

*Welcome to
Bethlehem United Church of Christ*



*September 6, 2026
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost*



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.



Happy Birthday to Bethlehem member, **Paul Neeb**,
who turns 90 on September 12th.



CHURCH LIFE

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

ATTENDANCE FOR LAST SUNDAY

Total:61 (In Person: 41, YouTube:18, Phone: 2)

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

CENTERING MUSIC

Elegy for Organ - John Ireland/arr. Alec Rowley
Cary Dumas, organ

OPENING WORSHIP

† CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Jesus asks, "Who do you say I am?"

All: We come with faith still growing and answers still unfolding,

One: Christ meets us beyond the voices and expectations of the crowd.

All: Here we listen deeply, speak honestly, and open our lives to God.

One: Come, let us worship the Living God who is still speaking!

† OPENING HYMN

NCH #407

How Firm a Foundation (VS 1-3)

† OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Holy One, we gather in your presence, you who meets us amid the many voices of the world and calls us into a faith of our own. We bring our questions, our convictions, and our still-unfolding understandings. May our worship move beyond borrowed words and become an honest response to you God who knows us completely. May we together, listen, speak, and worship with open hearts. Amen.

† PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you!

All: And also with you!

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

MESSAGE IN MUSIC

Zion's Wall

- Aaron Copland

Jimmy Tang, baritone; Cary Dumas, piano

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!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER OF BLESSING

SHARING THE MEAL

NCH #347

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

(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)

† PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (unison)

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Children may leave for Sunday School during the song.

SCRIPTURE READING

From the Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

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

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

MESSAGE

Speak for yourself

Rev. Matthew Hogue-Smith

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

† HYMN OF REFLECTION

NCH #473

Blessed Assurance

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.**

OFFERING

Invitation to give

Offertory

Orison

- Douglas E. Wagner

Cary Dumas, organ

† Hymn of Thanksgiving

NCH # 780

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God for all that love has done;

Creator, Christ and Spirit, One. Amen.

† **Prayer of Dedication** (unison)

**Generous God, receive these gifts as more than an offering of our
resources; receive them as an expression of the faith we profess. Use
them to strengthen your church, serve our neighbors, proclaim hope
and make Christ's love tangible in our community. May what we give
with our time, talents and treasures bear witness to what we believe in
our hearts. Amen.**

GOING FORTH TO SERVE

† CLOSING HYMN

Chalice #437

Go Now in Peace

GOING FORTH
437

Go Now in Peace

The musical score is written for keyboard, handbells, and/or Orff instruments. It consists of two systems of music. The first system begins with a treble clef and a 2/2 time signature. The melody starts with a whole rest, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system continues the melody and bass line, ending with a 'Fine' marking. The lyrics are: 'Go now in peace, go now in peace, may the love of God sur-round you ev-ery-where, ev-ery-where you may go.'

Keyboard, handbells,
and/or Orff instruments

Go now in peace, go now in peace, may the love of

God sur-round you ev-ery-where, ev-ery-where you may go.

Fine

May be sung as a round

WORDS and MUSIC: Natalie Sleeth, 1976

© 1976 Hinshaw Music, Inc.

GO IN PEACE
Irr.

WORDS OF SENDING

POSTLUDE

Prelude and Fugue in C, BuxWV 137
Cary Dumas, organ

Dietrich Buxtehude

OUR TEAM:

Senior Pastor: Rev. Matthew Hogue-Smith

Associate Pastor: Rev. Diane White

Ministers: All the people

Director of Music & Organist: Dr. Naki Sung Kripfgans

Director of Handbells: Jim Rowan

Guest Organist: Cary Dumas

Soloist: Jimmy Tang

Liturgist: Please see [Signup Genius](#) for open dates

Sound Technician: Gary Rogers

Videographer: Dan Blakeney

Streaming Technician: Oliver Kripfgans

Security Volunteer: Volunteers needed, please contact church office

Community Time Host: Jim and Katie Rowan

Reach out to us:

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(734) 665-6149

info@bethlehem-ucc.org

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



a just world for all