



For **God** did not
send his **Son** into the
world to condemn
the world, but to **save**
the world through **him**.
JOHN 3:17, NIV

BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, March 1, 2026

Second Sunday of Lent

Worship Leader: Rev. Randy Koppenhaver

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:**

Into life's challenges and questions comes the Mystery of God,
and God's truth opens our eyes.

Into our routines and rituals walks the presence of Christ,

and God's love brings healing and hope.

Into our traditions and conclusions blows the wind of the Spirit,

and God's people are born from above.

We gather in Jesus' name to encounter God's grace and glory.

Let us worship God with open hearts and minds.

*OPENING PRAYER:

God of majesty and mercy, Christ, both Lord and Servant,

**Spirit of new life, your mystery embraces the vast reaches of the universe
and yet you are present with us in the course of our daily lives.**

Even the tiniest spark of your wisdom illuminates the greatest complexities.

With the smallest gesture of your love, you renew our hope.

Deepen our sense of your holy presence this day.

Assure us that your love will never let us go.

We offer our praise and our prayers this day to you,

Holy God, Holy One and Holy Three,

with humble hearts and faith that seeks understanding. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN #41

"To God Be the Glory"

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:

God of mystery and mercy,

we confess that we prefer simple certainty to seeking deeper understanding.

We settle for what we know, ignoring our doubts and questions.

Forgive us when our faith falters because what we think no longer satisfies.

Open our eyes to the truth you hold out to us in Christ,

and give us courage to rethink what we have assumed about you

and your love for the world. (time of silent reflection)

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

The Apostle Paul declared that from now on, we regard no one from a human point of view. **If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.** Everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! **Thanks be to God for love that gives us all a new start this very day!**

*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

Psalm 121 (NIV)

¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?

**2 My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.**
3 He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
4 **indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.**
5 The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
6 **the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.**
7 The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
8 **the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.**

John 3:1-17 (NIV)

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

9 “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

10 “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? 11 Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

CHILDREN'S TIME

SERMON

"Misconceptions and Misunderstandings"

*HYMN #537

"Lift High the Cross"

THE LORD'S SUPPER

(God's table is open to ALL, regardless of affiliation or membership. Please hold the elements until all have been served and we will partake together. All bread is gluten free. The inner circles are grape juice; the outer rings are wine.)

INVITATION

PRAYER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

DISTRIBUTION

PRAYER OF THANKGIVING

We give thanks, loving God, that you have refreshed us at your table. Strengthen our faith; increase our love for one another. As we have been fed by the seed that became grain, and then became bread, may we go out into the world to plant seeds of justice, transformation, and hope. Amen.

COMMUNION RESPONSE #524 V.3

"Let us Break Bread Together"

PRAYER CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER...THE LORD'S PRAYER

Petitions end with: "God, our Companion - **Walk with us on the way.**"

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

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. March's Jingle Change supports Bethlehem's pledge to OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission)

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE: #438 v. 1 "We Give Thee but Thine Own"
**We give thee but thine own, Whate'er the gift may be:
All that we have is thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from thee. Amen.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Generous God, we offer our gifts to you in gratitude for all that we have received in Christ and in creation. Bless our gifts and our lives, so that we can share in the building up of your kingdom in the world you love. In Jesus' name, we pray. 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 and prayers for this morning were used with permission from:
presbyterian.ca/worship/*

Bethlehem Announcements:

- **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 Sunday School will be purchasing Easter lilies for the Easter season. We will decorate the sanctuary with the flowers. There will be no sign-up sheet to purchase additional flowers. However, after the service on Easter, you can take one of the flowers home. This will be on a first-come, first-served basis. If you would like to reserve one before the service, see Kathy Bowe. Any flowers left over will be given to a congregation member that is home bound or needs some sunshine in their life.
- 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!

Community Announcements:

- From Kiel Area School’s District Administrator: *For the last several years, donations support what we call our "Angel Fund," which allows families that are struggling financially to help pay for their children's breakfasts/lunches until they are able to get "back on their feet." Currently, we have been experiencing a group of somewhere between 15 and 20 families in the community that are struggling to make ends meet and their children occasionally need to use the Angel Account. The accounts at each of our three buildings are currently around 100 dollars, If are willing or able to donate anything toward our Angel Accounts, every dollar counts. If you have interest in making a donation to these accounts, just drop off a check at central office or mail it to 416 Paine Street in Kiel.*
- Sunday, March 8 – 11a-1p - CHILI SUPPER – St. John UCC, Park Ave, New Holstein
- 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 struggling with health issues:

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

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin Ninmer Helen Henning

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today, Sunday 3/1: 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday worship followed by pot luck and game day; *Happy Birthday Peyton Koppenhaver and Greyson Hoban!*

Monday 3/2:

Tuesday 3/3:

Wednesday 3/4: 6pm Lenten worship at Immanuel UCC

Thursday 3/5: *Happy Anniversary Jeff & Jennifer Holz!*

Friday 3/6: *Happy Birthday Mason Wempner!*

Saturday 3/7: *Happy Birthday Dylan Jeanty; ** SET YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD!!!***

Sunday 3/8: 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday worship

Mar/Apr Panty Item: Pasta, Rice or Crackers

