



BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, January 8, 2023

Leader: Pastor 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: #107 (first verse) "Joy to the World"

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

We are called to serve in the name of Jesus, God's beloved Son,

God calls us by name because we are beloved.

God calls us to be a light to the nations.

We wait for God's teaching and to learn justice.

We are witnesses to God's goodness and grace who claims and loves us.

God's name be praised!

***OPENING PRAYER:**

Creator God, you formed the heavens and stretched them over us; you spread out the earth and made it fruitful. From your glory, you came to us in Jesus, your Son, to touch the earth with healing and hope. We praise you for all the gifts you have given us in Christ and in creation. In the strength of the Spirit, we come to renew our commitment to you, to serve in the name of Christ Jesus, who is one with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and always. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN # #557

"I Just Came to Praise the Lord"

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Merciful God,

in baptism you promise us forgiveness and new life.

We confess that we often prefer our old ways.

We resist the new opportunities you set before us.

We cling to harmful habits and nurse grudges,

failing to forgive one another.

Have mercy upon us, O God,

and guide us to live with more grace and generosity through Christ our Lord.

(Time for silent reflection)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

Friends, hear the good news of the gospel. Before the world was made, we were chosen in Christ to be part of God's family. God calls us to new life in Christ, so trust in God's forgiveness and grace. Turn and follow Jesus in repentance and joy. **Thanks be to God! Amen!**

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE # 121 (refrain) "Gloria"

Glor - - -ri-a in excelsis Deo, Glor - - -ri-a in excelsis De - o.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Isaiah 42:1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,

my chosen, in whom my soul delights;

I have put my spirit upon him;

he will bring forth justice to the nations.

He will not cry or lift up his voice,

or make it heard in the street;

a bruised reed he will not break,

and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;

he will faithfully bring forth justice.

He will not grow faint or be crushed

until he has established justice in the earth;

and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

Thus says God, the LORD,

who created the heavens and stretched them out,

who spread out the earth and what comes from it,

who gives breath to the people upon it

and spirit to those who walk in it:

I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,

I have taken you by the hand and kept you;

I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,
to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
I am the LORD, that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.
See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness.' Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'

SERMON

RENEWAL OF BAPTISM (ucc.org)

INVITATION

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Adapted from a Reading from the Second National Meeting of United Church of Christ Women)

**O God, because you are the source of all life
And love and being,
We call you Creator.**

**Because we know the history of your presence
Among your covenanted people and honor their tradition,
We call you Lord.**

**Because our Savior, Jesus Christ, you obedient child,
Knew you intimately and spoke of you so,
We call you Father.**

**Because you are present in each act of birth;
And because you shelter, nurture and care for us,
We call you Mother.**

**Because you hold us up
And give us strength and courage
When we are weak and in need,
We call you Sustainer.**

**Because we have known you in our pain and suffering,
We call you Comforter.**

**Because beyond pain lies your promise
Of all things made new,
We call you Hope.**

**Because you are the means of liberation
And the way to freedom,
We call you Deliverer.**

**Because you have chosen to come among us
And share our common lot,
Making the hard choices, suffering and dying;
Because you rose victorious, bringing new life,
We call you Redeemer.**

**Confident that you will hear,
We call upon you with all the names
That make you real to us,
The names which create an image in our minds and hearts,
An image which our souls can understand and touch.
And yet we know that you are more than all of these.
Blessing and power, glory and honor be unto you, our God, Amen.**

QUESTIONS

One: Do you believe in the One of Many Names, God, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit?

Many: **We believe in the God of Many Names.**

One: Do you reject the powers of oppression in this world, the systems that marginalize and degrade human beings and communities created by God, and the norms of the world at odds with the way of the kingdom?

Many: **We do, with the help of God.**

One: Do you embrace grace as God's gift, to be freely given and freely received?

Many: **We do, with the help of God.**

One: Do you recommit to the covenantal and baptized life, the cost and joy of discipleship, and the community of belonging as a member of the Body of Christ?

Many: We do, with the help of God.

RENEWAL: "I am God's Beloved. I am Baptized."

(As we sing the next hymn, the people are invited forward to renew their baptism. Please come forward row by row. When you reach the font, please dip your finger in the water and make the sign of the cross on your forehead repeating these words: "I am God's beloved. I am baptized.")

One: John the Baptist told his disciples that he baptized them with water but the one to come would baptize with the Holy Spirit. As we receive the mark of our renewed baptismal vows, we recognize the movement of the Holy Spirit within us and among us.

