

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140
June 19, 2022 10:30 a.m.
Celebrating 207 years of Faithful Service to Our God
The Second 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: In Christ God was reconciling the world to Godself,

P: not counting their trespasses against them,

L: and

P: entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

OPENING PRAYER

Pour out upon us, O God, the power and wisdom of your Spirit, that we may walk with Christ the way of the cross, ready to offer even the gift of our lives to show forth to the world our hope in your kingdom. We ask this through 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-554 “Let All Things Now Living”

1 Let all things now living A song of thanksgiving
To God our Creator triumphantly raise.
Who fashioned and made us, Protected and stayed us,
By guiding us on to the end of our days.

God's banners are o'er us, Pure light goes before us,
A pillar of fire shining forth in the night.
Till shadows have vanished All fearfulness banished,
As forward we travel from light into light.

2 By law God enforces, The stars in their courses
The sun in its orbit obediently shine;
The hills and the mountains, The rivers and fountains,
The depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.
We too should be voicing our love and rejoicing;
With glad adoration a song let us raise;
Till all things now living Unite in thanksgiving:
To God in the highest, Hosanna and praise.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In humility and faith let us confess our sin to God as we pray together saying,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Almighty God, you poured your Spirit upon gathered disciples creating bold tongues, open ears, and a new community of faith. We confess that we hold back the force of your Spirit among us. We do not listen for your word of grace, speak the good news of your love, or live as a people made one in Christ. Have mercy on us, O God. Transform our timid lives by the power of your Spirit, and fill us with a flaming desire to be your faithful people, doing your will for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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: 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-638 "O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come"

1 O Christ, the healer, we have come to
pray for health, to plead for friends. How can we fail to
be restored when reached by love that never ends?

2 From every ailment flesh endures our
bodies clamor to be freed; yet in our hearts we
would confess that wholeness is our deepest need.

3 In conflicts that destroy our health we
recognize the world's disease, our common life
declares our ills. Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?

4 Grant that we all, made one in faith, in
your community may find the wholeness that,
enriching us, shall reach the whole of humankind.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Galatians 3:23-29

²³ Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

PSALM: Psalm 22:19-28

- ¹⁹ But you, LORD, do not be far from me.
You are my strength; come quickly to help me.
- ²⁰ Deliver me from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dogs.
- ²¹ Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.
- ²² I will declare your name to my people;
in the assembly I will praise you.
- ²³ You who fear the LORD, praise him!
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!
- ²⁴ For he has not despised or scorned
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help.
- ²⁵ From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;
before those who fear you^[a] I will fulfill my vows.
- ²⁶ The poor will eat and be satisfied;
those who seek the LORD will praise him—
may your hearts live forever!
- ²⁷ All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,
- ²⁸ for dominion belongs to the LORD
and he rules over the nations.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 8:26-39

²⁶ They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" ²⁹ For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained

hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

³⁰ Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

³² A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. ³³ When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, ³⁵ and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. ³⁷ Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.

³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

MESSAGE: *Experiential Scripture* Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman

This morning we are going to use our imaginations and place ourselves fully into the biblical text. We will take part in the action as the disciples who are accompanying Jesus. To get us in the spirit of our adventure, let us visualize where we are and what we are doing. We have set sail on the Sea of Galilee with our teacher, Jesus. The boat is gently rocking as the waves caress the hull, quietly splashing. The smell of the gentle breeze as we set sail is calming and relaxing, so it is not surprising when Jesus nods off for a nap.

Suddenly, a squall arises and the boat is in danger of sinking, we are afraid of being swamped and we fear for our lives. We wake Jesus saying,

“Master, we are going to drown!” Only to witness Jesus rebuke the storm, calming the wild waters of the sea; then turning to us and asking, “Where is your faith?” We are stunned still wondering who Jesus really is that he has power to speak and something miraculous happens. Jesus appears to have Lordship over nature as we just saw him quiet a raging storm with simply a word.

We have continued our journey sailing across the Galilee on smooth waters and have arrived upon the shores of the Gerasenes. As disciples of a teacher like Jesus, we are used to seeing people who are curious about what he will say and at this point we almost expect a large crowd everywhere we go. But today will be something entirely different. Jesus steps ashore near the tombs and there is only one man, but this man is wild-eyed, naked, dirty, smelly, wearing broken chains on his right wrist and left ankle that drag in the dirt behind him. It is easy for us to see that he has been tormented and tortured by whatever has a hold on him. He appears to have been the victim of a tremendous amount of physical abuse. This poor man is clearly demon possessed! As disciples, we stay back so as not to spook this man and cause him to go into a fit perhaps striking out at Jesus.

