

# The Visitor

## October 2022

### Bethlehem United Church of Christ

#### A Message from

#### Conference Minister, The Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel

#### Post-Covid Church Conflict Got You Down?



Is your church experiencing some conflict? If so, you are not alone. As I visit churches across Michigan and talk to leaders across the country and other denominations, I hear it. Churches with long, steady past pastorates are now at odds with a pastor, who suddenly can do nothing right. Churches who already have histories of struggle have seen their normal level of tension increase exponentially. Why?

First, I don't think there is anything weird or wrong with our churches. After preaching and worshiping over eleven Sundays at thirteen churches across the state, I am inspired by the creativity and courage I see. But the Church, like the rest of society, is still processing the trauma of the last two years of Covid and the growing realization that we can not simply go back in time, institutionally. When we do come back to worship in person and see some empty seats, it's only natural that we miss the people who have not returned. Even happy churches can get grumpy about "why everyone isn't back yet," and start to ask "who is to blame."

But if you wonder if some mythical church down the road is packed, let me tell you, the return is slow across denominations and across the nation. Families with children, stressed to the max during Covid, are the slowest to return to church and both the mega church and the tiny church are feeling it. If you are getting 30% of your previous in person attendance, that is normal. If you are getting 50%, I'd call that a victory. And if your church is a little cranky, give yourself and each other some extra Christian kindness.

Celebrate the people you see in person, rather than using the time to point out who is not there. Give thanks to God for the online participants we never had before Covid, and for the old friends we get to keep in touch with. Please do not shut down your worship videos or stop streaming! It would be the equivalent of locking your door on a Sunday morning. Multiple points of entry, in person or online, are how we show hospitality to the strangers sticking a virtual toe in the water and to the old friends who are out of the habit of showing up.

Consider how important your words and spirit are in worship. If your online worshipers hear announcements begging or shaming them for missing church, you have just negated the hospitality you provided by sharing your worship service online in the first place. Even worse, if what people hear about your church is tedious conflict, and if your church gives a disproportionately large amount of time to a small group of negative people, you have just confirmed your online worshiper's decision to stay away or on the sidelines. This is no time for churches to be feuding, with the people who show up, or with those who don't. Because these days, the whole world really is watching.

For those of you who are physically together, I hope you can truly celebrate the gift of getting to see someone face to face, which, in our ancient Christian tradition, is truly the image of God. That person you see made a great effort to be there, perhaps for the first time in years. Perhaps that person is you. Embrace each personal connection as the gift it is, and then turn your attention to Jesus, who shows up no matter the numbers, no matter the format, wherever you are on life's journey.

As for me, as your new circuit riding Conference Minister, when I get installed on Sunday, October 23 in person in East Lansing and online, I'm going to be grateful to God for every person there - in person, in spirit or in the mighty cloud of witnesses who have gone before us. We are not alone and we never have been.

Peace and Blessings,  
The Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel, Michigan Conference Minister

# BUCC HAPPENINGS



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Sundays, Worship Service in-person and via live stream and radio broadcast (WAAM 1600 am) 10:00 am

### OCTOBER

- October 2—Worship Ministry Team, Schmale Lounge, 11:30 am
- October 2—Food Gatherers Volunteer Day, Delonis Center, 12:00 noon
- October 3—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- October 5—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- October 5—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm
- October 7—BUCC Vets and Friends, Alpha Restaurant, 8:30 am
- October 9—CROP WALK, Zion Lutheran Church, 1:00 pm
- October 10—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- October 11—Facilities Ministry Team, Schmale Lounge, 3:30 pm
- October 12—Cemetery Board Meeting, Cemetery, 9:30 am
- October 12—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- October 12—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm
- October 13—Bethlehem Ladies Breakfast, Lake Forest Golf Club, 9:00 am

- October 15—U of M Football Parking, BUCC, time TBA
- October 16—Youth Group, Youth Room, 11:30 am
- October 16—LMPC Healing Session, Fellowship Hall, 12:00 noon
- October 17—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- October 18—Worship Team, ZOOM, 5:30 pm
- October 19—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- October 19—Member Care Meeting, Schmale Lounge, 4:00 pm
- October 19—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm
- October 20—Finance Ministry Meeting, Virtual, 7:00 pm
- October 24—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- October 26—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- October 27—Leadership Council, Schmale Lounge, 6:00 pm
- October 29—U of M Football Parking, BUCC, time TBA
- October 30—Youth Group, Youth Room, 11:30 am
- October 31—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm

# THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR DIANE

Hello Bethlehem, it's good to be back. I am humbled and honored to be your new Associate Minister for Pastoral Care. Many of you may be wondering what that title means and what I will be doing? The following is straight out of my job description:

## ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Make hospital visits, home visits for elderly and shut-ins, and visit any identified by the member care team.
- Preach in the absence of the Senior Pastor and at least once every other month.
- Support the Senior Pastor in worship (prayer, communion, liturgist) and with projects as needed.
- Assist in the development and facilitation of educational endeavors with Director of Spiritual Growth and Formation and the Senior Pastor.
- Become a Stephen Minister Leader and assist in Stephen Ministry coordination.
- Attend and offer guidance to ministry teams as appropriate (worship, member care, welcoming, and others as needed), attend regular staff meetings, and attend other meetings as requested by the Senior Pastor
- Attend meetings as requested by the Senior Pastor.
- Officiate at funerals, weddings, and baptisms as requested.
- Write a monthly article for the Visitor publication and a yearly report for the annual meeting.

To put it in plain words, "I am here for you." Having been a member of BUCC since I was 10 years old, I look forward to renewing friendships and meeting those I've not met yet. Please contact me if I am able to serve you – all of my information is in the church directory (use only my cell number if calling). I look forward to being the church with you and I cherish this opportunity.

Blessings,  
Pastor Diane  
Rev. Diane White



# BUCC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL NEWS

Dear Bethlehem Members,

I am writing to request that members planning on attending the Lombard Healing Session being held on **October 16, 2022** to please register in advance. The session will be **12-5pm in the Fellowship Hall**. Given the time of this session, I will order a light lunch (11:30-12:00) for those who attend so advance registration would be very helpful for planning of the food order.

**To register you can call the church office or send me an email ([rdechert@umich.edu](mailto:rdechert@umich.edu)).**

If you know of someone who does not receive our church electronic messages, please reach out to invite them to attend. Every member of Bethlehem, regardless if you participated in a small listening group discussion, is invited and encouraged to attend this next session.

Healing is needed for everyone in our congregation. This session is very important to the process put forth by Lombard Peace Center. Please consider being a part of this session. Your attendance is very important.

On a side note, the interim report from Lombard was expected to be sent yesterday. Devon Miller (Lombard) has been a little delayed in completing this interim report due to a medical emergency in his family. I expect we will receive the report by the end of next week.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue our healing journey together.

God Loves Us All,  
Ron Dechert-President



# BUCC OUTREACH

## Outreach Ministry Team - Bethlehem United Church of Christ

### Peace Neighborhood Center



On August 26, Peace had a great back-to-school night with 68 young students and their parents attending for the After-School Program Orientation and Registration. Each student also picked up their new fully stocked backpacks! A free Covid-19 Clinic was also provided.

### Alpha House



Bethlehem provided a Sunday evening meal to Alpha House residents on August 28. Thank you to the following volunteers who made this meal possible: **Kathy Warner, Mary Lutz, Jacquie Katz, Laura Seyfried, Katie Rowan, Julie Feldkamp.**



**Ann Arbor CROP Walk 2022**  
**October 9 –**  
**beginning at**  
**1:30pm**  
**Zion Lutheran Church**  
**Join or contribute to the Bethlehem Team**

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2022/team/bethlehem-united-church-of-christ>

**Leave a check at church or contribute on the church website**  
<https://bethlehem-ucc.org>

### THE WOMEN OF BETHLEHEM'S BOARD HAVE MADE A \$5,000 CONTRIBUTION TO BETHLEHEM'S UKRAINIAN FUND.



**We challenge the congregation to match the \$5,000 in order to raise \$10,000 or more for this important outreach need.**

**Donate online on our church website's Ukraine Crisis Fund:**  
[www.bethlehem-ucc.org](http://www.bethlehem-ucc.org)

**Checks are also welcome made out to Bethlehem United Church of Christ.**



# BUCC OUTREACH

## 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\*\*\***



## Food Gatherers Volunteer Day

All Bethlehem members are invited to join the Food Gatherers Volunteer Day, at the Delonis Center, on **Sunday, October 2 at 12:00 noon**. Looking forward to seeing you there!



## Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Day



On Saturday, September 10th, a group of volunteers from Bethlehem (**Larisa Jaskiewicz, Jamie Raab, Ellie Vasquez, Jennifer Vasquez, Diane White, and Jesse Wilcox**) worked on a Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley build at 1104 Parkwood Ave in Ypsilanti. Along with our Site Supervisor Steve and Volunteer Leader Dale, we mainly did interior painting. We also helped frame a shed. Katie Rowan (and Balto) stopped by with a delicious and nourishing lunch, which was much appreciated fuel for the second half of the day!



