

April

The Visitor


SPRING

April 2021

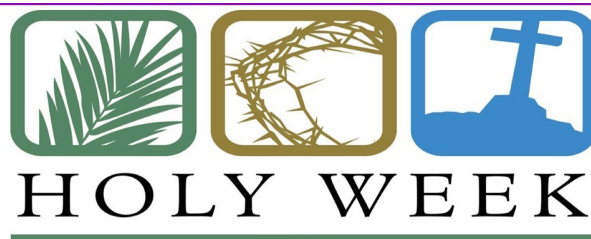
Bethlehem United Church of Christ

BLESSED EASTER TO ALL

Why do you look for the living among the dead?



He is not here,
but has **risen.**
Luke 24:5



Palm Sunday

March 28 - 10:00 Worship via Facebook & YouTube



**MAUNDY
THURSDAY**

April 1 - Service 7 p.m. via ZOOM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89075172942?pwd=dERQd3FNZ3N5SS0J0MmtBM0dJdXhqZz09>

Meeting ID: 890 7517 2942 Passcode: 826519



April 2 - 7 p.m. via ZOOM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86816257143?pwd=dTkrWGhaUUZLK0FnMmd1VzJlWDJpQT09>

Meeting ID: 868 1625 7143 Passcode: 389024



April 4 - 8 a.m. In Person Worship Service at Bethlehem Cemetery, 2531 Jackson Rd., Ann Arbor - MASKS ARE REQUIRED
Pre-registration required—click [HERE](#) or call the church office 734-665-6149
with name and number of people attending by April 1

10:00 a.m. Easter Worship via Radio Broadcast WAAM 1600 AM, Facebook & YouTube

**Deadline for the
May Edition of the Visitor is
Thursday, April 15**



In This Issue

Table of Contents	Page 2	Pastor Lily Thank You	Page 5
Holy Week Schedule	Page 2	COVID-19 Survey Results	Page 6-7
From the President	Page 3	Youth Group	Page 8
Budget	Page 3	Outreach Ministry	Page 9
Worship Ministry	Page 2	Memorial Gifts	Page 10
Lenten Mission Project	Page 4	Member Care	Page 11
Cemetery	Page 5	Who We Are	Page 12



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www.facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2

Office Hours

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

From Your President's Desk



As this Visitor deadline approaches on March 15, I see that a year ago we were just beginning to grapple with how the Covid virus was going to affect Bethlehem church. It all seems so long ago, made doubly so by our having been physically apart from one another and from worshiping together in our church building during that year.

My Presidential article in the last March's Visitor had no hint of what was to come: it concentrated on our marking Pastor Kennedy's five-year anniversary at BUCC, the pie celebration in Fellowship Hall and the official Pastoral photograph added to our gallery: still smiling down, awaiting passing congregants.

I see a webcast on my calendar from this time last year, "How to do church online in this time of Covid." We've all gained practical experience on that topic this year and in some ways, I think we're better for it.

Fiscally, we've "keep the faith." The 9 month report from our Financial Administrator shows our total income is almost 5% ahead of the three-quarter mark and our total expenditures are more than 4% below that same mark. (Keep in mind we are operating under a "bare bones" budget, but still have many fixed expenses.)

Last week, the Leadership Council sent all members a mailing announcing the beginning of our Financial Campaign for Fiscal 2022. A graph based on numbers prepared by a Task Force charged with looking at the next five year painted a pretty dismal picture of where we're headed, if we continue to balance deficit budgets using our investment funds. We're not the government: we can't print money!

After we gather input for the next fiscal year from the various groups appearing in our budget, we'll share a summary of that information to show the goals BUCC leadership has set to help inform your pledge to fund that journey. Expect pie! (Well, a pie chart, showing the budget breakdown.)

As we move through Lent toward Easter with plans of an in-person early morning service, please reflect on what Bethlehem church means to you and how best you can support her.

