

**BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140  
**September 12, 2021, 10:30 a.m.**  
**Celebrating 206 years of Faithful Service to Our God**  
**The Sixteenth 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: Jesus said:

**P: I give you a new commandment,**

L: that you love one another

**P: as I have loved you.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

God of mercy: Help us to forgive, as you have forgiven us. Help us to trust you, even when hope is failing. Help us to take up our cross daily and follow you in your redeeming work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**HYMN: B- 464 “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”**

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love;  
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee, Center of unbroken praise.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the gloom of doubt away;  
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,  
Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise:  
Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flowery meadow, flashing sea,  
Chanting bird and flowing fountain. Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Mortals, join the happy chorus, Which the morning stars began;  
Love divine is reigning o'er us, Joining all in heaven's plan.  
Ever singing march we onward, Victors in the midst of strife.  
Joyful music leads us sunward In the triumph song of life.

### **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, in your gracious presence we confess our sin and the sin of this world. Although Christ is among us as our peace, we are a people divided against ourselves as we cling to the values of a broken world. The profit and pleasures we pursue lay waste the land and pollute the seas. The fears and jealousies that we harbor set neighbor against neighbor and nation against nation. We abuse your good gifts of imagination and freedom, of intellect and reason, and have turned them into bonds of oppression. Lord, have mercy upon us; heal and forgive us. Set us free to serve you in the world as agents of your reconciling love in Jesus Christ.**

### **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-653 "I Will Call upon the Lord"**

I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised;  
so shall I be saved from my enemies.  
I will call upon the Lord.

I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised;  
so shall I be saved from my enemies.  
I will call upon the Lord.

The Lord liveth and blessed be the Rock,  
and let the God of my salvation be exalted.  
The Lord liveth and blessed be the Rock,  
and let the God of my salvation be exalted.

The Lord liveth and blessed be the Rock,  
and let the God of my salvation be exalted.  
The Lord liveth and blessed be the Rock,  
and let the God of my salvation be exalted.

**NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: James 3:1-12**

**3** Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. <sup>2</sup> We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

<sup>3</sup> When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. <sup>4</sup> Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. <sup>5</sup> Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. <sup>6</sup> The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

<sup>7</sup> All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

<sup>9</sup> With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. <sup>11</sup> Can both fresh water and saltwater flow from the same spring? <sup>12</sup> My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

### **PSALM: Psalm 116:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;  
he heard my cry for mercy.  
<sup>2</sup> Because he turned his ear to me,  
I will call on him as long as I live.  
<sup>3</sup> The cords of death entangled me,  
the anguish of the grave came over me;  
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.  
<sup>4</sup> Then I called on the name of the LORD:  
"LORD, save me!"  
<sup>5</sup> The LORD is gracious and righteous;  
our God is full of compassion.  
<sup>6</sup> The LORD protects the unwary;  
when I was brought low, he saved me.  
<sup>7</sup> Return to your rest, my soul,  
for the LORD has been good to you.  
<sup>8</sup> For you, LORD, have delivered me from death,  
my eyes from tears,  
my feet from stumbling,  
<sup>9</sup> that I may walk before the LORD  
in the land of the living.

### **GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 8:27-38**

<sup>27</sup> Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

<sup>28</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

<sup>29</sup> "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

<sup>30</sup> Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

<sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

<sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

<sup>34</sup> Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save their life<sup>[a]</sup> will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? <sup>38</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

**MESSAGE:**            ***Taming the Tongue***            **Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman**

Dragons are rather interesting mythical creatures. It has been reported that they are huge, and lizard like with large talons and the ability to fly. They tend to capture fair maidens and try to keep them by battling knights in shining armor. Dragons have another quality that probably has surprised many a knight. Dragons have a tongue that is aflame, and they can breathe fire. With little or no effort, they can summon fire balls and spew them at their opponent.

Now some of you may be thinking that you too can summon fire balls depending on what you have had to eat that might have been spicy during the day. But that is not quite what I mean. Dragons are large creatures that can cause a great deal of damage from something that comes out of their mouths. After reading the passage in James, my question to you is this: are not humans equally as bad as dragons at creating immense amounts of damage based upon what comes out of our mouths?

When I was in high school, I had a friend who said that she believed that her mother was possessed by a fire-breathing dragon. My friend explained

that one minute her mother would be sweet and smiling and saying really nice things. Then without warning her mother would be mean and ugly and saying really awful things. When my friend pondered her mother's behavior, she would say it was as if a fire breathing dragon lived inside her mother and every now and again without notice, the dragon would take over and say horrible things that were meant to sting or burn another person. The trouble, she would say was that her mother seemed to have no control over the dragon and seemed to be unsure about how to make it stop saying such terrible things to others.

