

The Visitor

May 2024

Bethlehem United Church of Christ

Easter blessings, beloved ones!

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. ...No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on a lampstand and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God in heaven." Matthew 5:14a, 15-16



Let Your Light Shine

I remember reading a story about a young man in a small town, who started his own business. It was a dime store. He was a good man, well loved by the people of that small town because he was honest and friendly. Over the years, his business grew and expanded. Ultimately, that one little dime store grew into a chain of stores from coast to coast.

One day later in life, he became ill and was taken to the hospital. Fearing the worst, he called together all three of his adult children and gave them this challenge: "One of the three of you will become the president of the company that I've built. To decide which one of you deserves to become the president, I am giving each of you a ten-dollar bill. Go out today and buy whatever you can with that \$10, but when you come back to my hospital room this evening, whatever you buy must fill this room from corner to corner."

So, the young men set out, excited about the opportunity to run such a successful organization. Each went to town and spent the ten dollars. When they came back in the evening, the father asked child number one, "What did you do with your ten dollars?" "Well dad," he said, "I went to my friend's farm, gave him my \$10 and bought two bales of hay." With that, he went into the hall, grabbed the two bales, brought them into the room, undid them, and began to throw hay all over the room. For a moment, the room was filled with hay. Eventually, it all settled on the floor, no longer filling the room.

Then the father spoke to child number two, "Well, what did you do with your ten dollars?" "Dad," he said, "I went to Target and bought two feather pillows." He brought the two pillows into the room, ripped them open, and threw feathers all over the room filling it with the fluff. Like the hay, the feathers eventually settled on the floor, no longer filling the room.

Finally, the father turned to the third child and said, "Well, what have you done with your ten dollars?" "I took my ten dollars, Dad, and went to a store like the one you started years ago," he said. "I gave the clerk my \$10-bill and asked her for some change in dollar bills. I invested \$5 on something worthwhile.

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Then I gave \$2 to our church and another \$2 to a charitable organization in town. With the one dollar I had left, I bought two items.” He reached into his pocket and pulled out a box of matches and a small candle. He lit the candle, turned off the light switch, and the room was filled with candle light. From corner to corner it was filled, not with hay or feathers, but with light.

His father was delighted. He said, “Well done, son! You will become president of this company because you understand a very important lesson about life. You understand how to let your light shine!”

The father in the story was right. A very important lesson in life is how to let your light shine – especially the light of Christ. Here is my question for you: How are you letting your light shine? Can you let it shine more brightly, to bless others even more? You see, this is not about filling rooms with stuff. Yes, sharing from our ‘treasure’ and contributing to the church and other worthy charitable organizations is very important. And I encourage you to prayerfully consider your stewardship investment in Bethlehem. Yet, what is equally, if not more, important is filling hearts and lives with the most precious and priceless commodities on the planet: our time and talent. Our Annual Meeting is drawing near, when you will be approving a new budget AND electing leaders to Council and Ministry Teams. How might YOU let your light shine by serving as an elected leader or as a volunteer in another capacity? Where is your passion? What makes your heart sing? Share it! Get involved, as you are able, and light up the lives of others!

Blessings of Hope,
Pastor Dawn



“The meaning of life is to find your gift.

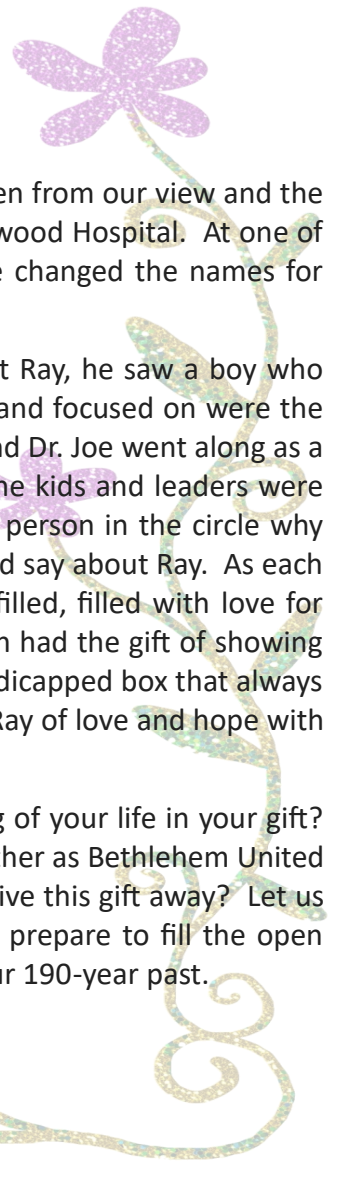
The purpose of life is to give it away.” Pablo Picasso

Each and every one of us has a gift, that something we do so well. Often times it is hidden from our view and the view of those closest to us. Several years ago I worked in leadership development at Oakwood Hospital. At one of my seminars, a doctor shared the following experience about discovering a gift. (I have changed the names for anonymity.)