Peace,

John Samford

February 2021	Year to Date	YTD Target	2020/2021 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$333,310	\$313,844	\$418,458
Expenses	\$336,039	\$355,858	\$474,477
Net	\$2,729	(\$42,014)	(\$56,019)

Ozone House Lenten Mission Project

Bethlehem members are invited to "Stand with Youth" by donating to Ozone House! You can donate online at www.bit.ly/bucc-donate or by mailing a check with "Ozone House" in the memo line to the Church Office.

In addition to raising money for Ozone House during Lent, the Education Ministry Team encourages members to donate items Ozone House has requested. See image for requested items. Members can ship items directly to Ozone House by purchasing at this link: <https://www.amazon.com/baby-reg/17S293R5XSVKT>. You can also purchase items locally and drop them off at Ozone House: 1600 N. Huron River Drive, Ypsilanti.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and for supporting this critical area organization.



Let your light shine!

As our Lenten season draws to a close, we hope you have found strength and solace in considering God's illuminating, restorative presence. We hope you have experienced God's light through prayer, other people, and within yourself. You are a beloved child of God always and forever. We are grateful to everyone who has participated in our online weekly services - through music, as liturgists, giving personal testimonies, providing messages and insights, and producing the videos. All are welcome and encouraged to be part of our worship experience.

Holy Week observations include a drive-through "Palm Pick-up" on Saturday March 27 from noon to 1:30 p.m. We will have fresh palms, special Easter treats, and "communion to go" kits. We will worship live on Zoom at 7:00 p.m. on Maundy Thursday, April 1, and at 7:00 p.m. Good Friday, April 2.

We are so excited to offer a live worship service at the Bethlehem Cemetery at 8:00 a.m. on Easter Sunday! This will be our first live worship in over one year. We anticipate the Holy Spirit blowing through our midst as we gather to celebrate Christ's resurrection in the beauty of these hallowed grounds. Please contact the church office if you plan to attend this service so that we know what size tent to rent and how many chairs we will need. Our pre-recorded Easter service premieres at 10 a.m. and will be available for viewing anytime afterwards.

On Easter morning we hear the story of Mary Magdalene coming to Jesus' tomb before dawn and discovering that the stone had been rolled away from its entrance. She runs to the disciples for help searching for Jesus. The disciples explore the empty tomb and find Jesus' linen wrappings, but not his body. As Mary looks inside the cave, she sees two angels who ask her why she is weeping. Then she turns and sees Jesus in bodily form, but does not recognize him, until he speaks her name. Mary was searching for a dead body, but she discovers that Jesus is very much alive. Her expectations were exceeded beyond her wildest imagination.

As we too search for Jesus, looking for His Light and praying for His presence, let us open our hearts and minds to God's imagination and answers beyond what we dare to hope. When we hear Jesus calling our name, perhaps we can discover new pathways and opportunities and strength for our challenges. Jesus is present among us. Jesus promises us new life and abundant love. Jesus offers healing and restoration. We can't know for sure what will happen to our souls after we leave our mortal bodies, but we can lean on the promises of Jesus that in heaven there are many rooms and that He goes to prepare a place for us. Jesus is alive!

During this Easter season as Spring is about to burst forth in all its glory, we pray that the light of Christ will continue to burst forth and shine brilliantly through us, within us, and as a glowing beacon to guide us through the darkness we will face on our journey. "For God, who said 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Marsha Rinke

Worship Ministry team member

THANK YOU

Dear Bethlehem,

Thank you for all you've done to celebrate our time together. The worship service and sendoff festivities Sunday, March 14 reminded me of the things I'll miss most about Bethlehem.

Thank you for the cards, conversations, gifts, well-wishes, and donations to Ozone House.

It has been a sincere joy to walk among you.

*With best wishes
& deepest gratitude,
Lily*



FROM THE CEMETERY BOARD

Reminder:
Please remove Fall/Holiday decorations by
April 1, 2021



BUCC Covid-19 Survey Results

Last month our task force sent out a brief three question survey to gain more insight into the vaccination status of the congregation along with your opinions on opening the church. That survey was recently closed and the summarized results are presented below.

