



# Ascension Day

## **BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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**Sunday, May 21, 2023**

**Worship 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 #549

“As We Gather”

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: We gather in the presence of the One who breathes life into all of Creation.

**All: We sing God's praises, breathing in God's glory.**

One: All are welcome in the presence of the Most High.

**All: We come, seeking the goodness in the hands of God.**

One: We gather as God's beloved people, leaving no one outside.

**All: Together we reflect the fullness of God's love; together we bring God's love into the world.**

One: Let us worship the Living God whose breath gives us life.

(Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe, based on Psalm 104)

**\*OPENING PRAYER**

**Holy One, be with us in this sacred space. Stir your Spirit in and among us as we offer our prayers and praises. We long to hear more than the groaning of Creation around us, more than our own fearful groaning. From the places deep within us, that we mistakenly believe are hidden**

**from you, may your Spirit intercede for us. Draw us into your presence. May we recognize you in ourselves and in our neighbors. Let us see you through all brokenness that we may find wholeness in being your body here and now. In the name of the One who fills the world with Hope. Amen.**

(Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe, based on Romans 8)

\*OPENING HYMN #393 all

“Rejoice the Lord is King”

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**O God, if we suffer, it is usually not because of our loyalty to Christ. When we are glad and shout for joy, it is seldom because we want to celebrate your presence with us. We even forget to say thank you when, by the power and strength you give us, we accomplish some cherished goal. Our lives are not focused on realizing your rule of love on earth, as in heaven. O God, receive our confession and help us to discipline ourselves in caring discipleship, in Jesus' name. Amen.**

(time of silence)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Let the righteous be joyful! The God of all grace cares about you and wants the very best for you, in company with all of God's children. God restores, supports, and strengthens you. God establishes you as a person of worth and as a community of faithful, loving people.

**Individually and together, we are called to eternal glory in Christ, whose love we share. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #571

“Halle, Halle Hallelujah!”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Acts 1:6-14**

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’ 7 He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ 9 When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. 11 They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’ 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. 13 When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and

Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14</sup>All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

### **Psalm 68: 1-10, 32-35**

- <sup>1</sup> Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered;  
let those who hate him flee before him.
- <sup>2</sup> **As smoke is driven away, so drive them away;  
as wax melts before the fire, let the wicked perish before God.**
- <sup>3</sup> But let the righteous be joyful;  
let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy.
- <sup>4</sup> **Sing to God, sing praises to his name;  
lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds—  
his name is the LORD— be exultant before him.**
- <sup>5</sup> Father of orphans and protector of widows  
is God in his holy habitation.
- <sup>6</sup> **God gives the desolate a home to live in;  
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity,  
but the rebellious live in a parched land.**
- <sup>7</sup> O God, when you went out before your people,  
when you marched through the wilderness,
- <sup>8</sup> **the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain  
at the presence of God, the God of Sinai,  
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.**
- <sup>9</sup> Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad;  
you restored your heritage when it languished;
- <sup>10</sup> **your flock found a dwelling in it;  
in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.**
- <sup>32</sup> Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;  
sing praises to the Lord,
- <sup>33</sup> **O rider in the heavens, the ancient heavens;  
listen, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.**
- <sup>34</sup> Ascribe power to God,  
whose majesty is over Israel; and whose power is in the skies.
- <sup>35</sup> **Awesome is God in his sanctuary, the God of Israel;  
he gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!**

## 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

## LITANY OF NAMING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY

Leader: On this Mental Health Sunday, we join in this Litany of Naming.

**People: As a congregation we are glad to lift up our voices and our spirits to break the silence that often happens when we are confronted with mental illness.**

L: As a faith community, we name the gifts and the often unnamed experiences which come to those who live with a mental illness such as major depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, substance use, addiction, historic and generational trauma, racial trauma, grief and eating disorder. We name:

**P: The Hope which upholds our spirit through honest sharing;**

L: The Pain when people turn away because of fear;

**P: The Courage to speak in a safe place the way that Jesus spoke truth with love;**

L: The Strength from being with others who listen compassionately;

L: The Isolation that comes when no one knows what to say;

**P: The Realization that mental illnesses and brain disorders can be managed;**

L: The Exhaustion that comes with living with a mental illness as well as for those who are caregivers;

