

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018

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

Church Office: 610-868-4441

E-Mail: bethanyunitedchurch@rcn.com

Web address: www.uccbethany.org

Pastor Todd Fennell

Matt Miller, Consistory President

Susan Wright, Director of Music



**This Jesus is the stone
that was rejected
by you, the builders,
which has become the
CORNERSTONE.**

Acts 4:11, ESV

October 8, 2023 Nineteenth 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

October 8, 2023

10:45 AM

We encourage our visitors to include their name, address, and phone number in the Guest Book at the top of the steps and come again. If you are looking for a church home, we invite you to become part of the community of faith and mission here at Bethany.

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

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: "Get in Line Brother" ...Flatt/Scruggs
Banjo and Vocal – Bob Ruhe

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We come from the East, the West, the South, and the North into this sacred space to worship the living God who walks with us.

C: O, God, we worship you for who you are, for loving and granting us your grace.

L: We lift our hands in praise to you and open our hearts to worship you in the fullness of who we are.

ALL: Let us worship the Lord our God with joyful and thankful hearts. Amen!

*HYMN: #11 Stand Up and Bless the Lord

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Jesus, we ask that You bless our time together, that we may hear Your words and apply them to our lives so

that You will be honored and glorified. Allow your Holy Spirit to move through us so our faith grows and bears fruit. Amen!

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you.

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

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (unison): #657 He Has Made Me Glad**

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart; I will enter His courts with praise. I will say, "This is the day that the Lord has made!" I will rejoice for He has made me glad. He has made me glad; He has made me glad I will rejoice for He has made me glad. He has made me glad. He has made me glad I will rejoice for He has made me glad.

READING OF SCRIPTURE

Psalm 78: 1-4, 12-16

Philippians 2: 1-13

*Matthew 21: 23-32

Leader: This is the Good News

People: **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON: "A Sermon and a Reading: The Church Year"

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERING OF OUR TITHES & GIFTS (Neighbors in Need)

OFFERTORY: "Nearer My God to Thee" ... arr. J. Coates, Jr.
Chancel Choir

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE: #688 We Give thee But Thine Own vs.1

We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

Holy One, we ask that you bless these offerings and tithes so they can multiply to be a blessing for our community, our mission, and worldwide. Accept our offerings and tithes, O God, as a testimony of your goodness in our lives. Amen!

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER – PASTORAL PRAYER - 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: #711 Savior, again to Your Dear Name

*BENEDICTION

*CHORAL BENEDICTION: #393 Blest Be the Tie That Binds vs.1

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

POSTLUDE

Our worship ends, our service begins!

God is still speaking,
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



FLOWERS and BULLETINS: are placed in Loving Memory of Dolly Ackerman by her husband Fred Ackerman. Dolly would have celebrated her birthday on October 7th. She is missed.

GREETERS: Cindy Beck

USHERS: Cindy Beck and Bob Ruhe

LAY READER: Bob Ruhe

Scriptures

Psalm 19 NRSV

¹ The heavens are telling the glory of God,
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

² Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.

³ There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;

⁴ yet their voice goes out through all the earth
and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,

⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding
canopy,

and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens
and its circuit to the end of them,
and nothing is hid from its heat.

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;

the decrees of the LORD are sure,
making wise the simple;

⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right,

rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear,
enlightening the eyes;
⁹ the fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.
¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
¹² But who can detect one's own errors?
Clear me from hidden faults.
¹³ Keep back your servant also from the insolent;^[d]
do not let them have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless
and innocent of great transgression.
¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Philippians 3: 7 - 14 NRSV

⁷ Yet whatever gains I had; these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ if somehow, I may attain the

resurrection from the dead.¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 21: 33 – 46 NRSV

³³ “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went away. ³⁴ When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵ But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷ Then he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ ³⁹ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹ They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.” ⁴² Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?’ ⁴³ “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruits. ⁴⁴ The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Popcorn Sale

Do you like popcorn? Consistory approved a fundraiser for Bethany from Double Good Popcorn. There are 8 super fresh flavors and sets of flavors are available. What is amazing about this fundraiser is that we keep 50% of earnings. Please help with orders for yourself or other family members and friends. Order forms with the money is due back to Sherri Gangewere by Sunday, October 22. Checks should be made out to Bethany UCC. Orders would be delivered by mid-November. Thank You!

