

The Visitor

December 2022
Bethlehem United Church of Christ

“Wait Upon the Lord”

During Advent we will be using a series called, “Wait Upon the Lord.”

The season of Advent is characterized by waiting—waiting upon the Lord for the Lord’s presence to be revealed to us on Christmas. In this worship series for Advent, we look back in Scripture at those who waited upon the Lord for the Lord’s promises to come to pass through the Christ Child. We also look forward, contemplating how we should wait upon the Lord in this present moment of our lives, as God continues to make God’s self known to us. Let us wait upon the Lord together in worship.

- Week 1 • Wait Upon the Lord with Faith (Galatians 3:8):** Abraham and Sarah waited with faith for the birth of their son, Isaac, and we wait with faith for the birth of God’s Son, Jesus, trusting that he will come at Christmas to save all people.
- Week 2 • Wait Upon the Lord with Hope (Psalm 130:5):** The prophet Isaiah declared the coming of the Lord, which gave the people of Israel hope for the future. We wait with hope for the future because we know what the future holds—a Savior.
- Week 3 • Wait Upon the Lord with Rejoicing (Isaiah 25:9):** Elizabeth rejoiced as she waited for the coming of her son, John the Baptist. And Mary rejoiced as she waited for the birth of her son, Jesus. In the same manner we rejoice as we wait for the coming of the Son of God.
- Week 4 • Wait Upon the Lord with Gratitude (Psalm 9:1):** Zechariah’s waiting days for John the Baptist’s birth were filled with great gratitude for the Lord’s promise about to be fulfilled. In these remaining waiting days before our Savior’s birth, we are ever more grateful for the arrival of the Promised One.

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Diane



*From the
Pastor*

BUCC HAPPENINGS



In This Issue

From the Pastor	Page 1	Youth at Bethlehem	Page 8
BUCC Happenings	Page 2	Installation of Pastor Diane	Page 9
BUCC Leadership Council News	Page 3	Football Parking	Page 10
BUCC Outreach	Page 4	Congregational Sing-A-Long	Page 10
Hanging of the Greens	Page 5	Memorials and Gifts	Page 11
Christmas Wreaths	Page 5	Qualified Charitable Distributions	Page 11
Totenfest	Page 5		
Thanksgiving	Page 6		
BUCC Women's Breakfast	Page 7		
BUCC Veterans Breakfast	Page 7		
BUCCUeles	Page 7		

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

DECEMBER

- December 1—Leadership Council, Schmale Lounge, 6:00 pm
- December 2—Bethlehem Veterans & Friends Monthly Breakfast, Alpha Restaurant, 8:30 am
- December 4—Worship Team, Library, 11:00 am
- December 4—Advent Workshop, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am
- December 4—Youth Group, Youth Room, 11:30 am
- December 5—BUCCuleles Practice, Choir Room, 1:00 pm
- December 5—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- December 7—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- December 7—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm
- December 11—Congregational "Sing-A-Long," Sanctuary, 11:15 am
- December 12—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- December 13—Bethlehem Ladies Breakfast, Alpha Coney, 9:30 am
- December 13—Facilities Ministry Team, Schmale Lounge, 3:30 pm
- December 14—Cemetery Board, Cemetery, 9:30 am

- December 14—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- December 14—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm
- December 15—Finance Ministry Team, Virtual, 7:00 pm
- December 18—Congregational "Sing-A-Long," Sanctuary, 11:15 am
- December 18—Youth Group, Youth Room, 11:30 am
- December 19—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- December 21—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- December 21—Member Care Meeting, Schmale Lounge, 4:00 pm
- December 21—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm
- December 22—Worship at Brecon Village, 10:00 am
- December 22—Leadership Council, Schmale Lounge, 6:00 pm
- December 23—Christmas Eve Brass Ensemble Rehearsal, Sanctuary, 9:00 am
- December 24—Christmas Eve Service, Sanctuary, 5:00 pm and 7:30 pm
- December 26—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- December 28—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- December 28—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm

BUCC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL NEWS

Dear Members and Friends,

I started thinking the other day about the current state of Bethlehem. For some reason, my thoughts turned to a question of how do Tsunamis form? Every Tsunami starts with a ripple but not every ripple becomes a Tsunami. So what is it that transforms that small ripple into a giant wave? Any ideas? Energy! Tsunamis form from a sudden release of tremendous energy, pushing the ripple up and forward, pulling more water into the growing wave, increasing in size and speed.

