

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140
May 8, 2022 10:30 a.m.
Celebrating 206 years of Faithful Service to Our God
The Fourth 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: Awake! Rise up!

P: There is much to be done in the Lord's Name today.

L: Get ready to worship and to serve God.

P: We are ready to hear God's word for us and to respond in action and love.

L: Open your hearts to God's will this day.

P: Praise be to God who walks with us and guides us.

OPENING PRAYER

With joy we come this day to the house of the Lord. God provides for us abundantly even when we doubt and fear, even when we turn away. God is faithful. Open our hearts today, O Lord, to hear your word for us that we may become faithful disciples of our Lord all our days; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN: B- 104 “Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!”

1 Christ is risen! Shout Hosanna! Celebrate this day of days!
Christ is risen! Hush in wonder: All creation is amazed.
In the desert all-surrounding, See, a spreading tree has grown.
Healing leaves of grace abounding Bring a taste of love unknown.

2 Christ is risen! Raise your spirits From the caverns of despair.
Walk with gladness in the morning. See what love can do and dare.
Drink the wine of resurrection, Not a servant, but a friend.
Jesus is our strong companion. Joy and peace shall never end.

3 Christ is risen! Earth and heaven Nevermore shall be the same.
Break the bread of new creation Where the world is still in pain.
Tell its grim, demonic chorus: "Christ is risen! Get you gone!"
God the First and Last is with us, Sing Hosanna, everyone!

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:

The hard emotions of anger, hatred, anguish blare at us from the newspapers and the media. The shouts of hurt and pain harden our hearts, merciful God. We cannot bear the hurts, so we turn away. We hide and want the hurt to disappear. When we hear the words of the Psalmist singing about the green pastures, still waters, our souls long for this place of peace. We think that it can be found outside ourselves, yet this is a reminder of the peace and hope that your love offers us from within. We know that we will have struggles and hard times, but help us, Lord, to place our lives in your care, to trust in your comfort and guidance. Forgive our stubborn resistance to your compassionate love. Heal us again and place us on the right path.

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.

¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”

¹⁴ I answered, “Sir, you know.”

And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore,

“they are before the throne of God
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne
will shelter them with his presence.

¹⁶ ‘Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat down on them,
nor any scorching heat.

¹⁷ For the Lamb at the center of the throne
will be their shepherd;

‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’

‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

PSALM: Psalm 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name’s sake.

⁴ Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 10:22-30

²² Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³ and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. ²⁴ The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

²⁵ Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

MESSAGE: *Who We Are and Whose We Are*
Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman

How often do we understand who we are, based upon who knows us? We identify ourselves through our connections. We know we are our parent's child, and how we fit into the family, the only, the oldest, the youngest, or someone in the middle. We know who we are based on our affiliations, such as schools, organizations or hobby groups of which we are a part. We categorize who we are by what we do, either a job inside the home or outside the home and we are validated by the people who recognize our skills and our talent, those who know us. And within our faith community, who we are is celebrated by our choice to follow God and by being accepted as children of God by those around us.

We like to think about who we are in the most positive light possible. However, sometimes we are grumpy, mean, short-sighted and generally nasty, because we are having a bad day or someone who knows us has stepped on our last nerve. Mostly, we can identify ourselves, who we are - as children of God, imperfect human beings, striving every day to be the best version of ourselves that we can be.

In our Gospel lesson this morning, Jesus is asked point blank, “who are you?” by the Jewish people surrounding him. They wanted to know if Jesus was indeed the Messiah. These people were not interested in the true intention of the title, meaning God’s anointed one, rather, they wanted to know if Jesus was the political player and potential warrior king that the Jewish people were hoping him to be.

Jesus’ response plainly states that God leaves each one of us free to believe or not to believe and it is clear that Jesus’ enemies have chosen not to believe in spite of the proof of Jesus’ ministry and the works he has accomplished in God’s name. But more than that, Jesus claims that those who believe in him are those he calls his sheep, and because of their disbelief Jesus’ enemies are certainly not his sheep.

At this point, we expect Jesus to say that the sheep follow him because *they know him*, but instead Jesus says that they follow him because *he knows them*. As human beings we long to be known — to be understood at the deepest levels. That sense of profound intimacy anticipates profound love, God’s love. This Gospel makes it clear that Jesus sees to the depth of the heart, and it is no wonder that the sheep recognize that and follow him. There are times in our lives that we need a shepherd and we forget that we already have one. Jesus has told those who believe that he is our shepherd, and we are his sheep.

Who are you? My friends, each one of us are children of God given the freedom to believe or not. Whose are you? Those of us who believe are the sheep of Jesus’ fold.

May we remember each day that we are children of God and sheep in the flock of the Good Shepherd, Jesus. Let us live our lives so that we will proclaim our Good Shepherd in all that we think, all that we say, and all that we do.

We Respond with Thanksgiving

HYMN: B- 404 “Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

1 Precious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, help me stand: I am tired, I'm weak, I am worn; Through the storm, through the night, Lead me on to the light; Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

2 When my way grows drear, Precious Lord, linger near; When my life is almost gone, Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand lest I fall: Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

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

Let us pray,

Holy God, we come to You confessing that we do not listen well. We make rash decisions and do not seek discernment in prayer. We place our hope in news and stock reports rather than in You. Forgive us for not listening to You, for not following Your example in Scripture. Call us away from the ways of the world and back into Your ways of love, justice and mercy

John tells us in the book of Revelation that God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. We know that while we grieve now, we will rejoice again. We know that while we may be in darkness now, we will find the light again.

When we struggle, we must follow the voice, the example of Jesus, knowing that when we remain faithful, God remains faithful to us. We are forgiven, we are loved, and we are sent forth.

We lift before you the concerns of our hearts.

We lift up the joys of our lives.

We remember before you those who have died, who have been embraced in the arms of Jesus, welcomed home and now sits at the heavenly banquet table with you. Give solace and comfort to those who mourn. Let them know that you are with them even until the end of the age.

We take just a moment to pray for ourselves.

Gentle Shepherd, lead us to the green pastures and cool waters in times of stress and worry. Lead us to a full table when we feel empty and hollow inside. Lead us to the fullness of the cup of life when we feel drained by the world. Most of all, when the darkness of death lingers as a deep valley with no way out, show us the way out by Your light. Call us by name when we go astray so we might remember Your voice. Guide us in all the ways of our life, all of our days. In the name, Jesus the Christ, the Lamb and the Good Shepherd, the one 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-142 "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!"

1 All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown him Lord of all! Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all!

2 Ye chosen seed of Israel's race, Ye ransomed from the fall, Hail him who saves you by His grace, And crown Him Lord of all!, Hail Him who saves

you by His grace, And crown Him, Lord of all!

3 Let every kindred, every tribe, On this terrestrial ball, To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of All! To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of All!

4 O that with yonder sacred throng We at His feet may fall! We'll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all! We'll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all!

Charge and Benediction

Who are you? You are Children of God. Whose are you? You are the sheep of the Good shepherd's flock. Go in peace; let your faith make a difference, encourage one another. 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