

+ Our Faith is Built on the Rock Foundation of Jesus +



The Gospel According to Matthew + 7.24-27

+ The People of Mount Zion-Finksburg, Maryland +

Wm. Louis Piel Pastor + Leslie Gabler, Director of Music

Ushers in June Bobby & Bonnie Graham + Morning Prayer Leslie Gabler

The Fourth Sunday After Pentecost + June 25th, 2023 + Worship 9:55 a.m. +

I love this church!

I love its history and heritage! I love its vision and future!

I love the spirit of Jesus which is in the hearts and lives of our members and friends! We aren't perfect but we are pressing on to be more "Christ-like" every day! I love this church!

A Thought "The commandment we have from Jesus is this, those who love God must love their sisters and brothers also." (I John 54.21)

Congregation Singing

**"This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made,
Let us rejoice, let us rejoice and be glad in it....."**

Call to worship

When we pass through the waters,
God is there with us.
When we suffer and feel hopeless,
God is there with us.
When we are joyful and celebratory,
God is there with us.
Whether we feel triumphant or defeated,
God is there with us, always.
Come, let us worship together with Emmanuel,
God with us.

Hymn of Adoration & Praise "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" U.M. Hymnal #89

Opening Prayer

The Critical Need for Personal Foundations of Faith

Congregation Singing in Unity #2226 "The Faith We Sing" songbook

"Bind us together, Lord, bind us together with cords that cannot be broken. (over)

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together, Lord, bind us together in love.
There is only one God, there is only one Lord, There is only one body,
That is why we sing. (Repeat "Bind us together.....")

Informal Moments and We Welcome Our Children & Youth

"Where Children Belong" (in the "Faith We Sing." Songbook #2233) This, this is where children belong, welcomed as part of the worshipping throng. Water, God's Word, bread and cup, prayer and song. This is where children belong."

Reception of our Tithes & Offerings

Offering Response Hymnal #94 "Praise God From Whom....with Alleluia's

Anthem "We Sing Hallelujah When We Say Amen." The Faithful Few

Sharing Some Personal Words About our Holy Scriptures

Morning Prayer - Prayer Leader Leslie Gabler

Our Prayer Song + "People Need the Lord"
"The Faith We Sing" songbook #2244

Let us now pray to the God of light
that we may truly become the salt and the light of the world.
Let us say: **Lord, let your light shine in us.**

That there may be more love on earth, Lord,
we ask you to dispose people to be more understanding
and friendlier to one another
so we pray: **Lord, let your light shine in us.**

That there may be more justice and peace on earth,
dispose all nations to put an end to words of hatred
and threats of revenge, so we pray: **Lord, let your light shine in us.**

That there may be more joy on earth, dispose all those who follow Jesus
to show sympathy and affection to one another,
to be faithful in our friendships
so we pray: **Lord, let your light shine in us.**

Lord God, we pray that your light may shine on all the earth.
However limited we are, let our words and actions
reflect the light of your love,
in the name of Jesus the true light of the world. **Amen.**

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+ We sing the Lord's Prayer Together+

Our Closing Hymn "Marching to Zion" U.M. Hymnal #733



Our Holy Scriptures

- 1. I would like to spend a few minutes with you concerning my book Hopefully OUR book – the Bible – our Holy Scriptures**
- 2. You may ask – which Bible – the protestant Bible, or the Roman Catholic Bible, or the Greek Orthodox Bible, or the Hebrew Bible - and the list goes on - which one**
- 3. There are many different Bibles because of something called “Translations”**
- 4. It may come as a surprise to you but there are no original pieces of what we call “the Bible”. They do not exist.**
- 5. There are a few old ones – it was a joy for Judy and me to see when we were in Jerusalem, at the Shrine of the Book, a very old, the oldest piece of fragment of the prophet Isaiah.**
- 6. This was discovered in a “dig” some years ago. They are doing digs all the time in what we call “the holy land.”**
- 7. What is interesting is that this old piece of Isaiah, possible two thousand year old, when translated, and was compared to the same passage today in a modern translation and the modern version is 98% the same. Credit must go to the monks who hour after hour translated the scriptures word by word.**
- 8. We must also remember that the Bible was not written in English. The main original languages were Hebrew, Greek and Jesus may have spoke a dead language today, Aramaic.**
- 9. What confuses things, is that in translations sometimes there are several possible English words they can be translated from. Different translators often chose different words. So today you can find different wording in different tranlastions**
- 10. We also need to remember and this is what causes differences among Christians when they read the Bible, is that the moment you finish reading a passage from the Bible and say, “this is what that passage means” you are “translating.”**

