

# *Faith Presbyterian Church*

*Christians growing in Faith by caring, connecting &  
serving community*



**CELEBRATING GOD'S LOVE ON SUNDAY  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2020  
GOD'S PEOPLE GATHER**

**INTROIT**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

We are called by God,

**Drawn into the church, sprinkled with love, claimed forever.**

We are loved by God,

**Never forgotten, honored and precious, receiving God's blessing.**

We are sent by God,

**To befriend the world, cherish one another, comfort the grieving, lift up the fallen,**

Forever rejoicing in God's gifts.

**OPENING PRAYER**

**Holy One, mold our worship with your tender hands so that the words of our mouths and the whispers of our hearts find their way to you. So shape our celebration with your gracious touch that our prayers find a home with you and our songs bring you joy. Form this service and our lives into an acceptable offering of thanksgiving and witness. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

\*HYMN #430

“Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!”

*Come sing O church in joy! Come join O church in song! For Christ the Lord has led us through the ages long!*

*(Refrain)In bold accord come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!*

*Long years have come and gone, and still God reigns supreme, empowering us to catch the vision, dream the dream!*

(Refrain)

*Let courage be our friend, let wisdom be our guide, as we in mission magnify the crucified! (Refrain)*

## CALL TO CONFESSON

### PRAAYER OF CONFESSON

**Dear God, speak gently in our silence. When the loud outer noises of our surroundings and the loud inner noises of our fears keep pulling us away from you, help us to trust that you are still there. Give us ears to listen to your small, soft voice saying, "and I will give you rest .... For I am gentle and humble of heart." Let that loving voice be our guide, today and always. Amen.**

### A TIME OF QUIET/PERSONAL CONFESSON

### ASSURANCE OF GOD'S PARDON

\*RESPONSE “Glory to God Whose Goodness Shines on Me”

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

### PASSING THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you!

**And also with you.**

Please share a sign of God's peace- a nod of greeting, a wave of hello, a bow wishing your neighbors God's peace, God's Shalom.

## WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

### READING FROM THE BOOK OF ESTHER 4:1-3, 12-17

<sup>1</sup>When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. <sup>2</sup>But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. <sup>3</sup>In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

<sup>12</sup>When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, <sup>13</sup>he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. <sup>14</sup>For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

<sup>15</sup>Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: <sup>16</sup>"Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."<sup>17</sup> So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

## SPECIAL MUSIC

### GOSPEL READING Matthew 5:1-4

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, <sup>2</sup>and he began to teach them, saying: <sup>3</sup>"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

## SERMON

### *"For Such a Time as This, Part 3"*

So there's this story about a pastor who was talking to her congregation one Sunday. She was trying to get them to see how

important it is to have faith. She said, “all you people of this congregation, one day you’re going to die. Do you hear me? All you people of this congregation, one day you’re going to die.” One gentleman sitting in the front pew started to laugh, so the pastor asked him, what’s so funny? The man answered, “I’m just a visitor. I don’t belong to this congregation.” Let’s give thanks right now that Keith and Sheryl won’t be able to say that after today!

And the moral of the story is? Compared to years gone by, we don’t talk about and deal with death like we used to. We are less equipped to deal with the reality of death than people were, say, 100+ years ago. Back then, many more people died at home surrounded by family, instead of in the hospital surrounded by machines. When David and I were visiting Cades Cove in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in July, we heard stories of how when someone died in that community, one of the family members would run to the church and start ringing the bell. Everyone in the community knew each other so well that they usually knew who had died; and so they would all leave whatever work they were doing when they heard the bell and go right to the family’s house to help them with whatever needed to be done. Back then, death was not a stranger and it was not unexpected. And sometimes it was welcomed. Yes, we are blessed by all the progress that medicine has made, but we have also separated ourselves from a very important part of life.

Today Esther and Mordecai have to deal with the reality of death because of an evil plot against the Jewish people. Haman is one of the king’s top officials and he is dangerous. He’s taking out his frustrations on Mordecai because Mordecai refuses to bow down and submit to him. And worse than that,

King Xerxes claims he is going to allow Haman to wreak havoc on the Jewish people. They are possibly facing a whole lot of death. So the first thing they do is put on sackcloth and ashes. They want the world to know that they are in mourning for a tragedy that hasn't happened yet. Sackcloth was not very comfortable to wear. It was itchy and rough on your skin. It reminds me of a wool cowl neck sweater I got one year as a gift from my mother-in-law. And ashes were also a reminder that from dust we came and to dust we shall return.

