

The Visitor

November 2024

Bethlehem United Church of Christ



Giving Thanks

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night...For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the work of your hands I sing for joy.
(Psalm 92:1-2 & 4)

Beloved Ones, we have much to be thankful for! Here are just a few of the things that I am grateful for...

I give thanks for being blessed to be part of Bethlehem United Church of Christ! This is such a blessed community that I have grown to love. Yes, there are fewer of you now than 5 years ago. Yet, those of you who remain are strong, resilient, and faithful. It is YOU, with the help of God, who have carried Bethlehem through difficult times. It is YOU, with the help of God, who will transform Bethlehem into a new version of herself for future generations. YOU are Bethlehem UCC, and I am so grateful for you!

We spoke of such things during our conversation about the Lombard report on October 13th. I am very grateful to those of you who attended that meeting. And while the pain and grief was still evident, I witnessed a transformed community; a community who cares deeply about BUCC and her people; a community who have a vision for the future of Bethlehem UCC. I am deeply grateful to all of you who shared your hearts and hopes for the future. From our conversation that day, we gleaned things that are needed for the well-being of Bethlehem and her future, including discerning the pastor's role and the congregation's expectations of the pastor(s); discerning leadership's role; discerning the congregation's (governing body) role; as well as the need for a well-defined and developed Pastoral Relations Committee. Some of these things are being addressed through the work of the ad hoc Bylaws Committee. (More on that coming soon.) Some will be discerned and developed through our interim work together.

I am grateful to everyone who desires and is working toward improved 2-way communication and transparency. Living into that, as individuals, collectively contributes to the whole. If we each say to ourselves, "If it is to be, it's up to me." We can and will create the communication that we desire. And many of you realize that living in community, a Christian community, we must foster relationships and communication embodied by acceptance, love, and support, without judgment. You know the importance of finding common ground, and celebrating all of the positives and each milestone achieved. You have already achieved a tremendous milestone by turning your sights to the future rather than looking back. I thank God for you! I thank God for your honesty, for sharing your hopes and fears, and for sharing your dreams and your creativity to achieve those dreams.

Good people of Bethlehem, give thanks that you are rising like a Phoenix from the ashes, like Christ from the grave. Give thanks to our ever-faithful and loving God for leading you to this moment in time – a time when you

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are ready to give birth to a new and wonderful Bethlehem UCC! The birthing process may be painful at times, but in the end, we will be cradling a beautiful newborn lamb (BUCC) who is ready to receive her new shepherd.

But first we have some growing to do in the womb. Here are some of the prenatal milestones we need to achieve: Bylaws revisions, discerning ‘who IS Bethlehem today?,’ discerning ‘who is our neighbor and what is our relationship with our neighbor; what should it be?,’ and discerning the future vision for Bethlehem UCC; ‘who are you being called by God to become?’ Once Bethlehem is reborn, we will be able to discern the attributes and expectations for her next shepherd. Give thanks, Beloved Ones, the ‘bun is in the oven!’ Get ready for rebirth!

Abundant Blessings of Gratitude and Hope,

Pastor Dawn



Ponderings for November...

thanks·giv·ing (noun)

- 1. prayer of thanks**
- 2. giving of thanks**
- 3. public acknowledgment of divine goodness**

For many Americans the Thanksgiving season calls to mind images of a Norman Rockwell style gathering, Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, “Miracle on 34th Street,” spending time with relatives and friends, feasting on turkey, checking the sales fliers for black Friday sales, and taking a tryptophan-induced nap while watching college and pro football. All these traditions are wonderful and to be enjoyed, but it is important for us to remember what this holiday is really about, and who is the object of our thankfulness? The Psalms say it best...

**O come, let us sing to the LORD;
 let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
 let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
 For the LORD is a great God,
 and a great King above all gods. (Psalm 95:1-3 NRSV)**

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, may we focus on all the ways God has blessed us. I give thanks to God each and every day for my Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ and for each and every one of you.

