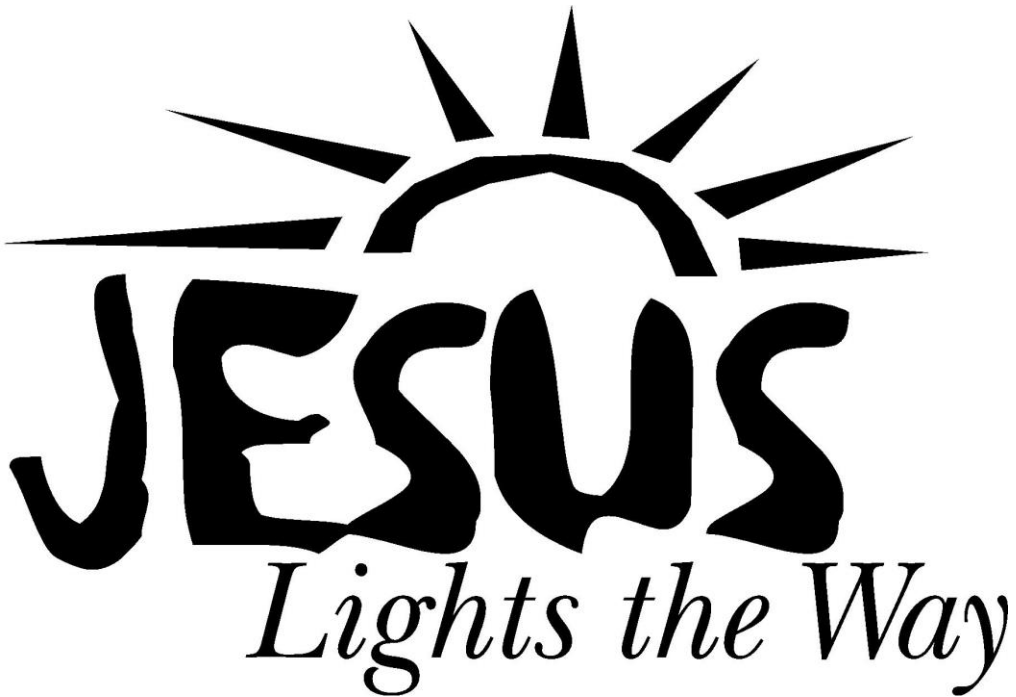


# Bethel Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

~ a welcoming community~



## **A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS:**

We extend a warm welcome from Bethel Presbyterian Church!

We invite you to participate in signing the Friendship Folders adding your name and address and if you desire a church newsletter or a pastoral call.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we say "sins...sin against us"  
rather than "debts..." or "trespasses..."

Prayer requests can be noted on the cards provided in the pew racks  
and placed in the offering plate.

**The Service for the Lord's Day**  
**Bethel Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**Fourth Sunday in Lent**  
**March 19, 2023 - 11:00 AM**

*\* Indicates congregation standing if able.  
Congregational responses indicated in bold.*

**GATHERING AND GREETING OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

*Please sign the Friendship Pad found in your pew, passing it down the pew then back.*

Prelude

Call to Worship (*L = Leader, P = People*)

L: Scripture is full of questions...

**P: Where are you?**

L: Am I my brother's keeper?

**P: Whom shall I send?**

L: Who do you say that I am?

**P: Who sinned?**

L: How many times shall I forgive?

**P: If God is for us, who can be against us?**

L: Scripture is full of questions, so just like those in our scriptures,  
may we bring our full curiosity and wonder into this space.

**P: Let us ask and seek after our merciful God.**

Prayer of Invocation

Let us pray:

Holy God,

why is it that we look, but do not see?

Bring us again and again into your light

until your ways become visible to us, and bear fruit in us.

Touch us so that we are utterly changed,

a “before” and “after,” a “now” and “then”;  
that we may also say,  
“One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”  
Lord, we believe; help our unbelief.  
In Christ’s light, we pray. Amen.

