



# The Visitor

June / July, 2021  
Bethlehem United Church of Christ

## Thank You! Well Done!

*"The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'"*

- The Gospel of Matthew 25:23

"O God, our Help in Ages Past our Hope for Years to Come, our Shelter from the Stormy Blast and our Eternal Home". This great hymn and many other have gone through my mind so many times over the last 15-months of COVID-19. Our entire world was turned upside down in March of 2020, when business, schools, stores, even churches, and religious centers all over the globe began closing their buildings. I wonder what hymns of strength and assurance that you have found yourself humming and then realized that your faith is coming to the surface in this challenging time? For many of us Scripture, hymns, baptisms, confirmation, Sunday School lessons, refreshments, Vacation Bible School, mission trips, and Sunday worship were being planted in our lives from a young age

The seeds of our faith planted in us from a young age sprout and grow while we are not aware. Then when hardship and struggles enter our lives these seeds are like a bread crumb trail that lead us back home to God. The importance of learning and experiencing God's love in a family and community of faith makes all the difference. We are not perfect, we are not free from the pain and struggles of life, but we know that we do not travel alone during these times, and that makes all the difference!

(continued on page 2)

**Deadline for the August  
Edition of the Visitor is  
Thursday, July 15**



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**BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104  
Phone 734-665-6149 Fax 734-665-3399  
[www.bethlehem-ucc.org](http://www.bethlehem-ucc.org)  
[www.facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2](https://www.facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2)



## Office Hours

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

(continued from page 1)

I noticed with a full heart as I saw God's love bloom in you. I saw and heard how we turned to our God, and said, "O Go, help and guide us", because we were/are worried and hurting. We reached for God, and embraced our families and neighbors with love and continual prayers when we could not physically embrace or be embraced by those from whom we were separated. So I want to shout, "Thank You, God, Our Help in Ages Past and our Hope for Years and eternity to come! Thank you, members of Bethlehem UCC, both long tenure and the many who have joined even during this world-wide pandemic.

Thank you for your informed and steady leadership with our COVID-19 Task Force during these last 15-months. With God's help, our Leadership Council Team made our congregation's health and safety the top priority. This is part of loving God and our neighbor.

I am thankful that there were no reported COVID-19 deaths in our congregation and only 8 reported members who reported a positive test for the virus, and only one reported hospitalization. Thank you Bethlehem and that our worship continued every Sunday without fail, through Easter, Christmas, Lent and Easter again. Thank you for those that delivered pastoral care to those who were ill, discouraged, experience a loss of a loved one. Funerals, weddings, Confirmation, and even Baptisms continued but in new ways.

Our vision of loving God and our neighbors, by working to create a Just World for All continued through mission and outreach efforts. Even 12 new members will have been received into membership during this time apart. Thank you to our dedicated and faithful staff! Well done good and faithful servants of God! Thank you God our hope for tears to come! I hope to see you Bethlehem Soon!

God loves us ALL with no take-backs!

*Pastor John*

April 2021	Year to Date	YTD Target	2020/2021 Budget
<b>Offerings and Income</b>	\$401,448	\$383,587	\$418,458
<b>Expenses</b>	\$425,548	\$434,937	\$474,477
<b>Net</b>	(\$24,100)	(\$51,351)	(\$56,019)

May 2021	Year to Date	YTD Target	2020/2021 Budget
<b>Offerings and Income</b>	\$429,885	\$418,458	\$418,458
<b>Expenses</b>	\$458,633	\$474,477	\$474,477
<b>Net</b>	(\$28,748)	(\$56,019)	(\$56,019)

## From Your 'Past' President's Desk



Those with eagle eyes will recognize in this July/August Visitor, by rights I should not be writing another President's column. I thank newly-elected Congregation President Ron Dechert for allowing me to stretch my tenure a couple days past our annual meeting to make the June 15<sup>th</sup> deadline of this Visitor.

Among my final duties the week prior to our annual meeting, I was the second signatory on a batch of checks from our church. (Note: I think I've found a way to cut the budget—stop writing so many checks!) I shudder to compute the total amount of checks I've signed over my tenure: some in the five figures (to the left of the decimal point!); more in the five figures including the cents to the right.

These disbursements are the economic lifeblood of our church and various missions and organizations we support. Sometimes they bring a smile, being for a very small amount for a piece or two of hardware; other times its clear they make a larger, more serious difference.