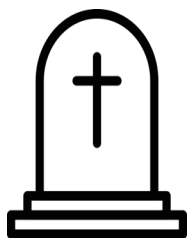
Dr. Joe’s son, 14-year-old Ray, was born with downs syndrome. When Dr. Joe looked at Ray, he saw a boy who would never play ball, never go to college, never be like all the other kids; all he noticed and focused on were the things Ray couldn’t do. He saw him as handicapped. Ray was invited to a youth retreat and Dr. Joe went along as a chaperone as he didn’t think Ray should go without a parent present. One evening all the kids and leaders were sitting around the campfire and they were going to do an exercise where they told each person in the circle why he/she was special. Dr. Joe was wary of this activity and worried about what the kids would say about Ray. As each child came to Ray, Dr. Joe heard his son described as touched by the Holy Spirit, spirit filled, filled with love for others, selfless, and kind. Dr. Joe realized then that his son was his gift of love and his son had the gift of showing others, including himself, the Holy Spirit at work on earth. Dr. Joe had put his son in a handicapped box that always found him failing – he was shown a new and different Ray through other people’s eyes, a Ray of love and hope with possibilities for his future. He treated Ray much differently from that day on.

Often we find our gift(s) when we hear from other people. Have you found the meaning of your life in your gift? Have you found the purpose of your life as you give your gift away? What about us – together as Bethlehem United Church of Christ? Have we discovered our collective gift as Christ’s church? How do we give this gift away? Let us pray for personal and communal discernment and listen to the still speaking God as we prepare to fill the open positions in the leadership of Bethlehem and set our path for the future as we celebrate our 190-year past.

Blessings,
Pastor Diane



Greetings from Bethlehem Cemetery Association



First, we would like to thank our many donors, for their gifts to the maintenance and preservation of our cemetery. It takes a lot of work, money, and diligence to maintain this large and historic site. We welcome donations at any time, especially now, **as Mother's Day and Father's Day are approaching.** When you want to donate to Bethlehem Cemetery, just indicate that on the memo line, when writing your check to BUCC. **Thank you.**

Bethlehem Cemetery Sexton Contract

As we did in April our Visitor article may cover various aspects of the cemetery operations. This month, we would like to highlight our Cemetery Sexton, **Brad Bouchie**, and the encompassing responsibilities he has with daily and seasonal cemetery operations.

The profession of a cemetery sexton, takes years of training and work alongside an experienced sexton. They handle all of the operations, and all of the interments, full burial or cremains. And, as important as the actual performance of duties, it takes a person who cares deeply about the people they will intersect within the processes.

Brad has been under contract and caring for our beloved cemetery for many years, and we hope for many more in the years to come. The cemetery board along with Brad work together to understand all the needs of the community and the evolving nature of the process of interment.

In closing, thank you to all Bethlehem members and friends for their interest and help in making Bethlehem Cemetery the peaceful and tranquil property it is, amid the busy City of Ann Arbor. If you have not visited in a long time, please drive through someday when traveling on Jackson Road.

Jamie Dylenski

Shannon O'Reilly

Jim Lutz

Mary Friend

Marilyn Pearson

Mary Jean Raab

Susan Irwin

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Dear Bethlehem,

The annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday June 9, 2024. The meeting will start immediately following our Sunday service. The planned agenda items will be sent out in advance of the meeting. As in years past, we need 25 members in attendance to have a quorum. Please add this date to your schedule. I hope to see you all at the meeting.

God Bless You All,
Ron Dechert

SAVE THE DATE!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



Dear Bethlehem Members,

As we approach the end of our church year and our annual meeting (June 9th), we are in need of 11 volunteers to serve in various positions of elected officers for the coming church year. Our church functions on the engagement of our volunteers. The need is real if we wish to continue the community and congregational support. Council is asking you to consider volunteering for any of the open positions. The requirements are simple: 1) active member in good standing with at least 2) 1 year since joining as a member in this congregation.

Listed below are the teams and open positions you might consider. If you are uncertain what the duties are for each team, please review the church by-laws and / or contact any member of Leadership Council.

Team	Open Positions	Title	Term Length
Council	4	President	1 year
		At-large	3 year
		At-large	3 year
		At-large	3 year
Worship	1	Chair	3 year
Facilities	1	At-large	3 year
Education	1	Chair	3 year
Welcome	1	Chair	3 year
Fellowship	1	Chair	3 year
Youth / Young Adult	1	Chair	3 year
Nominations	1	Chair	3 year

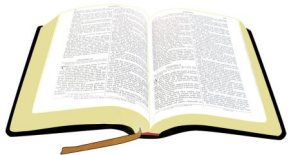
Thank you for prayerfully considering this request for support.