What does a Tsunami have to do with Bethlehem? Good question. As I observe our congregation and the current state of Bethlehem, it appears that not much is going on. Look closer. Across the calm surface we call Bethlehem, there are many ripples. Our Education ministry team has resumed Sunday School. It is a joy and blessing to see young children in our Pre-School room and to have Pastor Diane share each week with these young children during our service. Our Facilities ministry team has done a phenomenal job of addressing the needs of our buildings. This effort is paying dividends as our church building is being used more now than it has been in the past three years. There is an increased volunteer presence in the office and volunteers continue to show up to assist with planned events. Our Youth group has started fall meetings and events. Our average weekly in-person attendance has increased while continuing to have a solid audience viewing our live streaming. Our Music ministry continues to inspire me each week with their many wonderful talents. Our Outreach ministry team continues much needed and appreciated work to support our local community agencies. Outreach continues to monitor events going on globally and seeks Bethlehem support for those areas as well. The volunteers who support our weekly services through assisting with the sound board, live streaming, ushering, bell ringing, opening and closing the building, money counting, fellowship preparation, and numerous other activities cannot be overlooked. All of the other ministry teams (Worship, Finance, Member Care, Welcome, Cemetery, Nominations, Council) and our church staff bring their energy to Bethlehem (daily, weekly or monthly) in support of this wave.

If you take a moment to look around, you will see ripples spreading across Bethlehem. What do we need to do to change any of those ripples into our own Tsunami? We need energy! We need whatever energy and support you can contribute to help these ripples build into a larger and larger wave. You can provide needed energy by seeking to volunteer in any number of ways. You also provide energy simply by joining your friends in service each week.

We have many challenges in front of us. With your energy and support, we will face those challenges and rise above. It is time for Bethlehem to start to celebrate the wonderful people who are part of our church family. We need to celebrate all of the truly special things we have at Bethlehem.

As we get ready for this Holy season, CELEBRATE. Rejoice in the gifts and blessings that God bestows on each of us. Share your celebrations with those around you, share your energy with everyone. Push the waves of God's blessing up and out. Help Bethlehem become the Tsunami of God's love, here in Ann Arbor, Michigan. If you would like to volunteer to help with any of the activities at Bethlehem, please contact the church office, a Council member, or me directly (rdechert@umich.edu).

God Bless You All,

Ron Dechert-President

BUCC OUTREACH

It's that time of the year when we begin thinking of ways our congregation can "reach out" to our local agencies to help children and families during the Holiday Season. OUTREACH MINISTRY, YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS, and EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAMS are joining together this year to promote these appeals that you can access online.

Peace Neighborhood Center



Over the past 50 years, PNC has provided critical services and opportunities to more than 16,000 people. Opportunities to help this year are:

- *Amazon Wish List
- *Gift Cards

Please visit their website to find out how you can make a difference in the lives of the children and families that are part of the Peace Family.

[PNC Link](#)

Alpha House



Alpha House Shelters between 50-60 families each year. During the holidays, they plan to offer these opportunities to help out:

- *Gift Cards
- *Shelter Needs
- *Blessing Basket Items

Please visit the link below to find out how you can help.

Persons interested in "Adopt a Family 2022" need to contact:

Zach Crutchfield
zcruthfield@alphahouse-ihn.org

[Alpha House Link](#)

Food Gatherers



Food Gatherers continues to need donations of money and food to help access affordable, healthy food for Washtenaw County.

Last year Food Gatherers distributed 7.3 million pounds of food—the equivalent of 6 million meals—through their network of partner programs.

Our gifts of food and money can help eliminate hunger in Washtenaw County.

Use the link below for financial contributions.

Also, canned foods can be put in the Food Barrel at the church.

[Food Gatherers](#)

BUCC FAMILY

Many thanks to the "Decorating for Doughnuts" crew who helped make our church look amazing for the Christmas Season:

- John Irwin
- Tom Ziesemer
- Jim & Katie Rowan
- Pam Widmayer
- Ron & Alice Dechert
- Teresa Beagle
- Edgar & Jennifer Vasquez
- Pastor Diane
- Goesta Shindler
- Joe & Jan Eadie



CHRISTMAS WREATHS

The time is coming to green up the church with beautiful Christmas Wreaths! You can purchase one in memory of/or in honor of a loved one.

