



Community of Faith Presbyterian Church Sunday, August 13, 2023

Toll free conference call number (844) 855-4444, access code 654132#
Worship will also be connected through Facebook Live

Welcome and Announcements **Lighting of the Christ Candle** **Centering Music**

+Call to Worship

If you come into this place
with the hope of growing deeper,
with the hope of connecting,
with the hope of glimpsing God,
and if all of those things take place,
and your spirit is moved,
and you swear God is near,
and you feel more than lucky for the gift of faith,
and then the service comes to an end,
and it's time for you to leave,
and you ask yourself,
"Where do we go from here?"
Then I would say to you,
"Go out into the world
to love and to share and to learn,
but come back soon,
because this is the beginning.
This is only the beginning.
So come on in.
Fill your cup here.
Be present here.
God is here."
Let us worship Holy God.

+Hymn *For the Fruit of All Creation #36*

Call to Confession

One of the things I love about the prayer of confession is it allows us to claim that we are works in progress, and there is beauty in that.
You don't have to be perfect here. You don't have to have it all figured out here.
You don't have to have a five-step plan for what's next here.
You just have to show up with your messy, beautiful self, and be honest.
So friends, let us be honest. Let us pray the prayer of confession together. . .

Prayer of Confession

Holy God, We are naturals when it comes to stalling out. We reach a certain point in the relationship, in the conversation, in our faith, and then we stall. We buy property on the top of the plateau and build a house there, destined to never dig deeper or climb higher. Forgive us for giving up on the things that matter. Forgive us for confusing the plateau with the mountain top. Forgive us for taking the easy way out instead of doing the hard work of curiosity, relationship-building, vulnerability, and connection. Inspire us to see new paths for where we can go from here. With hope and honesty we pray, Amen.

(Time for silent reflection.)

Assurance of Forgiveness

Family of faith, We are works in progress, but we are works in progress designed, created, and claimed by God. No matter what you have done or left undone this week, today is a fresh start.

Hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

God is with me on the mountain top, and God is with me on the plateau.

I am loved, claimed, and forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Sung Response *Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me v1 #582*

Glory to God whose goodness shines on me, and to the Son whose grace has pardoned me, And to the Spirit whose love has lifted me, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be.

Special Music

Hearing the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, we know that you are always speaking—through strangers and friends, through sunrise and sunset, through random acts of kindness and feelings that stir hope awake in us. We know that you speak through dreams and prayer, through a still, small voice and bursts of overwhelming joy. We know that you are always speaking, but we also know that we are inclined to miss it. Settle our spirits now to hear your word fully. We want to be part of the conversation. Gratefully we pray, Amen.

Scripture Reading Ruth 1:1-22 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. ²The 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. ³But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴These 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, ⁵both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶Then 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. ⁷So 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. ⁸But 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. ⁹The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. ¹⁰They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But 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? ¹²Turn 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, ¹³would 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.” ¹⁴Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵So she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” ¹⁶But 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. ¹⁷Where 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!” ¹⁸When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her. ¹⁹So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?” ²⁰She said to them, “Call me no longer Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. ²¹I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty; why call me Naomi when the LORD has dealt harshly with me, and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?” ²²So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Hymn *I Shall Not Leave From By Your Side (Insert)*

Sermon

Responding to the Word

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that God is a conversationalist, drawing close to us and asking, “What do you need? Where does it hurt? Who do you long to be?” We see this conversational God in Jesus Christ, God’s own flesh, who walked the earth speaking with the poor, the hungry, the lonely, and the outcast. Therefore, we believe that our call as people of faith is to continue this holy conversation with those who look and think like us, as well as with those who share little in common with us. We believe that through these conversations, we are able to catch a glimpse of the Kin-dom of God, so we continue the conversation in hope. Amen.

Invitation to Generosity

You give us so much and we are so grateful God, so out of gratitude to you we want to give something back, something that will bring hope to our neighbors near and far. Whether we give online or through the offering plate, through our time or our talents, we give from the bottom of our hearts. Amen.

Sung Response *In the Lord I’ll be Ever Thankful #654*

In the Lord I’ll be ever thankful; in the Lord I will rejoice!

Look to God, do not be afraid.

Lift up your voices; the Lord is near. Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.

Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People

God of conversation, we are here, trying to be courageous. We are trying to be curious. We are here trying to build connections in this lonely and isolated world. We want to be somewhere other than here. We want to be standing in a place and time that is closer to your promised day— where all are fed, the prisoners are freed, the homeless are housed, and every person knows their worth. And we know we can’t get there without honest and vulnerable conversation, but we don’t always know what to ask. We fear saying the wrong thing. We fear offending, so we eat our words and stay quiet, hoping that answers will come, but they don’t always come. Connection has never been quite so easy for us.

