



\*The order of service is subject to change at the leading of the Holy Spirit.

**Italicized Bold print** invites congregational response in unison.

\*Means you are **invited to stand** if able and comfortable.

Large print hymnals, large print bulletins, service script, pew cushions, and Listening Assistance Devices are available at the entry of the Sanctuary.

You're encouraged to check-in at NMUMC on Facebook & share our livestream.

**WE GATHER TOGETHER**

**Prelude**

Harlan Otter

**Words to Ponder:**

In this house of God, angels traverse ladders of holy love.  
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Introit**

Harlan Otter

**\*Call to Worship**

Chris Prause

This is none other than the house of God.

This is nothing less than the gate of heaven.

**Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.**

God hems us in, behind and before, and lays hands of blessing upon us.

**Such knowledge is too wonderful for us.**

**It is so high we cannot attain it.**

Rest in the majesty of our God.

Give thanks and sing of God's glory.

**Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.**

**\*Opening Prayer**

Caretaker of our souls, you search us and know us;

you are acquainted with all of our ways.

Your Spirit hems us in, behind and before.

You discern our thoughts from afar.

If we take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead us, and your might shall hold us fast.

How can we bear such wonder?

How can we fathom such awe and splendor?

Breathe your Spirit upon us, and claim us as children of light, that we might be found worthy of your love and care. Amen.

**\*Hymn of Praise**

"Praise God for this Holy Ground"

W&S#3009

**\*Passing of the Peace Of Christ**

Pastor Ed

**WE HEAR THE WORD**

**Prayer of Confession (in unison)**

Chris Prause

Holy Mystery, we yearn to grow closer to you this day.

When our spirits grow unsettled and groan in travail like our warming planet, meet us in our need. When we seek isolation from the rancor of our time, remind us how the wheat and weeds grow together until the harvest.

When we feel captive to the pressures of this world, remind us that we need not succumb to our fears, for you have given us a spirit of adoption as children of God.

Pursue us and hold us near, Gentle One, that we may truly be set free. Amen.

**Words of Assurance**

Pastor Ed

**\*Hymn of Response**

"All My Days"

W&S#3011

**\*1st Reading**

Genesis 28:10-19a

Chris Prause

**Jacob's Dream at Bethel**

**10** Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. **11** He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. **12** And he dreamed that there was a stairway<sup>[a]</sup> set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. **13** And the LORD stood beside him<sup>[b]</sup> and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring, **14** and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed<sup>[c]</sup> in you and in your offspring. **15** Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." **16** Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!" **17** And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

**18** So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. **19** He called that place Bethel,<sup>[d]</sup> but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

*(Musical Interlude)*

**\*Gospel Reading**

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Chris Prause

**The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat**

**24** He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, **25** but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. **26** So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. **27** And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' **28** He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' **29** But he replied, 'No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. **30** Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' "

**Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds**

**36** Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” **37** He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; **38** the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, **39** and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. **40** Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. **41** The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin<sup>[a]</sup> and all evildoers, **42** and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears<sup>[b]</sup> listen!

**Reflecting on God’s Message** “To Dream, to See.” Pastor Ed

**Prayers of the People**

**Invitation of the Offering** Pastor Ed

**Offertory Anthem** Harlan Otter

**\*Doxology** “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow” UMH #95  
 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
 Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
 Praise Him above, Ye heavenly Host;  
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
 Amen

**Offering Prayer** Pastor Ed

God of dreams and visions, we offer you our gifts this day in gratitude and praise for your angels who come to bring us your blessings.  
 May this offering be a sign of our commitment to be a blessing to all the peoples of the earth.  
 Amen.

**WE RESPOND TO THE WORD**

**\*Sending Hymn** “We are Climbing Jacob’s Ladder” (v1,2&5) UMH#418

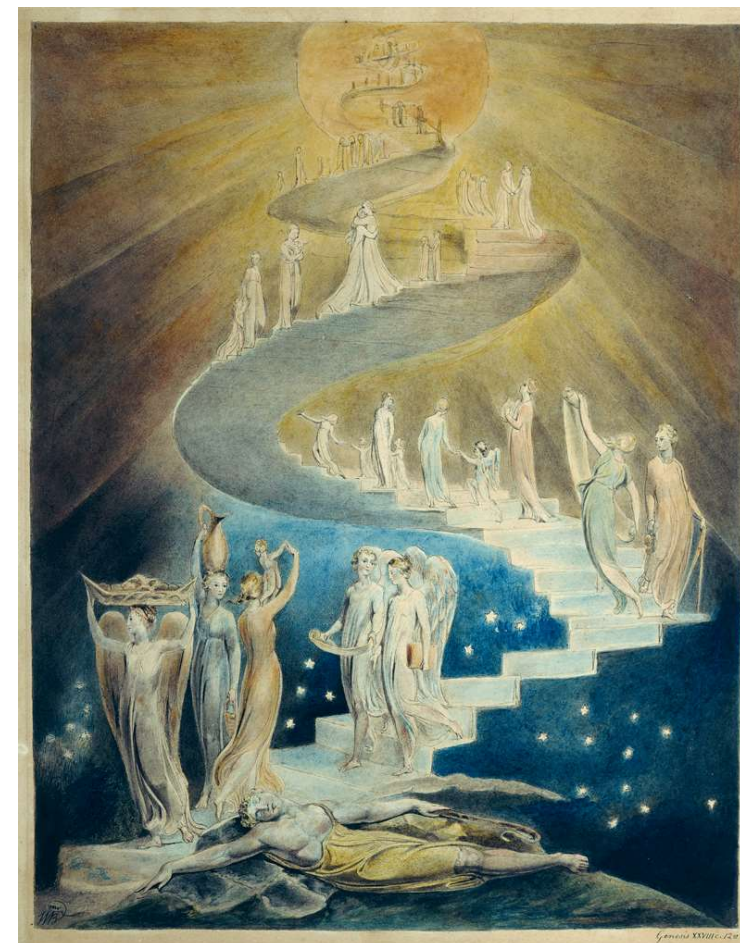
**Lord’s Prayer**

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 into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

**Benediction**

**Postlude** Harlan Otter

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 Pastor Ed Dayton | Music Director, Harlan Otter | Liturgical Arts, Barbara Williams  
 Liturgist – Chris Prause | Ministers: *All members of the New Milford UMC*



\* Blake, William, 1757-1827. Jacob's Ladder

# Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

**7.23.2023 | 9:00 am**

*You are invited to worship with us in the quiet of prayer, in the joy of song, and in the desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD Jesus Christ. Part of our mission is to be a place for all people. All are welcome here!*  
**Whatever your gender identity, age, race, religious background, economic status, sexual orientation or condition of ableness, we greet you as a beloved child of God.**