Look for forms that will be on the bulletin board outside the office with envelopes for payment soon.



Small wreaths: \$25

Large wreaths are \$30

November 6, 2022

Jotenfest

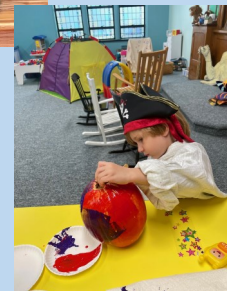


BUCC FAMILY

THANKSGIVING



Halloween



Many thanks to the "Decorating for doughnuts" crew who helped make our church look amazing for the Christmas Season! Your time and talents are appreciated!

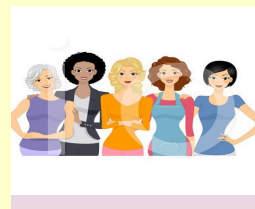
- John Irwin
- Tom Ziesemer
- Jim & Katie Rowan
- Pam Widmayer
- Ron & Alice Dechert
- Teresa Beagle
- Edgar & Jennifer Vasquez
- Pastor Diane
- Goesta Shindler
- Joe & Jan Eadie

BUCC FELLOWSHIP

Bethlehem Women's Monthly Breakfast

Changes in location, day of the week and time of our gatherings!

The Bethlehem Women's Breakfast Group is meeting at the Alpha Koney Restaurant (previously the Classic Cup), 4389 Jackson Road, at 9:30 am. Each of us will order directly from the restaurant menu and be charged separately. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 9:30 am at Alpha Koney.



Upcoming dates are December 13th, and January 10th.

All Bethlehem ladies are welcome! PLEASE pass this information on to others. Come and part of the talk, laughs, and fun of this get together.

For more information and to RSVP, please contact Susan Irwin at 734-255-5661 or siirwin46@gmail.com. We hope to see you there!

be



HOMEBOUND FRIENDS

We have many dear friends who remain home-bound and they would love to see you and/or hear from you.

If you would like names and contact information, please reach out to Pastor Diane who can share that with you.



Bethlehem Veterans & Friends Monthly Breakfast

Friday, December 2nd, 8:30 am
Alpha Restaurant,
4389 Jackson Rd.

Questions? Contact Tom Zieseimer

BUCCuleles

We will be practicing for the upcoming Congregational Sing-A-Long scheduled for Sundays, December 11th and 18th immediately following the 10:00 am service.

Please join us if you play guitar or ukulele:

Monday, Dec. 5, 1PM, Choir Room



BUCC FELLOWSHIP

Youth at Bethlehem

Youth Group has had a fun start to the year with an outing to Putterz mini golf, a Halloween themed scavenger hunt downtown, and a Halloween movie in the Bethlehem screening room. We also participated in the CROP walk.

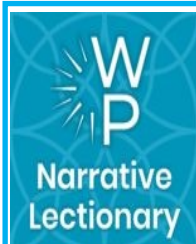
All Youth grades 6 - 12 are invited to join for our upcoming meetings which are held Sundays, 11:30 - 1:00 in the Youth Room:

Dec. 4

Dec. 18



BUCC MISCELLANEOUS



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.



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

Thank you all for your service to our church community.

REMINDER!!!



December 16th is the deadline for items to be included in the **December** edition of the VISITOR newsletter.

Please email submissions to:

deb_ventura@bethlehem-ucc.org

INSTALLATION OF PASTOR DIANE



Dear Bethlehem Church family,

I was overwhelmed by all who came to my Service of Installation on November 13. Thank you for attending, participating and holding me in prayer (we all need them). I want to thank all who helped to make afternoon special. So many people were involved with the event; however, I want to lift up Jim Rowan for his kind words, Judy Coucouvanis for her willingness to read, Dan Blakeney for streaming the service (so my mom in Marquette could be present), Gary Rogers for making sure everyone could hear what was happening, our amazing choir and Naki and Gail, (our guests were very impressed with the music) and Barb and Paul Marshall for planning the reception after the service. I appreciate the efforts of all who ushered, helped in the kitchen, produced the bulletin and served in any other way that I may have missed. Bless you all and thank you.

Peace and Love,
Diane

Thank You, Football Parkers!