Blessings,
Pastor Diane

Current Fiscal Year			
September 2024	Year to Date Actual	YTD Target	23 /24 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$136,505	\$140,667	\$422,000
Expenses	\$120,928	\$174,186	\$522,557
Net	\$15,577	(\$33,519)	(\$100,557)



November 1

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

November 2

- U of M vs Oregon Parking at BUCC, 3:30 pm
- Daylight Savings Time ends, set clocks back an hour

November 3

Totenfest Memorial Service/Communion Sunday

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

November 4

- Hand Bell Practice, Choir Room, 6:00 pm

November 6

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

November 10

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

November 11– Veterans Day

- Hand Bell Practice, Choir Room, 6:00 pm

November 12

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

November 13

- Cemetery Board Mtg., Cemetery, 9:30 am
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Room, 6:45 pm

November 17

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

November 19

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

November 20

- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Member Care Mtg., Lounge, 3:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Room, 6:45 pm

November 23

- U of M vs Northwestern- Parking at BUCC, TBD

November 24

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

November 25

- Hand Bell Practice, Choir Room, 6:00 pm

November 27

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

November 28– Thanksgiving

November 30

- Hanging of the Greens, Sanctuary, 9:00 am
- Mitten Tree



Totenfest Memorial Service

Sunday, November 3

at 10:00 am Worship

Please join us for our Totenfest Memorial Service where we will invite everyone to come forward to light a candle in memory of loved ones who have passed away in the last year.

There will be a special insert in the bulletin remembering all who have passed away since November 2023.

CHRISTMAS WREATHS

It is time to green up the church with our beautiful Christmas Wreaths

Sign up forms are by the office to order a wreath in memory or in honor of a loved one.



Please have all orders to the office by **November 17**

Small Wreaths are \$25
Large Wreaths are \$30

SAVE THE DATE

Hanging of the Greens

Saturday, November 30th @ 9:00 am



Your help is needed to decorate the church.
Plan on joining us to get ready for the Christmas Season!

For more information, please contact Jan Eadie (jee21152@gmail.com)

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS
FALL BACK

Set Your Clocks Back an Hour
Sunday, November 3, 2024



JOIN THE CRAFTERS

Bethlehem Community Crafters have been busy this year. Before our "snowbirds" took off, we photographed a few samples of what we've made. Remember that this group, which meets Wednesdays noon -2 pm in the lounge, is open to everyone. If you don't have a craft, we can teach you, or you can just come and share the fellowship.




MITTEN TREE IS COMING!

The Mitten Tree will be ready to decorate with mittens, scarves, hats, gloves, and socks starting **Friday November 29th through Sunday, December 15th** so we have time to distribute everything in time for Christmas

All items will be given to local organizations for those in need.



What better way to enjoy the company of your fellow church members than over a good cup of coffee? We are looking for two volunteers a week to adopt-a-coffee hour on Sundays after the 10:00 am worship service in the Fellowship Hall. Volunteers will need to set up, make coffee and clean up. Please click the link [HERE](#) to be taken to the Sign Up Genius website where you can choose your slot. Your willingness to participate in this act of fellowship is sincerely appreciated.




Save the Date
Advent Workshop & Potluck

Sunday, December 8 at 11:15. in the Fellowship Hall. Lots of fun crafts will be available for all ages to create. Bring your favorite main dish, salad, side, or dessert to share at the potluck.

Please sign up on the bulletin board outside the office with what dish you plan to bring.


Plan to attend to enjoy good food, fellowship and crafts.

Calling all Liturgists!

It's easy being a liturgist, everything is already written; all you have to do is read aloud.


Please use the [LITURGIST SIGNUP](#) link to volunteer.

You may also contact Pastors Dawn or Diane or call the office at 665-6149.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

December 15, 2024 @ 11:15 am following Worship, Member Care is sponsoring a Cookie Exchange during coffee hour!



Bring one dozen of your favorite holiday inspired cookies to trade for a dozen of someone else's favorites!

If you have any questions please contact Jenny Foster at bucc.membercare@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—especially at this time of year.

