

# BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018

Hours: Mon, Tues and Thurs. 9:30-1:30

Church Office: 610-868-4441 Fax: 610-868-7918

E-Mail: [bethanyunitedchurch@rcn.com](mailto:bethanyunitedchurch@rcn.com)

Web address: [www.uccbethany.org](http://www.uccbethany.org)

Pastor Todd Fennell

Matt Miller, Consistory President

Susan Wright, Director of Music



**“If anyone  
would come after me,  
he must deny himself and  
take up his cross  
and follow me.”**

**MARK 8:34, NIV**

September 4, 2022

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

**“Moving Forward United in Faith”**

“Committed to Christ, United by Love. We are about God, Christ, the Word, and the Future. No matter who you are or where you are on Life’s journey, you are welcome here. We are Bethany United Church of Christ.”

# BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

September 4, 2022

10:00 AM

If you are looking for a church home, we invite you to become part of the community of faith and mission here at Bethany. As per the Consistory decision, masks are optional here at Bethany. We will continue to monitor the situation and make changes when appropriate.

**(\*) PLEASE STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE  
(Bold Text is said or sung by everyone)**

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: "Be Thou My Vision" .... arr. B. Logan

## CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We are gathered to give witness to the enduring realities of life.

**P: We have come to affirm that life is a gift, that the gift is good, and that it comes from God.**

L: We are gathered to renew our hope in Jesus Christ, as we travel life's long journey.

**P: We find God in the paths of our present and our past, but we also trust in God's love in our future.**

L: The same God guides us all the way, every day of our lives, and beyond life.

**All: Let us praise God with our whole hearts, and entrust our lives to God's hands. Amen.**

\*HYMN: #351 "Take Up Your Cross" the Savior Said

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

**Righteous God, we live in a world where human life is exploited and abused. Violence is taken lightly, and people are often viewed as objects. Images of hunger and war and murder flash before us until we become nearly hardened. If we have taken on these values of the world, forgive us. Give us tender hearts, help us to**

**reflect your righteousness, and give us courage to challenge the wrongs we see; through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also, with you.**

**\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (unison): #344 I**

Have Decided to Follow Jesus. Vs. 1&2

**I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus – no turning back, no turning back. The world behind me, the cross before me, the world behind me, the cross before me, the world behind me the cross before me – no turning back, no turning back.**

**READING OF SCRIPTURES**

Psalms 139: 1-6, 13-18

Philemon 1: 4-21

\* Luke 14: 25-33

Leader: This is the Good News

**People: Thanks be to God**

SERMON: “The Conditions of Discipleship”

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERING OF OUR TITHES and GIFTS

OFFERTORY: “Be Thou My Vision” .... arr. A. Parker  
Chancel Choir

**\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE: #44 Doxology**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, you heavenly host: praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

**God of Justice and Love, transform these offerings, that they may be gifts of justice and love for a world in need of hope and help. Let love flow through these offerings, that they may become gifts of love for the world.**

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER – RESPONSIVE PRAYER (See Insert)  
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 sins as we forgive those who sin 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 and ever. Amen.**

\*HYMN: #346 O Come to Me the Master Said

\*BENEDICTION

\*CHORAL BENEDICTION: #287 Lift High the Cross.

Refrain, vs 1, refrain

**Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name. Come, Christians, follow where our Savior trod, our king victorious, Christ the son of God. Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name.**

POSTLUDE

***Our worship ends, our service begins!***



FLOWERS and BULLETINS: are presented by Len and Rebecca Kesselring to honor the glory of God!

GREETERS: Gail Correll

USHERS: Barbara Backensto, Gail Correll

LAY READER: Len Kesselring

**AUDIO & VIDEO RECORDINGS** If you or anyone you know would like to receive the link to the audio recording of the worship service, please let Bill Rumble know at [wrumble@ptd.net](mailto:wrumble@ptd.net). A copy of the bulletin is included with the audio link. Thank you, Bill, for making sure we are able to see and hear the services.

## Scriptures

### Psalm 139: 1 – 6, 13 – 18 NRSV

#### The Inescapable God

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.

<sup>3</sup> You search out my path and my lying down  
and are acquainted with all my ways.

<sup>4</sup> Even before a word is on my tongue,  
O LORD, you know it completely.

<sup>5</sup> You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.

<sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

<sup>13</sup> For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
16 Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.  
In your book were written  
all the days that were formed for me,  
when none of them as yet existed.  
17 How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!  
18 I try to count them—they are more than the sand;  
I come to the end—I am still with you.

## **Philemon 1: 4 - 21 NRSV**

### **Philemon's Love and Faith**

4 I thank my God always when I mention you in my prayers, <sup>5</sup> because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> I pray that the partnership of your faith may become effective as you comprehend all the good that we share in Christ. <sup>7</sup> I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

### **Paul's Plea for Onesimus**

<sup>8</sup> For this reason, though I am more than bold enough in Christ to command you to do the right thing, <sup>9</sup> yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. <sup>10</sup> I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. <sup>11</sup> Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me. <sup>12</sup> I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. <sup>13</sup> I wanted to keep him with

me so that he might minister to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel, <sup>14</sup> but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. <sup>15</sup> Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for the long term, <sup>16</sup> no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

<sup>17</sup> So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. <sup>18</sup> If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to me. <sup>19</sup> I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. <sup>20</sup> Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. <sup>21</sup> Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

## **Luke 14: 25 - 33 NRSV**

### **The Cost of Discipleship**

<sup>25</sup> Now large crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the

one who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

## **Church Picnic**

**Please join us on September 11 at Louise Moore Park as we return to our outdoor church picnic. We will provide Hot Dogs and want you to provide the side dishes, desserts and drinks as we have done so well in the past! We are also suggesting that if anyone is interested in playing any games to prolong the fun you may bring them along or step up and offer to be in charge of the after-church fun. Our service will be at 10:45 where we will remember 9-11 with patriotic music. A sign-up sheet is back on the table so mark your calendars! Remember “Be there or be square!”**

We are having a Fall Rummage Sale on Friday Nov. 18 from 8-4 and Sat. Nov. 19 from 8-2. Watch for a sign up for helpers. Donations of clothing and light items can be brought to the Sunday School room closet to 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. Thank You!

