

*"For all those who
exalt themselves
will be humbled,
and those who
humble themselves
will be exalted."*



LUKE 18:14, NIV

BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, October 26, 2025

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Worship Leader: Rev. Randy Koppenhaver

Musician: 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

Praise is due you, O God :: O you who answer prayer

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**

From the routines of work and school, home and play,

we have come to worship God.

With the weight of the world heavy on our hearts,

we have come to worship God.

In the midst of our fears and our hopes,

we offer our prayer and praise in Jesus' name.

For we trust in God's power and presence,

so let us worship God with heart, mind, soul and strength.

*OPENING PRAYER:

**Creating God, the mountains you raised reflect your strength and majesty.
Sunrise and sunset frame the day with your light and joy.
Fields bursting with grain and trees colored with autumn glory sing of your
steadfast love.
Pictures from the depth of space give a glimpse of your infinity,
yet in Christ you have walked the humble earth.
You alone are worthy of our praise.
You alone give us hope.
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of Life, we praise you,
and join our voices to those of every precious thing
to wonder at your mystery and majesty.**

*OPENING HYMN #285

“Come, Ye Thankful People, Come”

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:

**Merciful God,
You created human beings with gifts of intelligence and imagination.
Yet we confess we often use these gifts to exploit your creation
and put others in their place.
So often we think that we are great when we are small.
Or we claim smallness when you set a challenge before us.
We convince ourselves that our sin is not nearly as great as others,
yet, every sin offends your purpose for us.
Forgive us, we pray, and grant us a truer picture of ourselves. Amen.
*Time of silent reflection...***

WORDS OF GRACE

Friends in Christ, God is gracious. Christ has promised that those who humble themselves will be exalted. Having confessed our sin, let us trust the good news of the Gospel. **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

*RESPONSE #565 v. 1

“Blessed be the Name of the Lord”

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Joel 2:23-32

²³ Be glad, people of Zion,
rejoice in the Lord your God,
for he has given you the autumn rains
because he is faithful.
He sends you abundant showers,

both autumn and spring rains, as before.

²⁴ The threshing floors will be filled with grain;
the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.

²⁵ “I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—
the great locust and the young locust,
the other locusts and the locust swarm—
my great army that I sent among you.

²⁶ You will have plenty to eat, until you are full,
and you will praise the name of the Lord your God,
who has worked wonders for you;
never again will my people be shamed.

²⁷ Then you will know that I am in Israel,
that I am the Lord your God,
and that there is no other;
never again will my people be shamed.

²⁸ “And afterward,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.

²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

³⁰ I will show wonders in the heavens
and on the earth,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

³¹ The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

³² And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved;
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
there will be deliverance,
as the Lord has said,
even among the survivors
whom the Lord calls.

Psalm 65 – p.646 of hymnal – Leader reads odd verses, people read evens

Luke 18:9-14

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers,

evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

¹³ "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

¹⁴ "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

CHILDREN'S TIME

SERMON

*HYMN "A Pharisee Was Praying" Tune:AURELIA ("The Church's One Foundation")

**A Pharisee was praying; he proudly stood alone:
"God, thank you that I'm better than others I have known."
He saw the faults of others, yet in that holy place,
He missed the joy and wonder of God's amazing grace.**

**Far off in that same Temple, a tax collector stood.
He knew he was a sinner; he knew that God is good.
"Have mercy, God, upon me!" the tax collector cried.
He left that place of worship forgiven, justified.**

**O God of love, forgive us when we look all around
And think that, by our actions, we stand on solid ground:
We pray, "See how we serve you! We work and volunteer!
Aren't we the ones whose giving builds up your kingdom here?"**

**May we, your church, be humble in serving you each day,
For pride will never help us to walk your kingdom-way.
May we know your forgiveness — our need for mercy, too —
That, loved and loving others, our life may be in you.**

Biblical Reference: Luke 18:9-14

Tune: Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1864 ("The Church's One Foundation")

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PRAYER CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER...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.

SUNG PRAYER RESPONSE

**Open our eyes Lord
We want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch Him
And say that we love Him.**

**Open our ears Lord
And help us to listen,
Open our eyes Lord
We want to see Jesus.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY At Bethlehem United Church of Christ, we collect TWO offerings each Sunday. Our regular operational offering goes is collected in the wooden plate. In the metal cans, we collect loose change and small bills for a monthly designated benevolent collection. October's Jingle Change supports Neighbors in Need.

