



BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, March 8, 2026

Third 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 come to God's presence with thanksgiving :: Make a joyful noise!

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:**

God's Spirit shatters our prejudice.

God's Truth nourishes our hearts.

God's Spirit encourages us in the face of fear.

God's Truth frees us from past mistakes and misunderstanding.

God's Spirit moves us to find new purpose in life.

So let us worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

*OPENING PRAYER:

Creator, Christ and Spirit,

you provide what we need to live, from the bounty of creation.

God of mercy, you know us through and through and you love us.

God of hope, you have an everlasting purpose for us.

God of wisdom, you open our minds and teach and guide us.

So we come to worship you, Source of Wisdom, Son of Mercy, Spirit of

Hope, offering you our prayers and our praise,

trusting you to offer us the gifts we need to thrive

and to serve you in the world you love this day and always. Amen

*OPENING HYMN #247

“Come, Thou Almighty King”

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:

God, our Redeemer,

We are not proud of all you hear in our thoughts and prayers.

We complain when we want things to change but don't know what to do.

We justify ourselves when you call us to change but we don't want to.

We blame others when things change and upset our expectations.

Forgive us, God, when we are not listening for you.

(time of silent reflection)

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

While it is true that we have sinned and gone our own way, it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's love in Jesus Christ.

All who humbly seek the mercy of God may trust that in Jesus Christ our sin is forgiven.

Be at peace with God, with yourself and with one another.

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

Exodus 17:1-7 (NIV)

17 The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² So they quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.”

Moses replied, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?”

³ But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?”

⁴ Then Moses cried out to the Lord, “What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

⁵ The Lord answered Moses, “Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah^[a] and Meribah^[b] because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

Psalm 95 – p. 676 in hymnal – leader reads odd verses, people read even

John 4:5-42 (NIV)

⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.^[a])

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

¹¹ “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

¹⁶ He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

¹⁷ “I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

²¹ “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

³¹ Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

³³ Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

³⁴ “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵ Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶ Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷ Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴² They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

CHILDREN’S TIME

SERMON

*HYMN #480

“Shall We Gather at the River”

PRAYER CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER...THE LORD'S PRAYER

Petitions end with: Revealing God, **Guide us in spirit and in truth.**

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

**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: Having tasted the living water in Christ's love and forgiveness, we bring our gifts to God in gratitude for such refreshment and renewal.

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

Loving God, with our gifts we offer you our very selves, knowing you receive us as we are. Bless all that we have to offer, so that we may become gifts to those who encounter us through the grace of Christ our Lord. 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:

- Thursday, March 12 @ 10:30am - Bethlehem will be leading worship at Field of Dreams assisted living. Please join us!
- **MERRY CHRISTIANS PIZZA PARTY:** Who's Invited: All Family and Friends of Bethlehem When: Sunday, March 22, 2026, following the church service What: Pizza with a variety of toppings, Veggie Pizza, Fruit Pizza and Ice Cream Sundaes; Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall.
- **Wellness Mini retreat at Bethlehem UCC**
On Saturday, April 25, all are invited to participate in a mini retreat featuring psychologist and author, Dr. Cary Knier-Johannes at Bethlehem. Dr. Johannes' seminar will lead participants to improved spiritual wellness through centering, guided meditation, journaling, and more. The retreat will run from 9am-12pm. The cost is \$10 and includes a copy of Dr. Johannes' book, *The Missing Peace*. RSVP's are encouraged.
- **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 events bulletin board for multiple flyers for this event
- Monday, March 16 – 6:30-8pm – at Lakeland University - “Experiencing God's Love in Anxious Times and Chaos: Community Care & Mental Health” presented by Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund, author of Blessed are the Crazy, which was a book study at Bethlehem during the WISE process.
- Tuesday, April 7 – 11:45a-12:45pm – “An Introduction to Zen Buddhism” Lakeland University
- Saturday, April 11 – Auction supporting Divine Savior Catholic School @ Millhome Supper Club – Raffle tickets available for \$5000 Dream vacation - see flyers
- Sat. April 18 – 9a-1pm – “Stewardship of the Body” – A workshop for women – Zion Lutheran Church, New Holstein – see flyer

St. Nazianz First Responders

37th Annual **Fish Boil**

FRIDAY, MARCH 13 • SERVING 3-7:30PM
St. Nazianz Fire Station • 202 N 4th Ave

DRIVE THRU ONLY
Enter off of Liberty Street thru RBraun, Inc. lot

ADULTS: \$20
HOT DOG MEAL: \$15
HALF PORTION: \$15

Support Your Local EMS
St. Nazianz Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.
Proceeds benefit purchases of equipment, education and training

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

Monday 3/9:

Tuesday 3/10: 6:30pm Consistory Mtg

Wednesday 3/11: 6pm Confirmation Class; 6pm Lenten worship at Bethel UCC; *Happy Birthday Steven Voland and Scott Umland!*

Thursday 3/12: 10:30am Worship at Field of Dreams; *Happy Birthday Mariah Lau!*

Friday 3/13:

Saturday 3/14: *Happy Birthday Jennifer Deignan!*

Sunday 3/15: 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday worship w/ Confirmands leading worship

Mar/Apr Panty Item: Pasta, Rice or Crackers

