

**BETHLEHEM UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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Sunday, May 31, 2026

First Sunday after Pentecost

Worship Leader: BUCC WISE Team

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

God is my refuge and strength :: a present help in times of trouble

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #549

"As We Gather"

As we gather may your spirit work within us

As we gather may we glorify your name

Knowing well that as our heart begin to worship

We'll be blessed because we came; We'll be blessed because we came

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

One: We gather in the presence of the One who abandons no one.

All: Come Holy Spirit, our advocate and comforter.

One: All are welcome in this sacred place, made holy through your presence with us.

All: Open our hearts and minds this day, guide us into a loving relationship with all your children.

One: We gather as God's beloved people, leaving no one outside.

All: Spark us with a word of life and radical belonging—a message that we share with others as we seek to live out Christ's love.

One: We call on the name of God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us.

All: Amen.

(Rev. Amy Petré Hill, Call to Worship III in Mental Health and Wellness: Worship Resources for All, 2022)

*OPENING PRAYER:

Holy One, we are all seekers. No matter where we are in the world, no matter what our strengths or weaknesses, no matter what our language or our creed, you seek us out with the eternal parental love of the Creator. No matter that You are always present with and for us, no matter that we do not always recognize the form, no matter that we may have a dimness of sight as in a mirror, we continue to seek you with the unquenchable human desire to know You and to rest in You. In You we live and move and have our being. Guide us now to recognize that truth as we gather together with you in this hour. Amen.

(Carrie Bail, Invocation in One in Heart and in Mind: Liturgy for Mental Health Sunday, Year A, 2017)

*OPENING HYMN #389

“Be Still My Soul”

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

Let us cast all our anxiety on you, O Bearer of Burdens, as we seek to follow in your footsteps. Even when we are reviled, even when we feel abandoned, even when we suffer physically and mentally and emotionally, we ask that you will help us to remember that we are, no matter what, your children. Even when we pretend to hide from you, ashamed of our wandering, ashamed of our weakness, we know you will find us and forgive us when we ask. We want to resist evil, and to remain steadfast in our faith, because we know there are many who share in our suffering. Direct us toward them, o Healing God, that we might not shy away but instead deeply engage those who are in need of your love. AMEN. (time of silence)

(Carrie Bail, Prayer of Confession in One in Heart and in Mind: Liturgy for Mental Health Sunday, Year A, 2017)

WORDS OF GRACE *Based on 1 Peter 5:7*

"Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you." Hear the good news: God knows your name, understands your struggles, and covers you with grace.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, accepted, and loved. Our mental health matters to God. Thanks be to our Creator.

(Adapted by Rev. Carolyn C. Blair, 2026)

* RESPONSE #560 (tune: Doxology) "Be Thou, O God Exalted High"
**Be thou, O God exalted high; And as Thy glory fills the sky,
So let it be on earth displayed, 'Til Thou art here, as there, obeyed. Amen.**

LITANY *More Good Days, Together*

Leader: Gracious God, you created us for community, knowing that we are better together. On this Mental Health Sunday, we gather to celebrate the hope of "More Good Days, Together".

All: May your Spirit strengthen our minds and protect our hearts.

Leader: We recognize that 1 in 5 people experience a mental health condition each year,¹ and 5 in 5 of us are managing our mental health every day. For the times we have felt isolated, ashamed, or broken, we ask for your healing light.

All: Lord, hear our prayer for comfort and connection.

Leader: We pray against the stigma that keeps us silent. Help us to create spaces of radical belonging, where every unique experience is validated and supported.

All: Help us create more good days, together.

Leader: For those navigating depression, anxiety, trauma, or burnout, we pray for moments of peace and access to the care they need.

All: May your peace, which passes all understanding, guard our hearts.

Leader: We give thanks for counselors, therapists, doctors, and support systems that help us navigate the hard days.

All: We bless the work of healing hands and listening ears.

Leader: As we look toward the future, we commit to being a community that walks alongside one another, understanding that "good" is defined by our unique experiences and goals.

All: With your help, we will move from merely surviving to thriving and flourishing.

Leader: God of comfort, companion on our journey, remind us that we never walk alone.

All: May your love bind us together, making way for more good days, together. Amen.

