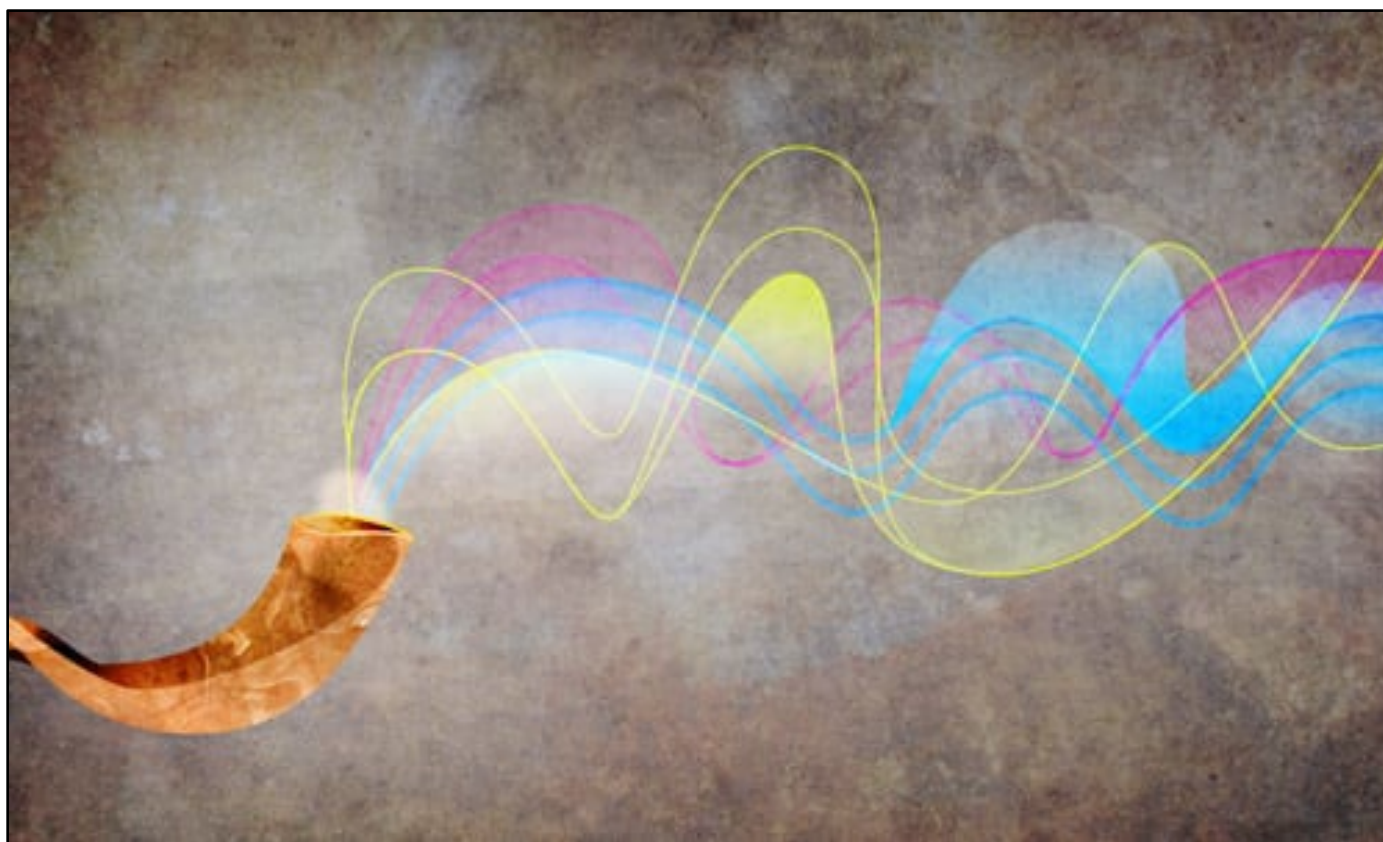


Worship Bulletin - Bethel Congregational Church UCC

September 17, 2023 – 16th Sunday after Pentecost

“Welcome, Wonder, and Deliverance”



*Centering Words ((Exodus 15,
Romans 14))*

*O God, you are our strength and
our salvation.*

*You uphold and save us. We offer
you our very lives.*

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Bethel Congregational Church, UCC
Sunday – September 17, 2023

Prelude

Music for Meditation

Responsive Call to Worship (*Inspired by Psalm 103*)

One: Bless the Holy One with our whole selves. Praise the Maker of our being!

Many: Remember the mighty deeds and the good works of our God.

One: The Sovereign One endows us with many gifts and equips us to do good work.

Many: Remember the mighty deeds and the good works of our God.