By chance, this final batch had more in the latter category: checks to Peace Neighborhood Center, Church World Service (CROP walk), Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley, and Food Gatherers.

In my opinion, a congregation "doing good works," as supporting these missions does, should also be praising and worshipping God, as we do. The next two checks were of that worshipping category: a monthly check keeping our Sunday morning services on the radio and another paying for the purchase of equipment facilitating live-streaming worship.

It's a bit of a stretch, but even the final check can be viewed through a spiritual lens: it was to a company providing our building alarm services. As King James (or maybe it was actually Jesus) said, "...be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." I.e., "don't let yourself be stolen blind" or "be good stewards."

In closing, let me thank you for trusting me to be a part of Bethlehem's leadership these past few years. I very much appreciate all those who served with me and I pray for a steady flow of good works for our neighbors and praises to our God.

I leave you with a piece of graffiti:

**Time exists so that everything doesn't happen at once.**

**Space exists so that it doesn't all happen to you.**

John Samford, Past President

## Update from Worship Ministry Team



Our Worship Ministry Team would like to thank the congregation for the recent vote to affirm our ability to acquire, install, and operate new video equipment to allow us to continue online/digital services. Thanks to a very generous donation to support this initiative we should be able to pay for the initial costs. And thanks to David Hahn, our Music Director & Video Editor, for spearheading the effort to determine what we need and the appropriate vendor to provide the equipment and installation. Our Worship Ministry Team will be working through the details needed to bring us back into the sanctuary for worship services. We'll work with Leadership Council to determine the appropriate timing for the sake of everyone's health and the acquisition/installation of our new video equipment.

We are seeking additional volunteers to serve as Liturgists for pre-recorded and eventually for in-person services; as well as Ushers and Soundboard Techs for when we return in person. If you are interested in serving as a Liturgist, please contact Jennifer Vasquez at [jenniferavasquez29@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferavasquez29@gmail.com). For the Soundboard, please contact Gary Rogers at [rogersg@courts.mi.gov](mailto:rogersg@courts.mi.gov). To volunteer as an usher, please contact the church office at [info@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:info@bethlehem-ucc.org) or (734) 665-6149.

## Summer BUCculeles

BUCculeles have begun our summer schedule. We had our first IN PERSON jam!! You're invited to join the jam on these Mondays 12:30 - 1:30PM:

July 12 Zoom  
 July 26 Church yard  
 Aug 9 Zoom  
 Aug 23 Church yard

For jams in the church yard, bring your songbooks and a lawn chair unless you are comfortable sitting on the ground. Clothespins are helpful if there's a breeze. The lounge will be our back up if it is too hot or rainy. For zoom jams use this link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71073058780?pwd=bHBSbzdKNTBqTkFSWEN3b2hUL1lwUT09>



Eileen Koprowski, Education Ministry Chair, presenting a check to a very grateful Scott Ellis, Director of Development for Ozone House from our congregation Lenten Project. Thank you to all

who participated and contributed to this worthy community partner.

*I'd like to add again, heartfelt thanks from Bethlehem's Education, Youth and Young Adult, and Outreach Ministry Teams, for your contribution to the success of the 2021 Youth Lenten Mission Project. If you'd like to learn more about Ozone House, their mission to help teens in crisis, volunteering, or fundraising opportunities you can get involved with, you can visit their website: [www.ozonehouse.org](http://www.ozonehouse.org) and sign up for their online newsletter.*

Eileen Koprowski  
 Educational Ministry Chair

## 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](http://bethlehem-ucc.org) or leave a message at the church office (734) 665-6149 and someone will get back with you.

## Memorials and Gifts Gifts Received May / June 2021

### CEMETERY MAINTENANCE FUND

#### CURRENT FUND

Norma & Conrad Foster Honorarium

### PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Bob Dylenski Memorial  
 Shirley Maichele Memorial  
 Margaret & Godfrey Keppler Memorial

#### RADIO FUND

Jan Leonard Memorial

### GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Kennyon Edwards Memorial

Thank you for special financial gifts dedicated to the glory of God, in loving memory of Kevin Wenk