\* Hymn No. 744

**“ARISE YOUR LIGHT IS COME”**

FESTAL SONG

*A-rise, your light is come!  
The Spir-it's call o-bey;  
show forth the glo-ry of your God,  
which shines on you to-day.*

*A-rise, your light is come!  
Fling wide the pris-on door;  
pro-claim the cap-tives' lib-er-ty,  
good ti-dings to the poor.*

*A-rise, your light is come!  
All you in sor-row born,  
bind up the bro-ken-heart-ed ones  
and com-fort those who mourn.*

*A-rise, your light is come!  
The moun-tains burst in song!  
Rise up like ea-gles on the wing;  
God's power will make us strong.*

\* Call to Confession

As children of God’s light,  
we are called to do what is pleasing to the Lord:  
to participate in what is good and right and true,  
and expose what is unfruitful and evil.  
Knowing that we turn from the light, we bring our confession to God,  
so that what is hidden in us becomes visible,  
and the shadows of our hearts may be illumined by grace.

\* Corporate Prayer of Confession

**Gracious God, we are people who still love darkness rather than light.**

**We keep shameful deeds secret,**

**but flaunt our occasional acts of virtue.**

**We see ourselves as blameless, but pass judgment on others.**

**We do not stand firmly enough with those who are vulnerable,**

**but step back, protecting ourselves.**

**Forgive us, we pray.**

**Bring us into your light that we may see ourselves rightly.**

**Bring us into your light that we may know ourselves loved.**

**Bring us into your light that we may live more fruitful lives.**

**Keep raising us, we pray, from the deadness of sin,**

**and shine upon us with your grace.**

**We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.**

\* Sung Response No. 437 **“YOU ARE THE LORD, GIVER OF MERCY”**

*You are the Lord, giv-er of mer-cy!*

*You are the Christ, giv-er of mer-cy!*

*You are the Lord, giv-er of mer-cy!*

\* Declaration of Forgiveness

The psalmist assures us that God’s goodness and mercy will follow us,  
even pursue us, all the days of our life.

As God’s forgiven people, receive this goodness and mercy,

and live a new life in the grace of Jesus Christ.

**We will live as children of the light for Christ shines on us.**

\* Sung Response No. 553 **“CHRIST HAS DIED; CHRIST IS RISEN”** LAND OF REST

*Christ has died; Christ is ris-en; Christ will come a-gain.*

*Christ has died; Christ is ris-en; Christ will come a-gain.*

THE WORD

Children’s Moment

Choral Anthem

## Prayer for Illumination

Let us pray:

Gracious God, illumine our hearts and minds  
as the Scriptures are read and proclaimed,  
so that by the power of your Holy Spirit  
we may see what is good and right and true.

And seeing, help us to do what is pleasing to you,  
so that your glory becomes visible in our words and deeds.

In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

## Readings from Scripture

Wisdom	Psalm 23	<i>(The Divine Shepherd)</i>	Pg. 474
Epistle	Ephesians 5:8-14	<i>(Renounce Pagan Ways)</i>	Pg. 183
Gospel	John 9:1-41	<i>(A Man Born Blind Receives Sight)</i>	Pg. 96

Sermon "Who Sinned?"

## RESPONSE TO THE WORD

\* Affirmation of Faith *Adapted from the Confession of 1967, 9.09*

**God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery  
which the Scriptures describe in various ways.**

**It is called the sacrifice of a lamb,  
a shepherd's life given for his sheep, atonement by a priest;  
again it is ransom of a slave, payment of debt,  
vicarious satisfaction of a legal penalty,  
and victory over the powers of evil.**

**These are expressions of a truth  
which remains beyond the reach of all theory  
in the depths of God's love for humankind.**

**They reveal the gravity, cost, and sure achievement  
Of God's reconciling work.**

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

## Prayers of the People

God our faithful Shepherd, we depend on you for everything we need:  
for daily food, for guidance and protection,  
for healing in injury and comfort in sorrow.  
You respond in abundant provision.

Knowing your faithfulness in our lives,  
we bring before you the lives of others, the cares of this world,  
entrusting all things to your goodness and mercy.

