



# The United Church of Bethel

An Open, Affirming Congregation of the UCC/UUA

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

Tom Harty – Pastor

Becky Kondi- Keyboard & Vocals, Larry Noble – Guitar & Vocals,

♠= Please Stand If you Are Able

All Prayers and Service Music are Found in the Folders in the Music Racks

## Centering & Prelude

### Welcome and Announcements

#### Introit

#### Greeting and Responsive Call to Worship

L The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**P And also with you.**

L Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**It is right to give him thanks and praise**

Sirach reminds us: "I came forth from the mouth  
of the Lord Most High and covered the earth like a mist."

**Let Wisdom take root in us as she proclaimed!**

Among all these I sought a resting place, in whose territory Shall I abide?

**Abide with us, today and forever!**

Before the ages, in the beginning he created me,

And for the ages I shall not cease to be?

**Be with us now in our time of need as we seek your guidance!**

Let us worship God!

### Invocation & Lord's Prayer

♠ Hymn NCH 127 Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming

#### Prayer of Confession

In the beginning the Word was with God and the Word was God  
**But the people, us included, did not clearly hear the Word**

Everything came in to being through the Word and  
without the Word nothing came into being.

**But yet we stumbled in the dark**

What came into being through the Word was life  
And the life was a light for ALL people  
**That light still shines in the darkness and the darkness  
does not extinguish it.**  
**Let us constantly turn towards the light.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

My sisters and my brothers, we are children of the light. We seek the light  
and bask in its radiance as a flower turns its face to the sun.  
Turning towards the light offers us forgiveness and makes  
Us one with our God and with one another.  
**Thanks be to our Creator**

Passing of the Peace

First Reading: Sirach 24:1-12

Psalm: 147

REFRAIN: Great is our God and abundant in power!

✠ Gloria Patri

Epistle: Ephesians 1:3-14

Choral Anthem NCH 148 What Child is This

✠ Gospel John 1:1-9 (10-18)

✠ Hymn NCH 145 Once In David's Royal City

Sermon

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Choral Response: Hear Our Prayer O Lord.

Offering

✠ Doxology & Prayer of Dedication

Communion - First Sundays

✠ Hymn NCH 160 Hark the Herald Angels Sing

✠ Benediction

✠ Choral Benediction

Postlude

(Please remain seated for a period of quiet meditation and  
appreciation for the music our worship team provides.)

*Whoever you are, Wherever you are on life's journey, You are welcome here.*

*Our Faith is 2000 Years Old; Our Thinking is Not.*

### **Sirach 24:1-12**

24 Wisdom praises herself,  
and tells of her glory in the midst of her people.  
2 In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth,  
and in the presence of his hosts she tells of her glory:  
3 "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
and covered the earth like a mist.  
4 I dwelt in the highest heavens,  
and my throne was in a pillar of cloud.  
5 Alone I compassed the vault of heaven  
and traversed the depths of the abyss.  
6 Over waves of the sea, over all the earth,  
and over every people and nation I have held sway.  
7 Among all these I sought a resting place;  
in whose territory should I abide?  
8 "Then the Creator of all things gave me a command,  
and my Creator chose the place for my tent.  
He said, 'Make your dwelling in Jacob,  
and in Israel receive your inheritance.'  
9 Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me,  
and for all the ages I shall not cease to be.  
10 In the holy tent I ministered before him,  
and so I was established in Zion.  
11 Thus in the beloved city he gave me a resting place,  
and in Jerusalem was my domain.  
12 I took root in an honored people,  
in the portion of the Lord, his heritage.

### **Psalms 147:12-20**

#### **Great is our God and abundant in power!**

12 Worship the Lord, Jerusalem!  
Praise your God, Zion!  
13 Because God secures the bars  
on your gates,  
God blesses the children  
you have there.  
14 God establishes your borders peacefully.  
God fills you full  
with the very best wheat.  
15 God issues his command to the earth—  
God's word speeds off fast!  
**Great is our God and abundant in power!**  
16 God spreads snow like it was wool;  
God scatters frost like it was ashes;  
17 God throws his hail down like crumbs—  
who can endure God's freezing cold?  
18 Then God issues his word

and melts it all away!  
God makes his winds blow;  
the water flows again.  
<sup>19</sup> God proclaims his word to Jacob;  
his statutes and rules to Israel.  
<sup>20</sup> God hasn't done that  
with any other nation;  
those nations have no knowledge  
of God's rules.  
Praise the Lord!  
**Great is our God and abundant in power!**

### **Ephesians 1:3-14**

<sup>3</sup> Bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing that comes from heaven. <sup>4</sup> God chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless in God's presence before the creation of the world. <sup>5</sup> God destined us to be his adopted children through Jesus Christ because of his love. This was according to his goodwill and plan <sup>6</sup> and to honor his glorious grace that he has given to us freely through the Son whom he loves. <sup>7</sup> We have been ransomed through his Son's blood, and we have forgiveness for our failures based on his overflowing grace, <sup>8</sup> which he poured over us with wisdom and understanding. <sup>9</sup> God revealed his hidden design to us, which is according to his goodwill and the plan that he intended to accomplish through his Son. <sup>10</sup> This is what God planned for the climax of all times: to bring all things together in Christ, the things in heaven along with the things on earth. <sup>11</sup> We have also received an inheritance in Christ. We were destined by the plan of God, who accomplishes everything according to his design. <sup>12</sup> We are called to be an honor to God's glory because we were the first to hope in Christ. <sup>13</sup> You too heard the word of truth in Christ, which is the good news of your salvation. You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit because you believed in Christ. <sup>14</sup> The Holy Spirit is the down payment on our inheritance, which is applied toward our redemption as God's own people, resulting in the honor of God's glory.

### **John 1:1-9 (10-18)**

In the beginning was the Word  
and the Word was with God  
and the Word was God.  
<sup>2</sup> The Word was with God in the beginning.  
<sup>3</sup> Everything came into being through the Word,  
and without the Word  
nothing came into being.  
What came into being  
<sup>4</sup> through the Word was life,  
and the life was the light for all people.  
<sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness doesn't  
extinguish the light.  
<sup>6</sup> A man named John was sent from God. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning the light,  
so that through him everyone would believe in the light. <sup>8</sup> He himself wasn't the light, but his  
mission was to testify concerning the light.  
<sup>9</sup> The true light that shines on all people

was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> The light was in the world,  
and the world came into being  
through the light,  
but the world  
didn't recognize the light.

<sup>11</sup> The light came to his own people,  
and his own people didn't welcome him.

<sup>12</sup> But those who did welcome him,  
those who believed in his name,  
he authorized to become God's children,

<sup>13</sup> born not from blood  
nor from human desire or passion,  
but born from God.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh  
and made his home among us.  
We have seen his glory,  
glory like that of a father's only son,  
full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup> John testified about him, crying out, "This is the one of whom I said, 'He who comes after me  
is greater than me because he existed before me.' "

<sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received  
grace upon grace;

<sup>17</sup> as the Law was given through Moses,  
so grace and truth came into being  
through Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God.  
God the only Son,  
who is at the Father's side,  
has made God known