When you think about it, everyone has had that type of experience at one time or another. You are having a pleasant conversation with someone you know and all of a sudden, seemingly out of nowhere, the dragon rears its ugly head and the words coming out of their mouth are like great balls of fire clearly meant to burn you and hurt your feelings.

But if we are honest with ourselves, the dragon doesn't live only within other people. No, that tongue of fire lives within us too, and in today's scripture, James warns us that, if we do not hold our tongue accountable, like a ship's rudder, that tongue can change the course of the body it's attached to by the fire of evil that erupts so intensely from it.

James' warning is true for each of us! How often have we turned up the heat on someone in a negative way by what we have said out of anger with our fiery tongues? How have we used that fire driven tongue as a signaling device to show others getting our way is better than their ideas? How have we tried to change the way things were happening around us by spreading rumor and innuendo with a controlled burn set aflame with our tongue? How have we tried using our tongue to make a crispy critter out of someone we dislike who has done something that we see as being personal affront?

According to James, none of us are protected from the fiery properties of the evil that our tongue can produce. Even the most prominent disciple fell victim; we heard that Peter used his tongue of fire to try to keep Jesus from telling the crowds about God's plan and God's mission for the world. Peter used his tongue to try to align Jesus' thinking with the thinking of society instead of trusting in God's will to be done. Jesus immediately identified the evil in Peter's statement and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." Jesus was

reminding Peter that he was a disciple who had a calling from God and Peter needed to remember that.

How often does that tongue of fire in our own head spew forth great balls of fire because we are setting our minds – not on divine things – but on human things? Does the flame come roaring out when we try to resist the change of the Holy Spirit? Does the fire erupt from our mouth when it becomes difficult to be a follower of Jesus? Does the blast furnace begin because ultimately, we want to be in control and tell God what to do? Have we forgotten that we have been called by God to be disciples of Jesus to this world? Have we ignored our calling to be on a sacred journey with God?

James tells us to use the tongue with great caution. He reminds us that ‘With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. 10From the same mouth come blessing and cursing.’ James states the obvious by saying, “My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.” This should simply not be happening.

My friends, our challenge this morning is to hold our tongue accountable and keep those great balls of fire created by our tongue from ever leaving our mouths. We are challenged to think before we speak so that we do not allow burning curses that would damage others from passing our lips. We are challenged to remember that we are Jesus’ disciples so that we can take control of our tongues and by taming the tongue we can then be a blessing by sharing the good news of God’s love with all that we meet.

### ***We Respond with Thanksgiving***

#### **HYMN: B- 426 “Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak”**

1 Lord, speak to me that I may speak living  
echoes of Thy tone. As Thou hast sought, so  
let me seek Thine erring children, lost and lone.

2 O lead me, Lord, that I may lead The wandering  
and the wavering feet. O feed me, Lord, that  
I may feed Thy hungry ones with manna sweet.

3 O teach me, Lord, that I may teach The precious

things Thou dost impart. And wing my words that they may reach The hidden depths of many a heart.

4 O fill me with Thy fullness, Lord, Until my very hearts o'er flows In kindling thought and glowing word, Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

5 O use me, Lord, use even me, Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where; Until Thy blessed face I see, Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.

### **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**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord, saying: Lord, have mercy.

For the holy church of God, that it may be filled with truth and love, and be found without fault at the day of your coming, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all who fear God and believe in you, Lord Christ, that our divisions may cease, and that all may be one as you and the Father are one, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the mission of the church, that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who do not yet believe, and those who have lost their faith, that they may receive the light of the gospel, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the world, that a spirit of respect and forbearance may grow among nations and peoples, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For a blessing upon all human labor, and for the right use of the riches of creation, that the world may be freed from poverty, famine, and disaster, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the poor, the persecuted, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our enemies and those who wish us harm; and for all whom we have injured or offended, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For ourselves, for the forgiveness of our sins, and for the grace of the Holy Spirit to amend our lives, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our families, friends, and neighbors; that, being freed from anxiety, they may live in joy, peace, and health, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all who have died in the communion of your church, that strengthened by their witness we may be grateful for their example, living in justice and love until we join them in life eternal, we pray to you, O Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us entrust ourselves, and one another, and all of life to Christ our God, the One who taught us to say as we pray,

## **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-229 "From All That Dwell Below the Skies"**

1 From all that dwell below the skies, Let the Creator's praise arise; Alleluia! Alleluia! Let the Redeemer's name be sung Through every land by every tongue. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

2 In every land begin the song, To every land the strains Belong: Alleluia! Alleluia! In cheerful sound all Voices raise And fill the world with joyful praise. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

3 Eternal are Thy mercies Lord; Eternal truth attends Thy Word; Alleluia! Alleluia! Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore Till suns shall rise and set no more. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

## **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**