

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140
August 15, 2021, 10:30 a.m.
Celebrating 206 years of Faithful Service to Our God
The Twelfth 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: The word of God

P: is living and active,

L: it is able to judge

P: the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts. Give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that all people may know the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN: B- 476 “O Worship the King, All Glorious Above!”

1 O worship the King all glorious above!

O gratefully sing God's power and God's love:

Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days.

Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

2 O tell of God's might and sing of God's grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.
The chariots of heaven, the deep thunder clouds form. And
Bright is God's path on the wings of the storm.

3 The earth with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty Thy power hath founded of old;
Hath stablished it fast by a changeless decree, And
round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

4 Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain, And
sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

5 Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail;
Thy mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,
our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

The proof of God's amazing love is this: While we were sinners Christ died for us. Because we have faith in him, we dare to approach God with confidence. In faith and penitence, let us confess our sin before God and one another as we pray together saying,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Merciful God, you pardon all who truly repent and turn to you. We humbly confess our sins and ask your mercy. We have not loved you with a pure heart, nor have we loved our neighbor as ourselves. We have not done justice, loved kindness, or walked humbly with you, our God. Have mercy on us, O God, in your loving-kindness. In your great compassion, cleanse us from our sin. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Do not cast us from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from us. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: As God's own people, be merciful in action, kindly in heart, humble in mind. Be always ready to forgive as freely as God has forgiven you. And, above everything else, be loving, and never forget to be thankful for what Christ has done for you.

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-359 "Give Thanks"

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One, give thanks, because he's given Jesus Christ his Son. Give Son. And now let the weak say "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am rich," because of what the Lord has done for us. And us. Give thanks!

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Ephesians 5: 15-20

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PSALM: Psalm 34: 9-14

⁹ Fear the LORD, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.
¹⁰ The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.
¹¹ Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
¹² Whoever of you loves life
and desires to see many good days,

13 keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from telling lies.
14 Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 6: 51-58

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.”

⁵² Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

⁵³ Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”

MESSAGE: *To Give Thanks* Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman

When we were young parents, Ron and I always taught our children to say please and thank you to people. We understood that it was important for our children to be courteous to people. To say please and thank you is a sign of respect and uplifts the other for the things they have done on our behalf. Because God had provided the gifts and skills of our lives, we also taught them to be grateful to God for the roof over our head, the food on the table and the family that surrounded us. We returned thanks at each meal even if it was a very simple prayer like, “Yay, God! Food,” which loosely translated means, “Thank you God for the food that we eat.”

When we were Sunday school teachers, we explained the importance of saying please and thank you to God for all that the children and youth had been given. We taught these young people that when they have troubles and concerns, God is always there to listen. God sent Jesus to redeem

them and to bring them into right relationship with God. Jesus sent the Advocate, the Holy Spirit to guide and lead them in the ways of truth and helps them to love their neighbor, no matter how different one was from them. To give thanks to God in return for what God has done for them is only right. Some of these ideas may sound elementary or simplistic, yet they are some of the building blocks of our faith.

I wonder if in this time, our attention been drawn away from the benefits that we receive as believers in God and our attention has been focused more fully on the world. I can certainly understand that as we are going through an unprecedented time in our collective life time. The trauma that is felt by each of us individually and jointly is very real and we are responding in a variety of ways. Some have closed themselves off to focus on themselves. Some have focused on the needs of other people. Some have done far less than courteous things. Some have become more courteous. Everyone is responding in their own way and that is simply human nature. I wonder if some of us are so preoccupied with things that are happening in the world that we have forgotten to give thanks to God.

If we watch the news or read the paper, it certainly seems that we have become such ungrateful people. Why do you think we show so little courtesy to God? Why is it that we are obsessed with our own needs and desires and not focused on the beautiful, all-inclusive and inspiring love of God? Why do we care more about our own point of view instead of loving our neighbor as Jesus commanded? Why do we want to do that which is evil while we stall and dig in our heels even as the Holy Spirit is whispering "Come back to God"? What do you think it will take for us to give thanks at all times?

