BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, Sept. 14, 2025

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Worship Leader: Rev. Randy Koppenhaver

Musician: 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

Have mercy on me, God :: according to your steadfast love

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 **(Inspired Psalm 51)**
One: Let us enter the presence of our God with a renewed heart and a right spirit.
Many: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.
One: Let us speak, hear, and embrace truth and the wisdom of God.
Many: Strengthen and empower us, O God, according to your steadfast love.
One: Let us hear joy and gladness. Restore our crushed spirits.
Many: Revive us again, O God, according to your steadfast love.

*OPENING PRAYER:
Maker of Heaven and Earth, we rejoice in your presence. In you, we find joy and strength, comfort and courage, truth and insight. Speak to us again. Reveal your power in and through us. Show us your glory and be glorified in our worship. May your glorious light shine through hidden spaces. May your blessed darkness make space for rest. Fortify us for this journey and make us instruments of your kingdom. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN #37 vs 1 & 4 "Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise"

CHILDREN'S TIME AND BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS (UMC.org)

Leader:
Today, we have before us backpacks to be carried to and from school by the children and youth gathered here…. And, as in every aspect of our life, we bring these before God for blessing at this time.

Let us pray together:
Gracious God, we lift to you today, these students.
They stand here ready to receive your blessings and they commit themselves to study and learning in the school year ahead. We ask your blessing on each of them.
Further, we ask your blessing on these backpacks. They will hold the school work of each student and will be carried from home to school and back again. As these students carry these backpacks, may they be reminded of the love and care of this congregation that surrounds them each school day. We pray as well for the teachers and administrators in our schools. May they also be sustained by your blessing. May they be reminded that this congregation embraces their call to teaching and learning and surrounds them with love and care as well.
We pray in the name of Jesus who we seek to follow day by day. Amen.

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:
Holy God, you seek us when we are lost. You do not turn away from those who others minimize and demean. Help us to recognize the belovedness of every human being and all your creation. Give us courage and curiosity to engage with those that others would ignore or isolate. Let us rejoice on earth as your rejoice in heaven as we make restoration, redemption, and reconciliation abound among us. Amen. *Time of silent reflection…*

WORDS OF GRACE
Beloved, the Holy One seeks us and rejoices when we turn from the ways of the world that minimize and marginalize the community God has prepared for us.

We can be builders of a future that celebrates the kingdom of God alive and rejoicing on earth.

*RESPONSE #565 v. 1 "Blessed be the Name of the Lord"

SCRIPTURE LESSONS
Psalm 51:1-10 – p. 632 of hymnal – Leader reads odd verses, people even

1 Timothy 1:12-17
12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. **13** Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. **14** The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.
15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. **16** But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. **17** Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Luke 15:1-10
Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. **2** But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."
3 Then Jesus told them this parable: **4** "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? **5** And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders **6** and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' **7** I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.
8 "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins[a] and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? **9** And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' **10** In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

MESSAGE "Mercy and Grace"

*HYMN #45 v. 1-2 "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

This morning, we officially welcome Vander John Schisel to God's family. Vander was born on June 6 2025, to parents, John and Sarah Schisel. Vander's sponsors are Bradley Schisel and Owen Ingraham.

INVITATION

WELCOME
Leader: They were bringing children to Jesus that Jesus might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, Jesus was indignant, and said to them,

People: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the realm of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the realm of God like a child shall not enter it."

Leader: And Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.[4]

ADDRESS
Leader: The sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible …and the beginning of their growth into full Christian faith and discipleship.[9]

People: This is the water of baptism. Out of this water we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ's body.

QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES

CONGREGATIONAL ASSENT (please stand)
People: We receive this child as a new person in Christ. We offer our understanding and support as he/she explores life. We enfold this child in our love, seeking together to grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and all people. We join with these parents in telling the gospel in our midst so that this child may live with us for Christ, showing forth Christ's love for all people.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH
Leader: Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God.
L: Do you believe in God?
P: We believe in God, Father Almighty.
L: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

P: We believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.
L: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?
P: We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, Giver of life.
L: The Lord be with you.
P: And also with you.

PRAYER OF BAPTISM

ACT OF BAPTISM

PRAYER FOR THE BAPTIZED

*HYMN #516 "I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry"

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 #533 "Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread"

PRAYER CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE …THE LORD'S PRAYER
Petitions end with: God of mercy**, Draw near to all who need you.**

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

Open our eyes Lord
We want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch Him
And say that we love Him.

Open our ears Lord
And help us to listen,
Open our eyes Lord
We want to see Jesus.

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY (Jingle Change supports The 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

God our Provider, receive these gifts in gratitude from your people. We pray that these offerings meet the needs of the world and our community. May they serve as a public witness of our commitment to being your church. 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.