*HYMN #512

"Wade in the Water"

PRAYER FOR THE BAPTIZED

Voice, Body, Spirit, we give thanks for the gathering of your people into a beloved community of belonging. By our baptism, we accept the invitation to public and faithful witness to the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world and to be instruments to that work. May we live the baptized life in the Spirit as caring companions of one another, with accountability, support, and grace. Shelter us in your love, nourish us in your truth, and uphold us in your word. May it be so. Amen.

CALL TO THE OFFERING (Jingle change will go to the Mission Committee)

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE

"Doxology"

**To God, all glorious heav'nly Light
To Christ revealed in earthly night,
To God the Spirit now we raise
Our joyful songs of thankful praise. Amen**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, we bring our gifts to you with grateful hearts. Use these gifts to spread your love in the world. And make us blessing to all those whom we encounter, that the life of Christ lives in us. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

(God's table is open to ALL, regardless of affiliation or membership. Please hold the elements until all have been served and we will partake together. All bread is gluten free. The inner circles are grape juice, the outer rings are wine.)

INVITATION

PRAYER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

DISTRIBUTION

PRAYER OF THANKGIVING

We give thanks, loving God, that you have refreshed us at your table. Strengthen our faith; increase our love for one another. As we have been fed by the seed that became grain, and then became bread, may we go out into the world to plant seeds of justice, transformation, and hope. Amen.

*HYMN #530

"Bread of the World, in Mercy Broken"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE...THE LORD'S PRAYER

Petitions end with: "God in your mercy, **Hear our 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.

*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 BLESSING

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

*Confirmation Class on Jan. 18 will be held at Bethel UCC from 6-8pm in conjunction with Immanuel UCC and Our Shepherds UCC. The goal is encourage interaction among the youth.

*Annual reports are due on January 8. Email to Traci Rabe @ trabefamily5@gmail.com

*The annual meeting will be Sunday, Jan. 29 following a brief worship.

*Bethlehem will be leading worship at Field of Dreams on Thursday, Jan. 12 @ 10:30am. We need singing voices! Please join us and let Randy know you will be coming!

WISE Initiative for Awareness of Mental Health Concerns

Pastor Randy is forming a study group to determine if Bethlehem might be interested in the WISE Initiative (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged). This initiative aims to seek ways in which congregations can support and advocate for individuals affected by mental illness, brain injuries, etc. The group would meet on selected Sunday mornings before church in January and February. We will study the issue of mental health, perhaps through a book study or guest speakers. Next, we would determine if we are willing to commit to a WISE "designation" and develop a covenant explaining how we will support people with mental health concerns. Please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall if you are interested in participating in this exploratory study group.

The Endowment Fund Committee

The Bethlehem Endowment Fund Committee has met two times this year. While using only the interest, we have made donations this year to the following local communities and individuals.

- ❖ Kiel Food Pantry
- ❖ Salvation Army
- ❖ 2 families in need

When you are reviewing your financial plan, please consider giving toward The Bethlehem Endowment Fund. Anyone is welcome to join the committee. There is something wonderfully fulfilling about doing good that lasts. Something that really makes a difference. Your gifts to the Endowment Fund are rewarding and adds to a fund that will benefit others for decades.

If you have any suggestions of an organization or a family in need, see any committee member for more details. Kerry Henning, Kathy Bowe or Marie Mueller.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Saturday, Jan. 14 – Ordination of Nicole Herda- Grace UCC, Two Rivers – 11am

2022 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 - Open Position - Prayerfully consider serving your Bethlehem family

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:

Those struggling with health issues:

Bob Radder	Daisy Sippel
Finn (a young boy with cancer)	Darlene Horneck
Doreen Schmidt	Helen Henning
Tom Lefeber	Hattie Lucille
Jessica Horneck	Sandra Tesch
Dana (friend of Melissa K)	Dawson Horneck
John Buchholz (Marie's brother)	Gary Steinhardt

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



This Week at Bethlehem:

Today Sunday 1/8: 8:00 Sunday School; 9:30am Worship w/ Communion; ~Happy Birthday Pat Hoban, Jane Umland, and Mary Beth Molitor!

Monday 1/9: 5pm Loads of Love

Tuesday 1/10: 6:30pm Consistory Mtg. ~Happy Birthday Harrison Zorn, Rich Schmitt and Arlyn Retlich!!

Wednesday 1/11:

Thursday 1/12: 10:30am Worship @ Field of Dreams ~Happy Birthday Kamlynn Rumpff!!

Friday 1/13:

Saturday 1/14: ~Happy Birthday Shirley Henschel and Mekenzie Biwan!

Sunday 1/15: 8:00 Sunday School; 9:30am Worship; ~Happy Birthday Judy Mueller and Bill Biwan!

January Pantry Items: Can of Soup