

The Visitor

January 2023
Bethlehem United Church of Christ

Ponderings on Forgiveness to start the new year - Happy 2023...

Every family has their stories and my family is no different. I never knew my great aunt, my grandmother's sister, for a very simple reason. My grandmother and her sister never spoke to one another, at least not from the time I was born. They did nothing together for 30 years. As the story goes, they no longer knew why they were angry or what caused the breakup, but they went to their graves without speaking.

Somewhere in this story I took away a lesson on the importance of forgiveness or a lesson on the temperament of the German women in my family and a caution for my life. In Matthew 18: 21-22, we read these words: "Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'" This is how to love your neighbor.

What happened that caused these ladies to be so unforgiving? Maybe another way to look at it is, what did one or both of these ladies do that prevented them from receiving the support, love and care from each other for the rest of their lives? As we learn from the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:23-35, there is punishment for being an unforgiving soul. My grandmother and great aunt punished themselves by not forgiving and holding a grudge - what a waste of a lifetime.

Forgiveness is some times hard to give, but living a life of bitterness without charity and forgiveness can be far more difficult. We all have something in common, we are all part of the human race and as such, we are going to mess up on a regular basis. Why are we so surprised when it happens? Let us praise God and thank the Lord for showing us how to forgive. Let us practice forgiveness...not only of others, but of ourselves too. If our Lord Jesus was willing to die for the forgiveness of our sins, we can all find the words to forgive each other our humanness. As a recent Face Book quote stated, "Forgiving will never change the past, but it just may change your future." (anonymous) Who deserves your forgiveness today?

Blessings,

Pastor Diane



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BUCC HAPPENINGS



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

JANUARY

- January 1—Worship Team, Library, 11:00 am
- January 2—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- January 4—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- January 4—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm
- January 6—Bethlehem Veterans & Friends Monthly Breakfast at Alpha Restaurant, 8:30 am
- January 9—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- January 10—Bethlehem Ladies Breakfast, Alpha Coney, 9:30 am
- January 10—Facilities Ministry Team, Lounge, 7:00 pm
- January 11—Cemetery Board, Cemetery, 9:30 am
- January 11—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon

- January 11—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm
- January 16—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- January 18—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- January 18—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm
- January 22—Youth Group, Youth Room 11:30 am
- January 23—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- January 25—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- January 25—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm
- January 26—Leadership Council, Schmale Lounge, 6:00 pm
- January 26—Worship at Brecon Village, 10:00 am
- January 30—Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Room, 6:00 pm
- February 1—Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- February 1—Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:00 pm

Hear ye, hear ye! Bethlehem Choir is starting once again!

It’s not too late to join the choir! Please join us on **Wednesdays from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m!** We will sing one or two anthems for the 10 a.m. worship service on Sundays with a run-through morning rehearsal at 9:15 a.m. **EVERYONE** is welcome to participate in this music ministry, to enjoy fellowship, and to experience God’s love and grace in our lives through the gift of music. Please email me at: musicdirector@bethlehem-ucc.org. ~Naki Kripfgans



REMINDER!!!

January 15 is the deadline for items to be included in the **February** edition of the VISITOR newsletter.

Please email submissions to:

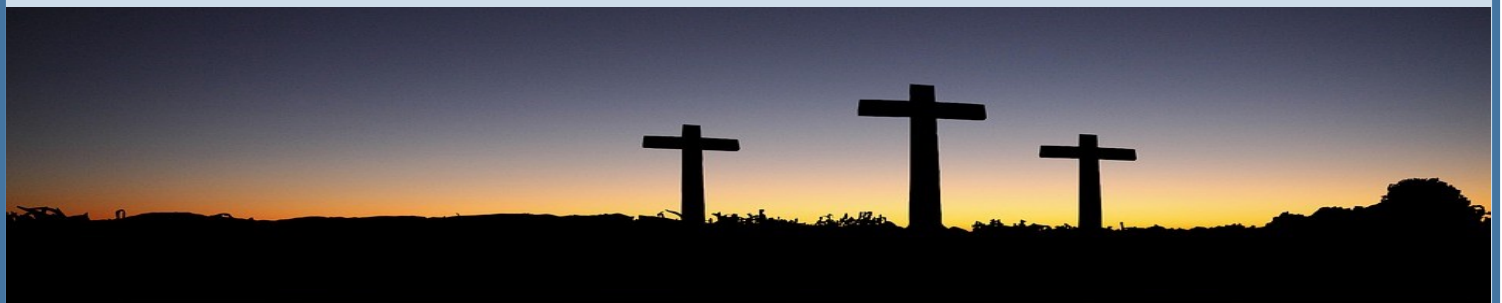
churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org



BETHLEHEM CEMETERY ASSOCIATION**LOCATED AT: 2801 JACKSON AVENUE, ANN ARBOR, MI 48103****PHONE: 734-761-6878 (VOICE MAIL)****ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE: BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST****423 S. 4TH AVENUE, ANN ARBOR, MI 48104****PHONE: 734-665-6149**

