

Worship Celebration

Christmas Day

Divine Interruptions

Week 5:

God Accompanies All Creation

December 25, 2022 + 9 AM

Welcome to The United Methodist Church of Berea!

As followers of Jesus Christ, who reveals a God whose love knows no boundaries, we are committed to welcoming and affirming every person as a beloved child of God. Every person—of every sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, age, economic status, health, ability, or any other identifying label—is welcome to participate fully in our ministries and life together as church. We hope The United Methodist Church of Berea will become a home for you, your family, and your friends as together, in our relationship with God, with each other, and with all creation, **we make and mature disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.**

Join us in worship, this week and every week:

Sunday at 9AM

in-person in the Sanctuary and online (www.facebook.com/umcberea/live)

Sunday at 11AM

in-person in Wesley Hall

Monday—Friday at 9AM

(Morning Prayer) via Zoom (1-888-788-0099, meeting id: 518 014 483; passcode: 170)

We Gather as God's Children

Prelude

Variations sur "In Dulci Jubilo"

Denis Bédard

Words of Welcome

+ Call to Worship

+ Hymn

Joy to the World

UMH 246

Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance

God Who Is With Us, too often we feel as if change is hopeless.
The problems of this world feel too big, the path forward too unclear,
and we are not confident that we can make any difference. We give up hope.

The first candle is extinguished.

Together we pray: ***Forgive us, God, for extinguishing hope.***

God Who Is With Us, too often we believe that peace is a thing of fairy tales.
Our spirits are anxious. Our bodies are weary. Our world is fractured.
Instead of praying for peace—in ourselves and in our communities—
we assume that peace no longer is on the table. We give it up.

The second candle is extinguished.

Together we pray: ***Forgive us, God, for extinguishing peace.***

God Who Is With Us, too often we think of joy as naïveté.
We forget that you ate with friends, that you celebrated at weddings,
that you laughed and rested and prayed on mountains.
We forget that you knew deep and big joy,
and that you desire our joy even in this fractured world.

The third candle is extinguished.

Together we pray: ***Forgive us, God, for extinguishing joy.***

God Who Is With Us, too often we treat love like a transaction.
We give a little love, assuming we should get something back.
But in our wiser moments, we know love is not meant for keeping score.
Love is meant to overflow, to spill out to our neighbors, to transform our world.
We guard our love.

The fourth candle is extinguished.

Together we pray: ***Forgive us, God, for extinguishing love.***

Beloved children of God, distractions and self-centeredness separate us
from God's gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love.
But thanks be to God, God draws us back to our truer center.
God comes to us in Jesus Christ, welcoming us into a fuller way of life.
No matter how many times we turn our backs on hope or extinguish peace
or snuff out joy or let love burn itself out,
still God continues to light our way.

The candles of hope, peace, joy, and love are relighted from the Christ candle.

We are seen, known, and noticed. Nothing is impossible for God.
We are loved and welcomed into God's greater purposes.
The good news of this day—the hope, peace, joy, and love of this Christmas season—
exists for you.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

We Grow in God's Word

Leader: With disciples of every time and place, let us listen for the word of God among us.

People: *Our ears and hearts are open.*

First Lesson—Isaiah 52.7-10 (CEB)

- ⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of a messenger
who proclaims peace,
who brings good news,
who proclaims salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God rules!"
- ⁸ Listen! Your lookouts lift their voice;
they sing out together!
Right before their eyes they see the LORD returning to Zion.
- ⁹ Break into song together, you ruins of Jerusalem!
The LORD has comforted his people and has redeemed Jerusalem.
- ¹⁰ The LORD has bared his holy arm in view of all the nations;
all the ends of the earth have seen our God's victory.

Leader: The word of God for the people of God.