God Bless You All

Ron Dechert-President




Palm Sunday
Hosanna to the King



Palm Sunday Brunch Celebration



A special **Thank You** to our **Education Ministry Team** who organized the Palm Sunday brunch pot luck. The pictures below show the wonderful time had by all who attended. Thank you also goes to everyone who brought a dish to share. There was an abundance of wonderful salads, main dishes and desserts.

One dish that drew many compliments was the Quinoa Salad provided by, Marilyn Pearson. With her permission, the recipe is listed below:

Greek Quinoa Salad

1 cup Tri-Color Quinoa
 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
 1 cup sliced calamata olives
 1 cup sliced pepperoncini
 1/2 red onion, finely diced
 4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled and divided
 2 tablespoons Extra virgin olive oil
 1 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar
 Sea salt to taste
 freshly ground black pepper to taste

Directions: cook quinoa according to package directions. Set aside and let cool to room temperature. Combine tomatoes, olives, pepperoncini, onion, and half the feta cheese. Stir into the cooked quinoa and top with the remaining feta cheese. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar and mix well. Season with salt and pepper. (I tend not to add any salt because the olives, pepperoncini, and feta are all salty.) Serve at room temperature.

Yum, Marilyn Pearson



Many who attended commented that it was so nice to have this opportunity to share fellowship again with each other.

**God Bless our Ministry teams and
 our congregation.**





mark your Calendar

May 1

- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Rm., 6:45 pm

May 2

- Leadership Council, ZOOM, 6:30 pm

May 3

- Bethlehem Veteran's and Friends Monthly Breakfast, Alpha Koney, 8:30 am

May 4

- Bethlehem Church Clean-Up, Church, 9:00 am-12:00 pm

May 5 Communion Sunday

- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am

May 6

- Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Rm, 5:30 pm

May 8

- Cemetery Board Mtg., Cemetery, 9:30 am
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Member Care Mtg., Lounge, 4:00 pm

May 11

- Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley Volunteer Work Day, 9:00 am

May 12

- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am

May 13

- Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Rm, 5:30 pm

May 14

- Bethlehem Women and Friends Monthly Breakfast, Alpha Koney, 9:30 am

May 15

- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm

May 18

- Habitat of Huron Valley Volunteer Day, 9:00 am

May 19

- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am

May 20

- Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Rm, 5:30 pm

May 21

- Facilities Ministry Team Mtg., Lounge, 3:30 pm

May 22

- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm

May 23

- Leadership Council, Lounge, 6:00 pm

May 26

- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am

May 28

- Hand Bell Rehearsal, Choir Rm, 5:30 pm

May 29

- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm





House of Faith



GROUP: BETHLEHEM UCC

WHEN: May 11, 2024 / May 18, 2024

TIME: 9 AM - 3 PM

LOCATION: 636 Lynne Ave. Ypsilanti, MI 48198. 900 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/7td3il>

Access code: **Faith**

Questions?

Contact:

Jessica DeVol at
jdevol@h4h.org
or 734.882.2012
www.h4h.org
@H4HHuronValley



www.h4h.org

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

734-677-1558



UNDER ONE ROOF

BUCC HAPPENINGS



BUCC Volunteer Days for Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley

Once again, Bethlehem is committed to local affordable housing and building strength, stability and new lives through our local Habitat for Humanity. We have **two volunteer days scheduled for Saturday May 11 and May 18, 9:00 - 3:00.**

Four or five volunteers are needed for each day. BUCC, along with other area churches and community volunteers, are revitalizing 636 Lynne Ave in Ypsilanti.

For more details and a sign up link, please see the House of Faith flyer in this Visitor.

To sign up, you may also click here: [Habitat Volunteer Sign Up](#)

Celebrating Graduates

Bethlehem wants to celebrate your graduate! Graduate Recognition will be on Sunday, June 2 during the 10:00 am worship service. Please email Katie Rowan no later than Sunday, May 19, at rowank55@gmail.com, if there's a high school or college, undergrad or advanced degree graduate in your life. Please include:

- Graduate's name as you would like it published
- Photo
- School
- Degree if applicable
- Future Plans



Memorial Day

Every year the America Legion Post 46 places American flags on the gravesites of military veterans at Bethlehem Cemetery. This is done during the week before

Memorial Day. There archives records show they have been leading this event since the late 1940s/ 50s. Last year Bethlehem UCC had 12 Veterans/members joined in with American Legion members and Cub Scouts to assist with placing an estimated 500 flags on veterans graves.

Once again Bethlehem UCC veterans along with friends are invited to help. **We plan to meet at the cemetery entrance on Thursday, May 23rd at 9:00am.**

Please contact Tom Ziesemer for info.