Over the past several weeks, we had been collecting money from the congregation to personally deliver to Habitat at our build date. Most of this money came from free will offering at three mini bake sales (**baked goods courtesy of Vicki Hoxie, Larisa Jaskiewicz, Eileen Koprowski, Jamie Raab, Katie Rowan, Ellie Vasquez, and Jennifer Vasquez**) that we hosted after a few church services. We were able to hand a check to Habitat for **\$1336**, surpassing our fundraising goal! Plus, according to Habitat, each volunteer saves them about \$25/hour. Thank you as always, Bethlehem members, for your generosity!

# BUCC FAMILY

**September 11th—Children's Moment before Sunday School and Children's Sunday School are back in session!** It's exciting to see children's ministry starting back up. Please pray for the teachers and these little ones as they hear about God's love for them.



## August 28th—New members and baptism



On August 28th, Bethlehem UCC welcomed the **Ryan and Ashley**



**Bavery** as new members. **Julian Bavery** was baptised as well! Older brother **Christopher** also was on hand to witness the baptism. Please join in and welcome the

Bavery family into the BUCC family!

## Choir and Associate Pastor—New (and familiar) Faces



It's wonderful to see the choir up front singing again after summer's break. **Naki Kripfgans** has begun her ministry as Director of Music Ministries. Thank you for bringing your gifts to our worship services.

**Rev. Diane White** has joined the ministry team as well as our new Associate Pastor of Pastoral Ministry. Some of her ministry focus will be on visitations, preaching in the absence of Pastor John and assisting in the development and facilitation of educational endeavors.



## CONGREGATIONAL SING-ALONG

Thank-you to Angie, Katie and Gayle for the **GREAT** Congregational Sing-Along on August 28th. It was a wonderful time of music and fellowship and hopefully we can do it again in the very near future!





# BUCC FELLOWSHIP

## Welcome Back Youth Group!

All Bethlehem Youth, 6th grade through high school, are invited to Youth Group! We will meet on Sundays, 1130 am—1:00 pm, every other week beginning in October. Here are our October Youth Group meeting dates:

October 2

October 16

October 30



Looking forward to seeing all of our youth in October!

## BUCCuleles News

Stay tuned!!!! BUCCuleles will be starting back up in OCTOER. Details will be announced in the near future!

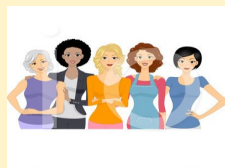
If you have any questions, please let Katie know: [rowank55@gmail.com](mailto:rowank55@gmail.com)



## ATTENTION LADIES!!!

The next ladies breakfast gathering is scheduled for Thursday, October 13th at 9:00 am at Lake Forest Golf Club.

Come and be part of the talk, laughs, and fun of this get together. ALL Bethlehem ladies are welcome!



For more information and to RSVP, please contact Susan Irwin at 734-255-5661 or [siirwin46@gmail.com](mailto:siirwin46@gmail.com).

UM FOOTBALL GAME Volunteers are needed to sell parking spots on home football Saturdays.

This is a terrific fundraiser for our church and we hope you can donate some of your time to help. Please follow this [link](#) or the QR Code to access the online sign-up page for the following dates.



Some game times have not been announced yet, but we will keep it updated as we get more information. You may also contact the church office (add phone #) or Jennifer Vasquez (734-658-6692) to sign-up.



For every volunteer shift, your name will be entered in a drawing for one of two hand knit maize and blue wool headbands made by Jennifer Vasquez.

Oct 15

Game Time: TBD

Volunteer Slot: TBD (game time not announced yet)

Oct 29

Game Time: TBD

Volunteer Slot: TBD (game time not announced yet)

Nov 12

Game Time: TBD



## Bethlehem Veterans & Friends Monthly Breakfast

Friday, October 7, 8:30 am  
Alpha Restaurant,  
4389 Jackson Rd.

*Questions? Contact Tom Ziesemer*



# BUCC MISCELLANEOUS

Do you enjoy watching the church service online, either on Sunday mornings or later in the week? We are so happy to bring that service to you. However, in order to continue that service, we do need more financial sponsors to keep us going. Please consider a donation to Bethlehem's Video Fund when sending in your pledge or weekly offerings. You can mark your donation to indicate the amount you would like to contribute specifically to the Video Fund. Thank you so much for supporting us!



## IN CASE YOU WERE *wondering...*

- ⇒ Prayer cards are collected during the 2nd hymn.
- ⇒ Don't forget to sign the pew register.
- ⇒ If you would like to be put on the Prayer Chain, please contact the church office at ([churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org)).
- ⇒ If you have a more urgent need, please call Pastor John on his cell phone, which is listed in the church directory.



