

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140
February 27, 2022 10:30 a.m.
Celebrating 207 years of Faithful Service to Our God
Transfiguration of the Lord

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: God who said, “Out of darkness the Light shall shine!”

P: is the same God who made light shine in our hearts

L: to bring us the knowledge of God's glory

P: shining in the face of Christ.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, glorious and faithful, to those who seek you with a sincere heart you reveal the beauty of your face. Strengthen us in faith to embrace the mystery of the cross, and open our hearts to its transfiguring power; that clinging in love to your will for us, we may walk the path of discipleship as followers of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN: B-487 “When Morning Gilds the Skies”

1 When morning gilds the skies, My heart awaking cries:
May Jesus Christ be praised! Alike at work and prayer
To Jesus I repair: May Jesus Christ be praised!

2 Does sadness fill my mind? A solace here I find:
May Jesus Christ be praised! Or fades my earthly bliss?
My comfort still is this: May Jesus Christ be praised!

3 Let earth's wide circle round In joyful notes resound:
May Jesus Christ be praised! Let air and sea and sky
From depth to height reply: May Jesus Christ be praised!

4 Be this, while life is mine, My canticle divine:
May Jesus Christ be praised! Be this the eternal song
Through all the ages long: May Jesus Christ be praised!

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:

God of compassion, in Jesus Christ you reveal the light of your glory, but we turn away, distracted by our won plans. We confess that we speak when we should listen, and act when we should wait. Forgive our aimless enthusiasms. Grant us wisdom to live in your light and to follow in the way of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and 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-472 "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face; and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

⁴ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

PSALM: Psalm 99

¹ The LORD reigns,
let the nations tremble;
he sits enthroned between the cherubim,
let the earth shake.
² Great is the LORD in Zion;
he is exalted over all the nations.
³ Let them praise your great and awesome name—
he is holy.
⁴ The King is mighty, he loves justice—
you have established equity;
in Jacob you have done

what is just and right.

⁵ Exalt the LORD our God
and worship at his footstool;
he is holy.

⁶ Moses and Aaron were among his priests,
Samuel was among those who called on his name;
they called on the LORD
and he answered them.

⁷ He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud;
they kept his statutes and the decrees he gave them.

⁸ LORD our God,
you answered them;
you were to Israel a forgiving God,
though you punished their misdeeds.

⁹ Exalt the LORD our God
and worship at his holy mountain,
for the LORD our God is holy.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 9:28-36

²⁸ About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. ²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰ Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. ³¹ They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. ³² Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³ As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.)

³⁴ While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

MESSAGE:

Astonished!

Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman

There is a certain quality of astonishment that is inherent to being a child. Often a child experiences everyday events through eyes that see the situation as new and unusual. I remember as a child going to the Shriner's circus at the Cincinnati Gardens. To this day, one of the most astonishing things to me was to see an elephant in the flesh. The sheer size of the elephant was intimidating and awe-inspiring. I could barely conceive of any real creature that was strong enough to lift a human being with their nose.

I can only imagine that being around Jesus as one of the disciples must have been much like being a child as so many things would be astonishing. Through healing, his teaching and his actions, Jesus was always making one question everything that they thought they knew about the world and how to live in it. The feeding of 5 thousand people was unimaginable. How did Jesus feed so many with so little? The challenges of Jesus that shaped discipleship were so often given in a way that made one's head spin. The idea of giving up one's life in order to live, the call to pray without ceasing, and the conviction to include all of the people that God had created at the table, even those that society deemed as untouchable. Surely to be one of Jesus' disciples was to potentially live in a constant state of awe and wonder.

Then to be one of the disciples that were closest to Jesus must have been a more intense experience. Jesus led by example and embodied what many of us seem to forget: the importance of setting one's self apart in prayer to be filled with God's glory prior to ministering to the people. To be disciples trusted to accompany Jesus as he took himself to be apart from the people so as to pray to God would have been incredibly humbling and uplifting.

Imagine being Peter or James or John who followed Jesus to the mountaintop. Can you envision what it would have been like to watch your teacher, your Rabbi pray and as he prayed to see the transformation from human being to heavenly being? Talk about shock and awe. Then to see Moses and Elijah standing with Jesus speaking of God's plan of redemption – man, that would have been incredible. Surely it would be hard to process. Finally, to actually be there, to witness the whole mountaintop being covered over in a cloud. Then hearing God's voice say, "This is my Son whom I have chosen; listen to him." Pow - mind blown!

If the mountaintop experience with Jesus were to happen today, I wonder if we would be so corrupt in our thinking, so used to hearing Satan's voice in our ear that we would find ways in which the occurrence could be labeled as only fake news. Would our hearts be so hard that we would say Moses and Elijah weren't there, they were photo-shopped in later. And that whole cloud thing with God's voice – surely that was only smoke and mirrors.

I wonder if that is why Jesus says, 'let the little children come to me' to remind us to come to him as disciples with the open hearts and open minds as if we were children so that we can experience that quality of astonishment that Peter, James and John experienced on the mountaintop. As disciples we too can go to the mountaintop and hear God's voice clearly as we are focused on listening to God's call on our lives. We can be witnesses to Jesus' mission to redeem creation as we see the Holy Spirit at work in the world.

God has a plan for us, just as Jesus knew of the plans for his life, death and resurrection. We are called to follow Jesus back down the mountain, to go out into the world to look at all the people in Spirit and in truth. As disciples of Jesus, let us dedicate ourselves to carrying the light of Christ into the world because our God is an Awesome God!

We Respond with Thanksgiving

HYMN: B- 339

“Be Thou My Vision”

1 Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art -
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

2 Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
Great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

3 Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

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)

DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures
Here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy
Ghost. Amen.

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

We confess our weary spirits, O God. We confess our tiredness. We confess that at times we are burned out and broken down. We confess that the work of justice, peace, and mercy has been difficult, and has yielded more sorrow at times than joy. We come before You, knowing You have taken this burden upon Yourself, so that we might know the fullness of Your reign. Grant us inner peace. Grant us a renewed spirit for justice. Grant us mercy beyond what we can imagine, and rest, so we may take upon the mantle You have bestowed upon us: to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You.

We ask healing for those who are sick, in pain or experiencing dis-ease in their lives.

We mourn with those who mourn and pray for their comfort, even while You welcome those who have taken their next step to be in heaven with you.

We share with joy the exciting things that have been happening.
We pray travel mercies on those traveling.

We take just a moment to pray for ourselves.

Holy Healer, we call upon You in our brokenness, in our distress. We call upon You in our times of simply feeling run down and tired. We call upon You to restore us. Help us to say no when needed. Help us to set boundaries that are healthy for ourselves as well as for others. Help us to seek You, and in our well-being, may we do the work You have called us to do, to bring healing to the world. Help us to follow your plan for our lives and to do your work in this world. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Savior, 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-263 "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

2 Unresting, unchanging, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 To all, life Thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
Then wither and perish; but naught changeth Thee.

4 Thou reignest in glory, Thou rulest in light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render; O help us to see
Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee!

Charge and Benediction

Go out into the world in peace; have courage; hold on to what is good;
return no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak,
and help the suffering; honor all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing
in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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