

Community of Faith Presbyterian Church

Sunday, August 6, 2023

Toll free conference call number (844) 855-4444, access code 654132#

Worship will also be connected through Facebook Live

Gathering

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Centering Music

Family of faith, this must be the place. This is the place for connection and growth, for community and hope.

This must be the place for questions like, “Where are you from?” and, “What do you need?”

For whispers of: “I’ve been thinking of you,” and, “I’ve been meaning to ask. . .”

This must be the place, because all belong here. All are welcome here. All hurt and joy, needs and prayers, dreams and love, are welcome here.

So, for our call to worship today, we are going to lean into invitation for connection.

I want to invite you to take two minutes and to share one thing that has brought you deep joy this week so that we might begin our service with joy, gratitude, and connection.

God is near. Let us worship Holy God

+Hymn *All People That on Earth Do Dwell* #385

Call to Confession

How many of you have ever had a bad day and found someone offering you unsolicited advice? How many of you have ever had a bad week and had someone rush in

with dozens of suggestions for how you might fix things, as if you hadn’t thought of that before?

We have all been there, and we have all done that. It is part of our humanity.

Our scripture reminds us today that often in the face of hurt, what people really need is not a list of advice or solutions, but the simple presence of love. So let us pray to God today, acknowledging that we are works in progress, and that relationships always come with mistakes and confession. Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, sometimes life feels like cooking with flour— it looks like it should be easy, but we always make a mess. This is particularly true when it comes to our relationships. We so desperately long to say the right thing, to be the right thing, to find the right solution, that we overstep the line. Forgive us for assuming the place you fill. Forgive us for imagining that we, in all our humanity, could possibly fix all the hurt in this world. Instead, give us the grace and the strength to stand by our loved ones in their moments of need to witness their hurt without trying to fix it. You are God. We are not. Teach us how to be a friend. Teach us how to ask, “What do you need?” Teach us how to point to you. Gratefully we pray. Amen.

(time for silent reflection)

Assurance of Forgiveness

Family of faith, no matter how many times we have spoken without listening, assumed without knowing, offered without asking, or rushed without waiting—we are forgiven. God knows our desire and our intent. God knows when we try and miss the mark, and God surrounds us in grace. So hear

and believe the good news of the gospel: Every day is a new day for love. We are claimed. We are forgiven. We are invited into relationship. Thanks be to God for growth and grace that know no end. **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

God of long winters and longer summers, in the words of Paul, do your best to come to us quickly. Come to us with loud praise and joy, or appear to us in a still, small voice. Come to us through friends, or come to us through strangers. Come to us in this text and in this hour of worship, and come to us quickly if you can. We are seeking you. We are always seeking you. With grateful hearts cracked open by love, we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading Job 2:11-13 ¹¹Now when Job's three friends heard of all these troubles that had come upon him, each of them set out from his home—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together to go and console and comfort him. ¹²When they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him, and they raised their voices and wept aloud; they tore their robes and threw dust in the air upon their heads. ¹³They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

Hymn *When the Poor Ones #762*

Scripture Reading Timothy 4:6-13. ⁶As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

⁹Do your best to come to me soon, ¹⁰for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry. ¹²I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.

Sermon

Responding to the Word

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in relationships. We believe in asking hard questions, in showing up for one another, and in sitting together through the pain. We believe in listening with grace, learning with curiosity, and apologizing with sincerity. We believe in asking for help, saying what we need, and trusting that no degree of vulnerability could strip us of God's love. We believe in trying our best and offering grace when our best is not enough. And we believe that God is in all relationships— modeling for us the value of community through the relationships of the Trinity. So we love today, and we strive to love even more tomorrow. Let it be so. 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.

Celebration of Holy Communion

Joys and Concerns

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One of the things I love most about this church is that we are never alone. When someone is hurting in this community, you show up with casseroles. When COVID forced us out of the sanctuary, you showed up online. When it comes time to set the budget each year, you show up with generosity. One of the things I love most about the Church is that on our hardest days and our longest nights, we are never alone.

Job needed his friends. Paul needed Timothy. Jesus needed the disciples. We need each other. So today you are invited to the Table, but know that you are not invited alone. You, your neighbor, your family, your friends, and those you haven't met are all invited. Look around. There is something special here. We need each other, and we are all invited—together. So come to the Table. You are not alone. Let us pray:

God of the here and now, My, oh my, how we need you. This world seems to turn upside down all the time. Our center of gravity feels off. In moments like these, we are particularly grateful for the care you offer and the stability of friends. So today we say a prayer of thanks for the people in our life who take the time to ask: "What do you need?" --For grocery store clerk who helps load our cars, for the neighbor across the street who leaves sidewalk chalk notes, for the friend in the pew who texts when we're not there, for parents and children who celebrate the good in life, for teachers who pay attention, for mentors who offer their support, for what we are thankful for here:

Gracious God, help us to be those people for others. Give us the eyes to see when our neighbors are in need, and the wisdom to ask, "What do you need?" Stop our assumptions cold in their tracks, and instead, carve out space in us to listen.

We are practicing breathing deeply.

We are practicing being still.

We are practicing opening ourselves up to you.

We are practicing listening—slowly and intentionally.

We are practicing sitting with our pain and honoring it.

We are practicing saying what we need and not being afraid to ask for help.

And in all of this, we need you. Oh how we need you.

So gather us in and hold us close. Be with us in our waiting and in our praying. Be with us in our grief and our sorrow. Be in our relationships, that we might be blessed with friends who support us and that we might be the friends who can bless others.

Be with us in this meal, that it might remind us that we are never alone, that you are always coming quickly to our side, sitting with us in the pain, and drawing us together as a community.

With deep gratitude and with true humility, we pray the words your son taught us to pray, saying together... ***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.***

Communion of the People

Prayer After Communion

God of grace, you know what we need even before we ask, and you invite us to your table and welcome us as part of your family. You feed us with your body and satisfy our deepest hunger. We thank you for these gifts. Now send us out into the world by the power of your Spirit that we may be your witnesses, sharing the life-giving news of the gospel. Amen.

Going Into the World

+Hymn *I've Got Peace Like a River #623*

+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

COMMUNITY OF FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AUGUST 6, 2023

Contact

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Scriptures for Sunday, August 13

Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28
Psalm 105:1–6, 16–22, 45b
Romans 10:5–15
Matthew 14:22–33

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.)*