COMMISSIONING

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- ADULT MISSION TRIP 2026!
  Area UCC churches will be joining together to send adult members (only because school will be in session) to flood-damaged Kentucky next spring. Here's your chance to help others and feel like you're making a difference. We will be having our first meeting to pick dates and begin planning on Sunday, September 28 at 6 pm at Bethlehem. Mission trips are hard work, but great fun! All who are interested in participating are encouraged to attend! Please contact Pastor Randy for more information, or if you'd like to be involved but cannot make the meeting. We hope you will join us!

- It's that time again… we are seeking people who would be interested in participating in the **United Christmas choir**? Rehearsals would be on Monday evenings at 7 pm beginning in October. The concert is planned for Sunday, December 14 at 1 pm at St. Peter's. Joint rehearsal on Monday, December 8 at 7 pm with a snow date of Wednesday, Dec. 10. Please see Pastor Randy to be added to the list.

- The **Bethlehem Ladies Annual Guest Night** will be Tuesday, September 16th. Guest Speaker will be Randy Olm who is a coordinator of the Kiel Area Community Food Pantry. There will be a light lunch served at 5:30 pm with the presentation to follow. Please invite your friends and family. There is a sign up sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

- **Mission and Service Sunday** will be September 21st! Save the date! We will be making sandwiches and cookies for the Guest House, cleaning up Hwy X, and making hygiene kits for Church World Service.
  - You can donate cash or gifts cards and items will be purchased by the mission team.

- Thursday, Oct 30 - United Church Men & Women's Scholarship Banquet – Ebenezer UCC, Sheboygan – Meal starts @ 6:30pm – Program at 7:45 with Music by Rev. Dr. Christopher Grundy. The program is free. Tickets are $20 if you want to join for the meal. See Pastor Randy for tickets. If you like to make a donation to the scholarship fund, donations are always welcome!

- Friday, October 31, 2025. **– WHAT WE SING MATTERS – A Sing-a-Long Workshop** 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. with Rev. Dr. Christopher Grundy, Academic Dean | Professor of Worship and Preaching | Dean of the Chapel, Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri -- Event Venue: Lakeland University, Bradley Auditorium, W3718 South Dr, Plymouth, WI 53073 The event is free, but please register with Pastor Randy and he will procure your tickets

Community Announcements

It's Apple Pie Time! Please join the families of Divine Savior Catholic School in Kiel on September 19th and 20th with celebrating 25 years of making delicious Apple Pies. Made from scratch with love and care, each pie is made fresh and not baked. Pies are ready-to-bake or freeze to enjoy later. Apple Pies are $15 each and can be ordered by calling (920) 894-3533 or online at divinesaviorschool.org/apple-pie-sale. We are also looking for some volunteers to help make pies. From quality control to pie assembly we have jobs to fit all abilities. Contact us at divinesaviorapplepiefundraiser@gmail.com to help make some delicious pies. All supplies are provided along with delicious food to keep you full of energy!

Gospellers Coming to Sheboygan, October 11 and 12

The Wisconsin Gospellers will be coming to Sheboygan on Saturday, October 11 and Sunday, October 12th. The Gospellers will be leading the 10:00 am worship service in the First Congregational UCC (FCC) sanctuary on Sun. Oct. 12th. All who like to sing are invited to join the Gospellers for the Sat. Oct. 11th music workshop that they will be hosting from 3-5 pm in the FCC sanctuary. Any questions can be directed to David Wernecke (davidmusic1213@yahoo.com). We look forward to you joining us for this exciting opportunity.

- Tim Keenan, (who has served as a supply pastor at BUCC), is a Christian novelist and has published several books. There will a book signing at St. John's UCC in Ada from 2pm-4pm on Sunday, October 26. Please see the flyer for details and for information of ordering his books.

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
Financial Secretary - Ruthie Rumpff (920)946-5849 srumpff@tm.net
Treasurer - Jane Umland (920)286-2175 jm59umland@gmail.com
Pastor – Rev. Randy Koppenhaver (920)286-2531 randynmel5@gmail.com

IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

Those Grieving:
The family of Will Mathes

Those struggling with health issues:

Ross Sippel	Dana
Mary Beth Molitor	Louie Bowe
Heidi Konen	Sofia
Darlene Horneck	Donna Firman
Brad Westphalen	Dawson Horneck
Jessica Horneck	Tom Lefeber
Hubert	
Scott Vogel	John (Friend of Schlegel's)

Those unable to worship with us:
Merlin Ninmer Helen Henning

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today, Sunday 9/14: 8:00am Sunday School! 8:15 WISE team; 9:30am Sunday Worship w/ baptism, Communion and Blessing of the Backpacks; *Happy Birthday Ben Jeanty!*
Monday 9/15; *Happy Anniversary Louie and Kathy Bowe!*
Tuesday 9/16; *Happy Anniversary John & Sarah Schisel!*
Wednesday 9/17: *Happy Birthday Courtney Riesterer!*
Thursday 9/18:
Friday 9/19:
Saturday 9/20: *Happy Birthday Bonnie Hoban!*
Sunday 9/21: 8:00am Sunday School! 9:30am Sunday Worship followed by Lunch and Mission and Service projects

September Panty Item:
Toilet paper or Paper towels