

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140
August 8, 2021, 10:30 a.m.
Celebrating 206 years of Faithful Service to Our God
The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

We Enter Into God's Presence

WELCOME

L: This is the day that the Lord has made

P: Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

THE PEACE

L: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

P: And also with you.

“SURELY THE PRESENCE”

Surely the presence of the LORD is in this place.

I can feel His mighty power and His grace.

I can hear the brush of angel's wings, I see glory on each face.

Surely the presence of the LORD is in this place.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: I wait for the Lord,

P: my soul waits,

L: and in God's Word

P: is my hope.

OPENING PRAYER

Grant us, O Lord, the grace always to do and think what accords with your purpose; that we, who cannot exist without your, may be enabled to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN: B- 140

“Holy, Holy”

Holy, holy, holy, holy, Holy

holy, Lord God Almighty;

And we lift our hearts before You as a

Token of our love, Holy, holy, holy, holy.

Gracious Father, gracious Father, We're so
blest to be Your children, gracious Father;
And we lift our heads before You as a
Token of our love, Gracious Father, gracious Father.

Precious Jesus, precious Jesus, We're so
glad that You've redeemed us, precious Jesus,
And we lift our hands before You as a
Toke of our love, Precious Jesus, precious Jesus.

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Come and
fill our hearts a new, Holy Spirit;
And we lift our voice before You as a
Token of our love, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In humility and in faith let us confess our sin before God and one another as we pray together saying,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Eternal God, our judge and redeemer, we confess that we have tried to hide from you, for we have done wrong. We have lived for ourselves, and apart from you. We have turned from our neighbors, and refused to bear the burdens of others. We have ignored the pain of the world, and passed by the hungry, the poor, and the oppressed. In your great mercy forgive our sins and free us from selfishness, that we may choose your will and obey your commandments; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: Hear the good news! The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, that we might be dead to sin, and alive to all that is good. I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

P: We know that we are forgiven and we can be at peace. Thanks be to God! 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.

We Hear God’s Word

SPECIAL MUSIC: W&R-614 “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me
let there be peace on earth the peace that was meant to be.

With God as our Creator, children all are we,
Let me walk with each other in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.

With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow;
to take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Ephesians 4:25-5:2

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **5** ¹ Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

PSALM: Psalm 34: 1-8

I will extol the LORD at all times;

his praise will always be on my lips.

² I will glory in the LORD;

let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

³ Glorify the LORD with me;

let us exalt his name together.

⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me;

he delivered me from all my fears.

⁵ Those who look to him are radiant;

their faces are never covered with shame.

⁶ This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;

he saved him out of all his troubles.

⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,

and he delivers them.

⁸ Taste and see that the LORD is good;

blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 6:35, 41-51

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

⁴¹ At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

⁴³ "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. ⁴⁴ "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. ⁴⁶ No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

MESSAGE:

Speaking Truth

Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman

Speaking truth is something we owe to the Christian community to which we belong as members of the body of Christ. In fact, in this passage from the letter to the Ephesians, Paul makes some significant observations and identifies six sins. The first observation is that we have a duty to be truthful about God. One way that we do that is by telling others about God. Miss Jess has taught the children of this church to look for God through God sightings. Each week when gathered in the Sunday school room, Miss Jess would ask the children, "Where have you seen God this week?" Each week the children would answer where they had encountered God. Miss Jess let them know that it is important for them to search out and see God at work in the world, even if they had never thought about or done it before. By giving the children the opportunity to express their findings, it became important for them to pay attention and observe God's work in the world. That meant they had to see concrete acts of faith, service or even love so that they could believe more deeply in the love and goodness of our God. I wonder if some of us need to engage in some God sightings of our own so that we can speak truth about God.

The next observation Paul makes is about anger. Paul recognizes that there are certainly times when we will become angry, but he reminds us not to allow our anger to cause us to sin. As citizens of a broken and sinful world, there is a place in the Christian life for righteous indignation. There are situations that we encounter that require that spark of righteous indignation for us to take action to address the situation and determine best practices for how to change it. Righteous indignation rises out of love for our neighbors and its goal is to help someone other than us find justice.

Paul's concern is that a Christian must be alert to not letting anger become a pathway to sin. When we allow our temper to reign over us, we can become enraged and out of control to the point of doing something rash that will harm others with our thoughts, our words or our deeds. Paul warns us to never go to bed angry. Why? When you attempt to rest and recharge your body, that anger will bore a hole into your sense of peace. It will cause a fitful or sleepless night, which in turn leaves you cranky and irritable the next day and more prone to attacking other people. By then you have opened the door, rolled out the red carpet and invited in the Devil. Let's face it, it is in the steaming hot fit of anger that gives the Devil his chance; therefore Paul tells us, we must not give the Devil any room in our

hearts, minds or spirits in which he can work. I wonder what Paul would think about the anger that is spewed on Social Media these days by some Christians.

Paul also observed that in the Christian community it is important for thieves to cease stealing from others, because stealing is destructive. It is important for the thief to reform and turn to honest work in order to help those in need within the community. For a thief to stop stealing is to actively love neighbor as self which builds up the body of Christ.