Upper Room Booklets are once again available for pick up in the wall rack at the 5th Avenue entrance. If you would like to help offset the cost of the booklets, please place your donation in the offering basket. Envelopes available in the wall rack with the Upper Room books. If you are unable to attend worship services and would like a copy of the Upper Room mailed, please contact the church office.

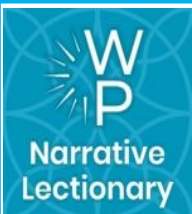


## MEETING MINUTES

Minutes from all Ministry Team Meetings are due to Gwen by the 1st of every month at:

**[gwenda\\_mayes@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:gwenda_mayes@bethlehem-ucc.org)**

Thank you all for your service to our church community.



## 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.

## REMINDER!!!



**October 15th** is the deadline for items to be included in the **November** edition of the VISITOR newsletter.

Please email submissions to:

[deb\\_ventura@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:deb_ventura@bethlehem-ucc.org)

## HAVE YOU SPONSORED A RADIO BROADCAST LATELY?

A sponsorship is a great way to honor or remember a special person, a special day, or a special event.

A sponsorship is \$230 and is read on the radio and printed in the weekly bulletin and monthly Visitor newsletter. In addition, general donations of any amount are appreciated. A sign up is located near the office or at [SignUpGenius.com](http://SignUpGenius.com).

**Radio  
Ministry**



We are 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.



Pastor John is in the office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday each week from 10:00 am—2:00 pm.

Pastor Diane is in the office primarily on Wednesdays and by appointment on other days.

Please contact Debbie by calling 734-665-6149, ext 212 or by emailing [deb\\_ventura@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:deb_ventura@bethlehem-ucc.org) if you would like to schedule an appointment.



## Memorials and Gifts Gifts Received Memorials and Gifts Gifts Received September 2022 – PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND Matilda O'Reilly Memorial

### Gifts listed were received through September 30, 2022



## FAITH AND FAMILY NIGHT

### WHEN

- Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup> @ 7 PM
- Doors open at 5:15 PM

### TICKET PRICE

- \$12/person for game ticket
- Parking included

### INCLUDES

- Special Guest testimonial pregame at 5:30 PM

### TO PURCHASE

Visit: [usahockeyntdp.com/faith](http://usahockeyntdp.com/faith)  
Use promo code: FAITH



### FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Erika Hansen | 734.453.0818 | [erika.hansen@usahockey.org](mailto:erika.hansen@usahockey.org)  
USA Hockey Arena | 14900 Beck Road | Plymouth, MI 48170

## 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.



**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

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

## Staff E-Mail Addresses

The following is a list of our current staff at Bethlehem and their email addresses. Please utilize these email addresses for all communications.

**John Kennedy** Pastor  
 pastorjohn@bethlehem-ucc.org  
**Diane White** Associate Pastor of Pastoral Ministry  
 pastordiane@bethlehem-ucc.org  
**Naki Kripfgans** Dir. of Music Ministry  
 musicdirector@Bethlehem-ucc.org  
**Gail Jennings** Organist  
 gailpiano@yahoo.com  
**Jim Rowan** Hand Bell Director  
 jrowan@umich.edu  
**Gwenda Mayes** Office Supervisor  
 gwenda\_mayes@bethlehem-ucc.org  
**Debbie Ventura** Admin. Assistant to Pastor  
 deb\_ventura@bethlehem-ucc.org

## 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: Tom Krell	President: Ron Dechert
Assoc. Pastor: Diane White	Facilities: Steve Darr	Vice President: Jim Rowan
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Orval L.E. Willimann	Education: Eileen Koprowski	Secretary: P.J. Lindemann
Office Supervisor: Gwenda Mayes	Worship: Jennifer Vasquez	Treasurer: Pete Hendershot
Administrative Assistant: Debbie Ventura	Member Care: Beth Wenner (co-chair) Karen Kennedy (co-chair)	At-Large Members:
Director of Music: Naki Kripfgans	Welcome: Jane Schmerberg	Dindy Haab
Organist: Gail Jennings	Outreach: Sue Muir/Roy Muir	Pat Huibregtse
Director of Handbells: Jim Rowan	Fellowship:	Barbara Schenk
Video Director: Dan Blakeney	Youth & Young Adult: Katie Rowan	Ex Officio: Rev. John Kennedy
Maintenance Personnel: Bill Hustead	Bethlehem Cemetery: Sue Buday	
	Nominations Committee: Cresson Slotten	