What else did they do when they found out about the evil plot? They fasted. I see it as kind of like a time out. It's a time for prayer and a time for Esther to consider what God is calling her to do. She knows she needs to go the king, but the details are still a bit foggy. She doesn't want to act too soon, so she takes time to fast and to pray. Fasting is a lost art. Nobody wants to fast anymore, (unless you're getting ready for surgery) and nobody wants to wear uncomfortable clothes like sackcloth. We just talked about that last week. For the women, the question was how long has it been since you wore a dress? Pants are much more comfortable. The point I'm trying to make is that sometimes doing these things that we don't want to do serves a higher purpose. And when we lose our higher purpose, we lose a lot.

We've lost a lot of our formal practices of mourning. 100 or more years ago, you would have worn black and stayed home for some time after losing a loved one. And people came to see you. That still happens today, but not as much. Calling hours are getting shorter and even funerals are not what they used to be. The whole funeral industry is changing and becoming less formal. That's not a bad thing. But it doesn't necessarily help us

deal with death in a healthy way. I'm not saying that we need to go back to how things used to be done, but maybe we need to make sure we hold on to the ways that we still have to come alongside those who are grieving, so they know they're not alone.

What's more important than that? Not much. And so Mordecai tells Esther that she needs to come alongside her people at this crucial time. And so he sends her a note that says, *"And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"* Esther was in the right place at the right time for her people. And how about us today? What can we do with the place and the time God has put us in? In one sense it's really hard when we think of all the people we've known over the years who are gone now. And we need to let ourselves grieve for the people we miss.

I was thinking about Pat Peck and I know we haven't gotten to celebrate her life and mourn her passing formally yet. Her family is waiting until her sister and other relatives in NY can come to Ohio without having to quarantine, and also it isn't possible for their daughter to come home from college because of the rules around the pandemic. One of the last things Pat said to me when I saw her last winter was "keep the music playing." And Pat was a good one to say that. How many years was she choir director? John shared with me how when he first started, Pat did a lot to make that a smooth transition. Even though I only knew Pat for the last two years or so, I could see that twinkle in her eye every time I talked to her. I'm sad to say the last time I saw her was at Ed's memorial service down at Heritage Spring where she was living. Soon after that they closed the home to visitors. But even then she sang along with the hymns and still

had that twinkle. So God bless you Pat and we will wait for the time when we can formally say good-bye along with Dan and Tom and their families.

Even though Faith Church has lost a lot of people, (most recently Pat and Sets), the wider church, the invisible body of believers, will always go on in some way, shape or form. It's in God's hands. The church is not going to look the same 50 years from now as it does today. And it certainly looks different than it did 50 years ago. And I think that's okay. The church has taken many shapes in her 2000 year old history and she's evolving into another one right in front of our eyes.

And here's where our good news comes from today. Mordecai writes to Esther that yes, she should try to do all she can to save the Jewish people. But if something happens, "*relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place.*" The Book of Esther almost didn't make it into the Bible because God isn't mentioned. But here's an example of God working behind the scenes. Help will come- we don't know when or where or how- but it will come. That was true in Esther's time, and it's true today too. We do our best. And we try to be creative and welcoming. And then we give it all to God.

Just to be able to come together as a community and be safe is so important. We support one another in life and death and all the occasions in between. And we are blessed today that Keith and Sheryl will be joining with us. They just celebrated the beginning of a life with their first grandchild. And we are delighted to be celebrating the beginning of their coming alongside and joining with Faith Church today. After our time of silent reflection we'll sing about the beginning of life and the end

of life. That God called our name when we were born and that God will sustain us and lead us out of this life when the time comes. Amen.

