



The Parable of the Talents

## BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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**Sunday, November 19, 2023**  
**25th Sunday After Pentecost**

**Worship Leader: Randy Koppenhaver**

**Organist: Kathy Bowe**

*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 #555

“Sanctuary”

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

\*CALL TO WORSHIP (Inspired by Psalm 90)

One: Holy One, you have been our God from generation to generation. Before the universe exploded and the earth was without form, you have been with us.

**Many: Creator, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.**

One: We enter your presence to worship and praise your holy name.

**Many: Mighty One, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.**

One: Teach us to count the days with joy and appreciation for all your marvelous works and steadfast love.

**Many: Everlasting God, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.**

\*OPENING PRAYER

**Generous God, you pour your Spirit into us. You bless us with your love. In your presence, there is fullness of joy, comfort for those in despair, and peace in the midst of chaos and confusion. You do not abandon us in time of need or of celebration. We turn toward you now seeking to receive your message, to give you honor, and to commune in your presence. Make yourself known among us, O God, make yourself known to us. Amen.**

\*OPENING HYMN #306

“The Church in the Wildwood”

Chorus: Come to the church in the country  
Oh, come to the church on the hill  
No spot is so dear to my childhood  
As the little white church on the hill

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Sovereign God, we confess that life is hard. We don't always make the best choices, and all too often we realize the options before us are lacking. We are overwhelmed with the enormity of the world's problems. Sometimes, we turn away completely. Sometimes, we respond with our tribal allegiances first in mind. Bitterness and resentment are easy guides. Help us seek wisdom and clarity, compassion and presence, hope and peace over shallow victories, material gain, and violence of the mind, body, or spirit. Bless us to be peacemakers, hope sharers, and love spreaders in the world for our neighbors and for your glory. Amen.**

*Time of reflection...*

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Friends, God is merciful and journeys with us as we navigate uncertain terrain. **God is still at work in us and through us that we might have flourishing and abundant lives in community with one another.** Receive the grace God grants to begin anew when our journey stalls or diverts from the path of the kingdom. **That grace is ours! Thanks be to God! Amen**

\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #571

“Halle, Halle, Hallelujah”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Psalm 90: 1-8, 12**

<sup>1</sup> Lord, you have been our dwelling-place  
in all generations.

- <sup>2</sup> **Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**
- <sup>3</sup> You turn us back to dust,  
and say, 'Turn back, you mortals.'
- <sup>4</sup> **For a thousand years in your sight  
are like yesterday when it is past,  
or like a watch in the night.**
- <sup>5</sup> You sweep them away; they are like a dream,  
like grass that is renewed in the morning;
- <sup>6</sup> **in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;  
in the evening it fades and withers.**
- <sup>7</sup> For we are consumed by your anger;  
by your wrath we are overwhelmed.
- <sup>8</sup> **You have set our iniquities before you,  
our secret sins in the light of your countenance.**
- <sup>12</sup> **So teach us to count our days  
that we may gain a wise heart.**

### **Matthew 25:14-30**

'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will

be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

## SERMON

\*HYMN #349 all “Take my Life and Let it Be”

## PASTORAL PRAYER... 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.**

CALL TO THE OFFERING (Jingle Change for the month of November supports the Sunday School.)

\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE # 282  
**Give thanks with a grateful heart  
Give thanks to the Holy One  
Give thanks because He’s given Jesus  
Christ,  
His Son (2 times)**

“Give Thanks”  
**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

**Generous God, we bring the gifts of ourselves and our abundance. Magnify and multiply these offerings to meet the needs before us. Continue to cultivate the spirit of generosity among us and make us good stewards as we allocate the use of these gifts in your name. 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.***

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Thanksgiving Eve Worship: WEDNESDAY, NOV. 22 @ 6:30 PM. WE WILL BE COLLECTING A SPECIAL OFFERING OF “CASH & CANS” FOR THE KIEL FOOD PANTRY! JOIN US FOR DESSERT AND FELLOWSHIP FOLLOWING THE SERVICE!**

- For many years Bethlehem UCC has supported Heifer International through an auction hosted by the Bethlehem Merry Christians. In order to make a donation in 2023, the Merry Christians are asking you to make a monetary gift by Sunday, December 10. Checks can be made payable to: Bethlehem Merry Christians. And mailed to: Lora Mathes, 21607 CTH C, Kiel, WI 53042. Thanks in advance for your generosity to help those in need. ~Bethlehem Merry Christians



The Bethlehem Ladies are taking orders for Poinsettias. They are \$9 each and the colors available are red, white and pink. The last Sunday to order Poinsettias is December 3rd. The Poinsettias can be taken home on Christmas Day after worship service. The sign up is on the table in the fellowship hall. Cash or checks to “Bethlehem Ladies” can be given directly to Ginny Schultz or put in her mail box. Thank you!!!

### **2023 Bethlehem UCC Leadership Team**

Elder/President - Steven Voland (920)286-0162 or [svoland44@gmail.com](mailto:svoland44@gmail.com)

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**Those in our thoughts and prayers:**

**Families who have lost loved ones:**

Bob Radder

**Those struggling with health issues:**

Sarah Arnold

Heidi Konen

Brenda Voland

Darlean Rumpff

Helen Henning

Tom Lefeber

Jessica Horneck

Dawson Horneck

Crystal

Elizabeth Quackenboss (Nicole Watson's Gmother)

Marie Rietbrock

Daisy Sippel

Darlene Horneck

Molly

Mary Beth Molitor

Sandra Tesch

Gary Steinhardt

Neal (Louie's Brother)

**Those unable to worship with us:**

Merlin and Doris Mae Ninmer

**Other Concerns:**

Those affected by war in Israel.

Those affected by the earthquake in Afghanistan.

**This Week at Bethlehem:**

**Today Sunday 11/19:** 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Worship;

**Monday 11/20:**

**Tuesday 11/21:** ~Happy Birthday Heidi Konen!

**Wednesday 11/22:** 6:30pm Thanksgiving Eve Worship w/ Fellowship; ~Happy Birthday Keith Bowe, Bruce Jeanty, and Asher Rodriguez!

**Thursday 11/23:** \*\*Happy Thanksgiving!\*\*; ~Happy Birthday Ellie Holz!

**Friday 11/24:** ~Happy Anniversary Tom & Traci Rabe!

**Saturday 11/25:** ~Happy Birthday Joe Molitor!

**Sunday 11/26:** 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Worship; ~Happy Birthday Logan Shaver! Happy Anniversary Kerry & Barb Henning!

**November Pantry Items:  
Box of Cake Mix or Frosting**