One: Holy Love entered the world without condemnation but with grace and forgiveness, mercy and compassion, redemption and restoration.

Many: Hallelujah! We give thanks for the mighty deeds and the good works of our God!

Unison Opening Prayer

God who calls,

it is you who gathers us together and forms us as a community.

It is you who makes us uniquely individual and who designs us for companionship. Let us journey together this day in your presence reminded of our interdependence with one another.

May we see your glory and be inspired to demonstrate your goodness and care through our lives. Amen.

1 Take my gifts and let me love you,
God who first of all loved me,
gave me light and food and shelter,
gave me life and set me free,
now because your love has touched me,
I have love to give away,
now the bread of love is rising,
loaves of love to multiply!

2 Take the fruit that I have gathered
from the tree your Spirit sowed,
harvest of your own compassion,
juice that makes the wine of God,
spiced with humor, laced with laughter -
flavor of the Jesus life,
tang of risk and new adventure,
taste and zest beyond belief.

3 Take whatever I can offer -
gifts that I have yet to find,
skills that I am slow to sharpen,
talents of the hand and mind,
things made beautiful for others
in the place where I must be:
take my gifts and let me love you,
God who first of all loved me.

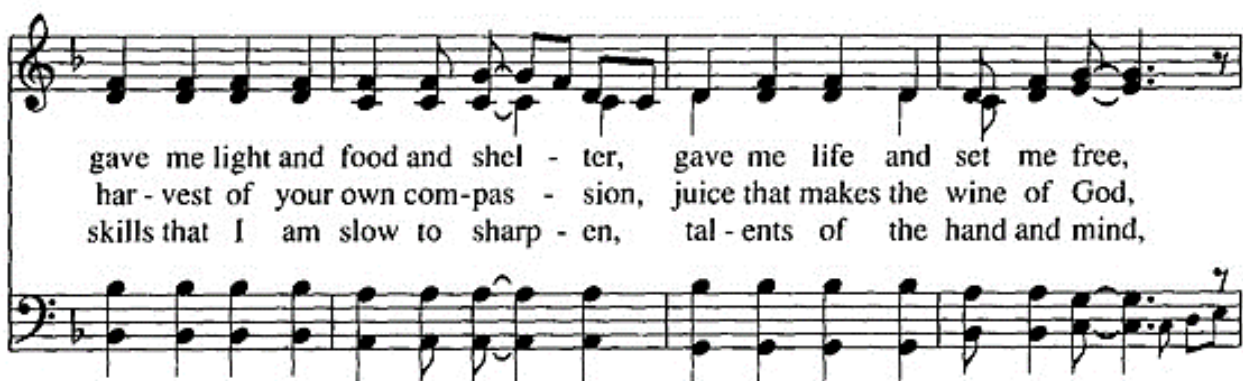
Take My Gifts

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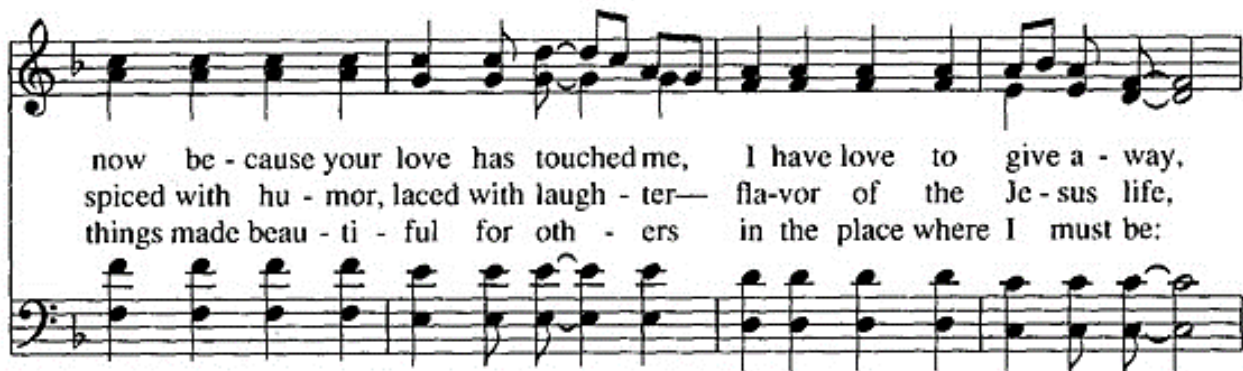
Shirley Erena Murray, 1991



