

# **BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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**Sunday, December 15, 2024**

**Third Sunday of Advent**

**Worship Leader: Steven Voland**

**Organist: Kathy Bowe**

*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

***I rejoice in the Lord always :: again, I say "Rejoice!"***

**RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #216 v.1 "While We are Waiting, Come"**  
**While we are waiting, come. While we are waiting, come.**  
**Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, While we are waiting, come.**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY | ISAIAH 12:2-6 {a}**

God is our salvation! We will trust in him and not be afraid;

**The Lord of Salvation is our strength and song!**

Look up and rejoice! Draw water out of the wells of salvation.

**The Lord of Joy is our strength and song!**

Give thanks to God! Call on his name!

**The Lord of Might is our strength and song!**

Declare his works among the people that his name is exalted!

**The Lord of Wisdom is our strength and song!**

Sing to the Lord, for he has done excellent things! Let this be known in all the earth!

**The Lord of Righteousness is our strength and song!**

Cry aloud and shout, people of God, for Christ, the King of kings, is coming to save us. **Come quickly, Lord Jesus.** — *(The lighting of the advent candles)*

\*OPENING PRAYER {c}

**Holy Convenor of the Ages,**

**As the memories of happiness sweep back into our minds, we delight in the Advent blessing of joy. Such blissfulness turns our spirits from the lengthened nights to God's Divine Light which will be arriving soon. Like the saints of yesteryear, we celebrate together, rejoicing in the season, and knowing the best is yet to come. Amen.**

\*OPENING HYMN #92

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

PRAYER OF NEW LIFE AND TRANSFORMATION {c}

**Loving God, Creator of Wonder and Delight,**

**We have fallen into the crevices of worry. We have allowed the preoccupation of what was said in the past and will happen in the future to distract us from embodying joy in the present. Clear a pathway to our souls so that we can find levity and delight again. May we find ways from the chasms of concern to the daylight of hopefulness. Amen.** (moment of silent reflection)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE {c}

The blessedness of God's grace will fill our hearts with a peace-filled joy as we move about this season and follow the light ahead.

**Alleluia! Come, Christ Jesus, come!**

\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

“Gloria Patri”

**Glory be to the Father, And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, Is now and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen, Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Isaiah 12:2–6**

Surely God is my salvation;

I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
for the Lord God is my strength and my might;  
he has become my salvation.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say on that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;

make known his deeds among the nations;  
proclaim that his name is exalted.  
Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be known in all the earth.  
Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

### **Philippians 4:4–7**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### **Luke 3:7–18**

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.' So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

\*HYMN: #84

"Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People"

PRAYER CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER #403 “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 {b}... THE LORD'S PRAYER

Petitions end with: “Generous God, **Send joy to the world again.**”

**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.**

POST PRAYER RESPONSE #403 “Lord, Listen to your Children Praying”

CALL TO THE OFFERING (Jingle Change for the month of December supports the  
Christmas Fund)

One: We make our offering today with joyful hearts, anticipating our celebration of  
God's gift to us in Christ Jesus. Know that our gifts may touch lives in deep need  
this season with the joy we have received in Jesus' name.

OFFERTORY

\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE Doxology to tune of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”  
**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God all creatures here below.  
Praise God above ye, heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION {c}

**God of Holy Darkness and Returning Light,  
We give of our full hearts, knowing that you will bless this world with love.  
We give of our full minds, knowing that you will bless this world with peace.  
We give of our full souls, knowing that you will bless this world with hope.  
May the joy of your gifts encourage us to share the best we have, creating  
your Realm here on earth. Amen.**

## CHILDRENS PROGRAM

Cast:

Ellie Holz

Mia Watson

Blake Holz

Kamlynn Rumpff

Kylie Brockway

Jacob Riesterer

Hallie Brockway

Colten Ashenbach

Melanie Volland

Hymns during performance

#112 "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem"

#100 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

\*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 {c}

Bless our dusty roads renewed by hope.

**Bless our opening hearts renewed by peace.**

Bless our sunny skies renewed by joy.

