

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140
August 28, 2022, 10:30 a.m.
Celebrating 207 years of Faithful Service to Our God
The Twelfth 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: Jesus said:

P: Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;

L: for I am gentle and humble in heart,

P: and you will find rest for your souls.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, you alone can order unruly wills and affections. Help us to love what you command, and desire what you promise; that in the midst of this changing world, our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN: B- 461

“God Is Here!”

1 God is here! As we Your people Meet to offer praise and prayer,
May we find in fuller measure What it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us, All our varied skills and arts
Wait the coming of the Spirit Into open minds and hearts.

2 Here are symbols to remind us Of our lifelong need of grace;
Here are table, font, and pulpit; Here the cross has central place.
Here, in honesty of preaching, Here in silence, as in speech,
Here, in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.

3 Here our children find a welcome In the Shepherd's flock and fold,
Here, as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant Seek in worship to explore
What it means in daily living to believe and to adore.

4 Lord of all, of church and kingdom, In an age of change and doubt
Keep us faithful to the gospel, Help us work Your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication, All we have to give, receive:
We, who cannot live without You, We adore you! We believe!

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:

Eternal God, our judge and redeemer, we confess that we have tried to hide from you, for we have done wrong. We have lived for ourselves, and apart from you. We have turned from our neighbors and refused to bear the burdens of others. We have ignored the pain of the world, and passed by the hungry, the poor, and the oppressed. In your great mercy forgive our sins and free us from selfishness, that we may choose your will and obey your commandments; 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-551 "As a Fire Is Meant for Burning"

1 As a fire is meant for burning with a bright and warming flame,
so the church is meant for mission, giving glory to God's name.
Not to preach our creeds or customs, but to build a bridge of care,
we join hands across the nations, finding neighbors everywhere.

2 We are learners; we are teachers; we are pilgrims on the way.
We are seekers; we are givers; we are vessels made of clay.
By our gentle loving actions, we would show that Christ is light.
In a humble, listening spirit, we would live to God's delight.

3 As a green bud in the springtime is a sign of life renewed,
so may we be signs of oneness 'mid earth's peoples, many hued.
As a rainbow lights the heavens when a storm is past and gone,
may our lives reflect the radiance of God's new and glorious dawn.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. ² Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. ³ Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

⁴ Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. ⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

"Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you."

⁶ So we say with confidence,

“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.

What can mere mortals do to me?”

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

¹⁵ Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. ¹⁶ And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

PSALM: Psalm 112

¹ Praise the LORD!

Happy are those who fear the LORD,
who greatly delight in his commandments.

² Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

⁴ They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright;
they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.

⁵ It is well with those who deal generously and lend,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

⁶ For the righteous will never be moved;
they will be remembered forever.

⁷ They are not afraid of evil tidings;
their hearts are firm, secure in the LORD.

⁸ Their hearts are steady; they will not be afraid;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

⁹ They have distributed freely; they have given to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn is exalted in honor.

¹⁰ The wicked see it and are angry;
they gnash their teeth and melt away;
the desire of the wicked comes to nothing.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 14:1, 7-14

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely.

⁷ When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. ⁸ “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, ⁹ and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹ For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

¹² He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

MESSAGE: ***Always the Same*** **Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman**

From the moment we are conceived, we are changing. We develop and change constantly from that time forward. Even as our bodies are evolving, so are our feelings, emotions, and our health. We have good and bad things happen that change how we view the world and our relationships.

We change to adapt to the environment that we are living in. If we live in a hot, dry desert and move to a green, lush mountain top, we would learn to adapt. There are times that we change in the face of illness, accident or aging, adjusting to accommodate our limitations. We change our minds based upon the information we receive from our own research, from what we hear from others and from what we see and experience.

Some of us change the style of our clothing to keep in trend with others, while some of us see no need to engage in that type of vanity. We change

our clothes for the sake of hygiene. We change our hair as we go through our lives, we grow it out or cut it to wear it short or long, straight or curly. Some change their hair color to fit every mood or state of mind. We change neighborhoods, the place where we make our home, and our jobs.

We change the wallpaper or the paint in our home, the plants around it, and what we grow in the garden. We change our shoes, our sheets on the bed, and the burnt out light bulb. We change the baby and the cat litter. We change our diet, our lifestyle, and our exercise routine. We change what we do on a daily basis. As much as we would like for things to remain the same, in our human existence, things are always changing.

However, for us there is one thing that is always the same, our God. God is unchanging, immutable, constant, unvarying, and consistent. God loves humanity, each and every one of us. Even in the light of human sin. We know because God sent Jesus to earth to demonstrate the depth of that love embodied in the Son. Jesus is always the same, God's love made accessible to us. There is no changing that.

If you are hurt by someone, Jesus understands betrayal and is there to comfort you. If you are suffering, Jesus knows the ways in which the human body and emotions can be in agony and can sympathize with you. If you are grieving, Jesus has felt the pain of loss and he will mourn with you. If you are filled with guilt, Jesus understands the brokenness of humanity and forgives all who bring their guilt and shame to him. Jesus accepts each one of us just as we are, where we are, however we are. Jesus pours out the love of God on all of us, individually and corporately.

As Presbyterians, we understand that the ultimate reason for humanity's existence is to glorify God and to enjoy God forever. We are to say to our unchanging, ever loving, ever present, ready to forgive all we have done God, "God we adore you, we love you and will worship you all our days. Jesus, we bend our knees to bow down and bless your Holy name for saving us from sin and death. Holy Spirit, we follow your guidance so that we can do all that would please our God while we wait for Jesus to return."

The ultimate expression of glorifying God is to give of ourselves, our time, our talent and our treasure in the beloved community of the church. In so doing, we demonstrate our love for God; we become a disciple of Jesus; and we open ourselves to receive assistance from the Holy Spirit.

So our challenge this morning is to release ourselves from the conformity of the world that goes against God and simply say with enthusiasm, "Out of gratitude for the love you have shown me and all that you have done for me - I am your servant Lord, use me as you see fit. Here I am, Lord."

We Respond with Thanksgiving

HYMN: B- 525

"Here I Am, Lord"

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard My people cry.
All who dwell in darkest sin My hand will save
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear My light to Them Whom shall I send?

[Chorus]

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if You lead me. I will hold Your people in my heart.

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne My people's pain.
I have wept for love of them, They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My word to them. Whom shall I send? [Chorus]

3. I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give My life to them. Whom shall I send? [Chorus]

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)

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

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:

Hear our prayer.

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:

Hear our prayer.

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:

Hear our prayer.

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:

Hear our prayer.

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

Hear our prayer.

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

Hear our prayer.

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:

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; in the mystery of the Holy Spirit and through Jesus Christ, 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-466 "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing My dear Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King, The triumphs of God's grace!

2 Jesus, the name that charms our fears, That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears, 'Tis life, and health, and peace.

3 Christ breaks the power of reigning sin, And sets the prisoner free;
Christ's blood can make the sinful clean, Christ's blood availed for me.

4 My gracious Master and my God, Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad The honors of Thy name.

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