People: *Thanks be to God.*

Second Lesson—Psalm 98 (UMH 818)

- ¹ O sing to the LORD a new song,
for the Lord has done marvelous things!
God's right hand and holy arm
have gotten him victory.
- ² ***The LORD has declared victory;
and has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.***
- ³ The Lord has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.
***All the ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God.***
- ⁴ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
- ⁵ Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody!
- ⁶ ***With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the Ruler, the LORD!***
- ⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it,
the world and those who dwell in it!
- ⁸ ***Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord,***
- ⁹ ***who comes to judge the earth.
The Lord will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.***

Leader: The word of God for the people of God.

People: *Thanks be to God.*

+ Hymn

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

UMH 224

Gospel Lesson—John 1.1-14 (CEB)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4** in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. **9** The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. **11** He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. **12** But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Leader: The word of God for the people of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Meditation

+ Affirmation of Faith

With Mary,

we, too, believe in cherishing good news.

With the angels,

we, too, believe in singing God's praise.

With the shepherds,

we, too, believe that God's presence in our lives is something worth talking about.

With generations before us,

we, too, believe that God is with us.

With generations yet to come,

we, too, believe that God is with us.

God is here. God is with us. God is love.

We believe. Thanks be to God!

Solo

Mary Did You Know

Mark Lowry, Buddy Greene

Prayers of the People & the Lord's Prayer

As we join our hearts to lift our prayers to God, we invite you to share your joys and concerns. If you are worshiping with us online, you can share your prayer request through the "comments" section on Facebook. And throughout the week, you can share your prayer requests with Pastor Nathan (440-234-3525 x101, nhowe@umcb.org), the church office (info@umcb.org), or through our website (www.umcb.org/worshipresources).

Opportunities for Ministry and Invitation to Give Our Tithes and Offerings

You are invited to give your tithes and offerings online (www.umcb.org/donate or scan the QR code to the right), by mailing a check to the church office, or in the offering plates that are passed through the worship space. Through whatever means you give, thank you for your generous and ongoing participation toward making and maturing disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!



Offertory

Greensleeves

Richard Purvis

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Public Domain

+ Prayer of Thanksgiving and Commitment

*God Who Comes to Us, Emmanuel, in this sacred Christmas season,
we offer you these resources and ourselves.
We entrust all that we have and are into your hands
for the building of your beloved community.
We lift our hearts to you in praise as we follow your Word:
Christ, our way, our truth, our life. Amen.*

We Go Out to Serve in God's Name

+ Hymn

Angels We Have Heard on High

UMH 238

+ Benediction

In every time and place, God keeps coming to us.
In every situation and circumstance, a light keeps shining in the darkness.
God's love moves through this world, so let us be thankful.
May we rest in this day and allow its good news to change us.
Go in peace and joy, knowing and feeling that God is with you every step of the way.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Postlude

Toccata sur "Il est né, le divin Enfant"

Denis Bédard

***Our service of worship is ended.
Our worship through service now begins.***

Worship Participants

Pastors

Rev. Nathan Howe
Rev. Carrie Antczak

Music

Jeffrey Sonoda, *Organist*
Courtney Popp, *Vocalist*

Audio Video Elements

Mark Williams
Marlynda Dziak
Debbie Haas

Liturgist

Sandy Marek

*Today's Prayer of Confession and Affirmation of Faith have been adapted from liturgy
by Rev. Sarah Speed, A Sanctified Art LLC. Used by permission.*

Morning Prayer

Gracious and Holy God,
I thank you for the darkness and the light,
for sleep and for waking,
for the privilege of safety and shelter.
And I ask your help for all who do not have these
comforts.
Guide me to pray for your world with a whole heart
and to perceive in myself,
my family, my friends, and my neighbors
what you perceive: each one, a beloved child.
Give me wisdom this day to rejoice in you. Amen.

Evening Prayer

God of Earth and of all the stars,
thank you for this day when you call us
to gather in your loving embrace.
Thank you for the joy of life itself
and for your promise of steadfast love,
even when my days are hard with sorrows.
Surround me now with the love that will not let go,
and give me rest, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Blessing of Homes

Post-Epiphany (January 6, 2023)

In some parts of the world, there is a Christian custom of inviting God's blessing on dwelling places, including both homes and workplaces, and upon all who live, work, or visit there. Along with prayers for God's blessing, the front or main entrance is marked with chalk as a sign and reminder that we have invited God's presence into our homes.

