



be with you.
As the Father has
sent me,
so I send you."

John 20:21, NRSV

BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, April 16, 2023

Guest Worship Leader: Rev. Dan Borchers

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 #549

"As We Gather"

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: You meet us in our questioning,

All: yet encourage us to explore and express our doubts.

One: You meet us in our individual faith,

All: yet remain with us when faith grows and shares within community.

One: You meet us as we focus on local needs,

All: yet show us our vital part in service and in mission, beyond this locality.

One: You meet us as we come away from the cross-hill,

All: yet surprise us as we encounter the risen Jesus Christ.

***OPENING PRAYER**

One: There is joy in the upper room.

All: The old despair is gone; new life in Christ surprisingly appears.

One: There is challenge in the upper room.

All: The new realities are questioned; faith comes alive in the testing.

One: There is peace in the upper room.

All: The old anxieties are forgotten; a new enthusiasm is courageously evident.

One: There is Jesus Christ in the upper room.

All: The focus for change, the promise of life unending. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN #199 (all) "Alleluia! The Strife is O'er"

(Top line is only sung before first verse)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: Christ lives! A challenge to cross-shattered hopes.

All: In Jesus, we will find the means to bring our dreams to reality.

One: Christ lives! A contrast to those who predict doom and destruction.

All: In Jesus, we will see the sun break through clouds of defeat and uncertainty.

One: Christ lives! A rock-steady marker in the shifting sands of life.

All: In Jesus, we will find the values that count, and the firm basis for a healthy faith community.

One: Christ lives! A strong token of your enduring love, O Most Gracious God.

All: In Jesus, the aspirations of leaders, prophets, and wise ones come together, and prove that your love is effective beyond measure.

Time of silence...

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: The tomb is empty!

All: The reasons for inaction are gone;

the fears that haunt us are dispelled;

the guilt of the past is worked through;

the ties of faith community are heartening and strong;

the needs of refugees, and those without rights in our world, are seen as our concern.

One: You are rising to new life; pardon and peace are yours!

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #571

"Halle, Halle Hallelujah!"

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

'You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to

you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him,

“I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;
therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover, my flesh will live in hope.
For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One experience corruption.
You have made known to me the ways of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.”

‘Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

“He was not abandoned to Hades,
nor did his flesh experience corruption.”

This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.’

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but

believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

SERMON

*HYMN #200 (all) "Easter People, Raise Your Voices"

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER... 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.

CALL TO THE OFFERING (Jingle change for goes towards One Great Hour of Sharing) One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery. (ucc.org)

Leader: The Risen Christ invited Thomas to touch the wounds in his hands and his side. When we give our gifts in Jesus' name, we can touch the wounds of the world with his healing power. Give, knowing you will make a difference for Christ's sake. (Presbyterian Church of Canada)

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE "Doxology" Text: John H. Danner (2016)

**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

One: Raise us to life, O God!

**All: With gifts that disclose generosity,
with gifts that bring us together,
with gifts that banish fear,
with gifts that show compassion,
with gifts that reflect the Christ.**

One: Raise us to life, O God,

**All: with these gifts, which bring Easter hope
in the risen Jesus Christ. 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 AND BENEDICTION

One: Create a faith community of hope;
serve a faith community of compassion;
work for a just faith community;
strive for a faith community that looks and works beyond its own walls.

**All: We will nurture a faith community of mutual support and
freedom-bringing;
we will rejoice in a faith community creating peace:
peace in the Risen Jesus Christ.**

POSTLUDE

**Responsive liturgies from Sparks, David. Prayers to Share: Year A, 2004.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Rural Church Fellowship Youth Event: TONIGHT, Sunday, April 16 – 5-7pm at Immanuel UCC (Near Lakeland University) Wii bowling and other games – sign up in the fellowship hall.
- We are still in need of delegates for the Northeast Association Annual Meeting – April 22 – 9a-2p. It will be held at Daycholah (formerly Pilgrim Center) on Green Lake, Ripon. See Randy if Interested.

- Been attending awhile, but not a member? Bethlehem will be holding a “New-Member Sunday on May 21. From 8-9a we will have a brief “class” and discussion about Bethlehem. New members will be “installed” during the 9:30 worship service. Please let Pastor Randy know if you are interested in joining.

2023 Bethlehem UCC Leadership Team

Elder/President - Steven Volland (920)286-0162 or svolland44@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:

June Propson

Lucy Dreifuerst (Brian Witkowski's Grandmother)

Those struggling with health issues:

Shirley Henschel

Scott Umland

Bob Radder

Daisy Sippel

Darlean Rumpff

Darlene Horneck

Doreen Schmidt

Helen Henning

Tom Lefeber

Hattie Lucille

Jessica Horneck

Sandra Tesch

Dawson Horneck

Gary Steinhardt

John Buchholz

Those unable to worship with us: Merlin and Doris Mae Ninmer

- Other Concerns:**
- Victims of violence
 - Victims of recent natural disasters, especially victims of recent tornados in the US
 - People affected by war and/or oppression (Esp. Ukraine)

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Drive Thru Pork Chop Dinner – Thursday, April 20 – 4p-6pm – Saron UCC - See flyer in Fellowship Hall for more information.
- Bingo Night – April 22 – 5-8:30pm – St. Paul’s Christian Church – Hwy J near the Sheboygan Marsh – Elkhart Lake
- All you can Eat Potato and Buttermilk Pancake Dinner on Sunday April 30, 2023 from 3-6pm. Also Serving: Brats, Hamburgers, Applesauce, Desserts, Milk, & Coffee
Cost: \$14.00 for Adults, \$8.00 for Children 6-12 years, Free for Children 5 & Under
Zion Lutheran Church, 1702 Van Buren St., New Holstein, proceeds benefit the Zion LYF
- Unfortunately, due to lack of registrations, the Manitowoc ADRC course, “Stepping On,” planned to be held at Bethlehem this spring has been canceled. We will work with the ADRC to try again in the fall. Those who DID register will be contacted and presented with options.

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today Sunday 4/16: 8:00 Sunday School; 9:30am Worship; *~Happy Birthday Blake Holz!
Happy Anniversary Bill & Karen Schlegel!*

Monday 4/17: *~Happy Birthday Emerson Witkowski!!*

Tuesday 4/18: 6:30pm Consistory Mtg.

Wednesday 4/19: ****SPIRIT NEWS DUE**** *~Happy Birthday Dominick Sheets!*

Thursday 4/20:

Friday 4/21:

Saturday 4/22: 9a-2p NE Assoc. Annual Meeting; *~Happy Birthday Amy Wempner!*

Sunday 4/23: 8:00 Sunday School; 9:30am Worship; *~Happy Birthday Kaye Radder!*

April Pantry Items:

Bottle of hand soap, dish soap or shampoo