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

REMEMBERING OUR **Homebound**



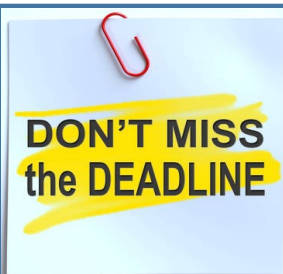
Fall Happenings at Bethlehem Cemetery

Ten new trees were planted by our Sexton and his crew in October. A big thank you to Kevin and Sally Elmiger for their professional assistance in tree selection, purchasing, and planting methods to insure our tree canopy will remain healthy for years to come. Then Fall clean-up began, and a group of elementary children and their parents spent time on a Saturday afternoon weeding our Memorial Garden and watering our newly planted trees. Thanks to Team 16 from Ann Arbor St. Francis School who had asked us for permission to complete one of their service projects requirements of "Caring for the Dead" at our cemetery. That afternoon, we witnessed an amazing example of how "Many hands make lightwork".

November will bring Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and more visitors to Bethlehem Cemetery. We invite you also to come out and drive through to see the display of the fall colors there.

We ask you to please consider Bethlehem Cemetery Ann Arbor in your future. If you have a Required Minimum Distribution to take, consider gifting it to the cemetery. Contact can be made by email us at bucc.cemetery.board@bethlehem-ucc.org or calling us and leaving a message at 734-6665-6149 ext 219. Thank you Bethlehem Cemetery Board

Bethlehem Cemetery Ann Arbor is located at 2801 Jackson Rd. 48103.



Please make sure that the office receives all **Refrigerator Page** and **Email Blast** submissions by **12:00 pm Wednesday each week.** **November 15** is the deadline for items to be included in the December edition of the VISITOR

newsletter. Please email submissions to: churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org

CHRISTMAS SERVICES



Wednesday, December 18
The Longest Night Service

5:30 pm

Tuesday, December 24
Christmas Eve Worship

7:00 pm

A Candlelight Service and a musical celebration featuring the Bethlehem Chancel Choir and Bethlehem Hand Bells

MEMORIALS AND GIFTS

Gifts Received September 16 - October 15

BETHLEHEM CEMETERY FUND

Norman & Helen Grob Memorial
(on the occasion of their 77th anniversary)

GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Ruth Keppler Memorial

Gifts listed were received through
October 15, 2024

In honor of Veteran’s Day, November 11, 2024, we would like to acknowledge those Bethlehem members that are still among us, that gave or are giving their time serving our country.



Mike Ehnis	US Army	1963 – 1971
Dave Gilmore	US Army	1970 – 1972
Dennis Huibregtse	US Army	1989 – 2005 Ret. 1971 – 1976
Ron Karr	US Army	1968 – 1970
Paul Neeb	US Army	1954 – 1956
Jerry Sutfin	US Army	1957 – 1962
Carl Waltjen	US Army	1956 – 1959
Norm Wetzel	US Army	1961 – 1964
Jesse Wilcox	US Army	1968 – 1970
Tom Zieseemer	US Army	2008 – 2015 1966 – 1969
Jim Aldrich	US Air Force	1963 – 1969
Mike Haab	US Air Force	1965 – 1969
Larry Katz	US Air Force	1957 – 1960
Gary Dresselhouse	US Marines	1954 – 1956
Jacob Pieske	US Marines	
Eugene Alber	US Navy	1949 – 1953
Bob Loukotka	US Navy	1961 – 1966 Ret. 1988
Jim Stadel	US Navy	1969 – 1973
Ron White	US Navy	1969-1970
Jennifer Steinaway	Army National Guard	Active Duty

**Bethlehem Veterans & Friends
Monthly Breakfast
November 1 @ 8:30 am**



VETERANS
Breakfast

Alpha Koney Island, 4389 Jackson Rd.
Questions? Contact Tom Zieseemer
734-476-7515 or via email at:
zieseemerth@gmail.com



**Bethlehem Women & Friends
Monthly Breakfast**

November 12 at 9:30 am

Alpha Koney Island, 4389 Jackson Rd.
Contact Susan Irwin at 734-255-5661 or
siiwin46@gmail.com for more info.



