

Responding to God's Love

The opening lines of Psalm 103 are an exuberant expression of praise and thanksgiving toward God. Attributed to David, this psalm reflects on the goodness of God and the multitude of blessings, or benefits as the scripture states, we receive.

For example, God blesses through everyday things. Think about the basic needs you had met this week: shelter, clean water, food, healing, and social support. Furthermore, God blesses us with immeasurable gifts of steadfast love, wisdom, mercy, and forgiveness. Not remembering wrongs of the past, God embraces the possibility of reconciliation for the future. And in Jesus, we see the same divine attributes. So, as Christ's disciples, we also are blessed.

At the same time, this psalm challenges us not to keep these blessings to ourselves. We respond in faith to God's goodness by blessing God and others in return. In verse 6, the psalmist proclaims that God works through vindication and justice for the oppressed. Drawing from the exodus narrative, the psalmist then reminds us of the promises of liberation that God fulfilled through Moses and the Hebrews' captivity in Egypt. This way—God's way—is ours.

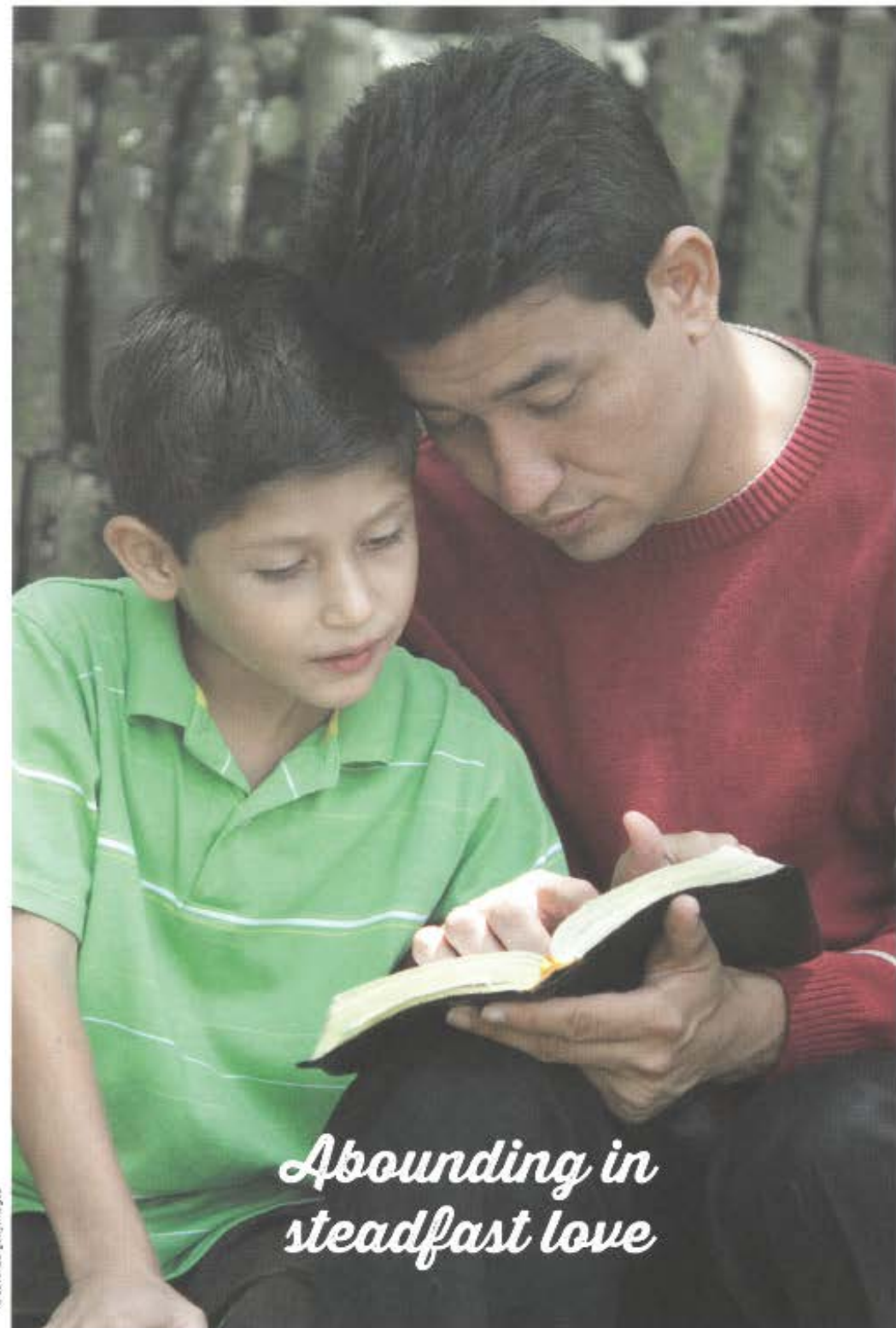
Stop and see the poverty, the violence, the injustices in our country and around the world. They're a painful reality. If we who have received divine blessings do not share them further, we may be denying the same blessing that God desires for others. And when we bless others with tangible gifts of mercy, that returns praise and gratitude back to God. Since we worship a merciful God, whose very nature is steadfast love, the church is called to mimic divine compassion to the world.

