

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140
October 17, 2021, 10:30 a.m.
Celebrating 207 years of Faithful Service to Our God
The Twenty-first 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 Son of Man

P: came not to be served

L: but to serve,

P: and to give his life a ransom for many.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, tireless guardian of your people, ever prepared to hear the cries of your chosen ones, teach us to rely, day and night, on your care. Support our prayer, lest we grow weary. Drive us to seek your enduring justice and your ever-present help. Grant this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN:B- 288“I Sing the Mighty Power of God”

1 I sing the mighty power of God That made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad And built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained The sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at God's command, And all the stars obey.

2 I sing the goodness of the Lord That filled the earth with food;
God formed the creatures with a word And then pronounced them good.
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed, Where'er I turn our eyes,
If we survey the ground I tread Or gaze upon the skies!

3 There's not a plant or flower below But makes Thy glories known;
And clouds arise and tempests blow, By order from Thy throne;
While all that borrows life from Thee is ever in Thy care,
And everywhere that we can be, Thou, God, are present there.

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: The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

May the God of mercy, who forgives us all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

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-631 "There Is a Balm in Gilead"

Refrain: There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole,
there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

1 Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain,
but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again. (Refrain)

2 If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,
you can tell the love of Jesus and say, "He died for all." (Refrain)

3 Don't ever feel discouraged, for Jesus is your friend;
And if you lack for knowledge he'll ne'er refuse to lend. (Refrain)

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Isaiah 53:4-12

⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?

For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.
⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.
¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.
¹¹ After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.
¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

PSALM: 91: 9-16

⁹ If you say, "The LORD is my refuge,"
and you make the Most High your dwelling,
¹⁰ no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.
¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;
¹² they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
¹³ You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.
¹⁴ "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name."
¹⁵ He will call on me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.
¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation."

GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 10:35-45

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

³⁶ “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

³⁷ They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

³⁸ “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

³⁹ “We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴² Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

MESSAGE: *We are Not in Control* Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman

James and John had very high aspirations. Having been chosen as two of Jesus’ disciples, James and John, the sons of Zebedee had a plan – they wanted to secure for themselves the places of honor and be Jesus’ go-to-guys, his right hand man and his left hand man. James and John wanted to be there at the top with their positions securely in place as part of the inner circle when Jesus came into power. They wanted to secure the place of being generals for Jesus so that they would have the authority to rule over other people; and so much like the game show, they tried to engage Jesus in a game of ‘Let’s Make a Deal’ by asking Jesus to do whatever they asked.

When Jesus asked what it was that they wanted, James and John told him of their desire to be Jesus' upper echelon. Their ultimate desire was to become the top dogs of the disciples. Instead of the response they were hoping for, Jesus told them flat out –

“You do not have any idea what you are asking for; you will have to be willing to submit to what I have willingly submitted to: you must first repent, be devoted totally and become baptized as a child of God with the same baptism I had. Then you must be willing to drink the cup you are given by God and follow God's call upon your life. Even though you say you will do these things, it is not up to me to decide who sits where in the grand scheme of things. My Father in heaven has already made those choices and the places of honor at my right and left sides are not mine to give.”

Can you imagine how James and John felt upon hearing that their dealing was for nothing and worse yet, the other disciples heard the exchange, and boy were they steamed! But Jesus called them all together and said to them,

“Have you noticed how the Gentiles choose the people who will be their leaders and those leaders always have a way of making themselves more important than the people that they lead. The leaders become tyrants and make life miserable for the people they are supposed to be taking care of. But look at you, my disciples. You are called to be different from the world's understanding of a leader. You are to understand that if you want to be top dog then you need to be willing to serve other people as if you were their slave. All of my disciples will have equality and the only way to climb the ladder is to bow down and show the most humility and devotion to serving other people. You need to understand that the disciple that is the most selfless, humble and of service to others will be the one who holds the highest place in God's kingdom.”

Considering the actions of James and John, I guess it is not surprising to realize that we all try to play “Let's Make a Deal” every day for a variety of things. Particularly when we face a situation for which we do not control the outcome. This could be the negotiation for a job with an employer as we try to make a deal to get the best pay and benefits we can to support ourselves and our families. Maybe it is when we are trying to buy or rent a place to live and we want to be sure to get the best deal we can get in

order to be in safe and affordable housing. Perhaps it is when we bargain with our doctors over the course of treatment we will receive as we try to make a deal to find the best medical options for our own healthcare. Like James and John, we, too, want to be the cream of the crop or we try to get the best possible outcome for ourselves and our families.

But if we really listen to Jesus' teaching to the disciples then we hear we are not in control, God is in control. That means that we need to determine how it is that we can become not the one that lord it over other people, but the one who becomes the most useful to others. How do we take ourselves out of the middle and put Jesus there? How do we live into the baptism we have been baptized with and the cup we have been given by God to drink? How do we become the followers who support others through the church and its ministries? How do we use our gifts of time, talent and treasure to demonstrate our willingness to be the ones who have received the same baptism as Christ and who drink the same cup as Christ devoting ourselves to serving God just as Christ did?

How about today, instead of trying to wheel and deal so we can lord it over others, let us recognize that our God is in control so that we may become the most faithful and obedient servants, sharing all that we have to the glory of God!

We Respond with Thanksgiving

HYMN: B- 78 "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed"

1 Alas! and did my Savior bleed, And did my Sovereign die!
Would he devote that sacred head For sinners such as I!

2 Was it for sins that I have done, He suffered upon the tree?
Amazing pity! Grace unknown! And love beyond degree!

3 Well might the sun in darkness hide, and shut its glories in,
when Christ, the great Redeemer, died For his own creature's sin.

4 But drops of grief can ne'er repay The debt of love I owe.
Here, Lord, I give myself away; 'Tis all that I can do.

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

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-306 "Fairest Lord Jesus"

1 Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
O Thou of God to earth come down, Thee will I cherish,
Thee will I honor, Thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.

2 Fair are the meadows, Fairer still the woodlands,
Robed in the blooming garb of spring: Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is purer Who makes the woeful heart to sing.

3 Fair is the sunshine, Fairer still the moonlight,
And all the twinkling starry host: Jesus shines brighter,
Jesus shines purer, Than all the angels heaven can boast.

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