



*Sunday, August 27, 2023*  
*13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*





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

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## PRELUDE

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

*THE SOLID ROCK*  
setting, Emma Lou Diemer

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*In Isaiah 51:1-6, God's people are advised to look to their spiritual ancestors as the rock from which they were hewn. Jesus declares that the church will be built on the rock of Peter's bold confession of faith. God's word of reconciliation and God's mercy are keys to the church's mission. Paul urges us to not be conformed to this world but to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, using our individual gifts to build up the body of Christ. From the table we go forth to offer our spiritual worship through word and deed.*

## **GATHERING**

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † 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

O Savior, Precious Savior

ELW 820

### 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

Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;  
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.  
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;  
ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.  
Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;  
yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **HEARING GOD'S WORD**

READING: Romans 12:1-8

*In response to God's merciful activity, we are to worship by living holistic, God-pleasing lives. Our values and viewpoints are not molded by the time in which we live but are transformed by the Spirit's renewing work. God's grace empowers different forms of service among Christians, but all forms of ministry function to build up the body of Christ.*

<sup>1</sup>I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

<sup>3</sup>For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup>For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. <sup>6</sup>We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; <sup>7</sup>ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; <sup>8</sup>the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 16:13 20

*At a climactic point in Jesus' ministry, God reveals to Peter that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," and Jesus responds with the promise of a church that will overcome the very gates of Hades.*

<sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup>And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup>He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup>Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

## 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

*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 Sarah and Abraham, inspire your church to pursue righteousness in its ministry. Equip us to share your compassion that unites us as one family of faith.  
**Hear our prayer.**

#2 Remind us that from the beginning of creation, you knit together a world meant for harmony. Protect and restore the wasted places to joy and gladness. God, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

#3 Stir the leaders of nations and towns, militaries and courts, to respond to your teachings. Let your call for justice reach all people and bring deliverance where there is oppression. God, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

By the power of your Spirit, you nurture and bring growth. Strengthen the connections we share with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Roger & Rosemarie, Ron & Sandy, Elizabeth & Mike (Olivia, Ryan), Kim, and Al & Marcy. 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 offer prayers of thanksgiving for:*

- Warren and Julie Richards, former members of Bethlehem celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding anniversary on August 31

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

- Mary Strecker, mother of John Perry, who died on August 11
- Connie H, especially husband, Erich. Connie died on August 23

*We pray for those in need of healing, especially:*

- Ray M, brother of Rosemarie K, who is home recovering after abdominal surgery
- Vivian J who is recovering from surgery
- Don, friend of Dave W, who is recovering from anticipated surgery on 8/25
- Rachel G, who is recovering from a work injury
- Chick F who has been hospitalized
- Taylor H, niece of Kathy M, who is recovering from Covid-19
- Bill A as he prepares for a biopsy this week
- Karen B as she explores treatment options for a recent diagnosis of stage 4 lung cancer

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 [blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry](http://blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry).*

### OFFERING OF MUSIC

Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel?

African-American spiritual  
setting, Marianne Kim

piano four-hands  
assisted by Phyllis Stock

### OFFERTORY



☐ Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles - sing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were



sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.

Gath- er the hopes and dreams of all; u- nite them with the prayers we  
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,  
Lord, and give us a fore- taste of the feast to come.

#### 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



**☩ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on**



**us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have**

mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

ELW 623

Faith of Our Fathers

ELW 812

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

☞ Thank - ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry -  
one what God has done. Let all who seek the  
Lord re - jice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.  
Send us with your prom - is - es, O God, and  
lead us forth in joy with shouts of thanks -  
giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

## **LEAVING TO SERVE**

### BENEDICTION

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

**Amen.**

SENDING HYMN	We All Are One in Mission	ELW 576
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### DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### POSTLUDE

Lobt Gott, ihr Christen all zugleich  
(Praise God the Lord, Ye Sons of Men)

Johann Gottlieb Walther

## **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 [volunteersupport@blcfairport.org](mailto:volunteersupport@blcfairport.org).

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

**What's happening at BLC this week?** Visit the Calendar of Events at [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org). 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 [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org) or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

**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](mailto:pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org) or [pastor.amy@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.amy@blcfairport.org).

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your flowers are growing.**

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 **Text us  
Pictures at  
585.364.1554**

**or email at  
office@blcfairport.org**

## **Confessing Christ, Formed in Faith**

In late August, students are preparing to go back to school, and many churches gear up for a new year of Christian education. It is a good time to be reminded of the heart of Christian formation: conformation and transformation (Rom. 12:2).

Disciples are formed over time—shaped by learning, worship, and all aspects of Christian life in community. As it was for Peter, part of our formation is learning to confess Jesus as the Messiah, not only with the right words but also through an experience of the Living God in Christ. And along with Peter, through such formation we also discover who we are in relation to God: After Peter “confesses” Jesus’ identity of Messiah, Jesus “confesses” Peter’s identity by calling out his name and vocation.

Traditionally, Lutheran worship contains two confessions which keep forming us: a confession of sin and a confession of faith. In the first, we acknowledge who we are as sinner and saint, and in the second, we acknowledge who God is in the mystery of the Trinity. Like Peter’s, our own identity is revealed in those truths. And, we might say, we are continually formed by and through them.

Peter’s confession is not a precondition for following Jesus; it comes in the middle of his journey of discipleship. Our formation too is a long process—lifelong, in fact—which begins at baptism (or even before!) and is guided by those who travel before and with us. At this time of year, as we explore our own formation, identity, and vocation as disciples of Jesus, Isaiah entreats us, “Look to the rock from which you were hewn.” Envisioning Peter “the rock,” we might also consider how our shape is a “chip off the old block” of our forebears in faith.