11. You and I may read the same passage of Holy Scripture and come out with different interpretations. And this can cause radical differences. even anger and division among believers
12. I need to add that the bible is my book, and has been since Sunday school at St. Luks church in Woodlawn. My parents gave me a copy of the Revised Standard Bible in my teens.
13. It is interesting that when the Revised Standard Version came out many people raised on the Old King James version called the new translation a heretic bible and actually had bible burnings to destroy this new translation even though the new translation was more accurate than the old King James that dates back to 1611.
14. I love the Bible, I love the Holy Scriptures but I need to make it very clear, I have a love affair with the Bible BUT I do not worship the Bible.
15. I worship God in Christ Jesus.
16. Some Christians come very close to Bible worship and that almost makes the bible an idol. Idolatry.
17. The Bible, our Holy Scriptures always points beyond itself.
18. I also need to make it very clear that I firmly believe the Bible was written by human beings who were inspired by God.
19. I do not believe God wrote the Bible.
20. Human beings, inspired by God, in their own culture, with their own biases put down in writing what they believe God has spoken to them.
21. We must also remember, and this is critical, that long before what we call the Bible was set to paper, you had hundreds of years of what we called “the oral tradition.”
22. In the “oral tradition” faith beliefs were set down by the word of mouth. And often they differed.
23. For example, the resurrection account of Jesus from the tomb is standard in Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. Jesus was crucified. Jesus rose from the dead.

24. Bu how they tell the story account is very different. Mark, Matthew, Luke and John all had different sources for their materials. The wrote at different times. They wrote for different audiences.
25. Matthew wrote for Jewish audiences. Luke wrote for Gentile audiences. This is what makes Bible study so enjoyable, at least for me.
26. You will often hear the Bible referred to as “The Word of God.” I sometimes use that term but not very often because I feel it is somewhat misleading.
27. For me the “Word of John” is Jesus. In John’s gospel, “the Word became flesh and dwells among us.”
28. When someone says the Bible is the Word of God, that implies to me that everything in the Bible was spoken by God - and I do not believe that is true. I believe some scripture writers gave credit to God for something God never said, nor wanted to say.
29. I prefer the wording, following a Scripture lesson, “This is the word from our Holy Scriptures for the people of God.”
30. The writers of the Hebrew Bible, what we call the Old Testament, often attribute to Yahweh, God, some beautiful words, like “The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want.”
31. The writers of the Hebrew Bible also attribute to God some very harsh or deadly words like God saying to the children of Israel as they made their way from Egypt to the Promised Land, you will the enter the land of the Amorite, they are evil people, therefore you can kill the men and kill the women and the children and kill their flocks.”
32. This is in direct contrast to the New Testament where Jesus says to love your enemy, turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and so on.
33. Did God change from the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures to the New Testament. No, God did not change, but our understanding of God changed.
34. As I have mentioned to you many times, the best picture of God I have is Jesus.

35. Let me share another thing with you that we often say in congregational worship.
36. God is good all the time, all the time God is good.
37. It is critically important to know what you mean when we say “God is good.” What do we mean by good? What do we mean when we say “Good God?”
38. A person can look at the sun rise or the sun set or nature in general and say, what a beautiful world God has created.
39. But reverse that when a tornado hits and houses are destroyed or people are killed, or a tornado wipes out a complete town and people lose everything they worked for, do we say that God is evil.
40. I firmly believe that in creation, and remember the earth as we know it is about 4.5 billion years old, and I also believe that the scientific theory of evolution is the best way to understand creation.
41. What I mean by this is simply, Holy Scripture reminds us that God was in the beginning of creation, the “who.”
42. But modern science helps us understand the “how” of creation.
43. This may sound too simple but I believe in creation the Creator, had a choice, allow the creation to be a puppet or marionette on a string or allow creation to move on its own.
44. If God wanted the creation to be in a “love relationship” with the Creator, God had no real choice. If you force someone to love you then its not really love
45. It is only real love when the person or the creation has freedom not to love but to hate. Often people, followers of Jesus, choose to love, sometimes at high risk.
46. I believe the Creator gave freedom - to nature - to humans who came much later and to creation itself.
47. But the Creator made another decision and this is a very important one.

48. Instead of being like the watch maker who created the watch, wound it up and then cast it into space and walked away.
49. Our Creator has stayed with the creation, in the good times and more importantly, the bad times.
50. Jesus said it better than I can, “Lo, I am with you even to the end of the age.”
51. Even in the worst of times God is present. Where? In the power of the Spirit, and in the lives of others who come to rescue.
52. Some people will use the freedom God has given us in positive ways to build up. And some people will use the freedom, like Putin in Russia, to tear down and destroy.
53. This is true in life today. Even followers of Jesus have choices.
54. There are many different types of literature in the Bible.
55. I do not take a “flat view” of Holy Scripture. That is, I do not believe that all Scripture has the same value. This is where serious Bible study take place.
56. Some passages are totally irrelevant for life today. They come out of the culture of that day and time. Like in the New Testament “wives be subject to your husbands.” Or, “slaves obey your early masters with fear and trembling.”