



KENILWORTH UNION
CHURCH

Kenilworth Union Church
Tuesday, January 18, 2022, 12:15 p.m.
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*He loved constantly, instantly, spontaneously, without thought or words.
That's what he taught me.
Love is not something you think about, it is a state in which you dwell.
That was his gift. Joshua (Jesus)*

From "Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal"

Opening Response

Iona Community

Speaker: When we are happy, when we are full of fun and laughter,

All: God welcomes us.

Speaker: When we are angry, when people let us down and we feel sad,

All: God welcomes us.

Speaker: When we are tired, when we need to stop and curl up and rest,

All: God welcomes us.

Speaker: God of welcome, God, whose door is always open.

All: We are glad to meet you here.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 36:5-10

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.

How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

O continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your salvation to the upright of heart!

Selected Scriptures:

So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen but what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal Corinthians 4:18

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Romans 12:12

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in God, Romans 15:13

so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the holy spirit.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

A Connected Church

Kaji Dousa

Someone once interpreted the scriptures to teach me: “Faith is (mostly) not about you.”

This was a curious proclamation to me, since I had heard so much, even from Jesus, about “ye of little faith.” The ones of “little faith” seemed to doubt the goodness of God, tried to stand in the way of God’s progress. I read Jesus’ words and wanted to be of “big faith” instead. So I willed myself to do faith.

Until I found myself in places of doubt, wondering why God would let certain things happen. Until I sat in church and heard the call to confession and realized that I was doing the very things for which we asked forgiveness. My bigly approach to faith was not working. Instead, the faith I needed might be as tiny as—in the words of Jesus—a mustard seed. That was when I understood: Faith belongs to God.

Faith is a gift. Faith is grace. It is this thing that connects us to the eternal in moments we could not have summoned on our own. Faith is not something that we will ourselves to have, it is given to us freely from the one who has everything to give. We do not will ourselves to faith.

Meanwhile, the experience of faith is everything but passive. Faith is God’s. Hope is ours. Conviction is God’s. The world of the unseen is ours. God does the hard parts. God gives us faith and conviction, assurance. We do what we can to summon hope.

We live in the world with so many things that we cannot see, nor can we anticipate. Hebrews 11 gives us a template for responding to this. Draw on the faith that God gives. If you cannot summon it, that is not your fault because faith comes from God, not from you. And since faith comes from God, when you cannot conjure a sense of assurance, then that is not your fault, either. All you can do is the other part: hope. You can try to orient yourself to a sense of possibility in the face of despair or uncertainty.

God takes care of the rest, whether you believe this or not.

Prayers of the People

Blessed are you O God for your gift of faith and we gather now, grateful that we need only have the faith of a mustard seed—and you meet us there. Please be with us God, as the creator of all possibilities.

We thank you for this church and our chance to pray together here. We pray for our fellow churches, for faith communities everywhere and for the people who amplify your word and your ways in the world.

You know us God, you know our hopes and our fears. You know our confusion and our troubles. Sometimes we hurt others, sometimes we hurt ourselves. So, we bring our hurts to you in this moment of silence, and ask you to heal and refresh us, and we acknowledge those we have hurt and ask you to forgive us. We lay our burdens and our roiling thoughts and our grasps at control in such a whirling time, and for just this moment we rest and breathe in this place: (90 seconds of silence)

We speak names from our Kenilworth Union Church community this week, asking for your

presence and blessing for them: Todd and Cari Viereg, Bob and Amy Viereg, Charles and Cindy Vogl, Sally Volkert-Bissel, Charlie and Casey Waddell, Rick and Cate Waddell, Scott and Laurie Walker, Ann Carey and Gregg Walla, Bill Walsh, Mac Walter and Marion Stanley, Carol Watkins, Ryan and Lindsey Watson, Samuel and Susanne Watson, Allen and Jennifer Weaver, Tim and Catherine Weaver, Debby Weber, Ray and Gay Weber, Tom and Ellen Wegert, Ertem Weinkopf, Steve and Amy Weir.

Eternal and loving God, please be present to those who are finding life difficult. We pray for all who are suffering, for those who are living without—for those who are without the basic needs for living, and for those who are mourning. We pray for our world, where there is political and violent upheaval, where there is illness and famine and no resources. We pray to you as we have become weary and unable to absorb more hard news.

And in our helplessness God, please allow us to claim the promises of scripture—that despair and destruction are never your last words. Pivot our collective worries into hope—even if it is dogged—and enable our thoughts and plans to be the next positive and constructive steps in your divine ways. Align us with you, O God.

In our dealings with one another please help us to accept, apologize, forgive, and to respond with patience. Help us to listen, to understand, and to begin anew. In your infinite goodness, lead us to ways of justice and peace. Create in us a heart for grace and generosity. Have mercy on us O God when we make a mess of things.

We pray for our loved ones and for those we name now, who are need an extra measure of your help and presence: _____(Prayer list names)

We pray all these things to you God our beloved creator. You are our source of possibility, hope, and assurance. And we pray in the name of Jesus, who taught us:

The 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 and the power and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

Blessing

To the four corners of the world be peace,
and on us in this place
may the compassion of God come,
to bless us and overshadow us continually.

To God be the glory. Amen.