



BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, July 23, 2023

Worship Leader: Randy Koppenhaver

Organist: Polly Jeanty

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

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

God has searched us and knows us. God knows when we sit down and when we rise up.

God searches out our path and our lying down. God is acquainted with all our ways.

Before a word is on our tongues, God knows it. God's hand is ever available to guide us.

Such knowledge is a wonder to us. It is beyond anything we can attain.

We cannot escape from God's spirit. There is nowhere to flee from God's presence.

Darkness is as light to our God. God illuminates the way before us.

***OPENING PRAYER**

Search us, O God, and know our hearts. Test us and know our thoughts. We gather with eager longing to know you, ever present God, and to be known by you. We want to live as your beloved children. Assure us in these moments that you hear our prayers, even as your will is revealed to us. Fill our dreams and our waking hours with radiant hope. May every

time of encounter move us to awe and fervent worship. Lead us in your way everlasting. Amen.

*HYMN #552

“We Gather Together”

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Search us and test us, that all wickedness may be purged from us, O Creator.

Save us from our futile striving after our own advantage. Reshape our will to conform with your intentions for us. We confess that we have allowed weeds to grow in our lives. Our focus has drifted from the harvest you intend to the fears and greed that hold us hostage. Release us from bondage to decay that we may grow in likeness to Jesus Christ. We want to bear fruit for you. Turn us to the brightness of a new day. Amen

Time of reflection...

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

If by the spirit we put to death the misuse of our bodies, we will live.

We are set free from bondage to death to claim the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Live in the hope that God offers, waiting with patience for all that God will yet reveal.

We will shine like the sun in the realm of God, who leads us in the way everlasting. Thanks be to God! Amen

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

“Gloria Patri”

**Glory be to the Father, And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, Is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen, Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 28:10-19a;

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the LORD stood beside him and said, ‘I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.’ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!’ And he was afraid, and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’

So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

Psalm 139: 1-12, 23-24

- ¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
² **You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.**
³ You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
⁴ **Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.**
⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
⁶ **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.**
⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
⁸ **If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.**
⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
¹⁰ **even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.**
¹¹ If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night',
¹² **even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.**
- ²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
²⁴ **See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.**

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No; for in gathering the

weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, ‘Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.’ He answered, ‘The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

SERMON

*HYMN #366

“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”

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)

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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Thank you, God, for the rich heritage of faith we have received from our ancestors. We are grateful that your spirit is ever with us, assuring us of your acceptance and love. May our offerings share this good news with other children of God who you love. May all of us grow in righteousness that we might together experience the reality of your work in our lives, here and now and for all eternity. 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

Scatter to serve, listening for God's direction. Let your faces shine with the good news you have received.

The Spirit of God will lead us day by day. God claims us and is with us every moment.

God promises to be with us whenever we go. We can say, "Surely God is in this place."

God searches us and knows us. All our thoughts and actions are discerned by God.

Let us live, then, according to the Spirit. Let us show forth the first fruits of the spirit.

With eager longing, we seek to live in the Spirit. We look up with hope, and patience and joy. Amen

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The WISE Committee has been studying the topic of mental health since February. Now it's time to get the congregation involved! The first activity is going to be a **book study of Blessed are the Crazy by Rev. Sarah Lund**. (The WISE team studied this book in the spring.) The book study will be led by Traci Rabe and will begin on Sept. 10 before church. At that time the group will decide the schedule going forward. Please sign up in the fellowship hall. The book will be provided for you.

Youth Volleyball Tournament – Sunday, July 30 – Bethlehem UCC is hosting!

- Baked goods (cookies, bars, cupcakes, sweet treats, trail mix, etc.) are needed for the tournament. A sign-up sheet is provided in the Fellowship Hall. Please package your goodies in single servings and bring them to church Sunday, July 30th.
- Volunteers are also needed to sell hamburgers, hotdogs and drinks during the tournament. Any help you can give is much appreciated. Please sign-up in the sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

Church Picnic and Outdoor Worship – Sunday, August 6

- Beach/Hawaiian themed clothing and decorations

- The service w/communion and picnic will be outdoors (weather permitting) Bring a chair!
- Grilled hotdogs and drinks will be provided. Members attending are asked to bring a salad or dessert to share and to sign-up in the Fellowship Hall so we know how many to plan for.
- Games for all are being planned as well as a *bounce house (weather permitting)*.

Summer Concert Concessions – Wednesday, August 9th

- Bethlehem UCC will be providing concessions for the Kiel Concert in the Park. The menu includes hotdogs, chips, and a drink.
- Members are being asked to donate baked goods that can also be sold during the concert. Please sign-up on the sheet provided in the Fellowship Hall.
- We are also in need of 5-6 people willing to work the concessions from 5 – 8/8:30pm. Please sign-up on the sheet in the Fellowship Hall or contact any consistory member.

HHT A-Cappella

- Special music will be provided during our church service on Sunday, August 20th. Our very own Ross Westphalen is a member of this local barbershop group.

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.

Mission Fest – Sunday, October 8th

- Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 8th as we celebrate Mission Fest. This year's outreach activities will include:
 1. Assembling Period Packs
 2. Making sandwiches for Mission House
 3. Highway clean-up

4. Playing BINGO at an assisted living facility

Lunch will be provided for everyone participating.

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 Kopenhagen (920)286-2531 randynmel5@gmail.com



Those in our thoughts and prayers:

Joys:

Families who have lost loved ones:

Scott Hartenberger

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

Timber Rattlers: Faith & Family Night! Friday, August 11 @ 6:40pm – Neuroscience Group Field @ Fox Cities Stadium. Flyer on Bulletin Board with QR code for discounted tickets

POLKA and Potluck! - Saturday, Aug. 26 – 2pm. Sponsored by St. Marks/St. James – see flyer and signup sheet in fellowship hall.

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today Sunday 7/23; 9:30am Worship

Monday 7/24: ~ Happy Anniversary Scott & Jane Umland!

Tuesday 7/25: ~Happy Birthday Bill Schlegel and Gerald Schnell!

Wednesday 7/26: ~Happy Birthday Jeanette Wriedt! ~ Happy Bruce & Polly Jeanty!

Thursday 7/27: ~ Happy Birthday Tom Brickbauer, Bob Markelz, and Ruthie Rumpff!

Friday 7/28:

Saturday 7/29: ~Happy Birthday Allyson Jeanty, Mandy Voland, and Kendra Muehlbauer!!

Sunday 7/30; 9:30am Worship

**July Pantry Items:
School Supplies**