

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140

July 30, 2023 10:30 a.m.

**Celebrating 208 years of Faithful Service to Our God
The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**

We Enter Into God's Presence

WELCOME/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

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: Ask,

P: and it will be given you;

L: seek,

P: and you will find;

L: knock,

P: and the door will be opened for you.

OPENING PRAYER

Eternal God, protector of all who put their trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Fill us with your mercy and your grace, that with you to rule and guide, we may so use the good things of this present life that we do not neglect those of eternal worth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN: B-275

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

1 A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;

Our helper he, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe.
His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.

2 Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he.
Lord Sabaoth his name, from age to age the same,
and he must win the battle.

3 And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to
undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed his
truth to triumph through us. The Prince of Darkness grim,
we tremble not for him. His rage we can endure,
for lo, his doom is sure. One little word shall fell him.

4 That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them,
abideth. The Spirit and the gifts are ours through
him who with us sideth. Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also. The body they may kill; God's
truth abideth still. His kingdom is forever.

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 commandment; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

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: 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-557 "Pass It On"

1 It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing;
that's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it:
you spread God's love to everyone, you want to pass it on.

2 What a wondrous time is spring when all the trees are budding,
the birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming;
that's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it;
you want to sing, it's fresh like spring, you want to pass it on.

3 I wish for you my friend, this happiness that I've found
on God you can depend, it matters not where you're bound;
I'll shout it from the mountain top, I want my world to know:
the Lord of love has come to me, I want to pass it on.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: God, our helper, by your Holy Spirit, open our minds, that as the scriptures are read and your word is proclaimed, we may be led into your truth and taught your will, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Romans 8:26-39

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the

Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Psalm: Psalm 105: 1-11, 45b

¹ Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.

² Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.

³ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

⁴ Look to the LORD and his strength;
seek his face always.

⁵ Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,

⁶ you his servants, the descendants of Abraham,

his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.

⁷ He is the LORD our God;

his judgments are in all the earth.

⁸ He remembers his covenant forever,

the promise he made, for a thousand generations,

⁹ the covenant he made with Abraham,

the oath he swore to Isaac.

¹⁰ He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree,

to Israel as an everlasting covenant:

¹¹ “To you I will give the land of Canaan

as the portion you will inherit.”

⁴⁵ that they might keep his precepts

and observe his laws.

Praise the LORD.

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

³¹ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

³³ He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the

righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

⁵² He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

MESSAGE: ***Paranoid?*** Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman

I have been thinking about this recently and I wonder what you think. Why do you think we are so paranoid? What is it that makes us think that others are out to get us? What devious kind of life do we lead that we are hyper aware of the potential of others to come after us and do us harm? Have we watched too many spy movies and think that there is danger around every corner? Does someone have us in their sights? Have we watched too many criminal investigation shows that have death waiting to pounce on us from an unlikely source? Have we read one too many mysteries, stories of intrigue, tales of treason? What is it about our culture and our world that causes us to be so suspicious and obsessed with the idea that someone is out to get us?

If you think that I am way off base, then I know that you have not been on social media or read any newspaper or watched any news outlet. From the most prominent leaders of the world to the most average of people in our neighborhoods, there seems to be an overriding sense that “someone is out to get me!” It seems that we are convinced there are traps lying in wait for us when we will least expect it. Why do we think that? What valuable information do we have that might compromise someone else so that they would be inclined to come after us? What state secrets do we hold? What make us so self-important to think that someone has nothing better to do than to track us down and cause us harm? I’m just curious.

The thing I really have been struggling with is that, as Christians are we not called to consider a higher purpose rather than to dig around in the dirt trying to find our own sense of self-worth? Why are we distracted from God by all of the things that others do? Why is that? Is it because as human

beings we tend to engage in hero worship? We place people on a pedestal admiring all that they think, do and say, until they show their imperfect humanity. Then, we damn them to the eternal fires where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. In which case, I would like for you to tell me, just when did God step aside and say, "Have at it! Go ahead judge everyone around you with your human knowledge. You know best"? When did that happen?

Why do we take so lightly or simply ignore Paul's message to Christians in all times and places? The apostle Paul faced real danger; his life was constantly on the line. He was arrested, tortured, and imprisoned for the sake of the Gospel. Yet, he did not take the stance that someone was out to get him, even though he could have legitimately done so. Why is that? Could it possibly be that Paul's heart and mind were focused on the things of God, of God's Son, Jesus Christ and the intercession of the Holy Spirit and not on the things of this world?

