



The United Church of Bethel

An Open, Affirming Congregation of the UCC/UUA

January 24th, 2021

Tom Harty – Pastor

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

Seth Stoddard Technical Director

♠= 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.

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

Friends in Christ, what hopes do you bring to worship?

We bring hope for health and wholeness

What afflictions do you bring to worship? Physical pain?

From illness and injury.

Emotional pain?

From sad and scary life situations.

Mental pain?

From dis-ease of many kinds.

With all of these afflictions,

it's a miracle that any of us have made it to worship this morning!

**But where else would we be? We yearn to know God's powerful love
and to know that wholeness is possible.**

In today's gospel, a person with an "*afflicting spirit*" * interrupts Jesus

And Jesus sets the person free

And where does the miracle of this story and our stories begin?

When we bring all of who we are into relationship with the Divine.

So come, let us enter this sanctuary with our whole selves

–Hopeful, afflicted and bold–

Come, let us worship!

Invocation and Lord's Prayer

♠ Hymn NCH 99 Abide With Me

Prayer of Confession

O Divine Healer, we confess that sometimes we yearn for you
**to wave a magic wand on our wounded lives
to remove our pain, illness, and suffering.**

We hear the gospel story of the one seeking healing from Jesus
and assume you will perform a similar miracle for all of us –
if we just pray hard enough! And we do pray!

Open our eyes to recognize the teachings and tools you have given us with which to
seek healing in the midst of our afflictions and dis-eases.

You whisper to us that wholeness requires self-care and rest;

You nudge us toward caregivers who can support and advise us;

You breathe into us energy to move and stretch and reach toward health;

You place in us an urgency to seek justice so that all may enjoy adequate health care;

Renew our spirits in the midst of our dis-eases and afflicting spirits.

Transform us, O Whole-y One, for the health of your creation. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

In the midst of struggle, dis-ease and affliction, know that you are made in God's image
and God sees you as whole and good. So may you celebrate God in your midst
through opportunities of wholeness and justice

Passing of the Peace

First Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm: 111

Refrain: Great, Great, Great are the Works of God

✠ **Gloria Patri**

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Choral Anthem 519 Not My Brother Not My Sister

✠ **Gospel Mark 1:21-28**

✠ **Hymn NCH 493 O Jesus I Have Promised**

Sermon

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Choral Response: Hear Our Prayer O Lord.

Offering

✠ **Doxology & Prayer of Dedication**

✠ **Hymn 391 In the Midst of New Dimensions**

✠ **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.

FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 18:15–20

¹⁵ The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. ¹⁶ This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." ¹⁷ Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. ¹⁹ Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. ²⁰ But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die."

PSALM 111

Great, Great, Great are the works of God

¹ Praise the Lord!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

² Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.

³ Full of honor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.

⁴ He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

Great, Great, Great are the works of God

⁵ He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.

⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.

⁸ They are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

Great, Great, Great are the works of God

⁹ He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant forever.

Holy and awesome is his name.

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.

His praise endures forever.

Great, Great, Great are the works of God

EPISTLE READING

1 Corinthians 8:1–13

¹ Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ² Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; ³ but anyone who loves God is known by him.

⁴ Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” ⁵ Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords— ⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

⁷ It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸ “Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹ But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. ¹² But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

GOSPEL READING

Mark 1:21–28

²¹ They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²² They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴ and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

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