# Welcome to
# Bethlehem United Church of Christ



## November 8, 2026
## Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

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.




Happy Birthday to Bethlehem member, **Mike Ehnis**,
who turns 91 on November 10th.
The flowers today are in honor of Mike's birthday from his family.



**CHURCH LIFE**

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

**ATTENDANCE FOR LAST SUNDAY**

Total: 97 (In Person: 75, 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**

**CENTERING MUSIC** *When Morning Gilds the Skies* - arr. Dale Wood
Naki Kripfgans, organ

## OPENING WORSHIP

**† CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: When the night is long and the waiting feels uncertain, God remains near.
**All: We will tend the light of hope and trust in God's presence.**
One: Christ is among us in unexpected people, needs, and possibilities.
**All: We will keep our hearts open and our lights burning.**
One: Let us worship the God who calls us to keep the light on.

**† OPENING HYMN** **Chalice 261** **Sweet, Sweet Spirit**

**† OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

**Faithful God, meet us in this time of worship. When the night feels long, strengthen our hope. When we grow weary, renew our spirits. Fill our hearts with your love, open our eyes to your presence, and teach us to keep the light on for all who need welcome, compassion, and hope.**

**† PASSING OF THE PEACE**

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

## PROCLAIMING THE WORD

**MESSAGE IN MUSIC** *Can We Sing the Darkness to Light?* - Kyle Pederson
Bethlehem Chancel Choir

What if instead of more violence, we let our weapons fall silent?
No more revenge or retribution; no more war or persecution.

*It could be beautiful.*

What if instead of our judgment, we soften our hearts that have hardened?
Instead of certainty and pride, we love and sacrifice.

*It could be beautiful.*

Can we see the other as our brother?
Can we sing the darkness to light
Sounding chords of compassion and grace?
Set the swords of judgement aside,
Let mercy's eyes see the other human face.

**Children's Time**

**Jesus loves me, this I know, as God loved so long ago,**
**Taking children on their knee, saying, "Let them come to me."**
**Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!**
**Yes, Jesus loves me! For the Bible tells me so.**

**SCRIPTURE READING** **Matthew 25:1-13**

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

**MESSAGE** Keeping The Light On Rev. Matthew Hogue-Smith

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD

**† HYMN OF REFLECTION  Chalice 592  Every Time I Feel The Spirit**

**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** *This Little Light of Mine* - arr. Calvin Taylor
Naki Kripfgans, 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 and use them to keep the light of your love burning. Through what we offer, bring hope to the weary, welcome to the stranger, and care to those in need. May our generosity prepare the way for your grace to be seen among us. Amen**

## GOING FORTH TO SERVE

**† CLOSING HYMN** **Chalice 469** **I Am the Light of the World**

**WORDS OF SENDING**

**POSTLUDE** *"Fiat Lux" (Let There Be Light)* - Théodore Dubois
Naki Kripfgans, 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
**Ensemble:** Bethlehem Chancel Choir
**Liturgist:** Teresa Beagle
**Usher:** Ron Dechert
**Sound Technician:** Dennis Huibregtse
**Videographer:** Dan Blakeney
**Streaming Technician:** Oliver Kripfgans
**Community Time Host:** Ron and Alice Dechert

**Reach out to us:**

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a just world for all