

# BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST HERITAGE SUNDAY

HONORING THE PAST  
CELEBRATING THE PRESENT  
EMBRACING THE FUTURE



This Sunday we take a moment to remember Bethlehem's heritage. From our roots in the German immigrant community as the First German Evangelical Society of Scio, worshipping in a humble log cabin in 1833, to our present-day worship space, we have grown and prospered over the years.



We are grateful for all who came before us to make us the church we are today.

**This funny entry from the 1985 Annual Report reminds us that Bethlehem, which respects and honors its past, has always been a forward-looking congregation:**

*"The Bethlehem pigeons are still a problem and will plague this commission long after we are gone. However, I still believe that if everyone would just take one or two home with them every Sunday, by the year 2000, we would be free of them!"*

## ***First time guests, welcome!***

*We are so glad that you are worshiping with us this morning. Please sign our guest book in the Narthex and identify yourself to one of our ushers or Welcome Team members to receive a delicious gift.*

*We invite everyone to write their prayer requests on the Action Pads in the pews. They will be gathered and read aloud during our Prayers of the Church. Prayer requests may be edited for privacy concerns.*

*All are invited to stand for sections marked with a cross (✝); however, some may choose to remain seated.*

*Congregational responses are in **bold**.*

### **CHURCH LIFE**

**Marion Seyfried** is at St. Joe Hospital.

**Bev Hanselman** is at St. Joe Hospital.

**Marie Slotten** has moved to the Redies Center in Saline.

**Tamsen Marshall** is at Glacier Hills.

### **RADIO BROADCAST**

The Radio Broadcast today is in memory of **Ron Jaworowski** from his family and friends.

### **ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY**

8:30 = 22    10:00 = 97

### **Our Mission**

To worship God, to learn and live the Word of God,  
to engage in Christian fellowship and service,  
to invite others to join us on our faith journey in the ministry of Jesus Christ.



## PRAYER OF INVOCATION

O God, you sowed the seeds of justice when you created this world. Though your bountiful creation has enough for everyone, it is hardly divided fairly. There are those who struggle to get their daily bread and there are those who have more than they can use in their lifetime. May we remember that all we have comes from you and that you have entrusted to us all that we have. May we take your commandments to heart so we can do as Jesus asks of us. Grant that we, O God, use this hour to work in our ministries to end this disparity. **Amen.**

## UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Almighty and Holy One, we cannot begin to count all our possessions. We have things in our closets, our attics, and our basements. We have things tucked away in boxes we haven't opened in years, and still we acquire more. We have so much stuff, and yet there are those in our communities who can fit all their worldly possessions in a shopping cart. We know that you, O God, will defend the poor and come to them in their need. But we, O God, need your forgiveness, for we are more attached to our things than we willingly acknowledge. Help us confront our attachment to possessions and things more honestly so we can share our own abundance more equitably. Amen.**

*(let us observe a few moments of silence to breathe and reflect)*

## WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

One: We draw false and fleeting comfort from our material things. True comfort comes from God's love for us and by responding with that same love to family, friend, neighbor, and stranger. By God's love we are forgiven.

All: **Let us do likewise. Amen.**

## THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR *(please say in the way most familiar to you)*

**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 [sins/trespasses], as we forgive our debtors [those who sin/trespass against us].**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;**

**for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

## ✠ PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: Children of God, the Peace of Christ be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

One: Let us share Christ's peace with one another.

**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.**

10:00 LEARNING WITH OUR CHILDREN

*Following the message, nursery, preschool, and K-6 children may leave for childcare and Sunday school. Teachers will lead them to their classrooms.*

ANTHEM

Let It Be  
*Will Fishwick, tenor;  
Ben Powell, electric bass; Marsha Rinke, piano*

John Lennon,  
Paul McCartney

SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Amos 5:6-7, 10-15**

<sup>6</sup> So seek GOD and live! You don't want to end up with nothing to show for your life but a pile of ashes, a house burned to the ground. For God will send just such a fire, and the firefighters will show up too late. <sup>7</sup> Woe to you who turn justice to vinegar and stomp righteousness into the mud. <sup>10</sup> People hate this kind of talk. Raw truth is never popular. But here it is, bluntly spoken: Because you run roughshod over the poor and take the bread right out of their mouths, you're never going to move into the luxury homes you have built. You're never going to drink wine from the expensive vineyards you've planted. I know precisely the extent of your violations, the enormity of your sins. Appalling! You bully right-living people, taking bribes right and left and kicking the poor when they're down. <sup>13</sup> Justice is a lost cause. Evil is epidemic. Decent people throw up their hands. Protest and rebuke are useless, a waste of breath. <sup>14</sup> Seek good and not evil—and live! You talk about God, the God-of-the-Angel-Armies, being your best friend. Well, *live* like it, and maybe it will happen. <sup>15</sup> Hate evil and love good, then work it out in the public square. Maybe God, the God-of-the-Angel-Armies, will notice your remnant and be gracious.