Looking Back:

It is almost incomprehensible that a year has passed since we last met in-person to worship together. I remember vividly the impromptu church meeting where those present discussed the emerging COVID 19 pandemic. At that time, all schools were open and there were only a handful of people in Washtenaw County who had contracted the virus. We debated and discussed criteria that we might use to determine when the appropriate time would be to suspend all indoor church activities. At the conclusion of the meeting, the group settled on two markers that would be used to trigger the closing of our church. If either the Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) closed or a member of our congregation contracted the virus then our Leadership Council, with the support of Pastor John and Pastor Lily, would close the church for in-person services and activities. The very next day, AAPS announced that they were immediately closing all public schools in Ann Arbor. Our leadership followed by suspending all activities to protect our congregation from potential spread of this new virus. That decision, in the short term resulted in our church staff working from home and our renters (Groundcover, UM School of Nursing, Ann Arbor Youth Choir) losing access to our building.

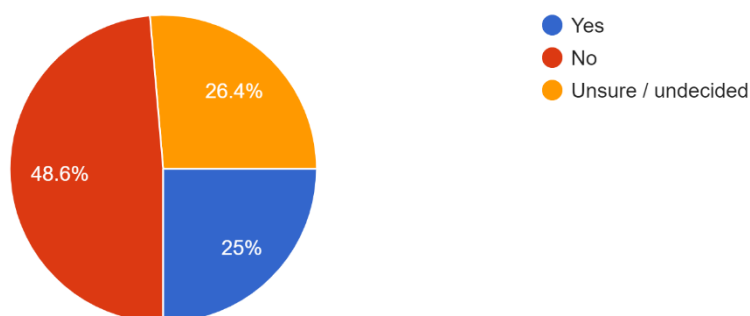
As the pandemic progressed, our Leadership Council established the BUCC COVID 19 task force and charged the task force with developing and presenting recommendations for our church. The task force (composed of Pastors John and Lily, Julie our Parish Administrator and myself) began to review every recommendation, guideline, and restriction that came from the CDC, our state and local health departments. We were able to recommend targeted activities within the church building by various groups provided each group met the mitigation requirements. At the appropriate time, Groundcover and School of Nursing partners began modified activities within the building. In addition, our facilities team and staff also implemented modified activities. I am impressed with the response from these groups to each and every recommendation / restriction that rolled out over the past year. Julie, Pastors John and Lily supported these efforts and educated all staff members and visitors that came into our building. In addition, Tom Ziesemer and the Facilities Ministry Team provided daily building inspections and coordination with contractors to address our building needs while meeting all recommendations. I find it a testament to the efforts of all (Staff, Leadership, Facilities, volunteers and renters) that we have been able to maintain reduced but continuous indoor activities without incident. I know of no known cases of viral transmission associated with any of these activities to date.

Looking ahead:

As we see the roll-out for the approved vaccines, it seems reasonable to begin to see a path forward to the return of in-person services. That was the reasoning behind the distribution of the church survey last month. I am pleased to say that the response from the congregation to this survey was substantial. I received 73 responses from our church members, below are the responses.

Question 1: Do you feel now is the time to open in-person services at Bethlehem?

72 responses



As shown, twenty-five percent of those who responded felt that now is the time to re-open our building. In contrast, 75% felt it was either not the time or they were unsure/undecided. Although right now may not be the correct time to re-open, we can appreciate the desire to re-open as soon as it is safe.

In our second question, we asked if you would be interested in returning once the Governor relaxed the indoor gathering restrictions (currently in place). Your responses are summarized in the next pie chart.

Question 2: Would you be willing to attend in-person church worship when allowed?