## MOMENT OF REFLECTION

### WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

HYMN#522                    “Lord, When I Came Into This Life”  
*Lord when I came into this life You called me by my name; Today I come commit myself, responding to Your claim.*

*Within the circle of the faith as member of your cast, I take my place with all the saints of future, present, past*

*In all the tensions of my life, between my faith and doubt, let Your great Spirit give me hope, sustain me lead me out.*

## RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Presentation

Renunciations

\*A PCUSA Brief Statement of Faith

**We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the church.**

**The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church.**

**In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all the peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in church**

**and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom and peace.**

**In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"**

**Amen.**

Laying on of Hands

Welcome

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Sharing Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

### **OFFERING OUR GIFTS**

Call to the Offering

\*Doxology

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;*

*Praise Christ, all people here below;*

*Praise Holy Spirit evermore;*

*Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen*

### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**All good gifts around us come from you, O God. You have given us life and new life in Christ. As you have given us these gifts, so we offer our time, talent and treasures so that we may be gifts to one another and to our community and wider world, even as Jesus so taught and lived. Amen.**

\*HYMN #435

"We All Are One in Mission"

*We all are one in mission, we all are one in call, our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all. A single, great commission compels us from above to plan and work together that all may know Christ's love.*

*We all are called for service to witness in God's name. Our ministries are different, our purpose is the same: to touch the*

*lives of others with God's surprising grace, so ev'ry folk and nation may feel God's warm embrace.*

*Now let us be united and let our song be heard. Now let us be a vessel for God's redeeming word. We all are one in mission, we all are one in call, our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.*

### \*BENEDICTION

\*RESPONSE     “Glory to God” (words by John Derrickson)

*As we go forth, we'll live each day for him;  
Almighty Lord, who washed away all sin;  
All glory and honor, praise be unto his name;  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen!*

### POSTLUDE

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

A very warm welcome to Keith and Sheryl Williams who are transferring their membership to Faith Church from Bethany Presbyterian Church, Columbus. Keith is a Systems Engineer in Springfield. He is a lifelong Presbyterian, an avid sports fan, an Eagle Scout and an ordained deacon and elder. He has served as clerk of session, church treasurer and moderator of Presbyterian Men. Sheryl is a Clinical Audiologist. She was raised AME but joined the Presbyterian Church after marriage. She enjoys a variety of needlework and sewing crafts, as well as flea marketing. She is an ordained deacon, served as Sunday school superintendent, youth group leader and moderator of PW. They have 4 children and just welcomed their first grandchild, Maya Lynn. Many blessings Keith and Sheryl! We are delighted you are joining with us.

**On Sunday, October 4 there will be a congregational meeting** for the purpose of changing the by-laws to bring session down from nine to six elders, to elect two new elders to session and to dissolve the PNC. We will also install our new officers that day.

**The CROP Walk** will be held on Oct. 4 following worship, we will follow our FISH Walk path and keep our social distance. If you would like to walk or donate, please call Mary Skare or go to [crophungerwalk.org/daytonoh](http://crophungerwalk.org/daytonoh). Our team is FaithPresHH and current walkers are Mary Skare, Ellen Mayhew & Julia Williamson.

*THIS WEEK AT FAITH- -Sept 21-27*

<i>Monday</i>		
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>6:30 PM</i>	<i>Popcorn w/Pastor Zoom</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>10:30 AM</i>	<i>Blankets by Faith</i>
<i>Thursday</i>		
<i>Friday</i>		
<i>Saturday</i>		
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>9:30 A.M.</i>	<i>Sunday School</i>
	<i>10:30 A.M.</i>	<i>Worship</i>

***PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY***

<i>Maria Beimly</i>	<i>David Henry</i>	<i>Jan Schroeder</i>
<i>Bob &amp; Emily</i>	<i>Rick Latimer</i>	<i>Dorothy Standley</i>
<i>Christian</i>	<i>Norma Lresher</i>	<i>Mary Swartzel</i>
<i>Beth Griffin</i>	<i>Betsy Morris</i>	

*To remind us of our connection with the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, please pray for Huntsville Presbyterian Church located at 6490 Fruit Street, Huntsville and their Pastor Ben Beres.*

*Pastor Julia Williamson  
Music Director John Derrickson  
5555 Chambersburg Rd. Huber Heights, Ohio 45424  
Regular Office Hours M- Th 9 AM- 12 PM  
937-233-0873*