

# The Visitor

March 2023  
Bethlehem United Church of Christ



## General Minister & President Nominee

Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson



After a year-long search, the United Church of Christ Board's Search Committee for General Minister and President has made a historic choice. The committee will be recommending Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson to the UCCB this week as nominee for General Minister and President. If elected, she would be the first woman, and the first woman of African descent, to lead the denomination. Below is the letter to the wider church from Search Committee Chair the Rev. Emma Brewer-Wallin

To read the full letter regarding the new General Minister and President Nominee, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, please click the following link:

[GENERAL MINISTER](#)



## Lenten Journey

Throughout Lent we will focus on the story of the Passion of Christ which is filled with vivid characters, each of whom played an important role on that fateful day. We will use a series of interviews titled "They Were There" written by Elise Seyfried. The five characters we will meet are: Judas, Barabbas, Pilate, Pilate's Wife, and Peter. Each will be asked about their lives, what led them to that tragic event, and what they would say to us in the 21st century. With all of this in mind, I am looking for volunteers to play the characters. There is no memorization – just expressive reading. If you are interested, give Pastor Diane a call at: 734-660-1886.

Holy Week will be as follows:

Palm Sunday, we will have a special music you will not want to miss.

Maundy Thursday, we are planning to have a Soup and Service time in the fellowship hall – time TBD.

Good Friday services will be observed at noon and 7:30PM.

Easter Worship will be only at the 10:00 AM service. (Sorry, we will not have a sunrise service at the cemetery this year due to my physical limitations in the cold weather.)



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Romans 12:2 “Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what [God] wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.” (The Message)

Dear Friends in Christ,

Many of you are aware that I have held positions in public education, banking, healthcare, and transportation. I have always loved taking on a new position because there was always a new challenge in the learning. Each industry has its own language, culture and mode of operation.

This is also true in churches. Bethlehem UCC in Ann Arbor does things differently than Clinton UCC in Clinton and St. Paul UCC in Saline. There are different ways to begin the service, light the candles, ring the bells, serve communion, meet as a governing body, communicate and serve. Each church knows what needs to be done when and how to do it without giving it much thought because it’s “the way we’ve always done it.”

I wonder if this is the “well-adjusted in the culture” that Paul is warning the church in Rome about? Do we get so comfortable doing what we do that we forget why we do it? Do we keep adding more and more and more without ever stopping to ask who God wants us to be and what God wants us to do? We have God’s instruction manual to help us develop well-formed maturity. Our prayer life and understanding of God’s Word help us draw closer to spiritual maturity in our relationship with God and spiritual maturity with each other. Let us all spend this time during lent and this time of transition praying and asking for God’s input as we move forward as the church of Jesus Christ who is the creator of the Way.

God bless,

*Pastor Diane*



## Memorials and Gifts

### Gifts Received

January 15 – February 15, 2023

#### CURRENT FUND

Manfred Hilberer Memorial

#### GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Manfred Hilberer Memorial

Martha Holliday Memorial

#### LIVE STREAMING FUND

Joseph & Laura O'Reilly Memorial

#### MUSIC/CHOIR FUND

Melvin Rookus Memorial

#### RADIO FUND

Manfred Hilberer Memorial



## 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\*\*\***



# BUCC FAMILY



## IT'S TIME TO SHARE

In Galatians, the Apostle Paul encourages followers of Jesus to generously help and care for others. Though there is great need in the world and we can grow weary because we do not know how to help, God's Spirit energizes and re-energizes us in every season.

We can make a difference. We do make a difference. Your generosity makes all the difference. Your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing provide immediate aid and long-term support to people experiencing hunger, thirst, disaster, or crisis around the world.

The need has never been greater. The opportunity is now. **It's time to share.**

### YOUR GENEROSITY MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

**Esmerelda Robles lives in rural Honduras.** She and her neighbors participate in a "pass chain" program. A family receives a pregnant pig, sheep, or cow; families are taught how to feed and care for the animals. When the next piglet, lamb, or calf is born, it is passed on to another family, which in turn will do the same. "A dream we have as a family is to have a micro-business for the production and sale of meat," Esmerelda says. Families now envision a future not possible before. This is just one part of a program to improve food security. This program and its components are made possible because of your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing.

So let's not allow ourselves to get  
fatigued doing good. At the right  
time we will harvest a good crop  
if we don't give up...  
— Galatians 6:9

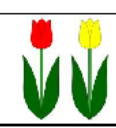


ucc.org/oghs

### 2023 Easter Gift Order Form

**Deadline for orders:**  
**Sunday March 12**

Make checks payable to  
Bethlehem Church  
(write "Easter donation" in memo)



FLOWER OR DONATION	# OF PLANTS	\$ AMOUNT
Easter Lily (7.5" two stems) \$22.00		
Hyacinth \$12.00		
Tulip \$12.00		
Daffodil \$12.00		
Donation to cemetery memorial garden upgrade		
Memorial Fund of your choice: _____		
TOTAL DOLLARS ENCLOSED		_____

In memory of  In honor of

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(please print clearly)

From: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your name and phone number/email (please print clearly)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any money left over after flower and delivery charges are paid  
will be placed in the General Fund


Diana Slaughter will be leading a  
Lenten Bible study:  
**The Lord's Prayer, its Biblical context and beyond,  
over the next four Sundays,  
March 5-26, 11:20-noon.**

We will meet in the library for the first session. We will study the Lord's Prayer as it is written in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, touching on the original Greek. We will also look at variant English translations over time, and discuss what the Lord's Prayer means for us today.

