



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

1st Sunday
After Christmas
Jan 1, 2023

The Brick Church c.1816
Embarking upon our
3rd Century of Service in Christ

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



After the Light comes the Dark

Deacons
Lyndell Davis
Ann Hyde
Nancy Barr
Pat Densmore

The United Church of Bethel
PO Box 28
Bethel, VT 05032
unitedchurchofbethel.org

Pastor Tom Harty Available 24/7 x 365
Home: (802) 728-4294
Cell: (802) 793-4521
Email: tjharty@comcast.net

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.

✠ = *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 Let all of creation praise the name of the Holy One!

P The rhythms of life praise the Everlasting God through the markings of time.

L Let all of creation praise the name of the Holy One!

P The flowers, land, and trees praise the Divine Gardener through rest and renewal.

L Let all of creation praise the name of the Holy One!

P Living creatures praise the Spirit of God through our breathing, living and being. Praise God!

Invocation & Lord's Prayer

✠ **Hymn** NCH 132

Joy to the World

Prayer of Confession

L Eternal God, the dawn of a new year prompts us to reflect on our past and hope for our future.

P Help us live every day seeking your way and moving on your path.

L Help us commit to love and resolve to extend the grace and mercy we need from you and our neighbor.

P Make us new. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

L The God who counts our days knows us intimately, loves us abundantly, and abides with us relentlessly. Receive the brand new mercies of this day. Hold the love of God closely, firmly, and freely. Transformation, grace, and new life is assured this day.

Passing the Peace

The United Church of Bethel

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

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 63:7-9

Psalm 148

*r: Praise God from the heavens,
praise God in the heights!*

✠ Gloria Patri

Epistle Reading

Hebrews 2:10-18

Choral Anthem

✠ Gospel:

Matthew 1:18-25

✠ Hymn NCH 135

Adeste Fideles

Oh Come All Ye Faithful

Sermon

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Choral Response: Hear Our Prayer O Lord.

Offering

✠ Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Communion

✠ Hymn NCH 417

This is a Day of New Beginnings

✠ 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

Isaiah 63:7-9

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior ⁹ in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

PSALM 148

r: Praise God from the heavens, praise God in the heights!

1. Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
2. Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!
3. Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!
4. Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!

r: Praise God from the heavens, praise God in the heights!

5. Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for he commanded and they were created.
6. He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.
7. Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
8. fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!
9. Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!
10. Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

r: Praise God from the heavens, praise God in the heights

11. Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
12. Young men and women alike,
old and young together!
13. Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
14. He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the LORD!

r: Praise God from the heavens, praise God in the heights!

EPISTLE READING

Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." ¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me." ¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 1:18-25

¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." ¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more." ¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."