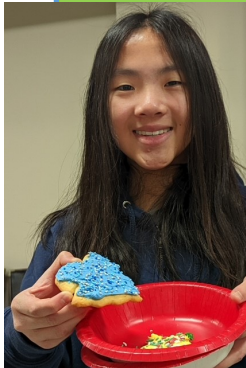
It's been a few months since the last Bethlehem Cemetery Board article was written for the Visitor and it is time to share a brief history of the cemetery and to share the change in the Board's responsibilities. One acre of land was deeded to Bethlehem Church in 1833 by Daniel Allmendinger for the first church and for a cemetery. The first burial took place in 1834 and Bethlehem Church became responsible for maintaining the accurate records of the purchase of grave sites, the location of the burial sites in the cemetery and responsibility for maintaining the grounds. The cemetery became an entity of the church. When the church moved into downtown Ann Arbor the cemetery was opened to the public. The record keeping responsibilities increased for the church office staff. At some point the Bethlehem Cemetery Board was formed to make decisions in regards to maintaining the cemetery. The church office staff and volunteers continued to be responsible for the record keeping and eventually a Sexton was hired to manage the cemetery. This past May, the Cemetery Board learned that the church office staff was no longer responsible for the cemetery record keeping. It meant working with the Leadership Council to allow the cemetery records, phone calls and computer access to remain in the secured church office space. The Cemetery Board hired Betty Clark to continue as the bookkeeper, and John and Karen Samford to continue to maintain the cemetery records. As co-presidents of the Board, Sue Buday and Mary Friend are learning the daily operations of the cemetery. It includes maintaining the accuracy of the paperwork before it is given to Betty and the Samfords for processing, responding to emails, phone call inquiries about the cemetery, and researching questions for family members. Jim Lutz continues to be the treasurer, Sallie Stadel is the secretary, Mary Jean Raab and Jamie Dylenski are new to the Board and Marilyn Pearson is our member at large. Brad Bouchie is the Sexton. The Cemetery Board has managed to maintain the sales and burial rates for a few years, however, In November, the board voted to increase our prices. The Board is including the new rates in this Visitor. The Cemetery Board thanks Susan Irwin for her dedication to the Bethlehem Cemetery Board.

Sue Buday



BUCC FAMILY

CHRISTMAS



**Please join us in saying goodbye to Debbie Ventura
thank you for all of your hard work and dedication.**

You will be missed.

Thank you!

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 January 10th, February 14th and March 14.

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



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



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, January 6th, 8:30 am
Alpha Restaurant,
4389 Jackson Rd.

Questions? Contact Tom Zieseimer



All Bethlehem Youth, 6th grade through high school, are invited to Youth Group!

We meet :
Sundays, 11:30 am—1:00 pm,
every other week.

Our upcoming Youth Group meeting dates are:

January 22nd
February 5th
February 18th

Looking forward to seeing all of you!



FAITH AND FAMILY NIGHT

WHEN

- Friday, January 20th @ 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
Use promo code: FAITH

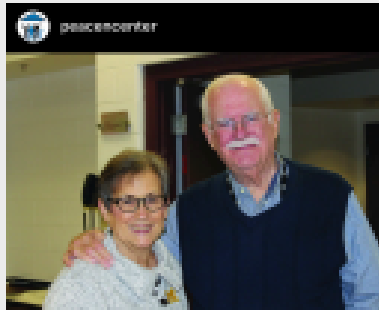


FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
Erika Hansen | 734.453.0818 | erika.hansen@usahockey.org
USA Hockey Arena | 14900 Beck Road | Plymouth, MI 48170

OUTREACH NEWS

Outreach Ministry Team - Bethlehem United Church of Christ

Peace Neighborhood Center



On December 8th at Peace's Family Night, volunteers were also honored. Pictured are Kathy Warner and David Gilmore, who help weekly with the Friday Food Distribution. Two other weekly volunteers not pictured are Katie Rowan and Sue Muir.

We are grateful for the dedication of our volunteers!



Women of Bethlehem challenge our congregation to match their \$5,000 gift to the Ukraine Crisis Fund.

To date, an additional \$1,920 has been contributed to date. Please help us reach our goal of raising at least \$10,000 total!

Donate online on our church website's Ukraine Crisis Fund: www.bethlehem-ucc.org

Checks are also welcome made out to Bethlehem United Church of Christ - Ukraine Fund



Thank you to all our members and friends who made contributions of toys, gift cards and items for the Mitten Tree to help Peace Neighborhood Center, Alpha House and Food Gatherers this holiday season!

Memorials and Gifts

Gifts Received

November 15, 2022 – December 15, 2022

GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

John Fischer Memorial
Virginia Slocum Memorial

OUTREACH FUND

Virginia Slocum Memorial

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE FUND

Jane Santoro Honorarium
Conrad & Norma Foster Honorarium

PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Bill Fellenberger Memorial
Hilda McLaughlin Memorial
Betty Diuble Memorial

Gifts listed were received through
December 15, 2022



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.

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.**
3. **You can even donate online at bethlehem-ucc.org.**
4. **Tell the office how you want your sponsorship listed in the bulletin and read on-air.**



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 at:

(gwenda_mayes@bethlehem-ucc.org)



November, 2022	Year to Date	YTD Target	22 /23 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$176,970	\$200,010	\$400,020
Expenses	\$238,838	\$267,064	\$534,128
Net	(\$61,869)	(\$67,054)	(\$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
 9:00 am - 2:00 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 Husted

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