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

"Give Thanks"

Give thanks with a grateful heart

Give thanks to the Holy One

**Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ,
His Son (2 times)**

And now...

let the weak say, "I am strong"

Let the poor say, "I am rich

**Because of what the Lord has done
for us" (2 times)**

Give thanks... (2 times)

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Good and generous God, receive our humble gifts, offered in hope and gratitude. Make something of them, and of us, so that the world will be surprised by your love and what we can offer them in Jesus' 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/COMMISSIONING

POSTLUDE

***liturgies for this morning were used with permission from <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/>*

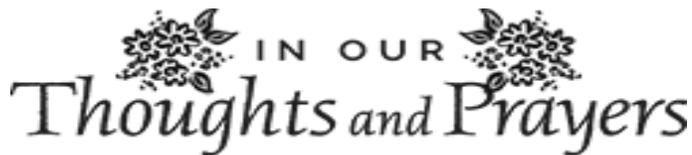
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Bethlehem family and friends can help provide **Thanksgiving Dinner for the Immanuel Food Pantry Clients**. The following items are needed to fill the Thanksgiving Dinner bags: 35 Boxes of Mashed Potatoes, 37 Jars of Turkey Gravy, 40 Boxes of Jello, 4 Boxes of Stuffing, 40 Bags of Marshmallows, 40 Cans of Cream of Mushroom Soup, 80 Cans of Green Beans, 80 Cans of Corn, 30 Cans of Cranberry Sauce, 40 Cans of French Fried Onions, 39 Cans of Yams, and 40 Cans of Pie Filling (Apple or Pumpkin). Please bring your donations by November 16th.
- **ADULT MISSION TRIP 2026!**
The area UCC churches met last week and have scheduled our spring mission trip from March 22-28, 2026. We will be traveling to Pikeville, KY to help with damage caused by floods. If you are interested in joining the group, please let Pastor Randy know. Our next meeting is 11/2 – 6pm at Bethlehem.
- **Thanksgiving Eve!** Wednesday, Nov. 26 we will be joining with St. John's UCC (NH) and Gloria Dei Lutheran for worship. The service will include communion and be held at Gloria Dei (N1230 7 Corners Rd, New Holstein). Everyone is invited to a light supper at "Gloria's Meals" beginning at 5pm - Worship at 6:30pm. Pie and coffee (decaf) to follow worship. We are seeking any members who may be willing to serve as readers, ushers, or communion assistants. Please see Pastor Randy if you'd like to help by Nov 2.

Community Announcements – See flyers in fellowship hall for details.

- Sunday, Oct 26 – 11a-2pm - **Drive-thru Brat Fry** -St. Johns UCC, New Holstein
- Saturday, Nov. 1 – **Craft and Vendor Fair** - 8:30am -3pm – Salem UCC, Plymouth

- Saturday, Nov. 8 – **Fall Fare** – 9am-2pm – Craft sale, silent auction, bake sale, soup to go – First Congregational UCC, Plymouth
- Sunday, Nov. 9 – 10am – **Mission Fest** – St. Marks UCC, Cleveland
- **Kiel Municipal Band Scholarship Concert**
Celebrate music and mentorship at the Kiel Performing Arts Center on Friday, Nov. 14 at 7 PM! This grand finale of the Friends of Kiel Performing Arts 2025 Series supports the Edgar P. Thiessen Scholarship, helping local high school seniors pursue their dreams. Tickets at www.cur8.com (search “Kiel”). Let’s pack the house with heart and harmony!



Those Grieving:

The Family of Jeanette Wriedt
The Family of Will Mathes

Those struggling with health issues:

Louie Bowe	Dawson Horneck
Heidi Konen	Darlene Horneck
Brad Westphalen	Jessica Horneck
Sofia	Melissa
Hubert	Larry
John (Friend of Schlegel's)	Dana
Chase Goekes	Lynn
Mark	Darya
Molly	

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin Ninmer Helen Henning

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today, Sunday 10/26: 8:00am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday Worship; 6pm Rural Church Fellowship @ Our Shepherds UCC, Howards Grove

Monday 10/27: *Happy Birthday Aliyah Arnold, Tyson Arnold, and Steve Deignan!*

Tuesday 10/28:

Wednesday 10/29: 6pm Confirmation Class; *Happy Birthday Hudson Hoban! Happy Anniversary Tony & Sandy Tesch!*

Thursday 10/30:6:30pm United Church Men/Women Banquet at Ebenezer UCC, Sheboygan

Friday 10/31: 9am-11:30am - Chris Gundy Music Workshop at Lakeland: *Happy Birthday Laura Mueller!*

Saturday 11/1: *Happy Birthday Mark Riesterer!*

Sunday 11/2: 8:00am Sunday School; 9:30am All Saints Sunday Worship w/ Communion; *Happy Birthday Caralyn Riesterer!*

November Panty Item: Box of Cake Mix or Frosting