You may well ask what in the world do we have to be thankful for right now? One wonderful thing that we always have to be thankful for is that God loves us deeply and faithfully. God is always pursuing us and inviting us to turn away from the power of sin and death in our lives and turn back to God. God sent Jesus the Son to proclaim the good news of God's love for all people, not just for some or just those with money and power, but for everyone. Jesus was both fully God and fully human who lived a human life, preached the good news, carried all of our sin paying our debt on the cross when he was crucified. God raised Jesus from the dead so that the power of sin and death would be broken and have no hold on us. As Christians, we have the privilege of laying our cares and concerns at the

foot of the cross and letting Christ walk with us through them. The Holy Spirit is there every step of the way ready to nudge us when we go astray and help us to turn back to God.

There are so many things about which we should be thankful to God. I wonder if we would actually follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, put our cares at the foot of the cross, and accept the forgiving grace given to us by God; do you think we would be more grateful and willing to give our thanks. When you consider what God has provided for each one of us who truly believe, it is hard to imagine that we are not thanking God every minute of every day.

My friends, when the troubles and trials of the world are weighing down on you, I invite you to turn to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and give thanks for five things in your life. You may come to realize you are more blessed than you know. For that let us say together: **Thanks be to God!**

We Respond with Thanksgiving

HYMN: B- 554 “Let All Things Now Living”

Let all things now living A song of thanksgiving
To God our Creator triumphantly raise,
Who fashioned and made us, Protected and stayed us,
By guiding us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us, Pure light goes before us,
A pillar of fire shining forth in the night,
Till shadows have vanished, All fearfulness banished,
As forward we travel from light into Light.

By law God enforces. The stars in their courses,
The sun in its orbit, obediently shine;
The hills and the mountains, The rivers, and fountains,
The depts of the ocean proclaim God divine,
We too should be voicing Our love and rejoicing,
With glad adoration a song let us raise,
Till all things now living Unite in thanksgiving,
To God in the highest, hosanna and praise.

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 Let us bring the needs of the church, the world, and all in need, to God's loving care, saying: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of heaven and earth, through Jesus Christ you promise to hear us when we pray to you in his name. Confident in your love and mercy we offer our prayer.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Empower the church throughout the world in its life and witness. Break down the barriers that divide, that, united in your truth and love, the church may confess your name, share one baptism, sit together at one table, and serve you in one common ministry.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Guide the rulers of the nations. Move them to set aside their fear, greed, and vain ambition, and bow to your sovereign rule. Inspire them to strive for peace and justice, that all your children may dwell secure, free of war and injustice.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Renew our nation in the ways of justice and peace. Guide those who make and administer our laws to build a society based on trust and respect. Erase prejudices that oppress; free us from crime and violence; guard our youth from the perils of drugs and materialism. Give all citizens a new vision of a life of harmony.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Sustain those among us who need your healing touch. Make the sick whole. Give hope to the dying. Comfort those who mourn. Uphold all who suffer in body or mind, not only those we know and love but also those known only to you, that they may know the peace and joy of your supporting care.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

O God, in your loving purpose answer our prayers and fulfill our hopes. In all things for which we pray, give us the will to seek to bring them about; 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-483 "Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above"

1 Sing praise to God who reigns above, The God of all creation. The God of power, the God of love, The God of our salvation; With healing balm my soul is filled, And every faithless murmur stilled: To God all praise and glory.

2 What God's almighty power hath made, God's gracious mercy keepeth; By morning glow or evening shade God's watchful eye ne'er sleepeth; Within the kingdom of God's might, Lo!

all is just and all is right: To God all praise and glory

3 The Lord is never far away, But through all grief
distressing, An ever present help and stay, Our peace, and
joy, and blessing' As with a mother's tender hand, God
gently leads the chosen band; To God all praise and glory.

4 Thus all my glad some way along, I sing aloud Thy
Praises That all may hear the grateful song My voice
Unwearied raises. Be joyful in the Lord, my heart, Both
Soul and body take your part; To God all praise and glory.

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