

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140
March 20, 2022 10:30 a.m.
Celebrating 207 years of Faithful Service to Our God
The Third Sunday in Lent

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.

L: The Lord God said:

P: I will give you a new heart and a new mind.

L: I will take away your stubborn heart of stone

P: and give you an obedient heart

OPENING PRAYER

Merciful God, in Christ you make all things new. Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and 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, Wherever I turn my eyes;
If I 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:

Remember that our Lord Jesus can sympathize with us in our weaknesses, since in every respect he was tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with boldness approach the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor as we pray together saying,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

God of mercy, you sent Jesus Christ to seek and save the lost. We confess that we have strayed from you and turned aside from your way. We are misled by pride, for we see ourselves pure when we are stained and great when we are small. We have failed in love, neglected justice, and ignored your truth. Have mercy, O God, and forgive our sin. Return us to paths of righteousness through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

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-259 “Amazing Love”

1 My Lord, what love is this that
Pays so dearly; that I the
Guilty one may go free?

Refrain Amazing love, Oh what sacrifice, the Son of God
given for me; my debt he pays and my
death he dies That I might live, that I might live

2. And so they watched him die,
despised, rejected; but O the
blood he shed flowed for me. *Refrain*

3. And now this love of Christ shall
flow like rivers; come wash your
guilt away, live again *Refrain*

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³ They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." ⁸ We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. ⁹ We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰ And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

¹¹ These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can

bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

PSALM: Psalm 63:1-8

¹ You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.
² I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
³ Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
⁴ I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
⁵ I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
⁶ On my bed I remember you;
I think of you through the watches of the night.
⁷ Because you are my help,
I sing in the shadow of your wings.
⁸ I cling to you;
your right hand upholds me.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 13:1-9

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ² Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

⁶ Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. ⁷ So he said to the

man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'

⁸ "Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down."

MESSAGE: ***Stalled Growth*** **Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman**

Have you ever experienced stalled growth? Many of us have had that time in our life when we thought that an opportunity would be the one thing that could take us to the top of our field. But instead of acting on the opportunity, we sat back and took the situation for granted. We assumed that it would flourish on its own, but that didn't happen. We did nothing and guess what? That's right – nothing happened. Instead everything just stalled out.

That is what some folks do, they have the gifts and skills to succeed and yet when they are faced with an opportunity that requires their participation, they sit back and assume that it will just happen for them – and when it doesn't then they get angry because they did not get the promotion or praise.

It also happens in the church. There are some folks who say they are Christians and that they love the Lord, but when they have done something sinful and turned away from God they do not think that they need to repent or ask for forgiveness so that they can repair their broken relationship with God. Instead of admitting their sin and asking for forgiveness, they make the choice to remain in their sin, they simply stall out and their faith fails to grow.

It is easy to point at others and their faults, but what about us? How have we stalled in our spiritual growth? Do we sin and think it is no big deal, because we consider it a small sin in comparison to someone else's sin? Do we feel that God already knows our guilt, so why bring it up? Do we think that it is unnecessary to rehash old issues and so we simply ignore them hoping they will go away? Do we so easily forget that God's thoughts are not like our thoughts and our thoughts are not like God's thoughts?

Let me ask you this – what sin have you committed in your life that you have tried to ignore and then the consequences of that sin have simply gone away? I can honestly say I've never had that happen. Those sins

that have been ignored always seem to turn up at the most inopportune times and almost always in a really big and messy public way.

You know it seems silly that we set ourselves up for this type of embarrassment and rejection carrying unwanted guilt and shame, when we could have dealt with it by recognizing our sin, going to God, and asking for forgiveness. We can be assured that we will receive mercy from our ever faithful God and we can release that guilt and shame because we have been forgiven. Just as the gardener spreads fertilizer on a plant that is not flourishing, we can chalk up the total encounter with digging out our sense of guilt and shame and admitting our sin to spreading fertilizer on our soul so that we can grow from the experience of repentance, turning back to God and becoming more faith-filled disciples in our walk with Jesus.

Let us lean into our faith so we are open to trust the master gardener and grow and flourish where God leads us.

We Respond with Thanksgiving

HYMN: B-92

“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”

1 Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty rock Within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness, A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat, And the burden of the day.

2 Upon the cross of Jesus Mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One Who suffered there for me:
And from my stricken heart with tears Two wonders I confess:
The wonders of redeeming love And my unworthiness.

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

L: As God's people, called to love one another, let us pray for the needs of the church, the whole human family, and all the world, saying: Hear our prayer.

That churches of all traditions may discover their unity in Christ and exercise their gifts in service of all, we pray to you, O God:

P: Hear our prayer.

L: That the earth may be freed from war, famine, and disease, and the air, soil, and waters cleansed of poison, we pray to you, O God:

P: Hear our prayer.

L: That those who govern and maintain peace in every land may exercise their powers in obedience to your commands, we pray to you, O God:

P: Hear our prayer.

L: That you will strengthen this nation to pursue just priorities so that the races may be reconciled; the young, educated; and the old, cared for; the hungry, filled; and the homeless, housed; and the sick, comforted and healed, we pray to you, O God:

P: Hear our prayer.

L: That you will preserve all who live and work in this place in peace and safety, we pray to you, O God:

P: Hear our prayer.

L: That you will comfort and empower those who face any difficulty or trial: the sick, the disabled, the poor, the oppressed, those who grieve and those in prison, we pray to you, O God:

P: Hear our prayer.

L: That you will accept our thanksgiving for all faithful servants of Christ now at rest, who, with us, await a new heaven and a new earth, your everlasting kingdom, we pray to you, O God:

P: Hear our prayer.

Merciful God, as a potter fashions a vessel from humble clay, you form us into a new creation. Shape us, day by day, through the cross of Christ your Son, until we pray as continually as we breathe and all our acts are prayer; through Jesus Christ and in the mystery of the Holy Spirit, through Christ our Lord, 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-281 "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

1 Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty; Hold me with Thy powerful hand;
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more,
Feed me till I want no more.

2 Open now the crystal fountain, Whence the healing
Stream doth flow; Let the fire and cloudy pillar Lead me
all my journey through; Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan, Bid my anxious
fears subside; Death of death, and hell's destruction, Land me
safe on Canaan's side. Songs of praises, Songs of praises
I will ever give to Thee, I will ever give to Thee.

Charge and Benediction

May the road rise to meet you; may the wind be always at your back; the sunshine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields; and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

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