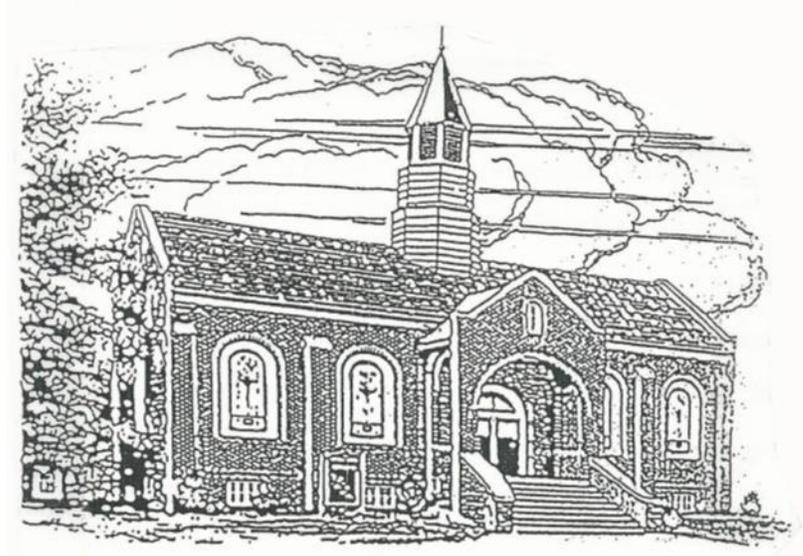


Bethel United Methodist Church



January 24, 2021

Knowing, Loving, Serving God

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Pianist Dena Wade

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ORDER OF WORSHIP
January 24, 2021

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, You search our hearts and you see every part of us. All our desires are known to You, and from you no secrets are hidden. By the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, cleanse our hearts so we may perfectly love you and glorify Your holy name. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

Let us give thanks for all of God's mercies.
O God, our Covenant Friend,
you have been gracious to us through all the years of our lives.
We thank you for your loving care,
which has filled our days and brought us to this time and place.
We praise your holy name, O God.

You have given us life and reason,
and set us in a world filled with your glory.
You have comforted us with family and friends,
and ministered to us through the hands of our sisters and brothers.
We praise your holy name, O God.

You have filled our hearts with a hunger after you,
and have given us your peace.
You have redeemed us, and called us to a high calling in Christ Jesus.
You have given us a place in the fellowship of your Spirit
and the witness of your Church.
We praise your holy name, O God.

You have been our light in darkness
and a rock of strength in adversity and temptation.
You have been the very Spirit of joy in our joys
and the all-sufficient reward in all our labors.
We praise your holy name, O God.

You remembered us when we forgot you.
You followed us even when we tried to flee from you.
You met us with forgiveness when we returned to you.
For all your patience and overflowing grace.
We praise your holy name, O God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

This Is My Song

Chris Wade

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Creator of Heaven and Earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, His 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.
Is seated at the right hand of the Father,
And 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 of life everlasting. AMEN.**

RESPONSE: **Gloria Patri**

Pre-recorded and sung by Chris Wade

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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 trespasses,
As we forgive those who 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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

PROCLAMATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 50 and John 15:1-8

SERMON

Rev. Emily Sutton

THE CONFESSION

Leader: We are those who seek to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ, but sometimes we fall short. Let us now examine ourselves before God, humbly confessing our sins and submitting our hearts so that we do not deceive ourselves and cut ourselves away from God. Let us pray:

People: Father God, You have set forth the way of life through Your Son Jesus Christ, whom You love dearly. We shamefully confess that we have been slow to learn of Him and have been reluctant to follow Him. You have spoken and called to us but we have not listened. You have revealed Your beauty to us, but we have been blind. You have stretched out Your hands to us through our friends, but we have passed by them. We have accepted Your gifts and offered little thanks. We are unworthy of Your unchanging love.

Leader: We now confess to you our sins.
Please forgive us for the poverty of our worship...
for the selfishness of our prayers...
for our inconsistency and unbelief...
for the ways we neglect fellowship and Your grace...

for our hesitation to tell others about Christ...
for the ways we deceive others...

People: Forgive us for when we waste time and when we misuse the gifts you have given us. Forgive us for when we have made excuses for the wrong things we have done and when we have purposefully avoided responsibility.

Leader: Forgive us that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good and that we have not been ready to carry our cross. Forgive us that we have not allowed Your love to work through us to help others and that we have not made their suffering our own. Forgive us for those times when instead of working for unity we made it hard for others to live with us because of our lack of forgiveness, inconsiderate judgment, and quick criticism.

People: Forgive us for when we have not tried to reconcile with others and when we have been slow to seek redemption.

Leader: Forgive us also for these sins that we silently confess to you now.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND PARDON

SPECIAL MUSIC

Trust and Obey

Chris Wade

THE INVITATION

Leader: Let us gathered here before the Lord now in covenant commit ourselves to Christ as his servants. Let us give ourselves to Him so that we may fully belong to Him. Jesus Christ has left us with many services to be done. Some of these services are easy and honorable, but some are difficult and disgraceful. Some line up with our desires and interests, others are contrary to both. In some we please both Christ and ourselves, but then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.

Jesus Christ, we offer You this prayer:

People: Let me be Your servant. Let me follow your commands. I will no longer follow my own desires. I give myself completely to your will.

Leader: The power and strength to live as true servants is given to us in Christ. We accept the place and work that He gives us, acknowledging that He alone will be our reward.

People: I am not my own. I am Yours alone. Make me into what You will. Rank me with those You will. Put me to use for You. Put me to suffering for You. Let me be employed for You. Let me be laid aside for You. Let me be lifted high for You. Let me be brought low for You. Let me be full or let me be empty. Let me have all things or let me have nothing. With a willing heart, I freely give everything to Your pleasure and disposal.

