



# The Visitor

## February 2022

### Bethlehem United Church of Christ



#### New Year

Dear Friends,

I hope this month's article finds everyone healthy and looking forward to the coming year. The past two years have been difficult for everyone, driven mostly by the non-ending and constantly changing impact of this global pandemic. COVID has caused all of us to change from what we were accustomed to, to accept new ways of doing things. The pandemic has caused a substantial amount of uncertainty in our lives. Will the grocery shelves be stocked today? Will I get COVID today? Will I remain healthy? In addition, we live in contentious times right now. Substantial divisions exist today across our country and our church family. The uncertainty of our time due to all of the stressors that bombard us daily is also expressing itself in our church family. Will I be able to worship in person? Will I want to worship in person? Will my church and church family survive?

Bethlehem, our church and church family, continues to move forward through these uncertain times. We are blessed with many wonderful people, staff, Pastor, volunteers and leaders who are working behind and in front of the scenes to help all of us take those steps forward. It is not easy to move forward and there are many ideas on what needs to be done to move forward. Over the past seven months I have had hundreds of emails, calls, and one-on-one conversations with many of you. I have not agreed with everything conveyed to me but I believe we have discussed our issues respectfully and prayerfully. In order to move forward, we must continue to embrace open, honest, and respectful conversation. We must listen to each other, offer God's Grace to each other, and if necessary, agree to disagree with each other. We are called now, more than ever, to be the Body of Christ. In becoming the Body that Christ expects of us, we can come out of this wilderness stronger and better than before we entered. This will not be easy! It cannot be done by just a few! It requires all of us to come together, to recognize our differences, to respect those differences, and to support each other regardless of those differences.

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**Deadline for the March  
Edition of the Visitor is  
Tuesday, February 15**



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[www.facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2](https://www.facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2)



## Office Hours

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

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As we move towards Lent, let's all take stock of the blessings we have. I and all of Leadership know that healing needs to happen. We have reached out to the Michigan-UCC to seek guidance and support for the Council's efforts to bring our church family closer together. The purpose is to receive suggestions and guidance that Council can use to support our Pastor, our church family, and our staff as we continue on this difficult but necessary journey together. As Council continues this process, we will share what we learn with all of you. In addition, our Council, Pastor, and team leaders have worked to improve communication. We have scheduled routine meetings between our ministry teams, Council, Pastor, and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. Much work is being planned by everyone for the remainder of this fiscal year and beyond.

It is my hope that you will find it within you to put aside differences and join your friends and church family who want to move forward together. It is time to return to worship and church activities. It is time to bless each other and in doing so we bless ourselves. It is time to offer support for the myriad of tasks that need volunteers to keep our church functional and vibrant. We have many blessings at Bethlehem, perhaps the most important is the steadfast belief in our church. We may not have a clear understanding of where we are going or how we will get there, but we do believe we will move forward, together, supported, and encouraged. We will continue to be the Body of Christ.

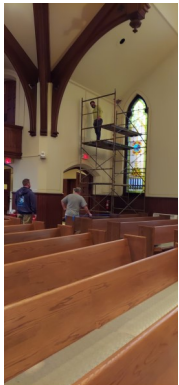
Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of my message this month. As always, I am happy to hear from you if you have questions, comments or concerns you want to share. I can be best reached via email at [rdechert@umich.edu](mailto:rdechert@umich.edu).

God Bless You All,  
Ron Dechert-President



### THANK YOU!

Thanks for all the generous donations to our Mitten Tree. Dozens of hats, gloves, scarves and socks were delivered to Peace Neighborhood Center before Christmas. There were also gifts of gloves, hats and scarves for members of Groundcover. Your contributions will keep the recipients warm this winter, and has made an impact on countless lives over the years.



**Plastering crews were out all last week repairing the ceiling and walls in and outside of the sanctuary.**



Many thanks to the following amazing people who braved the chilly weather to help pack up and store our Christmas decorations until next season.

