Welcome to
Bethlehem United Church of Christ



November 29, 2026
First Sunday of Advent

Jesus didn't turn people away
Neither Do We. United Church of Christ

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: 89 (In Person: 64, YouTube:21, Phone: 4)

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

Meditation on Creator of the Stars of Night - Rebecca Groom te Velde
Cary Dumas, organ

OPENING WORSHIP

One: In 1865, William Chatterton Dix penned a poem that would become the beloved Christmas-time favorite, “What Child is This?” This year for Advent and Christmas, we will be prompted by this carol to ask deeper questions of Jesus’ identity, “what child IS this?” When we look beyond the lullaby, what we discover is that the answers are much more complicated than the lilting lullaby tune conveys. The time of Jesus’ birth was fraught with difficulties. This is the scene into which Jesus was born. We are called, as his disciples, to enter the scene in the midst of our own complicated and difficult time in history, offering Hope as the Christ Child did.

[candle-lighters/readers come forward to the Advent candles as we sing]

Sung:
What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?

Lighting of the Advent Candle

One: We light this candle of Hope for those who need it most.
All: For all who search for a place to belong.
One: For all who are frightened by imposing forces.
All: For all whose future seems uncertain.
One: Our question for today at the scene of the nativity is this: “For what do we hope in our time that will be ‘good news for ALL people?’”
All: What child IS this? This, this, is Christ the King who reigns with hope forever.

Sung:
This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

OPENING HYMN Chalice #91 All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name! (Vs 1,4,5)

† **OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

Here, at the nativity of your birth, give us the courage to face this moment with humility and hope. Open us to new understandings of the unfolding story of your presence among us. Show us the true meaning of the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. We pray in the name of the Child, the One Who Reigns in our hearts and lives. Amen.

† **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

One: The peace of Christ be with you!
All: And also with you!

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

MESSAGE IN MUSIC

"O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion" from *Messiah* - G. F. Handel

Bailey Tallman, mezzo soprano; Cary Dumas, organ

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain;
O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength;
Lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, arise, shine; for thy light is come,
And the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Children's Time

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so,
Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

SCRIPTURE READING **Luke 2:1-5**

Leader: The Word of God, for the people of God!
All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

MESSAGE King of Kings Rev. Matthew Hogue-Smith

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

† **HYMN OF REFLECTION** **Chalice #125** **Come, O Long-Expected Jesus**

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 *O God, Beyond All Praising* - David Blackwell
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)

God of Hope, receive these gifts as signs of our readiness for Christ's coming. Use them to bring light to those who walk in darkness, hope to those who are weary, and love to all who long for belonging. Prepare our hearts and guide our hands as we share your goodness with the world. Amen.

GOING FORTH TO SERVE

† CLOSING HYMN **Chalice #129** **Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates**

WORDS OF SENDING

POSTLUDE *Coronation* - David Schelat
Cary Dumas, organ

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: Bailey Tallman
Liturgist: Judy Coucouvanis
Usher: Barb Schenk
Advent Candle Lighters: Jane and Kurt Schmerberg
Sound Technician: Dennis Huibregtse
Videographer: Dan Blakeney
Streaming Technician: Jennifer Vasquez
Community Time Host: Jenny Foster

Reach out to us:

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a just world for all