Don't worry, knowledge of Greek is not required!


If you wish to attend, please contact Diana by email: [dslster@umich.edu](mailto:dslster@umich.edu) or by text/phone at (734)905-2781.

This will ensure that an adequate number of handouts are prepared.



**The Education and Youth Ministry Teams** invite you to a special coffee hour on Palm Sunday, April 2nd at 11:15 in the Fellowship Dining Room. If you can provide baked goods or treats for everyone to enjoy during this time together.

Please email Jan Eadie: [jee21152@gmail.com](mailto:jee21152@gmail.com)



A free will offering basket will collect donations for our Lenten Project - Doctors Without Borders. This organization delivers medical care, free of charge, in over 70 countries. Doctors are currently treating those injured in the Ukraine, and in the earthquake damaged areas of Turkey and Syria.

To make an online donation, please click the GIVE link:  
[GIVE](#)

January, 2023	Year to Date	YTD Target	22 /23 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$239,084	\$266,680	\$400,020
Expenses	\$330,678	\$356,085	\$534,128
Net	(\$91,595)	(\$89,405)	(\$134,108)

# 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 the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Alpha Koney Restaurant (previously the Classic Cup), 4389 Jackson Road, at 9:30 am. Upcoming dates are March 14.

For more information and to RSVP, please contact **Susan Irwin** at **734-255-5661** or **siirwin46@gmail.com**.

We hope to see you there!



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## Bethlehem Veterans & Friends Monthly Breakfast

Friday, March 3th, 8:30 am  
Alpha Restaurant,  
4389 Jackson Rd.

*Questions? Contact Tom Ziesemer*

## 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](mailto:musicdirector@bethlehem-ucc.org).



~Naki Kripfgans

## 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.



## 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.

## YOUTH GROUP

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:

**March 5th**  
**March 19th**

Looking forward to seeing all of you!

## 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. 4<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, ANN ARBOR, MI 48104

PHONE: 734-665-6149



# HAPPENINGS



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 Aimee in the church office at: [churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org)



## REMINDER!!!

**March 15** is the deadline for items to be included in the **April** 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.**
- 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.**

March 1

- Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- Choir Practice, Choir RM, 7:00 pm

March 3

- Bethlehem Veterans & Friends Monthly Breakfast at Alpha Restaurant, 8:30 am

March 5

- Lenten Bible Study, Library 11:20 am - 12:00 PM
- Youth Group, Youth Group RM 11:30 am-1:00 pm

March 6

- Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir RM, 6:00 pm

March 8

- Cemetery Board Mtg., Cemetery 9:30 am
- Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- Choir Practice, Choir RM, 7:00 pm

March 9

- ONA Movie & Discussion, Fellowship Hall 6:30 pm

March 12 - Daylight Savings Begins, Set Clocks Ahead

- Worship Team Mtg., Library & Zoom 11:00 am-1:00 pm
- Lenten Bible Study, Lounge 11:20 am - 12:00 pm

March 13

- Hand bell Rehearsal, Choir RM, 6:00 pm

March 14

- Bethlehem Ladies Breakfast, Alpha Koney, 9:30 am
- Facilities Ministry Team, Lounge, 7:00 pm

March 15

- Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- Member Care Ministry Mtg., Lounge, 4:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir RM, 7:00 pm

March 19 - One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

- Lenten Bible Study, Library 11:20 am - 12:00 pm
- Youth Group, Youth RM 11:30 am

March 20

- Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir RM, 6:00 pm

March 22

- Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- Choir Practice, Choir RM, 7:00 pm

March 23

- Worship at Brecon Village, 10:00 am
- Leadership Council, Schmale Lounge, 6:00 pm

March 26

- Lenten Bible Study, Library 11:20 am - 12:00 pm

March 27

- Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir RM, 6:00 pm

March 29

- Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- Choir Practice, Choir RM, 7:00 pm



# OUTREACH NEWS

Outreach Ministry Team - Bethlehem United Church of Christ

## Alpha House

On Sunday, January 29, we provided both Brunch and Dinner for the Alpha House residents.

Thank you Sue & Roy Muir, Susan Buday, Susan Wortman, Julie Feldkamp, Pam Widmayer and Jane Ziesemer for your generous food contributions.

## Peace Neighborhood Center

The Poverty Reduction Collaborative (PRC) is going to be a system that focuses on reducing poverty in Washtenaw County rather than managing it. It's a collaboration of seven local nonprofits and people experiencing poverty working together to identify where people are getting stuck in the cycle of poverty and providing programs to avoid those points.



We are getting closer to our goal of raising \$10,000 for the Ukrainian Crisis Relief Fund.

To date we have received a total of \$7,070.

We are only **\$2,670** from reaching our goal!

Please consider making a gift to this important outreach needed in Ukraine.

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 - Ukraine Fund

	Provide <b>17,000</b> meals each day	Donate food to <b>170</b> community partners	Food Gatherers... making such an impact in our community!
Focus on health <b>60%</b> of food that is eaten is grown and fresh produce	Save <b>57,900</b> summer meals to kids		



**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  
 9:00 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.

**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  
 parishadministrator@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:  
 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  
 Welcome: Jane Schmerberg  
 Outreach: Sue Muir/Roy Muir  
 Fellowship:  
 Youth & Young Adult: Katie Rowan  
 Bethlehem Cemetery: Sue Buday  
 Nominations Committee:

#### 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: