Flying  
*Gail Jennings, organ*

J. S. Bach

### WELCOME & SHARING PARISH LIFE

Pastor John

### MEMBER CARE MOMENT

Jenny Foster

Happy birthday to the following Bethlehem members who are celebrating a birthday  
this week:

Karl C

Robert S

Jennifer D

Linda T

Nancy G

Edgar V

Sue I

Issac W

Heather M

## RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Jennifer Vasquez

One: After such suffering,  
We go searching for a sign, any sign.  
The sun seems to dim, the moon fails, the stars fall.  
We need a sign, any sign.

**All: Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

One: We hope that the Human One is on the way,  
gathering the faithful from the four winds, into a place of peace –  
We need a sign, any sign.

**All: Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

One: Nature once offered signs to depend on:  
The fig tree put out tender leaves,  
and we knew summer was near—  
But climate today is hurting, and unpredictable.  
We need a sign, any sign.

**All: Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

One: So together we search for a sign of the One who is coming--  
Clarity in confusion  
New growth in a barren landscape  
Song arising in a weary soul.

**All: Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

One: Come, let us worship!

## HYMN OF GATHERING #119

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (v 1& 2)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

REFRAIN  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight. [Refrain]

## LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE – HOPE

Ashenfelter Family

One: Violence stalks the world. Families flee in fear.  
From where will their hope come? The light is surely coming!

**All: From One who was born to save, and who became a refugee in the process.**

One: The planet warms with every turn.  
Storms worsen; the poor pay the price.  
From where will their hope come?

**All: From One who taught Noah to survive the flood,  
One who walked across its surface,  
One who promised that we would not be overwhelmed.**

One: One among us is waiting for the doctor's call.  
Another staggers with depression.  
From where will their hope come?

**All: From one who has wept and despaired and then emptied tombs.**

One: Desire of nations, Glory of Heaven, Light of the World:  
You are our HOPE. You are our light.

**All: We don't know the hour of your coming,  
so until then, let us be the HOPE and the light.  
See us shining, and come.**

*(The Candle of HOPE is lit. Silence is kept.)*

One: Like calls to like. Deep calls to deep. After shadow, light.

**All: Deep calls to deep. Like calls to like. After shadow, light.**

One: We worship a God who is not distant nor apathetic,  
but a God who is with us—a God who loves us.  
Let us keep our eyes open and look for God’s daily presence  
and conform our ways to God’s teachings of compassion and grace.

**All: Let the Holy Spirit shine like a light in our hearts  
fueled by the love and teachings of Jesus Christ  
who came into the world that we would be forgiven. Amen**

## **HYMN #128**

One Candle Is Lit (verse #1- HOPE)

Come surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night,  
our hearts long to greet you, as roses the light.  
Salvation, draw near us, our vision engage.  
One candle is lit for the HOPE of the age.

## **RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Jennifer Vasquez

One: This has been a year to lament—  
Grief and loss,  
Crisis when social structures have failed the common good  
Complicity when age-old prejudices found new and cruel expression:

**All: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

One: This has been a year to wake up—  
To read the “signs of the times”  
To wake up to painful truths, and give them voice  
To ponder the changes needed for a just world for all:

**All: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

One: This has been a year to call God into our sorry midst—  
Show us your face!  
Encourage us in the face of brutal realities,  
Empower us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you  
On the way in which you make all things new.

**All: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

*Silence.*

## WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Jennifer Vasquez

God is faithful,  
and gives us grace in Christ Jesus.  
In this fellowship we can count on being in enriched  
In speech, in knowledge, in every spiritual gift.  
Let us give thanks, in Christ, we are forgiven  
and sent forth to work for God's reign among us.

## THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Jennifer Vasquez

*Please say in the way most familiar to you.*

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts [trespasses/sins],  
as we forgive our debtors [those who trespass/sin against us].  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;  
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

## PASSING THE PEACE

Jennifer Vasquez

*As we gather together virtually, let's take a moment to extend peaceful greetings to those at home and online.*

One: The face of God shines brightly on us,  
that we might be saved.  
The love of God revives us,  
that we might call upon God's name.  
Seek out the shining face of God in one another  
as we share the peace of Christ.  
We share the peace of Christ.  
Children of God, the Peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Let us share Christ's peace with one another.

## SPECIAL MUSIC

### SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 13: 6-37 (*selected verses*)

Jennifer Vasquez

Jesus replied,  
“Don’t let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming,  
‘I am the Messiah.’ They will deceive many.

And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won’t follow immediately. Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in many parts of the world, as well as famines. But this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

“When these things begin to happen, watch out! You will be handed over to the local councils and beaten in the synagogues. You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me. For the Good News must first be preached to all nations. But when you are arrested and stand trial, don’t worry in advance about what to say. Just say what God tells you at that time, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

“The day is coming when you will see the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing where he should not be.” (Reader, pay attention!)

“Then if anyone tells you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah,’ or ‘There he is,’ don’t believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God’s chosen ones. Watch out! I have warned you about this ahead of time!

“At that time, after the anguish of those days,

the sun will be darkened,  
the moon will give no light,  
the stars will fall from the sky,  
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with great power and glory. And he will send out his angels to gather his chosen ones from all over the world—from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.

“However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, NOT EVEN the angels in heaven or the Son himself.

Only the Father knows. And since you don’t know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert!

“The coming of the Son of Man can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip.

When he left home, he gave each of his slaves instructions about the work they were to do, and he told the gatekeeper to watch for his return.

You, too, must keep watch!

For you don’t know when the master of the household will return—in the evening, at midnight, before dawn, or at daybreak. Don’t let him find you sleeping when he arrives without warning.

I say to you what I say to everyone: Watch for him!”

**SERMON**

Call to Awareness, Call to Hope

Pastor John

**SERMON HYMN #132**

When God Is A Child

Hope is a star that shines in the night,  
leading us on till the morning is bright.  
When God is a child there's joy in our song,  
the last shall be first a  
and the weak shall be strong,  
and none shall be afraid.

## PASTORAL PRAYER & PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Pastor John

### INVITATION TO GIVE

Jennifer Vasquez

In struggle and in joy, God is faithful to us.

We bring forth our offerings – our tithes, our treasures, our least coins –  
to demonstrate our faithfulness to God.

### OFFERTORY MUSIC

### OUTREACH MOMENT

Holiday Outreach Appeal

Sue Muir

### UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Jennifer Vasquez

O Faithful One,  
accept these gifts of our hearts and hands.  
May they be multiplied and magnified  
as the living presence of Christ in the world. **Amen**

### SENDING HYMN #125

Come, O Long-expected Jesus

Come, Thou long expected Jesus  
Born to set your people free;  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Christ in whom our rest shall be.  
You, our strength and consolation,  
come salvation to impart;  
dear desire of many a nation,  
joy of many longing hearts.

Born Thy people to deliver,  
Born a child and yet a king,  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
Born your precious realm to bring,  
By your own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by your all sufficient merit  
raise us to your glorious throne.

## **BENEDICTION**

Pastor John

Send us into the world refreshed in hope,  
Awake, alert,  
attuned to your presence  
ready to join your work of blessing for all. Amen.

## **POSTLUDE**

The King Shall Come (Consolation)  
*Gail Jennings, organ*

David N. Johnson



## **HELPING IN THE SERVICES TODAY**

Pastor: Rev. John L. Kennedy

Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development: Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel

Director of Music: David Hahn

Organist: Gail Jennings

Liturgist: Jennifer Vasquez

Additional Speakers: Ashenfelter Family, Jenny Foster, Sue Muir