



**BETHLEHEM UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

11608 Lax Chapel Road - Kiel, WI 53042
Phone: 920.894.3332

Email: BethUCCKiel@outlook.com

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**Sunday, September 1, 2024
Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost**

Worship Leader: Rev. Darren Beachy

Organist: Polly Jeanty

If listening from your car, please tune to 101.3 FM

***= 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

Lord, may I abide in your tent :: may I dwell on your Holy hill

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #557 v. 1 "I Just Came to Praise the Lord"

I just came to praise the Lord, I just came to praise the Lo—rd

I just came to praise his Ho--ly Name, I just came to praise the Lord

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP:

Holy God, you call us to worship.

In your presence, we seek truth and forgiveness.

Holy God, you call us to worship you.

In your presence, we seek the grace to forgive one another.

Holy God, you call us to worship you, heart, body, mind and soul.
So we gather to offer you our prayer and praise with joyful thanks.

*OPENING PRAYER:

Loving God, we rejoice to be with you and with one another. You are the God who makes all things new and who redeems our past. In life, we find the fullness of life—from joy beyond measure to despair that consumes. Your presence sustains us through the depths and the plateaus. We acknowledge your sovereignty and express our bold trust that hope is our portion and assigned position in your everlasting and incomparable realm. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN: #259 vs. 1,2,4,5,6 “For the Beauty of the Earth”

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:

**Faithful God,
even though we know you are the Source of our lives,
we confess we often turn our backs on you.
We hear your Word but follow our own ways.
We see others in need but prefer to meet our own needs first.
We harbor anger and say things that cause others pain.
In your mercy, forgive us,
and restore us to right relationship with you and with one another.**
(Time of brief silent reflection)

WORDS OF GRACE

While it is true that we have all sinned,
it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God’s love in Jesus Christ.
When we seek the mercy of God in humility, God will grant us grace.
Be at peace with God, with yourself, and with one another.
Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #358 “Only Believe”

**Only believe, only believe;
All things are possible, only believe;
Only believe, only believe;
All things are possible, only believe.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Psalm 15

¹ O Lord, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?

² Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,
and speak the truth from their heart;
³ who do not slander with their tongue,
and do no evil to their friends,
nor take up a reproach against their neighbors;
⁴ in whose eyes the wicked are despised,
but who honor those who fear the Lord;
who stand by their oath even to their hurt;
⁵ who do not lend money at interest,
and do not take a bribe against the innocent.
Those who do these things shall never be moved.

James 1:17-27

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfilment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

SERMON

“Just Do It!”

Darren Beachy

*HYMN #47

“Great is Thy Faithfulness”

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE...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.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Leader: James 1:17 reminds us that "Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above." May we receive all the gifts from God with gladness, share the gifts with hospitality and compassion, and celebrate the kingdom of God's abundance with boldness.

OFFERTORY (Jingle Change for the month of September supports the Rural Church Fellowship's CROP WALK)

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE "Give Thanks"**
Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ,
His Son (2 times)

And now...
let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done
for us" (2 times)

Give thanks... (2 times)

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Great is your faithfulness, O God, and so we offer to you a portion of what we have received through your unfailing goodness. Bless these gifts and our lives, so that your love is proclaimed to the world through all we accomplish in the name of Jesus Christ, our Friend and Savior. 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

POSTLUDE

**This morning's liturgies were used with permission from <https://ucc.org/worship-way/> and <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Pastor Randy will be out of the state through Sept. 3. Please contact Pastor Nicole of St. Peter's UCC with any pastoral care needs. (920-242-8308)
- **The Bethlehem Ladies Annual Guest Night** will be Tuesday, September 17th. Our Guest Speaker will be Steve Hamer, President of Wash for Life. Wash for Life is a nonprofit organization that installs wells (boreholes) at schools and villages in Malawi, Africa so they can access clean water. The evening will begin at 5:30 with a light lunch and speaker to follow. Lunch will consist of broasted chicken, rolls, salads and dessert. The congregation and the community are invited to join us. Please invite your family and friends!! All are welcome! There is a signup sheet in the Fellowship Hall.
- Once again, **we are seeking individuals willing to be Confirmation Mentors**. Your commitment is one meeting per month with your student. What's required: Your willingness to be accepting, a good listener, and supportive. What's NOT required: any special biblical or theological knowledge or the desire to impress your beliefs on the student. The job description is to be a mentor and friend, not a teacher. Please see Pastor Randy if you're willing to accept the challenge!
- On Sunday, Sept 8, we will conduct a **Blessing of the Backpacks!** Any student, young or otherwise, is invited to bring their bookbags, backpacks, etc. If you're not a student and just want your "work bag" blessed, bring it along!!
- **The United Church Men and Women will hold their annual scholarship banquet** at St. John's UCC in Sheboygan on Thursday, October 24th at 6:30pm. WI Conference Minister Rev. Franz Rigert is the keynote speaker. Please see Pastor Randy for tickets. They are \$20 each.
- The Bethlehem Ladies are continuing to collect items for the Harbor House woman's shelter. Information and collection site is located near the church entrance.
- On **Mission and Service Sunday** in September, we will be putting together disaster clean up kits for Church World Service. An example kit has been created. If you wish to contribute, please buy the EXACT item. They are somewhat fussy about the items. You can also donate money and the "team" will purchase the necessary supplies.

