

*Welcome to
Bethlehem United Church of Christ*



*January 17, 2021
Second Sunday after Epiphany*



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.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy Birthday to Bethlehem members,
Norma Couch, who turns 90 on January 18 and
Charlotte Sell, who turns 96 on January 21.



CHURCH LIFE

No Bethlehem members were known to be
in the hospital as of Wednesday.

BUCC Worship Statistics during COVID Era

1/10/2021: Facebook Views – 58 complete views, YouTube Views - 31

PRELUDE

Promised Land – American Folk Hymn arr. Joseph Martin
Gail Jennings, piano

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:

Sheri B
Norma C
Carlene D

Gerald F
Brooke H
Audrey K

Kirsten P
Charlotte S
Sue W

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Judy Coucouvanis

One: Come joyfully before the Lord!

All: God knows us and loves us!

One: Come prayerfully before the Lord!

All: God sees our concerns, our fears, our sins!

One: Come hopefully before the Lord!

All: Christ proclaimed God's love and forgiveness for all God's people!

One: Know throughout all of your being, that God absolutely loves you!

**All: How precious and powerful that knowledge is! Thanks be to God!
AMEN.**

GATHERING HYMN # 464 God of Grace and God of Glory

God of grace and God of glory,
on thy people pour thy power;
crown thine ancient church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flower.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil round us
scorn thy Christ, assail thy ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure thy children's warring madness,
bend our pride to thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss thy righteous goal,
lest we miss thy righteous goal.

Set our feet on lofty places;
fill our lives that we may be
strengthened with all Christ-like graces
pledges to set all captives free.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we fail our call from thee,
lest we fail our call from thee.

Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the search for thy salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving thee whom we adore,
serving thee whom we adore.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Judy Coucouvanis

Awesome God,
you knew us before we were born.
You love us into life.
Open our hearts and our spirits today to hear your word for us.
And, upon hearing the word,
may we be convinced of our call to ministry and mission through the church.
Bless us with your presence and your powerful love,
for we ask this in Jesus' Name. **AMEN.**

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Judy Coucouvanis

Lord, somewhere long ago, someone convinced us that we would not be good material for God to use in healing and helping ministries for this world.
We don't really believe that we have anything worthwhile to offer.
It is relatively easy for us to donate funds for missions and the good works of the church, but we do not see ourselves worthy of further involvement.
Remind us of your forgiving love, when we stubbornly refuse to believe your claim on our lives.
Open our eyes and spirits to see the gifts with which you have blessed us, and to commit those gifts to serving you by serving others.
There are so many things that we can do. And everything starts with prayer.
So, patient God, bear with us as we settle down to pray, asking for your wisdom in our lives.
Give us courage and strength to accomplish any task that you set before us.
And give us hearts of grateful love to acknowledge your presence in our lives, and live that presence with great joy. In Jesus' name, we pray. **AMEN.**

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE & FORGIVENESS

Judy Coucouvanis

From the very beginning,
God has blessed you and planted within your spirit the words
"I can do all things through God who strengthens me".
Do not fear the task God sets before you.
Rejoice, for God is with you every moment
and God's love washes over you always,
healing and nourishing your life. **AMEN.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Judy Coucouvanis

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 [sins/trespases],
as we forgive our debtors [those who sin/trespass 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 OF PEACE

Judy Coucouvanis

Though we gather virtually this morning, we still have the opportunity to pass the peace to those we are with, and to fellow worshippers in the comments below. As we pass the peace,

One: May the Peace of Christ be with you!

All: And also with you!

One: Let us share a sign of Christ's peace.

HYMN # 344

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus (v. 1 & 3)

I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus--
no turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, I still will follow,
though none go with me, I still will follow,
though none go with me, I still will follow,
no turning back, no turning back.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Judy Coucouvanis

Now the boy Samuel was serving the Lord under Eli. The Lord's word was rare at that time, and visions weren't widely known. One day Eli, whose eyes had grown so weak he was unable to see, was lying down in his room. God's lamp hadn't gone out yet, and Samuel was lying down in the Lord's temple, where God's chest was.

