



# The Visitor

November, 2021  
Bethlehem United Church of Christ



**Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!**

Dear Bethlehem Family,

I want to express my sincere appreciation to all of you. By the time this Visitor article comes out, we will have concluded the collection and initial summary of both the Congregational Self-reflection survey and the Pastoral Evaluation survey. You may remember that in late September, our Leadership Council approved the distribution of both of these surveys to you, our church family members. The surveys were distributed by providing electronic links to each survey tool which were posted in our previous Visitor, our refrigerator pages, and our Friday email messages. In addition, Council requested that paper copies of each survey tool be available for pick-up in our church office. Council also requested that paper copies of both surveys be mailed to church members who do not have an email address on file with our office. Finally, to get the message out, I made several announcements at our Sunday services. I am very pleased with the responses from all of you to our (Council) request for your opinions and feedback. At the time of writing this message (10/14), I can report that we have received 56 completed Congregational self-reflection surveys (40 through the electronic links and 16 on paper) and 43 Pastor surveys (33 through electronic links and 10 via paper). The number of responses are substantially more than Council received when we sent these out to the Congregation 3 years ago. In addition, I have received numerous additional communications from church members during this same period. In my opinion, this incredible response speaks to the overall involvement, dedication, and commitment you have for our church family and our church leadership. The links have been taken down but I will gladly accept any outstanding paper copies for those who forgot to submit your feedback by the requested date (October 17<sup>th</sup>).

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**Deadline for the  
December Edition of the  
Visitor is Monday,  
November 15**



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## Office Hours

**Tuesday - Friday**  
9:30 am - 2:30 pm  
*(the office is closed  
on Mondays)*

(continued from page 1)

What happens now? The next step involves summarizing all results and creating a final report for each survey. The congregational survey summary report will be shared with Leadership Council and our ministry teams. It is my hope we will use this report as the bedrock for developing a collective strategic plan. Developing such a plan is a primary responsibility, identified in our by-laws, for Leadership Council. Once that is developed, in consultation with our ministry teams, the congregational survey summary and strategic plan draft will be shared with you, our congregation. The summary results for the pastor evaluation will be shared and reviewed by our Council. We will compare the congregation's input with the responses provided solely by the Council. We will then meet with Pastor John to review and plan for the coming months. This type of evaluation occurs annually as directed again by our by-laws.

Thank you again for your time and engagement in completing these surveys. Working together, discussing our issues, listening to each other, forgiving ourselves and other church members can only strengthen who we are. God bless you all.

As always, if you have any additional thoughts or questions, please contact me using the following email address: rdechert@umich.edu.

God's grace,  
Ron Dechert-President



We are now live streaming our 10:00 am Worship Service on Sundays. You can click the link [HERE](#) to be taken directly to the BUCC website so that you can watch services.

September 2021	Year to Date	YTD Target	2020/2021 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$180,307	\$168,868	\$506,604
Expenses	\$134,467	\$178,057	\$534,171
Net	\$45,840	(\$9,189)	(\$27,567)

## Stewardship Sunday — November 14

Please give generously to this worthy cause.

You may click the link [HERE](#) to donate via BUCC's online giving.

### Rooted in Love

Our Stewardship theme of "Rooted in Love" draws inspiration from Psalm 1, "They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season." The Psalmist invited us to imagine all the good things we can bear when well planted. What might we give away when rooted in love?

But the Psalmist also meant something deeper. The word we translate as "planted" in English means "transplanted" in Hebrew. This translation speaks to the power of love to move us from one place to another, the power to convert us from one way of life to another. What would need to change in our lives for us to be fully rooted in love?

We might need to make a move from a "mindset of scarcity" to a "mindset of abundance." A scarcity mindset makes us think there will never be enough - we must compete, one against another, because there is not enough to go around. Scarcity thinking names all the things we cannot do, all the things we cannot share. But a mindset of abundance sees the fullness of God's love. Martin Luther King Jr. saw the world abundantly - despite all the injustice he confronted, King knew God's spirit moved through history, creating and renewing community.

King once described the force of love that animated the Civil Rights Movement. "Agape is not a weak, passive love. It is love in action. Agape is love seeking to preserve and create community. It is insistence on community even when one seeks to break it. Agape is a willingness to go to any length to restore broken community."

What would it mean for our lives to be rooted in such love?



They are like trees planted by streams of water,  
which yield their fruit in its season.

Psalm 1:3a



### Thank you!

We had 8 volunteers take part with our church cleanup day on October 2nd. We pulled weeds, cut back flowers and cleaned up the beds.

