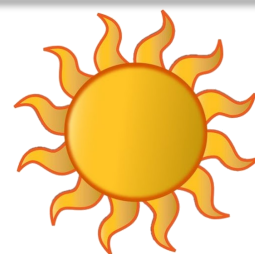




# The Visitor

August, 2021  
Bethlehem United Church of Christ



## Welcome Back to Worship



Deadline for the September  
Edition of the Visitor is  
Sunday, August 15



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BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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[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.



## Worship Update & Call for Assistance

Our Worship Ministry Team wants to let everyone know that for our 10am service on Sundays we'll be ringing the bells at 9:50am, followed by the prelude, and announcements. This will allow us to start the Call to Worship promptly at 10am, which is when our radio broadcast goes on air. Now that we are back to in-person services we are seeking assistance from congregation members. We would like to invite you to serve as Liturgists, Ushers, and Soundboard Techs. 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.

## Member Care Ministry Team

We would like to start by giving a big THANK YOU to Jenny Foster for her leadership over the past 3 years and for her insight during this transition time. We are looking forward to seeing what the next year will bring.

As we begin our tenure as co-chairs, there are a few things that we need to cover. We are looking for people who would like to join the Member Care team. Whether you are someone who has been a member for fifty years or someone who has joined during our time of remote worshipping, we would love to have you join us. We are also looking for a person or two to continue our card ministry. This job entails sending cards out for birthdays, anniversaries, and other events which occur in the lives of our members. Member care would supply the cards and stamps to mail them and even deliver them to you. Please let one of us know if you would be willing to do this important ministry.

While we as a church are still navigating the road back to full in person worship, we are asking that you submit prayer requests either by calling or texting Beth Wenner at 734-274-1156. Currently, as there are no prayer request forms in the pews, this would be the best way to have prayers included during the service.

As we continue to navigate these new times, please be assured that as the Member Care Ministry Team will continue to provide care for all of our church family. Please feel free to contact either Beth or Karen Kennedy with anything that you might need. Blessings to you and yours!



Beth Wenner  
Email: [betha2@comcast.net](mailto:betha2@comcast.net)  
Phone: 734-274-1156

Karen Kennedy  
Email: [klkennedy65@gmail.com](mailto:klkennedy65@gmail.com)  
Phone: 734-845-4103



## 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.

June 2021	Year to Date	YTD Target	2020/2021 Budget
<b>Offerings and Income</b>	\$73,869	\$42,217	\$506,604
<b>Expenses</b>	\$31,531	\$44,514	\$534,171
<b>Net</b>	\$42,337	(\$2,297)	(\$27,567)



Friends,

## Crossroads

I want to say thank you for the honor of serving our congregation. This is my first Visitor message since being elected as the President. In the past four weeks, since the annual congregational meeting, I have heard from several members who have spoken to me about their concerns, and suggestions for our church family in the coming year. These conversations have prompted me to reflect on the past year. I believe we at Bethlehem are at a crossroads. Looking backward, I can see what we have collectively come through while standing at the center of the crossroads, I see several choices ahead.

During the past year and more, we have collectively and individually faced many challenges, disappointments, sadness, and joy. The past challenges have, in my opinion, caused a tear in the very fabric of our church family resulting from at least two significant events. First, the divisions resulting from our leadership responses to the pandemic. As the lead for the BUCC COVID Task Force and a member of our Leadership Council, I frequently heard from church members who questioned why we were not opening sooner or why our recommendations were so restrictive. Others, felt just the opposite, that we were moving too quickly or dramatically to re-open. Having attended our first in-person worship service today, I am convinced that the divisions and apprehensions about church service will be short-lived. The recommendations instituted for these return services are temporary. We will learn what is comfortable and correct for safe worship as we gain more experience. Return to normal worship will erase any divisions that developed during COVID.

Second, we have a split in our family fabric due to the unexpected departure of Pastor Lily. For the record, during last year I served as Vice-President for the congregation. As stated in our by-laws, part of my responsibility as Vice President was to counsel Pastor Kennedy on issues involving personnel. I also served as a liaison for the church staff addressing any personnel matters that they felt warranted my involvement. Since Pastor Lily's departure in March, I have met or communicated with several church members who sought answers to their questions. I found each of these conversations helpful. I continue to hear indirectly that members have questions and are unclear where to find answers. I invite any members who are seeking answers or who want to offer thoughts and opinions to contact me. I am happy to start a dialogue with anyone in an effort to fuse together this tear. We may disagree on answers to these questions but I believe if we are willing to offer our "truth" while listening to each other's "truth", we can learn from our mistakes of the past. We can discover new ways forward, and most importantly we can be the church we endeavor to be.

