

The Visitor

January/February 2025
Bethlehem United Church of Christ



According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:10-11)

Beloved Ones, Blessings for the New Year to you!

I hope that you are getting excited and ready to do the work that is before us, to discern how we will carefully build upon Bethlehem's past and present. Our ultimate goal is to build an exciting and realistic future vision that lays a solid foundation for you and your future settled pastor. We'll begin our work on January 5th, with our initial workshop: *Wall of Wonder* – **a fabulous and fun way to begin our metaphorical 'building project'**.

Don't worry – we have the Master Builder (God) to guide our work. And we have a sure foundation in Christ the Lord. We have been shoring up the Body of Christ (you) since my arrival. We will continue to strengthen your relationships and help you discern your individual and collective gifts of the Spirit. That sacred work must be ongoing, even after I depart, for YOU are the Body of Christ. And because of that, I strongly encourage you to attend two workshops, led by Diana Slaughter on January 12th & 19th, that explore what it means to be the Body of Christ. I am deeply grateful to Diana for her willingness to lead these discussions with you. (Please refer to the list of other workshops elsewhere in the newsletter and the weekly refrigerator page, for dates and topics.)

In between workshops, I'll be working with the Leadership Council to form a Search Committee. Plus, the Bylaws Committee will be continuing its work, making adjustments to proposed revisions, per feedback from Council. We'll be sending further drafts to the congregation soon.

So hold onto your hats and get ready for the race before us!

Blessings,

Pastor Dawn

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- January 3**
- Veterans and Friends Breakfast, Alpha Koney 8:30 am
- January 4**
- De-Greening of the Church, Sanctuary 9:00 am
- January 5**
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am
- Outreach Meeting, Lounge 11:30 am
- Workshop: Wall of Wonder Youth Rm. 12:00 pm
- January 6**
- Hand Bell Practice, Choir Room 5:30 pm
- January 8**
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Room, 6:45 pm
- January 12**
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am
- January 13**
- Hand Bell Practice, Choir Room 5:30 pm
- January 14**
- Ladies Breakfast, Alpha Koney, 9:30 am
- January 15**
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Room, 6:45 pm
- January 19**
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am
- January 20**
- Hand Bell practice, Choir Rm, 5:30 pm
- January 22**
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Room, 6:45 pm
- January 23**
- Leadership Council, Lounge 6:00 pm
- January 26**
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am
- January 27**
- Hand Bell practice, Choir Room, 5:30 pm
- January 29**
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Room, 6:45 pm

- February 2**
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am
- February 3**
- Hand Bell Practice, Choir Room 5:30 pm
- February 5**
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Room, 6:45 pm
- February 7**
- Veterans and Friends Breakfast, Alpha Koney, 8:30
- February 9**
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am
- Workshop: Who Is Our Neighbor, Youth Rm. 12:00 pm
- February 10**
- Hand Bell Practice, Choir Room 5:30 pm
- February 11**
- Ladies Breakfast, Alpha Koney, 9:30 am
- February 12**
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Room, 6:45 pm
- February 15**
- Food Gatherers Volunteer Day 8:30 am
at 1 Carrot Way, Ann Arbor, 48105
- February 16**
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am
- February 17**
- Hand Bell Practice, Choir Room 5:30 pm
- February 19**
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Room, 6:45 pm
- February 23**
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall, 11:15 am
- Outreach Ministry Mtg., Lounge 11:30 am
- Workshop: Asset Mapping, Youth Rm., 12:00
- February 24**
- Hand Bell Practice, Choir Room 5:30 pm
- February 26**
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Choir Practice, Choir Room, 6:45 pm
- February 27**
- Leadership Council, Lounge 6:00 pm

Current Fiscal Year

November 2024	Year to Date Actual	YTD Target	23 /24 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$199,723	\$211,000	\$422,000
Expenses	\$206,296	\$261,279	\$522,557
Net	(\$ 6,573)	(\$ 50,279)	(\$100,557)

Building Room Requests

Our building has many lovely spaces to use for meetings and workshops. We also have a demand for rental of these spaces.

PRIOR to planning an event, please contact office staff to verify room availability and to have your event scheduled on the calendar.

(734) 655-6149 or info@bethlehem-ucc.org

Thank you !

A huge thank you for the generous donations that decorated our Mitten Tree this year.

We had 27 pair of socks, 38 hats, 5 pairs of slippers, 35 pairs of gloves/mittens, and 58 hat/scarf sets - many of them hand made.

These items were delivered to Peace Neighborhood Center, Alpha House, Safe House, and to Groundcover.

Many people will stay warm this winter because of your kindness.

In addition, \$480.00 in cash, and \$250.00 in gift cards were raised for Safe House.

Thanks again for all your Christmas gifts.

MEMORIALS AND GIFTS

Gifts Received November 16 - December 15

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE FUND

Glenn Bailey Memorial

PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Ken & Harriett Holzapfel
Glenn Bailey Memorial

GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Jane Griffel Conlen

Baptism



The team at Bethlehem UCC wishes you all a

Happy New Year!!

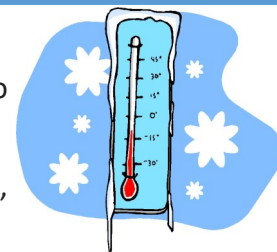
May you and your loved ones have a healthy and peaceful 2025.