The next observation is that of unwholesome or evil talk, also known as bad language, as it is a spotlight on exactly how the mind of the speaker is geared. Words are used by the one using foul language not to uplift, but rather to shock or denigrate. Instead the Christian's use of language should be edifying, that is, helpful, constructive, uplifting and appropriate so that it gives abundant grace to those who hear it. Paul makes it clear that the use of foul language grieves the Holy Spirit of God. I wonder how being on the receiving end of someone's unwholesome talk felt for you. I wonder if that experience made you more aware that a Christian's conversation should be pleasant to listen to and helpful to faith.

Finally, Paul lists the six sins that are obnoxious and unchristian qualities, many of which we are encouraged to engage in and are modeled by the TV and social media today – "bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." Then Paul lists the counter-cultural qualities that should replace them – kindness, compassion, and the forgiving spirit. As always, Paul grounds Christian conduct and behavior in the Christian understanding of "forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Then Paul throws down the gauntlet and encourages us to rise out of our self-centered universe that is ruled by the Devil and unchristian demeanor. Instead, Paul proclaims that you are to copy God, for you are God's beloved children. Indeed, you must live in love as you are to love one another like Christ, even to the point of sacrifice. For Paul, we are most like God when we live in love. I wonder if we need to be reminded of God's love so that we can share that love.

Paul has made it clear that as a Christian, you are to pay attention to your anger and don't allow the Devil to get into your heart, mind or spirit. You

are to do honest work, and watch your tongue. You are to engage the world and the people in it with kindness, compassion and a forgiving spirit and you are to do your best to rise up and be an imitation of God.

My friends, the truth is that you should look with intent out of your deep and abiding faith so that you may have a sighting of God working in the world. Once you see God's handiwork, share it with others; tell them of the love and faithfulness of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Reassure them that God's love is deep and wide enough to enfold them; they will be accepted regardless of the brokenness of their lives. Invite them to put their cares and concerns at the foot of the cross and believe in the power of forgiveness through the resurrection of Jesus Christ that will forever change their lives. Encourage them to be led by the Holy Spirit to be Jesus' hands and feet in this world through service to others as a response of their gratitude to God.

The truth is that many of us may have needed to be reminded of the love of God, the grace we have received from Jesus and how we are not alone, because we are led by the Holy Spirit to do God's work in this world. Let us be grateful for all that God has done for us. Thanks be to God!

We Respond with Thanksgiving

HYMN: B- 391

"Take My Life"

1 Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days; Let them flow in
ceaseless praise, Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

2 Take my hands and let them move At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be Swift and beautiful
for Thee, Swift and beautiful for Thee.

3 Take my voice and let me sing, Always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be Filled with messages
from Thee, Filled with message from Thee.

4 Take my silver and my gold; Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use, Every power as
Thou shalt choose, Every power as thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it Thine; it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, It is Thine own; It shall be Thy royal throne,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be Ever, only, all for Thee,
Ever, only, all for Thee.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen. *(The Apostles' Creed-Ecumenical)*

OFFERING (Please remember to mail your offering to Bethel Murdoch Presbyterian Church, 9602 Murdoch Goshen Road, Loveland, Ohio 45140)

JOYS & CONCERNS OF THE CONGREGATION – (Please send your joys and concerns to the church email and we will publish them in the weekly ENews)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray,

Holy God, in Jesus Christ you taught us to pray to you in his name. Guide us by your Holy Spirit, that our prayers for others may serve your will and show your steadfast love.

God our creator, you made all things in your wisdom, and in your love you save us. We pray for the whole creation. Overthrow evil powers, right what is wrong, feed and satisfy those who thirst for justice, so that all your children may freely enjoy the earth you have made, and joyfully sing your praises.

Eternal God, you sent us a Savior, Christ Jesus, to break down the walls of hostility that divide us. Send peace on earth, and put down greed, pride, and anger, which turn nation against nation and race against race. Speed the day when wars will end and the whole world accepts your rule.

Merciful God, you bear the pain of the world. Look with compassion on all those who are sick mentally, emotionally or physically. Cheer them by your presence and your Word, and bring them healing as a sign of your grace.

Have mercy on those who are facing financial difficulties or loss of jobs and homes. God of comfort, stand with those who sorrow that they may be sure that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, shall separate them from your love.

Mighty God, whose Word we trust, whose Spirit enables us to pray: Accept our requests and further those which will bring about your purpose for the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray the prayer he taught us as we say together,

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.

We are Sent Out to Love and Serve

HYMN: B-368 "I've Got Peace Like a River"

1 I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river in my soul. I've got peace like a river in my soul.

2 I've got joy like a fountain, I've got joy like a fountain, I've got joy like a fountain in my soul. I've got joy like a fountain in my soul.

3 I've got love like an ocean, I've got love like an ocean, I've got love like an ocean in my soul. I've got love like an ocean in my soul.

Charge and Benediction

Go out into the world in peace. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself. And as you go out, know that you take with you the love of God, the grace of Our Lord, Jesus Christ and the *awesome* power of the Holy Spirit.

Choral Amen

Postlude