Leader: Christ is Savior to those who are His true servants. He is the source of all salvation to those who obey. To be His servant is to consent fully to His will. Christ accepts nothing less. Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing. Now confirm this truth in holy covenant. Make it a reality in your life in these five ways:

First, set apart time in your day, more than once, to be spent alone with the Lord. Seek to perceive God's special care for you and gracious acceptance of you. Carefully think through the words of this covenant and its conditions. Examine your heart, even if you have freely given your life to Christ. Name the sins in your life. Reflect on whether you are willing to choose Christ's holy laws and strict commands. Be sure you are clear in all of these so you do not lie to God!

Second, uphold a serious spirit of holy awe and reverence.

Third, claim God's covenant. Do not trust in your own strength and power but rely upon God's promise of giving grace and strength. In this way, He will empower you to keep your promise.

Fourth, be determined to be faithful. You have given your heart and life to God. You have opened your mouth to dedicate yourself to the Lord. With God's power, never go back to your former way of living.

And last, be prepared to renew your covenant with God. Fall on your knees. Lift your hands. Open your hearts.

THE COVENANT PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray together:

People: My righteous God, for the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, see me now as I fall down before You. Forgive my unfaithfulness when I have not done your will. You promise mercy if I turn to You with my whole heart.

Leader: God requires that you rid yourself of every idol in your life.

People: From the bottom of my heart, I here and now renounce every idol in my life, covenanting with You that I will not commit any known sin. By turning against Your will I have turned my love toward the world. In Your power I will watch for any temptation that will lead me away from You.

Leader: Through Jesus Christ, God offers to be your God again, if you allow Him to be.

People: Before all heaven and earth, I here and now acknowledge You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as my Lord and God. I vow to give all of myself, body and soul, to be Your servant and to serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

Leader: Jesus Christ is the only way and means to God. God has given us Jesus as the way and means to salvation.

People: Jesus, I here and now accept You and the only new and living Way. I join myself in covenant with You. I come to You hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked, unworthy even to wash the feet of Your servants. With all my power, I accept You as my Lord and Head. I renounce my own unworthiness, and vow that You are the Lord, my righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom and take You for my only guide. I renounce my own will and take Your will as my law.

Leader: Christ has told you that you must suffer with him.

People: Jesus, I here and now make this covenant with You and accept whatever comes in life. Through Your grace I promise that neither life nor death will separate me from You.

Leader: God has given holy laws as the rule of your life.

People: I here and now willingly take on Your yoke and burden. All Your laws are holy, just, and good. I accept them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions, promising I will strive to order my whole life around your direction. I will not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.

Leader: The Almighty God searches and knows you, even the thoughts of your heart.

People: O God, You know that we have made this covenant today in sincerity, without deceit or reluctance. If You find anything false in us, guide us and help us to set it right. And now, glory be to You, God the Father. From this day forward, I shall look upon You as my God and Father. Glory be to You, God the Son. You have loved me and washed me from my sins in Your own blood. From this day forward, I shall look upon You as my Savior and Redeemer. Glory be to You, O God the Holy Spirit. By Your almighty power, You have turned my heart from sin to God. From this day forward I shall look upon You as my Comforter and Guide. O mighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you have now become my Covenant Friend. And I, through Your infinite grace, have become Your covenant servant. You are mine and I am Yours. So be it. May this covenant that I have made here on earth be ratified in heaven. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Take My life and Let it Be

Chris Wade

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

THE POSTLUDE

Updates and Announcements

Thank you for worshiping with us at Bethel United Methodist Church! We are delighted you have chosen to worship with us this morning.

This Week

Tuesday – Prayer Meeting at 9:30 am via Zoom

Wednesday – Wesley Prayer Challenge Study begins at 7pm via Zoom

Upcoming:

Wesley Prayer Challenge - An Individual or Group 3 week Study that will begin on January 27! The Wesley Covenant Prayer has been used in Methodist services around the world on the first Sunday of the year since John Wesley introduced it in 1755. Wesley expected that people would pray this prayer as a way of remembering, renewing, and surrendering themselves in complete trust to God. When we pray it, we are to remember what living like Jesus looks like and what loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves requires of us. In *The Wesley Prayer Challenge*, author Chris Folmsbee invites readers to consider words from the Wesley Covenant Prayer each day for three weeks while reflecting on their meaning in the context of the larger piece. Each day's reading will include scripture, prayer, and a challenge for daily life. Books are available in the Bethel UMC Church office.

Lent Book Study of the 10 Commandments – Words of Life - An Individual or Group Lenten Study beginning February 17th. Buy your books online or get one from the Bethel UMC Church Office. A little about *Words of Life* written by Adam Hamilton: “Nearly everyone has heard of the Ten Commandments, the list of “thou-shalt-nots” found in the Bible. Jesus saw these commandments not as onerous burdens, but as guideposts to help us experience a good and beautiful life. These ten ancient “words” were given to us by a loving God who longed to set safe boundaries, create order out of chaos, help communities live peacefully, and protect us—often from ourselves. In this book of Scripture and inspiration, bestselling author Adam Hamilton brings modern eyes to the most important set of ethics in history. He considers the commandments in their historical context, considering the meaning of each commandment in Hebrew, unpacking how Jesus reinterpreted them, and showing how every thou-shalt-not was intended to point to a life-giving “thou shalt.” He also explores how the latest research in science and psychology illuminates these

commandments, rightly understood, as a way of ordering one's life beautifully in the present day. In a culture marked by workaholism, materialism, and social media-driven envy, God has given us a time-tested path that leads to gratitude, confidence, and peace.”



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