73 responses



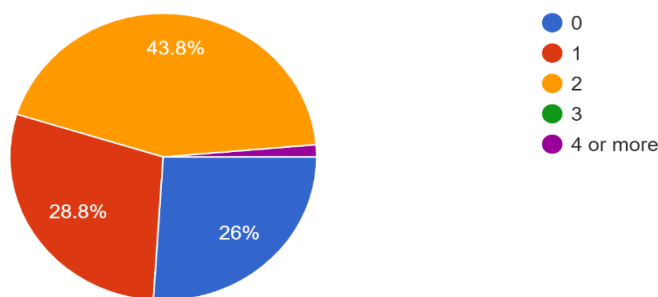
Seventy-one percent indicated they would be willing to return to indoor, in-person services provided appropriate mitigation steps were in place or respondents would return with no specific concerns. This suggests that we should begin to think what returning to in-person services would look like. Our task force is in the process of developing these recommendations for submission to Leadership Council. We will submit those, based upon current recommendations and restrictions, once the indoor gathering restriction is lifted to a level that would support an in-person worship service. Once those are approved, the expectations for everyone attending a service will be communicated to all of our congregation.

Good News:

The last question in our survey asked how many adults in your household have received at least their first vaccine injection. The summary answers are provided in the last pie chart.

Question 3: How many adults in your family unit have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

73 responses



The good news is that approximately 72% of respondents indicated that one or more adults have started or completed their vaccination journey. As the vaccines become more readily available, this number will increase.

We are coming out of the long darkness together. So many people have been working diligently to keep everyone safe and protected. Their efforts have allowed us to continue to safely record and deliver our Sunday services, be open to our rental partners, maintain our aging but beautiful infrastructure and be in a position to return to in-person worship in the near future.

Peace to all,
BUCC COVID 19 Task Force



Youth Group

The youth group continued gathering on ZOOM in February and March. We hosted an All Church Zoom Game Event and tried our hand at the game scribble.io, which is fast becoming a favorite! We also had an in-person sledding outing at Vets Park on February 19. Sledding was the top request by youth in our February Brainstorming Sessions and Mother Nature delivered the perfect day to accommodate our hearts' desire!



Youth Group will continue meeting (virtually) on Sundays 12:00PM with Jesse and Katie. Use this zoom link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/79726721507?pwd=a1hEbndoUCt1bmNmK2dnY1RtYWVvZz09> Meeting ID: 797 2672 1507 Passcode: BiU8TD Watch for upcoming emails about details.

Outreach Ministry Team News

Easy Water for Everyone

Thank you Letter



Case History By Timber-Formals:

We write to you with warm greetings and deep gratitude to the organizing staff of the International Olympic Council of the American Olympic Committee for sponsoring the 1996 Olympic "Easy Water Aerobics" as it appeared in a brochure for the Florida members of our Board, and to Esq. J. Smith, our long-time secretary.

By chance, we have been able to get a cross-section of devices, brands and models used on the national and subnational levels, as well as a cross-section of main and sub, as the producers are not all national, and as part of water in the system may be as clean as clean water and as expensive and abundant as drinking water in the rest of the country. And finally, we have had the advantage of using high-resolution digital data, not paper-based, which is both flexible and very powerful in what it allows scholars to do with the data. We have had the good fortune of often studying the same place, which, while not always the best, is one of the other methods for getting water under a good power. In Port of Spain, the leaders in the field and have already done so and inspired our own to do the same in other areas.

Your interest and generosity have literally changed the lives of children in the world, and we can only offer the same to you.

[illegible]

Exposure assessment: individuals that, in future, would live within 100 m of a road would be more likely to be exposed to road traffic noise than those who would live further away from the road.

2000-01-01

India and Herbar

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 Email: info@india.com
 91 80 2300 0000
 Lodhi Corner, 150 Connaught Place
 and www.india.com
 561 003 0003

[illegible]

Check out Volunteer Opportunities
now available for our congregation
at Food Gatherers!

Individuals (group size less than 3 volunteers) can volunteer at our warehouse, on 1 Carrot Way, Community Kitchen, or special events!

- More information, age requirements and job descriptions at [Volunteer Jobs](#).
- Each individual volunteer must register and sign up for a shift before volunteering.

Ready to get started?
Follow this link:

[https://foodgatherers.volunteerhub.com/
account/signin](https://foodgatherers.volunteerhub.com/account/signin)

Upper Room Devotional

The Upper Room has made their daily devotionals available as PDF for subscribing churches. Devotional via email.

