



## **BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

11608 Lax Chapel Road - Kiel, WI 53042

Phone: 920.894.3332

Email: [BethUCCKiel@outlook.com](mailto:BethUCCKiel@outlook.com)

Follow Bethlehem UCC on Facebook

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**Sunday, September 8, 2024**  
**Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost**  
**Worship Leader: Pastor Randy Koppenhaver**  
**Organist: Polly Jeanty**

*If listening from your car, please tune to 101.3 FM*

**\*= Please rise in body or spirit**

**CENTERING BREATH PRAYER:** as you inhale, say the first part of the prayer to yourself, and say the second part as you exhale. Repeat 5x

***Do good, O Lord, to those who are good :: and to the upright in heart***

**RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #557 v. 1** "I Just Came to Praise the Lord"  
**I just came to praise the Lord, I just came to praise the Lo—rd**  
**I just came to praise his Ho—ly Name, I just came to praise the Lord**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Put your confidence in God.

**We have God as our helper and so we rejoice.**

God gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry.

**God frees the prisoners and opens the eyes of the blind.**

So put your trust in God's goodness.

**May God's goodness endure forever! Let us worship God.**

**\*OPENING PRAYER:**

**Eternal God, You are our beginning and our end. You gave breath to all living things. By your Spirit, you come among us this day, breathing new life into our familiar patterns, as the gift you offer us through Christ Jesus. By your grace, you open new possibilities for the world you love. So we offer you our lives in worship and in service, joining our voices with all your creatures, to offer you honour and blessing, glory and gratitude, now and always. Amen.**

**\*OPENING HYMN: # 59**

**"Jesus, Name Above All Names"**

CHILDREN'S TIME AND BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS (UMC.org)

**Leader:**

Today, we have before us backpacks to be carried to and from school by the children and youth gathered here.... And, as in every aspect of our life, we bring these before God for blessing at this time.

*Let us pray together:*

**Gracious God, we lift to you today, these students.**

**They stand here ready to receive your blessings and they commit themselves to study and learning in the school year ahead. We ask your blessing on each of them.**

**Further, we ask your blessing on these backpacks. They will hold the school work of each student and will be carried from home to school and back again. As these students carry these backpacks, may they be reminded of the love and care of this congregation that surrounds them each school day. We pray as well for the teachers and administrators in our schools. May they also be sustained by your blessing. May they be reminded that this congregation embraces their call to teaching and learning and surrounds them with love and care as well.**

**We pray in the name of Jesus who we seek to follow day by day. Amen.**

**PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

**God of mercy, you keep an eye out for those who dwell on the margins of life. We confess we fail to keep our eyes open for those on the margins.**

**We have been silent when we should have spoken up**

**in the face of injustice. Our generosity to others does not match what you offer us. Forgive us for thinking of ourselves first. Renew our commitment to show others the kindness we meet in Jesus Christ. (Brief silent reflection)**

## WORDS OF GRACE

Beloved, God's grace is sufficient to meet you in weakness. And yet, faith without works lacks power, conviction, and life.

**Let our commitment to the gospel and a life with Christ be reflected in our attitude and actions toward those on the margins and those with different life experiences, identities, and cultures.**

Let us be opened to the possibilities, wonders, and joy that the diversity of God's creation presents to us.

**Let us serve God by serving ALL God's people. Amen.**

\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #358

"Only Believe"

**Only believe, only believe;**

**All things are possible, only believe;**

**Only believe, only believe;**

**All things are possible, only believe.**

## SCRIPTURE LESSONS

### Psalm 146

<sup>1</sup>Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

**<sup>2</sup>I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.**

<sup>3</sup>Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.

**<sup>4</sup>When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.**

<sup>5</sup>Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God,

**<sup>6</sup>who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;**

<sup>7</sup>who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free;

**<sup>8</sup>the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.**

<sup>9</sup>The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

**<sup>10</sup>The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!**

## James 2:1-10, 14-17

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? <sup>2</sup>For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, <sup>3</sup>and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," <sup>4</sup>have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup>Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? <sup>6</sup>But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? <sup>7</sup>Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

<sup>8</sup>You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup>For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? <sup>17</sup>So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

## SERMON

\*HYMN #443

"Called as Partners in Christ's Service"

LITANY FOR VOLUNTEERS by Fran Pratt

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE...THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## HOLY COMMUNION

(God's table is open to ALL, regardless of affiliation or membership. Please hold the elements until all have been served and we will partake together. All bread is gluten free. The inner circles are grape juice, the outer rings are wine.)