This tradition is rooted in the visit of the magi to the place where the Christ-child resided (Matthew 2.1-12), and so it is most appropriately practiced near or during the season after the Epiphany, on January 6. If you would like to share in this brief and simple ritual of worship for your home, please contact **Pastor Nathan** (nhowe@umcb.org or **440-234-3525 x101**) with a day and time that would be convenient for you, beginning January 6, 2023.



Ring in the New Year and Celebrate UMW Sunday

Saturday, January 7, Noon, Fellowship Hall

Celebrate the NEW YEAR with brunch! Everyone is invited to a post-holiday brunch on Saturday, January 7, at Noon. We'll be serving a variety of soups, salads, and pies. Our guest, Sherry Buehl, will speak about Flat Rock missions. Cost of the brunch is \$10 (\$5 will be donated to Flat Rock).

Then continue the celebration on Sunday, UMW Sunday. Join us for Coffee Hour following the 9 am service. Thank you for your support and generosity.



Thursday Night Bible Study

Thursdays beginning January 12, 6:30 PM, via Zoom

Our Bible Study is open to anyone and everyone. We will be studying **Women Rise Up** by Katey Zeh. Books will be available in Rm 12. For more information and Zoom details, please contact **Mary Lynn Swartz** at marylynn482@gmail.com or **440-409-5931**.



GriefShare

Wednesdays beginning January 11, 6:30 PM, via Zoom

We will restart the Wednesday GriefShare group on January 11, again on zoom. All are welcome to join us as we talk about feelings, about doubts, and about problems getting back to a new normal way of life. Questions? Please contact **Mary Lynn Swartz** at marylynn482@gmail.com or **440-409-5931**. (We will postpone the Friday one until the weather is decent - probably mid March.)



Read & Grow Book Discussion Group

Monday, January 9, 6:30-8 pm, Room 13 & on Zoom

We will discuss **Blind Man's Bluff** by James Tate Hill on January 9. For more information, please contact **Betsy Meikle** at meiklebetsyj@gmail.com or **440-243-5767**.



Faith and Protest: The Role of Gospel Music in Movements for Social Change

Sunday, January 15, 10 AM, Fellowship Hall

Cleveland-based singer/musician Erin Nicole Neal will discuss the history of gospel music from an African American experience and how it had evolved from the age of slavery to the civil rights movement to more modern times. Gospel music influenced culture, and, in particular, its impact on the civil rights movement of the 50s and 60s as activists incorporated freedom songs and protest songs amid the struggle for Civil Rights. The music carried them through marches, jail, demonstrations, and police brutality, as they carried on unabashedly singing, "We Shall Overcome" and "Up Above My Head, I Hear Freedom In The Air" and many more. Erin will demonstrate gospel songs utilized in Civil Rights, as well as Gospel songs throughout its evolving history and discuss why Gospel music was influential in culture and utilized in the Civil Rights struggle.



Upcoming Book Discussion: *Wholehearted Faith*

by Rachel Held Evans with Jeff Chu

Wednesday, January 25, 6:30 PM, Parlor

At the time of her death in 2019, at the age of 37, Rachel Held Evans was recognized widely for her theologically astute, profoundly honest, and beautifully personal books which have guided, edified, and helped to shape countless Christians as they seek to live a just and loving faith. *Wholehearted Faith* is the book she was working on at the time of her death; in it, the author wrestles with God's grace and love, looks unsparingly at what the church is and does, and explores universal human questions about becoming and belonging. All are welcome to join us.

Copies of the books are available through most library systems, but please contact **Pastor Nathan** at nhowe@umcb.org or **440-234-3525 x101** if you need help accessing a copy and if you plan to participate.



Support Our Local Food Pantries

Donations can be left in the cupboard between the Narthex and the Library

Our collections of food continue. Please place donations of non-perishable food in the cupboard between the narthex (the hallway outside the Sanctuary) and the library anytime you are in the building. (If you need help finding the right location, talk to one of the pastors or other staff.)

