

# The Visitor

May 2025  
Bethlehem United Church of Christ



***Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.***

**Isaiah 60:1**

I can still hear one of my high school classmates singing this at a solo and ensemble festival years ago. The movement is “*O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion*”, from Handel’s Messiah. Laura did a fabulous job with it. And it wasn’t just her vocal prowess; it was the sheer joy that she infused into the piece. It lit up the room as she sang.

In this Easter season, we too should be joyful! Christ makes all things new! As we continue to celebrate God’s love for us in our risen Savior, we should be overflowing with joy! And we need to let that joy permeate every aspect of our lives. Yes, we all have challenges that we face. AND we all have blessings that God bestows upon us each and every day. We need to focus on those blessings, no matter how small, for that is where hope is found; and that is where perseverance and fortitude dwell. Within the blessings of our lives, we witness the presence of God – an eternal, flickering flame that enlightens our lives and guides along life’s path. Each of us is called to let that light shine through us, into the lives of others, thereby bringing hope to them as well.

As we move closer to our Annual Meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup>, think about how God has blessed you. What is bringing you joy? How are you sharing that joy? How is God’s light and love shining through you? Christ makes all things new! What new thing is the Spirit calling forth to grow and bloom in your life? Think about how you might be able to share a little of your time and talent to benefit Bethlehem and those we serve. Arise, shine, for your light has come, good people of Bethlehem! The glory of the Lord has risen upon you! Go forth and shine!

Eastertide Blessings,

*Pastor Dawn*

As you may know, Pastor Diane broke her ankle and it required surgery. She will be recovering at home for several weeks. Many want to know how they can help. Please watch for information on how support can be provided to Pastor Diane. Please refrain from contacting her directly so she can rest and recover but prayers are most welcome.

There will be a SignUp Genius created for ways you can assist Pastor Diane and her family during her recovery.

Please contact the church office or Pastor Dawn for pastoral care needs.

We all wish her the very best. *More to come.*



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## IMPORTANT MESSAGE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**Dear Bethlehem,**

The annual congregational meeting will be held on **Sunday, June 1, 2025**. The meeting will start immediately following our Sunday service. The planned agenda items will be sent out, via email, in advance of the meeting. Printed copies will be available in the church office. 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,  
Jim Rowan**

2025/26 Stewardship Drive materials have been mailed to all members. Our theme this year is:

 **Faith in action** - No Gift Too Small

*Please prayerfully consider how your gifts of treasure, time, and talent support Bethlehem's mission. We ask that you turn your pledge cards into the church office no later than May 5.*

*May God's blessings be upon you.*

## Celebrating Graduates

Bethlehem wants to celebrate your graduate! Graduation Recognition will be on Sunday, June 8, 2025 during worship. Please email Jenny Foster no later than May 14, 2025 with the following information:

- Name of graduate as you would like it published
- Photo
- Name of school
- Degree if applicable
- Future plans



Please consider celebrating your graduate with us!!

[jen.foster@comcast.net](mailto:jen.foster@comcast.net)

## Bethlehem Veterans & Friends

### Monthly Breakfast

**May 2nd at 8:30 am**

Alpha Koney Island, 4389 Jackson Rd.

Questions? Contact Tom Ziesemer

734-476-7515 or

via email at: [ziesemerth@gmail.com](mailto:ziesemerth@gmail.com)



## Bethlehem Women & Friends

### Monthly Breakfast

**May 13th at 9:30 am**

Alpha Koney Island,  
4389 Jackson Rd.

Contact Susan Irwin at 734-255-5661 or  
[siiwin46@gmail.com](mailto:siiwin46@gmail.com) for more info.

## Current Fiscal Year

March 2025	Year to Date Actual	YTD Target	24/25 Budget
Offerings and Income	\$353,874	\$351,667	\$422,000
Expenses	\$359,105	\$435,464	\$522,557
Net	(\$5,231)	(\$83,798)	(\$100,557)

## MEMORIALS AND GIFTS

**Gifts Received March 16 - April 15**

### GENERAL FUND

In Memory of Jay Katz  
In Memory of Rose Senrud  
In Honor of John Schmale



When contributing to a special fund or collection, please use a separate envelope. Using your current fund or any other fund envelope, without indicating on that envelope what the funds are to be used for, may result in your contribution being applied incorrectly. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

**May 2**

- Veterans and Friends Breakfast, Alpha Koney, 8:30 am

**May 3**

- Habitat Volunteer Day, 9:00 am-4:00 pm

**May 4**

- Worship, Sanctuary, 10:00 am
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Youth Room, 11:15 am
- Bylaws Q & A Session, Youth Room 11:30 am
- Outreach Ministry Mtg., Lounge 11:30 am

**May 5**

- Handbell Practice, Choir Room 5:30 pm

**May 7**

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

**May 11**

- Worship, Sanctuary, 10:00 am
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Youth Room, 11:15 am

**May 12**

- Handbell Practice, Choir Room 5:30 pm

**May 13**

- Ladies Breakfast, Alpha Koney, 9:30 am

**May 14**

- Cemetery Board Mtg., Cemetery 9:30 am
- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Member Care Ministry Mtg., Lounge 3:00 pm

**May 17**

- Spring Clean up of Church Yard 9:00 am

**May 18**

- Worship, Sanctuary, 10:00 am
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Youth Room, 11:15 am

**May 19**

- Handbell Practice, Choir Room 5:30 pm

**May 20**

- Facilities Meeting, Lounge 3:30 pm

**May 21**

- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm
- Clergy Group Mtg., Youth Room, Fellowship Hall, Library, 12:00 pm

**May 22**

- Leadership Council, Lounge, 6:00 pm

**May 25**

- Worship, Sanctuary, 10:00 am
- Sunday School during Worship
- Coffee Hour, Youth Room, 11:15 am

**May 28**

- Bethlehem Community Crafters, Lounge, 12:00 pm

## 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 3 and August 9, 9:00 - 4:00.**

Four or five volunteers are needed for each day. BUCC, along with other area churches and community volunteers, are revitalizing 423 Ainsworth Circle 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 Sign Up](#) (Use lockcode: Bethlehem)

We hope to give a generous donation towards the costs of the project. You can contribute by supporting our upcoming **Habitat Coffee Hour** after church on **April 27**, or by using this link to donate on the Bethlehem website: [Donate](#) Or drop a check at the church office or in the Sunday offering marked **Habitat Huron Valley**.

Thank you for helping build new lives with affordable housing in our community.

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House of Faith

# 2025 Build



**GROUP NAME:** Bethlehem UCC  
**WHEN:** Saturday, May 3 & Saturday, August 9  
**TIME:** 9 AM - 4 PM

**LOCATION:** 423 Ainsworth Cir., Ypsilanti

792 square feet • 3 bed • 1 bath  
 Located in the City of Ypsilanti  
 Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley is working to create affordable homeownership and a sustainable community for the people of Washtenaw County. For more than 30 years, Habitat's work has been a catalyst for stabilizing homes, families and communities.

### 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 prior to their chosen date.

Location details, expected tasks, and additional details and will be emailed to all volunteers the week of each scheduled build day.

All MUST arrive by 9 AM and plan to stay until 4 PM, unless projects/tasks are completed earlier.

### LEARN MORE:

<https://givepul.se/whyidq>  
 lock code: Bethlehem

Questions?  
 Contact  
 Mariah Forger at  
[mariah@h4h.org](mailto:mariah@h4h.org)  
 or 734.968.8472



[www.h4h.org](http://www.h4h.org)  
 @H4HHuronValley



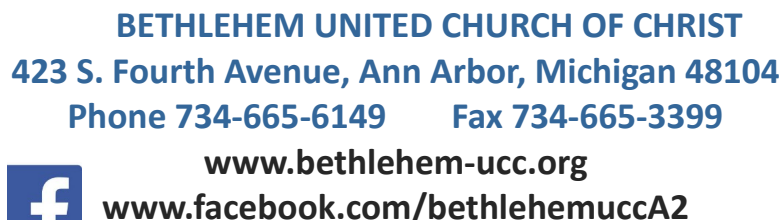
[www.h4h.org](http://www.h4h.org)

950 Vectors Way, Ste. 50  
 Ann Arbor, MI 48106

734-677-1558

Building homes. Securing futures. Strengthening communities.





## Office Hours

**Tuesday - Friday**  
**9:00 am - 2:00 pm**  
*(the office is closed  
on Mondays)*

The following is a list of our current staff at Bethlehem and their email addresses. Please utilize these email addresses for all communications.

<b>Rev. Dawn Christenson</b>	<b>Interim Pastor</b>
revdawnchristenson@gmail.com	
<b>Rev. Diane White</b>	<b>Associate Pastor</b>
pastordiane@bethlehem-ucc.org	
<b>Naki Kripfgans</b>	<b>Music Director /</b>
<b>Organist</b>	musicdirector@bethlehem-ucc.org
<b>Gwenda Mayes</b>	<b>Church Administrator</b>
parishadministrator@bethlehem-ucc.org	
<b>Jim Rowan</b>	<b>Hand Bell Director</b>
jrowan@umich.edu	
<b>Lisa Reach</b>	<b>Administrative Assistant</b>
churchoffice@bethlehem-ucc.org	



- ◆ 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.

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  
 Church Administrator: Gwenda Mayes  
 Admin. Assistant: Lisa Reach  
 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: Eileen Koprowski  
Worship: Open Position  
Member Care: Judy Coucouvanis  
Jenny Foster  
Welcome: Open Position  
Outreach: Katie Rowan  
Fellowship: Open Position  
Youth & Young Adult: Open Position  
Bethlehem Cemetery: Mary Jean Raab  
Nominations Committee: Open Position

## LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

President: Jim Rowan  
Vice President: Open Position  
Secretary: Barbara Schenk  
Treasurer: P.J. Lindemann  
At-Large Members:  
Teresa Beagle  
Open Position  
Ex Officio: Rev. Dawn Christenson