- Ready to talk about Christmas??? We are once again organizing the “United Church Choir” to perform on Dec. 8. This a community choir with St Peter’s UCC and other area UCC churches. See Randy if interested!

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS -See flyers in fellowship hall for more details

- **Faith in the Fall:** Sun. Sept 8 – 10a-2pm Music Festival at Our Shepherd’s UCC in Howards Grove (see flyer)
- **Upcoming NAMI Events:** If interested, Let Pastor Randy know and he will forward you the email with registration links
 - NAMI Walk – Sat. Oct 5 – 12-2pm – Kiwanis Park, Sheboygan
- **Cardboard City 2024: Raising awareness of Homelessness in Manitowoc County** Oct 12 – 4-10pm, First Presbyterian Church, 502 N. 8th Street, Manitowoc. For a firsthand experience, you can also sleep overnight in a cardboard box, tent, or in your car. Minimum pledge is \$20. All proceeds support agencies that assist the unhoused. See flyer for more details.



Those in our thoughts and prayers:

Joys:

Those Grieving:

Those struggling with health issues:

Will Mathes	Doris Mae Nimmer
Jeanette Wriedt	Wanda Matzdorf
Brad Westphalen	Chad Jeanty
Art Matzdorf	Jessica Horneck
Nancy Zimmermann	Jim Markelz
Gary Steinhardt	Marie Rietbrock
Shari	Tom Lefeber
Heidi Konen	Mary Beth Molitor
Dawson Horneck	Darlene Horneck

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin and Doris Mae Nimmer
Helen Henning

2024 Bethlehem UCC Leadership Team

Elder/President - Steven Voland (920)286-0162 or svoland44@gmail.com

Elder - Traci Rabe (920)894-7903 or trabefamily5@gmail.com

Elder - Lee Watson (920)562-0588 or lwatson@kiel.k12.wi.us

Deacon - Ross Westphalen (920)629-0193 rossw@forhealthycows.com

Deacon/Secretary - Kathy Bowe (920)894-7243 LandKBowe@outlook.com

Financial Secretary - Ruthie Rumpff (920)946-5849 srumpff@tm.net

Treasurer - Jane Umland (920)286-2175 jm59umland@gmail.com

Pastor - Randy Koppenhaver (920)286-2531 randynmel5@gmail.com



May God bless all who labor!!

a blessing for the start of a new school year:

by: Kate Bowler

The year is tilting toward the start of school again,
but truth be told, we're not ready.

We're still hanging on to summer, to the promise it held
for long-awaited connections and celebrations,
for refreshment for our bodies and souls
in water and sky and color and sunlight,
and all those little moments given to us
where we could linger just a little longer.

Now that it's almost over, we don't want to let it go.

The beauty. The freedom. All that was life-giving.

God, could you help us stretch it, extend it,
and maybe even blend it
into this coming school year?

Parents, students, teachers, all,
may your newly-structured days breathe with creativity,
your new duties be infused with delight.

As you write on those fresh new calendars
may you trust that your plans are a lot like magic ink.
Much may seem to disappear into obscurity,
but whatever is done in love will remain.

Get Comfortable! Bethlehem has a new “lounge” located in the middle Sunday School room. Comfortable seating! Coffee! Books and Games!
Feel free to relax or meet for conversation.
Before church - After church – While your kids are at Sunday School!

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today Sunday 9/1: 9:00am Worship

Monday 9/2: ~ *Happy Birthday Tony Tesch!*

Tuesday 9/3: ~*Happy Birthday Brian Witkowski and Wyatt Snyder!*

Wednesday 9/4: 6:30pm Consistory Meeting

Thursday 9/5:

Friday 9/6:

Saturday 9/7:

Sunday 9/8: 8:00 am First day of Sunday School!! 9:00am Worship w/ Communion and Blessing of the Backpacks

**September Pantry Items:
Toilet Paper or Paper Towels**