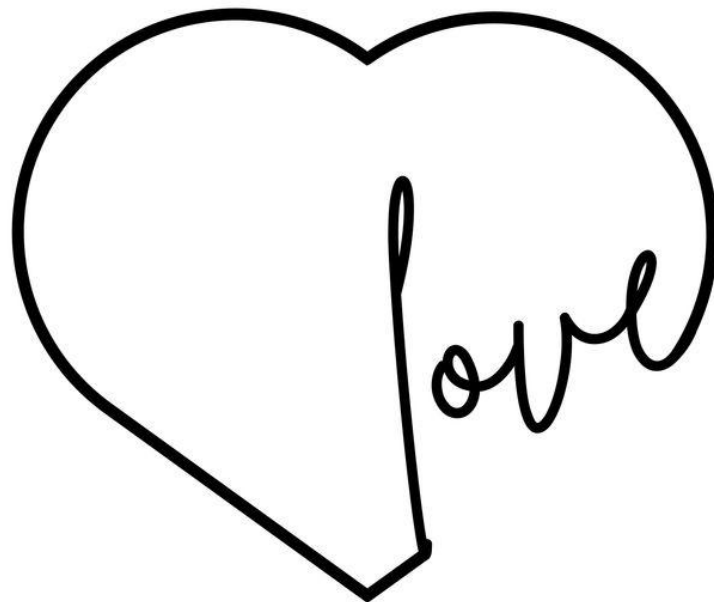


*Welcome to
Bethlehem United Church of Christ*



*May 3, 2026
Fifth Sunday of Easter
Stewardship Sunday*



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.

Welcome to Bethlehem!

We are so glad that you are joining your voice with ours in worship today! Everyone, please sign our green friendship pads, found at the end of each pew.

If you like, a comfortable space for families is available under the balcony.

God put the wiggle in children, and we welcome them in worship!

Children are also welcome to participate in Sunday school, if they prefer.

All are invited to stand, as you are able, for sections marked with a cross (†);

Congregational responses are in bold text.

Prayer Requests

Fill out a prayer request card found in the pews.

You may give it to one of the pastors before the service

or to an usher during the Hymn of Response.



CHURCH LIFE

No Bethlehem members were known to be in the hospital as of Wednesday

ATTENDANCE FOR LAST SUNDAY

Total:77 (In Person:55, YouTube:19, Phone:3)

Worship is available in the sanctuary, via Phone Streaming and Livestream to access the Livestream go to our website: <https://www.bethlehem-ucc.org>. To join the Phone Stream, call 855-669-8965 prior to the start of worship. You may sign up to be called by the Phone Stream by contacting the church office during regular business hours.

(You will be called about 5 minutes before worship begins.)

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

RINGING OF THE BELLS

WELCOME AND SHARING CHURCH LIFE

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

CENTERING MUSIC

Clair de Lune (Moonlight)
Gail Jennings, piano

- Claude Debussy

OPENING WORSHIP

† **CALL TO WORSHIP** (adapted from Psalm 27)

One: The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear?

**All: The Lord is the stronghold of our lives;
let us sing praises to the Lord our God!**

† **OPENING HYMN**

NCH # 417 v.1-5

This is a Day of New Beginnings

† **OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

Holy One, open our hearts to you. Set a seal upon our hearts that is as porous as a sieve – permitting your love to freely flow into the world. By your Spirit, empower us to be as generous, loving and faithful as you. Amen.

LITANY OF GRATITUDE & GENEROSITY

One: All that we are is a gift from God:

All: Each breath, each heartbeat, filled with life and opportunity.

One: All that we have is a gift from God:

**All: Our lives, our relationships, our abilities, our necessities,
and our treasures.**

One: The earth, sun, moon and sea are gifts from God:

**All: We give thanks for the beauty of God's Creation, and our creaturely
kin who dwell among us.**

One: Rejoice and praise God for all of God's great gifts!

**All: We give thanks to you, O God, for the abundance you provide, so that
we too may generously share in love. Help us to be good stewards of all
you provide.**

PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

Benevolent God, you heap blessing upon blessing on us. You faithfully lavish us with your love and grace. All that we are and all that we have are blessed gifts from you. How can we possibly thank you? With humble and grateful hearts, we offer you our thanks and praise. Through Christ, our Lord and greatest gift of all. Amen.

RECEIVING – PLEDGES of TIME, TALENT & TREASURE

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Loving God, you call us to be good stewards of all the blessings you have bestowed upon us. Receive and bless these promises we have given. Help us to always use your gifts wisely. And lead us to share generously in all things. By your Spirit, multiply all that we offer, just as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fish. Help us to ensure food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, welcome to the stranger, clothing for the naked, and care for the sick and imprisoned. May all that we share offer new beginnings that bring hope, love and joy to all those we serve, in the name of Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

SONG OF PRAISE NCH #4, v.3 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You
You are giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blessed,
Well-spring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Loving Spirit, Father, Mother, all who love belong to you;
Teach us how to love each other, by that love our joy renew.

† PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you!

All: And also with you!

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

MESSAGE IN MUSIC

For the Beauty of the Earth

- John Rutter

Bethlehem Chancel Choir

Bailey Tallman, guest conductor; Gail Jennings, piano

1. For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies, over and around us lies;
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
This our joyful hymn of praise.

2. For the beauty of each hour, of the day and of the night
Hill and vale and tree and flower,
Sun and Moon and stars of light, Sun and Moon and stars of light;
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
This our joyful hymn of praise.

3. For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild, for all gentle thoughts and mild;
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
This our joyful hymn of praise.

4. For each perfect gift of Thine, to our race so freely given,
Graces human and divine,
Flow'rs of earth and buds of heav'n, flow'rs of earth and buds of heav'n;
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
This our joyful hymn of praise, our hymn of praise.

HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

One: . . .Now, let us prepare our hearts. The Lord be with you!

All: And also with you!

One: Lift up your hearts!

All: We lift them to the Lord!

One: Let us give thanks to God Most High!

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise!

PRAYER OF BLESSING

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING THE MEAL SPP # 112 *Come to the Table of Grace*

(note: all bread is gluten-free; red cups contain juice; white cups contain wine;
prepackaged elements also available; please place empty cups in the baskets)

Lyric order: grace, peace, love, joy

Come to the table of grace.

Come to the table of grace.

This is Christ's table not just yours or mine.

Come to the table of grace.

† PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (unison)

Holy One, we thank you for refreshing us at your table. We thank you and praise you for the gift of Christ's redemptive love and for giving us new life in him! By your Spirit, strengthen our faith; increase our love for one another; and send us forth into the world with courage and mercy. All this we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Savior. Amen.

MUSICAL RESPONSE **NCH # 236 *Halleluja*** sung twice
Halle, halle, halleluja. Halle, halle, halleluja.
Halle, halle, halleluja. Halleluja, halleluja.
Children may leave for Sunday School during the song.

SCRIPTURE READING

From the Letters: **Acts 2:42-47**

From the Gospel: **Matthew 6:19-21**

One: The Gospel of the Lord, for the people of God!

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

MESSAGE

Gift of Love

Pastor Dawn

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

† HYMN OF REFLECTION **NCH # 565** ***God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys & Concerns

Silent Prayer & Sung Petition ***Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying***

Lord, listen to your children praying; Lord, send your Spirit in this place;

**Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us pow'r,
send us grace.**

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Please use these words or those most familiar to you.

Our God in heaven, holy is your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

OUR TEAM:

Interim Pastor: Rev. Dawn Christenson

Associate Pastor: Rev. Diane White

Ministers: All the people

Director of Music & Organist: Dr. Naki Sung Kripfgans

Director of Handbells: Jim Rowan

Ensemble: Bethlehem Chancel Choir

Guest Conductor: Bailey Tallman

Guest Organist: Gail Jennings

Liturgist: Judy Coucouvanis

Sound Technician: Gary Rogers

Videographer: Dan Blakeney

Streaming Technician:

Security Volunteer: Volunteers needed, please contact church office

Community Time Host: Jenny Foster

Reach out to us:

423 S. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48104

info@bethlehem-ucc.org

<https://www.bethlehem-ucc.org>



a just world for all