

**BETHEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
2112 Yingling Drive, Spring Grove, PA 17362  
[www.betheluccspringgrove.com](http://www.betheluccspringgrove.com)

**Epiphany 5 February 7, 2021**

***A welcoming Christian community of faith...a place to Worship,  
Learn, Grow and Serve.  
We prophecy.***

*"The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and  
tenements halls and whispered in the sounds of silence."*

-Paul Simon

### **Welcome and announcements**

#### **Call to Worship (based on Psalm 24:7-10)**

Lift up your heads, O gates!

**Be lifted up, O ancient doors!**

that the King of glory may come in.

**Who is the King of glory?**

The LORD, strong and mighty,

**the lord mighty in battle.**

Lift up your heads, O gates!

**Be lifted up, O ancient doors!**

that the King of glory may come in.

#### **Opening Hymn    *In the Midst of New Dimensions***

In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways.

Who will lead the pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate  
ways?

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We  
your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now  
and ever more.

**Invocation    *Be the Shining Light***

*by Iqbal Osman (allpoetry.com)*

Let your lantern light up the dark

and the earth upon which all creatures walk,  
your charming shine from the inner sanctum of your love  
ease the pain creating peace and harmony for all,  
holding onto hands that stumble along their path  
forming a crutch of emotional anesthesia  
accepting familiarity rather than ill-gained wrath  
indoctrinated within temples of cemented love  
an aura distinct - like the freedom of a thousand doves  
altruism leading those lost and forlorn  
nudging them back without hate and scorn,  
cheering abundance in this aesthetic gracious life  
through easy transition bearing little labored strife  
the naturalness of warmth felt by all  
endowed with bounty to be written in the immortal scrolls.

#### **Acknowledging our Need of God's Grace**

If we believe we have no sins, we deceive ourselves and the  
truth is not in us. It is right and good to come into a time of  
confession where we can recognize our growing edges, reorient  
ourselves to the lives we want to live, and receive the grace of  
community and of Christ. Let us confess together:

#### **Prayer of Confession**

**God, you made all of creation, and you made each and  
every one of us. Open us to the truth that you see us in all  
of our humanity. Help us to see ourselves  
as you do, in love, acceptance, and potential. Help us to be  
open to your grace by being honest with ourselves. Give us  
the strength to see, the grace to love, and the strength to  
grow.**

*Please Join in a Moment of Silence*

**Beloved Creator, make in us a new path, a new way of**

**being. Strengthen our feet on the path of Christ. Help us to hear your voice in all the ways you appear around us. Remind us that the path is not ours alone and give us the strength to rely on one another. Help us to love all of creation just as Christ has loved us. Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

In Christ we live and move and have our being. As we sin, we come away from that path, but we find the power of repentance as a community. As we are made new together today, help us to go forward in the path of love, covenant, and forgiveness which we have found in Jesus Christ.

**Thanks be to God!**

### **Hymn of Thanksgiving *In the Midst of New Dimensions***

As we stand a world divided by our own self seeking schemes,  
Grant that we, your global village might envision wider dreams  
God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We  
your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now  
and ever more.

### **Sharing our sacred story**

#### **Prayer of Illumination**

God, as we listen to your word help us to be transformed by your way. Open our hearts to the goodness and mystery of these sacred words which have been touched, spoken, written, read, and shared by humans throughout time. Remind us of where we come from and strengthen us for where we're going, and help us to be present in this moment and place. Amen.

#### **Malachi 3:1-4**

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his

temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight--indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

#### **Psalm 84**

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!

**My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the LORD;  
my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.**

Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.

**Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise. Selah**

Happy are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

**As they go through the valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.**

They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

**O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah**

Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed.

**For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness.**

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; he bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the LORD withhold from those who walk uprightly.

**O LORD of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you.**

**Luke 2:22-40**

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed--and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the

age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

God bless the reading and the hearing of the holy scripture.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn of Response**                    *In the Midst of New Dimensions*

Through the flood of starving people, warring factions and  
despair, Who will lift the olive branches? Who will light the flame  
of care?

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We  
your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now  
and ever more.

**Sermon**                                    *in the midst*

Pastor Zoë

**Musical Meditation**                    *Stand By Me*                    *Ranky Tanky*

**Invitation to Communion**

This table is for all Christians who seek to know the presence of Jesus Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We Lift them to God!**

Let us give thanks to God most high. It is right to give God thanks and praise.

**We give you thanks, God of majesty and mercy, for calling fourth creation and raising us from the dust by the breath of your being.**

We bless you for the beauty and bounty of the earth and for the vision of the day when sharing by all will mean scarcity for none.