Gifts listed were received through  
 June 15, 2021

### Radio Sponsorship

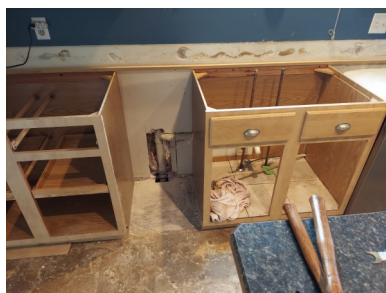
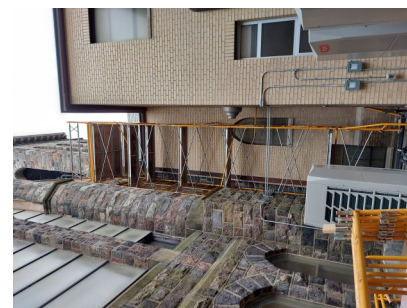
- 5/9 - In honor of the Brophy, Katz, Schwartz and Wenner Families
- 6/6 - In memory of Frederick & Lela Keppler
- 6/13 - In memory of Bob Dylenski



## Maintenance Work Continues

Facilities team is overseeing several projects:

- Scaffolding put up by the bell tower to repair gutters.
- Repair drain leak at the Hewett parsonage.
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- Getting ready to replace the porch deck at the 4th Ave parsonage.



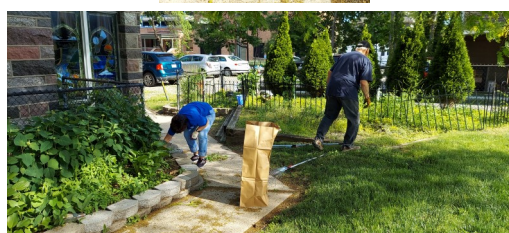
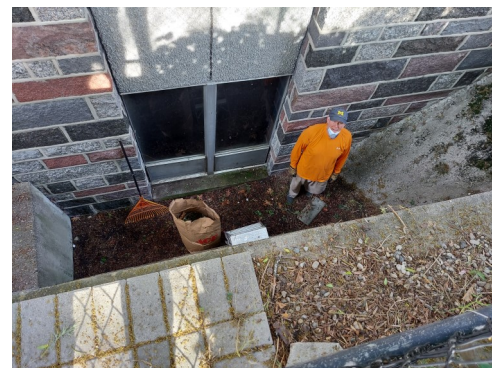
Tom

## Thank You to Our Work Day Volunteers

I thank everyone that participated on our work day at the church. It was nice getting together with this wonderful group.

Thank You, John I, Michelle L, Roy and Sue, Tom, Christina, Logan, Ron D, Edgar and Jennifer V, Jan E, Katie. Thank you to Jim Stadel for removing a dead tree in front of the 437 house.

Tom Z





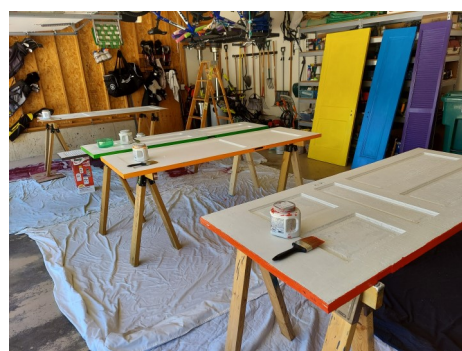
## THE RAINBOW DOORS ARE COMING BACK!

Prior to the COVID shutdown, we had to take down our Rainbow Doors that told the neighborhood and community we believe that “GOD’S DOORS ARE OPEN TO ALL” because of the deteriorated condition of the doors in the display. A replacement set of doors will be coming back soon thanks to the efforts of the ONA Committee and family members and the Bethlehem Youth.

A new set of solid wood doors have been primed, painted, and are ready to have God’s message attached to them and be put on display outside the church. This clear and visible sign of our Covenant of Welcome that we “welcome the diverse tapestry of all people, no matter their age, race, nationality, ethnicity, economic circumstances, marital or family status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression” will once again let passersby know that Bethlehem UCC is an Open and Affirming congregation that welcomes all to join us on their faith journey.

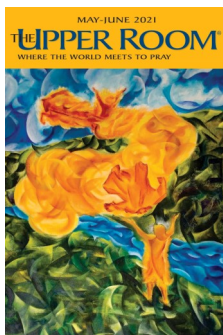
Thanks to Karen Slotten, Ellie Vazquez, Jennifer Vasquez, Allan Authier, Mira Authier, Noah Bailey and Matt Kennedy for your efforts on these new doors!

