

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140
May 29, 2022 10:30 a.m.
Celebrating 207 years of Faithful Service to Our God
The Seventh Sunday of Easter

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: Clap your hands, all you people!

P: Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

L: Sing praises to God, sing praises!

P: Sing praises to our sovereign Lord!

L: God is sovereign over all the earth!

P: Sing praises to God, sing praises!

L: Let everything that has breath sing praises.

P: Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, through Jesus Christ, you revealed to us a power that has no parallel. May the eyes of our heart be enlightened to this power and all it has done in our lives. Pour out your Spirit of power upon us, that we may proclaim your glory and your grace. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives with you now and always in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. **Amen.**

***HYMN: B-105**

“Because You Live, O Christ”

1 Because You live, O Christ, The garden of the world has come to flower;
The darkness of the tomb Is flooded with Your resurrection power.

Refrain

*The stone has rolled away And death cannot imprison!
O sing this Easter Day, For Jesus Christ has risen,
has risen, has risen, has risen!*

2 Because You live, O Christ The spirit bird of hope is freed for flying;
Our cages of despair No longer keep us closed and life denying, **Refrain**

3 Because You live, O Christ, The rainbow of Your peace will span
creation, The colors of Your love Will draw all humankind to adoration.

Refrain

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:

Our Savior Jesus, even while we extol you as Divine Sovereign whose authority is above all earthly power, we have failed to give you authority over even the smallest matters of our lives. We confess our arrogant, self-centered exercise of power over matters in our lives, in our church, and in our world. We desperately cling to our own power, failing to yield to your divine authority, wisdom, guidance, and love. Forgive us, we pray, for the harm we have done to others and to ourselves. In your mercy, save us, Lord.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: Jesus said to his disciples before he ascended to God, "Repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in my name to all nations."

P: Let us repent as followers of Christ, and allow Christ to transform our lives. We joyfully receive forgiveness in the name of the risen savior. 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: B-333 "Seek Ye First"

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And His righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you.
Allelu, alleluia!

Ask and it shall be given unto you,
Seek and ye shall find,
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you.
Allelu, alleluia!

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

¹² "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

¹⁴ "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

PSALM: Psalm 97

- ¹ The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad;
let the distant shores rejoice.
- ² Clouds and thick darkness surround him;
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
- ³ Fire goes before him
and consumes his foes on every side.
- ⁴ His lightning lights up the world;
the earth sees and trembles.
- ⁵ The mountains melt like wax before the LORD,
before the Lord of all the earth.
- ⁶ The heavens proclaim his righteousness,
and all peoples see his glory.
- ⁷ All who worship images are put to shame,
those who boast in idols—
worship him, all you gods!
- ⁸ Zion hears and rejoices
and the villages of Judah are glad
because of your judgments, LORD.
- ⁹ For you, LORD, are the Most High over all the earth;
you are exalted far above all gods.
- ¹⁰ Let those who love the LORD hate evil,
for he guards the lives of his faithful ones
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
- ¹¹ Light shines on the righteous
and joy on the upright in heart.
- ¹² Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous,
and praise his holy name.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 17:20-26

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

MESSAGE: *Come, Lord Jesus!* Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman

When I was a small child around four years old, I remember getting up each morning and asking my mother, “Is today my birthday?” Most mornings my mother would respond with, “No, but it is coming soon.” That would satisfy me for the day and I could move on knowing that even if my birthday wasn’t today, it would be coming soon. As a child, I didn’t realize that time was a matter of perspective. To my mother, a year was something that passed very quickly. As a parent and a teacher, a deacon and a volunteer, my mother’s life was very busy and time passed by swiftly so that a year seemed to her like no time at all. As a small child, I did not have a real sense of time, and sometimes five minutes felt like an eternity to me.

The same is true for all of us today. As embodied creatures, I am sure that you have days when you are so consumed by all of the tasks that you need to do that you wonder where the time went. Or times when you are preparing for an event that is weeks away and it seems as if it takes an eternity for the time to come, but when the time for the event arrives, you are surprised by how quickly the time passed. And then there are times when the last ten minutes of a meeting or a workday or a doctor’s appointment seems to take forever. Or when you are away from a dear friend or loved one, waiting for the day of their return can seem to make time creep along at a snail’s pace. It seems when you are the one who is actively involved with what is occurring, then time advances rapidly, but if you are on the receiving end, not in control of the situation, then time seems to move extremely slowly.