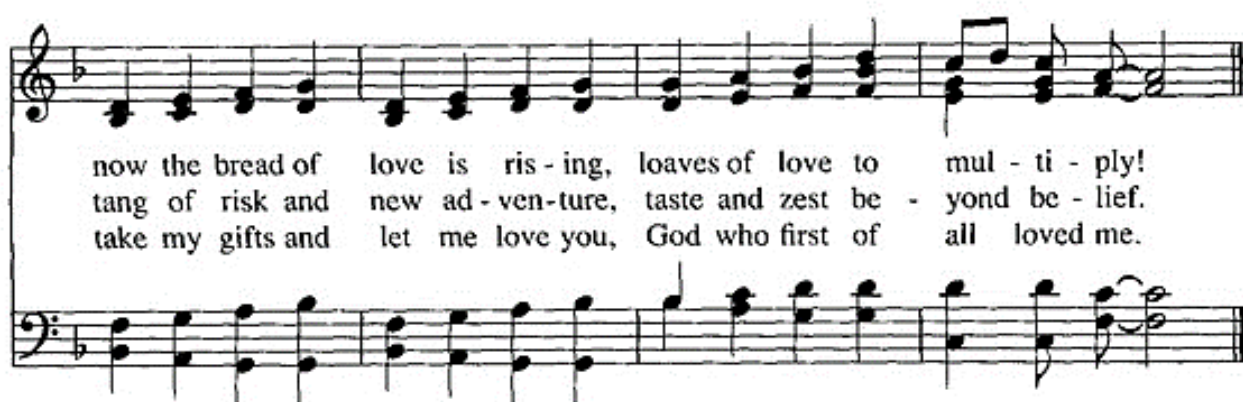
1 Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me,
 2 Take the fruit that I have gath - ered from the tree your Spir - it sowed,
 3 Take what - ev - er I can of - fer— gifts that I have yet to find,



gave me light and food and shel - ter, gave me life and set me free,
 har - vest of your own com - pas - sion, juice that makes the wine of God,
 skills that I am slow to sharp - en, tal - ents of the hand and mind,



now be - cause your love has touched me, I have love to give a - way,
 spiced with hu - mor, laced with laugh - ter— fla - vor of the Je - sus life,
 things made beau - ti - ful for oth - ers in the place where I must be:



now the bread of love is ris - ing, loaves of love to mul - ti - ply!
 tang of risk and new ad - ven - ture, taste and zest be - yond be - lief.
 take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.

Shirley Erena Murray recounted that Colin Gibson composed this tune for her stewardship text "almost instantaneously." Gibson has served as professor at the University of Otago, as well as organist and choir director in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Tune: TALAVERA TERRACE 8.7.8.7.D.
 Colin Gibson, 1991
 Alternate tune: HOLY MANNA

Passing the Peace As we stand before God, accepted and upheld, let us greet one another as brothers and sisters in this gathered community.

Announcements

Special Music

Shalom Aleichem

Sylvia Lee Mann, viola & Sandy Gunn, piano

Children's Time

***Gloria**

Glory to the Creator,
The Christ, the Holy Spirit Three in One
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.
World without end, Amen, Amen.

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Glory to the Creator

The musical score is written for piano and voice in 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 1-4) has the piano part on the bottom staff and the voice part on the top staff. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the piano and voice parts. The third system (measures 9-12) concludes the piece. Chords are indicated above the piano staff, and lyrics are placed below the voice staff. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Chords: C, G/D, C, G/B, G, C, G/B, Am/C, G/D, D⁷, G, C, G⁷, G⁷, C, G, G/F, C/E, C/G, G⁷, C.

Lyrics: Glo - ry to the Cre - a - tor, the Christ the Ho - ly Spi - rit
three in one; as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and ev - er
shall be, world with - out end. A - men. A - men.

Exodus 14:19-31

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*Unison*)

God of grace, we need your strength in our weakness. We confess that we can be judgemental and hyper-critical of our neighbors, family, and friends. We project our own shortcomings on others in order to deflect attention from our mistakes. We withhold and condition forgiveness, mercy, and grace from those who wrong us at the same time we seek it for the wrongs we have done. Even still, we struggle to forgive ourselves. You have shown us the better way. Help us to follow your path—receiving and extending forgiveness in a world in need of an infusion of grace for transformation. In your mercy, O God, hear our prayer, and let us forgive as you forgive. Amen.

Words Assurance and Grace (*Pastor*)

Beloved, grace has always been part of God's relationship with humanity. God does not want you condemned or held captive by unresolved anger leading to bitterness. Rather, Creator desires you to be released as both forgiven and forgiver so that all may live a life that is whole, free, and flourishing..

Prayers of the People - Joys and Concerns

The Lord's Prayer (*Unison*)

**Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever and ever. Amen**

Offering

Invitation to Generosity (Pastor) *Let us share gifts of every kind in the service of God's healing justice and love.*

Please remember to send your offerings in so that we can continue our ministries.