**P: The Welcome of mental health as part of our church's ministry and outreach;**

L: The Wisdom that comes when we become educated about mental health;

L: The Spirituality that comes when we walk alongside those who show both resilience and vulnerability in their lives affected by mental illness;

**All: We receive these gifts that we have named, those which are welcomed and those that are challenges. We come before you, our God,**

**knowing we are not alone and that You will show us a way to be and live.  
In the name of Jesus, we pray, Amen. (Rev. Alan Johnson)**

### SONG

Our God is awesome God,  
He reigns from heaven above.  
With wisdom, power and love,  
Our God is an awesome God.

Humble thyself in the sight of the  
Lord, (echo)  
Humble thyself in the sight of the  
Lord, (echo)  
And he will (and he) lift you up,  
higher and higher  
And he will (and he) lift you up, up  
into heaven  
And he will lift you up.

MESSAGE "Ascension Day" a dramatic reading written by Sam Hargreaves  
(engageworship.org)

\*HYMN #211 vs. 1,3,5

"Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun"

### ORDER FOR RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

INVITATION

SENTENCES

QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:

Leader: Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our  
faith in the triune God with the United Church of Christ's Statement of Faith.

**We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit,  
God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God,  
and to your deeds we testify:**

**You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image,  
and set before each one the ways of life and death.**

**You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.**

**You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through  
prophets and apostles.**

**In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior,  
you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and  
death and reconciling the world to yourself.**

**You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.**

**You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.**

**You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.**

**Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.**

ADDRESS

QUESTION ABOUT PARTICIPATION

\*WELCOME AND RECEPTION:

One: Let us, the members of Bethlehem United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

**All: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the Church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.**

GREETING OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

PRAYER

CLOSING    One: Go in the peace of Christ.    **All: Thanks be to God! Amen**

\*RESPONSE #550 v. 5

"All Are Welcome"

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 May supports the Guest House of Milwaukee Men's shelter)

\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE "Doxology" Text: John H. Danner (2016)

**Let trumpets sound and voices sing!  
Let all on earth their praises bring!  
For Christ has conquered sin and death  
And given life eternal breath. Amen**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Thank you, God, for empowering our prayers and multiplying our gifts.  
You provide for the needy through us. What a privilege! Widows and  
orphans and prisoners find hope in you because we join you in caring  
for them. You give homes to the desolate when we share. Your power is  
working in us. Blessed be your name, O God! 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 BENEDICTION

One: The reign of God is being restored among us. The Holy Spirit is coming to empower us.

**All: We are together in awe before God. Now we carry our worship into our work.**

One: God cares for us and supports us day by day. In all we do and say, God is present.

**All: We see God's power in the skies. We realize the power of God's love within.**

One: Go now to share that love to strengthen others. Trust God and be alert to life's possibilities.

**All: God dwells among us and unites us in Christ. In this faith is our deepest joy. Amen**

POSTLUDE

\*\*Liturgies and prayers used with permission from: <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/>; <https://www.mhn-ucc.org/mental-health-sunday/> and Baylor, Lavon. *Taught by Love: Worship Resources for Year A*, Pilgrim Press, 2002.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Next youth activity: TONIGHT- 5p-7 @ Bethel UCC – Outdoor activities including volleyball and bonfire. Sign up in fellowship hall.
- The Bethlehem Merry Christians made a special donation to Heifer International who has been approached by another institution with an offer to multiply by 10 times whatever donations are made to Heifer before June 1<sup>st</sup>.  
The Merry Christians annually support Heifer International with a Christmas appeal to our congregation. The short notice made it difficult to do that in this case. So the Bethlehem Merry Christians is sending a check to Heifer for \$1,000.00 along with a private check from one of our members for another \$1,000.00 for this very important drive to assist in getting poor people around the world to become self-sufficient. The multiplying factor of times ten will be given credit for the gift of \$20,000.00 altogether.  
Research was also done to check with Heifer to assure this was not a scam. Thank you to the Bethlehem congregation for your support in our endeavor.
- We are in need of delegates to attend the Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting in Green Lake from June 9-11. You can attend only part of the weekend if that works better. Please let Pastor Randy if you are interested in attending.
- Please let Pastor Randy know of any members who are graduating (High school or higher education). We like to honor them in early June.

