



BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, February 23, 2025

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

Worship Leader: Rev. Randy Koppenhaver

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 commit my way to the Lord:: I trust in him, and he will act

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #555

"Sanctuary"

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 37)**

L: Come, Beloved, and release your frenzied fear.

P: We come, trusting the enduring promises of the Holy One.

L: Let meekness rise as strength of soul.

P: May our promised inheritance of love shine brightly all around.

L: May it strengthen us in our waiting and our working.

P: May all that is evil wither, and all that is good grow to fullness.

L: May the grace of God rest on us all as we gather.

*OPENING PRAYER

Holy Love, bear in us a new beginning. Soften our hearts and still our minds into Your gracious embrace. Hold the worries and wanderings of our lives. Gift us with the renewing energy of Your Holy Spirit. Let it meet our fatigue and form in us a deepened commitment to your vision of the beloved community. Yes, mold us with Christ-love into agents of Your blessing, for the good of the world. May the cup of our lives run over with this of Your desire. In Your Holy name, we pray. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN #48

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

God of the grand reversal, we confess our easy attachment to revenge in its many forms. Instead of interrupting violence, it has been easy to practice it in word and deed. It has been easy to worship the lie of scarcity instead of trusting your promise of abundance. By this, the way of the world has worked into our hearts and minds. Forgive us and free us from ourselves. Equip us anew with an outpouring of Your love. By this of You, form us into channels of grace. Deepen our love, expand our generosity, and mold us and the world with Your abundant mercy. Let the heart and mind of Christ take up residence in us anew. Amen. (Time of reflection)

WORDS OF GRACE

I have good news!

The Holy One, Love Almighty, interrupts our missteps and misdeeds, our distractions and our detours.

In Christ Jesus, God has shown us what forgiving love has already done and continues to do. It heals, it mends, and makes a new chapter possible.

This is the forgiving power of God that embraces us, here and now. It is the good news! We can trust it with our lives. Thanks be to God!

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #82 v. 1 “O Come let us Adore Him”

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 45:3–11, 15

Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?’ But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Come closer to me.’ And they came closer. He said, ‘I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be

distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, “Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.” And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

- ¹ Do not fret because of the wicked;
do not be envious of wrongdoers,
- ² **for they will soon fade like the grass,
and wither like the green herb.**
- ³ Trust in the Lord, and do good;
so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.
- ⁴ **Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.**
- ⁵ Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act.
- ⁶ **He will make your vindication shine like the light,
and the justice of your cause like the noonday.**
- ⁷ Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him;
do not fret over those who prosper in their way,
over those who carry out evil devices.
- ⁸ **Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath.
Do not fret—it leads only to evil.**
- ⁹ For the wicked shall be cut off,
but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.
- ¹⁰ **Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more;**

though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there.

¹¹ But the meek shall inherit the land,
and delight in abundant prosperity.

**³⁹ The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord;
he is their refuge in the time of trouble.**

⁴⁰ The Lord helps them and rescues them;
**he rescues them from the wicked, and saves them,
because they take refuge in him.**

Luke 6:27–38

‘But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

‘If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.’

CHILDREN’S TIME

FIVE MINUTES OF PRAISE

“Jesus Said, “Love Your Enemies”

By Scriptural Thinking - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4MUBZvKjHI>

SERMON

“Vengeance is not Ours”

*HYMN #46

“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

PRAYER CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER: #403 “Lord, Listen to your Children Praying”

PASTORAL PRAYER... THE LORD’S PRAYER

Each petition ends with:

“God of the whole human family, **Hear our prayers for your world.**”

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 – Your Jingle Change supports the Sunday School’s Leprosy collection for the month of February.

OFFERTORY

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE To tune of the Doxology

**Oh God, may we who bear your name,
By gentle love your grace proclaim.
Christ’s gift of peace on earth declare,
And your anointing Spirit share. Amen**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Generous God, thank you for placing Your holy love into the lap of our lives. Bless these gifts that they may be multiplied into goodness larger than we can imagine. Also, bless us, that we might live our lives in gratitude, sharing freely without expectation of return. Through this way of Jesus, stretch our hearts, minds, and lives into channels of Your Holy grace. 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/COMMISSIONING

POSTLUDE

**This morning's prayers and liturgies are used with permission from:
ucc.org/worshipways

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- ICE FISHING!! Immediately following worship today, we will head to Scott and Jane Umland's on Wilke Lake (10411 Glen Flora Rd. Kiel, WI 53042) and fish until about 2pm. Bring warm clothes, fishing gear and DNR license, along with your own beverages. We will grill brats, burgers, and hot dogs on the lake. Bait will be provided. If you don't have ice fishing gear, there will be some available for use.
- On Sunday, March 2, The Mission team has signed up to deliver dinner to the Sheboygan Warming Center. We will prepare our food on March 2 after church and then someone will take it to Sheboygan. TODAY, we will meet very briefly following worship to plan our meal and decide who will bring what items. Please join us if you're interested in helping.
- **THANK YOU!** No matter how many times I say it, it will never be enough. I can't tell you how much I appreciate the support of the Bethlehem community throughout my discernment journey up to my ordination! It is my pleasure to serve this church and look forward to our future together. Thank for the gift of my clergy robe. Thank you to the choir, youth fellowship, Sunday School, Bethlehem Ladies, Merry Christians and mission Group for the fun "pastor" gifts. This is a great place to be! - Pastor Randy
- Lenten Devotions!! Kate Bowler: *The Hardest Part: Hurt we carry, Hope we find*
Meeting at 5:30pm in the Lounge -Wednesday, March 5, 12, 26, April 2 and Tuesday, April 8
If interested in attending, please sign up on the table in the fellowship hall. You can also sign up to receive Kate Bowler's entire collection of Lenten Devotions by email.
- Summer Looms ahead and some of my favorite memories are the times I spent at church camp, both as a camper and camp counselor. Daycholah Center is a UCC camp on Green Lake that offers many fun activities for people of all ages. There are outdoor adventure camps, Sailing Camp, MADD (Music, Art, Dance, Drama), "Con" Camp (Think Harry Potter, Comics, Star Wars, etc), and "Night Owl" Camp, (designed for teens who like to stay up late and sleep in!) I urge you to check out ucci.com for more information. Scholarships and financial assistance are available. It's a lot of fun! – Pastor Randy