You may access a PDF copy from the church website by clicking [here](#). The PDF can also be located at: www.bethlehem-ucc.org under the events tab at the top of the page.



Memorials and Gifts Gifts Received March 2021

General Memorial Fund
Kennyon Edwards Memorial
Carole Katz Memorial

Ozone House Fund
Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel Honorarium

Property Improvement Fund
Elsie Lovelace Memorial

Gifts listed were received through
March 31, 2021

Radio Sponsorship
3/7—In memory of Jean Raab
3/14—In memory of Bertha Harley & in honor of Pastor Lily Tinker Fortel
3/21—In memory of Ron Jaworowski, Laura Ann Jaworowski, and Wilma Wahl
3/28—In memory of Wil A. Leonard

RADIO BROADCAST SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIPS



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?

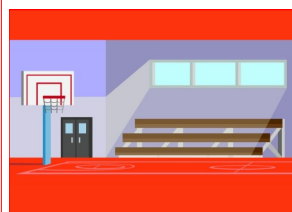
Are you looking for a way to honor or remember a friend or family member? A weekly Radio Sponsorship is \$230. In addition, general donations of any amount are appreciated. Thank you for supporting this important ministry!

1. **Pick a date you want to sponsor.**
2. **Sign up on the bulletin board in the office hallway, or call the office at 734-665-6149.**
3. **You can even donate online at bethlehem-ucc.org.**
4. **Tell the office how you want your sponsorship listed in the bulletin and read on-air.**

BUCCuleles: One-on-One Zoom Lessons

One-on-one zoom ukulele lessons are being offered for elementary age youth. A parent or another adult attends with the youth. There's one spot left! If you have an interested musician, contact Katie: rowank55@gmail.com to schedule at your convenience.

Gym Rental for Members



Bethlehem UCC members can rent the gym for \$15 per hour, but must agree to follow the "Covid-19 Mitigation Expectations for Church Space Rental" guidelines, which includes mask use, sanitizing, contact list, screening and social distancing. Please contact the church office for information and scheduling options at info@bethlehem-ucc.org or 734-665-6149.

News You Can Use

from the Member Care Ministry Team



COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Requirements:

Beginning Monday, March 8, individuals age 50 and older who are living with a disability or with COPD, hypertension, chronic kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes, obesity or other conditions that put them at high risk of negative COVID-19 outcomes, are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Michigan. Caregiver family members and guardians age 16 years and older of children with special health-care needs are also eligible.

Beginning Monday, March 22, all patients age 50 and older will also be eligible for vaccination, as supply allows.

Here are great resources to find vaccination options in our area:

<https://www.vaccinemi.com>

Washtenaw County Health Department (734-544-6700) or <https://www.washtenaw.org/3269/COVID-19-Vaccination>

State of Michigan - https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_103214---_00.html?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=covid20

Rite Aid Pharmacy - <https://www.riteaid.com/pharmacy/covid-qualifier>

Meijer Pharmacy - <https://clinic.meijer.com>

MICHIGAN MEDICINE PATIENTS:

If you are an established Michigan Medicine patient and meet the state's criteria for vaccination eligibility, you are automatically enrolled in our vaccination program. No sign-up or action is needed. Invitations to schedule an appointment for vaccination are sent to eligible patients in waves based on availability of vaccine. Patients who are enrolled in the MyUofMHealth patient portal will receive invitations through email and portal message, and patients who are not enrolled in the patient portal will receive invitations by mail.

IHA/SAINT JOSEPH MERCY HEALTH SYSTEM PATIENTS:

Eligible IHA & St. Joe's Medical Group patients on the MyChart Patient Portal will be contacted in waves to schedule their COVID-19 vaccine appointments. They are first contacting eligible primary care patients, followed by specialty patients. Patients without MyChart will be contacted by phone. You are encouraged to sign up for MyChart as it will be the quickest way to schedule your vaccine once you have been contacted to do so. Here is the link sign up <https://ihacares.com/resources/patient-portal>

OTHER OPTIONS:

<https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2021/02/24/covid-19-vaccine-eligibility-good-neighbor-program/6800740002/>



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:	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	