I applaud Jennifer Vasquez, Jim and Katie Rowan, Ron Dechert, Sue Muir, Steve Darr and the young man that just stepped by and helped. Thanks for sharing your time.

We still have work to do. Cut back hostas on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, pull weeds along the parking lot and trim small bushes. Please feel free to stop by the church and help keep the grounds beautiful.

Tom Ziesemer  
Facilities IG



### Fall 2021 School Supplies Thank You!

With heartfelt gratitude and praise for the continued support from BUCC for the youth of our congregation and throughout our local community during the 2021-2022 School Kick-off.

Your never-waning generosity has contributed hundreds of dollars and school supplies this Fall for two very worthy organizations, Ozone House and Peace Neighborhood.

Thank-you, from your Education, Outreach, and Youth and Young Adult Ministry Teams

# HAPPENINGS



Wednesdays, 4:30 PM BUCCuleles  
via ZOOM

Sunday, Oct 24 11:30am - 1p All  
Church Pizza and Board Games

Sunday, Oct 31 11:30 am - 2:30 pm  
Youth Group - Blast Corn Maze

Sunday, Nov. 7 11:30 am- 1 pm Youth Group

Sunday, Nov. 14 11:30 am - 1 pm Youth Group

Sunday, Nov. 21 11:30 am- 1 pm All Church Pizza and  
Board Games

Sunday, Nov. 28 No Youth Group



## 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



## Roundtable Pulpit

All are invited to participate in a  
"Roundtable Pulpit" with Pastor John  
on Tuesdays from 12-1:30 pm via  
[ZOOM](#). Gather to study and discuss  
the coming week's scripture. Please

click on the link above if you would like to participate.

## Memorials and Gifts

**Gifts Received from  
September 16 - October 15, 2021**

### CEMETERY MAINTENANCE FUND

Norm & Helen Grob's 74th Anniversary Memorial

### PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

John Nimz Memorial

### RADIO BROADCAST

Oct. 17 - In Memory of Frederick & Lela Keppler

Oct. 31 - In Memory of Bill Fellenberger

**Gifts listed were received through  
October 15, 2021**



## Totenfest Memorial Service Sunday, November 7 at 10:00 am Worship

At our Totenfest Memorial  
Service everyone will be invited to  
come forward to light a candle in  
memory of loved ones who have passed away.

In addition, we will have a special insert remembering  
all who have passed away since November 2020.

Please contact the church office by October 25 and let  
us know of any immediate family members you would  
like listed in our Totenfest Memorial insert. You may  
email the information to: [churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org).

### Also

This year, in addition to names, we would like a  
picture of your loved one. If you want a picture, other  
than the one from their obituary, please let the office  
know. Thank you.



## It's FOOTBALL SEASON

which means

**FOOTBALL PARKING** in our church lot!

You can volunteer to help at

**Sign-Up Genius** by clicking [HERE](#)

**Volunteers** are still need for the

**following Saturday home games:**

- November 6 Time TBA
- November 27 12:00 pm

Shifts begin approximately 4 hours prior to the  
start of the game. Two volunteers are needed  
per shift.



*A great fundraiser  
for Bethlehem*



## Save the Date

Hanging of the Greens  
Saturday, November 20  
at 9:00 am

## Bethlehem Youth & Young Adults

The Youth have had a busy month. Highlights include volunteering for the CROP walk, meeting Rev. Sam Kinsman, and hosting All Church Pizza and Boardgames (Did you know that we can play ping pong in the church yard?)



Well - it's kind of a board game . . . ) Special thanks to Noah for producing the CROP Walk livestream, and to both Matt and Noah for assisting as Bethlehem hosted the event. Our meet and greet with Sam Kinsman was a high energy experience complete with pizza, frisbee, limbo, and Zip Zap Zup (we'll be glad to explain if you ask!) Coming up, we will attend the Professional Young People's Theater production of "Matilda" to support our budding actress, Mira. More All Church Pizza and Boardgames are on the agenda, as well as a Halloween trip to Dexter's Blast Corn Maze.

Several Young Adults joined the group of Bethlehem members that attended the University of Michigan musical "The Wild Party."



The Youth & Young Adult Ministry Team is looking for additional members to join in planning for these important age groups. Please contact Katie if you are interested: [rowank55@gmail.com](mailto:rowank55@gmail.com)

Youth Group is also in need of a second adult on certain dates in order to be able to hold planned events and comply with Bethlehem's Safe Church Policy. Your help is truly appreciated! Sign up here: [Youth Group Second Adult](#).