Jim and Sallie Stadel

John Irwin

Jim and Katie Rowan

Brian Paton

Joe and Jan Eadie

It was a big job, but accomplished in a short amount of time.

Thanks again,  
Fellowship

December 2021	Year to Date	YTD Target	2020/2021 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$317,513	\$295,519	\$506,604
Expenses	\$255,685	\$311,600	\$534,171
Net	\$61,828	(\$16,081)	(\$27,567)

# OUTREACH MINISTRY PAGE

## BETHLEHEM CHURCH WILL HOST ROTATING SHELTER PROGRAM MARCH 14-20, 2022

### WHAT IS BETHLEHEM'S ROLE IN THE PROGRAM THIS YEAR?

Bethlehem Church will host approximately up to 25 men each night from March 14 to 20. Our participation is led by the Outreach Ministry Team, with the endorsement of the Leadership Council and other ministry teams. Mary Jean Raab, Sue Muir and Roy Muir are serving as co-chairs of the congregation's participation.

### HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS WILL BE NEEDED, AND WHAT WILL THEIR ROLES BE?

We will seek to enlist at least 3 or 4 host volunteers who will serve to greet/welcome the men, stay overnight, provide information on where restrooms are and other questions.

### WHAT IS OUR HISTORY IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS?

Bethlehem was a founding participant in hosting during the first year of the program in the 1980s, and continued as a host through 2017. We have committed to renew our participation for the present year.

### HOW TO REGISTER TO VOLUNTEER

During February and early March there will be regular information provided each Sunday and in our group emails.

A Sign-Up Genius will be provided to choose a date(s) to volunteer to stay overnight at the church.

Those interested or have questions, please contact:

Mary Jean Raab: [raabmj@aol.com](mailto:raabmj@aol.com) or 734-395-5589

Roy Muir: [muirmich@comcast.net](mailto:muirmich@comcast.net) or 734-604-6098

Sue Muir: [suemuir@comcast.net](mailto:suemuir@comcast.net) or 734-604-6128



## PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER DECEMBER 14, 2021



A check for \$5,000 was presented to Peace Neighborhood Center as a special gift for their 50th Anniversary Campaign. This gift from our congregation came from the McKay Community Benevolence Fund. Peace's special campaign was to raise money to strengthen their Endowment Fund, to make new long-term investments in key staff, programs and facilities and to celebrate the thousands of families they have served during its 50 years of being in our community. We are grateful for the gifts the McKays endowed to our church for community outreach. Bethlehem currently has several members who are active as supporters and volunteers at Peace including Kurt Schmerberg, who serves on its Board.

### 2021 Holiday Gifts Appeal

The Outreach Ministry Team and Education Ministry Team appealed to our congregation to fulfill holidays wishes for families at Peace Neighborhood Center, Alpha House, and Food Gatherers with contributions of gifts cards, fulfillment of Holiday Gift lists (provided by the agencies), and gifts of money. We appreciate all the members who dropped off their gifts to our agencies or made donations online.

Thank you also to the Education Ministry Team's Mitten Tree again this year. Dozens of scarves/hats/mittens/socks were gathered and given to both Peace Neighborhood Center and to Ground Cover.



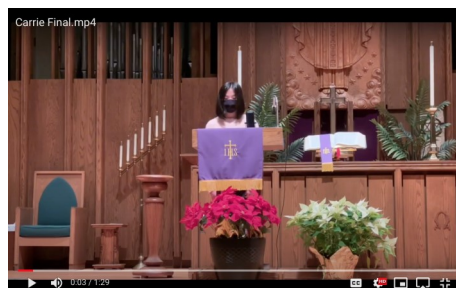
# HAPPENINGS

## Food Gatherers Volunteer Day

Bethlehem members and friends are invited to sign up for our next Food Gatherers Volunteer Day Saturday, February 19, 9:30 - 11:30 AM at the warehouse at 1 Carrot Way. To sign up use this easy link [Food Gatherers Volunteer Day](#)

## Youth at Bethlehem

Many thanks to Carrie Schwartz, Noah Bailey, and Mira Authier for their participation via video in the 5PM Christmas Eve Service. Thanks also to Jim Rowan for coordinating the video performance of Silent Night with flute and handbell accompaniment, and to Jennifer Vasquez and the sound team for their technical assistance.