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2025). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. PEP25-07-007, NSDUH Series H-60). Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/data-we-collect/nsduh-national-survey-drug-use-and-health/national-releases>, 32.

(Adapted by Rev. Carolyn C. Blair, 2026; theme inspired by Mental Health America's 2026 theme of "More Good Days, Together")

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Psalm 88

- ¹ O LORD, God of my salvation,
when, at night, I cry out in your presence,
- ² **let my prayer come before you;
incline your ear to my cry.**
- ³ For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life draws near to Sheol.
- ⁴ **I am counted among those who go down to the Pit;
I am like those who have no help,**
- ⁵ like those forsaken among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom you remember no more,
for they are cut off from your hand.
- ⁶ **You have put me in the depths of the Pit,
in the regions dark and deep.**
- ⁷ Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
and you overwhelm me with all your waves.
- ⁸ **You have caused my companions to shun me;
you have made me a thing of horror to them.
I am shut in so that I cannot escape;**
- ⁹ my eye grows dim through sorrow.
Every day I call on you, O LORD;
I spread out my hands to you.
- ¹⁰ **Do you work wonders for the dead?
Do the shades rise up to praise you?**
- ¹¹ Is your steadfast love declared in the grave,
or your faithfulness in Abaddon?
- ¹² **Are your wonders known in the darkness,
or your saving help in the land of forgetfulness?**
- ¹³ But I, O LORD, cry out to you;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.

14 O LORD, why do you cast me off?

Why do you hide your face from me?

15 Wretched and close to death from my youth up,
I suffer your terrors; I am desperate.

**16 Your wrath has swept over me;
your dread assaults destroy me.**

17 They surround me like a flood all day long;
from all sides they close in on me.

**18 You have caused friend and neighbor to shun me;
my companions are in darkness.**

1 Kings 19: 1-18

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

³ Elijah was afraid^[a] and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." ⁵ Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." ⁶ He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

⁷ The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." ⁸ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹¹ The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁴ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

¹⁵ The Lord said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. ¹⁷ Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸ Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”

FIVE MINUTES OF PRAISE

“God Didn’t Let me Break”

GUEST PRESENTATION

Angela Rought

*HYMN #319 sing 3x

“Take, O Take Me As I Am”

PRAYER CONCERNS

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.

POST PRAYER RESPONSE #226 v. 1

“Spirit of the Living God”

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

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. Jingle Change for May supports The Undy 500, a collection drive of new men’s undergarments for the Guest House of Milwaukee men’s shelter.)

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE 447 v.1 “All Things are Yours”

**All things are yours! We make that true, when we return our gifts to you.
And so we give, and so we share, in Christ's strong name expressing care.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

You have given us the gift of your child, Jesus Christ, so that we might all know the one true God. Everything we have been given has the purpose of shaping us be of one heart and mind with Christ, and so we offer what we have to you. Bless these honest gifts as we bring them, that we all might do the work of God. AMEN.

(Carrie Bail, Prayer of Dedication in One in Heart and in Mind: Liturgy for Mental Health Sunday, Year A, 2017)

*CLOSING SONG #390

“It is Well with my Soul”

BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

One: The One who created all that is calls us by name and invites us into a life of abundant Love.

All: We go out into the world as God's beloved people, bringing Holy Love to all whom we meet.

One: Jesus taught us to love one another as fiercely and freely as God loves each of us, with the power that binds us together as the Body of Christ.

All: We will embody Christ by shattering stigma and welcoming all, leaving no one outside.

One: The Spirit fills us with the Breath of Life and urges us to imagine anew how to be Church in the world today.

All: We will breathe deeply and move beyond what has been and what is. We will follow the Spirit and bring hope and healing to all who live in despair and brokenness. We will be the Church!

(Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe, Benediction in Prayers for Mental Health Sunday Pentecost, Year B, 2018)

POSTLUDE

***liturgies and prayers for today we used with permission from <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/> and Sparks, David. Prayers to Share: Year A. Wood Lake Books: Kelowna, BC, 2004.*

Bethlehem Announcements:

Vacation Bible School!

Top o' the mornin'! Get ready to explore the Emerald Isle and the powerful words of Psalm 23! In a confusing world, kids need to know there's a God who cares for them. As they journey through lush landscapes, they'll discover the shepherd - King David and learn how to cross from anxiety to peace, fear to faith, and uncertainty to trust in God's Word.