### BUCCuleles

Our very own ukulele band will be starting up again for jam sessions after a fall break. We'll be meeting on Zoom, Wednesdays at 4:30PM beginning Nov. 3.

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

Meeting ID: 710 7305 8780

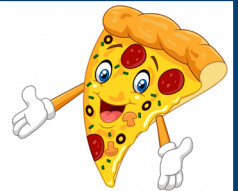
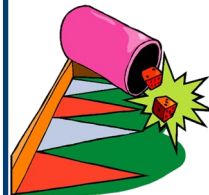
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### All Church Pizza and

**Boardgames is back!** Please join the Youth

on October 24, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm, in the church yard (or Youth Room if weather is bad.)



### Veterans Breakfast Returns

The Veterans and friend's breakfast resumed its gathering after an 18 month halt because of Covid19.

The group will meet on the first Friday of the month. Veterans and friends all welcome. Please contact Tom Ziesemer for more details.





## Get Involved with Worship!

### Volunteers Needed

We need people to serve as liturgists, sound techs, and ushers now that we are back in-person. Please contact the office or people listed below for more information:

**Liturgist:** Jennifer Vasquez,

Email: [jenniferavasquez29@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferavasquez29@gmail.com)

**Sound Tech:** Gary Rogers,

Email: [rogersg@courts.mi.gov](mailto:rogersg@courts.mi.gov)

**Usher:** Jane Schmerberg,

Email: [jmnmd@med.umich.edu](mailto:jmnmd@med.umich.edu)

We are in need of Sunday morning volunteers to work in the church office. The volunteer would need to arrive at 9:30am and stay until the service is concluded. If interested, please contact Tom Ziesemer at [ziesemertn@gmail.com](mailto:ziesemertn@gmail.com).



## Bethlehem Rebuilding Our Choir

Do you miss singing in church? Do you harmonize to the melodies everyone else sings? Join Bethlehem's choir! Please reach out to our Music Director, David Hahn at: [musicdirector@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:musicdirector@bethlehem-ucc.org) and he will provide more details about rehearsals.

## From the Bethlehem Cemetery Board



Reminder from the Cemetery Board: All remaining Spring & Summer arrangements and decorations will be removed from the cemetery November 1, 2021.

Please remember Bethlehem Cemetery when making any of your end of the year donations or RMDs/Qualified Charitable Distributions. These gifts to Bethlehem Cemetery are greatly appreciated!

Happy Thanksgiving Everyone from your Cemetery Board.

## RADIO BROADCAST SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP

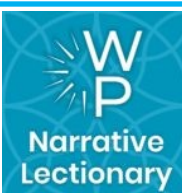


Please remember that a lot of folks count on the weekly Radio Broadcast of our 10 o'clock worship service. This program is funded by weekly radio sponsorships, memorials, and special donations.

### *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.



## Narrative Lectionary Resource

Beginning on September 12, 2021, we started utilizing the **Narrative Lectionary** for the scripture readings for upcoming worship services. Please click this [LINK](#) to connect to the Narrative Lectionary to see the scheduled readings and themes for services for the upcoming year.



November 15 is the deadline for items to be included in the December edition of the VISITOR newsletter. Please email submissions to: [churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org)

# CROP Walk 2021



The BUCC Pillamas

A big thank you to our team of volunteers at Bethlehem who helped our church host  
[Ann Arbor CROP Hunger Walk!](#)

Shout out to Tom Ziesemer, Katie Rowan, Sue Muir, Edgar and Jennifer Vasquez, Jim Stadel, Jesse Wilcox, Matt Kennedy, and Noah Bailey. Noah live-streamed the opening ceremony. Watch it on the Facebook Page for the AA Crop Walk.

Final figures for how much we raised for this year's walk are not available at the time this newsletter is printed. But we will let you know soon!

Thank you to all the walkers and contributors to this year's walk!  
["Ending Hunger One Step At A Time"](#)



**There is a role for everyone in the fight against hunger.**  
**BETHLEHEM'S FALL VOLUNTEER DAY AT FOODGATHERER'S WAREHOUSE!**

We are back on board to have a group from our congregation volunteer at 1 Carrot Way on Saturday, **November 13 from 9:30-11:30!**

Follow this simple link to sign up:

[Food Gatherers Carrot Way Sign Up](#)



## Our Core Values

- ## Our Mission

# Bethlehem United Church of Christ

## Staff, Ministry Team Chairs, and Leadership Council

**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**

**Finance:** Karen Samford  
**Facilities:** Steve Darr  
**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:** Marty Seyfried  
**Nominations Committee:** Cresson Slotten

**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**