Jesus has no such qualms, he strides forward to the man and commands the impure spirit to come out of him. We are dumbfounded and alarmed when the man falls at Jesus’ feet and we hear the gravelly, broken sound of many voices begging to not be tortured. Instead of astonishment and fear, Jesus asks the voices for their name and they reply, “Legion” even as they continued to beg Jesus for mercy.

We have seen many unusual things as Jesus’ disciples, but it is still disconcerting and bewildering to encounter demon possessed people. We are unsure of how to help or what might escalate the situation, so we stay where we are feeling the fear, grief and tension within the moment as Legion continues to beg to not be sent into the Abyss.

Just then, Legion directs Jesus’ line of sight to the herd of pigs on the hillside. Each swine looked to be bristly, big and solid. We could hear them snorting, snuffling and rooting in the distance. Legion pleaded to leave the man and be permitted to enter into the pigs. Jesus said go. There was a soft popping sound as each demon left the man. We could see the arc through the sky of the demons’ dark path toward, and their entrance into

the pigs. The swine screamed and squealed as they wheeled themselves around to stampede down the steep bank. Their thundering hooves drove into the lake creating a tidal wave, even as the swine and Legion drowned in the depths of the sea.

After the demons had left the man, his eyes cleared then welled up with tears because he was finally freed from the torture. We helped guide him into the sea so he could wash the stink off to clean up and put on some clothing. After dressing, he gratefully took a seat at the feet of Jesus for having saved him.

In the meantime, while we were tending to the redeemed man, the terrified swineherds ran to the town and the countryside to tell of this wild and crazy event that Jesus had done, and the people came to see for themselves, not believing it could actually be that bad.

We sat near Jesus and the man listening to the good news of God's love for even the demon possessed, as the people arrived. Their eyes grew wide with shock as they recognized the man and the drastic change that had come over him. They gazed in horror at the empty hillside and the realization that the swine were no more. The people concluded that what this man Jesus had done was too frightening for them. The terror of the people was intense because they understood that Jesus had cured the man who had lived so long in the tombs, naked, and untamed. The power that Jesus must have was threatening to their lives and community; the possibility of what Jesus could do was too disturbing to allow him to remain in their land. The people of the region asked Jesus to leave, so he got into the boat to leave.

We waded into the water and begin pushing the boat off of the shore and into the sea; the man came up begging to come with us. We were a bit surprised when Jesus said no, until we heard him say, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." Pushing now with more strength and speed, we slip into the boat and begin rowing away, knowing that the good news of God's love would still spread in the land of the Gerasenes and around the world. Thanks be to God!

We Respond with Thanksgiving

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, airer 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.

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,

L: God's Spirit joins with our spirits, Alleluia,

P: to declare that we are children of God. Alleluia!

L: Come, Spirit of wisdom, and teach us to value the highest gifts.

P: Come, Holy Spirit.

L: Come, Spirit of understanding, and show us all things in the light of eternity.

P: Come, Holy Spirit.

L: Come, Spirit of counsel, and guide us along the straight and narrow path to our heavenly home.

P: Come, Holy Spirit.

L: Come, Spirit of might, and strengthen us against every evil spirit and interest which would separate us from you.

P: Come, Holy Spirit.

L: Come, Spirit of knowledge, and teach us the shortness of life and the length of eternity.

P: Come, Holy Spirit.

L: Come, Spirit of godliness, and stir up our minds and hearts to love and serve the Lord our God all our days.

P: Come, Holy Spirit.

L: Come, Spirit of fear of the Lord and make us tremble with awe and reverence before your divine majesty.

P: Come, Holy Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit! Rain upon our dry and dusty lives. Wash away our sin and heal our wounded spirits. Kindle within us the fire of your love to burn away our apathy. With your warmth bend our rigidity, and guide our wandering feet. We pray these and all things through Jesus Christ our Lord and 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-355 "Hear the Good News of Salvation"

1 Hear the good news of salvation: Jesus died to show God's love.
Such great kindness! Such great mercy! Come to us from heaven above.

Refrain: Jesus Christ, how much I love you! Jesus Christ, you save from sin! How I love you! Look up-on me. Love me still and cleanse with-in.

2. All the sins I have committed, To my Savior now I bring.
I bow down with tears of anguish; Christ forgives and so I sing: 1 Hear the good news of salvation: Jesus died to show God's love.
Such great kindness! Such great mercy! Come to us from heaven above.

Refrain: Jesus Christ, how much I love you! Jesus Christ, you save from sin! How I love you! Look up-on me. Love me still and cleanse with-in.

2. All the sins I have committed, To my Savior now I bring.
I bow down with tears of anguish; Christ forgives and so I sing: *Refrain*

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