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.



Transitional Workshops

We will be hosting 6 transitional workshops January – March 2025 in the Youth Room after Worship from 12:00 – 2:00 pm.

January 26, 2025 - Who are We?

This is an important exercise to deeply explore who BUCC is believed to be today, especially given current members. Many perspectives, history and hope will be shared by those present. This is always an eye-opening experience.

February 9, 2025 - Who is Our Neighbor?

This exercise explores physical, ecumenical, service agencies, and more (not necessarily as obvious as you might think). We will be looking for opportunities for ministerial partners, as well as perceived "threats". We will think about how we might want to or are called to engage with some of these neighbors in new ways.

February 23, 2025 - Asset Mapping

This exercise will help us identify all of BUCC's assets, as well as those needed or desired; ranking/prioritizing them. Information generated through this exercise is of paramount importance for the next visioning workshop.

March 2, 2025 - I Can See Clearly

This is one of the most exciting workshops in which we will engage! This is where we will consider all of the information discerned to date and further discern who God is calling BUCC to be and what God is calling BUCC to do. This is where we develop the vision for the future of BUCC.

March 16, 2025 - Shepherding 101

This is the last big discernment piece, in which we will determine the qualities needed and desired in the next settled pastor for BUCC, in relation to the future vision of the church.



HOMEBOUND FRIENDS

We have many dear friends who remain homebound 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.

Greetings. In an effort to keep our BUCC members and friends up-to-date on cemetery operations, this is the letter we are sending out to Funeral Directors in the greater Washtenaw County area. We thought including the letter in the *Visitor* might offer a new insight or two. Thank you for your support of the Bethlehem Cemetery, and let us know if we can answer questions, or be of service to you. Regards.

Bethlehem Cemetery
2801 Jackson Rd
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

December 30, 2024

Greetings from Bethlehem Cemetery:

We thank you for our long-standing partnership, as we do important work together.

As we enter 2025, our 192nd year, we wanted you to have our contact information, who we are as the cemetery trustees and board members, and our current prices, even though they have nearly remained unchanged from 2024.

Did you know:

- we serve all faith traditions?
- we have hundreds of plots available for sale, and more space will be pinned soon?
- we will work with families large and small to find the perfect location for all to be together?
- we can accommodate many monument sizes, configurations, and formats?

We recently launched a new website, bethlehemcemeteryaa.org. Please check it out and we hope you will bookmark the link.

We have a special request for you. Would you please, take just a few minutes, to tell us:

- when a client mentions Bethlehem Cemetery, what is the first thing that comes to mind?
- what are we doing very well?
- what could we improve upon?

Please email us at bethlehemcemeteryaa@gmail.com or use the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Thank you very much for your time and attention, as we take pride in our past, remain focused on the ever-present, and are planning for the future.

Sincerely,

Jamie Dylenski, Mary Friend, Susan Irwin, Shannon O'Reilly, Marilyn Pearson, Mary Jean Raab, trustees and board members

Bethlehem Cemetery Association, c/o Bethlehem United Church of Christ


423 South Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48105
734-665-6149 (Ext. 219), bethlehemcemeteryaa.com
Cemetery Sexton: Brad Bouchie, 734-274-7422

Just a reminder: During the winter, we will be following the Ann Arbor Schools Closing Policy. If Ann Arbor Schools are closed due to inclement weather, Bethlehem Offices will be closed as well. Thank you for your understanding

Bethlehem Veterans & Friends
Monthly Breakfast
February 7th & March 7th
@ 8:30 am
 Alpha Koney Island, 4389 Jackson Rd.
 Questions? Contact Tom Ziesemer
 734-476-7515 or via email at:
 ziesemerth@gmail.com



Bethlehem Women & Friends
Monthly Breakfast
January 14th , February 11th
& March 11th at 9:30 am
 Alpha Koney Island, 4389 Jackson Rd.
 Contact Susan Irwin at 734-255-5661 or
 siiwin46@gmail.com for more info.



Refrigerator Page and **Email Blast** submissions must be received by **5:00 pm Tuesday each week.** There will be a March Visitor. All submissions for this edition are due by February 15th. Please be sure to include all dates, times and pertinent information. Please email submissions to:
churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org



Great News!

The Bethlehem website has been updated to include easy access to sign up for opportunities here at church. On the front page, at the bottom, are one click buttons that take you to sign up sheets. You can add your name to be a [Liturgist](#), provide [Flowers for Sunday Worship](#), [Adopt a Coffee Hour](#), or [Sponsor a Live Broadcast](#). If you do not have access to a computer or need assistance please call the church office at 734-665-6149

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

Food Gatherers Volunteer Days

Bethlehem will have two volunteer days at the Food Gatherers Warehouse at 1 Carrot Way:

Sat. Feb. 15, 8:30 - 11 AM

Sat April 19, 1:00 - 3:30 PM

You can sign up at: [Food Gatherers Sign Up](#)
 This is a fun way to work alongside fellow Bethlehem members to combat hunger in Washtenaw county.



Sundays of Advent



Advent Workshop



Christmas Eve



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C
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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	