



BETHEL MURDOCH

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

June 16, 2024, 10:30 a.m.

Celebrating 209 years of Faithful Service to Our God
Fourth 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.

OPENING SENTENCES

L: The kingdom of God is like a tiny mustard seed; *Mark 4:31-32*

P: it grows into a great plant with many branches.

OPENING PRAYER

All-powerful God, in Jesus Christ you turned death into life, and defeat into victory. Increase our faith and trust in him, that we may triumph over all evil, in the strength of the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN: 804

“Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!”

1 Rejoice, Ye pure in heart! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

your festal banner wave on high, the cross of Christ your King.

Refrain: Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

2 With voice as full and strong as ocean's surging praise,
send forth the sturdy hymns of old, the psalms of ancient days. **Refrain**

3 Yes, on through life's long path, still chanting as ye go,
from youth to age, by night and day, in gladness and in woe: **Refrain**

4 At last the march shall end; the wearied ones shall rest;
the pilgrims find their home at last, Jerusalem the blest. **Refrain**

5 Then on, ye pure in heart! Rejoice, give thanks and sing!
Your festal banner wave on high, the cross of Christ your King. **Refrain**

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:

Merciful God, you pardon all who truly repent and turn to you. We humbly confess our sins and ask your mercy. We have not loved you with a pure heart, nor have we loved our neighbor as ourselves. We have not done justice, loved kindness, or walked humbly with you, our God. Have mercy on us, O God, in your loving-kindness. In your great compassion, cleanse us from our sin. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Do not cast us from your presence, or take your Holy Spirit from us. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(We share with God those things that lay heavy on our hearts in silence)

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 32 "Creating God, Your Fingers Trace"

1 Creating God, your fingers trace the bold designs of farthest space;
let sun and moon and stars and light and what lies hidden praise your
might.

2 Sustaining God, your hands uphold earth's mysteries known or yet
untold; let water's fragile blend with air, enabling life, proclaim your care.

3 Redeeming God, your arms embrace all now despised for creed or race;
let peace, descending like a dove, make known on earth your healing love.

4 Indwelling God, your gospel claims one family with a billion names;
let every life be touched by grace until we praise you face to face.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:

Testify to us, O God, by the voice of your Spirit. Put your law in our hearts,
write your word in our minds, and show your will in our lives; through Jesus
Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Does not wisdom call, and understanding raise her voice? *Proverbs 8:1*
Hear the word of the Lord.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-10

⁶ Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at
home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷ For we live by faith, not by
sight. ⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body
and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So we make it our goal to please him, whether
we are at home in the body or away from it. ¹⁰ For we must all appear
before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is
due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

PSALM: PSALM 20

¹ May the LORD answer you when you are in distress;
may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.

² May he send you help from the sanctuary
and grant you support from Zion.

³ May he remember all your sacrifices
and accept your burnt offerings. ^[b]

⁴ May he give you the desire of your heart
and make all your plans succeed.

⁵ May we shout for joy over your victory
and lift up our banners in the name of our God.

May the LORD grant all your requests.

⁶ Now this I know:

The LORD gives victory to his anointed.
He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary
with the victorious power of his right hand.

⁷ Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

⁸ They are brought to their knees and fall,
but we rise up and stand firm.

⁹ LORD, give victory to the king!
Answer us when we call!

GOSPEL LESSON: MARK 4:26-34

²⁶ He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

³⁰ Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

³³ With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴ He did not say anything to them without using a

parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

MESSAGE: *PROVIDENCE AND PRIORITIES*

Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman

Paul's conviction that we walk by faith and not by sight is centered in the providence of God. We understand that God rules over all of creation. God cares for, guides and governs the whole of creation. God is personally involved with humanity. We understand that God has a purpose and a plan for each one of us. The knowledge that God has a plan is reinforced by the prophet Jeremiah who shares God's vision with us: "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11) The knowledge that God is in control and loves us unconditionally nurtures our faith in God.

As Christians, we understand that when people work together with God's purposes, they feel the presence of God and recognize God's guidance in their own lives. God provides what they need and each person comes to realize that even the smallest thing in their life is important to God. If you have ever had a time that your prayers were answered or when you made it through a particularly difficult time in your life, you have experienced God's personal care for you. You have encountered God uplifting you and guiding you during times of special need.

As Presbyterians, we recognize God's governing providence and hold the conviction that God's divine plan and purposes guide the creation, human history, and human lives. We believe that God knows all things and wills all things.

Some may think that if God is governing all things, then how is there evil in the world? If God is good, then why does evil exist? Let's be clear here. Evil is that which opposes God and God's will. Evil stands against God and it does whatever is opposed to the will of God. God is against evil. We can see that very clearly in Jesus Christ who withstood all that was evil and that was in opposition to God. Jesus set the example for us to overcome evil by doing good in this world.

Human evil is caused by human beings and the actions they take. Each one of us is responsible for those things we do that are in opposition to God's will and purposes. We cannot blame God for our evil; we must confess that we are accountable for that which we do that is against God's will. We live in a broken and sinful world. That is our reality. Yet, God does not send evil upon us. The mere idea that "God's gonna getcha if you don't watch out" is completely against the purpose of God's gracious love and justice as we know them through our savior, Jesus Christ. Because we know Christ, even though we are still part of the world, we are changed. Paul tells us, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (2 Corinthians 5:17.)