Bring healing to those who are ill in mind, body, or spirit.

Bring release to those who are held captive by old hurts  
or new bonds that oppress and entangle.

Bring freedom to those unjustly accused,  
relief to those burdened with debt,  
comfort to all who suffer from abuse of any kind.

We pray for people living precariously in the midst of war.

Protect, we pray, citizens and soldiers alike,  
and teach us to put away our weapons,  
taking up instead words of peace and reconciliation.

By the power at work in Christ,  
break down the walls of hostility we build  
so that we may learn to live together graciously.

We remember those living in the midst of drought and famine.

We pray for rain to fall and crops to grow,  
and for generosity to overflow from our own hands and resources.

Compel us to be better stewards of creation  
so that our habitation is sustainable and responsible.

Loving God, help us to see the world as you see it;  
to see others as you see them; and to see ourselves rightly, too.

We pray these things in the name of the one  
who came that we might see,

Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior,  
who taught us to pray, saying ...

The Lord's Prayer (*sin / sin against us*)

Hymnal pg. 35

**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. Amen.**

Invitation to the Offering

Our lives overflow with the goodness of God.  
Sharing what we have so abundantly received,  
we bring now our tithes and offerings to God,  
with gladness and gratitude.

Offertory

\* Hymn No. 606 **“PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW”**

\* Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us pray:

In gratitude, O God, we come to your table,  
into your presence, into your house.

For all that you have done for us,  
most especially, for bringing us into the light of Jesus Christ,  
we offer our thanks and praise.

We long to live as children of light, doing what is pleasing to you  
and bearing the fruit of the light through Jesus Christ,  
who awakens those who sleep, and raises those who are dead to new life.  
In his name we pray. Amen.

## THE SENDING FORTH

\* Hymn No. 853 **“WE ARE MARCHING IN THE LIGHT OF GOD”**

*We are march-ing in the light of God;  
we are march-ing in the light of God.  
We are march-ing in the light of God;  
we are march-ing in the light of God.*

*We are march-ing, --- ooh  
we are march-ing in the light of God.  
We are march-ing, --- ooh  
We are march-ing in the light of God.*

\* Benediction

As you leave this place, may God bless you with seeking.

Seek out the hungry. Seek the weary.

Seek the good in every person you pass.

Seek out the hopeful. Seek the faithful.

Seek God in each of us.

As you seek and as you wonder, may you find what you are looking for.

In the name of our loving God, who is always seeking us,  
go now in peace. Amen

\* Sung Response No. 547 **“GO, MY CHILDREN, WITH MY BLESSING”**

*(Verse 3)*

*“Go, my chil-dren, fed and nour-ished, clos-er to me.*

*Grow in love and love by serv-ing, joy-ful and free.*

*Here my Spir-it’s pow-er filled you;*

*here my ten-der com-fort stilled you.*

*Go, my chil-dren, fed and nour-ished, joy-ful and free.”*

\* Postlude



## MUSIC ATTRIBUTIONS

“Arise, Your Light Is Come!”

Text: Ruth Duck, 1974

Music: William H. Walter, 1894

Text © 1992 GIA Publications, Inc.

“You Are the Lord, Giver of Mercy”

Text: Trad. Liturgical text; rev. The Worshipbook, 1970

Text © 1970 The Westminster Press (admin. Westminster John Knox Press)

Music © 1972 The Westminster Press (admin. Westminster John Knox Press)

“Christ Has Died; Christ Is Risen”

Text: Trad. Liturgical text;

Music: American folk melody; arr. Richard Proulx, 1984

Music Arr. © 1986 GIA Publications, Inc.

“We Are Marching in the Light of God”

Text: Gracia Grindal, 1984

Music © South African; arr. Freedom Is Coming, 1984

English Trans. And Music Arr. © 1984 Utyck (admin. Walton Music Corp.)

“Go, My Children, with My Blessing”

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1983

Music: Welsh melody

Text © 1983 Concordia Publishing House

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