



## **BETHLEHEM UNITED**

### **CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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**Sunday, May 17, 2026**

**Seventh Sunday of Eastertide**

**Worship Leader: Lou Ann Norsesetter**

**Musician: Polly Jeanty**

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

***I am jubilant with joy :: I sing praises to God's name***

**RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CALL TO WORSHIP #554**

**"Holy Ground"**

**We are standing on holy ground, And I know that there are angels all around**

**Let us praise Jesus now, We are standing in his presence on holy ground**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP: (inspired by Psalm 68)**

**Leader:** Let God rise up! Sing to God; lift up a song to the One who rides upon the clouds—the Holy One— be exultant before God.

**All:** **Let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy!**

**Leader:** Let God rise up! Ascribe power to God, full of majesty and power.

**All:** **Let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy!**

Leader: Let God rise up! Awesome is God in the sanctuary, who gives power and strength to the people.

All: **Let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy! Blessed be God!**

\*OPENING PRAYER:

**Today we'll hear stories of your many families, Holy One. The family you were born into on earth. Your heavenly family with God and the Holy Spirit. Your family of disciples. And all the men, women and children you met in between. Help us to see our own lives as a succession of families: birth families, adoptive families, families with human and furry children, church families, choir families, families devoted to helping others – firefighters, teachers, immigrants, literacy and scouting. We ask your love and support for whatever families we may become; may we act with kindness and patience, seek justice and share the good news with all.**

\*OPENING HYMN #39

“I Sing the Mighty Power of God”

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

**Didn't we just pray for forgiveness last week and here we are again. We know our ways are not always God's ways. Maybe we ran out of time, maybe we're afraid of judgment by others, maybe we prefer a workout to worship. We may look away when we'd rather not challenge injustice. We sometimes run from the life God hopes for us. Whether we fear life's harshness or simply cannot trust the promises God makes for us, we seek God's mercy when we have fallen short.**

**Rather than despair for lacking perfection, we rejoice that God constantly seeks us in love no matter what happened in the past week. God who showers love, mercy and new life on us every time we pray.**

(time of silence)

WORDS OF GRACE

Jesus spoke to Peter about the need for forgiveness. Rather than agree with Peter's offer of forgiving seven times, Jesus told him to forgive 77 times. If that seemed like an impossibility for Peter, it's just a hint of the forgiveness the Holy One offer us.

As Paul assured the Romans over 2000 years ago, **“For I am certain that nothing can separate us from God's love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all**

**creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.” Amen.**

\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #571      “Halle, Halle, Hallelujah”

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

**Acts 1:6-14 – Jesus Is Taken Up to Heaven**

When the apostles met together with Jesus, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time give the Kingdom back to Israel?”

Jesus said to them, “The times and occasions are set by my Father’s own authority, and it is not for you to know when they will be. But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After saying this, he was taken up to heaven as they watched him, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They still had their eyes fixed on the sky as he went away, when two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them and said, “Galileans, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw him go to heaven.”

Then the apostles went back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is about half a mile away from the city. They entered the city and went up to the room where they were staying: Peter, John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Patriot, and Judas son of James. They gathered frequently to pray as a group, together with the women and with Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.

**John 17:1-16, 20-22 - Jesus Prays for His Disciples**

After Jesus finished saying this, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your Son, so that the Son may give glory to you. For you gave him authority over all people, so that he might give eternal life to all those you gave him. And eternal life means to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom you sent. I have shown your glory on earth; I have finished the work you gave me to do. Father! Give me glory in your presence now, the same glory I had with you before the world was made.

“I have made you known to those you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me. They have obeyed your word, and now they know that everything you gave me comes from you. I gave them the message that you gave me, and they received it; they know that it is true that I came from you, and they believe that you sent me.