Once again, we are partnering with St. Marks/ St. James for Vacation Bible School! All are welcome, and needn't be members of any of the involved congregations. Invite a friend! Bonus: It's free!! There is no cost to families! If possible, we will attempt to work out some sort of transportation from Bethlehem to St. Marks. Additionally, we would always accept volunteers to help with activities, even if just for ONE hour!

Enrollment forms were mailed to Sunday School families, but if you need one, please ask Pastor Randy. Please return your enrollment by June 30 so we can begin preparing for classes.

- **Do you know a member of Bethlehem that is graduating this year from high school or place of higher learning? If so, please provide Pastor Randy with the name, school, and type of degree. We will honor them on June 21!**
- With the updating of new media equipment, there will be several items available for sale/donation. See items next to the sound room. Couch and chair are in the youth room.
 - Small TV with VHS capability
 - DVD player
 - VHS tapes
 - Large TV stand
 - Also available is a couch and rocking chair

It's UNDY 500 time!!! Please bring your new undergarments for the Guest House (men's shelter) in Milwaukee. We are collecting throughout the month of May.

Note: All items must be NEW and in the original packaging

- Men's Underwear - BOXERS and BOXER BRIEFS ONLY (No "tighty whiteys" please)
- Men's Undershirts

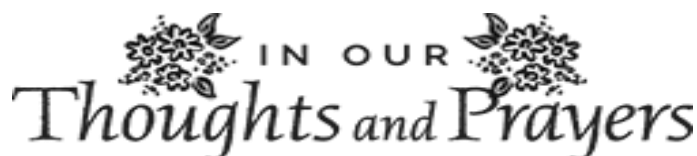
Please buy a variety of sizes in each item

- Men's S, M, L, XL, 2X,3x, and 4X Undershirts (**note: Guest House is currently completely out or low on M, L and XL t-shirts**)
- Men's S, M, L, XL, 2X, 3X and 4X Underwear (**note: Guest House is currently completely out or low on M, L and XL underwear**)

****Pastor Randy and Melissa will be on vacation June 6-14. If you have an emergency pastoral need, please call Rev. David Kohls of St. John's UCC, New Holstein. (920-522-2565)**

Community Announcements:

- **OUR LADY OF THE HOLYLAND PARISH SOCIAL – AT JOHNSBURG!**
Saturday, June 6th, 2026. Outdoor Polka Mass @ 4PM. 5PM-8PM 2/5's Party Band. Brats, hamburgers, and refreshments available in the beer stand following mass. Raffle drawing held at 8:00PM. Putting Contest, Meat Raffle, Kid's Games, and Pot of Gold Raffle during event. Hope to see you there! St. John the Baptist Church [N9288 County Road W, Malone].



For those grieving:

Family of Joe Joas (neighbor of Bethlehem)

Those dealing with health concerns:

Elaine Brill	Tom Knier
Tyler Meyer	Janet
Judy Brockway	Davin Horneck
Dayton Horneck	Jackie Volland
Louie Bowe	Dawson Horneck
Heidi Konen	Darlene Horneck
Jessica Horneck	Margaret
Sofia	Willow
Hubert	Larry
Chase Goekes	Tyler Smith
Molly	Linda Skinkis (sister of Judy Brockway)

And for those in our church family who are dealing with concerns but wish to keep them private.

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin Ninmer Helen Henning

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today, Sunday 5/31: 9:30am Mental Health Sunday worship w/ guest presenter; *Happy Birthday Lloyd Rumpff!*

Monday 6/1: *Happy Anniversary Tim & Judy Mueller!*

Tuesday 6/2:

Wednesday 6/3: *Happy Birthday Kylie Brockway, Brenna Koppenhaver and Brian Radder!!*

Thursday 6/4: *Happy Birthday Brooke Kilgas!!*

Friday 6/5:

Saturday 6/6: *Happy Birthday Gene Radder, Keatyn Suttner, and Vander Schisel! Happy Anniversary Jesse & Jenna Rumpff!*

Sunday 6/7: 9:30am Sunday worship w/ Communion

May/June Panty Item: Cereal