Neighbors in Need

As we place our offerings in the plate for NIN please remember the local neighbors we can help each time we shop. Our local food bank at Star of Bethlehem is suffering from empty shelves and many in need. If you would like to help donations can be dropped off there, please contact the church @ 610-865-2684.

Trick or Treat

Trick or treat falls on Friday Oct. 27th and we would like to continue our tradition of handing our candy and water in front of the church. Please bring in donations to the narthex for distribution, and let the office know if you would like to help.

THE CHURCH YEAR

Group 1

The church is Advent.

The unwrapping of God's greatest gift is near.
Advent—coming.

God will take away the tinsel
and decorate our human hearts in hope
So that Christians can sit laughing in the rain,
knowing that the Lord is going to
shine in upon their being.

For no matter how long the darkness,
God will send the Light.

In spite of cursing and violence and the massacring of human
dignity,
we will dance in the streets of Bethlehem,
for He will be born!

Group 2

The church is Epiphany.

We are the Magi, searching,
Resplendent in this world's accouterments
of knowledge and wealth and achievement.
But we search for something more

And—of all unlikely places—
in a stable
the Deity appears.

The birthing of our Lord
bursts in upon our ordinary lives
like fireworks in the snow.

Only God would send a little baby King,
And we are on our knees,
Where we are within reach of our full personhood.

GROUP 3

The church is Good Friday:
Blackness burnt into blackness,
Abysmal absence of anything good.
We acknowledge that death is real
And we tremble for a world that would kill its God.
Our feet stand in quicksand;
Our voices echo sterile silence.
We huddle together to meet the dark and the death,
Forgetting what was taught us,
Forgetting that somewhere
a seed is sprouting,
somewhere
a child is growing.
All we see is Christ crucified.

GROUP 4

The church is Easter.
Out of Death: Life.
Out of blackness: a lush green world,
flowers in the ice,
sunrays in the storm,
mustard seeds galore.
Our souls enter a spiritual springtime,
Our bodies given over to leaping and dancing,
Our very beings saturated in hosannas.
Our shouting crashes in upon this world:
The Lord lives!
We live!
Resurrection resounds throughout our community.

ALL TOGETHER —

The church is Pentecost.
The Holy Spirit is poured out upon us
And sends us out together
 afame

 with new life,
Inheritors of the wealth of God:
 Life abundant.

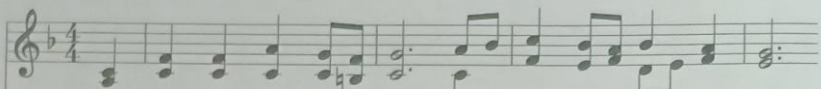
We are liberated from the prisons of pettiness,
 jealousy, and greed,
Liberated to be the church.

We are freed to free others.
We are affirmed to affirm others.
We are loved to love others.
We are family.
We are community.

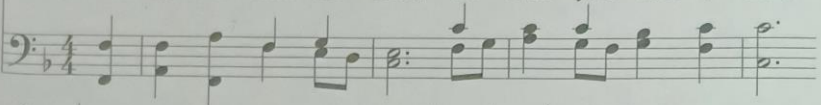
 We are the church triumphant—
You, me, anyone who would come unto the Lord—
Renewed, redirected, empowered
To change things and lives
Together in love and wholeness.
We are the Lord's church,
The church of justice and mercy,
The people sent to open prisons,
 to heal the sick,
 to clothe the naked,
 to feed the hungry,
 to reconcile,
To be alleluias when there is no music.
The mantle is upon our shoulders.
Joy is apparent in our living.
We have been commissioned to be the church of Jesus Christ.

