



BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, July 16, 2023

Worship Leader: Consistory Members

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 #556 "Surely the Presence..."

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE "Missionary Medley" Kathy Bowe and Polly Jeanty

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The Word is a lamp and a light. The word illuminates our life.

Many: We welcome The Word with praise and thanksgiving.

One: The Word comes from the mouth of God and accomplishes its purpose.

Many: We hear The Word that loves and embraces, challenges and convicts, renews and restores.

One: The Word is life, offers a future with hope, and creates peace in the midst of the storm.

Many: We receive The Word among us with rejoicing. We worship The Word in spirit and in truth!

*OPENING PRAYER

Creator, your presence among us illuminates our lives. Make us fertile soil, receptive to the seeds planted by your word. Nourish us with Living Water and grow us through the energy of your empowered and healing rays of sunshine. Let us encounter you afresh as we gather in community. May our worship show our love for you and each other. Make your presence known to us and through us for your glory. Amen.

*HYMN #34

“Let All Things Now Living”

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God our Redeemer, the words of our mouths often lead to hurt and harm. We tear down when we could build up. We speak of death and destruction when the power of life resides in our tongues. We say what is unnecessary and unhelpful while hesitating to offer encouragement and hope. Transform our speech as you write your word into our hearts. Stir us to speak life, joy, and love in all things.

Time of reflection...

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Romans 8:1 tells us, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” **God does not shame or condemn; rather, the One who is holy makes us holy, restored, and whole.** Receive the grace of God as it is freely given. Be empowered by the one who observes you and declares your good. Know that you are loved, forgiven, and transformed in Jesus Christ. **Thanks be to God!**

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #558

“Gloria Patri”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 55:10-13

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Psalm 65 – p. 646 of Hymnal – Leader reads odd verses, people read even – all on v.13

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!'

The Parable of the Sower Explained

18 'Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

MISSION MOMENT

The Clements Family

*HYMN #463

"I Love the Tell the Story"

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 the month of July supports the Bethlehem Ladies and their Christmas Mission Project)

Leader: We submit that all things came into being through The Word. All our gifts, resources, and blessings come from the Generous God, our Creator. May we return a portion of these gifts in grateful generosity for the ministry of the kingdom.

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE #438 v. 1 "We Give Thee but Thine Own"

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Holy One, we thank you for revealing yourself to us and through us with abundance and flourishing. Give us generous hearts. May our offerings offer a testimony honoring your provision and giving glory to your name. Receive these gifts and magnify them for the needs of your creation. 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.***

BENEDICTION

Let us go from this time of word and worship to word and witness. May the moments, movement, and ministry of our lives reveal the God we know and love to a world we know and love. May our voices echo the rhythm and message of good news to a world in need of encouragement, community, and hope. Let us go in peace...go as peace fortified and nurtured by The Word.

POSTLUDE -- Please join us for refreshments and fellowship after worship

The Word: Service Prayers for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost was written by The Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology, United Church of Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MISSION PROJECT:

In many parts of the world, women and girls live in period poverty – lacking access to necessary feminine care supplies. During the menstrual cycle, these hygiene materials are especially important to healthy practices. Not having supplies like sanitary napkins, tampons, soap and disposable plastic bags can create challenges that lead to unsafe and unsanitary conditions. During the months of June, July, and August our Bethlehem family will be collecting menstrual hygiene supplies and will then assemble these kits as part of our Mission Fest Sunday. Supplies can be brought to church during these months. See the flyer at church for the list of needed supplies.

2023 Bethlehem UCC Leadership Team

Elder/President - Steven Volland (920)286-0162 or svolland44@gmail.com

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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:

Scott Hartenberger Rose Wedero

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 Volland |
| Molly | |

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin and Doris Mae Ninmer

Community Announcements

POLKA and Potluck! - Sunday, Aug. 20 – 2pm. Sponsored by St. Marks/St. James – see flyer and signup sheet in fellowship hall.

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today Sunday 7/16; 9:30am Worship w/ Missionary Guests; Fellowship following worship

Monday 7/17:

Tuesday 7/18: *~Happy Birthday Helen Henning!*

Wednesday 7/19:

Thursday 7/20: *~ Happy Anniversary Eric & Dawn Muehlbauer!*

Friday 7/21:

Saturday 7/22; *~Happy Birthday Lynnette Steinhardt!*

Sunday 7/23; 9:30am Worship

**July Pantry Items:
School Supplies**