My vision for the coming year is for all of us to heal from the events of the past year, to grow together spiritually, and to support our community and each other. I thank you again for the honor to represent all of you. I hope my vision is similar to yours but would love to hear from you, to understand what concerns, thoughts, and opinions you have. You can reach me through my email address listed below.

God Bless You All,  
Ron Dechert  
rdechert@umich.edu

### *Sincerest Thanks!*

I want to thank everyone who has sent cards, called or visited since my son Steven's death.

I also want to say thank you to all those who have given me comfort and sent prayers during his valiant fight with cancer.

I am very grateful to all of you for your care and support. ~ Gert Eisele

### **Memorials and Gifts Gifts Received July 2021**

#### **CURRENT FUND**

Beverly Hanselman Memorial

#### **MUSIC FUND**

Steve Eisele Memorial

Gifts listed were received through  
July 15, 2021





## Bethlehem Veterans' & Friends Monthly Breakfast

Resumes Friday, October 1  
at 8:30 am

Alpha Restaurant, Jackson Rd.  
(formerly Classic Cup Café)

Questions? Contact Tom Ziesemer

Email: ziesemertn@gmail.com

## 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:

Aug 9 Zoom

Aug 23 Church yard

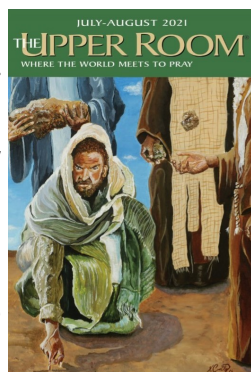
For jams in the church yard, bring your songbooks and a lawn chair unless you are comfortable sitting on the ground. Clothespins are helpful if there's a breeze. The lounge will be our back up if it is too hot or rainy. For zoom jams use this link:

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



## 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](#). The PDF can also be located at: [www.bethlehem-ucc.org](http://www.bethlehem-ucc.org) under the events tab at the top of the page.



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

email submissions to:

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

## Rainbow Doors Completed



## Supper Club Returns!

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

# Outreach Ministry Team News



## 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Ann Arbor CROP Hunger Walk

Sunday, October 3, 2021

Every fall since 1975, Washtenaw / Ann Arbor congregations and organizations have walked together with a common mission:

- ✚ to help the hungry and impoverished here and throughout the world.

The 2020 Virtual Walk raised a total of \$33,407.98, well above our goal of \$30,000.



**BETHLEHEM**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

423 South Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor MI 48104  
Bethlehem UCC has kindly agreed to serve as our 2021 Headquarters/Host church. This year we are offering a "virtual" and in-person event. The event will be hosted outside [weather permitting] with the group send-off at 2 PM.

**Mark your calendars:**  
**Sunday, October 3, 2021**

Visit our website:

[www.crophungerwalk.org/AnnArborMI](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/AnnArborMI)

[www.facebook.com/annarborcrophungerwalk](https://www.facebook.com/annarborcrophungerwalk)

### ALL AGES EVENT

#### 2021 CROP TEAM

##### Co-Chairs:

Mary Pratt  
Barb Fichtenberg

#### Bethlehem United Church of Christ Hosts:

Sue Muir  
Katie Rowan  
Tom Ziesemer

#### Treasurer:

Patti Yonka

#### Route Co-Chairs:

Jen Chapin-Smith  
Alex Nemmers

#### Members:

Donald MacGregor  
Rodger Wolff  
Bryan Weinert  
Charles Yonka

#### Church World Service

##### [CWS] Co-Ordinator:

Andrew Gifford

#### Benefitting:

75% of funds raised go to CWS national and international communities.

25% of funds raised go to local non-profits which serve in the Washtenaw area. List of organizations to follow!

#### CONTACT

[marypratt33@yahoo.com](mailto:marypratt33@yahoo.com)  
734-975-5310

Many small gifts make a BIG difference!



## 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 - no construction experience necessary! 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 the June/July Visitor for more details and the link to sign up online. You can also contact Katie Rowan - [rowank55@gmail.com](mailto:rowank55@gmail.com) - for additional information and sign-up help. If you would like to support this project with your prayers and/or a donation it will be much appreciated. The flyer below outlines examples of what your donation could provide. Checks can be mailed or dropped off at the church office with Habitat Huron Valley in the memo. There is also a Habitat Huron Valley line on the church's online giving page. Please click [HERE](#) to be taken directly to BUCC's online giving page.

