



BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

11608 Lax Chapel Road - Kiel, WI 53042

Phone: 920.894.3332

Email: BethUCCKiel@outlook.com

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on Facebook

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Sunday, August 27, 2023

Worship Leader: LouAnn Norsetter

Organist: Polly Jeanty

If listening from your car, please tune your car radio to 101.3 FM

***= Please rise in body or spirit**

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #556 "Surely the Presence..."

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP (based on the hymn "He Never Failed Me Yet")

All: **We will sing of God's mercy, every day, every hour God gives us power. We will sing and give thanks to God for all the dangers, toils and snares that God has brought us out.**

People: **Didn't God deliver Moses from King Pharaoh?**

Leader: **And didn't He cool the fiery furnace for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?**

All: **Let us continue to praise God's mercy and love, every day and every hour. Amen.**

*OPENING PRAYER

Ancient One and Yet Cosmic God,

We give you thanks for your presence in ancient times and our world today. The stories we read help us to learn how people have sought you since the beginning of time. We follow in that same quest. Reading,

discussing, singing praises and giving thanks for the life you bestowed upon us, continuing today and into the future. Give us courage to hear and take in stories that always show us the depths of your love. Amen.

*HYMN #7 all

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy Midwife of Compassion,

We confess that we have not been model humans. We fall prey to petty arguments, distraction, intentional ignorance, and sometimes much worse. Sometimes we fear we may lose our social standing, wealth, and comfort; we see others as threats to overcome. Each week we seek your forgiveness, leaving purposely to live a better life of justice, kindness and humility. Yet, here we find ourselves again with the same petition. We may wonder about the elusive point of forgiveness.

Yet Jesus came to us for expressly that purpose, to join us in our humanity. Jesus experienced human frailties, bad choices, and shortcomings. Sometimes we are shocked when we read passages where Jesus may treat another callously. Some of us have even called out Jesus: his mother at the wedding in Cana; the woman seeking help for her daughter. Part of being human is falling short. We acknowledge that our shortcomings have prevented us from serving You and others. Let our time of confession birth the life you have always wanted for us. Amen.

Time of reflection...

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Saint Paul said that “when I am weak, then I am strong.” **May we recognize the strength your Presence provides us.** As we ask for forgiveness of human shortcomings, you give us the strength to once again lift the yoke of service to others. **In pardoning us, we strive to bring your kingdom to fruition, glorifying God’s name.**

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

“Gloria Patri”

**Glory be to the Father, And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, Is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen, Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 91:1-8, 14-16 (responsively)

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,

Will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.”

For he will deliver you from the snare of the hunter and from the deadly pestilence;

He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and defense.

You will not fear the terror of the night or the arrow that flies by day

Or the pestilence that stalks in darkness or the destruction that wastes at noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

You will only look with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. When they call to me, I will answer them;

I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue them and honor them. With long life I will satisfy them and show them my salvation.

Exodus 1:8-2:10

Now a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. The Egyptians subjected the Israelites to hard servitude and made their lives bitter with hard servitude in mortar and bricks and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, “When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this and allowed the boys to live?” The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” So God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.”

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

***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.***

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MISSION TRIP!!!

We have been invited to participate in a mission trip next summer with St. Peter's UCC and other area churches. The trip is open to 9th grade and above and will be part of ASP: Appalachia Service project. (www.asphome.org)

There will be a planning meeting on Sept. 11 at 6pm at St. Peters. Dates will be decided at that meeting. Please let Pastor Randy know if you are interested in taking part in this trip.

Mission Fest – Sunday, October 8th - *Lunch will be provided for everyone participating.*

- Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 8th as we celebrate Mission Fest. This year's outreach activities will include:
 1. Assembling Period Packs
 2. Making sandwiches for Mission House
 3. Highway clean-up
 4. Playing BINGO at an assisted living facility

Bethlehem Ladies Annual Guest Night will be Tuesday, September 19th. The Guest Speaker will be from Harbor House. *Harbor House* Domestic Abuse Programs provides safe shelter and support services to survivors of domestic abuse in Northeast *Wisconsin*. The evening will begin at 5:30 with a light lunch and speaker to follow. Please invite your friends and family to attend. There is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship hall.

SEEKING FAITH MENTORS!!!

We would like to re-implement the "faith mentors" program for our confirmation students. Are you willing to accept the challenge? We need three mentors for our students this year.

What is required: Willingness to meet one time per month with a student to discuss various aspects of faith. Have an open mind – be a good listener... be supportive.

What is NOT required: extensive knowledge of the bible, faith, etc. There are no correct answers and your job will not be to "correct" the student or say the right things. Just listen and be supportive. Please let Pastor Randy know if you are willing to consider this challenge. It will be beneficial to YOU, as well as the student.

The Bethlehem Ladies are collecting items needed for the Harbor House Abuse Shelter. These items can be brought to church and placed in the basket at the entrance until Sunday, September 17th. There is a list of their current needs printed and placed by the basket at the front entrance for you to take. Thank you for your generosity!!

The WISE Committee has been studying the topic of mental health since February. Now it's time to get the congregation involved! The first activity is going to be a **book study of Blessed are the Crazy by Rev. Sarah Lund**. (The WISE team studied this book in the spring.) The book study will be led by Traci Rabe and will begin on Sept. 10 before church. At that time the group will decide the schedule going forward. Please sign up in the fellowship hall. The book will be provided for you.

2023 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



Those in our thoughts and prayers:

Joys:

Families who have lost loved ones:

Gaiden Schultz (Garrett's sister)

Those struggling with health issues:

Heidi Konen	Marie Rietbrock
Bob Radder	Daisy Sippel
Darlean Rumpff	Darlene Horneck
Doreen Schmidt	Helen Henning
Tom Lefeber	Hattie Lucille
Jessica Horneck	Sandra Tesch
Dawson Horneck	Gary Steinhardt
Crystal (Friend of Randy/Melissa)	Brenda Voland
Molly	
Mary Beth Molitor	

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin and Doris Mae Ninmer

Other Concerns: Those affected by Hawaiian wildfires

Divine Creator,

As our siblings on Maui suffer the unimaginable loss of family, friends, pets, homes, businesses, jobs, and dreams, along with any sense of certainty about the future, we come to you.

Feeling powerless to alleviate the suffering and with the knowledge that you suffer with the people of Lahaina, we come to you.

We pray for wisdom in the midst of confusion.

We pray for healing in the midst of pain.

We pray for love in the midst of anger.

We pray for justice for Hawai'i.

Amen.



This Week at Bethlehem:

Today Sunday 8/27: 9:30am Worship; ~Happy Birthday Tasha Rabe

Monday 8/28:

Tuesday 8/29: ~Happy Anniversary Rich & Lori Schmitt!

Wednesday 8/30: ~Happy Birthday Lee Watson!

Thursday 8/31:

Friday 9/1:

Saturday 9/2: ~Happy Birthday Tony Tesch!

Sunday 9/3: 9:30am Worship- NO Communion; ~Happy Birthday Brian Witkowski!

**September Pantry Items:
Package of Toilet Paper or Paper Toweling**