If you are not planning already to make a trip to the grocery store, please feel free to participate with a monetary donation instead, either by mailing a check to the church office or online at www.umcb.org/donate. Please note "food pantry" on the description line. Thank you for supporting this effort.



Dinner Church

Wednesday, January 4, 6 PM, Wesley Hall

Bring a dish - but more valuably, bring a friend or neighbor! We are ready to fully launch this new ministry and now need your help by inviting new folks, or folks we haven't seen in awhile, to join us for dinner and faith conversations. At our last Dinner Church, participants remarked how great it was to share a meal, catch up with people from different worship services, and meet some new faces. A sign-up sheet for food and help with set-up and clean-up is available on the Outreach board by Room 13.

Happening at The UMCB this week:

Sunday, December 25

Christmas Day

Traditional Worship

9 AM / Sanctuary or Online at

<http://www.facebook.com/umcberea/videos>

Christmas Day Worship Service at The Renaissance

10:45 AM / The Renaissance

26376 John Rd, Olmsted Township, 44138 /

[Contact Pastor Nathan](#)

Monday, December 26

Christmas Day Holiday for Staff - Offices Closed

Morning Prayer

9 AM - 9:30 AM / via Zoom / [Contact Pastor Nathan](#)

Survivors Fellowship

11 AM / Parlor, Lunch TBD

Women's Bible Study

7 PM / Women's Bible Study /

Contact Katie Flynn at kathryn.flinn@gmail.com

Tuesday, December 27

Church Office will be open 9AM -Noon

Morning Prayer

9 AM - 9:30 AM / via Zoom / [Contact Pastor Nathan](#)

Tuesday Bible Study

9:30 AM / Room 13

Wednesday, December 28

Church Office will be open 9AM -Noon

Morning Prayer

9 AM - 9:30 AM / via Zoom / [Contact Pastor Nathan](#)

Storytime

10 AM / Room 11 (Nursery) / [Contact Pastor Carrie](#)

The Wednesday Group

11 AM / Gathering Place

Women's Bible Study

7 PM / Offsite /

contact Linda Short at 9short28@gmail.com

Thursday, December 29

Church Office will be open 9AM -Noon

Morning Prayer

9 AM - 9:30 AM / via Zoom / [Contact Pastor Nathan](#)

Handbell Choir Rehearsal

6 PM / Sanctuary / [Contact Tori Penfound](#)

Choir Rehearsal

7 PM / Parlor / Contact [Courtney Popp](#)

or [Margaret Proctor](#)

Friday, December 30

New Year's Eve Holiday for Staff - Offices Closed

Morning Prayer

9 AM - 9:30 AM / via Zoom / [Contact Pastor Nathan](#)

Saturday, December 31

New Year's Eve

Sunday, January 1

New Year's Day

Traditional Worship

9 AM / Sanctuary or Online at

<http://www.facebook.com/umcberea/videos>

Formation

10 AM / Children - Second Floor /

Youth - Second & Third Floors / Adults First Floor

Modern Worship

11 AM / Wesley Hall

Monday, December 26

New Year's Day Holiday for Staff - Offices Closed

Morning Prayer

9 AM - 9:30 AM / via Zoom / [Contact Pastor Nathan](#)

Survivors Fellowship

11 AM / Parlor, Lunch TBD

Women's Bible Study

7 PM / Women's Bible Study /

Contact Katie Flynn at kathryn.flinn@gmail.com

Church Office - Beth Barner

Mon., Wed., Thurs. 9 AM - 3 PM

Tues., Fri. From Home 9AM - 3 PM

ebarner@umcb.org, 440-234-3525 x100, Cell: 440-710-4498

Finance Office - Maryann Herron

Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 AM - 3 PM

mherron@umcb.org, 440-234-3525 x103

Facilities Manager - Mark Williams

Office Hours vary based on need.

mwilliams@umcb.org, 440-234-3525 x102

Pastor Nathan Howe & Carrie Antczak

Office Hours vary based on need.

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