 	 	
<p>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... <b>under one roof.</b></p> <p>The cost to renovate a Habitat home isn't free, and we rely on donations to help cover the cost of materials and labor to provide a newly renovated, energy efficient home for a future Habitat homebuyer. Your donation will help cover costs, and opportunity to build strength, self-reliance and shelter in our local community.</p>		<p><b>Bethlehem United Church of Christ</b> Ann Arbor</p> <p><b>WHEN:</b> Sat., July 31, 2021 <b>TIME:</b> 9 AM - 4 PM</p> <p><b>LOCATION:</b> 835 Lamay Ave., Ypsilanti 1,335 square-feet • 3 bedroom • 1 bath basement • detached shed</p> <p>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... <b>under one roof.</b></p>
<div data-bbox="99 894 318 1073">  <p><b>\$20</b> can help cover the cost of a bucket of nails</p> </div> <div data-bbox="334 894 553 1073">  <p><b>\$25</b> can cover the cost of a door lock to provide security</p> </div> <div data-bbox="570 894 789 1073">  <p><b>\$45</b> can cover a sheet of OSB board to build a floor</p> </div> <div data-bbox="99 1094 318 1272">  <p><b>\$100</b> can buy one new energy-efficient window</p> </div> <div data-bbox="334 1094 553 1272">  <p><b>\$300</b> can help buy paint for the walls and trim</p> </div> <div data-bbox="570 1094 789 1272">  <p><b>\$600</b> can buy a new hot water heater</p> </div>	<p><b>What to Wear:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face mask/covering and gloves (volunteers are required to wear a face mask while on our sites)</li> <li>• Comfortable clothes that can get dirty</li> <li>• Dress for the weather and wear layers, if needed</li> <li>• Work boots or sneakers (no open-toed shoes)</li> <li>• Remove jewelry and pull back loose hair</li> <li>• Hat and sunscreen, if needed</li> </ul> <p><b>What to Bring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lunch and snacks (we do not provide food, but we will have drinking water on site)</li> <li>• Port-a-jons will also be available</li> <li>• Tools &amp; equipment will be provided. You are welcome to bring your own, but are responsible for anything you bring.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to Expect:</b></p> <p>No construction experience is necessary!</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, all volunteers are required to wear a face mask while on site and adhere to Habitat's guidelines.</p> <p>Whatever the projects may be, the Habitat house leader will ensure there are a variety of indoor and outdoor tasks, at various skill levels.</p>	<p><b>Safety &amp; Age Restrictions:</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Due to safety regulations, individuals under the age of 16 are not permitted on site.</p> <p><b>SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER</b> (4 - 6 volunteers needed!) <b>REGISTER HERE:</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/BethlehemUCCJuly31">http://bit.ly/BethlehemUCCJuly31</a></p> <p>Learn more about the Faith Build at <a href="http://www.h4h.org/thrivent">www.h4h.org/thrivent</a></p> <p><b>Questions?</b> Contact Leah Borst <a href="mailto:lborst@h4h.org">lborst@h4h.org</a> • 734-882-2004</p> <p>   </p>
 <p><a href="http://www.h4h.org">www.h4h.org</a>   2805 S. Industrial Hwy., Ste. 100 Ann Arbor, MI 48104   734-677-1558</p> <p>I AM HABITAT</p>	 <p><a href="http://www.h4h.org">www.h4h.org</a>   2805 S. Industrial Hwy., Ste. 100 Ann Arbor, MI 48104   734-677-1558</p> <p>I AM HABITAT</p>	



## 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.





## 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

### STAFF

**Pastor:** Rev. John Kennedy  
**Pastor Emeritus:** Rev. Orval L.E. Willimann  
**Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development:**  
**Financial Administrator:** Betty Clark  
**Parish Administrator:** Julie Rhodes  
**Administrative Assistant:** Gwenda Mayes  
**Director of Music:** David Hahn  
**Organist:** Gail Jennings  
**Director of Handbells:** Jim Rowan  
**Sunday School Nursery Teacher:** Kelsey Postler

### MINISTRY TEAM CHAIRS

**Finance:** Karen Samford  
**Facilities:** Tim Schenk  
**Education:** Eileen Koprowski  
**Worship:** Jennifer Vasquez  
**Member Care:** Beth Wenner (co-chair)  
 Karen Kennedy (co-chair)  
**Welcome:** Jane Schmerberg  
**Outreach:** Sue Muir/Roy Muir  
**Fellowship:** Jan Eadie  
**Youth & Young Adult:** Katie Rowan  
**Bethlehem Cemetery:** Sue Buday  
**Nominations Committee:** Cresson Slotten

### LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

**President:** Ron Dechert  
**Vice President:** Jim Rowan  
**Secretary:** Rachel Hemp  
**Treasurer:** Pete Hendershot  
**At-Large Members:**  
 Dindy Haab  
 Pat Huibregtse  
 Pam Rutledge  
**Ex Officio:** Rev. John Kennedy