



BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, May 28, 2023

Worship Leader: LouAnn Norsetter

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 #549

"As We Gather"

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*OPENING PRAYER (from Psalm 104)

Leader: O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

People: Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great.

Leader: These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

People: When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

Leader: When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.

People: May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works.

Everyone: Bless the LORD, O my soul. Praise the LORD!

*CALL TO WORSHIP (from enfleshed.com)

Since the beginning, God has been relentlessly pursuing us in love. Though our faithfulness ebbs and flows, God's love endures forever. Taking on flesh like ours, God became one with humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. God lived and moved and ministered in the margins of power. God incarnate was not what we expected. We did not recognize God in Jesus. Still, we struggle to recognize God with us. And yet, God continues to dwell in our midst. Thanks be to God.

*OPENING HYMN #38 (vs. 1-3-5)

“O Worship The King...”

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

In ancient times, as well as today, we sometimes give up on God. We make a world in our likeness, building walls to keep out those differing from us. Sometimes it's just in conversation, other times we erect walls and fences. It's nothing new. The story of the Tower of Babel depicts self-determination to the extreme. A community builds a monument to itself, reaching right into Heaven to assure a kingdom in our likeness. Holy Spirit, we ask your forgiveness when we lose sight of God's plan for a world of abundance for all. Assure us that God's design is indeed divine and all that we can ever hope for.

(time of silence)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Today, we celebrate the festival known as Pentecost. It conjures up lots of images – flames, noisy din, accusations of drunkenness. **Yet it also demonstrates great forgiveness.** The Holy Spirit draws us close not to exact retribution, but so love may flourish in the hearts and tongues of everyone present. **People accept one another as equals even if we come from distinct backgrounds in location, status, language, age, skin color.** Even when we build modern-day Towers of Babel, the Holy Spirit lovingly calls us back to unity. **The Spirit assures us of pardon, rejoicing in our union together.**

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #571

“Halle, Halle Hallelujah!”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Acts 1:1-11 The Ascension (Good News Translation)

Dear Theophilus:

In my first book I wrote about all the things that Jesus did and taught from the time he began his work until the day he was taken up to heaven. Before he was taken up, he gave instructions by the power of the Holy Spirit to the men he had chosen as his apostles. For forty days after his death he appeared to them many times in ways that proved beyond

doubt that he was alive. They saw him, and he talked with them about the Kingdom of God. And when they came together, he gave them this order: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift I told you about, the gift God promised. John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

When the apostles met together with Jesus, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time give the Kingdom back to Israel?”

Jesus said to them, “The times and occasions are set by God's own authority, and it is not for you to know when they will be. But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After saying this, he was taken up to heaven as they watched him, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They still had their eyes fixed on the sky as he went away, when two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them and said, “Galileans, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw him go to heaven.”

Acts 2:1-22 The Coming of the Holy Spirit (Good News Translation)

When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

There were Jews living in Jerusalem, religious people who had come from every country in the world. When they heard this noise, a large crowd gathered. They were all excited, because all of them heard the believers talking in their own languages. In amazement and wonder they exclaimed, “These people who are talking like this are Galileans! How is it, then, that all of us hear them speaking in our own native languages? We are from Parthia, Media, and Elam; from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia; from Pontus and Asia, from Phrygia and Pamphylia, from Egypt and the regions of Libya near Cyrene. Some of us are from Rome, both Jews and Gentiles converted to Judaism, and some of us are from Crete and Arabia—yet all of us hear them speaking in our own languages about the great things that God has done!” Amazed and confused, they kept asking each other, “What does this mean?”

But others made fun of the believers, saying, “These people are drunk!”

Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles and in a loud voice began to speak to the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me and let me tell you what this means.

These people are not drunk, as you suppose; it is only nine o'clock in the morning. Instead, this is what the prophet Joel spoke about:

‘This is what I will do in the last days, God says:

I will pour out my Spirit on everyone.

Your sons and daughters will proclaim my message;

your young men will see visions,

and your old men will have dreams.
Yes, even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will proclaim my message.
I will perform miracles in the sky above
and wonders on the earth below.
There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke;
The sun will be darkened,
and the moon will turn red as blood,
before the great and glorious Day of the Lord comes.
And then, whoever calls out to the Lord for help will be saved.'

SERMON

*HYMN #239 all "Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness"

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: Roger Lynn (2013)

**Praise God whose breath fills all the earth
Whose love reveals our sacred worth
Whose Spirit forms one family
Whose grace brings peace and harmony. Amen.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

At the beginning of time, Dearest Creator, you knew each and every one of us. Whether we consider the swirling waters of chaos in Genesis or the Big Bang as our origin, you have provided for us. You have given us an earth that supports our physical lives; a faith that unites our spirits. We depend on your everlasting love now and since time began. May we give back in the same spirit of love in which You gave us life.

*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

**We proclaim the words of Saint Paul spoken to the Corinthians:
There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;
and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;
and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates
all of them in everyone.**

**As we leave our sanctuary, may we share our variety of gifts with
everyone we meet. Amen.**

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- All Items for the Undy 500 must be at church by noon on May 31. They will be delivered to Milwaukee on June 1. Thank you for supporting this important mission.
- 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 1st.
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.

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

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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:

Robert Suttner

Those struggling with health issues:

Scott Umland

John Buchholz

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)

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin and Doris Mae Ninmer

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today Sunday 5/28: 9:30am Worship ~Happy Birthday Davin Horneck!

Monday 5/29: ~Happy Birthday Armond Wempner!

Tuesday 5/30:

Wednesday 5/31: ~Happy Birthday Lloyd Rumpff!

Thursday 6/1:

Friday 6/2:

Saturday 6/3: ~Happy Birthday Brenna Koppenhaver, Brian Radder, and Kylie Brockway!

Sunday 6/4: 9:30am Worship w/ Communion; Happy Birthday Brooke Muehlbauer!

June Pantry Items:

Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Deodorant or Lotion