



THE PARABLE OF  
THE FRUITLESS  
FIG TREE  
Luke 13:6-9

# Bethlehem United Church of Christ

Sunday, March 20, 2022

Worship led by: Randy Koppenhaver

Organist: Kathy Bowe

*If listening from your car, please tune your car radio to 101.3 FM*

RINGING OF THE BELLS

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Seek the Lord while God may be found. Call upon God who is near.  
**We will return to the Lord our God.**

God's thoughts are not our thoughts. God's ways are not our ways.  
**We come, seeking new paths to follow.**

As the heavens are higher than the earth so are God's ways higher than ours.  
**We come as pilgrims on the journey, praising God along the way.**  
**Let us worship God with thankful hearts!**

\* OPENING PRAYER

**God, our Creator and Sustainer,  
in you we live and move and have our being.  
In your depths we find meaning; in your heights we find light and joy.  
You are the source of peace and hope for all who turn to you.  
You alone have been our help and our guide;  
you give us strength and courage when we face challenges.  
In you we find rest and welcome along the way.  
We praise you, O God, for your steadfast love.  
Draw near to us once more in this time of worship.  
Reveal your purposes for us  
and prepare us for the days ahead  
so that our lives may witness to your mercy and grace  
as we follow Jesus. Amen.**

\*OPENING HYMN “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee ” #22 verses 1-2

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of grace and mercy,  
We confess that our thoughts are so often not your thoughts;  
our way are rarely your ways.  
Our tempers are short and we fail to act with kindness.  
Our confidence is weak and we treat others without respect.  
Our faith falters and we lose track of you.  
Forgive the many ways we fail you,  
and inspire us to follow you more faithfully.**

*(silent reflection)*

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God grants us strength to overcome temptation and offers us a second chance to produce the fruits of repentance. Receive these gifts from God who is faithful, in covenant with us, and all people. Open yourselves to the continued guidance of the Holy One, for God’s steadfast love is better than life. **God’s mercy is abundant; God’s provision for us is extravagant. God’s ways are higher than our own. Praise God with joyful lips. Amen,**

\*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.**

### READING OF SCRIPTURE

#### **Isaiah 55:1-9**

Ho, everyone who thirsts,  
come to the waters;  
and you that have no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price.  
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?  
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food.  
Incline your ear, and come to me;  
listen, so that you may live.  
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, sure love for David.  
See, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.

See, you shall call nations that you do not know,  
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,  
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.

Seek the LORD while he may be found,  
call upon him while he is near;  
let the wicked forsake their way,  
and the unrighteous their thoughts;  
let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

### **Psalm 63**

O God, you are my God, I seek you,  
my soul thirsts for you;  
**my flesh faints for you,**  
**as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.**

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,  
beholding your power and glory.  
**Because your steadfast love is better than life,**  
**my lips will praise you.**

So I will bless you as long as I live;  
**I will lift up my hands and call on your name.**

My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,  
**and my mouth praises you with joyful lips**  
when I think of you on my bed,  
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;  
**for you have been my help,**  
**and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.**  
My soul clings to you;  
**your right hand upholds me.**

### **Luke 13:1-9**

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'

Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down." '

## SERMON

HYMN "Great is Thy Faithfulness" #47 vs 1-2

## CALL TO THE OFFERING

\*RESPONSE "We Give Thee But Thine Own"

**We give thee but thine own, Whate'er the gift may be:**

**All that we have is thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from thee. Amen.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Loving God, accept these our gifts, we pray.**

**Bless them and use them to inspire peace in places of unrest,**

**love in places of resentment, joy in places of fear, and hope in places of loss,**

**all for the sake of Jesus Christ, our friend and Savior. Amen**

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER (congregation may be seated)

Petitions end with, "O God, give us hope in our time." Congregation responds, **Turn our hearts to you.**

## BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE (Please wait to be dismissed by an usher. Thank you.)

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### **2022 Bethlehem UCC Consistory Members**

Elder/President - Steve Volland (920)286-0162 or [svolland44@gmail.com](mailto:svolland44@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)

Financial Secretary - Ruthie Rumpff (920)946-5849 [srumpff@tm.net](mailto:srumpff@tm.net)

Treasurer - Jane Umland (920)286-2175 [jm59umland@gmail.com](mailto:jm59umland@gmail.com)

### Jingle Change Update

At the March consistory meeting, it was decided that collections in March would be given the UCC's Ukrainian Relief Fund rather than OCWM. We will continue this collection through April. We also encourage support of One Great Hour of Sharing, which will be done with envelopes rather than Jingle Change.

OGHS is non-denominational and supports disaster relief, refugee crises, hunger, etc.

### Those in our thoughts and prayers:



#### Joys:

#### Families who have lost loved ones:

Dale Horneck

#### Those struggling with health issues:

Steve Kornely	Glen Schad
Signe Burkhart	Hailey Wirtz
Kenzie Koppenhaver	Darlene Horneck
Hattie Lucille	
Elizabeth Loose	Warren Fidlin
Jane Markelz	Olivia Marie
Karl (nephew of Will and Lora)	Everett Henning
Steve Rumpff	Helen Henning
Jessica Horneck	

#### Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin and Doris Mae Ninmer  
Leah Henning – Deployed to Japan

UPDATE: Field of Dreams is NOW ACCEPTING visitors. Please arrange a visit with Merlin and Doris Mae and continue to keep them in your prayers.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### PIZZA PARTY with ICE CREAM SUNDAES

Sunday, April 3rd - following worship service - Everyone is invited

See the sign up sheet in the fellowship hall

Sponsored by Merry Christians

Leah Henning is stationed in Japan. Send cards and letters to: (standard US postage rates)  
Sgt. Leah Henning  
31st MEU CE S-3  
Unit 35621  
FPO, AP 96385-5621

### **Upcoming Community Events:**

- SOUP COOK OFF – Sunday, March 20 – 11a-1:30pm – Laack’s Hall, Johnsonville – (\$10)  
– Proceeds support this summer’s combined mission trip of area UCC churches.

**PORK CHOP DINNER!!** Thursday, March 31 – 4p-7pm – Drive Thru Smoked Pork Chop Dinner  
@ Saron UCC- Reservations required: call Joan (920-946-4652) or Judy (920-980-0748) Cost is  
\$12.00

### **Kiel Community Center News:**

**Meals on Wheels is again serving in person dining at the Kiel Community center.** If you are 60 yrs. and over and would like to join other for a delicious lunch and a few laughs please call Missy at 894-7861 by noon prior to the day you would like to eat here. Please see the attached menu.

**Guest speaker series:** held at the community center upper level the first Monday of the month.

**April 4<sup>th</sup>:** Guest speaker **Joe Zenk and LuAnn Travis** will talk about bereavement and hospice

**May 2<sup>nd</sup>:** A representative from the Kiel VFW will be here

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

**Today Sunday 3/20:** 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Worship  
*~Happy Birthday Ross Westphalen!!*

**Monday 3/21:** *~Happy Birthday Kathy Bowe and Tom Mueller!*

**Tuesday 3/22:** *~Happy Birthday Riley Radder!!*

**Wednesday 3/23:** *~Happy Birthday Randy Koppenhaver*

**Thursday 3/24:**

**Friday 3/25:**

**Saturday 3/26:** *~Happy Birthday Doreen Schmidt and DuWayne Nimmer!*

**Sunday 3/27:** 8am Sunday School; 9:30am Worship  
*~Happy Birthday Ross Westphalen!!*

**March – Box of Pasta, Noodles, Rice or Crackers**