Outreach Volunteer Opportunities

In addition to monetary donations, Bethlehem members support our partner organizations by volunteering. If you would like to be involved in this way, there are multiple opportunities.

Peace Neighborhood Center Food Distribution

Fridays 8:30 - 12:00

[Peace Food Distribution Sign Up](#)



Peace Neighborhood Center

Food Gatherers

Various shifts are available for signup at the Carrot Way warehouse sorting produce, or at the Delonis Center Community

Kitchen preparing and serving meals.

[Food Gatherers Sign Up](#)



Fiftieth Ann Arbor Area CROP Walk Raises \$45,000

Six Bethlehem members joined about 250 walkers from sixteen local congregations and organizations in support of global and local hunger relief. One quarter of the funds will be dedicated to a dozen local programs, including Peace Neighborhood Center, the St. Andrews Breakfast Program, Hope Clinic, FedUp Ministries, and Avalon Housing. The rest goes to international hunger relief efforts. Many thanks to our Pllama team walkers: Gail Jennings, Jackie Katz, Eileen Koprowski, Katie Rowan, Jane Schmerberg, and Diane White. Thanks as well to the congregation for your generous donations. We raised \$1,822.53!



FOOD DRIVE



Fight hunger where we live with Food Gatherers, the food bank & food rescue program serving Washtenaw County.



MOST NEEDED ITEMS

Please no glass

- ✓ Hearty soups
- ✓ Canned meats
- ✓ Canned vegetables
- ✓ Packaged pasta & rice
- ✓ Whole-grain cereal & oatmeal
- ✓ Baking & cooking supplies
- ✓ Condiments
- ✓ Nut butters & jelly
- ✓ Kid-friendly snacks
- ✓ Baby food & formula
- ✓ Nutritional supplement drinks
- ✓ Personal care items:
 - soap & shampoo
 - dental hygiene kits
 - disposable razors



Scan this code to make a donation online.

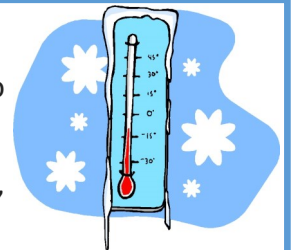
Your donation benefits 140+ community programs serving our neighbors in need of food.

Food Gatherers | 734-761-2796 | www.foodgatherers.org

BRRRR!!!!

As the temperature drops, we invite those who are able to walk, to park a bit further away to allow those who aren't able to walk a parking space in the church lot.

There is free parking available on 4th and 5th Ave on Sunday as well as at Muehling Chapel, the doctor's office next door and the parking structure at the corner of 4th and Williams.





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 | Church Administrator |
| parishadministrator@bethlehem-ucc.org | |
| Jim Rowan | Hand Bell Director |
| jrowan@umich.edu | |
| Lisa Reach | 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

<u>STAFF</u>	<u>MINISTRY TEAM CHAIRS</u>	<u>LEADERSHIP COUNCIL</u>
Interim Pastor: Rev. Dawn Christenson	Finance: Tom Krell	President: Jim Rowan
Assoc. Pastor: Rev. Diane White	Facilities: Steve Darr	Vice President: Open Position
Church Administrator: Gwenda Mayes	Education: Eileen Koprowski	Secretary: Barbara Schenk
Admin. Assistant: Lisa Reach	Worship: Open Position	Treasurer: P.J. Lindemann
Director of Music/Organist: Dr. Naki Kripfgans	Member Care: Judy Coucouvanis Jenny Foster	At-Large Members:
Director of Handbells: Jim Rowan	Welcome: Open Position	Teresa Beagle
Video Director: Dan Blakeney	Outreach: Katie Rowan	Open Position
Maintenance Personnel: Bill Husted	Fellowship: Open Position	Ex Officio: Rev. Dawn Christenson
	Youth & Young Adult: Open Position	
	Bethlehem Cemetery: Mary Jean Raab	
	Nominations Committee: Open Position	