

The Visitor

May 2023
Bethlehem United Church of Christ

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." 1Samuel 16:7

If only we could see each other's heart as God does and understand the "real" in each of us. The following was given to me several years ago. It held me captive as I read perhaps because it speaks of me and you and all of humankind. See if you agree? If only we had God eyes as we look at each other, perhaps we could then see below the masks and accept and love one another more readily.

Don't be fooled by me. Don't be fooled by the face I wear for I wear a mask. I wear a thousand masks; masks that I'm afraid to take off and none of them are me. Pretending is an art that's second nature with me but don't be fooled, for God's sake, don't be fooled. I give you the impression that I'm secure that all is sunny and unruffled with me within as well as without, that confidence is my name and coolness my game, that the water's calm and I'm in command, and that I need no one. But don't believe me. Please!

My surface may be smooth, but my surface is my mask, my ever-varying and ever-concealing mask. Beneath lies no smugness, no complacency. Beneath dwells the real me in confusion, in fear, in aloneness. But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know. I panic at the thought of my weaknesses and fear exposing them. That's why I frantically create my masks to hide behind. They're nonchalant, sophisticated facades to help me pretend, to shield me from the glance that knows. But such a glance is precisely my salvation, my only salvation, and I know it.

That is, if it's followed by acceptance, and if it's followed by love. It's the only thing that can liberate me from myself, from my own self-built prison walls.

I dislike hiding, honestly, I dislike the superficial game I'm playing, the superficial phony game. I would really like to be genuine and me. But I need your help, your hand to hold. Even though my masks would tell you otherwise. That glance from you is the only thing that assures me of what I can't assure myself, that I am really worth something.

But I don't tell you this. I don't dare. I'm afraid to. I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh, and your laugh would kill me. I'm afraid that deep-down I'm nothing, that I'm just no good and you will see this and reject me.

So, I play my game, my desperate, pretending game with a facade of assurance without, and a trembling child within. So begins the parade of masks. The glittering but empty parade of masks, and my life becomes a front.

I idly chatter to you in suave tones of surface talk. I tell you everything that's nothing and nothing of what's everything, of what's crying within me. So, when I'm going through my routine do not be fooled by what I'm saying. Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying, hear what I'd like to say but what I cannot say.

It will not be easy for you; long felt inadequacies make my defenses strong. The nearer you approach me the blinder I may strike back. Despite what books say, I am irrational; I fight against the very thing that I cry out for. You wonder who I am you shouldn't for I am everyman and everywoman who wears a mask. Don't be fooled by me. At least not by the face I wear.

---author unknown and it has been published in several books and on the web.

We are all wearing a mask at times – know this as we interact with each other and look for the heart. Christ welcomes everyone and it's important that we do so too. All are welcome here as we are all God's children, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Come as we worship together.

Christ's Peace,
Pastor Diane



Outreach Ministry Team News



Life-Changing Support — that helps youth, individuals and families achieve their goals.

2022 IMPACT

\$75,000+ IN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE and additional in-kind support helped 740 households across Washenaw County as follows:



- 36% RENT/EVICTION PREVENTION
- 33% HOLIDAY ASSISTANCE
- 12% UTILITIES
- 8% TRANSPORTATION CAR REPAIRS & GAS
- 7% FOOD
- 3% EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE
- 3% CLOTHING

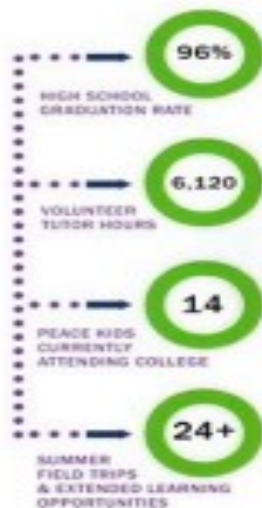


12,200 MEALS Served at Peace Programs, helps alleviate food insecurity and builds community & connections.

172 HOUSEHOLDS SERVED Includes those enrolled in programs and/or those residents receiving services in 3 public housing communities: Maple Meadows, West Arbor and Baker Commons.



180 K-12 YOUTH attended After-School and Summer Programs



This information about Peace Neighborhood is included in their Annual Report for 2022. Our Outreach Ministry Team is grateful that we have been able to make yearly contributions to PNC in order for Peace to have such a large impact in our community. And we thank all members and friends who have contributed to make this possible.