Cresson Slotten, ONA Committee Chair



### Upper Room Devotional

The Upper Room has made their daily devotionals available as PDF for subscribing churches. You may access a PDF copy from the church website by clicking [here](https://www.bethlehem-ucc.org). The PDF can also be located at: [www.bethlehem-ucc.org](https://www.bethlehem-ucc.org) under the events tab at the top of the page.



### Bethlehem Volunteer Day with Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley

We are excited to connect with our local Habitat for a volunteer day! There will be a dedicated volunteer day just for Bethlehem UCC on **Saturday, July 31, 9AM - 4PM**, available to individuals 16 and up. If that date doesn't work for you, these 3 additional Faith Build dates are available for open signup online: July 9, July 10, July 23. See the flyer in this Visitor for more details and the link to sign up online. And stay tuned for news coming soon about additional ways the congregation can support this project!



thrivent

# Faith Build Venture



Bethlehem United Church of Christ  
Ann Arbor

WHEN: Sat., July 31, 2021

TIME: 9 AM - 4 PM

LOCATION: 835 Lamay Ave., Ypsilanti  
1,335 square-feet • 3 bedroom • 1 bath  
basement • detached shed

Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley engages our neighbors to build better neighborhoods through our volunteer, donation, partnership and ReStore efforts. We build homes, communities and hope... under one roof.

## What to Wear:

- Face mask/covering and gloves (volunteers are required to wear a face mask while on our sites)
- Comfortable clothes that can get dirty
- Dress for the weather and wear layers, if needed
- Work boots or sneakers (no open-toed shoes)
- Remove jewelry and pull back loose hair
- Hat and sunscreen, if needed

## What to Bring:

- Lunch and snacks (we do not provide food, but we will have drinking water on site)
- Port-a-jons will also be available
- Tools & equipment will be provided. You are welcome to bring your own, but are responsible for anything you bring.

## What to Expect:

No construction experience is necessary!

It is difficult to predict exactly how renovations will proceed each week, so projects will vary. Tasks may include light demolition, framing, insulation, blue board, house wrap, siding, floor repair, wall repair/framing, caulking, trim, fixtures, windows and doors, painting and landscaping.

Due to COVID-19, all volunteers are required to wear a face mask while on site and adhere to Habitat's guidelines.

Whatever the projects may be, the Habitat house leader will ensure there are a variety of indoor and outdoor tasks, at various skill levels.

## Safety & Age Restrictions:

Our construction sites have the highest standard of safety and we will provide safety glasses, gloves and a hard hat. We also ask that you do not use an iPod/Blue Tooth.

Due to safety regulations, individuals under the age of 16 are not permitted on site.

## SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER

(4 - 6 volunteers needed!)

REGISTER HERE:

<http://bit.ly/BethlehemUCCJuly31>

Learn more about the Faith Build at [www.h4h.org/thrivent](http://www.h4h.org/thrivent)

Questions?

Contact Leah Borst

[lborst@h4h.org](mailto:lborst@h4h.org) • 734-882-2004



[www.h4h.org](http://www.h4h.org)

2805 S. Industrial Hwy., Ste. 100  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

734-677-1558

I A M H A B I T A T





# Outreach Ministry Team News

## CROP WALK

### OCTOBER 3, 2021

Bethlehem UCC will again be the host church for this year's Walk. It will be a "hybrid" Walk with the option of walking on your own or with a group of friends. Or walkers can also choose to meet at Bethlehem that day to have a send-off and a map for a suggested route.

The Outreach and Youth Ministry Teams will work together to organize the Walk. And we will once again have our church team—The Pllamas.

Last year our congregation raised \$3,450 for the CROP Walk. We hope to surpass that amount this year

More information to follow along with ways to join our team, the Pllamas!

WALK.

GIVE.

CHANGE THE WORLD.

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*2021*

## CROP HUNGER WALK

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Ending Hunger

One Step  
at a Time.



## Friday Food Distribution at Peace

Volunteers can now sign up again to help on Fridays from 8:30-11:30 at Peace Neighborhood Center. To sign up, you can:

Go to Peace's Website: [peaceneighborhoodcenter.org](http://peaceneighborhoodcenter.org) and click on VOLUNTEER, which will take you to a link.