In what ways have you been blessed? And how are you called to bless others, and therefore, to bless God?

—Jonathan Stauffer
Polo Church of the Brethren
Polo, Illinois

Text for today: "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD . . . and do not forget all his benefits . . . The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and *abounding in steadfast love*. He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him" (Psalm 103:1-2, 6-11, NRSV). **Bible readings for today:** Genesis 50:15-21; Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13 (8); Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35.

09-17-17, International Day of Peace (21). Printed in the USA
Worship resource © 2017 Brethren Press. www.brethrenpress.com



*Abounding in
steadfast love*

BRIDGEWATER CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
at Worship September 17, 2017 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

RESPONDING

“I am what I am because of who we all are.” ~ Leymah Gbowee

GATHERING

PRELUDE (11:00) Partita on NETTLETON *John Eggert*
 (“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”)

CONNECTING WITH EACH OTHER Jeff Carr
Please sign and pass the *Friendship Register* pad located at the inside aisle of the pew. Signing helps us learn the names of those worshipping near us. After all have signed, the pad can be passed back to the inside aisle.

***HYMN # 21** *All praise to our redeeming Lord* RESIGNATION

OFFERING

Invitation

Offertory

(8:30) We bring our tithes and offerings to the worship center.

(11:00) Ushers receive our tithes and offerings.

Air in D Major (from Suite # 3 in D) *J. S. Bach*

PROCLAIMING

CHILDREN’S TIME (11:00) Jeff Carr
Children of ALL ages are invited to the front of the sanctuary for a time of building upon and connecting to faith through stories and interactions.

ANTHEM (11:00) I Want Jesus to Walk With Me *Raymond H. Haan*

SCRIPTURE READING Romans 14:1-12 *NRSV*

SERMON “Community” Jeff Carr

***HYMN # 322** *For we are strangers no more* STRANGERS NO MORE

REFLECTIONS (8:30) Contemplation and conversation.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Robbie Miller

***HYMN # 407** *We are people of God’s peace* AVE VIRGO VIRGINUM

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE (11:00) March Triumphal: *Sigfrid Karg-Elert*
“Now Thank We All Our God”

* Rise as able in body and spirit.

MEETINGS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE & NURTURE

September 17-23, 2017 (All events are p.m. unless noted)

This is a church events calendar and does not include all building events use.
Please be sure to schedule ALL EVENTS through the church office.

Today	9:30 & 10:30 a.m.	Blood Pressure Clinic	Office Reception
Tues.	7:00	Food Pantry	Social Hall
Wed.	2:00	Pastor's Book Study	Lounge
	5:15	Cherub Choir Rehearsal	Agape Room
	5:45	Carol Choir Rehearsal	Agape Room
	6:30	YORFFs Rehearsal	Room # 35
	7:00	Board of Administration	Seekers Room
Thurs.	6:00	Brethren Student Movement	Carter Center
	7:30	Sanctus Choir Rehearsal	Choir Room
Fri.-Sat.		Child Disaster Services Training Event	

NEXT SUNDAY– September 24, 2017 – 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Worship: 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. – Sanctuary

Preaching: Jeff Carter, President, Bethany Theological Seminary

Sunday School – 9:45 a.m. – Classrooms

ATTENDANCE / STEWARDSHIP FOR SUNDAY: 09/10/17

Worship Attendance: 8:30 – 16 11:00 – 269 Sunday School: 148

Pledges & Envelope Giving	\$16,792.00
Loose Offering	764.00
Disaster Relief	50.00
Brethren Student Movement	400.00
Hurricane Relief 2017	750.00
McIntyre Assistance Fund	2,150.00

PASTOR CHRIS is away this weekend while serving as advisor for the annual fall retreat of the Brethren Student Movement (BSM) at Brethren Woods.

