

Worship Service: FAITH

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is ____ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Today we'll be looking at the idea and value of **faith**.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask that your Holy Spirit bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and especially forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology, p. 1

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hymns:

For the Beauty of the Earth, p. 2

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us, p. 3

Amazing Grace, p. 4

First reading: Psalm 146:1-7

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

² I will praise the Lord as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³ Put not your trust in princes,

in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

⁴ When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;

on that very day his plans perish.

⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,

whose hope is in the Lord his God,

⁶ who made heaven and earth,

the sea, and all that is in them,

who keeps faith forever;

⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed,

who gives food to the hungry.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Holy, Holy, Holy, p. 5

Jesus Loves Me, p. 6

Second reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸*Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Softy and Tenderly, p. 7

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, p. 8

Interactive Homily: Let's talk more about faith.

- What does it mean to *be* faithful?
 - true; steadfast; make a commitment; stay loyal; “forsaking all others”
- Tell me some things that you've been faithful to in your life
 - kids, jobs, military service, marriages, friends
- What does it mean to *have* faith?
 - to believe something, even if you don't see it; e.g., belief that the sun will come up; belief that God loves us
- Tell me about the different stages of your journey of faith.
 - What was the religion of your birth family?
 - Did you ever fall away from your faith in God?
 - What drew you back?
- I wonder who has gone through a time in life when your relationship with God and your sense of God's faithfulness to you were sources of strength?
 - [Encourage sharing; share a story of your own]

I like this section from *Spiritual Rx*, by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat:

“In the broad scope of the spiritual life, we see faith not as something you have but as something you are in—a relationship. It involves an awareness of and an attunement to God's presence in our everyday experiences.

Practicing faith, then, is like developing any relationship. You have to give it time and attention. It requires you to see, hear, feel, and constantly remember your partner—God. Have confidence in the relationship's viability, even when you are facing mysteries, doubts, and paradoxes.”

Let's pray silently and thank God for the gift of faith.

(Silent Prayer) ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us say the Lord's prayer together:

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, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Hymns:

This is My Father's World, p. 9

It is Well with My Soul, p. 10
Standing on the Promises, p. 11

Third Reading: Quotes on Faith

“Learning to trust—that is the great thing. You realize that you do have to do your work, you have to provide what you can, but also you have to learn to believe that Providence is going to provide all that you really need.” –Bede Griffiths, Benedictine monk

“Seek not for perfect belief, but let your faith grow as you test and find what works for you, as you experience God in your life.” –Pir Vlayat Inayat Khan, Sufi Teacher

Difficulties can be catalysts to faith. During a dark night of the soul, sometimes all we can do is trust that this, too, will pass. –Frederick and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spiritual Rx*

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” –Corrie ten Boom

Hymns:

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing, p. 12

Shall We Gather at the River, p. 13

Fourth Reading: Matthew 17:20-21

“For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Blest Be the Tie that Binds, p. 14

I Need Thee Every Hour, p. 15

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology, p. 23

Hebrews 11

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible....⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.