**Hebrews 4:12-16**

<sup>12-13</sup> God means what he says. What he says goes. His powerful Word is sharp as a surgeon's scalpel, cutting through everything, whether doubt or defense, laying us open to listen and obey. Nothing and no one is impervious to God's Word. We can't get away from it—no matter what. <sup>14-16</sup> Now that we know what we have—Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God—let's not let it slip through our fingers. We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing,

experienced it all—all but the sin. So let’s walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help.

### **Mark 10:17-31**

<sup>17</sup> As he went out into the street, a man came running up, greeted him with great reverence, and asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?” <sup>18-19</sup> Jesus said, “Why are you calling me good? No one is good, only God. You know the commandments: Don’t murder, don’t commit adultery, don’t steal, don’t lie, don’t cheat, honor your father and mother.” <sup>20</sup> He said, “Teacher, I have—from my youth—kept them all!” <sup>21</sup> Jesus looked him hard in the eye—and loved him! He said, “There’s one thing left: Go sell whatever you own and give it to the poor. All your wealth will then be heavenly wealth. And come follow me.” <sup>22</sup> The man’s face clouded over. This was the last thing he expected to hear, and he walked off with a heavy heart. He was holding on tight to a lot of things, and not about to let go. <sup>23-25</sup> Looking at his disciples, Jesus said, “Do you have any idea how difficult it is for people who ‘have it all’ to enter God’s kingdom?” The disciples couldn’t believe what they were hearing, but Jesus kept on: “You can’t imagine how difficult. I’d say it’s easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than for the rich to get into God’s kingdom.” <sup>26</sup> *That* set the disciples back on their heels. “Then who has any chance at all?” they asked. <sup>27</sup> Jesus was blunt: “No chance at all if you think you can pull it off by yourself. Every chance in the world if you let God do it.” <sup>28</sup> Peter tried another angle: “We left everything and followed you.” <sup>29-31</sup> Jesus said, “Mark my words, no one who sacrifices house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, land—whatever—because of me and the Message will lose out. They’ll get it all back, but multiplied many times in homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land—but also in troubles. And then the bonus of eternal life! This is once again the Great Reversal: Many who are first will end up last, and the last first.”

One: The Word of God, for the people of God.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

“Letting Go and Letting God”

Pastor John

8:30 COLLECTION OF OFFERING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

✠ HYMN #381

Take My Gifts

PASTORAL PRAYER & PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

10:00 INVITATION TO GIVE

10:00 OFFERTORY

Praeludium in F Major, BuxWV 144

Dietrich Buxtehude

✠ 10:00 DOXOLOGY #46

**Praise God the source of life and breath;  
Praise Christ, now born to conquer death;  
Praise Holy Spirit's mystery:  
One God, pure grace, who sets us free. Amen.**

✠ 10:00 UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Generous God, we thank you for all that we have—for all of it comes from you.  
We gratefully return a portion of what we have to you. May our offerings  
sustain and support the work of this church to close the disparity between  
those who have much and those who have little in this community. Amen.**

✠ HYMN OF PARTING #382      We Give Thee but Thine Own

✠ BENEDICTION

Let us count our days that we may gain a wise heart. Let God satisfy us this morning with steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Depart in peace, and let God's favor be upon us to prosper the work of our hands.

✠ SUNG BENEDICTION

May God's Sheltering Wings

Judith Snowdon

✠ POSTLUDE

Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 553

J.S. Bach

***Please join us for our Sunday morning Coffee Connection:***

♥ *in the Schmale Lounge after the 8:30 service*

♥ *in the Willimann Fellowship Hall after the 10:00 service*

♥ ***NOTE: Starting October 21, the 10:00 Coffee Connection will be in the GALLERY.***

**Courage for Justice: Prayers for the 21st Sunday after Pentecost** was written by the Rev. Quentin Chin, member of Church on the Hill in Lenox, Mass. Copyright 2018, Faith Formation Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.

## HELPING IN THE SERVICES TODAY

**Pastor:** Rev. John L. Kennedy

**Minister of Spiritual Growth and Development:**

Lily Tinker Fortel

**Director of Music:** Thomas Burton

**Guest Organist:** Marsha Rinke

**10:00 Bell Ringer** Matt Perros

**Liturgist** Brian Paton

**Coffee Hour Servers**

**8:30** John Irwin, Susan Irwin

**10:00** Jenny Foster, Harriett Holzapfel, Matt Perros

**10:00 Sound Technician** Edgar Vasquez

**Office Volunteer** Myrna Pancost

**10:00 Educational Building Greeter** Marj Alber

**Building Opener/Closer**

Kurt Schmerberg/John Irwin

**Ushers**

**8:30** Kurt Schmerberg, Mike Ehnis

**10:00** Bob Grant, Ken Tappe, Doug Cameron,  
Jerry Sutfin, Tony Peters, Roy Muir