So today we ask for your words. Plant questions in us that, like seeds, grow into a garden of connection. Plant affirmation in us that, like laughter, is contagious and mood-changing. Plant curiosity in us that, like rain, washes away any judgment we carry, replacing it with a desire to understand. And when we have your words in our mouth, and your mind in our hearts, then teach us how to listen. Teach us how to hear the message under the words—the grief, the hurt, the fear, the shame that hangs under sentences like bats under a bridge. Help us to hear and make space for those unspoken truths. Then teach us how to listen to voices that differ from us—voices with different opinions, with different histories, with different perspectives. So that like Ruth and Naomi, Peter and Cornelius), we might move through disagreement and ultimately find you. God of conversation, we are here, trying to be courageous. We are here, trying to be curious. We are here, trying to build connections. It is easier said than done. We need you like we need this community, like we need the sunrise every morning. So draw near to us. Teach us how to speak. Teach us how to listen. Teach us how to find you in the spaces between our words and our ears. And as you do, hear and receive these prayers...

God of conversation, we've been meaning to ask, "Where do we go from here? How do we speak truth? How do we listen for you?" Guide us. Be with us. Hold us. Unsettle us. Catch us. Feed us. Fill us. Meet us here. God, we are open. Pour into us. Gratefully we pray these things and also the prayer that Christ taught us: ***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.***

Going Into the World

+Hymn *God Be with You Till We Meet Again #541*

+Blessing

Family of faith, as you leave this place, may God grant you the curiosity to counter assumptions, the vulnerability to befriend, the bravery to speak your truth, the wisdom to listen, the strength to ask for help, the resiliency to choose love, even when it's hard, and the awareness of the Holy Spirit always beside you.

In the name of the Great Connector—Love itself-- go in peace.

* Liturgy by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

I Shall Not Leave from By Your Side

Chris Shelton

PROSPECT
Southern Harmony, harm. David N. Johnson

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The score consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are as follows:

1. I shall not leave from by your side;
2. Your people, I shall call my own:
3. And when, at last, you close your eyes,
4. May God who binds us heart to heart,

where you will live, I shall abide.
flesh of my flesh, and bone of bone;
and angels bid your soul to rise,
abide with us, and never part.

Where you will go, I'll walk with you.
and to your God, I'll sing my praise,
my heart shall fly with you,
Though joy or pain, may round us roll,

Where you will sleep, I'll slumber too.
the One whose love shall fill our days.
for the death can not of God shall love us do.
the love of God shall make us whole.

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COMMUNITY OF FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AUGUST 13, 2023

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Scriptures for Sunday, August 20

Genesis 45:1–15
Psalm 133
Romans 11:1–2a, 29–32
Matthew 15:[10–20] 21–28

In Our Thoughts & Prayers

Betty Murphy
Ruth Roeber
The McDermott family
Johanna Willis
The Kleier family
Jean Jennings' family
Emille Walden
Kelly Montana
Lynda Jaeger
Ron Carlin
Ella Grace Marksberry

Worship Services

Join us for in-person services at 710 Western Reserve Rd., Crescent Springs, KY. You can also worship with us online via Facebook Live, or by joining the conference call. Worship services begin at 11:15 am.

Liturgists Needed

Liturgists are needed to help lead worship. Please sign up on the sheet located on the welcome table. Thank you!

Treasurer Position Opening

The COF session is looking for a new Treasurer. The position of Treasurer is required by the Book of Order, and entails working with our accounting firm to pay bills, manage pledges and offerings, and report to session and the congregation regarding the finances of the congregation. Training will be provided. For further questions or a job description, please contact Rev. Sharon.

Supporting the Work of the Presbytery and the Denomination with Per Capita

Per Capita is a fundamental way in which all of us, as members of the nearly 10,000 congregations and mid councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) connect, participate and share in the work of the wider church. Per capita is the primary source of funding for the Presbytery, as well as the Synod and General Assembly, and is how Presbyterians mutually and equitably share the costs of coming together to discern the Spirit's leading for the future. It is how Presbyterians are trained to become better ruling elders, teaching elders and deacons, and ministers. It is how Presbyterians are helped to discern God's call in their lives. It has supported our ministries at COF through grants to CLASP, Medical Debt Relief, and for equipment purchases for our virtual church services. Please prayerfully consider donating the \$34 per capital apportionment set by the Presbytery, for each church member. *(Adapted from the Presbytery of Cincinnati's newsletter.)*