- MARK THIS ON YOUR CALENDAR**
- Mondays, Hand bell Rehearsal 6:00-7:00 pm, Sanctuary
  - Tuesdays, Roundtable Pulpit 12:00-1:30 pm via ZOOM
  - Wednesdays, 4:30 PM BUCCuleles via [ZOOM](#)
  - Thursdays, Youth Group, 6:30 - 8 pm Youth RM
  - 2/4 Veterans & Friends Breakfast, 8:30 am Alpha Restaurant
  - 2/6 Food Gatherers Volunteer day 12:00-2:30 pm, Delonis Center
  - 2/8 Facilities Team Mtg. 3:30-4:30 pm, Lounge
  - Cemetery Board Mt. 4:00 pm, Cemetery
  - 2/15 Worship Team 5:30 pm via ZOOM
  - 2/16 Member Care Mtg. 4:00 pm via ZOOM
  - 2/17 Virtual Finance Mtg. 7:00 pm
  - 2/19 Food Gathers Volunteer Day, 9:30-11:30 am 1 Carrot Way, Ann Arbor
  - 2/24 Worship at Brecon Village 10:00 am
  - Leadership Council Mtg. 4:30 via ZOOM

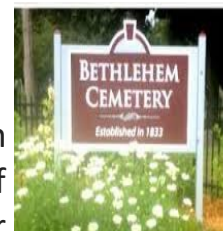


## Roundtable Pulpit

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.

## From the Bethlehem Cemetery Board

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!



## Bethlehem Veterans' & Friends Monthly Breakfast

Friday, January 7  
at 8:30 am

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

Questions? Contact Tom Ziesemer  
Email: [ziesemertn@gmail.com](mailto:ziesemertn@gmail.com)

**BUCCuleles**

Our very own ukulele band has started up again for jam sessions. We'll be meeting on Zoom, Wednesdays at 4:30PM.



<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71073058780?pwd=bHBSbzdKNTBqTkFSWEN3b2hUL1IwUT09>

Meeting ID: 710 7305 8780

Passcode: X7E1dG

**Memorials and Gifts****Gifts Received from**

**December 16, 2021—January 15, 2022**

**BETHLEHEM CEMETERY MAINTENANCE FUND**

Fathers, Mothers, Grandfathers & Grandmothers Memorial  
Norma & Conrad Foster Honorarium

**BUILDING IMPROVEMENT**

Betty Diuble Memorial

**GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND**

Brian Balliet Memorial  
Gertie Fischer Memorial

**PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND**

Gertie Fischer Memorial

**OUTREACH FUND**

Mary Ford Memorial

**SUNDAY SCHOOL FUND**

Sarah Kennedy UM Graduation Honorarium

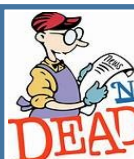
**RADIO SPONSORSHIP**

December 19—In Memory of Gary Hentz

**Gifts listed were received through  
January 15, 2022**



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.



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

**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](tel:734-665-6149).**
- 3. You can even donate online at [bethlehem-ucc.org](http://bethlehem-ucc.org).**
- 4. Tell the office how you want your sponsorship listed in the bulletin and read on-air.**

**OUR FOOD BARREL IS HUNGRY**

Our Food Gatherers barrel for nonperishables is located in the library. Please remember to gather extras each time you shop. Items most in need are soup, canned meat or vegetables, pasta, beans, rice, cereal, granola bars, peanut butter, jelly, baby food, formula, diapers, and toiletries. **\*\*\*PLEASE NO GLASS CONTAINERS\*\*\***





## 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**