The Lord called to Samuel. "I'm here," he said.

Samuel hurried to Eli and said, "I'm here. You called me?"

"I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go lie down." So he did.

Again the Lord called Samuel, so Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said, "I'm here. You called me?"

"I didn't call, my son," Eli replied. "Go and lie down."

(Now Samuel didn't yet know the Lord, and the Lord's word hadn't yet been revealed to him.)

A third time the Lord called Samuel. He got up, went to Eli, and said, "I'm here. You called me?"

Then Eli realized that it was the Lord who was calling the boy. So Eli said to Samuel, "Go and lie down. If he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down where he'd been.

Then the Lord came and stood there, calling just as before, "Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel said, "Speak. Your servant is listening."

The Lord said to Samuel, "I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of all who hear it tingle! On that day, I will bring to pass against Eli everything I said about his household—every last bit of it! I told him that I would punish his family forever because of the wrongdoing he knew about—how his sons were cursing God, but he wouldn't stop them. Because of that I swore about Eli's household that his family's wrongdoing will never be reconciled by sacrifice or by offering."

Samuel lay there until morning, then opened the doors of the Lord's house. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel, saying: "Samuel, my son!"

"I'm here," Samuel said.

"What did he say to you?" Eli asked. "Don't hide anything from me. May God deal harshly with you and worse still if you hide from me a single word from everything he said to you." So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him.

"He is the Lord," Eli said. "He will do as he pleases."

So Samuel grew up, and the Lord was with him, not allowing any of his words to fail. All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was trustworthy as the Lord's prophet.

NEW TESTAMENT READING

LUKE 4: 1-13

Jesus' temptation

Jesus returned from the Jordan River full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. There he was tempted for forty days by the devil. He ate nothing during those days and afterward Jesus was starving. The devil said to him, "Since you are God's Son, command this stone to become a loaf of bread."

Jesus replied, "It's written, People won't live only by bread."

Next the devil led him to a high place and showed him in a single instant all the kingdoms of the world. The devil said, "I will give you this whole domain and the glory of all these kingdoms. It's been entrusted to me and I can give it to anyone I want. Therefore, if you will worship me, it will all be yours."

Jesus answered, "It's written, You will worship the Lord your God and serve only him."

The devil brought him into Jerusalem and stood him at the highest point of the temple. He said to him, "Since you are God's Son, throw yourself down from here; for it's written: He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you and they will take you up in their hands so that you won't hit your foot on a stone."

Jesus answered, "It's been said, Don't test the Lord your God." After finishing every temptation, the devil departed from him until the next opportunity.

HYMN # 339

Just as I Am, Without One Plea

Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am, thy love unknown,
hast broken ev'ry barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

PASTORAL PRAYER & PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**BETHLEHEM BELLS**

The Summons

John Bell, arr. Mike Rowan

INVITATION TO GIVE IN LOVE

Judy Coucouvanis

Part of how we pray is in offering our gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Bethlehem remains committed to directing our resources to those most in need in our community and world, and to maintaining our commitments to our staff. We are checking mail at the church regularly. Please mail in your offering, or consider making an online donation using the online giving page at: www.bethlehem-ucc.org.

UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Judy Coucouvanis

God, receive these gifts as part of our commitment to be present with each other and with all in the fullness of life's experiences. May these offerings be directed in ways that prioritize justice, mercy, and humble accompaniment.

HYMN OF RESPONSE

Battle Hymn of the Republic

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fatal lightning of his terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps.
His Day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment-seat:
Oh! be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me:
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

BENEDICTION

Pastor John

Go into God's world, aware of God's Truth and call in your life.
Follow our truth & courage of our Lord Jesus Christ
who will lead you in paths truth, of service, and hope.
Lean on the power of the Holy Spirit
to give you wisdom, courage, and strength.
May peace, joy and love flow through you to others,
in God's name. **AMEN.**

POSTLUDE

Life Every Voice and Sing
Gail Jennings, organ

J. Johnson, arr. R Lowe



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

Bethlehem Hand Bell Choir

Liturgists: Judy Coucouvanis

Additional Speakers: Jenny Foster