In today’s scripture we hear Jesus assuring us that he is coming soon. Jesus does not tell us the day or the hour he will return, however he does tell us that we should not simply stand around looking toward the sky, twiddling our thumbs as we wait for his arrival. Jesus cautions us not to

wait and do nothing until the day he arrives. Everyday life needs to continue on as usual, and we need to be ready for Christ's return.

Doing laundry is, for most folks, not the most exciting job they have to do in a week, however it is a necessity. The rather odd statement "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates" is designed to point us away from looking skyward and daydreaming and directs us to do the everyday work of being faithful and obedient followers of Jesus Christ embodied in this world at this time and that includes doing our laundry. Jesus is encouraging those of us waiting for his return to concentrate on the tasks at hand and to be about the work of cleansing a world made unclean.

Perhaps we are called to begin within our own faith community and our own lives by cleaning away our prejudices and false assumptions. Maybe then we can do as Jesus directs us to do and say "Come" to everyone we meet. Come meet Jesus, come be a part of the beloved community of the church, /come share the gifts and talents God has given to you.

Jesus wants us to invite everyone we meet to 'come' and meet him. We are to invite everyone that we like and think of as good people *and* we are to invite everyone we can barely stand to be around. We are to invite those who have a nice place to live *and* those who are homeless or in need. We are to invite those who are aware of who God is *and* those who are unaware. We are to invite every single person we encounter to come, drink of the water of life and take the gift of living water by becoming a follower of Jesus Christ.

Come one and all – there is nothing that you have done that is too big for God to forgive. There is nothing you have experienced that God's grace cannot cover and help to grant you peace. There is no one who is beyond the love of God; no matter how lost we think they are. There is not one prayer uttered that God does not hear. There is not one person who is so dirty that the living water of Jesus Christ cannot wash clean. Jesus offers each of us the gift of the water of life so that we may live our lives to the glory of God.

Wouldn't it be great if God would run an ad, something like a movie trailer to let us know when Christ will come again? It might sound something like...Coming soon to a planet near you....Jesus will return! People will laugh, people will cry, some will believe, some will not believe. Many will know of him but many will not have met him yet. When will it happen? How long will we wait?

There are no answers to that question, although many people have tried in vain to calculate when the Lord will come back. But in the scriptures, Jesus tells us even he doesn't know when he will be returning. Only God the Father knows. It may be sooner or it may be later. What Jesus does tell us is that we should be vigilant and stand ready for his return.

The reality is that it is not up to me or you to determine when Jesus will be coming again. Jesus tells us that he is coming soon and that we should remain doing the everyday tasks of our lives and the everyday tasks that should be part of our lives as embodied Christians. We are to continue to do the mundane things that get us through each day as well as to continue being Christ's hands and feet in this world because we know – without the shadow of a doubt, that Jesus is coming soon!

We Respond with Thanksgiving

HYMN: B-417 “Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation”

1 Christ is made the sure foundation, Christ the head and
cornerstone, Chosen of the Lord and precious,
Binding all the church in one; Holy Zion's
help forever, And our confidence alone.

2 To this temple, where we call You, Come, O Lord of
Hosts, today; With Your wonted loving kindness,
Hear Your people as they pray; And Your fullest
benediction Shed within its walls always.

3 Here bestow on all Your servants What the ask of
You to gain, What they gain from You forever
With the blessed to retain, And hereafter
in Your glory Evermore with You to reign.

4 Laud and honor to the Father, Laud and honor
to the Son, Laud and honor to the Spirit,
Ever three and ever one; One in might and
one in glory While unending ages run.

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 hosts; 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

Let us pray,

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-111 “Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing!”

1 Good Christians all, rejoice and sing! Now is the triumph
of our King! To all the world glad news we bring:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

2 The Lord of life is risen today! Bring flowers of song,
bedeck the way; Let every tongue rejoice and say:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

3 Praise we in songs of victory That love, that life which
cannot die, And sing with hearts uplifted high:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

4 Thy name we bless, O risen Lord, And sing to day with
one accord The life laid down, the life restored:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Charge and Benediction

There is new life all around. The resurrection is still happening. Christ is at work in our world, in our communities, and in you. Search your heart, and find the goodness, the love, the life that is there. Christ is coming again, doing a new thing—can you not perceive it?

You are forgiven. You are loved. You are very much needed for the reign of God, which is being built up now. Go and share the good news, and roll up your sleeves; for if you have breath, God still has something for you to do. 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