Or you can contact Sue Muir to sign you up at [suemuir@comcast.net](mailto:suemuir@comcast.net)







April 29, 2021

Bethlehem United Church of Christ  
423 S 4th Ave  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2394

Dear Friends at Bethlehem United Church of Christ,

Thank you for your gift of support for our community's most vulnerable young people. Ozone House is able to shelter young people in crisis tonight and every night because of your generosity.

*"Thanks to Ozone House, I have not been homeless for three years, and I am in college. Had it not been for Ozone, I would be back to square one, homeless and alone. I am finally happy."*

*- Former Ozone House client*

Thank you for your recent gift of \$5,885.00 we received on 4/28/2021. On behalf of our board, staff, and volunteers, thank you again for providing support and stability to our community's most vulnerable youth.

Warmest regards,

Krista Girty  
Executive Director  
kgirty@ozonehouse.org

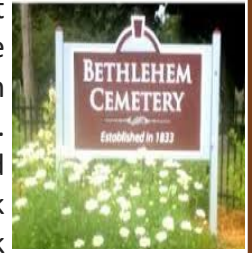
Ozone House is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service. As such, your contribution may be tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please keep this letter for your income tax records as your receipt for the above mentioned gift, and as verification that no goods or services were provided by Ozone House in exchange for this donation. EIN: 38-1916505

Main Office | Housing | Counseling  
1600 N. Huron River Drive  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
734-662-2265

Drop-In Center  
102 N. Hamilton Street  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
734-485-2222

## FROM THE CEMETERY BOARD

Summer is here finally and with it road construction season. At the cemetery we are having the main road repaired and seal coated. Additional road work is planned around the office building and Block 10. The anticipated cost of this work is \$55,880.40. We are seeking donations to help cover this cost. Donations may be made through the church office or on-line.



## Supper Club Returns!

Have you been anxious to get together with your supper club again? Are you

**SupperClub**  
FOOD & FRIENDS

interested in joining in a social group with other members of the church? I would be happy to get us organized again and get things going. For those not familiar with this activity, groups typically meet once a month for a meal in member homes or in restaurants. While it's called a "Supper Club" many of us have gathered for brunch as well on the weekends! Please contact Jennifer Vasquez at [jenniferavasquez29@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferavasquez29@gmail.com) or 734-658-6692. To help me align the groups, I would like to know:

- ♦ How soon you would be comfortable getting together with others?
- ♦ Are you willing to meet in indoor locations as well as outdoors?
- ♦ Would you like to stay with the same group you were in previously or join a new group?
- ♦ How important is vaccination status of other group members to determine whether you will participate?
- ♦ Are you comfortable sharing your vaccination status with group members?



July 15 is the deadline for items to be included in the August edition of the VISITOR newsletter. Please

email submissions to:  
[churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org)



## 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>
<b>Pastor:</b> Rev. John Kennedy	<b>Finance:</b> Karen Samford	<b>President:</b> Ron Dechert
<b>Pastor Emeritus:</b> Rev. Orval L.E. Willimann	<b>Facilities:</b> Tim Schenk	<b>Vice President:</b> Jim Rowan
<b>Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development:</b>	<b>Education:</b> Eileen Koprowski	<b>Secretary:</b> Rachel Hemp
<b>Financial Administrator:</b> Betty Clark	<b>Worship:</b> Jennifer Vasquez	<b>Treasurer:</b> Pete Hendershot
<b>Parish Administrator:</b> Julie Rhodes	<b>Member Care:</b> Beth Wenner (co-chair) Karen Kennedy (co-chair)	<b>At-Large Members:</b>
<b>Administrative Assistant:</b> Gwenda Mayes	<b>Welcome:</b> Jane Schmerberg	Dindy Haab
<b>Director of Music:</b> David Hahn	<b>Outreach:</b> Sue Muir/Roy Muir	Pat Huibregtse
<b>Organist:</b> Gail Jennings	<b>Fellowship:</b> Jan Eadie	Pam Rutledge
<b>Director of Handbells:</b> Jim Rowan	<b>Youth &amp; Young Adult:</b> Katie Rowan	<b>Ex Officio:</b> Rev. John Kennedy
<b>Sunday School Nursery Teacher:</b> Kelsey Postler	<b>Bethlehem Cemetery:</b> Sue Buday	
	<b>Nominations Committee:</b> Cresson Slotten	