

Sunday, July 9, 2023 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ <u>www.blcfairport.org</u> The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

# Sunday, July 9, 2023 ~ 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDE Softly and Tenderly, Jesus Is Calling

Will L. Thompson setting, Dale Wood

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The mystery of God's ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. Jesus associates with those often excluded from the religious community. Like Paul, we struggle with our own selfish desires and seek God's mercy and forgiveness. We gather to be refreshed by Christ's invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary." Gathered around word, water, and meal, we find rest for our souls.

# **GATHERING**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS** 

Blessed be the holy Trinity,  $\pm$  one God, who looks upon us in compassion, forgives our sin, and heals our lives.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Have mercy, O God,

against you, you alone, we have sinned. In your compassion, cleanse us from our sin and take away our guilt. Create in us a new heart and give us a steadfast spirit. Do not cast us away, but fill us with your Holy Spirit and restore your joy within us. Amen.

As tender as parent to child, so deep is God's compassion for you. As high as heaven is above earth, so vast is God's love for you. As far as east is from west, so far God removes your sin from you, renewing your life through Jesus Christ. Blessed be God who crowns us with mercy and love.

#### Blessed be God forever.

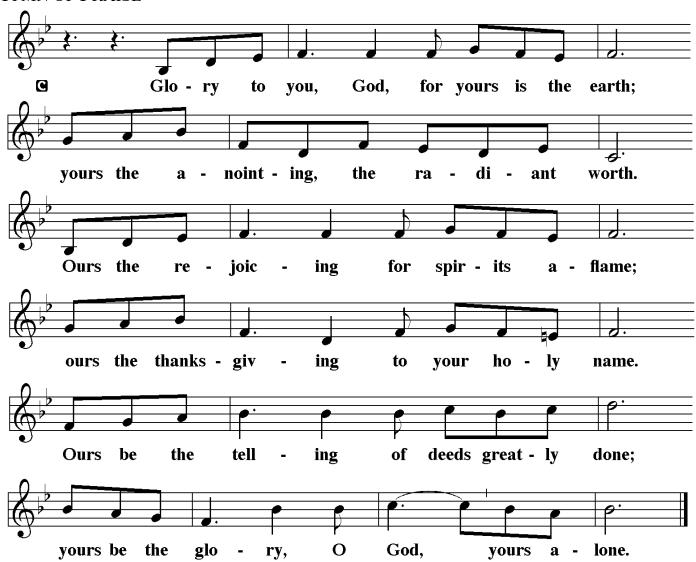
GATHERING HYMN	Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun	ELW 557
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### **GREETING**

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

## And also with you.

### HYMN OF PRAISE



#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

# **HEARING GOD'S WORD**

READING: Romans 7:15-25a

Life captive to sin is a catch-22 existence in which we know good but do not do it and do things we know to be wrong. Through Jesus Christ, God has set us free from such a futile existence.

<sup>15</sup>I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup>But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup>For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. <sup>19</sup>For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

<sup>21</sup>So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, <sup>23</sup>but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. <sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25a</sup>Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.





The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Jesus chides people who find fault with both his ministry and that of John the Baptist. He thanks God that wisdom and intelligence are not needed to receive what God has to offer.

[Jesus spoke to the crowd saying:] <sup>16</sup>"To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

<sup>17</sup> We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.'

<sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; <sup>19</sup>the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup>yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup>"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY	Come to Me, All Pilgrims Thirsty	ELW 777
		sts. $1 - 4, 6$

#### **APOSTLES' CREED**

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,

creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead.\*

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

# THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

hear our prayer.

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.

Trusting in God's abundant mercy, let us offer our prayers for a world in need..

# A brief silence.

#1 God of the covenant, you call ministers to proclaim your gospel of grace throughout the world. Inspire pastors, deacons, church musicians, and all ministers of your word, especially our Pastors, Abby and Amy, and our Bishops, Lee and Elizabeth, as they carry out your work. God, in your mercy,

#2 God of all creation, you reveal your goodness through all you have made: rivers and seas, plants and animals, and endangered species. Prosper the work of conservation organizations, botanical gardens, zoos, and wildlife sanctuaries. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

#3 God of the nations, you desire that all the peoples of the world live in peace. Guide government leaders at all levels—national, state/province, and local—to work for justice, mercy, and reconciliation. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, you make all things new. Strengthen and renew the relationships we share with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: David & Lisa, Jeff, Jimmy & Laura, Paige, and Ryan. Bring new life and growth to the ministry of our sisters and brothers in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Breathe your abundance into all people.

We lift up prayers of thanksgiving for:

• The birth of Hadley Henrietta T., great-granddaughter of Toni and Jerry T.

We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:

• Kay B., grandmother of Eric C., who died on 6/23

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Justin A., son of Marcy and Tom A., who is hospitalized
- Erich H., who is hospitalized
- Mike D., friend of Jim O. and Chris G.

Hear these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for individual prayer.

God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Receive our prayers and answer us, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

## **SHARING GOD'S MEAL**

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

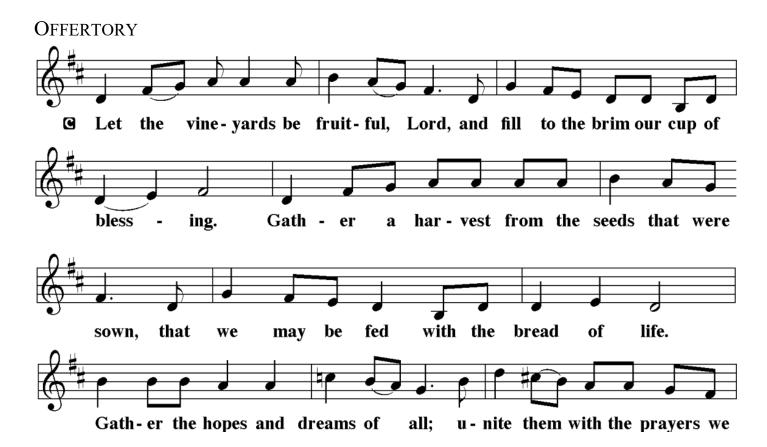
Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor. If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.

