

“Lord,  
I believe.”

John 9:38, NRSV



## **BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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### **Sunday, March 19, 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**

One: Lead us gently as we worship, O God.

**All: With you we have everything we need.**

One: You give us calm in the midst of stress,  
the light of hope when the world seems dark.

**All: You strengthen and restore us.**

One: You enable us to make the right choices,  
and sustain us in the fearful times.

**All: You are a good friend to us.**

One: You, O God, are the source of a life that is  
faithful and fulfilling;

**All: as day follows day, as year follows year; all through life!**

**\*OPENING PRAYER**

One: Children of the light, worship your God with joy!

**All: The gifts of each new day, the ties of family and friends, bring us to God  
with thanksgiving.**

One: Children of the light, worship your God in community!

**All: The traditions of the church, the witness of wonderful saints, bring us to God with thanksgiving.**

One: Children of the light, worship your God with just acts!

**All: The inclusion of those looked down upon, the acceptance of the disadvantaged, bring us to God with thanksgiving.**

One: Children of the light, worship your God, known in Jesus Christ!

**All: Jesus' ministry of compassion and his sacrifice of the cross, bring us to God with thanksgiving. Amen.**

\*OPENING HYMN #78 all

“Christ Is the World’s True Light”

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

**God of surprises, we know that we do not often perceive the world as you do. We look to the flashy fame, the grand gestures, optimal achievements, and unreachable standards. Yet, in spite of our misguided reach towards perfection, you give us glimpses of your grandeur and grace. Surprise us yet again this day, O God, that in our complacency which allows us to drift towards the same old ways of faith that we may be transformed anew. Provide us with a new cup of oil that we may be anointed by your love so that we may set out into your world to bless and anoint others. In the name of the One whose love and peace make all things new we pray. Amen.**

(silent reflection)

WORDS OF GRACE

Friends, receive the anointing of God’s tender love and forgiveness this day. For God’s care and compassion for you abides in your heart today and always.

**All: We rise and set out restored and renewed. 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 LESSONS

**1 Samuel 16:1-13**

The LORD said to Samuel, ‘How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.’ Samuel said, ‘How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.’ And the LORD said, ‘Take a heifer with you, and say,

“I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.” Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.’ Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, ‘Do you come peaceably?’ He said, ‘Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.’ And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the LORD’s anointed is now before the LORD.’ But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.’ Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, ‘Neither has the LORD chosen this one.’ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, ‘Neither has the LORD chosen this one.’ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, ‘The LORD has not chosen any of these.’ Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Are all your sons here?’ And he said, ‘There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.’ And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.’ He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, ‘Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.’ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

**HYMN Psalm 23 – #55 all**

**“The Lord’s My Shepherd”**

### **John 9:1-41**

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, ‘Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?’ Some were saying, ‘It is he.’ Others were saying, ‘No, but it is someone like him.’ He kept saying, ‘I am the man.’ But they kept asking him, ‘Then how were your eyes opened?’ He answered, ‘The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, “Go to Siloam and wash.” Then I went and washed and received my sight.’ They said to him, ‘Where is he?’ He said, ‘I do not know.’

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, ‘He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.’ Some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.’ But others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner perform

such signs?' And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.

## SERMON

\*HYMN #334 all

"Amazing Grace"

## SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

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

Petitions end with: "Shepherd God, fill us with your love...**Lead us on your paths.**"

**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 March goes towards Bethlehem's OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) pledge)

Leader: It is not the outward appearance or size of the gifts we have to share that matters to God. It is the loving generosity of our hearts that is closest to the heart of God. We are invited to give this day out of the abundance of our lives, from our heart, knowing that no matter the size of the gift that God knows our hearts.

