



BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

11608 Lax Chapel Road - Kiel, WI 53042

Phone: 920.894.3332

Email: BethUCCKiel@outlook.com

Follow Bethlehem UCC on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/bucckiel/>

or Bethlehem's website at www.bethlehemkiel.org

CCLI Copyright and Streaming Lic # 11640740 and CSPL193734

Sunday, December 14, 2025

Third Sunday of Advent

Worship Leader: Steven Voland

Musician: Kathy Bowe

The white peace candle on the altar is lit in solidarity with all peoples of the world affected by armed conflict, civil war, oppression, tyranny, exploitation and discrimination. God, bring them peace.

***= 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 be to the Lord God :: who alone does marvelous deeds

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #86 v. 1

"like a child"

like a child love would send to reveal and to mend,

like a child and a friend, Jesus comes

like a child we may find claiming heart soul and mind,

like a child strong and kind, Jesus comes.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING - JOY—Joyce Borger © 2025 ReformedWorship.org,

Out of darkness a light shines.

Out of a desert a river flows.

From a dead stump a shoot grows.

Mourning turns to joy.

Today we continue our Advent journey.

Today we light this candle of joy

in gratitude for the gift of the Christ child,
and in anticipation of Christ's second coming. [Candle lighting of the third candle.]

Come let us worship and rejoice!
**Praise be to God,
our Lord has done great things!
Our Lord will do great things!**

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Joy is the gift God gives us upon
waking in the morning to see beams of sun
dance in dusty corners or hear much needed
rain, even on a leaky roof.

Many: Joy is in the delight of tiny precious things.

One: Joy is the magnificence of the Redeemer when the tests come back clear,
or when a school test is finally passed, or when the spirit is tested and chooses
faith over fear.

Many: Joy is in the hands that hold our own while we sit silently and wait.

One: Joy is the patience of Emmanuel when petty disagreement turns into great
injustice and change is slow to bend towards what is right and good.

**Many: Joy is in the small actions we take each day to help righteousness
and peace abound.**

*OPENING PRAYER:

**Beloved, we come now seeking to recognize moments of delight when we
feel connected to you. We bring our fragmented hearts filled with good
cheer, gentle reverence, and utter amazement; we share our secret hopes,
dependable comforts, and cozy moments of advent peace. Rise up within us
as we cherish the divinity of all that is good.**

*OPENING HYMN

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:

**Great Redeemer, too often we allow the idea of absolute happiness to block
the existence of joy from our daily lives. Our hopes are crushed under the
weight of the world's sorrows, and our peace is disturbed by the agonies of
an interconnected existence. We race toward solutions without pausing to
meditate on the greater good. We lay bare the sorrows we carry without
acknowledging the small delights that make the fight against injustice**

Today's bulletins are sponsored
in honor of Merlin's Ninmer's
98th birthday which will be
celebrated on December
20th. To a special dad,
grandfather, and great
grandfather from your loving
children, grandchildren and
great grandchildren.

worthwhile. Relieve us of the pain we wear as a badge of honor, ignoring your love, even as it surrounds us. *Time of silent reflection...*

WORDS OF GRACE

Our loving God does not spare us from pain, as empathy is born from suffering; but neither does God remove joy from our lives as a punishment for our indiscretions.

We are bound together with a sacred braid of hope, peace, and joy designed to hold fast against the greatest adversities.

In faith, no anguish can take hold completely; no sorrow can completely outweigh the possibility of joy. **Praise be to God!**

*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 LESSONS

Luke 1:46-55 (NIV)

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”

James 5:7-10 (NIV)

⁷ Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn

and spring rains. ⁸ You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹ Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰ Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 11:2-11 (NIV)

² When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

⁴ Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy^[a] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

⁷ As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. ⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you."^[b]

¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

*HYMN

CHILDREN'S TIME

*HYMN

MESSAGE

*HYMN

PRAYER CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER...THE LORD'S PRAYER

Petitions end with: God who makes all things new, **Renew our life together.**

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 #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.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Leader: There is a simple joy to be found in sharing what we have. Regardless of how much or how little that may be, a portion belongs to God. What God desires is not an altar of sacrifices, but an outstretched hand. Give what you can, and delight in the joy your gift will bring.

OFFERTORY At Bethlehem United Church of Christ, we collect TWO offerings each Sunday. Our regular operational offering is collected in the wooden plate. In the metal cans, we collect loose change and small bills for a monthly designated benevolent collection. December's Jingle Change supports the UCC's Christmas Fund. (*“The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.”*)

***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**

**Precious God, take these gifts in the spirit they were given, with joy and love for our siblings around the world. Let us remember that we all have times of trouble. We will each stand before you, hands clasped in prayer, begging for relief. Use what we have here to bring that relief where it is needed most.
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

God, lead us from this time of prayer and reflection with dancing! Allow the joy within each one of us to shine upon those who suffer. **Let our light be magnified by your grace each and every day! Amen.**

POSTLUDE

***liturgies for this morning were used with permission from: ucc.org/worship/ unless noted otherwise.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Heifer International: Due to the generosity of the Bethlehem people plus an addition by the Merry Christians, \$3000 was sent to Heifer International. That amount not only exceeded our goal for 2025 but also exceeded the amount given in 2024. This allowed us to give 3 Heifers, 3 Goats, 3 Sheep, 3 Pigs, 3 Flocks of Chicks, 4 Honeybee Hives, and 4 Baskets Garden Seeds. This came at a great time as Heifer International announced a donor willing to match 5 times contributions received during this time period.
- Please attend the "Sing Joy" concert this afternoon at 1pm at St Peter's UCC, Kiel. The choir contains members of four area UCC churches, including Bethlehem.
- Not feeling it this Christmas season??
That's ok. There are many reasons why the holidays can be difficult. We will be holding its annual "Blue Christmas" worship on Thursday, Dec. 18 at 6:30pm. It's a quiet, contemplative service with music, candles, and scriptures
- Chili Supper Tickets Available – packets of 10 tickets for the February 4, 2026 Chili Supper are available in the Fellowship Hall. Please sign out any packets you take. If you'd like less than 10 please see Kaye Radder. Payment is due by Feb 4.

- Bethlehem UCC is signed up to work at the Sheboygan Warming Center on Sunday, January 26. The shift is from 6pm-9pm. The work involves setting up for dinner, serving dinner, washing dishes (commercial dishwasher) and cleaning up. There are five slots available. Sign up in the fellowship hall.
- CALLING NEW MEMBERS!! If you've been visiting for a awhile and feel like Bethlehem is a "good fit" for you, we will be inducting new members on Sunday, February 8. We will meet at 8:45 am that morning for a little paperwork and Bethlehem "education," followed by the induction during worship. We will celebrate after worship with a reception. Please see Pastor if you'd like to join Bethlehem, or if you have questions.

Community Announcements – See flyers in fellowship hall for details.

- Christmas Bingo – 12/14 – 11:30a-2:00pm - St. Marks UCC – see flyer for details



Those Grieving:

The Family of Tom Phillip, Jr
 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
Chase Goekes	Tyler Smith
Mark	Molly
Willow	

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin Ninmer Helen Henning

This Week at Bethlehem:

Sunday Sunday 12/14: 8:00am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday Worship; 1pm – Choir Concert at St. Peter's UCC, Kiel

Monday 12/15:

Tuesday 12/16:

Wednesday 12/17: 6pm Confirmation; ** SPIRIT ARTICLES DUE**

Thursday 12/18: 6:30pm Blue Christmas Service

Friday 12/19:

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

Sunday 12/21: 8:00am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday Worship w/ Children's Program

December Panty Item: Box of Cereal