“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those you gave me, for they belong to you. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine; and my glory is shown through them. And now I am coming to you; I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world. Holy Father! Keep them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one just as you and I are one. While I was with them, I kept them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me. I protected them, and not one of them was lost, except the man who was bound to be lost—so that the scripture might come true. And now I am coming to you, and I say these things in the world so that they might have my joy in their hearts in all its fullness. I gave them your message, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but I do ask you to keep them safe from the Evil One. Just as I do not belong to the world, they do not belong to the world.

“I pray not only for them, but also for those who believe in me because of their message. I pray that they may all be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me. I gave them the same glory you gave me, so that they may be one, just as you and I are one.

## CHILDREN’S TIME

MESSAGES – Like a Child at Home

Lou Ann Norsetter

\*HYMN (insert)

“My Shepherd is the Living God

## PRAYER CONCERNS

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE...THE LORD’S PRAYER

Let us join in with the faithful of centuries past and future, in Kiel WI and throughout the world with 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**

**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 THE OFFERING**

Our commitments in the world are tangible and spiritual. Let us bring our whole selves to contribute to the kingdom of God, including material resources, as a faithful act of hope, trust, and companionship in this community and in the world.

*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 Tune "Doxology"**

**Let trumpets sound and voices sing!  
Let all on earth their praises bring!  
For Christ has conquered sin and death  
And given life eternal breath. Amen.**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**God of challenge, comfort, forgiving kindness, bless our gifts for your people. We know that everything we have comes from you. Our gifts are but a token of our very lives we dedicate to your service. We ask your blessings in the name of Christ, our shepherd.**

**\*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

Jesus commanded his disciples and us to go to the ends of the earth to share the good news. For it is in knowing Jesus, that we have come to know God. We rejoice, taking our place in the family of God, here and now. Lead us as faithful disciples in bringing God's love, Jesus' teachings and the strength of the Holy Spirit to everyone we meet.

## POSTLUDE

*\*\* The Call to Worship and Invitation to the Offering came from Worship Ways at ucc.org. The Prayer of Illumination was inspired by enfleshed.net.*

## **Bethlehem Announcements:**

- Attention Sunday School families!!! Vacation Bible School will be held on August 18,19 and 20. Same format as previous years. Please watch your mailboxes for registration information.
  
- 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***

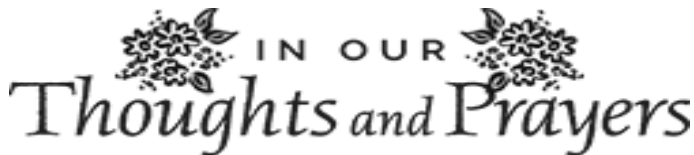
- Men's Underwear - BOXERS and BOXER BRIEFS ONLY (No "tighty whiteys" please)
- Men's Undershirts

***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**)

## **Community Announcements:**

- Memorial Day Dinner at the American Legion clubhouse in New Holstein on Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Sponsored by the New Holstein American Auxiliary. Dinner is a choice of barbecued beef or pulled pork sandwich, sauerkraut, German potato salad, baked beans, dessert and beverage for \$12.00. Single BBQ beef or pulled pork sandwich \$6. Proceeds will go to Veterans' Programs.
  
- Sat. May 30 – Treasures in the Trunk Sale – 9am-2pm @ Salem UCC, Plymouth – Vendor spots still available too! See Flyer!
  
- **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	
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 5/17:** 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday worship; \*\* SPIRIT ARTICLES DUE\*\*

**Monday 5/18:** *Happy Birthday Brenda Pike!*

**Tuesday 5/19:** *Happy Birthday Melanie Volland! Happy Anniversary Ben & Cassie Jeanty!*

**Wednesday 5/20:** *Happy Birthday Charly Deignan!*

**Thursday 5/21:** *Happy Birthday Allyson Wirtz!*

**Friday 5/22:**

**Saturday 5/23:** *Happy Birthday Owen Ingraham!*

**Sunday 5/24:** NO Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday worship; *Happy Anniversary Bill & Kelly Biwan!*

**May/June Panty Item: Cereal**