## **It's Time for the Undy 500 –**

***Donations go to the Guest House of Milwaukee (Homeless Shelter)***

***All items must be NEW and extra-large sizes are highly needed (2XL, 3XL, 4XL, etc.)***

- **Men's Underwear - BOXERS and BOXER BRIEFS ONLY**

*No briefs ("tighty whiteys") can be accepted*

- **Men's Undershirts**
- **Women's Underwear**
- **Sports Bras**
- **All items size 2XL or larger will receive one bonus point per item!**





## **COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Brat Fry – Friday, May 26 – 9a-2:30p – at Miesfeld's, Sheboygan for St. John's UCC, Schwarzwald

### **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 - Lee Watson (920)562-0588 or [lwatson@kiel.k12.wi.us](mailto:lwatson@kiel.k12.wi.us)

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)

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



### **Those in our thoughts and prayers:**

#### **Joys:**

The baptism of Emma Marie Reis on 5/7/23. Parents are Abbi and Ben Reis.

For Lillie Brockway, Ryan Holz, Cooper Tesch and Logan Tesch who affirmed their baptisms through the Rite of Confirmation on 4/30/23.

The baptism of Piercy Edward Hoepfer Heugel on 4/23/23. He is the grandson of Jane & Scott Umland.

#### **Families who have lost loved ones:**

Robert Suttner

#### **Those struggling with health issues:**

Shirley Henschel	Scott Umland
Bob Radder	Daisy Sippel
Darlean Rumpff	Darlene Horneck
Doreen Schmidt	Helen Henning
Tom Lefeber	Hattie Lucille
Jessica Horneck	Sandra Tesch
Dawson Horneck	Gary Steinhardt
John Buchholz	
Crystal (Friend of Randy/Melissa)	

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

**Wisdom Tips for talking about Mental Health from** [www.mhn-ucc.org](http://www.mhn-ucc.org)

**Be a Friend:** “A friend loves at all times...” (Proverbs 17:17a). Listen without judgment. Provide companionship. Offer a ride or a meal. Respect confidentiality. Avoid shame and guilt. Remember that we all have and we all are impacted by mental health.

**Remember that Words can Hurt:** “Rash words are like sword thrusts...” (Proverbs 12:18a). Pay attention to the words you use and how they affect the people around you. Avoid labelling and stereotyping people.

**Stop the Stigma:** “We, who are many, are one body in Christ” (Romans 12:5). Challenge negative attitudes toward mental health and neurodiversity whenever you encounter it. Question your assumptions. Correct misinformation about mental health challenges, substance use disorders, trauma, and brain differences.

**Educate Yourself:** “Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?” (Proverbs 8:1). Learn the facts about the various challenges that can affect mental health, including substance use disorders, neurodevelopmental difference, trauma, and brain disorders. Realize that mental health is physical health.

**Thank God for Neurodiversity:** “Wonderful are your works” (Psalm 139:14 ) Be aware that we all process the world around us differently. Celebrate and affirm neurodiversity and the many gifts that each person brings.

Members of Bethlehem, Thank you so much for the faith and trust you’ve placed in me over the past seven years. It is my privilege to be your **settled** pastor! Thank you also for the gifts I received at installation. I love them! May God bless you all! - Pastor Randy

**This Week at Bethlehem:**

**Today Sunday 5/21:** 8:00 Sunday School; 8:00 New member meeting; 9:30am Worship w/ New Members; ~Happy Birthday Allison Wirtz! Happy Anniversary Merlin & Doris Mae Nimmer

**Monday 5/22:**

**Tuesday 5/23:**

**Wednesday 5/24:** ~Happy Anniversary Bill & Kelly Biwan!

**Thursday 5/25:** ~Happy Anniversary Trevor & Tess Rabe!

**Friday 5/26:**

**Saturday 5/27:** ~Happy Birthday Noah Watson and Amber Hoeffner!!

**Sunday 5/28:** NO Sunday School; 8:00 9:30am Worship ~Happy Birthday Davin Horneck!

**May Pantry Items:  
Laundry Detergent or Fabric Softener**