

## WISE Covenant of Bethlehem United Church of Christ of Kiel, WI

Bethlehem United Church of Christ of Kiel, Wisconsin has embraced the UCC General Synod's call to become a Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged (WISE) congregation for mental health. With Jesus as our model for how to live and love, we strive to provide a warm welcome, promote inclusion, and offer support for all who live with mental health challenges and to those who love and support them. We strive to promote understanding and compassion, reduce stigma through education and support activities, and partner with local community agencies that advocate for those living with these challenges.

At Bethlehem we seek to be a community that cares for the whole person. We recognize that mental wellness is on a continuum and that stressors, loss, and life events can challenge us at any point. Since one in four people is living with a diagnosable mental health condition, it is safe to say that many among us and those we encounter in our lives are dealing with mental health and substance abuse challenges every day. Others may struggle with brain disorders such as dementia, autism, and traumatic brain injury. Our congregation's atmosphere of openness and acceptance makes members, friends, and visitors more likely to feel safe and free from judgment. This acceptance and sense of safety can create a place of belonging where truly everyone, no matter where they are on life's journey towards mental wellness, is welcome.