Stand Up and Bless the Lord

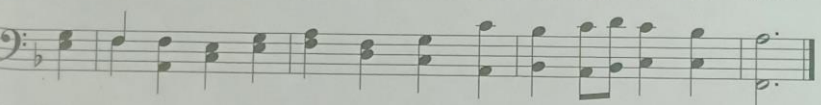
11



1 Stand up and bless the Lord, you peo - ple of his choice;
2 O for the liv - ing flame, from God's own al - tar brought,
3 God is our strength and song, and his sal - va - tion ours;
4 Stand up and bless the Lord, the Lord your God a - dore;



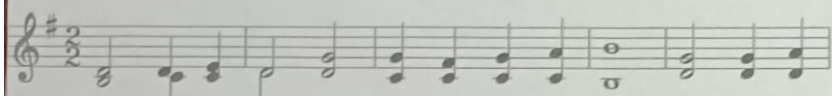
stand up and bless the Lord your God with heart and soul and voice.
to touch our lips, our minds in - spire, and wing to heaven our thought.
then be his love in Christ pro - claimed with all our ran - somed powers.
stand up and bless his glo - rious name, both now and ev - er - more.



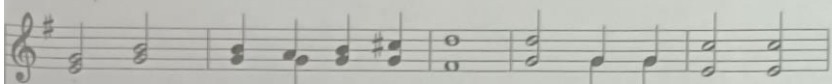
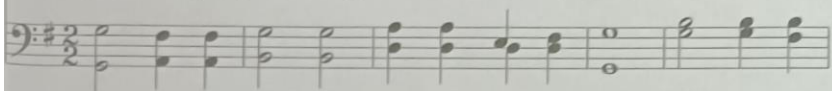
WORDS: James Montgomery (1771-1854)

ST. THOMAS

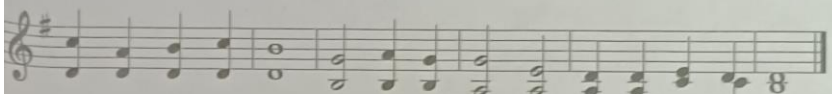
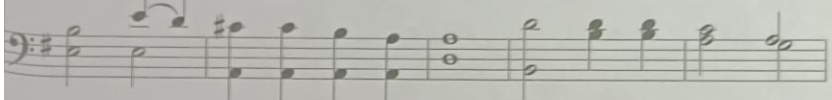
Savior, Again to Your Dear Name 711



- 1 Sav - ior, a - gain to your dear name we raise with one ac -
2 Grant us your peace up - on our home - ward way; with you be -
3 Grant us your peace, Lord, through the com - ing night; turn all our
4 Grant us your peace through - out our earth - ly life: com - fort in



cord our part - ing hymn of praise; we give you thanks be -
gan, with you shall end the day; guard now the lips from
dark - ness to your per - fect light; then, while we sleep, our
sor - row, cour - age in the strife; then, when your voice shall



fore our wor - ship cease, and now de - part - ing, wait your word of peace.
sin, the hearts from shame, that in this house have called up - on your name.
hope and strength re - new, for dark and light are both a - like to you.
make our con - flict cease, call us, O Lord, to your e - ter - nal peace.



WORDS: John Ellerton (1826-1893)
MUSIC: Edward J. Hopkins (1818-1901)

ELLERS
10.10.10.

THIS WEEK AT BETHANY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8

10:45AM Worship in the Sanctuary
Futuring Project Task Force Meeting after church

MONDAY, OCTOBER 9

9:30AM 1:30PM Office Hours
7PM Darts @ College Hill

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10

9:30AM 1:30PM Office Hours

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11

No Rehearsal

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12

9:30AM 1:30PM Office Hours
7PM Consistory in FH

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15

10:45AM Worship in the Sanctuary followed by
Luncheon in FH as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of
Susan Wright's Ministry of Music here at Bethany!



**Many thanks to all who helped with the
Rummage Sale including donations!**