



**...it is written,
"Worship the
Lord your God,
and serve
only him."**

Matthew 4:10, NRSV

BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, February 22, 2026

First Sunday of Lent

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

I will be glad in the Lord and rejoice :: I will shout for joy

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place;

I can feel his mighty power and his grace.

I can hear the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face;

surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

One: We gather with the disciples.

The enthusiastic crowds of Judea and Galilee are behind us.

All: God fills us with thankfulness for Jesus: skilled healer, wise teacher, close friend.

One: The highway to Jerusalem stretches ahead of us.

All: God gives us courage to walk the challenging Lenten Way with Jesus, the Chosen One.

One: At the end of the journey there is a hill and a cross.

All: God calls on us to wonder at what sacrificial love will do, and to respond to Christ's love in practical ways.

*OPENING PRAYER:

One: God loves this congregation so much, and has gifted us Jesus;

All: through Jesus we are encouraged to bring our heartfelt praise and prayer to God.

One: God loves the wider church so much, and has gifted us Jesus;

All: through Jesus we are challenged to broaden our vision of cooperation and responsibility.

One: God loves the world so much, and has gifted us Jesus;

All: through Jesus we are prepared to serve those most at risk, both near and far away.

One: God loves each one of us so much, and has gifted us Jesus;

All: through Jesus, we have the promise of salvation and of eternal life. Thanks be to God! Amen.

*OPENING HYMN #173

“Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days”

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:

One: Let us go out with Jesus to the desert, and know his temptations; the Devil said, “Turn these stones into bread.”

All: Food and drink will only go so far to satisfy; we need God's Word, the spiritual food.

One: The Devil said, “Throw yourself down from this pinnacle of the Temple.”

All: We do not need miracles to save us; we will find God as we loyally serve day by day.

One: The Devil said, “All the world's power and influence you need, I will give to you.”

All: We do not need power over others; rather we seek to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. (time of silent reflection)

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

One: The darkness will be overcome by the Light.

**All: As we open our eyes to the subtle power of evil,
as we confront the evil powers and name them,
as we find strength to recognize the evil in ourselves and overcome it,
peace will be ours.**

One: Rejoice! Evil is powerless; peace is your reality.

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

*RESPONSE #564 refrain

“All Will be Well”

All will be well, and all will be well, all manner of things will be well

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 (NIV)

¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴ “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Psalm 32 – p. 613 of hymnal – Leader reads odd verses, people read evens

Matthew 4:1-11 (NIV)

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’^[b]”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’^[c]”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’^[d]”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’^[e]”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

CHILDREN’S TIME

SERMON

*HYMN #192

“Jesus Walked this Lonesome Valley”

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 (Kathy will play through first)

O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call, answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Leader: God has given us so many gifts in Christ and in creation. We offer our gifts in gratitude for the possibilities we enjoy, trusting God to multiply what we bring for goodness’ sake.

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. February's Jingle Change supports the Sunday School's Leprosy project

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE: #438 v. 1 "We Give Thee but Thine Own"

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

One: These gifts will be blessed by you, O Loving God.

**All: Blessed through honest questioning,
blessed through a quest for meaning,
blessed through gentle encouragement,
blessed through serving the downhearted,
blessed through facing temptation,
blessed in common endeavors.**

One: Confidently we offer these gifts, O God, for you have blessed us in Jesus. 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

One: Begin your Lenten journey:

**All: We will listen for God's call;
we will respond with the commitment Jesus made clear;
we will endure the hard places and the struggle;
we will rejoice in the victory that lies beyond the cross.**

POSTLUDE

***liturgies and prayers for this morning were used with permission from:
Sparks, David. Prayers to Share: Year A. Wood Lake Books: Kelwona, BC. 2004.*

Bethlehem Announcements:

- **THERE IS A MEETING TONIGHT AT 6PM!!!** (at Bethlehem)
The mission trip will take place March 22-28. We will travel to eastern Kentucky to serve God's people who were subject to flooding last year. The cost is \$90 for lodging + travel expenses. Members of several area UCC churches will be going and we'd love YOU to join us! Our final participant list needs to be submitted by March 1. Please commit asap. Contact Pastor Randy with questions. Also, if you wish to support our trip, we welcome donations of Walmart and/or BP gift cards.
- **Mid-week Lenten Worship:** There will be no mid-week Lenten worship services held at Bethlehem. Members are invited to attend services at St. Peters UCC in Kiel or the "rotating" Lenten services at RCF churches. (location listed each week in our bulletin) Services at both locations begin at 6pm.
- The **annual meeting for the WI conference of the UCC**, will be held April 10 & 11 at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake. Bethlehem is allotted two delegates from the membership. It's a time of worship, business meetings, seminars and more. There are funds allocated in the budget to cover your costs. Please contact Pastor Randy if you're interested in attending - even if just for ONE of the days!
- **BUCC Breakfast Club!** - Our first gathering will take place on Saturday, Feb. 28 at Riverview Restaurant at 8:30am. All are welcome! Join us for food and fellowship! Please sign up on the sheet in the fellowship hall TODAY!
- **Up Coming Events!!**
 - Saturday, Feb 28 – BUCC Breakfast Club 8:30am @ Riverview
 - Sunday March 1 – Potluck and "Game Day" to follow worship

Community Announcements:

- Feb. 24 – 9a-12pm **Quilters Club** at St. Marks UCC – Orchard Rd. Cleveland. See the flyer for details.
- Feb 25 – 8:30-11:30am **Board Game group** at St. Marks UCC – Orchard Rd. Cleveland. See the flyer for details.
- Friday, Feb 20 – Holy Trinity Parish Perch Fry- (11928 Marken Rd. – School Hill) Dine-in from 3:30-7pm. Carry-outs available 11a-1p and 3:30-7:00pm by calling 920-773-2380. Grilled cheese also available. (See flyer for more details.)

- March 13-14 – Feed My Starving Children – Volunteers needed – Held at First United Lutheran Church, Sheboygan – Please see the BACK of the events bulletin board for multiple flyers for this event
- Sat. April 18 – 9a-1pm – “Stewardship of the Body” – A workshop for women – Zion Lutheran Church, New Holstein – see flyer


 IN OUR
Thoughts and Prayers


Those Grieving:

Family of Luella Emily Rogers Mauro (Pastor Roy’s mother)

Those struggling with health issues:

Louie Bowe	Dawson Horneck
Heidi Konen	Darlene Horneck
Jessica Horneck	Jackie Voland
Sofia	Willow
Hubert	Larry
Chase Goekes	Tyler Smith
Molly	Eileen Koppenhaver
Margaret	Linda Skinkis (sister of Judy Brockway)
Heather	Garrett Schultz

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin Ninmer Helen Henning

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today, Sunday 2/22: 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday worship; Ice Fishing on Wilke Lake

Monday 2/23:

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

Wednesday 2/25: 6pm Confirmation Class; 6pm Lenten worship at St. John’s - Schwartzwald;

Thursday 2/26:

Friday 2/27:

Saturday 2/28: 8:30 am BUCC Breakfast Club at Riverside Restaurant; *Happy Birthday Karen Schlegel and Alexis Horneck!*

Sunday 3/1: 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday worship followed by pot luck and game day

Jan/Feb Panty Item: Can of Soup

