

# A NEW BEGINNING!

St. John United Church of Christ - Bellevue KY

January 3, 2021

The Tenth Day of Christmas

**"See, I am making all things new."**

-Revelation 21.5b



## Welcome and Lighting the Christ Candle

Keith M. Haithcock

Christ is the Light-- a Light that the darkness has never overtaken.

## Preparation Music

Steve Milloy, piano

"Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella" -*French Carol, arr. Janet Vogt*

## Call to Worship

Keith M. Haithcock

Before we speak, God is here, within us and among us, knocking at our door.

**Living God, open what is closed that the Spirit may come in.**

Open our hands, to give, and to greet.

Open our minds to new truth and old wisdom.

Open our hearts to new hope and old assurance.

**Open what is closed that the Spirit may come in.**

## Christmas Hymn

Steve Milloy, vocalist; Eric Knechtges, piano

"Who Would Think That What Was Needed"

Who would think that what was needed to transform and save the earth  
might not be a plan or army proud in purpose, proved in worth?

Who would think, despite derision, that a child should lead the way?

God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas Day.

Shepherds watch and sages wonder, monarchs scorn and angels sing;

such a place as none would reckon hosts a holy helpless thing;

Stabled beasts and passing strangers watch a baby laid in hay:

God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas Day.

Centuries of skill and science span the past from which we move,  
yet experience questions whether with such progress we improve.

In our search for sense and meaning, lest our hopes and humor fray,

God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas Day.

## Psalm 8

Cherie Draper

Adonai, Our God, how majestic is your Name in all the earth!  
You have placed your glory above the heavens!  
From the lips of infants and children  
you bring forth words of power and praise,  
to answer your adversaries  
and to silence the hostile and vengeful.

When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars which you have set in place—  
what is humanity that you should be mindful of us?

Who are we that you should care for us?  
You have made us barely less than God,  
and crowned us with glory and honor.  
You have made us responsible  
for the works of your hands,  
putting all things at our feet—  
all sheep and oxen,  
yes, even the beast of the field,  
the birds of the air, the fish of the sea  
and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

Adonai, Our God, how majestic is your Name in all the earth!

## Prayers of the People

Keith M. Haithcock

## An Offering of Music and our Gifts

Steve Milloy, piano

“Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is a Season)” -Pete Seeger, arr. David Lanz

~

**Thank you for your financial support to the mission and ministry of the Church!**  
**US mail: 520 Fairfield Ave., Bellevue, KY 41073; Online: [StJohnChurch.net](http://StJohnChurch.net)**

~

## Ecclesiastes 3.1-13

Richard Robbins

There is a time for everything,  
a season for every purpose under heaven  
a season to be born and a season to die;  
a season to plant and a season to harvest;

a season to hurt and a season to heal;  
a season to tear down and a season to build up;  
a season to cry and a season to laugh;  
a season to mourn and a season to dance;  
a season to scatter stones and a season gather them;  
a season for holding close and a season for holding back;  
a season to seek and a season to lose;  
a season to keep and a season to throw away;  
a season to tear and a season to mend;  
a season to be silent and a season to speak;  
a season to love and a season to hate;  
a season for hostilities and a season for peace.

What do workers gain from their efforts? I have reflected on this while learning all the kinds of work God gives to humankind. God has made everything in harmony with the divine; yet although the Almighty has imbued eternity in our soul, we are unable to grasp the totality of God's work from beginning to end.

What I do know is that what is best for us is to be happy and enjoy life as long as we live. And God's gift to us is to eat and drink and find fulfillment in our work.

One: Here ends the reading inspired by God.

May God grant to us wisdom and courage for interpretation.

**All: Amen.**

## **Children's Couch Church**

Sarah, Anthony, Adeline and Eliza Palm

## **Sermon**

*"BE HAPPY & ENJOY LIFE"*

Keith M. Haithcock

## **Song of Response** (sung twice)

Steve Milloy, vocalist; Eric Knechtges, piano

*"Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child"*

Jesus, Jesus, oh, what a wonderful child.

Jesus, Jesus, so holy, meek, and mild; new life, new hope the Child will bring.

Listen to the angels sing, "Glory, glory, glory," let the heavens ring!

# Celebration of Holy Communion for the New Year

## Communion Invitation and Prayer

Jesus, you invite us to your table, freely, without condition.