**God's love enriches us as we continue on this season's journey.**

POSTLUDE

\*\*This morning's prayers and liturgies are used with permission from: {a} United Theological Seminary, {b} <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/>, and {c} [ucc.org](http://ucc.org)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- There will be no Sunday School on Dec. 22 or 29. Sunday school and Confirmation classes reconvene on Sunday, Jan 5.
- Please note: The Christmas Eve Service will start at 6:30pm!! The time was previously shown incorrectly in the bulletin. Randy is seeking scripture readers for Christmas Eve, as well. Please let him know if you want to read.
- Thank you to those who contributed to the Heifer International fund raiser. With your contributions plus a donation by the Merry Christians, we are able to send 3 Heifers, 3 Sheep, 3 Goats, 3 Pigs, 3 Bees and 4 Flocks of Chicks.
- Food Drive!! We are doing a reverse advent calendar to collect food for the Kiel Food Pantry during the month of December. There is a list near the front entrance with the desired items.
- The Sunday School is collecting CHILDREN'S hats and mittens (any size) to be donated to the Salvation Army. Please help yourself to a hat or mitten ornament as a reminder, located on the Christmas tree in the entrance. Your donation can be dropped off in the box next to the tree. We will be collecting thru December 22.
- If any individuals or groups are seeking a recipient for end-of-the-year financial donations, United Church Camps, Inc (Moon Beach, Daycholah, Cedar Valley) is holding a capital campaign called Roots & Wings to support our church camps. See Randy for more info.
- The Adult Mission trip to Kentucky has been scheduled for March 16-22. We will be helping repair damage from tornadoes. Members of several area UCC churches will be involved. From Bethlehem: Pastor Randy, Melissa Koppenhaver, and Marie Mueller. Would you consider joining us? The cost for lodging is \$90 for the week. Please see Pastor Randy for more info or to get involved.

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

- The Sheboygan County Warming Center is a mission of several churches in the city of Sheboygan, including St. John's UCC. This winter the shelter will be operated at St. Luke United Methodist Church. They are seeking donations of clothing, bedding, travel-sized toiletries, and shelf-stable snacks, along with bus passes and Kwik Trip gift cards. See flyer for more info. Bring your donations to Pastor Randy and he will get them to Sheboygan.



**Those in our thoughts and prayers:**

**Those Grieving:**

Mark Beitzel  
Gary Steinhardt

**Those struggling with health issues:**

Gary Rabe	Heidi Konen
Will Mathes	Nancy Zimmermann
Jill Wehmeyer-Sheets	Julie and Addison
Brad Westphalen	Darlene Horneck
Jessica Horneck	Mary Beth Molitor
Marie Rietbrock	Dawson Horneck
Tom Lefeber	

**Those unable to worship with us:**

Merlin Nimmer      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)

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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)

**This Week at Bethlehem:**

**Today, Sunday 12/15:** 8:00 am Sunday School; 9:30am Worship w/ Children's Program;  
\*\*SPIRIT ARTICLES DUE @ 5pm\*\*

**Monday 12/16:**

**Tuesday 12/17:**

**Wednesday 12/18:** 6pm Confirmation @ Kiel Food Pantry

**Thursday 12/19:** 6:30pm Blue Christmas worship

**Friday 12/20:** Happy Merlin Nimmer, Rachel Suttner, and Judy Brockway!

**Saturday 12/21:**

**Sunday 12/22:** 8:00 am Sunday School; 9:30am Worship

**December Pantry Items:  
Box of Cereal**

**December Worship Services:**

- Sunday, December 15; 9:30am – Third Sunday of Advent - Children's Program
- Thursday, December 19; 6:30pm – Blue Christmas Service
- Sunday, December 22; 9:30am – Fourth Sunday of Advent Service
- Tuesday, December 24; 6:30pm – Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols
- Wednesday, December 25; 9:30am – Christmas Day Communion Service
- Sunday, December 29; 9:30am – Hymn Sing