**We remember the covenant you made with your people Israel and then we give you thanks for all our ancestors in faith we rejoice that you call us to reconciliation with you and all people everywhere and that you remain faithful to your covenant even when we are faithless.**

We rejoice that you called the entire human family to this table of sacrifice and victory.

**We come in remembrance in celebration of the gift of Jesus Christ, whom you sent, in the fullness of time, to be the Good News. Born of Mary our sister in faith, Christ lived among us to reveal the mystery of your word, to suffer and die on the cross for us, to be raised from death on the third day, and then to live in glory.**

We Bless You gracious God for the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church you have gathered. With your sons and daughters in faith in all places and times, we praise with joy.

**Seraphic Hymn  
(read in unison)**

**Holy, Holy, Holy, God of the heavenly host;  
Heaven and earth are full , are full of the majesty of your glory!**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed is one who comes in the name of our God  
Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!**

We tell our sacred story.

The bread is broken.

The wine is poured out.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Come for all things are ready.

*The elements are shared.*

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Strong and gracious God, we give you thanks for the gift of the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Like Anna and Simeon offered their vision to the Christ Child, we offer our gifts to you, O God. We know that we are an integral part in the beautiful tapestry of creation, and we ask for the wisdom to be good stewards of your many gifts. God, we give thanks that we may give, for we know that, through you, our gifts offer more than the sum of their parts. Amen.**

**Hymn of Response            In the Midst of New Dimensions**

We are man and we are woman, all persuasions, old and young, Each a gift in your Creation, each a love song to be sung.

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.

**Invitation to Offering**

Just as Anna and Simeon offer their years and wisdom to a world seeking the salvation of Christ, may we offer what is best of ourselves. Just as Christ walked in courage and sacrifice to offer that salvation, may we commit to being the healing light of the divine in a hurting world. Give us the courage to give in faith, in support of your Kingdom, and live in the hope of Christ and his beloved community.

**Offering**

**God of all Gifts, thank you for the privilege of partnering with you and each other in the work of our ministry in your world. We know that you will bless our efforts and contributions for the proclamation of the gospel and the**

**building up of your church. Bless us in our giving today.**

*Please join in a moment of silence to reflect on our individual offerings, and what we offer as a church.*

**God of Jubilance, be pleased with our tithes and offerings today. Affirm your love, grace, and provision for each giver in our midst. Thank you for their heart for the ministry. Let them continue to give with cheerfulness and full trust that you will never fail them in their time of need. Amen.**

### **Dedication**

**Like Anna and Simeon offered their vision to the Christ Child, we offer our gifts to you, O God. We know that we are an integral part in the beautiful tapestry of creation and we ask for the wisdom to be good stewards of our resources. God, we give thanks that we may give, for we know that, through you, our gifts offer more than the sum of their parts. Amen.**

### **Closing Hymn      *In the Midst of New Dimensions***

*Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain, May your blazing phoenix spirit, resurrect the church again.*

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.

### **Closing Prayer**

*As we leave this place, take a moment to exchange a symbol of Christ's love with your neighbors. Bow towards one another, offer a thumbs up, a peace sign, even an "air hug" and remember: the Christ in me meets the Christ in you.*

God of all time and space, we give thanks for having met in your name. We give thanks for Simeon and Anna who recognized the Christ Child and the Word of the God among us. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Holy One, Now let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled: My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the Glory of your people Israel.

**Like Anna and Simeon offered their vision to the Christ Child, we offer our gifts to you, O God. We know that we are an integral part in the beautiful tapestry of creation and we ask for the wisdom to be good stewards of our resources. God, we give thanks that we may give, for we know that, through you, our gifts offer more than the sum of their parts. Amen.**

God who has been, is now, and always shall be, we give you thanks for every moment which we are blessed to live in your name. We thank you for this time of worship. We thank you for this sacred community. **Amen.**

### **The Commissioning**

**Go forth into the world and serve God with gladness. Be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good, render to no one evil for evil. Strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, and honor all people, rejoicing in the power of the holy spirit. Amen.**

### **Benediction**



**Communion Services will be held the first Sunday of the month. Our next communion will be 3/7.**

**2/9 Consistory meeting 2/9 @ 6:30 PM**

**2/17 Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 PM. Service will include communion and distribution of ashes. COVID 19 Guidelines will be followed**

**2/21 Congregational Meeting after worship service. Review of year end reports.**

**The bulletins are sponsored in honor of Deb and Dave 51<sup>st</sup> Anniversary**

**Visit our website for updated Bethel news and taped services**

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