There are times when bad things do happen to good people. But we know that God has a purpose and a plan, so that when evil and suffering happen within our lives, we can be assured that God is with us and God's loving grace and power will see us through. Our comfort is that our world and lives are being held securely in God's hand. God cares for creation and our human existence. Our lives are entrusted to the God who created us and loves us completely, as we see in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God guides our lives and provides for our needs. We can trust God.

In the face of the providence of God, we should be grateful when good things happen to us, we will be able to be patient when we face difficult times, and we will not have to worry unnecessarily about the future because we know that God is in control.

But often that is not the case. We are not grateful when good things happen to us, rather we believe that somehow, we deserve those good things and more. When we face difficult times, we want our problems to be solved in the blink of an eye rather than being patient in the face of adversity. Instead of putting our worries of the future in the hands of God through prayer, we chew on our worries over and over like a dog with a bone showing our lack of trust in God. When we do these things we need to reexamine our priorities.

Who is central to your priorities? Who is at the top of the priority list for you? The answer to this question will shape the outcome of how you live your life. If you place yourself at the top of the priority list, like the media

we are exposed to each day suggests, then everything that you do will be self-centered. You will function with the understanding that you are the most important and indispensable being in the universe. No one can do anything as well as you do. No one has any expertise over that which you have. There is no compassion or need to allow others to use their gifts as other people are merely steppingstones for you to achieve your ultimate goal. There is no grace and if you don't like something, no one else is allowed to like it. When you face trials, you face them alone with no one to help you. God is optional in your life, and if you feel like being seen, you come to church. Even if you do come, you have no trust in God and you think you are infinitely more important than God.

On the other hand, if you place God at the top of your priority list, then everything you do will be God-centered. You will know in your heart of hearts that God is in control and will be with you during good times and bad times. You will experience evil and suffering however you have the assurance that God will be with you. You will take good care of yourself, because God gifted you with life. Our compassionate God will give you the strength and perseverance to minister to others which may mean allowing them to shine instead of you. You will be in constant prayer lifting up your adoration, confessions, trials and tribulations and asking for God's help in all things. The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you.

The Westminster Confession clearly states how we should determine our priorities with the question, "what is the chief end of man?" In other words, what is the purpose of humanity, why is it that we exist? The answer is that the purpose of humanity is to glorify God and enjoy God forever. When we live a self-centered life, we are not glorifying God - we are glorifying ourselves.

Let me ask you this: In the face of the providence of God who wants to give you a future with hope, and in gratitude for all that God has done for you, who will you choose to be the top of your priority list? You or God.

We Respond with Thanksgiving

***HYMN: 655**

"What Shall I Render to the Lord"

1 What shall I render to the Lord; what shall my offering be, for all the gracious

benefits God hath bestowed on me?

2 Salvation's cup my soul shall take while
to the Lord I pray, and with God's people
I will meet, my thankful vows to pay.

3 Not lightly dost thou, Lord, permit thy
chosen saints to die; from death thou hast
delivered me; thy servant, Lord, am I.

4 Within God's house, the house of prayer, my
Soul shall bless the Lord, and praises to God's
holy name let all the saints accord.

***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

Empower the church throughout the world in its life and witness. Break down the barriers that divide 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.

Guide the rulers of the nations. Move them to set aside their fear, greed, and vain ambition, and bow to your sovereign rule. Inspire them to strive for peace and justice, that all your children may dwell secure, free of war and injustice.

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.

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.

With thanksgiving we remember before you those saints who bore witness to the light. Grant that we may persevere in the faith to which we have been called and at the end behold your glory.

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 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: 645 "Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above"**

1 Sing praise to God who reigns above, the God of all creation, the God of power, the God of love, the God of our salvation. With healing balm my soul is filled, and every faithless murmur stilled:
to God all praise and glory!

2 What God's almighty power has made God's gracious Mercy keepeth' by morning glow or evening shade God's watchful eye ne'er sleepeth.
Within the kingdom of God's might, lo! all is just and all is right: to God all praise and glory!

3 The Lord is never far away, but through all grief distressing, an ever present help and stay, our peace and joy and blessing, as with a mother's tender hand, God gently leads the chosen band: to God all praise and glory!

4 Thus all my toilsome way along, I sing aloud thy praises, that all may hear the grateful song my voice unwearied raises.
Be joyful in the Lord, my heart; both soul and body take your part: to God all praise and glory!

Blessing and Charge

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through him.

Choral Amen

Postlude

**Stand either in body or in spirit*

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, June 19, 8:30am – Men's Breakfast

Wednesday, June 19&26, 11:30am– Lunch and Learn

Sunday, June 23 – Trustees Meeting following service

Sunday, June 30 – Feed My Sheep 12pm

Monday, July 8, 6pm – Session via Zoom

Saturday, July 13, 11am-2pm – Antique Firetruck Event with Ice Cream

Sunday, July 14– Deacons and Living Churches Initiative Meetings following service



BETHEL MURDOCH
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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