## \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Generous God, you call us to reach out to those in need in kindness rather than judgment; and with generosity, not just good intentions. Bless our gifts and our actions for Christ's sake, so that our faith in his love will show in the work of the Church that bears his name. Amen.**

## \*CLOSING SONG

“Go Now in Peace”

***Go now in peace. Never be afraid.***

***God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.***

***Go now in faith. Steadfast strong and true.***

***Know he will guide you, in all you do.***

***Go now in love, and show you believe.***

***Reach out to others so all the world can see.***

***God will be there, watching from above.***

***Go now in peace, in faith, and in love. A-men, A-men, A-men.***

## BENEDICTION

## POSTLUDE

\*\*This morning's liturgies were used with permission from <https://ucc.org/worship-way/> and <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/>

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Pastor Randy will be out of the state through Sept. 10-17. Please contact Pastor Nicole of St. Peter's UCC with any pastoral care needs. (920-242-8308)
- Sunday Sept. 22 - Sign up for Mission and Service Sunday projects in the fellowship hall. Lunch will be served!
- The Bethlehem Ladies Annual Guest Night** will be Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Our Guest Speaker will be Steve Hamer, President of Wash for Life. Wash for Life is a nonprofit organization that installs wells (boreholes) at schools and villages in Malawi, Africa so they can access clean water. The evening will begin at 5:30 with a light lunch and speaker to follow. Lunch will consist of broasted chicken, rolls, salads and dessert. The congregation and the community are invited to join us. Please invite your family and friends!! All are welcome! There is a sign up sheet in the Fellowship Hall.
- The United Church Men and Women will hold their annual scholarship banquet** at St. John's UCC in Sheboygan on Thursday, October 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. WI Conference Minister Rev. Franz Rigert is the keynote speaker. Please see Pastor Randy for tickets. They are \$20 each.

- On **Mission and Service Sunday** in September, we will be putting together disaster clean up kits for Church World Service. An example kit has been created. If you wish to contribute, please buy the EXACT item.
- Ready to talk about Christmas??? We are once again organizing the “United Church Choir” to perform on Dec. 8. This a community choir with St Peter’s UCC and other area UCC churches. See Randy if interested!

**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS** -See flyers in fellowship hall for more details

- **Oktoberfest!!** – Sat. Sept 21 – 4p-8p - @ Kiel City Park – Food! Beer! Music!  
Hosted by St. Peter’s UCC
- **Upcoming NAMI Events:** If interested, Let Pastor Randy know and he will forward you the email with registration links
  - NAMI Walk – Sat. Oct 5 – 12-2pm – Kiwanis Park, Sheboygan
- **Cardboard City 2024: Raising awareness of Homelessness in Manitowoc County** Oct 12 – 4-10pm, First Presbyterian Church, 502 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Manitowoc. For a firsthand experience, you can also sleep overnight in a cardboard box, tent, or in your car. Minimum pledge is \$20. All proceeds support agencies that assist the unhoused. See flyer for more details.



***Those in our thoughts and prayers:***

**Joys:**

The return of children’s voices in the classrooms!

**Those Grieving:**

Family of Doris Mae Ninmer

**Those struggling with health issues:**

Will Mathes	Wanda Matzdorf
Jeanette Wriedt	Chad Jeanty
Brad Westphalen	Jessica Horneck
Art Matzdorf	Jim Markelz
Nancy Zimmermann	Marie Rietbrock
Gary Steinhardt	Tom Lefeber
Shari	Mary Beth Molitor
Heidi Konen	Darlene Horneck
Dawson Horneck	

**Those unable to worship with us:**

Merlin Ninmer      Helen Henning

## **2024 Bethlehem UCC Leadership Team**

Elder/President - Steven Voland (920)286-0162 or [svoland44@gmail.com](mailto:svoland44@gmail.com)

Elder - Traci Rabe (920)894-7903 or [trabefamily5@gmail.com](mailto:trabefamily5@gmail.com)

Elder - Lee Watson (920)562-0588 or [lwatson@kiel.k12.wi.us](mailto:lwatson@kiel.k12.wi.us)

Deacon - Ross Westphalen (920)629-0193 [rossw@forhealthycows.com](mailto:rossw@forhealthycows.com)

Deacon/Secretary - Kathy Bowe (920)894-7243 [LandKBowe@outlook.com](mailto:LandKBowe@outlook.com)

Financial Secretary - Ruthie Rumpff (920)946-5849 [srumpff@tm.net](mailto:srumpff@tm.net)

Treasurer - Jane Umland (920)286-2175 [jm59umland@gmail.com](mailto:jm59umland@gmail.com)

Pastor - Randy Koppenhaver (920)286-2531 [randynmel5@gmail.com](mailto:randynmel5@gmail.com)

**Get Comfortable!** Bethlehem has a new “lounge” located in the middle Sunday School room. Comfortable seating! Coffee! Books and Games!  
Feel free to relax or meet for conversation.  
Before church - After church – While your kids are at Sunday School!

### **This Week at Bethlehem:**

**Today Sunday 9/8:** 8:00 am First day of Sunday School!!! 9:30am Worship w/ Communion and Blessing of the Backpacks

**Monday 9/9:** 9-12 Visitation, 12pm Doris Mae Nimmer funeral; *Happy Birthday Lori Schmitt!*

**Tuesday 9/10:**

**Wednesday 9/11:** *~Happy Birthday Addison Salm and Kelly Ryba!!*

**Thursday 9/12:** *~Happy Birthday Molly Rabe and Traci Rabe!*

**Friday 9/13:**

**Saturday 9/14:** *~Happy Birthday Ben Jeanty!*

**Sunday 9/15:** 8:00 am Sunday School; 9:30am Worship; *~Happy Anniversary Louie & Kathy Bowe!*

**September Pantry Items:  
Toilet Paper of Paper Towels**