



**The United Church of Bethel**  
An Open, Affirming Congregation of the UCC/UUA

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday**  
**After Epiphany**  
**Jan 29, 2023**

**The Brick Church c.1816**  
*Embarking upon our*  
*3<sup>rd</sup> Century of Service in Christ*

Tom Harty, Pastor  
Becky Kondi - Keyboard  
Larry Nobile - Guitar & Vocals  
Stoddard/Apelquist Family – Tech Team



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

# The United Church of Bethel

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

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✠ = *Please Stand If You Are Able*

## **Centering & Prelude** **Welcome & Announcements** **Introit**

### **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.*

**P We lift them up to the Lord**

*L Let us give thanks to the Lord our God*

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

*L Holy One, who may abide in your sanctuary? Who may dwell in your sacred creation?*

**P Those who do justice. Those who confront inequities and uplift the oppressed.**

*L Holy One, who may abide in your sanctuary? Who may dwell in your sacred creation?*

**P Those who love kindness. Those who love neighbor, friend and foe.**

*L Holy One, who may abide in your sanctuary? Who may dwell in your sacred creation?*

**P Those who walk humbly with you. Those who follow your lead and answer your call.**

### **Invocation & Lord's Prayer**

✠ **Hymn NCH 44**

Beautiful Jesus

### **Prayer of Confession**

*L Holy Wisdom, you have expressed your hope for us and vision for life abundantly. Many times we settle for a temporary truce over real peace. We avoid confrontation and accountability that builds up and creates a more just world. We refuse to relentlessly pursue your will when discomfited by the cost of discipleship.*

**P Forgive us, O God, we pray.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

*L Receive the good news that each day presents a new opportunity to follow the way of Jesus—to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. The grace of the Holy One meets us. God embraces and supports us in the turning and will be faithful to strengthen us on the path of righteousness.*

### **Passing the Peace**

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## Old Testament Reading

Micah 6:1-8

## Psalm 15

*Who may dwell on the holy hill of God*

## ✠ Gloria Patri

## Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

## Choral Anthem

## ✠ Gospel:

Matthew 5:1-12

## ✠ Hymn NCH 117

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

## Sermon

## Joys and Concerns

## Pastoral Prayer

*Choral Response: Hear Our Prayer O Lord.*

## Offering

## ✠ Doxology

## Prayer of Dedication

## ✠ Hymn NCH 575

O for a World

## ✠ Benediction

## ✠ Choral Benediction

## Postlude

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

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

### Micah 6:1-8

Hear what the LORD says Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the LORD has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel. "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of slavery; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the LORD." "With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

## PSALM 15

R: Who may dwell on the holy hill of God

✠ O LORD, who may abide in your tent?

Who may dwell on your holy hill?

✠ Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,  
and speak the truth from their heart;

✠ who do not slander with their tongue,  
and do no evil to their friends,  
nor take up a reproach against their neighbors;

R: Who may dwell on the holy hill of God

✠ in whose eyes the wicked are despised,  
but who honor those who fear the LORD;  
who stand by their oath even to their hurt;

✠ who do not lend money at interest,  
and do not take a bribe against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be moved.

R: Who may dwell on the holy hill of God

## **EPISTLE READING**

### **1 Corinthians 1:10-18**

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Consider your own call, brothers and sisters not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

## **GOSPEL READING**

### **Matthew 5:1-12**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.