

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Praise God from the heights! The Holy One is transcendent, radiant, and glorious.

Many: Salvation, redemption, and liberation come from above and dwell among us.

One: Praise God from the earth! Emmanuel is humble, gracious, and near.

Many: Past, present, and future rests in the work of our hands in God's hands.

One: Praise the name of God! I AM hears our cry, responds to our need, and still speaks to our spirits.

Many: Blessing, honor, and power belong to our God. Praise God!

*OPENING PRAYER

Wise and Eternal God, You are sovereign over all the earth. Your works declare your greatness. Make your wisdom known to us as we gather in your holy name. Amen.

HYMNS

PRAYER OF NEW LIFE AND TRANSFORMATION

Holy God, you hold wisdom and knowledge beyond our ability to imagine or comprehend. Yet, you reveal yourself and the wonders of your creation to us. Regrettably, we allow the busyness of our lives, the distraction of our days, and the influences of the world to pull us from your revelation, presence, and hopes for us. Hold us accountable to your covenant so that as you are with us, we will be with you.

Make us a righteous branch in the vineyard. In the name of Jesus and hope of restoration, we pray. Amen. (moment of silent reflection)

WORDS OF GRACE

Beloved, let us trust that the grace of God has appeared, bringing new life to all.

We receive the gifts of grace and mercy from the Compassionate One who recognizes our repentance, comes to us in our weakness, offers strength for transformation, provides encouragement for repair, and grants forgiveness for sin.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

“Gloria in Excelsis Deo”

HYMNS

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 148 – p. 731 of hymnal – leader reads odd verses, people read evens

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Luke 2:41-52

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

MESSAGE

HYMNS

PRAYER CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER #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.**

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.**

POST PRAYER RESPONSE #403 "Lord, Listen to your Children Praying"

CALL TO THE OFFERING (Jingle Change for the month of December supports the
Christmas Fund)

One: The blessings we receive—in wisdom, years, and favor—are meant to be
shared. When we use these gifts to sustain the ministry of the church and respond
to the needs of the community, we demonstrate the good news in the world. Let
us give with boldness and boundless trust in the provision of the Creator of all.

OFFERTORY

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE Doxology to tune of "The First Noel"

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye, heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Lavish God, collect these offerings so that the blessings and favor you have
given to us may be shared among our neighbors with trust, hope, and love.
Amen.**

HYMNS

*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 and COMMISSIONING

As you go, remember that you are a righteous branch

Blessed to be a blessing

Empowered to spread the good news of Jesus Christ

May a new life of joy be born as we share the warmth of God's love and peace in the world.

POSTLUDE

**This morning's prayers and liturgies are used with permission from: ucc.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Sunday school and Confirmation classes will reconvene on Sunday, Jan 5.
- If any individuals or groups are seeking a recipient for end-of-the-year financial donations, United Church Camps, Inc (Moon Beach, Daycholah, Cedar Valley) is holding a capital campaign called Roots & Wings to support our church camps. See Randy for more info.

Pastor Randy's Ecclesiastical Council

When: Saturday, January 11, 2025 at 1:00pm

Where: Bethlehem United Church of Christ

Following a short worship service, guests are able to ask Randy questions about his ordination paper, theology, etc. Those gathered, including Bethlehem members and clergy of ALL Northeast Association churches, will then vote on recommending Pastor Randy for ordination.

Treats and fellowship to follow!

Please mark this important day on your calendar to show Pastor Randy and his family our love and support for his caring and devotion to Bethlehem as well as the wider community.



Those in our thoughts and prayers:

Those Grieving:

Mark Beitzel
Gary Steinhardt

Those struggling with health issues:

Gary Rabe	Heidi Konen
Will Mathes	Emily (Melissa's cousin)
Jill Wehmeyer-Sheets	Julie and Addison
Brad Westphalen	Darlene Horneck
Jessica Horneck	Mary Beth Molitor
Marie Rietbrock	Dawson Horneck
Tom Lefeber	

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin 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

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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

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today, Sunday 12/29: 9:30am Worship w/ Hymn sing; *Happy Birthday Dawn Wirtz!*

Monday 12/30:

Tuesday 12/31: *Happy Birthday Cassie Jeanty!*

Wednesday 1/1: *Happy New Year! Happy Birthday Kenzie Koppenhaver and Grant Taylor!*

Thursday 1/2: *Happy Birthday Jayden Jeanty!*

Friday 1/3: *Happy Birthday Carol Wehrmann!*

Saturday 1/4:

Sunday 1/5: 8:00 Sunday School and Confirmation class; 9:30am Worship w/ Communion; Annual reports due to Traci by 5pm; *Happy Birthday Garrett Schultz!*

**January Pantry Items:
Can of Soup**