#### **OFFERING**

Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting <u>blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry</u>.

OFFERING OF MUSIC KUM BA YAH

African American spiritual setting, Emma Lou Diemer





#### OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God of goodness and growth,

all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is sure. Word and water, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Receive the gifts we bring, and nourish us to proclaim your abiding love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song.

Amen.

**GREAT THANKSGIVING** 

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

# WORDS OF INSTITUTION

God, you open wide your hands And feed all creation with your goodness.

Open us to receive all that you give us –

Your mercy, your grace, your love, your very self. Amen

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who
sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

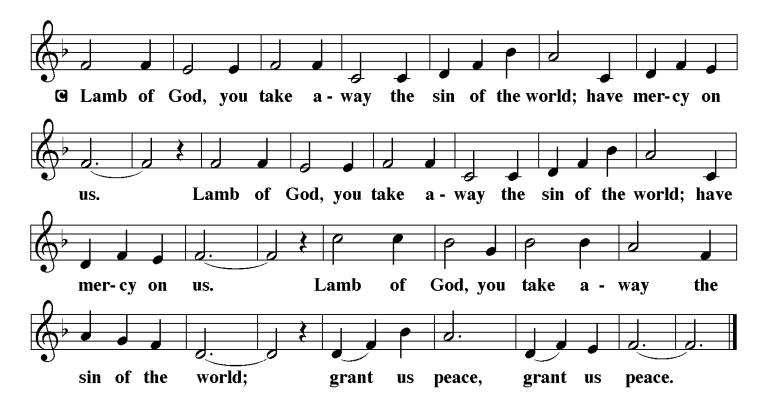
All are called to Christ's table. Come, eat what is good.

#### Thanks be to God!

### DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

#### THE COMMUNION

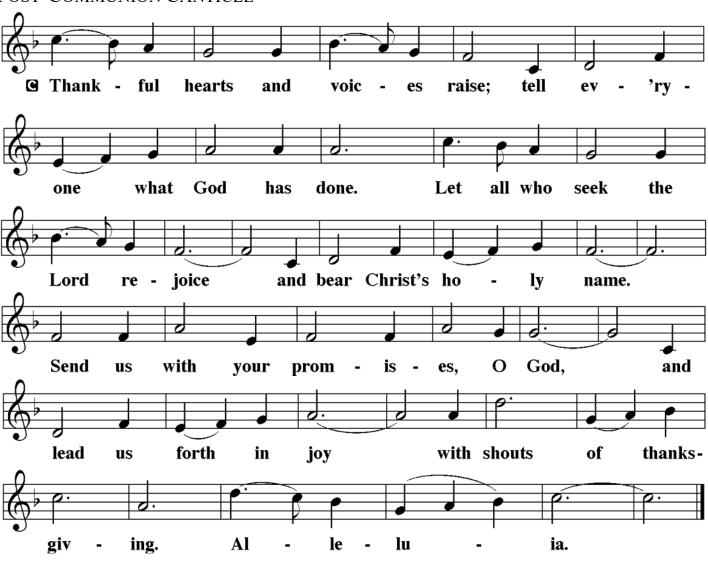


COMMUNION HYMNS Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling Day by Day

ELW 608 ELW 790

## TABLE BLESSING

## POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



# **LEAVING TO SERVE**

**BENEDICTION** 

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in + Christ Jesus.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Jesus Shall Reign

ELW 434

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE** 

God of Our Fathers

NATIONAL HYMN tune, George W. Warren setting, Carlos Staszeski

The altar flowers are given by Clifford Donahower in honor of Our Bethlehem family, for the love and support for Linnea, and our family.

#### **BLC Musicians**

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

**Thank you** to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with Mark Finke or one of the pastors following worship or contact Mark directly at <a href="mailto:volunteersupport@blcfairport.org">volunteersupport@blcfairport.org</a>.

**Communicate with us:** Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <a href="https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/">https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/</a> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

What's happening at BLC this week? Visit the Calendar of Events at <a href="www.blcfairport.org">www.blcfairport.org</a>. Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at <a href="office@blcfairport.org">office@blcfairport.org</a> or visit <a href="https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/">https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/</a>

Church office hours: Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585) 223-0634 or emailing pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org.

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### When a Yoke Means Freedom

Today's gospel reading contains iconic words from Jesus: "Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matt. 11:28-30)." Jesus offers a yoke to tired listeners and tells them that a yoke will give them rest. The yoke as a means to rest was a strange idea for the disciples. A yoke as a means to rest ought to sound strange to us, as well. The early hearers of this biblical passage would have known a yoke to be a means of engaging the energy of oxen as heavy lifters in the enterprise of farming. Yokes are still employed in our world and they are still a burden and a way of harnessing animal's hard work, especially in places where people don't have access to the internal combustion engine. The first ancient readers or hearers of Matthew also viewed a yoke as a symbol of obedience to God's law and wisdom. Generally, our instinct is to resist yokes and laws, or at least not immediately connect them with the idea of freedom. Through the image of the yoke, however, Jesus invites us to think of God's law and wisdom as a means to surrender, give way, and accept something graceful and positive—rest, ease, lightness. Jesus reframes the idea of a yoke by telling us that a yoke will help us grow as disciples. The gospel links humility to freedom.