Text: Thank you to the team of volunteers and office staff for supporting the football parking fundraiser at BUCC. **Due to your efforts, we raised over \$6,000!** We worked in all kinds of weather, including late summer, breezy fall temps, rain, and even some snowflakes, but we extended hospitality to over 200 people. We introduced season passes for the first time in many years, sold to eight grateful customers. Next year, we hope to increase that number to about 15 season passes, leaving the rest for first come, first served availability.



I could not have managed the administrative or financial side of this effort without the support of our office staff. Debbie Ventura managed our sign-up genius list and articles in the Refrigerator Page and Visitor. Gwenda Mayes worked with me this summer to plan out the details of the season passes, set up the cash box, and keep track of our monies each week. Our Maintenance Team Member Bill Hustead re-painted one of our parking signs to make it easier to read by passing motorists.

Our team of volunteers showed up several hours before game time to staff the lot and welcome our visitors with a cheery smile, clean restrooms, and directional assistance. We negotiated a number of requests from our regular parkers who have strong and diverse opinions on season passes and "holding spots" for friends. While this is a successful fundraiser for our church, it is also a way to connect with the community; even the neighbors across the street parked their family and friends with us for the MSU home game. Thank you to everyone who made this such a success for our church. I hope more of you will consider volunteering next year. It's a fun way to provide a respite from the competitive parking on home football Saturdays and to see many of the same faces come back to park with us year after year.



As an incentive to our volunteers this Fall, I offered to raffle off two hand knit headbands in maize and blue. The drawing was held on Sunday, November 20, and the two winners are: **Alice Dechert and Katie Rowan**. Congratulations and I hope you stay warm this winter!

2022 Parking Volunteers: Ron & Alice Dechert, Jim & Katie Rowan, Jan Eadie, Edgar & Ellie Vasquez, Eleanore Sculati, Oliver Kripfgans, and Kurt Schmerberg. Thank you for making this one of the best volunteer jobs at church!

--Jennifer Vasquez

Congregational Sing-Along

Come one, come all! On December 11th and 18th, directly following the service, please gather at the front of the sanctuary for a time of singing Christmas carols, favorite hymns and well-known popular songs. Absolutely no skill is required! Song sheets will be provided!



It's all about having a good time in music and fellowship!



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 or leave a message at the church office (734) 665-6149 and someone will get back with you.

Memorials and Gifts

Gifts Received October 15, 2022 - November 15, 2022

CURRENT FUND

Brock Foster and Nicole Roser Marriage Honorary

PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

John O'Reilly Memorial

SOCK AND MITTEN TREE FUND

Ms S Petersen Memorial

GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

John William Fischer

Radio Sponsorship

As 2022 comes to a close, please remember that any Qualified Charitable Distributions from your IRA needs to be received by the Church Office no later than **Friday, December 30, 2022**. Thank you very much for considering Bethlehem UCC in your year-end giving. We are truly grateful. Wishing you Christmas Blessings and a Joyous New Year!



There are many opportunities for you to donate flowers yet this year to beautify the sanctuary. If you are interested, please sign up either on the board in the hallway in front of the office or by SignUp Genius. If you have questions, please contact Gwen Mayes (gwen_mayes@bethlehem-ucc.org)

October, 2022	Year to Date	YTD Target	22 /23 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$121,170	\$166,675	\$400,020
Expenses	\$175,044	\$222,553	\$534,128
Net	(\$53,874)	(\$55,878)	(\$134,108)



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
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	
Aimee Winchester	Administrative Assistant
churchoffice@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

STAFF

Pastor: Rev. John Kennedy
 Assoc. Pastor: Diane White
 Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Orval L.E. Willimann
 Office Supervisor: Gwenda Mayes
 Administrative Assistant: Aimee Winchester
 Director of Music: Naki Kripfgans
 Organist: Gail Jennings
 Director of Handbells: Jim Rowan
 Video Director: Dan Blakeney
 Maintenance Personnel: Bill Hustead

MINISTRY TEAM CHAIRS

Finance: Tom Krell
 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:
 Youth & Young Adult: Katie Rowan
 Bethlehem Cemetery: Sue Buday
 Nominations Committee: Cresson Slotten

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

President: Ron Dechert
 Vice President: Jim Rowan
 Secretary: P.J. Lindemann
 Treasurer: Pete Hendershot
 At-Large Members:
 Dindy Haab
 Pat Huibregtse
 Barbara Schenk
 Ex Officio: Rev. John Kennedy