



## **BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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### **Sunday, January 11, 2026**

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

**Worship Leader: Rev. Rae Ann Beebe**

**Musician: Polly Jeanty**

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

***The voice of the Lord is powerful :: the voice of the Lord is full of majesty***

**RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP**

**O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright  
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP:**

**One: We are a people of the water!**

**Many: God's love flows through water.**

**One: Love, like a rain shower, awakens the sleeping seed within the soul and lures it to blossom.**

**Many: Love, like a wading pool, inspires the delight of children jumping, splashing, spraying each other, shivering with wet joy.**

One: Love, like a hot shower after a long day's work, cleanses us, reawakens us.

**Many: Love, like little drops, drips from fingertips to forehead.**

One: Through baptism, the family of faith makes room for one more.

\*OPENING PRAYER:

**Holy One, Breath of Creation, you stretched out the heavens and set the earth dancing with life. You whispered belovedness over Jesus rising from the Jordan, and your Spirit rested upon him like a gentle dove. Rest your Spirit upon us now. Stretch our hearts where they have grown tight. Soften the places that have been hardened by fear or disappointment. Wake the embers of joy that still glow beneath the ash. Remind us that we are your Beloved, not because of what we have done, but because of who you are and the love that holds us. As we gather at the water today, let us remember who we are, and who we are becoming together—your people of compassion, courage, and gentle justice. In the name of Christ, the One who shows us how to be human, we pray. Amen.**

\*OPENING HYMN #456 "God of Grace and God of Glory" (verses 1, 2, 4)

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE: <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/>  
In order to begin again with God and one another, let us confess our sins:

**Merciful God,  
in baptism you promise us forgiveness and new life.  
We confess that we often prefer our old ways.  
We resist the new opportunities you set before us.  
We cling to harmful habits and nurse grudges,  
failing to forgive one another.  
Have mercy upon us, O God,  
and guide us to live with more grace and generosity through Christ our Lord. *Time of silent reflection...***

WORDS OF GRACE <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/>

Friends, hear the good news of the gospel. Before the world was made,

**we were chosen in Christ to be part of God's family.**

God calls us to new life in Christ, so trust in God's forgiveness and grace.

**We will turn and follow Jesus in repentance and joy.**

\*RESPONSE #82 v1

"O Come Let Us Adore Him"

## SCRIPTURE LESSONS

### Isaiah 42:1-9 (NRSVUE)

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my spirit upon him;  
he will bring forth justice to the nations.

<sup>2</sup> He will not cry out or lift up his voice  
or make it heard in the street;

<sup>3</sup> a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

<sup>4</sup> He will not grow faint or be crushed  
until he has established justice in the earth,  
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

<sup>5</sup> Thus says God, the Lord,  
who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
who gives breath to the people upon it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:

<sup>6</sup> I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness;  
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;  
I have given you as a covenant to the people,<sup>[a]</sup>  
a light to the nations,

<sup>7</sup> to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

<sup>8</sup> I am the Lord; that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to idols.

<sup>9</sup> See, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth,  
I tell you of them.

### Acts 10:34-43 (NRSVUE)

<sup>34</sup> Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup> but in every people anyone who fears him and practices righteousness<sup>[a]</sup> is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup> You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. <sup>37</sup> That

message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: <sup>38</sup> how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. <sup>39</sup> We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, <sup>40</sup> but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, <sup>41</sup> not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup> He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup> All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

## CHILDREN’S TIME

### SERMON

## BAPTISMAL RENEWAL

Beloved of God, today we remember that we are a people formed in water and Spirit. We remember that Jesus stepped into the waters of the Jordan, not because he needed to be cleansed, but to show us what it means to be fully human—to say yes to God, yes to belovedness, yes to the work of gentle justice. Today we step into that yes again.

Holy One, you moved over the waters at creation. You carried your people through the sea and into freedom. Your Spirit descended upon Jesus in the river. Bless this water now.

Let it awaken memory. Let it carry mercy. Let it stir our hearts toward your dream.

“Rejoice and be glad. Remember your baptism.”

Unison:

**We are the Body of Christ—not alone, but together. We are God’s beloved. The Spirit that was in Christ is in us. We are called to bring gentle justice. We will walk in compassion, courage, and joy. This is our covenant. This is our life together. Amen.**

\*HYMN #517

“Come, Be Baptized”

## 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 #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

Beloved of God, we remember today who we are—a people formed in water and Spirit, held in love, and called to bring gentle justice to the world. We do not give out of guilt, or out of scarcity, or because the church needs to keep the lights on. We give because love takes form in us. We give because we belong to one another. We give because our lives are woven together with all creation.

Our offering is the way we say: Yes—we will live as God's Beloved. Yes—we will stretch our hands toward compassion. Yes—we will join Christ in the work of healing. Let us, then, bring our gifts—our time, our treasure, our commitments, our lives—with joy.

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. January's Jingle Change supports Bethlehem's Mission Fund.

\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE: Tune: 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

**Holy One, Source of Living Water, you have gathered us in, washed us in grace, and reminded us that we are your Beloved. As water flows from its source to nourish field and forest, so let our giving flow outward—to nourish hope, to tend to healing, to join the slow and sacred work of renewing the world. Bless these gifts and bless the lives from which they come. May they**

**ripple outward in acts of compassion, in courage where it is needed, in justice that is gentle and strong. Just as the river does not hold itself, teach us not to hold back our love. We offer what we have and who we are, with joy and trust, for the sake of your dream of flourishing. Amen.**

\*CLOSING SONG #307

“We Are Called”

#### BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

Beloved of God, you are the ones upon whom the Spirit rests. You are the ones God delights in. You are the ones called to bring gentle justice to the world.

Go now as people who have passed again through the waters—washed in mercy, renewed in courage and stretched wide in compassion.

Go in peace, to love and to live, in the name of the Creator, the Christ, and the Spirit who makes all things new.

#### POSTLUDE

*\*Portions of this service adapted from Stretched Them Out: Service Prayers for The Baptism of Christ/Epiphany 1A was written by Rev. Michael Anthony Howard who serves as Minister of Faith in Action for Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast.*

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Bethlehem’s ANNUAL MEETING will be held on Sunday, Jan. 25 after a short worship service. Please plan to attend! Also, any annual report items for the “packet” need to be submitted to Traci by Sunday, Jan. 4. (trabefamily5@gmail.com) Thank you!
- 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 25. 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 while 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.

IN OUR  
*Thoughts and Prayers*

**Those struggling with health issues:**

Louie Bowe	Dawson Horneck
Heidi Konen	Darlene Horneck
Jessica Horneck	Jackie Volland
Sofia	Willow
Hubert	Larry
Chase Goekes	Tyler Smith
Molly	Eileen Koppenhaver
Margaret	

**Those unable to worship with us:**

Merlin Ninmer      Helen Henning

**This Week at Bethlehem:**

**Today, Sunday 1/11:** 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday Worship; 6pm Mission Trip planning meeting @ BUCC

**Monday 1/12:** *Happy Birthday Kamlynn Rumpff!!*

**Tuesday 1/13:** 6:30pm Consistory mtg

**Wednesday 1/14:** *Happy Birthday Shirley Henschel and Mekenzie Biwan!!*

**Thursday 1/15:** *Happy Birthday Judy Mueller and Bill Biwan!*

**Friday 1/16:** Confirmation Retreat at Lakeland

**Saturday 1/17:** Confirmation Retreat at Lakeland

**Sunday 1/18:** 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday Worship w/ Baptism; 5pm Youth Leaders meeting @ BUCC \*\*Spirit Articles Due\*\*

**Jan/Feb Panty Item: Can of Soup**

