

**BLOOMING GROVE  
United Church of Christ**

2 Old Dominion Road  
Blooming Grove, NY 10914



**WORSHIP SERVICE  
23rd Sunday after Pentecost  
Honoring All Saints Day  
October 31, 2021 - 10:30 a.m.**

The Rev. Dr. Linda U. Barnes – Pastor  
Janiece Kohler – Minister of Music  
John Hopkins – Liturgist

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**

**GREETING**

Rev. Linda Barnes

**PRELUDE** “‘More Love to Thee’ with ‘I Love Thee’” (T. Fettke)

*Move love to Thee, O Christ, more love to Thee!  
Hear Thou the prayer I make on bended knee.  
This is my earnest plea: More love, O Christ, to Thee...*

*I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, my Lord;  
I love Thee, my Savior, I love Thee, my God;  
I love Thee, I love Thee, and that Thou dost know;  
But how much I love Thee my actions will show.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Hear, O people of God: our God is one. Hear the commandments of our God.

**First, love God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.**

Hear, O people of God: our God is one. Recite the commandments to your children and hold them in your hearts.

**Second, love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these calls to love.**

## **PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Rev. Barnes

O Holy One, Source of all life and Ground of all love, we thank you for your love that never lets us go. Thank you for the privilege of gathering to worship you. We do not come merely to open the doors of the church, but that our hearts might be opened to you and to one another. As we worship today, help us respond to the call of love – to love you, our neighbors, and ourselves.

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

We are inspired by the saints who have gone before us and who live among us.

**We confess we do not easily ourselves in their company.**

We would rather hide from your call to live faithfully to the fullest.

**We hang on to our worries, our fears and old habits.**

We confess our need to break free of these things to serve you with heart, soul, strength, and mind.

**We are truly sorry and ask your forgiveness.**

*(Silent prayer)*

## **ASSURANCE OF GRACE**

Hear the Good News! God forgives. God helps us begin anew, saying, “Do not be afraid! I will never leave you or forsake you.” Know that God who began a good work in us is able to complete it. As we open ourselves to the Spirit of God, may we see more fully the wonder of God already at work in us.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

May the powerful peace of Christ be with you, now and always.

**And also with you.**

## **RAINBOW BELL CHOIR**

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

## **CHILDREN’S MOMENT**

“Remembering Our Ancestors”

## **RESPONSIVE READING**

John Hopkins, leader

### **Psalm 146**

Praise be to God!

**Praise God, O my soul!**

I will praise God as long as I live;

**I will sing praises to my God all my life long.**

Do not put your trust in nobles, in mortals,

**in whom there is no help.**

When their breath departs, they return to the earth;

**on that very day their plans shall perish.**

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,

**whose hope is in the Sovereign their God,**

who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them;  
**who keeps faith forever;**  
who executes justice for the oppressed;  
**who gives food to the hungry.**  
God sets the prisoners free;  
**God opens the eyes of those who cannot see.**  
God lifts up those who are bowed down;  
**God loves those who are righteous.**  
God watches over the strangers, and upholds the orphan and  
the widow,  
**but the way of the wicked God brings to ruin.**  
The Sovereign will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all  
generations.  
**Praise be to God!**

**MEDITATION** “They’ll Know We are Christians by Our Love”

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** John Hopkins  
Beloved Companion, you deal with us kindly in steadfast love,  
lifting up those bent low with care, and sustaining the weak and  
oppressed. Release us from our anxious fears so that we,  
holding fast to your commandments, may honor you with all that  
we are and all that we have. Amen.

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Old Testament Lesson:** Ruth 1:1-18

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had considered his people and given them food. So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back each of you to your mother’s house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband.” Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. They said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.” But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought

there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me.” Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

So she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” But Ruth said, “Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!” When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

**Epistle Lesson:**

**Hebrews 9:11-14**

But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

**Gospel Lesson:**

**Mark 12:28-34**

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

**SERMON**

**“The Way of Love”**

Rev. Barnes

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**HYMN #311 (NCH)**

**“Renew Your Church”**

1. **Renew your church, its ministries restore:  
both to serve and adore.  
Make us again as salt throughout the land,  
and as light from a stand.  
‘Mid somber shadows of the night  
where greed and hatred spread their blight,  
O send us forth with power endued.  
Help us, God, be renewed.**
2. **Teach us your word, reveal its truth divine;  
on our path let it shine.  
Tell of your works, your mighty acts of grace;  
from each page show your face.  
As you have sent your Christ to save,  
in love to triumph o’er the grave,  
O let our hearts with love be stirred.  
Help us, God, know your word.**
3. **Teach us to pray, for you are ever near;  
your still voice let us hear.  
Our souls are restless till they rest in you;  
this is life, full and true.  
Before your presence keep us still  
that we may find for us your will  
And seek your guidance every day.  
Teach us, God, how to pray.**
4. **Teach us to love, with strength of heart and mind,  
each and all—human-kind!  
Break down old walls of prejudice and hate;  
leave us not to our fate.  
As you have loved and given your life  
to end hostility and strife,  
Your grace we must be mindful of:  
Teach us, God, how to love.**

**CALL TO OFFERING**

Rev. Barnes

We give to God because we love God as God loved us. Here is our treasure given in gratitude. Bless our gifts with spirit and with power.

*We dedicate offerings given through our church’s website, placed on the offering plate by the door, or mailed to the church (PO Box 101, Blooming Grove, NY 10914). We give thanks to God for each contribution.*

**UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**God of all ages, in response to the gifts you continually give us, and in gratitude for the saints who have gone before us, we bring our gifts to you. Receive them with our gratitude and prayers, so they will be a blessing to others who seek your mercy and care. Amen.**

**POSTLUDE “Postlude on ‘EIN FESTE BURG’”** (M. Larkin)

**CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

Rev. Barnes

Go forth following as the Holy Spirit leads you, moving in love and compassion, pursuing justice and mercy, and trusting on the God of peace. For the Source of all life and love is as close as your very breath. Breathe deeply. Go in peace. Amen.

**PARTING HYMN #81, ver. 1**

**“God Be with You”**

**God be with you till we meet again;  
By good counsel guide, uphold you,  
With a shepherd’s care enfold you:  
God be with you till we meet again.**

**Refrain**

**Till we meet, till we meet,  
Till we meet at Jesus’ feet;  
Till we meet, till we meet  
God be with you till we meet again. Amen.**

■ ■ ■