



**BETHLEHEM UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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Sunday, March 23, 2025

Third Sunday in Lent

Worship Leader: Bonnie Ziegler

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

Because of your steadfast love :: My lips will praise you

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #556

“Surely the Presence...”

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: You who are thirsty:

People: Come to receive living water.

L: You who are hungry:

P: Taste the bread that satisfies.

L: You who long for connection:

P: Receive the fellowship of this community, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

L: You who search for love:

P: Experience the love of Jesus expressed in music, prayer, community, word and action.

L: May this time of worship fill and refresh you.

P: Let us worship God together!

*OPENING PRAYER

Holy One, draw us into community and connection. Let us receive you and our companions in worship. Keep us open to the unexpected, so that we may perceive your work in the world, and your work in us. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN #68

“Come Christians Join to Sing”

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

Gracious God, sometimes we are disappointed by other people, too ready to dismiss or discard them. Help us to see in others what you see in them: their growth, the fruits that they offer. Forgive us when we too quickly judge others. Forgive us also, when we doubt that we can be worthy followers of you. May we be inspired to nurture your people and ourselves. Amen.

(Time of reflection)

WORDS OF GRACE

God's ways are not our ways.

Where we would condemn ourselves or others, God forgives.

In the name of Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #564 refrain

“All Will be Well”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 55:1-9 - An Invitation to Abundant Life

Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for

that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does
not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is
good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting

covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
See, I made him a witness to
the peoples,
a leader and commander for
the peoples.
See, you shall call nations that you do
not know,
and nations that do not know you
shall run to you,
because of the Lord your God, the
Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the Lord, that he
may have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will
abundantly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your
thoughts, nor are your ways my ways,
says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than
the earth, so are my ways higher than
your ways
and my thoughts than your
thoughts.

Luke 13:1-9

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'

Psalm 63:1-8 - Comfort and Assurance in God's Presence

O God, you are my God, I seek you,
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where
there is no water.
So I have looked upon you in the
sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
Because your steadfast love is better
than life,
my lips will praise you.
So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on
your name.

My soul is satisfied as with a rich
feast,
and my mouth praises you with
joyful lips
when I think of you on my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches
of the night;
for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I
sing for joy.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down." '

CHILDREN'S TIME

SERMON

*HYMN #334 vs. 1-4

"Amazing Grace"

PRAYER CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER: #403 "Lord, Listen to your Children Praying"

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 March helps offset Bethlehem's pledge to OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission)

Leader: From the abundance that God has given us, let us return a portion to be used for God's work through this church. We will receive the offering at this time.

OFFERTORY

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE #438 v1

"We Give Thee but Thine Own"

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Loving God, accept these, our gifts, we pray.

Bless them and use them to inspire peace in places of unrest,

love in places of resentment, joy in places of fear, and hope in places of loss, all for the sake 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/COMMISSIONING

Go in peace; be of good courage,
hold fast to what is good, render no one evil for evil;
**we will strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak,
help the afflicted, and honor all people,**
lastly, love and serve God, and may the blessing of God Almighty,
Creator, Christ and Spirit descend upon you and remain with you forever.
Thanks be to our God. We go in peace. Amen

POSTLUDE

**This morning's prayers and liturgies are used with permission from:
<https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/lent-3c-march-23/> and <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- We will be collecting donations for a Daycholah Center project that involves removing a window, installing a patio door, and building a deck on one of the cabins. The Rural Church Fellowship will match up to \$500, all donations collected from its member churches. There will be a basket for this free will offering on March 16, 23, and 30. Daycholah is also looking for volunteers for a work and clean-up day. See Steven Voland for details.
- On Sunday, May 4, Pastor Randy will be holding a “Communion class” during Sunday School. The start time for this class will be based on when it's convenient for the SS teachers. It shouldn't be more than 30 min, depending on student questions. Then they can return to their regular class. If you are interested in your child learning about the meaning behind the Lord's Supper, please sign your child up in the Fellowship Hall.

- **Bethlehem Ladies – Easter Flowers!** We will be purchasing our flowers from Millhome Nursery. All orders are due TODAY!

Easter Lily and Mums - \$13.00
Hydrangea (colors vary) \$34.00
Azalea (colors vary) \$25.00
Reiger Begonia (colors vary) \$19.00

Flowers will be delivered to church on April 11th.

Please place your orders on the signup sheet by Sunday, March 23rd. Make your check out to Bethlehem Ladies and you can place in Ginny Schultz mailbox.

- Summer is coming and some of my favorite memories are the times I spent at church camp, both as a camper and camp counselor. Daycholah Center is a UCC camp on Green Lake that offers many fun activities for people of all ages. There are outdoor adventure camps, Sailing Camp, MADD (Music, Art, Dance, Drama), “Con” Camp (Think Harry Potter, Comics, Star Wars, etc), and “Night Owl” Camp, (designed for teens who like to stay up late and sleep in!) I urge you to check out ucci.com for more information. Scholarships and financial assistance are available. It’s a lot of fun! – Pastor Randy
- Thank you for supporting our Loads of Love ministry. In Feb. we served 4 clients and expended \$89.50. Our donations for February were \$85.
- Stay informed!!! Did you know that Bethlehem sends out a weekly email update called The Bethlehem Blurb? If you would like to be added to our distribution list, please send a message to randynmel5@gmail.com or BethUCCKiel@outlook.com.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- First Lutheran Church, located at 521 N. Eighth St. in Manitowoc, will once again host the Annual Spring Chili Warm-up & Bake Sale on Saturday, March 29, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. All proceeds will benefit Manitowoc County Habitat for Humanity. Please see the flyer for more information.
- 15th Annual Divine Savior School Fundraising Auction
Saturday, March 29th. 5:00 PM @Millhome Supper Club - Admission is \$10
*There will be a 'Live' Auction, 'Silent' Auction, 'Virtual' Auction, Raffles, games, delicious hors d'oeuvres and desserts, and an evening of socializing and fun.



Those in our thoughts and prayers:

Those Grieving:

Wayne Stauss
Don Mogenson
Elaine Waack

Those struggling with health issues:

Diane Fidlin	Tony Bowe
Will Mathes	Heidi Konen
Darlene Horneck	Emily (Melissa's cousin)
Brad Westphalen	Dawson Horneck
Jessica Horneck	Tom Lefeber
Marie Rietbrock	Molly
Dana	Mary Beth Molitor
Hubert	Jason

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin Nimmer Helen Henning

2025 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

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

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

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today, Sunday 3/23: 8:00 Sunday School; 9:30am Worship

Monday 3/24:

Tuesday 3/25:

Wednesday 3/26: 5:30pm Lenten Devotions; *Happy Birthday Doreen Schmidt!*

Thursday 3/27:

Friday 3/28:

Saturday 3/29:

Sunday 3/30: 8:00 Sunday School; 8:00 Confirmation Class; 9:30am Worship w/ Baptism;
Happy Anniversary Joe & Doreen Schmidt!

**March Pantry Items:
Box of Pasta, Noodles, Rice or Crackers**