**All: We give this day from our hearts and may it be pleasing to God. Amen.**

\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE "Doxology" (Written by GW Dub Shepherd, 2006)

**Praise God throughout these forty days,  
Praise Christ, Our Lord, whom God did raise,  
And praise the Spirit who imparts,  
God's love in Christ into our hearts. Amen**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Generous God, you remind us that you "anoint our heads with oil" and that our "cup overflows" with your abundance. We do not take for granted all that you provide. Take these gifts and use them for the healing and tender care of your hurting world. May your cup of love overflow and abide with the hurting and heartbroken, forgotten and despised, so that we may all be made whole. 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

## POSTLUDE

\*\*Elements and liturgies for today's service were used with permission from ucc.org and <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/> and Sparks, David. Prayers to Share: Year A, 2004.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Rural Church Fellowship is planning a youth game night for students 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade. It will be held at Our Shepherd's UCC in Howards Grove on TONIGHT from 5p-7p. Pizza will be served. FREE!! Let Randy know if you will be attending and if you need a ride on the sign up sheet in the fellowship hall. Bring a friend!
- During the season of Lent, Prayer Stations will be offered on Wednesday's from 9a-7pm. The stations are self-guided and will be set up in the middle Sunday School room. Please come and engage in spiritual practice and quiet contemplation.
- Been attending awhile, but not a member? Bethlehem will be holding a "New-Member Sunday" sometime this Spring. Watch the bulletin and Blurb for details!

## **2023 Bethlehem UCC Leadership Team**

Elder/President - Steven Voland (920)286-0162 or [svoland44@gmail.com](mailto:svoland44@gmail.com)

Elder - Traci Rabe (920)894-7903 or [trabefamily5@gmail.com](mailto:trabefamily5@gmail.com)

**Elder – Open Position – Prayerfully consider serving your Bethlehem family**

Deacon - Ross Westphalen (920)629-0193 [rossw@forhealthycows.com](mailto:rossw@forhealthycows.com)

Deacon/Secretary – Kathy Bowe (920)894-7243 [LandKBowe@outlook.com](mailto:LandKBowe@outlook.com)

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Pastor – Randy Koppenhaver (920)286-2531 [randynmel5@gmail.com](mailto:randynmel5@gmail.com)

### **This Week at Bethlehem:**

**Today Sunday 3/19:** 8:00 Sunday School; 8:30 Bethlehem Ladies; 8:30 WISE Team; 9:30am Worship; ~Happy Birthday Hallie Brockway!

**Monday 3/20:** ~Happy Birthday Ross Westphalen!

**Tuesday 3/21:** 6:30pm Consistory Mtg. ~Happy Birthday Kathy Bowe and Tom Mueller!

**Wednesday 3/22:** 9a-7pm Prayer Stations; ~Happy Birthday Riley Radder!

**Thursday 3/23:** ~Happy Birthday Randy Koppenhaver!

**Friday 3/24:**

**Saturday 3/25:**

**Sunday 3/26:** 8:00 Sunday School; 9:30am Worship; ~Happy Birthday Doreen Schmidt!

**March Pantry Items:  
Box of pasta, noodles, rice or crackers**



**Those in our thoughts and prayers:**

**Joys:**

**Families who have lost loved ones:**

Dale Spindler  
Adeline Schmitz  
Todd Lisowe  
June Propson  
Lucy Dreifuerst (Brian Witkowski's Grandmother)

**Those struggling with health issues:**

Bill Baldwin (Randy's Uncle)	Fred Kraemer
Bob Radder	Daisy Sippel
Darlean Rumpff	Darlene Horneck
Doreen Schmidt	Helen Henning
Tom Lefeber	Hattie Lucille
Jessica Horneck	Sandra Tesch
Dawson Horneck	Gary Steinhardt
Tom Rabe	John Buchholz

**Those unable to worship with us:** Merlin and Doris Mae Nimmer

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

**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- The Installation of Rev. Nicole Herda will take place at St. Peters UCC, Kiel on Saturday, March 25 at 11am.
- Upcoming Class  
Do you have a fear of falling or losing your balance? The Aging & Disability Resource Center of the Lakeshore, along with Bethlehem UCC Church is offering Stepping On, a 7 week workshop, beginning Thursdays, April 13<sup>th</sup>-May 25<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-3:00pm. Trained leaders and community professionals guide you in recognizing your risk of falling by identifying fall hazards in the home and community, help you build the balance, strength and practical skills you need to avoid a fall, how to safely get up from a fall, identify vision, footwear and medication management risks, and how to manage safely in inclement weather. The cost is a suggested \$10 donation. Please contact the Aging & Disability Resource Center of the Lakeshore at 1-877-416-7083 for more information or to register.