We cannot earn a seat at your table and yet we are here.

We came together as individuals, but now formed a community of believers.

Just as the grapes and the grains of wheat are transformed,  
we also are transformed by your grace and your love.

Christ, you have brought us together in your presence.

We have no words with which to explain or to fully understand,  
and yet we are here with open hearts and open hands.

Continue to transform us as we work together for your kin-dom.

A new year is upon us, a year full of your promise and possibilities.

Help us to see ourselves in a new light and fill us with a desire to change for good.

You taught us that God's creation is full of abundance to be shared with everyone.

May we practice daily to share your love and your gifts with those around us.

We have come to this table as strangers, but now your body in the world.

Together, we lift up our voices to give you praise and thanksgiving singing:

## **Praise Song**      "How Majestic Is Your Name" -Michael W. Smith

**O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.**

**O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.**

**O Lord, we praise your name. O Lord we magnify your name:**

**Prince of Peace, Mighty God; O Lord God Almighty.**

## **Words of Institution -1 Corinthians 11.23-26**

St. Paul said to the early Christians,

What I have passed on to you, I received from Christ—that on the night he was betrayed, our Savior Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, saying, "This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after supper, he took the cup and said, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do it in remembrance of me."

For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim Jesus' death until Christ comes.

## Prayer for the Holy Spirit

In this act of sharing a common meal, we ask the Holy Spirit to come to us.  
At this table, we can see, smell, touch and taste the gifts of God.  
With God's gifts to us we also bring our commitments to God for the new year.  
Therefore we ask, Holy Spirit, consecrate this bread and drink and fill us with the  
promise of new possibilities. Amen.

## Breaking Bread and Sharing the Cup

This is the body of Christ, broken for you. Take and eat, **Amen**.  
This is the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you. Take and drink, **Amen**.

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of new life, we have received this meal, giving thanks for Christ, the light of the  
world. Unite your church in Christ's ministry of love so that all may know you. Thank  
you for renewing us through this meal and strengthening us each step we take into  
this new year. **Amen**

## New Year Hymn

Steve Milloy, vocalist; Eric Knechtges, piano

"This Is a Day of New Beginnings"

This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember and move on,  
Time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that's gone.

Then let us, with the Spirit's daring, step from the past and leave behind  
Our disappointment, guilt, and grieving, seeking new paths, and sure to find.

Christ is alive, and goes before us to show and share what love can do.  
This is a day of new beginnings— our God is making all things new.

## Send Out

Keith M. Haithcock

Let us look for Christ wherever we go  
Let us never stop seeking  
Believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness  
Which the darkness shall not overcome

And may the love of the Creator  
The joy of the Spirit  
And the peace of the Christ-child  
Be with you this New Year and evermore

## “Go Tell It on the Mountain”

---

Thanks to: Linda Schuster, administrative support;  
Edward Goode, editing and production; musicians, and other worship leaders.

**Copyrights, Notes & Acknowledgments: All items are used with permission. All rights reserved. OneLicense.net #A-712481.**

**Call to Worship** from Brian Wren, *Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany: Liturgies and Prayers for Public Worship* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008) © 2007 by Brian Wren, p.186; **Christmas Hymn** “Who Would Think That What Was Needed” and **Song of Response** “Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child” from *The New Century Hymnal*, ©1995 The Pilgrim Press (#153 and #136); **Psalm 8** and **Ecclesiastes 3.1-13** from *The Inclusive Bible* ©1996 by Priests for Equality; from the *New Revised Standard Version of Holy Scripture*, © 1989 by The Division of Christian Education, National Council of Churches; **New Year Hymn** “This Is a Day of New Beginnings” words by Brian Wren, music by Carlton R. Young, Tune: BEGINNINGS from *The New Century Hymnal*, ©1995 The Pilgrim Press (#417); **Celebration of Holy Communion for the New Year** by Catherine Kenlin, ©2019 Justice Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100, Song of Praise by Michael W. Smith ©1981 Meadowgreen Music Co., Words of Institution from *The Inclusive Bible* ©1996 by Priests for Equality, Prayer of Thanksgiving, all adapted by Keith M. Haithcock; **Send Out** by Cara Heafey, UK, <https://worshipwords.co.uk/new-year-blessing-cara-heafey-uk/>.