**Laity Sunday is October 9<sup>th</sup> . We are looking for 3-4 members to share reflections on the theme “The Power of Prayer”. Please let Pastor Todd know if you will share in church that Sunday.**

September 4, 2022

## **Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Philemon 1:1-21

A New Identity

As the letter to Philemon begins, the apostle Paul and his friend Timothy are writing a letter to their friends - two men, Philemon and Archippus, and a woman Apphia. Paul invites them to read the letter to the church community that they have gathered in their home. The letter they write is being carried by a freed slave named Onesimus. That's a lot of characters for such a short book!

In fact, this letter is the shortest book in the Bible. If you have never read the whole thing, why not try it now? As you do, try to put yourselves into the shoes of the characters. Imagine what they are thinking, feeling, seeing and hearing as they write, carry, or read this letter. As you imagine, consider if feeling empathy for these or other characters in the Bible can help you feel close to them, or understand them better.

You don't have to limit your imagination to characters on the page. What about people in your family, your region, your congregation, or your nation? How might your life, or your congregation's life, be changed for the better by using this practice of holy empathy?

*Imagine yourself as Paul or Timothy, in prison. As you look around the cell, what can you see, touch, hear, feel? How do you feel about being imprisoned? What are your emotions as you say goodbye to Onesimus? How do you experience God's presence in this place? What is God calling you to do next?*

*Imagine yourself as Onesimus, traveling toward Philemon and his family. As you travel, what can you see, touch, hear, feel? How do you feel about being on the road? What are your emotions as you prepare to deliver this letter? How do you experience God's presence now? What is God calling you to do next?*

*Imagine yourself as Philemon, Archippus, Apphia or a member of the church community gathered in their home. As Onesimus delivers his letter, what can you see, touch, hear, feel? How do you feel about those you are gathered with right now? What are your emotions as you hear the words of your friends Paul and Timothy? How do you experience God's presence in this gathered community? What is God calling your community to do next?*

"Take Up Your Cross," the Savior Said 351

1 "Take up your cross," the Sav-ior said, "if you would my dis-ci-ple be; de-  
 2 Take up your cross, let not its weight fill your weak spir-it with a-larm; his  
 3 Take up your cross, heed not the shame, nor let your fool-ish pride re-bel; your  
 4 Take up your cross, and fol-low Christ, nor think till death to lay it down; for

ny your-self, the world for-sake, and hum-bly fol-low af-ter me."  
 strength shall bear your spir-it up, and nerve your heart, and brace your arm.  
 Lord for you the cross en-dured, and fought the powers of death and hell.  
 on-ly they who bear the cross may hope to wear the glo-rious crown

## Alzheimer's Education Opportunity

On Sunday October 16<sup>th</sup> we will hear from Kelly Schoenberger from Alzheimer's Research. Due to our support with their work for the last 11 years she would like to both thank us as well as share with us what has been accomplished during that time. She will speak briefly during church after which we will adjourn to Fellowship Hall for a soup and salad lunch. After that we are extending an invitation to the other UCC churches as well as our neighboring churches and the neighborhood to join us for an educational talk and question and answer time. Kelly would like to make us aware of the resources that are available to anyone who needs them. Please contact the office if you are willing to help by either preparing soup or helping with this project.

# O Come to Me, the Master Said 346



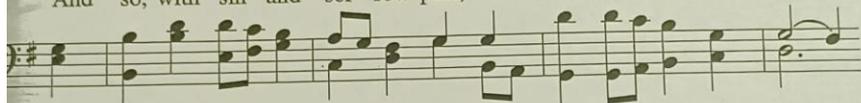
1 O come to me, the Mas-ter said, my Fa-ther knows your need;  
2 A - bide in me, the Mas-ter said, the true and liv - ing vine;  
3 Be - lieve in me, the Mas-ter said, for I have called you friends,



and I shall be, the Mas-ter said, your bread of life in - deed.  
my life shall be, the Mas-ter said, poured out for you as wine.  
and yours shall be, the Mas-ter said, the life that nev - er ends.



By faith in him we live and grow and share the bro - ken bread,  
His bod - y to the cross he gave, his blood he free - ly shed,  
And so, with sin and sor - row past, when death it - self is dead,



and all his love and good-ness know, for so the Mas-ter said.  
who came in love to seek and save; for so the Mas-ter said.  
the Lord shall raise us up at last, for so the Mas-ter said.



WORDS: Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-)

KINGSFOLI

## **THIS WEEK AT BETHANY**

### **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4**

10AM            We are in Fellowship Hall for Worship.

### **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5**

Office Closed for Labor Day

### **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6**

9:30AM            1:30PM Office Hours

### **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7**

5:30PM            Handbell Rehearsals

7PM                Chancel Choir Rehearsals

### **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8**

9:30AM            1:30PM Office Hours

### **NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11**

10:45AM          Worship and church picnic @ Louise Moore  
Park Pavilion 4

### **Just a reminder!**

**Starting September 6<sup>th</sup> Don Sorenson and his crew will be repairing the outside of the church. There will be equipment on the Market Street side of the church. Don feels that the work should be done before we move services back up to the sanctuary on September 18<sup>th</sup>. While the work is happening, please use the 5<sup>th</sup> avenue entrance for all meetings and rehearsals since the front doors will be covered to prevent damage.**