Ukrainian Refugee Relief Fund

We hope to reach our goal of \$10,000 by June 30, 2023. To date \$7,745 has been contributed. We only have \$2,255 to raise. Please consider making a contribution online at www.bethlehem-ucc.org or send a check to the church office.

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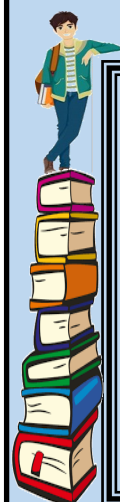
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Call for College Student Addresses



The BUCC Youth will again be sending out College Care Cards to College students as they finish up the semester

Please send your student's mailing address to rowank55@gmail.com

****Please indicate if there is an end date that the address will be not be current.****

Shared Vision – New Beginnings Stewardship Campaign 2023-2024

We are embarking on our stewardship campaign for the upcoming year. This year's theme, "Shared Vision – New Beginnings", reflects Bethlehem's status as we experience transition and begin to make plans for the future. Sharing our vision for what is to come also means sharing our gifts to make those visions possible. You will be receiving stewardship materials by mail very soon.

Please take the time to review them; to consider the importance of Bethlehem's programming for you, your family, and your neighbors; and to prayerfully consider your support of our church. We ask that you return your pledge card to the church office by Monday, May 8.



House of Faith



Bethlehem United Church of Christ
WHEN: May 20, 2023
TIME: 9 AM - 3 PM
LOCATION: 1093 Desoto Ave., Ypsilanti, MI 48198
 943 sq. ft. • 3 bed • 1 bath
DAILY CREW SIZE:
 4-5 volunteers needed per day

Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley engages our neighbors to build better neighborhoods through our volunteer, donation, partnership and ReStore efforts. We build homes, communities and hope... under one roof.

WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO PREPARE

- No construction experience necessary! Our House Leaders will ensure a variety of tasks are available for all individuals with a wide variety of skill levels and physical abilities.
- Wear comfortable clothes that can get dirty and dress for the weather. We do not guarantee heat/air condition at any of our work sites
- Wear closed-toed shoes or work boots (no open-toed shoes)
- Remove jewelry and pull back loose hair
- We have disposable water bottles on site, but do not offer food. Plan to go out or bring lunch (we'll break for an hour at noon, but do not provide food)
- Port-a-jons will be available
- Tools & equipment will be provided. You are welcome to bring your own, but you are responsible for them, and they are subject to our House Leader's safety check
- Safety is our highest priority! Keeping a safe worksite is everyone's responsibility. All PPE will be provided, but you can bring your own (eye protection, work gloves, mask, etc)
- Projects: Expected tasks will be emailed to you the week of your build day. Please dress accordingly
- Age Restrictions: Due to safety regulations, individuals under the age of 16 are not permitted on our active sites. Those ages 16 - 17 must have a waiver completed by a parent/guardian and be accompanied by an adult while on site

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER

All volunteers must register online by the Monday before each scheduled build day.

Expected tasks, additional details and possible location changes will be emailed the week of each scheduled build day.

All **MUST** arrive by 9 AM and plan to stay on site until the projects have been completed.