(If you want a portion of your offering to be designated as something specific, just write that in the message area.) If you forget to write a note with the offering – just email us (info@BethelUCCOntario.org) or message us through Facebook.

Giving Options: In person – *We are not yet “passing the plate”. You may leave your offering in one of the offering plates (front of the sanctuary, or usher's table in the rear).*

Give online at www.bethelucontario.org,



To use a credit or debit card, use the yellow “Donate” button (processed by PayPal – no PP account required), or green Tithe.ly button (Processed by



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Use **ZELLE** to transfer your offering to



us directly from your bank. When you use Zelle, we are “Bethel Congregational Church” Our verified Zelle email is info@bethelucontario.org



MAIL - Just mail your check to Bethel Congregational Church 536 N Euclid Ave, Ontario CA 91762.

QR Code – Scan the code to send your offering to us through PayPal



Scan. Pay. Go.

Blessing of the Gifts (*Unison*)

Merciful God, receive our humble offerings as a testimony to your provision and a demonstration of our love. May they be magnified and multiplied for the benefit of our community and all creation.

Singing into Mission *In the Midst of New Dimensions* NCH 391

In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways.

Who will lead the pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate ways?

[Refrain] God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.

Through the flood of starving people, warring factions and despair,

Who will lift the olive branches? Who will light the flame of care?

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,

We your people, ours the journey now and ever,
now and ever, now and ever more.

As we stand a world divided by our own self seeking schemes,

Grant that we, your global village might envision wider dreams

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,

We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever,
now and ever more.

We are man and we are woman, all persuasions, old and young,

Each a gift in your creation, each a love song to be sung.

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,

We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever,
now and ever more.

Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain, May your blazing phoenix spirit, resurrect the church again.

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,

We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever,
now and ever more.

In the Midst of New Dimensions

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Julian Rush, 1985; alt.

Gen. 9:12-16; Exod. 13:21-22; Num. 14:14

C C/B F C F Am7 Dm7 G7sus4 G7

1 In the midst of new di-men-sions, in the face of chang-ing ways,
 2 Through the flood of starv-ing peo - ple, war-ring fac-tions and de - spair,
 3 As we stand a world di - vid - ed by our own self - seek - ing schemes,
 4 We are man and we are wom-an, all per-sua-sions, old and young,
 5 Should the threats of dire pre-dic-tions cause us to with - draw in pain,

C C/B F C F Am7 Dm7 G C

Who will lead the pil-grim peo - ples wan-dering in their sep - arate ways?
 Who will lift the ol - ive branch-es? Who will light the flame of care?
 Grant that we, your glob - al vil - lage, might en - vi - sion wid - er dreams.
 Each a gift in your cre - a - tion, each a love song to be sung.
 May your blaz-ing phoe-nix spir - it res - ur - rect the church a - gain.

Refrain
 Am Em F C F C G7 C Dsus4 D7 G7sus4 G7 Am

God of rain-bow, fier - y pil - lar, lead-ing where the ea-gles soar, We your

Em F C F C/E F C/E F C/E Dm7 G7 C

peo-ple, ours the jour-ney now and ev - er, now and ev - er, now and ev - er - more.

Julian Rush, an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church, has spent more than a decade as director of the Colorado AIDS Project. He wrote this hymn on the theme of "diversity" for a meeting of the Rocky Mountain Conference

Tune: NEW DIMENSIONS 8.7.8.7. with refrain
 Julian Rush, 1985
 Arr. The New Century Hymnal, 1994

Responsive Benediction

ONE: Who is like our majestic God?
The One who is wonder-worker
and awesome in splendor.

MANY: No other!

ONE: God calls to us to join the holy work
of *Tikkun olam* - of healing the world.

**MANY: We will live for God and for God's world
in all we do. Go in peace Go in love, Go in joy. AMEN**

Postlude

Carillon



Bethel Ontario Online
Bethel Congregational Church, UCC
526 N Euclid Ave Ontario CA 91762
www.betheluccontario.org
info@betheluccontario.org
(909) 984-9111

Rev. Dr. Sylvia Lee Mann
Pastor & Minister of Music
drmann@betheluccontario.org
(626) 393-5507

Live Stream Worship Sundays at 9:55am
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Also available on [Roku](#) and [Amazon Fire TV](#).

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God sends us to serve, but God does not send us alone.

The Spirit is with us in the world, guiding our steps and protecting our paths. Christ yearns for us to be one in ministry and service, and one in community and faith—a unity that we discover through the Spirit's miraculous power in our lives. Sent to serve, we are sent not only with the power of the Spirit, but also with the power of unity with one another.

*Embracing this unity with both the Holy Spirit and one another
opens a path to the "complete joy" that Christ prays we may one day know.*