- Thank you for supporting our Loads of Love ministry. In Jan we served 2 clients and expended \$76.50. In Feb. we served 4 clients and expended \$89.50. Our donations for January were \$17.50.
- Stay informed!!! Did you know that Bethlehem sends out a weekly email update called The Bethlehem Blurb? If you would like to be added to our distribution list, please send a message to randynmel5@gmail.com or BethUCCKiel@outlook.com.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- March 2 - 11a-1pm Chili Dinner @ St James UCC - see flyer for details.
- Saturday, March 8 – InCourage Annual Domestic Chef Charity event – 4pm – 10pm - See flyer for details
- March 14 and 15 – Volunteer for “Feed my Starving Children” MobilePak event – First United Lutheran Church of Sheboygan. To register, see informational flyers on the mission bulletin board.



Those in our thoughts and prayers:

Those Grieving:

Wayne Stauss

Those struggling with health issues:

Diane Fidlin	Mary Beth Molitor
Will Mathes	Heidi Konen
Darlene Horneck	Emily (Melissa’s cousin)
Brad Westphalen	Dawson Horneck
Jessica Horneck	Tom Lefeber
Marie Rietbrock	Molly
Dana	

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin Ninmer	Helen Henning
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2025 Bethlehem UCC Leadership Team

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

Elder - Traci Rabe (920)894-7903 or trabefamily5@gmail.com

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

Deacon - Ross Westphalen (920)629-0193 rossw@forhealthycows.com

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

Financial Secretary - Ruthie Rumpff (920)946-5849 srumpff@tm.net

Treasurer - Jane Umland (920)286-2175 jm59umland@gmail.com

Pastor - Rev. Randy Koppenhaver (920)286-2531 randynmel5@gmail.com

From our Confirmation Students:

Thank you to all the people that supported the confirmation class on their trip to Daycholah I learned about a labyrinth. It is like a maze but it is not a maze. My favorite part of the trip was the snowball fight we had. The boys won. We also had flash cards that said "help, thanks, and wow." – Ethan

Starting off I want to give a personal thank you to everyone at Bethlehem who helped pay for our retreat at Daycholah. We did and learned a lot of things there. We made our own versions of the lord prayers, sang prayers together and had praying lessons and sessions. One of the things that stood out to me the most was we walked the labyrinth, the labyrinth is a maze looking circle, in the labyrinth there is no wrong way you walk it till the end then back. While you are walking the labyrinth, you can think to yourself about anything or you can pray to yourself. It was a cool experience to be able to have time to yourself and think or pray. Another reason it was cool was because of the lesson behind it. It proves that no matter what happens if you go on the other path in life it leads to good things . One of my favorite things at camp was just to be able to have fun while learning and being around new people. One of the activities we did was we had a game time where we could go and talk to other people in the other churches and play games with them. I want to thank you all one last time for helping pay for this trip!! – Kylie

Thank you all for giving me the great opportunity to go to Daycholah. It was a great experience I will never forget. Some things I got to do was learn more about praying. We got to see a labyrinth and learn more about that. We also played many games like a snowball fight, hide and seek, and tag. But my favorite thing was learning about the three words "thanks, help, and wow." They were very interesting and cool to learn about. So thank you all for helping me to go to Daycholah. - Blake

Thank you all so much for helping our confirmation class go to the Daycholah Center. It would not have been possible without all of you. We all had so much fun while there and learned so much. Some things we learned about were Labyrinths, and what each part of a prayer means, and we also made our own prayer. My favorite part about going to Daycholah was meeting all the new people. I made new friends and created great memories to look at in the future.
– Courtney

MERRY CHRISTIANS' PIZZA PARTY

Who's Invited: All Family and Friends of Bethlehem

When: Sunday, March 9th following worship

What: Pizza with a variety of toppings, Veggie Pizza,
Fruit Pizza, and Ice Cream Sundaes

Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today, Sunday 2/23: 8:00 Sunday School; 8:00 Confirmation class; 9:30am Worship: Ice fishing event following worship.

Monday 2/24: *Happy Birthday Amelia Horneck!!*

Tuesday 2/25: *Happy Birthday Julia Gabrielse!*

Wednesday 2/26:

Thursday 2/27: 9am BUCC @ Immanuel Food Pantry;

Friday 2/28: *Happy Birthday Karen Schlegel and Alexis Horneck!*

Saturday 3/1: *Happy Birthday Peyton Koppenhaver and Greyson Hoban!*

Sunday 3/2: 8:00 Sunday School; 8:30 WISE; 9:30am Worship: 6pm Rural Church Fellowship @ Immanuel UCC

**March Pantry Items:
Box of Pasta, Noodles, Rice or Crackers**