SIGN UP HERE:
<https://givepul.se/idxabz>
 Access code: Faith



Questions? Contact Leah Tessman at ltessman@h4h.org or 734.882.2004

www.h4h.org
 @H4HHuronValley



www.h4h.org

950 Victoria Way, Ste. 50
 Ann Arbor, MI 48108

734-677-1558



UNDER ONE ROOF

Memorials and Gifts

Gifts Received March 16 – April 15 Radio Sponsorship

April 9—In Memory of Frederick and Lela Keppler and brother, Hugh

Gifts listed were received through April 15, 2023

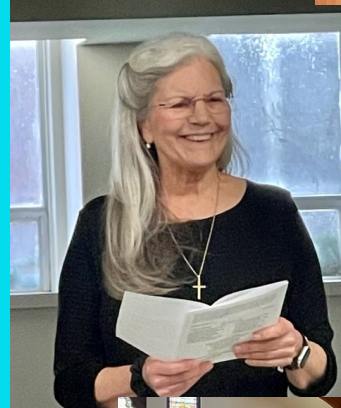
OUR FOOD BARREL IS HUNGRY

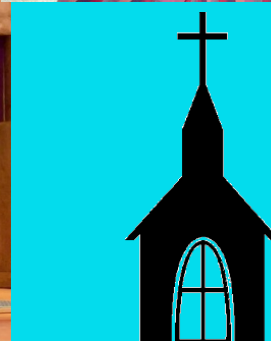
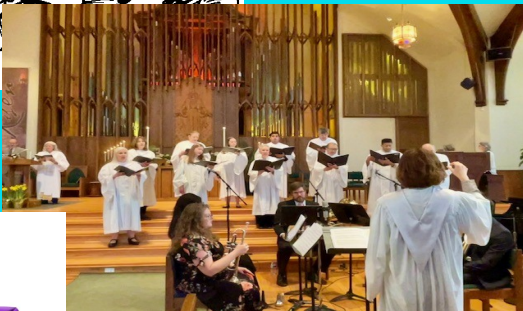
Our Food Gatherers barrel for nonperishables is located in the library. Please remember to gather extras each time you shop. Items most in need are soup, canned meat or vegetables, pasta, beans, rice, cereal, granola bars, peanut butter, jelly, baby food, formula, diapers, and toiletries.

*****PLEASE NO GLASS CONTAINERS*****



March 2023	Year to Date	YTD Target	22 /23 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$292,327	\$333,350	\$400,020
Expenses	\$414,817	\$445,107	\$534,128
Net	(\$122,490)	(\$111,757)	(\$134,108)





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



REMINDER!!!

May 15 is the deadline for items to be included in the **June/July** edition of the VISITOR newsletter.

Please email submissions to:

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.**
4. **Tell the office how you want your sponsorship listed in the bulletin and read on-air.**



- May 1
 - Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir RM, 6:00 pm
- May 3
 - Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- May 5
 - Bethlehem Veteran's Breakfast, Alpha Koney, 8:30 am
- May 6
 - Basket Weaving Class, Youth Rm, 8:00 am
- May 7 Communion Sunday
 - Worship Team Mtg., Library 11:00 am
- May 8
 - Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir RM, 6:00 pm
- May 9
 - Bethlehem Ladies Breakfast, Alpha Koney, 9:30 am
- May 10
 - Cemetery Board Mtg., Cemetery 9:30 am
 - Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
 - Choir Practice, Choir RM, 7:00 pm
- May 11
 - Facilities Ministry Team Mtg., Lounge, 3:30 pm
- May 13
 - Spring Clean-Up 9:00 am
- May 15
 - Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir RM, 6:00 pm
- May 17
 - Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
 - Member Care Ministry, Lounge, 4:00 pm
 - Choir Practice, Choir RM, 7:00 pm
- May 20
 - Habitat of Huron Valley Volunteer Work Day
- May 22
 - Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir RM, 6:00 pm
- May 24
 - Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon
- May 25
 - American Legion places flags on Veteran's Graves, Bethlehem Cemetery, 9:00 am
 - Brecon Worship, Brecon Village 10:00 am
 - Leadership Council, Lounge, 6:00 pm
- May 29
 - Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir RM, 6:00 pm
- May 31
 - Busy Christian Hands, Schmale Lounge, 12:00 noon





MEETING MINUTES

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

month at:

parishadministrator@bethlehem-ucc.org

Thank you all for your service to our church community.

SPRING CLEAN-UP

MAY 13, 2023

Come help us clean up after all of our

crazy winter weather

Sign-up Sheets are outside of the church office

Or call the church office @ 734-665-6149

to add your name to the list!



Please make sure that the office receives all Refrigerator Page and Email Blast submissions by

9 am Thursday each week.

May 15 is the deadline for items to be included in the combined June / July edition of the VISITOR newsletter.

Please email submissions to:

churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org

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.

Dear Bethlehem Members,

Please add the following dates to your calendars!

May 20: Gail Jennings is planning a recital at Bethlehem. The time will be announced closer to the event date. Following the concert, BUCC Leadership Council is planning a reception in the Fellowship Hall. The reception is to acknowledge the 30 plus years that Gail has provided wonderful music support for our congregation. We have been blessed to have Gail as our organist and we look forward to her concert and to gather to celebrate the wonderful gifts that Gail provides to us. Please plan to join us for this concert and celebration if your schedule allows.

June 11: Following the Sunday service on this date, we will have our annual congregational meeting. The meeting will be held in the Fellowship Hall. Light refreshments will be provided at the meeting. Those present will hear presentations from our ministry teams and be asked to vote on next year's church budget and slate elected officers. A final agenda will be distributed to our members prior to June 11.

God Bless You,

Ron Dechert, President

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





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.

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: