

Bethlehem

United Church of Christ



Annual Report

2025-2026

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
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Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2301
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Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Mission Statement

*To worship God;
To learn and live the word of God;
To engage in Christian service and fellowship;
To invite others to join us on our faith journey
in the ministry of Jesus Christ.*

Covenant of Welcome
Approved May 22, 2016

We, at Bethlehem United Church of Christ, declare ourselves an Open and Affirming congregation where we celebrate Christ's extravagant love. We covenant with God and one another to welcome the diverse tapestry of all people, no matter their age, race, nationality, ethnicity, economic circumstance, marital or family status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. We invite everyone—believers and questioners, seekers and skeptics—to share their gifts in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings of our congregation.

CHURCH STAFF
2025-2026

Rev. Dawn Christenson	Interim Pastor
Rev. Diane White	Associate Pastor
Gwenda Mayes	Church Administrator
Lisa Reach	Administrative Assistant
William Husted	Maintenance
Dr. Naki Kripfgans	Music Director / Organist
James Rowan	Hand Bell Choir Director

GOVERNING BODY 2025-2026

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jim Rowan	President
Ron Dechert	Vice President
Sally Elmiger	Secretary
P. J. Lindemann	Treasurer

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Jim Rowan	President
Ron Dechert	Vice-President
Sally Elmiger	Secretary
P. J. Lindemann	Treasurer
Steve Darr	Business Team
Judy Coucouvanis/Jenny Foster	Member Engagement (co-chairs)
Katie Rowan	Outreach Team
OPEN	Worship Team
Diana Slaughter	Education Team

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

P. J. Lindemann	Chair
Tom Krell	Invited
Edgar Vasquez	Invited
Greg Gotham	Invited

FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Steve Darr	Chair
John Irwin	Invited
Michelle Loukotka	Invited
Jim Rowan	Invited
Randy Schneider	Invited
Dani Webb	Invited

PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE

Ron Dechert	Chair
Dindy Haab	Invited
Ele Kotowski	Invited

OTHER MINISTRY TEAM CHAIRS

Diana Slaughter	Education Ministry Team
Open Position	Worship Ministry Team
Judy Coucouvanis (co-chair)	Member Engagement
Jenny Foster (co-chair)	Member Engagement
Katie Rowan	Outreach Ministry Team
Kurt Schmerbert	Pastoral Relations

BETHLEHEM CEMETERY BOARD

Mary Jean Raab
Mary Friend
Shannon O'Reilly
Jamie Dylenski
Marilyn Pearson
Susan Irwin
Jim Lutz

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Elected Member
Elected Member
Invited Member

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda
June 7, 2026

- 1) Call to Order – J. Rowan
- 2) Verification of Forum – J. Rowan
- 3) Opening Prayer – Pastor Dawn
- 4) Leadership Council Annual Report – J. Rowan
- 5) Ministry Team and Cemetery Board Reports
- 6) Review of current and proposed budget – P.J. Lindemann
- 7) Call for vote on proposed FY 26/27 budget
- 8) Review of elected officer nominations - J. Rowan
- 9) Call for vote on elected officer nominations
- 10) New business from the congregation
- 11) Prayer of adjournment – Pastor Dawn

BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Annual Congregation Meeting
June 1, 2025
MINUTES

Attendance

In-person attendance: 48 members

Remote attendance via Zoom: 7 members (not all present simultaneously)

Total attendance: 55 members

Note: This was the first annual meeting held with live streaming for remote participation.

1. Opening Prayer

Pastor Dawn led the congregation in opening prayer.

2. Call to Order / Determination of Quorum

Jim Rowan called the meeting to order and determined that a quorum was present.

An agenda change was announced: the bylaws discussion was moved earlier in the meeting order.

Copies of the annual report and proposed bylaws were made available to attendees.

3. Bylaws Presentation

The proposed bylaws were presented to the congregation. The bylaws had been revised by a dedicated committee.

Discussion and clarification of certain sections followed.

Vote on proposed bylaws:

- In-person: Approved by majority vote
- Zoom: 6 yes / 0 no

MOTION CARRIED. New bylaws approved.

4. Finance Report / Proposed Budget

P.J. presented the financial report and proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Current Financial Position

- General checking balance: \$298,000
- Investments: \$686,000
- The church ended the prior fiscal year with a \$7,000 surplus — significantly better than the projected \$112,000 deficit
- Member giving surpassed pledged amounts

Proposed FY Budget

- Budget projects a \$30,000 deficit, an improvement from the prior year's budget projection
- Personnel expenses reduced, reflecting an interim pastor for approximately two-thirds of the year
- Slight increases in facilities and worship expenses
- Budget does not yet include costs of the ongoing pastor search; those expenses may be covered using McKay funds
- A slight overall budget increase is driven by rising energy and insurance costs

Vote on proposed budget:

- In-person: Approved by majority vote
- Zoom: 6 yes / 0 no

MOTION CARRIED. Budget approved.

5. Leadership / Ministry Team Reports

Each ministry team offered a brief report. Teams were acknowledged for their contributions to the congregation.

Worship

Report received.

Education

Report received.

Member Care

Report received.

Outreach

Report received.

Stephen Ministry

Kurt highlighted the Stephen Ministry's role in providing short-term care and invited congregation members to participate.

Pastor Search Committee

Dawn explained the selection process. Five members have agreed to serve on the search committee.

Cemetery Board

Mary Jean presented the cemetery board report:

- Cemetery is financially stable and independent of the church's general budget
- A new natural burial area is planned; the landscape architect's proposal calls for pinning plots in Block 18
- Congregation members were encouraged to plan ahead for cemetery needs
- Note: A correction is needed to the cemetery board accounting regarding the Barbara Cope balance transaction

6. Proposed Candidates for Office

Jim Rowan presented the slate of officer nominations. The new bylaws, approved earlier in the meeting, established the structure of the Executive Committee and Leadership Council.

Nominations Presented

- President: Current president Jim Rowan announced candidacy for a second term
- Pastoral Relations Committee Chair: Kurt Schmerberg (newly organized committee)
- Vice President: Position open — to be filled by Leadership Council
- Worship Chair: Position open — to be filled by Leadership Council

Vote on slate of nominations:

- In-person: Approved by majority vote
- Zoom: 3 yes / 0 no (2 did not vote)

MOTION CARRIED. Slate of nominations approved.

Several members were recognized for their years of service.

7. New Business

Action items arising from the meeting:

- Leadership Council to fill open Vice President position (with additional personnel responsibilities)
- Leadership Council to fill open Worship Chair position
- Congregation members: submit remaining pledge cards to reach the target of 70 returns
- Cemetery Board to proceed with pinning plots in Block 18 for natural burials
- Kurt Schmerberg to begin role as Chair of the Pastoral Relations Committee

8. Closing Prayer

Pastor Dawn led the congregation in closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes recorded by: P.J. Lindemann

Date approved:

Annual Report

May 7, 2026

Rev. Dawn Christenson, Intentional Interim Minister

What a year this has been! From implementing a new governance model last June, to our cemetery being devastated by a tornado this April. And through it all, we have persevered and grown stronger together.

I am proud of our leaders and ministry team volunteers, for how they have adopted and adjusted to the new governance system. The new system is working well. Yes, we will need to continue to adapt and tweak policies and procedures, to fine-tune Bethlehem's operations and ministry. But the overall governance and, thereby the Church, is set on a solid foundation.

I am so pleased with the work of the Search Committee. The work they did in drafting the Church's Profile was outstanding. Leadership Council was pleased with and endorsed the final document. It represents Bethlehem very well, in a very open, honest, and at times amusing way. Yes, it is filled with BUCC's plethora of positive attributes. And it honestly shares difficulties and growing edges. Collectively, the contents of this document, I believe, have contributed to the overwhelming influx of clergy profiles. Twenty-two pastors, to-date, have submitted their profiles for consideration. This is an unheard-of number today! Most churches today receive three or four; six is considered exceptional. To have received twenty-two speaks volumes about Bethlehem UCC – YOU are a precious gem; a highly-desirable community of faith to serve. I couldn't agree more. The Search Committee has been carefully and diligently narrowing the field of candidates. I believe soon and very soon, they will have discerned the very best one to present to the congregation.

Because this will likely be my final Annual Report and Annual Meeting with you, I would like to take the time to pause and express my deepest gratitude and encourage you. When we began our journey together, nearly three years ago, you were so very broken, anxious, weary and sad. Many wounds and grief hung like a deep, dark cloud among you, with seemingly no light to be seen. Even in worship, you merely 'went through the motions.' Your energy was all but absent. Since then, you have gone through a remarkable transformation. Thanks be to God! And that transformation is a credit to all of you who have dug deep and worked hard to heal, to forgive, and to grow in faith and relationships. I AM SO PROUD OF YOU! This is your resurrection moment in time – in the long and rich history of Bethlehem United Church of Christ. Yes, there are still wounds that need further healing and grief and sorrows that require tender care. I encourage you to love one another, as Christ loves you. With love, you can continue to heal and journey together toward even brighter tomorrows and new ways of being. But I caution you – do not ignore or try to bury the wounds and grief that remain. Even Jesus' wounds were evident after the resurrection. Let yours serve as reminders from the past, to help you avoid repeating those historical difficulties. And may they serve, as Jesus' wounds did, to remind you to care for and be gentle with one another, to love one another, and to forgive one another as you have been forgiven in Christ. Doing so will keep you united and able to face any hurdles the future may bring.

Unity is so important. Love is the glue that makes it possible. Following Jesus' command to love one another, he prayed for his disciples and asked for God's protection. He said, "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one." You are in this together, by design. Each bringing unique gifts of the Spirit to the whole. Rely on one

another; lean on one another; and support one another in all things. This is how your predecessors over the past 193 years have provided a lasting legacy – a legacy of Christ, the head of the Church; a legacy rooted in love.

It has been my privilege to sojourn with you on this transitional journey. Thank you for trusting me, following my guidance, and helping me to grow as a person and as a pastor. I pray that you will bless your new pastor, as you have blessed me. I shall miss you, when I depart. I will continue to hold you in prayer, and look forward to the day when the Lord provides an opportunity for our paths to cross again. Until then, may the Lord bless and keep you, ever in God's care – always going before you to guide you, behind you to encourage you, beneath you to uplift you, beside you to befriend you, and may the Lord dwell in your hearts and fill you with a peace that surpasses all understanding. Amen.

In gratitude with the love of Christ,
Pastor Dawn

Bethlehem UCC Leadership Report 2025-2026

This has been a pivotal year for Leadership at Bethlehem, as we have transitioned into a new model of church governance consistent with the adoption of bylaws changes at last year's congregational meeting. The Executive Committee, consisting of four church officers and the pastor, is the core leadership body for church. The expanded Leadership Council - which includes ministry team chairs and a representative of the Cemetery Board in addition to the Executive Committee – allows for greater integration of ministry teams into church governance and has a special role in visionary planning for the church. As a result of these bylaws revisions, the number of elected officials (including Cemetery Board members) was reduced from 27 to 16, which has allowed us to fill all but one of the elected positions for this current year. Similarly, the number of ministry teams was reduced from nine to five. This has meant in many cases that the remaining ministry teams have had to broaden their activities as they have assumed additional responsibilities.

Some of the areas that received attention from church leadership this year include:

- The development of a personnel subcommittee that is assuming responsibility for management of personnel issues, including updating job descriptions and performing staff evaluations
- Providing input to the pastoral search committee in their development of a church profile
- Developing a church safety committee that is identifying mechanisms for ensuring increased safety in the church environment
- Development of several policy guidelines for church procedures. These include: Grounds and Facilities Use Policy; Food and Drink Policy for Church Facilities; Policies and Procedures for Church Committees. In additions, policies for church safety are in development.
- Inclusion of representation from the Cemetery Board members in Leadership Council meetings
- Coordination of oversight of church rentals in conjunction with the Facilities Ministry Team and office staff
- Efforts to introduce more internal communication among church leadership, congregation, and staff.
- Efforts to make Bethlehem's services more visible to the Ann Arbor Community
- Ongoing oversight of church finances and development of next year's budget

Leadership at Bethlehem has been making every effort to be fiscally responsible. Even so, Bethlehem finds itself in fiscally challenged times. As I write this in early May, our church revenue is running behind budgeted expectations for this fiscal year by 11%. Given this as our baseline, we know that expenses will increase over last year with the start of a new pastor.

These circumstances dictate that we at Bethlehem will be required to deal with these realities. Certainly, as we look to and plan for the future, we will be doing much of this with a new incoming pastor. Even so, I believe that this process should begin in the near future, even if a new pastor has not yet joined

us. As a starting point, Leadership Council will devote a portion of its June meeting to visionary planning for Bethlehem.

Having said this, I want to express how impressed and proud I am of the leadership displayed in Bethlehem, by those in leadership positions, and those who are not. I see our ministry teams capably meeting their responsibilities, which in some cases has included absorbing new roles as a result of bylaw changes. Additionally, I experience ministry teams as generating new and creative ideas – and renewing some past ones (e.g., pretzel-making and sponsoring the homeless shelter) - about how to serve our church and our community. I continue to be very impressed with the stewardship demonstrated by the Cemetery Board in the care of our cemetery, at all times but particularly their response to recent storm-inflicted damage. I see people stepping forward to give of themselves and participate in various aspects of church life. It is this type of giving and caring that I believe will carry us forward as we engage in planning for our future.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Rowan, Church President

Education Ministry Team 2025/2026 Annual Report

The Education Ministry Team has had a busy year with classes, activities and projects.

We introduced a new practice of having a theme for each month, or for a season, as we did with Advent and Lent, each with an easy to remember catch phrase and related Bible passages.

This brings more continuity to our lessons and allows reinforcement of the theme over several weeks, even if children do not attend every Sunday. We have had positive feedback from parents about this. They noted that their child talks about the themes at home and is able to relate them to life situations. Examples of the themes include: Welcome! (September; Matthew 19:14 and Leviticus 19:33-34) and God is love (February; John 3:16 and Romans 8:35-37). We are also striving to create more opportunities for the children to acquire hands-on experience in ministry and leadership, and to integrate them into the life of the church.

We carried out the following activities:

2025 McKay scholarships

Scholarships were awarded to Abby Bowers, Jacob Paton, John Schenk, Carrie Schwartz and Katie Schwartz.

Fall school supplies collection

We donated 674 items to Peace Neighborhood Center and Alpha House

Sushi Sundays (October 19, with a trial run on June 8)

Forget about pizza. What kids like today is sushi! The October theme was God knows me inside and out (Psalm 139:1, 13-14). Our sushi was plain nori (a thin sheet of compressed edible seaweed) on the outside, but the inside was filled with yummy rice, veg, fruit and cooked fish. (BTW, sushi refers to the rice. It doesn't mean raw fish.)

Screening of the film "She Rises Up!" (November 9)

SERRV International sponsored a special pre-release screening of this award-winning film. It highlights the intersection of women, poverty and entrepreneurship in the developing world.

Advent workshop and potluck (December 7)

Nancy Pieske once again provided new crafts for everyone to make. Jan Eadie organized the potluck.

Valentine's Day craft time (February 8)

In addition to making a craft in Sunday school, we brought craft materials to Community Time and invited everyone to join in.

Lenten project

175 lunches were prepared for our week of the Rotating Shelter Program. They were positively received by our guests. Leftover lunches were donated to Groundcover. A total of \$1789.19 was raised in cash and in-kind donations. Our shelter lunch costs came in under budget at \$455.45 because we were able to take advantage of sales and bulk purchases. The remaining \$1333.74 has been donated to Jewish Family Services, which provides services to all in need in the community, particularly to newly arrived refugees. This was a truly hands-on project that involved our children in planning, fundraising, publicity, shopping, and packing the lunches. Adult members also took part in the packing process. We are very thankful for the support of the congregation in this effort.

Palm Sunday potluck (March 29)

This potluck was under the leadership of Jan Eadie.

We're looking forward to building on this year's momentum to carry us forward in the year to come.
Respectfully submitted,

Diana Slaughter, chair

Members at large:

Jan Eadie

Eileen Koprowski

Nancy Pieske

Jane Schmerberg

Jill Schwartz

Christina Wilk

Member Engagement Ministry Team Annual Report 2025/2026

This past year, the Member Engagement Ministry Team focused on helping our church remain a caring, connected, and welcoming community. Through simple but meaningful acts—phone calls, visits, cards, prayer, and time spent together—we worked to ensure that our members and friends feel remembered and valued.

A central part of our ministry is caring for those who are homebound or experiencing health challenges. Team members stayed in touch through regular calls, visits, and notes, offering encouragement and support. Our card ministry, grief ministry and prayer chain continue to be important ways we reach out during times of illness, loss, or life changes.

Building community within the congregation has also been a key focus. Over the year, we gathered feedback and made adjustments to Community Time (coffee hour). After some trial and error, it returned to its familiar time after worship, with a simpler setup and shared responsibility for refreshments. These changes have helped create a more relaxed and welcoming time for conversation and connection.

We have been grateful for opportunities to come together through special events. Our pretzel rolling events were a highlight—bringing people together for fellowship while also raising funds for church initiatives. Some of the funds we raised this year were used to purchase an Observer ad which highlighted our Holy Week services. Additional activities included a Christmas cookie exchange and preparing Advent gifts for homebound members, helping them stay connected during the holiday season.

The team also coordinated several meaningful seasonal and congregational care efforts. For Mother's Day, geraniums were purchased and displayed on the altar, then shared with mothers following the service. For Graduate Sunday, we honored our grads with soft-bound bibles and journals. On Father's day we distributed "Hugs and Kisses" with a message of care from the Member Engagement Team. Finally, during our Totenfest service we honored those who passed away during the year by giving each family member in attendance a white chrysanthemum.

The team supported outreach efforts as well, including discussions and participation in programs like the rotating men's shelter. We also updated our Time and Talents process to make it easier for members to find meaningful ways to get involved in church life. All of our church volunteers were shown appreciation for their service to our church during the Volunteer Recognition Worship service in May. Members were asked to share how they give of their time and talents on a special banner that read "We Love Our BUCC Volunteers!" and cake was served in their honor.

With the adoption of new church bylaws, our team has taken on the responsibilities of the Nominating Committee. This includes helping identify and encourage members to serve in leadership and volunteer roles. We also strengthened communication with church leadership through participation in Leadership Team meetings.

As we look ahead, we hope to continue strengthening connections across the congregation, supporting those in need, and creating opportunities for fellowship and service. We are grateful for the many ways our church community shows care for one another, and we look forward to building on that spirit in the year to come.

Thanks to our team members: Teresa Beagle, Cathleen Connell, Dindy Haab, Jacquie Katz, Nan Lefton, Mary Jean Raab, Beth Wenner, and Pastor Diane White.

Submitted by,

Jenny Foster and Judy Coucovanis
Member Engagement Ministry Team Co- Chairs

STATISTICAL INFORMATION – 2025 - 2026

Baptisms	2
Confirmation Class	0
Weddings	1
Funerals/Deaths	7

359

Membership as of December 31, 2024

Additions

Births	0
Confirmation	0
Transfer or Affirmation	1

Losses

Death	11
Transfer/Drop	7

342

Membership as of December 31, 2025

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Pledges	56
Giving Units (member & non-member)	169

Bethlehem Cemetery Association Board
Annual Report
Fiscal Year June 1, 2025 - May 31, 2026

Dear Members and Friends,

As reported in the last two annual reports, the cemetery board continues operations largely using volunteers. The number of hours spent weekly is difficult to calculate, but for the six board members, it is likely close to one full-time employee equivalent, not including 12 monthly board meeting preparation meeting times and follow-ups. Again, the work has been plentiful, and has been done with enthusiasm and positive momentum, the pursuit of our call to mission and Servan leadership.

Some of our major initiatives during the 2025 - 2026 fiscal year include:

- Brad Bouchie of Brad's Ultimate Services was offered and accepted a new three year and three-month contract, taking his service supplied at our Cemetery until the end of 2028.
- The six-person board of trustees met with the Church executive leadership on two occasions for short exchanges of information, resulting in a request for a dedicated in person meeting in early 2026.
- Road maintenance and tree trimming are always high priority requiring large financial investments. This past year was no exception, and the Tornado of April 15, 2026, with the State of Emergency declared by Governor Whitmer, will be a story to be told long into the future.
- Our website continues to be enhanced with new features. This method of providing information has improved communication. Our website may be found at Bethlehemcemeteryaa.org.
- We continued to develop Block 18 as a space for future natural burials. At the time of last year's annual meeting, we were waiting to see the wildflowers grow. Well, they grew and grew, very tall, and we now must determine how the ground cover will work with burials.
- Our three bank accounts, two being investment accounts and a checking account, remain at the Bank of Ann Arbor.
- Barbara Cope, a past member of Bethlehem Church, bequeathed \$50,000 to be endowed in memory of her family, and the interest used for historical maintenance. The fund is called the Lutz Vogel Fund. We received the first interest award from this fund this past month.
- Our paid staff includes Brad Bouchie of Brad's Ultimate Services, Karen Samford, John Samford and Shannon O'Reilly. And we thank Gwen Mayes and her staff for their help when needed.

To you, our church members and friends, we promise to keep the communication flowing, always looking for your insight and feedback. And we thank you for your financial support of your cemetery. We do not have a line item in the church budget, but our insurance is paid and our payroll is administered by the church office. We are supported by cemetery lot sales, burial services performed, interest from

cemetery perpetual care and cemetery association invested monies, and generous gifts from you and the community.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Dylenski, Treasurer; Mary Friend, vice president; Susan Irwin, member; Shannon O'Reilly, secretary; Marilyn Pearson, member; and Mary Jean Raab, president.

Bethlehem Cemetery Board Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Bethlehem Cemetery Association
December 31, 2025
Checking Account

Balance January 1, 2025	\$ 36,438.00
Receipts:	
Sales: Lots	49,020.00
Sales: Niches and Memorial Garden	20,020.00
Burials	76,100.00
Deed Transfers	2,230.00
Contributions/Memorials	6,558.00
Contribution from Barbara Cope Estate	51,537.50
Interest Income	594.28
Receipt Total	\$ 206,059.78
Disbursements:	
Net Credit Card Fees	(7.59)
Grounds Maintenance Contract	74,235.00
Commissions to Sexton	31,431.00
Engraving	3,772.31
Road Repairs	3,000.00
Trees & Shrubs	19,900.00
Building Maintenance	4,020.03
Office & Cemetery Supplies	1,590.44
Telephone	513.40
Utilities: Electric	2,568.80
Utilities: Gas	633.61
Utilities: Water	7,590.51
Dumpster/Trash Removal	1,026.18
Software Maintenance and Renewals	349.54
Professional Fees	805.00
Website Development and Maintenance	2,586.00
Cemetery Development: Natural Burial Area	-
Record Keeping	2,400.00
Accounting	3,600.00
Cope Funds transferred to Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation	51,537.50
Bank Fees	17.60
Miscellaneous Expense	450.00
Disbursement Total	\$ 212,019.33
Adjustment	\$ -
Transfer out to Cemetery Association Investment Account	\$ -
Transfer 15% of Sales to Perpetual Care Investment Account	\$ 12,546.38
Balance December 31, 2025	\$ 17,932.07
Graves/Niches Sold	36
Openings/Closings	48
Perpetual Care Investment Account Balance	\$ 1,028,615.86
Cemetery Association Investment Account Balance	\$ 434,315.73

Outreach Ministry Team 2025- 2026 Annual Report

During this past year, the Outreach Ministry Team focused our attention and support on four local agencies:

Food Gatherers

Alpha House

Peace Neighborhood Center

Evangelical Homes of Michigan

From Bethlehem's operating budget \$3000 each was dispersed to Food Gatherers, Alpha House, and Peace Neighborhood Center, and \$1474 to Evangelical Homes of Michigan.

New projects and events this year:

- We were very pleased that Bethlehem was able to be part of the Rotating Shelter Program, continuing our longtime history with this program after not participating in it for several years. This effort was made possible by the support from Leadership Council, Facilities Ministry Team, our office and pastoral staff, the 14 members who donated sandwiches and snacks. and especially the 22 overnight volunteers. Volunteers came from our congregation, Groundcover News, and Church of the Good Shepherd. The Education Ministry Team provided sack lunches for the entire week for the guests as part of the Sunday School Lenten Project.
- Outreach sponsored a benefit recital and reception given by our music director, Naki Kripfgans and guest violinist Kristina Zlatareva. Donations of \$990 were raised for the Michigan Immigration Rights Center.
- A presentation by Kari Renner, CEO of Evangelical Homes of Michigan, and luncheon was held on April 26. • McKay Community Benevolence funds were distributed in consultation with Pastor Dawn to cover a community member's special need and to Our Church's Wider Mission.

In addition we have also contributed with donations and volunteer hours in the following ways:

- Four walkers participated in CROP Walk 2025 and raised \$1772.
- Education Ministry Team collected 2 boxes of school supplies and more than 30 backpacks that were donated to Peace Neighborhood Center and Alpha House.
- Education Ministry Team raised \$1789 for the Sunday School Lenten Project. Funds were used to provide sack lunches for the Rotating Shelter with the remainder of \$1333 donated to Jewish Family Services.
- Education Ministry Team gathered many boxes of mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves that were donated to Peace Neighborhood Center, Alpha House, and Groundcover for Christmas.
- \$790 in Meijer and Target gift cards were donated to Peace Neighborhood Center for the holidays.
- An additional \$325 was donated to Food Gatherers for the holidays.
- Food barrel collection is ongoing. In November we were able to send 2 full barrels to Food Gatherers. Our total for the year is estimated to be 8 barrels.
- Volunteers helped at Food Gatherers Warehouse on Saturday May 9 and June 6.

- Volunteers worked on Saturday August 9, refurbishing houses for Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley. Fundraising allowed us to donate \$1380.
- Volunteers from our congregation prepared meals the first Sunday of every month at the Community Kitchen.
- Volunteers helped weekly on Fridays at Peace Neighborhood Center with food distributions.
- Bethlehem supports Groundcover News by providing office space in our building funded by the community benevolence portion of the McKay bequest.

In total, an estimated 270 volunteer hours, and \$24,805 was donated by Bethlehem including budgeted Outreach funds, McKay funds, and donations from the congregation for special projects. This is in addition to the many items collected through our food barrels and EMT projects.

We are grateful for the dedication of our OMT members: Jane Schmerberg, Eileen Koprowski, Mary Jean Raab, and Katie Rowan. And most especially, we are grateful for Bethlehem's generosity with their gifts of donations and volunteering.

Outreach Ministry Team:

Eileen Koprowski

Mary Jean Raab

Katie Rowan, Chair

Jane Schmerberg

FACILITIES MINISTRY TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

June 1, 2025-May 31, 2026

Members: Steve Darr, Chair, Jim Rowan-LC liaison, Gwen Mayes-Church Administrator, John Irwin, Michelle Loukotka, Randy Schneider, Dani Webb

Advisors: Bob Loukotka, Jim Stadel

We wish to thank the congregation for their support as we continue to develop and implement plans to maintain, improve, and preserve all of our buildings and properties.

REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS

The following repairs and improvements were funded from our budget or, at our request, from undesignated funds. These requests for undesignated funds were approved by the Finance Team. We have had fewer emergency repair issues this year due to the major projects we were able to complete in recent years.

- Additional surge suppressor added to power line that serves the organ and refurbished circuit boards in organ.
- Sanctuary pew cushions were recovered.
- Safety tape added to stairwell to lower levels in 5th Avenue entrance. Light in stairwell now on 24/7.
- Working to update the elevator to new State codes.
- An exterior clean-up day was held last fall.
- Completed emergency and remedial repairs on slate roof as found necessary by Duke Roofing inspection.
- Video doorbell system installed at 5th Avenue entrance so renters can allow their participants access to the building. This will eliminate the need for the door to be open at hours when renters are here but the office is closed.
- Replaced three more windows in the lowest level. This work was suspended several years ago when other needs were more pressing.

OTHER

The Maintenance Personnel has continued with the following tasks this year.

- Setting up Fellowship Hall
- Cleaning and buffing floors: hallways, Fellowship Hall, Youth Room, Choir Room
- Cleaning A/C filters in the Lounge and the Sanctuary and changing those in the Office
- Painting
- Mowing at the church and at the Hewett Parsonage
- Weeding, spreading mulch, and sweeping 5th Avenue canopy entrance
- Installing emergency lights, changing light bulbs to LEDs
- Does building walk-through Sunday pm after rentals finish
- Takes trash to curb Sunday, returns receptacles on Monday

PARSONAGES

437 4th Avenue

- On June 1, 2023 this house became a rental property with Reinhart Realtors managing it for us.

815 Hewett

- On November 1, 2023 this property became a rental property being managed for us by Reinhart Realtors. It is vacant currently. We will not attempt to rent it again until we call a new pastor and know if they desire to occupy it.

Our **ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE LIST** is monitored throughout the year to ensure that inspections and preventive maintenance chores are carried out in a timely manner. We also take on projects to maintain the landscaping, to dispose of unnecessary furniture and equipment in the building, and to help with cleaning areas of the building that were removed from the job description of the custodial care company as a cost-cutting measure.

Bethlehem UCC Personnel Committee

Annual Report June 2026

Dear Members of the Congregation,

Grace and peace to you.

Your Personnel Committee—Dindy Haab, Ele Kotowski, and Ron Dechert—has been actively engaged over the past year in strengthening the foundation that supports our church staff and ministries. We would like to share several key accomplishments.

First, the committee developed and implemented a new paid sick time policy to ensure compliance with Michigan's updated legal requirements for all paid staff. This step helps protect both our employees and the church.

We also created a standardized position description template for all paid roles within the church. Existing job descriptions were carefully reviewed and incorporated into this new format, bringing greater clarity and consistency to staff responsibilities.

In addition, the committee developed new templates for annual performance evaluations, including a self-evaluation component. These tools are designed to support meaningful feedback, professional growth, and clear communication between staff and supervisors. The new templates have been distributed and are being used for evaluations this year.

Finally, we reviewed the personnel budget, and recommended merit increases for each employee, ensuring alignment with the proposed annual budget and a fair approach to staff compensation.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity and remain committed to supporting a healthy, effective, and well-supported staff for our congregation.

Sincerely,

The Personnel Committee

Dindy Haab

Ele Kotowski

Ron Dechert

Bethlehem UCC Safety and Security Committee

Annual Report June 2026

Dear Members of the Congregation,

We are pleased to share an update on the work of the Safety and Security Committee. The committee, consisting of Rev. Dawn Christenson, Gwen Mayes, Ron Dechert, and Steve Darr, has made meaningful progress over the past year in strengthening the safety and security of our church community.

A key accomplishment has been the completion of a comprehensive self-assessment of both our building and congregational security practices. This process helped us identify areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement.

Following the assessment, the committee carefully prioritized actionable items, focusing first on those that offer the greatest impact while requiring minimal financial investment. This approach allows us to make practical, steady improvements without placing undue strain on church resources.

In addition, we have begun building relationships with neighboring churches that are engaged in similar safety and security efforts. These partnerships provide valuable opportunities to share knowledge, resources, and best practices.

We remain committed to ensuring that our church is a safe and welcoming place for all. Thank you for your continued support.

Submitted on Behalf of the Safety and Security Committee

Reverend Dawn Christenson

Gwen Mayes

Steve Darr

Ron Dechert

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Nominations for Elected Officers June 2026-May 2027

Elected Office FY 25/26	Officer FY 2025-2026	Nominee FY 2026 - 2027
Executive Committee		
President	Jim Rowan	Jim Rowan
Vice-President	Ron Dechert	Ron Dechert
Treasurer	P. J. Lindemann	P. J. Lindemann
Secretary	B. Schenk/S. Elmiger	Teresa Beagle
Member Engagement		
Co-Chair	Judy Coucouvanis	
Co-Chair	Jenny Foster	
Education		
Chair	Diana Slaughter	
Worship		
Chair	Open	Michelle Loukotka
Outreach		
Chair	Katie Rowan	
Business Team/Facilities		
Chair	Steve Darr	Steve Darr
Pastoral Relations		
Chair	Kurt Schmerberg	
Cemetery Board		
	Mary Jean Raab	
	Mary Friend	Mary Friend
	Shannon O'Reilly	Shannon O'Reilly
	Jamie Dylenski	
	Susan Irwin	
	Marilyn Pearson	

MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS 2025-2026

MEMORIALS

BROADCAST FUND

Carol Carzon
Virginia Dabich
Laura & Joseph O'Reilly
Ron Jaworowski
Laura Ann Jaworowski
Wilma Wahl

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE FUND

Glen Diuble
Norm & Helen Grob
Frederick & Lela Keppler
Hugh Keppler

CHOIR FUND

Ron White

CURRENT FUND

Carol Carson

EASTER

Carole Katz

FOOD GATHERERS

Carol Carzon

GENERAL MEMORIAL FUND

Jan Burnham
Carol Carzon
Norma Crouch
Robert Finkbiner
Jay Katz
Evelyn Mullreed
Myrna Pancost
George Perros
Carl Waltjen
Ron White
Jane Schneider

MUSIC FUND

Ron White

PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Arlene Connell
Ryan Connell
Glen Diuble
Wilbert & Betty Diuble
Bill Fellenberger
Hilda McLaughlin
Douglas Mensch

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

Beverly Hanselman

WORSHIP FUND

Ron White

Financial Reports

Revenue and Expense Summary

May 2026

Date : 07/15/2026
Time : 12:34:32 PM

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Analysis of Revenues & Expenses - Summary
Fund: General Fund
May 2026

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Accounts	MTD Actual (This Year)	YTD Actual (This Year)	YTD Actual (Last Year)	Annual Budget (This Year)	% of Annual Budget Used (This Year)
REVENUES					
Current Offerings	\$19,309.00	\$226,507.31	\$245,501.22	\$267,000.00	84.83 %
Other Revenue	\$6,995.02	\$143,667.89	\$166,268.99	\$159,450.00	90.10 %
In and Out Income - GF	\$361.00	(\$1,318.88)	\$877.80	\$0.00	0.00 %
Total REVENUES	\$26,665.02	\$368,856.32	\$412,648.01	\$426,450.00	86.49 %
EXPENDITURES					
Education	\$39.37	\$307.40	\$895.57	\$1,775.00	17.32 %
Personnel	\$15,935.68	\$206,358.59	\$192,098.56	\$236,460.00	87.27 %
Administration	\$2,462.92	\$36,347.41	\$36,066.90	\$35,702.00	101.81 %
Outreach	\$0.00	\$10,474.00	\$10,474.00	\$10,474.00	100.00 %
Denominational Giving	\$0.00	\$1,214.50	\$1,045.00	\$1,171.00	103.71 %
Facilities					
Building Maintenance & Repairs	\$4,527.84	\$96,519.24	\$83,037.71	\$88,900.00	108.57 %
Parsonage	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00 %
Utilities	\$5,783.74	\$48,810.33	\$43,209.80	\$46,400.00	105.19 %
Total Facilities	\$10,311.58	\$145,329.57	\$126,247.51	\$135,300.00	107.41 %
Worship	\$3,589.54	\$42,274.42	\$42,517.89	\$42,033.00	100.57 %
Member Engagement	\$1,483.37	\$1,613.15	\$1,182.33	\$1,750.00	92.18 %
In and Out Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00 %
Leadership Council	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	66.67 %
Spiritual Growth & Development	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$258.64	\$128.00	0.00 %
Stephen Ministries	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00 %
Total EXPENDITURES	\$34,822.46	\$444,919.04	\$410,766.40	\$466,293.00	95.42 %
Net Total	(\$8,157.44)	(\$76,062.72)	\$1,861.61	(\$39,843.00)	0.00 %

Memorial and Gift Accounts

May 2026

Date : 07/15/2026
Time : 12:34:31 PM

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Memorial & Gifts
Fund: Memorials & Gifts
May 2026

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Accounts	Beginning Balance	Restricted Revenue	Restricted Expenses	Credit Adjustments	Debit Adjustments	Ending Balance
Temporary Restricted						
Memorials & Gifts - Facilities						
00020.114.01 - Property Improvement Fund	\$14,520.96	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$425.00	\$0.00	\$14,945.96
00020.117.01 - Feldkamp Trust Fund Income	\$32,730.16	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$71.39	\$4,000.00	\$28,801.55
00020.120.01 - Heating & A/C Improvement Fund	\$462.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$462.00
00020.130.01 - Building Repairs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
00020.140.01 - Cope Fund for Facilities Maintenance	\$154,612.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$154,612.50
Total Memorials & Gifts - Facilities	\$202,325.62	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$496.39	\$4,000.00	\$198,822.01
Memorials & Gifts - Music/Worship						
00020.104.01 - Broadcast Fund	\$6,690.57	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$140.00	\$77.47	\$6,753.10
00020.105.01 - Music/Choir Fund	\$24,763.61	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$1,605.00	\$23,558.61
00020.109.01 - Organ Fund	\$2,248.30	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,248.30
00020.110.01 - Handbell Fund	\$1,035.03	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,035.03
00020.112.01 - Alternative Worship Fund	\$2,644.03	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,644.03
00020.129.01 - Video Ministry	\$5,398.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$375.00	\$0.00	\$5,773.50
Total Memorials & Gifts - Music/Worship	\$42,780.04	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$915.00	\$1,682.47	\$42,012.57
Mem & Gifts - Cemetery Board						
00020.101.01 - Cemetery Maintenance Fund	\$6,815.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,060.00	\$920.00	\$8,955.50
00020.150.01 - Lutz Vogel Fund for Bethlehem Cemet	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Mem & Gifts - Cemetery Board	\$6,815.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,060.00	\$920.00	\$8,955.50
Memorials & Gifts - CEC						
00020.106.01 - Church School Fund	\$8,872.15	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,872.15
Total Memorials & Gifts - CEC	\$8,872.15	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,872.15
Memorials & Gifts - Finance						
00020.107.01 - Brewster Estate Fund	\$1,895.69	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,895.69
00020.108.01 - Tree of Life Fund	\$22,377.05	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$22,377.05
00020.111.01 - General Memorial Fund	\$51,226.81	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$51,326.81
00020.115.01 - Kulenkamp Trust Fund	\$4,191.51	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,191.51
00020.118.01 - Welcome Special Projects Fund	\$14,561.32	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,907.78	\$0.00	\$16,469.10
00020.126.01 - Capital Campaign - Fellowship Hall	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
00020.128.01 - Stephen Ministry	\$9,726.81	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$9,726.81
00020.199.01 - End of Year Close Account	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Memorials & Gifts - Finance	\$103,979.19	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,007.78	\$0.00	\$105,986.97
Memorials & Gifts - Youth						
00020.123.01 - Intergenerational Mission Fund	\$6,906.81	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,906.81
00020.124.01 - Youth Fund	\$18,944.42	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,944.42
Total Memorials & Gifts - Youth	\$25,851.23	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$25,851.23
Memorials & Gifts - Outreach						
00020.125.01 - Outreach	\$886.02	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$886.02
Total Memorials & Gifts - Outreach	\$886.02	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$886.02
Total Temporary Restricted	\$391,509.75	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,479.17	\$6,602.47	\$391,386.45

Balance Sheet

May 2026

Date : 07/15/2026
Time : 12:34:35 PM

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Balance Sheet
May 2026

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Accounts

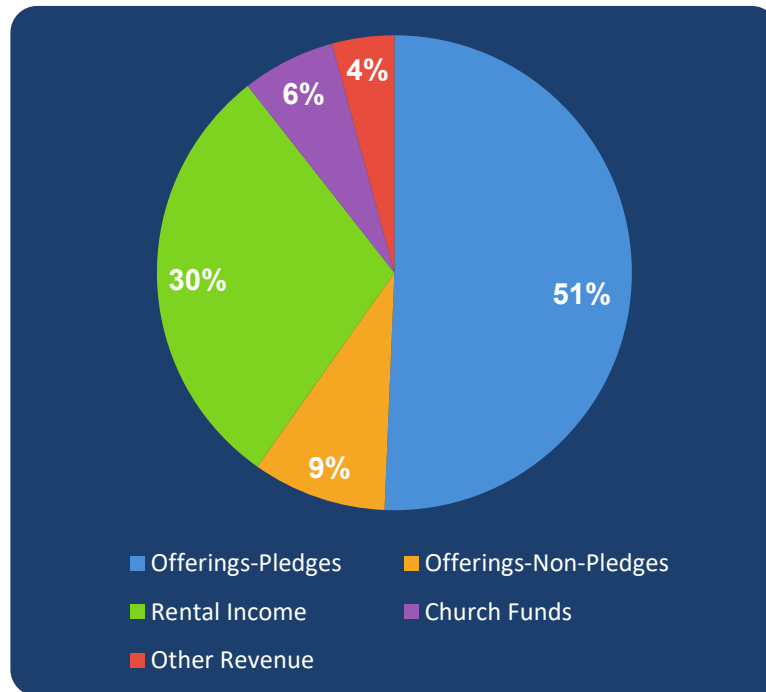
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
00000.002.01 - General Checking	\$62,641.70	
McKay Funds		
00000.025.01 - McKay Funds Checking	\$68,624.14	
Total McKay Funds	<u>\$68,624.14</u>	
Total Current Assets		\$131,265.84
Investments		
00000.010.01 - Bank of Ann Arbor Investment	\$955,944.39	
Total Investments		\$955,944.39
Total ASSETS		<u>\$1,087,210.23</u>
LIABILITIES, FUND BALANCE, & Restricted Funds		
LIABILITIES		
00000.030.01 - Security Deposits	\$3,350.00	
00000.053.01 - Deferred Compensation	\$16,170.00	
00000.065.01 - State withholding taxes	(\$503.13)	
00000.070.01 - Marshall Flower Fund	\$171.51	
00000.072.01 - Senior Pastor Equity	\$1,625.00	
Total LIABILITIES		<u>\$20,813.38</u>
FUND BALANCE		
00000.040.01 - Fund Balance	\$736,334.34	
Excess Cash Received	<u>(\$61,284.11)</u>	
Total FUND BALANCE and Excess Cash Received		\$675,050.23
Restricted Funds		
Total Temporary Restricted	<u>\$391,346.62</u>	
Total Restricted Funds		<u>\$391,346.62</u>
Total LIABILITIES, FUND BALANCE, & Restricted Funds		<u>\$1,087,210.23</u>

BUCC FY2025-2026 Budget vs Actuals

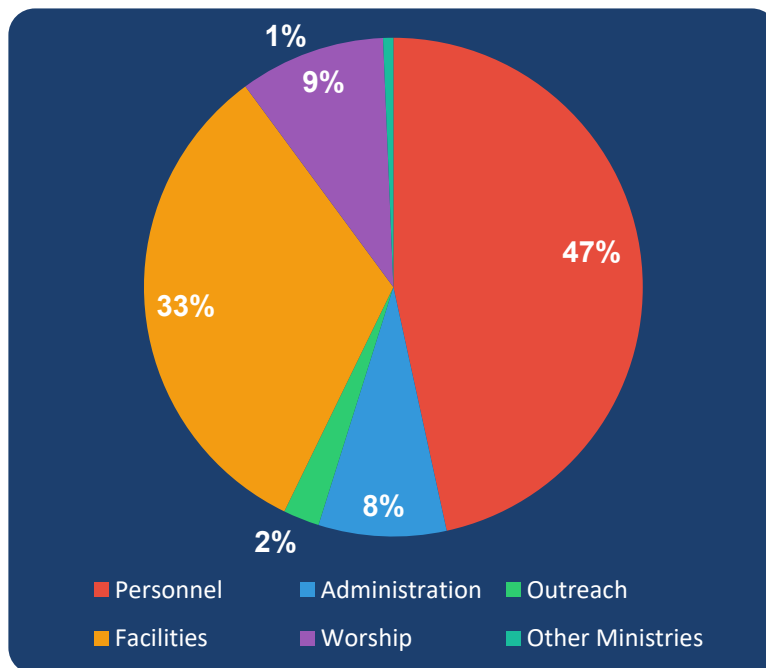
	Jun 25–May 26 Budget	Jun 25–May 26 Actual (prelim)	Variance
INCOME			
Offerings-Pledges	\$232,000	\$191,496	(\$40,504)
Offerings-Non-Pledges	\$35,000	\$34,538	(\$462)
Rental Income	\$127,000	\$111,926	(\$15,074)
Church Funds	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$0
Other Revenue	\$17,770	\$16,022	(\$1,748)
Total INCOME	\$435,770	\$377,983	(\$57,787)
EXPENSES			
Personnel	\$236,460	\$207,734	(\$28,726)
Administration	\$35,702	\$36,965	\$1,263
Outreach	\$10,474	\$10,474	\$0
Facilities	\$135,300	\$145,785	\$10,485
Worship	\$42,033	\$42,153	\$120
Other Ministries	\$6,234	\$2,958	(\$3,366)
Total EXPENSES	\$466,293	\$446,069	(\$20,224)
Sub Total / Net	(\$30,523)	(\$68,085)	(\$37,562)

FY 2025-26 Budget vs. Actuals – Pie Charts

FY 2025-26 Income (Actuals, prelim)



FY 2025-26 Expenses (Actuals, prelim)



BUCC FY 2025-2026 Budget vs 2026-2027 Proposed Budget

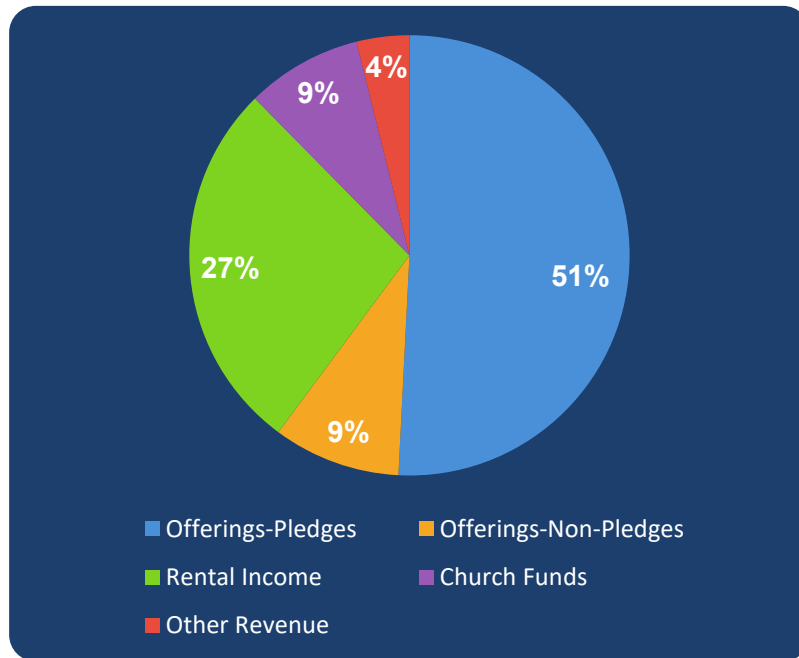
	Jun 25–May 26 Budget	Jun 2026–May 2027 Proposed Budget	Change
INCOME			
Offerings-Pledges	\$232,000	\$190,000	(\$42,000)
Offerings-Non-Pledges	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$0
Rental Income	\$127,000	\$102,704	(\$24,296)
Church Funds	\$24,000	\$31,808	\$7,808
Other Revenue	\$17,770	\$14,500	(\$3,270)
Total INCOME	\$435,770	\$374,013	(\$61,757)
EXPENSES			
Personnel	\$236,460	\$243,392	\$6,932
Administration	\$35,702	\$32,400	(\$3,302)
Outreach	\$10,474	\$10,667	\$193
Facilities	\$135,300	\$147,710	\$12,410
Worship	\$42,033	\$41,195	(\$838)
Other Ministries	\$6,234	\$9,400	\$3,076
Total EXPENSES	\$466,293	\$484,764	\$18,471
NET	(\$30,523)	(\$110,751)	(\$80,228)

BUCC FY 2025-2026 Actual (prelim) versus 2026-2027 Budget

	Jun 25–May 26 Actual (prelim)	Jun 2026–May 2027 Proposed Budget	Change
INCOME			
Offerings-Pledges	\$191,496	\$190,000	(\$1,496)
Offerings-Non-Pledges	\$34,538	\$35,000	\$462
Rental Income	\$111,926	\$102,704	(\$9,222)
Church Funds	\$24,000	\$31,808	\$7,808
Other Revenue	\$16,022	\$14,500	(\$1,522)
Total INCOME	\$377,983	\$374,013	(\$3,970)
EXPENSES			
Personnel	\$207,734	\$243,392	\$35,658
Administration	\$36,965	\$32,400	(\$4,565)
Outreach	\$10,474	\$10,667	\$193
Facilities	\$145,785	\$147,710	\$1,925
Worship	\$42,153	\$41,195	(\$958)
Other Ministries	\$2,958	\$9,400	\$6,442
Total EXPENSES	\$446,069	\$484,764	\$38,695
NET	(\$68,085)	(\$110,751)	(\$42,666)

FY 2026-27 Proposed Budget – Pie Charts

FY 2026-27 Proposed Income



FY 2026-27 Proposed Expenses