BRIDGEWATER CHURCH OF THE BRETHERN

*An inclusive family of faith seeking to follow Jesus
and live the love of God.*

Our Mission...

As an inclusive community of faith, we commit ourselves to embody the love of God and to share our diverse lives and gifts with each other and the world. Through faith formation, worship, mission, and fellowship we boldly proclaim the peace and love of Christ. Together we work for justice, extend grace, and partner with God to offer abundant life, healing, and hope to our community and the world.

Our Values...

*Sharing life together and including all persons in our common life.
Growing in faith, compassion, and understanding.
Serving one another and our neighbor's good.
Sharing the love of God and the God that is love.*

PASTORAL MINISTRY STAFF

Jeff Carr – Senior Pastor

Chris Zepp – Associate Pastor

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FACILITIES MINISTRY STAFF

Fortunato Correa – Custodian

Phil Flory – Treasurer

Shannon Puffenbarger – Administrative Assistant

Leon Rhodes – Head Teller

Glenna Wampler – Business Manager

PROGRAM & MUSIC MINISTRY STAFF

Kathleen Arndt – Child Care Center Administrator

John Barr – Organist

Jim Benedict – Bell Choir Director

Jeanie Eye – Christian Education Director

Mary Beth Flory – Pianist

Marianne Houff – Children's Choir Director

Ellsworth Neff – Sound, Light, Video Coordinator

Curtis Nolley – Sanctus Choir Director & Music Coordinator

Clarke & Hope Staton – Youth Ministry Coordinators

CONTACT INFORMATION

420 College View Drive, Bridgewater, VA 22812

www.bwco.org / (540) 828-3711

Normal office hours are Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-Noon, and 1-5 p.m.

SUNDAY MORNING INFORMATION & TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS

HOSPITALITY CENTER in the Greeting Hall

Nametags; large-print Bibles, hymnals, & bulletins; listening receivers; and information are available here.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:45 a.m.

All Are Welcome brochures, available in the pews and literature rack, list specific Christian Education opportunities and locations.

PARKING ASSISTANCE: 10:30-10:55 a.m. every Sunday.

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME!

Children are always welcome among us and in our corporate worship gatherings. Activity bags are available in the greeting hall for their use and enjoyment. Additionally, childcare for children ages birth to kindergarten is available as well as a "cry room" for those who wish to listen and see the worship service in a separate room from the sanctuary. Ushers are more than willing to help you locate these resources.

Pianist (8:30) – Cindy Fike

Head Usher – Kevin Keplinger

Decorator – Lori Lineweaver

Deacon Caregiver – Andrea Miracle

Van Driver – Wayne Angleberger

Worship Leader – Robbie Miller

TODAY'S ANTHEM TEXT: Traditional

I want Jesus to walk with me.

All along my pilgrim journey, I want Jesus to walk with me.

In my trials, Lord walk with me.

When my head is bowed in sorrow, I want Jesus to walk with me.

When I am dying, Lord walk with me.

When I am on my bed of sorrow, O Lord,

I want Jesus to walk with me.

© 1987 Morning Star Music Publishers

All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-717854

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE CONVOCATION

In observance of the International Day of Peace on Thursday, September 21, Bridgewater College will sponsor "Peace Through Social Engagement: Dignity, Determination and Declaration" at 7 p.m. in the Boitnott Room of Rebecca Hall. The speaker, Dr. Melody Pannell, is Assistant Professor of Social Work at EMU. The event is free and open to the public.

Praying for Peace



A Self-Guided Meditation

*The Sanctuary of Bridgewater UMC
will be open for personal prayers*

8:00 a.m.—Noon

**Monday—Wednesday
September 18-20, 2017**

and from

6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 21, 2017

*which is the
International Day of Prayer for Peace.*

There will be resources available to aid in your prayers, as well as prayer candles.

Romans 14:1-12 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
Do Not Judge Another

1 Welcome those who are weak in faith,^[a] but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord^[b] is able to make them stand.

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷ We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister?^[c] Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister?^[d] For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.^[e] ¹¹ For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to^[f] God.”

¹² So then, each of us will be accountable to God.^[g]