Paul's consistent message is not one of paranoia, suspicion or obsession, rather, Paul's message is: if God is on our side, what do we have to fear? God's love is so deep and wide and all-encompassing for all of creation. Think about how God has shown that love, because it was humanity that turned away from God and incurred so much sin and death that we could no longer pay the debt we owed. It was out of love for the humans that God sent the first-born, the Son to die on a cross to repay the debt humanity owed. God then raised this Jesus from the dead and gifted humanity with the Holy Spirit to intercede on our behalf so that we may have help in our human weakness.

In fact Paul says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) How do you think Paul would address this underlying paranoia that seemingly has a grip on humanity today? He would say:

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also

interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8: 31-37)

I wonder if it would be important for us as Christians to stand tall in this atmosphere of suspicion and distrust demonstrating to the world that we are more than conquerors through God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who loves us. What do you suppose the impact of that testimony would have on the culture and the world today? Are you willing to rise above cultural thinking and present yourself to the world as a beloved child of God who is more?

We need to remember that it is by the grace and love of God that we are redeemed by Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit which makes us more than conquerors of the paranoia; more than conquerors of our cultural context; more because we are the adopted children of God. Do you think that we should represent God our Father and show the world that we are more than these things? Can we share the love of God, the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit? I believe that is exactly what we are called to do at such a time as this. What do you think?

We Respond with Thanksgiving

HYMN: 445

"God, How Can We Forgive"

1 God, how can we forgive when bonds of love are torn?
How can we rise and start anew, our trust reborn?
When human loving fails and every hope is gone,
your love gives strength beyond our own to face the dawn.

2 When we have missed the mark, and tears of anguish flow,
how can you still release our guilt, the debt we owe?
The ocean depth of grace surpasses all our needs.
A priest who shares our human pain, Christ intercedes.

3 Who dares to throw the stone to damn another's sin,
when you, while knowing all our past, forgive again?
No more we play the judge, for by your grace we live.

As you, O God, forgive our sin, may we forgive.

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

God of heaven and earth, we bring the needs of the church, the world, and all in need to your loving care. Empower the church throughout the world in its life and witness. Break down the barriers that divide, so that united in your truth and love, the church may confess your name, share one baptism, sit together at one table, and serve you in one common ministry.

Merciful Father, hear the cries of the world's hungry and suffering. Give us, who consume most of the earth's resources the will to reorder our lives, that all may have their rightful share of the food, medical care, and shelter, and so have the necessities of a life of dignity.

Eternal God, renew our nation in the ways of justice and peace. Guide those who make and administer our laws to build a society based on trust and respect. Erase prejudices that oppress; free us from crime and

violence; guard our youth from the perils of drugs and materialism. Give all citizens a new vision of a life of harmony.

Merciful God, look with compassion on all who suffer. Support with your love those with incurable and stigmatized diseases, those unjustly imprisoned, those denied dignity, those who live without hope, and those who are homeless or abandoned. As you have moved toward us in love, so lead us to be present with them in their suffering in the name of Jesus Christ

God of comfort, sustain those among us who need your healing touch. Make the sick whole. Give hope to the dying. Comfort those who mourn. Uphold all who suffer in body or mind, not only those we know and love but also those known only to you, that they may know the peace and joy of your supporting care.

O God, in your loving purpose answer our prayers and fulfill our hopes. In all things for which we pray, give us the will to seek to bring them about, for the sake of Jesus Christ; 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: 625

"O Lord My God"

1 O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder consider
all the worlds thy hands have made, I see the stars,
I hear the rolling thunder, thy power throughout the
universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to
Thee: How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to
Thee: How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

2 When through the woods, and forest glades I wander and hear
the birds sing sweetly in the trees, when I look down from
lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook and

feel the gentle breeze:

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to
Thee: How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to
Thee: How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

3 And when I think that God, his Son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in, that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin:

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to
Thee: How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to
Thee: How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

4 When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in humble adoration, and then proclaim, "My God, how great Thou art!"

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to
Thee: How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to
Thee: How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

Charge and Benediction

Go out into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord be kind and gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. Alleluia!

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

Bethel Murdoch Presbyterian Church Contact Information

9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road
Loveland, Ohio 45140

Church Phone: (513) 583-9676
Church Website: www.thebmpc.org
Church Email: thebmpc@gmail.com

STAFF: Church Secretary – Judi Ramey
Organist – James Bronstrup
Custodian – Larry Flynn
Rev. Dr. Deb Uchtman Email: deb.uchtman@earthlink.net
Rev. Dr. Deb Cell Phone: (513) 484-3804

We believe that our mission is to:

Bring people to Jesus.

Equipping them for ministry

Teach them to love God and others

Heal the brokenhearted in loving family community

Enjoy God and each other

Live worshipful lives