



**Community of Faith
Presbyterian Church
Sunday, September 17, 2023**

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

Regular type, leader reads; **Bold type, all read**

Gathering

Welcome and Announcements Lighting of the Christ Candle Centering Music

+Call to Worship

L: Sing and rejoice! The Lord reaches out to you with healing love!

P: The Lord is our strength and our power!

L: Dance before the Lord, a dance of joy and hope!

P: The Lord brings us joy and lifts us up in hope.

L: Come, let us worship God who is always with us.

P: Let us celebrate the good news God brings to us each day.

Let us pray: **O God, light of the hearts that know you, life of the souls that love you, strength of the thoughts that seek you: to turn from you is to fall, to turn to you is to rise, and to abide in you is to stand fast forever. Grant us your grace and blessing as we praise you this day. Amen.**

+Hymn *For the Beauty of the Earth #14*

Call to Confession

We are a people born of water and the Spirit. We have made promises to be Christ's faithful disciples, and to show his love to our life's end. Although we struggle to fulfill those baptismal vows, God's faithful love endures forever. Confident of God's grace, let us confess our sin and the sin of this world.

Prayer of Confession

Lord, we confess that we don't always turn to you in our troubles. Sometimes we are paralyzed by fear and anxiety. We cannot see "the light at the end of the tunnel." For us, there is only the ongoing darkness and hopelessness. Clear our sight, O Lord. Bind up our wounded spirits! Fill us with your mercy and love. Forgive us when we stray; when we fear; when we falter. Pick us up and place us on pathways of peace and hope, for we ask this in Jesus' Name. (Time for silent reflection.)

Assurance of Forgiveness

Hear the good news! Hope does not disappoint us, for God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us in baptism. Believe this good news and give thanks:
In Jesus Christ, we are 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.*

Anthem

Hearing the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Guide us, O God, by your Word and Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover your peace. Amen.

Epistle Reading **Romans 14: 1-12** Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those 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. ⁴Who 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 is able to make them stand. ⁵Some 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. ⁶Those 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. ⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If 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. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." ¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Hymn *When We Are Living #822*

Gospel Reading **Matthew 18:21-35** ²¹Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ²³"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Sermon

Responding to the Word

Affirmation of Faith

We believe there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus; for we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. We are convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Invitation to Generosity

The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it.

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love. 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

Loving and merciful God, we come before you this day, fresh from a week in which we have been challenged. Some of the challenges have caused us worry and strife; other challenges bring to us clear directions for our lives. In all of this, you are with us bringing healing and peace for our lives. We offer to you names of those who are ill, who mourn, who feel lost and alienated, wondering if anyone cares about them. We also bring to you, loving God, names and situations of great joy and celebration, for you have been in our midst during these times as well as during the difficult times...
(Moment for silent prayer.)

Hear our praises, O God. Bring your loving presence to all these people we have named with our hearts and our voices. For it is in confidence of your abiding love and mercy that we offer this prayer and also pray 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 *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah #65*

+Blessing

Go in peace into God's world to serve and help others. Go in confidence of God's presence with you. Go into this world with messages of hope and reconciliation. Go in love. Amen.

COMMUNITY OF FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

Contact

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Scriptures for Sunday, Sept. 24

Exodus 16:2–15
Psalm 105:1–6, 37–45
Philippians 1:21–30
Matthew 20:1–16

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.

Cornerstone Mission

We'll prepare dinner for Cornerstone on Monday, Sept. 18 and serve meals on Tuesday, Sept. 19.

Farewell Party for Rev. Sharon

On Sunday, Sept. 17, there will be a farewell party for Rev. Sharon after church. The church will provide food by Harmon's Barbecue. Everyone is invited to celebrate Rev. Sharon's ministry with COF!

Work Day at the Refugee House

There will be a work day at the refugee house on Saturday, Sept. 19 at 9 am. All are welcome to help.

Peace and Global Witness Offering

Our Peace and Social Witness Offering is one of the four PCUSA offerings that we contribute to each year. Our world needs peacemaking and peacemakers, now, more than ever. The offering is generally received on World Communion Sunday, which we will celebrate on October 1. This is a call for contributions, beginning this Sunday and ending on October 1, that will be sent to PCUSA, soon. The PCUSA states the purpose of this offering as: "The Peace & Global Witness Offering offers light to those in the shadows and guides us all into the ways of peace. We come together to promote the peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice in our own communities and around the world." 25% of your offering will be designated by COF for use to address local peace and justice issues in our community. Please give generously to this cause.