Bethlehem Veterans & Friends Monthly Breakfast

May 3, 2024 8:30 am

Alpha Koney Island, 4389 Jackson Rd.

Questions? Contact Tom Ziesemer



SPRING CLEAN UP

MAY 4, 2024 @ 9:00 am

Come help us clean up our church grounds after all of our crazy winter weather.

Sign-up Sheet is outside of the church office or call the church office @ 734-665-6149 to add your name to the list!

BUCC LIBRARY OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Spring is here and the church Library is open again so it's a good time to check out the used books for sale in the Bethlehem Library. Or a good time to curl up with a book or try a new author you haven't tried before. Books are just \$1.00 each and there is a cash box on the right wall as you walk into the Library for your payment. And on the far right wall are also books for children and young independent readers. This project is managed by the Women of Bethlehem.

Since Covid began the Library was not open on lots of Sundays. It is now open again. Additional books are added regularly so come check out what's there.

If you are interested in donating books, we sell just NOVELS. *Please...no cookbooks, self-help or instruction books....just NOVELS.* There is a bin inside the door to place donated books.

**THANKS for your support.
We hope you enjoy the books.**

Bethlehem Women & Friends Monthly Breakfast

Tuesday May 14, 9:30 am

Alpha Koney Island, 4389 Jackson Rd.

Contact Susan Irwin at 734-255-5661 or siiwin46@gmail.com for more info.



Memorials and Gifts

Gifts Received March 16, 2024 – April 15, 2024

BETHLEHEM CEMETERY FUND

Glenn W Bailey Memorial

CURRENT FUND

Grandma & Grandpa Boman Memorial

Grandma Gotham Memorial

Pete & Pam Kleinschmidt's 17th Wedding Anniversary
Honorarium

GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Arlene Connell Memorial

Charles Daniel Hoffman Memorial

PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Pastor Dawn Christenson Honorarium

Douglas Mensch Memorial

Frances Schulenberg Honorarium

VIDEO STREAMING FUND

Glenn W Bailey Memorial

Gifts listed were received through
April 15, 2024



Please make sure that the office receives all Refrigerator Page and Email Blast submissions by 12:00 pm Wednesday each week. May 15 is the deadline for items to be included in the May edition of the VISITOR newsletter. Please email submissions to:
churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org



Calling all Liturgists!

It's easy being a liturgist, everything is already written; all you have to do is read aloud. Sign up in the Google doc using this link [LITURGIST SIGNUP](#), or contact Pastors Dawn or Diane, or call the office at 665-6149

Would You Like To Use The New Phone App?

You have two options with this new phone-based system. Option 1: Call 1-855-669-8965 and listen to the service live or listen to the latest recording any time during the week. **Option 2: The new system will call you just before the service begins.** All we need from you is your name and the phone number the system should call. All you need to do is answer your phone about 5 min before the service begins. The audio portion of the service will run the entire length of the service (it is not limited to 60 min).

This will also allow us to bring the audio of non-Sunday worship services to you such as the Longest Night Service, Christmas Eve service, Good Friday services, etc. With this phone service, you will be able to hear the worship service wherever you are. **Please call the office (734-665-6149) to provide your name and the phone number we should use for Option 2.** We encourage you to share this message with anyone you know who relies on the radio broadcast to follow our worship services. Thank you!



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.

Current Fiscal Year

March 2024	Year to Date	YTD Target	23 /24 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$288,096	\$326,142	\$391,370
Expenses	\$354,122	\$402,963	\$483,556
Net	(\$66,026)	(\$76,822)	(\$92,186)



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.

Rev. Dawn Christenson	Interim Pastor
revdawnchristenson@gmail.com	
Rev. Diane White	Associate Pastor
pastordiane@bethlehem-ucc.org	
Naki Kripfgans	Music Director / Organist
musicdirector@bethlehem-ucc.org	
Gwenda Mayes	Office Supervisor
parishadministrator@bethlehem-ucc.org	
Jim Rowan	Hand Bell Director
jrowan@umich.edu	
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

Interim Pastor: Rev. Dawn Christenson
 Assoc. Pastor: Rev. Diane White
 Office Supervisor: Gwenda Mayes
 Admin. Assistant: Aimee Winchester
 Director of Music/Organist: Dr. Naki Kripfgans
 Director of Handbells: Jim Rowan
 Video Director: Dan Blakeney
 Maintenance Personnel: Bill Husted

MINISTRY TEAM CHAIRS

Finance: Tom Krell
 Facilities: Steve Darr
 Education: Open Position
 Worship: Open Position
 Member Care: Judy Coucouvanis
 Jenny Foster
 Welcome: Jane Schmerberg
 Outreach: Open Position
 Fellowship: Open Position
 Youth & Young Adult: Katie Rowan
 Bethlehem Cemetery: Mary Jean Raab
 Nominations Committee: Open Position

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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