

Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren

Long Green and Kanes Rds., near Glen Arm, MD

February 7, 2016

Worship 10:00 am Sunday School 11:10 am

Large print hymnals are available see an usher

This room is equipped with a sound loop for the hearing impaired

*“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;
and the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13)*

Beginning with Praise (9:50 am) “Come, let us all unite to sing” 12

Announcements

Prelude

*Call to Worship

*Hymn “Praise, I will praise you, Lord” 76

*Opening Prayer

Unison Scripture Reading Luke 4:18-19

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

Moment for Mission Terri Smyth

The rest of the story Luke 4:21-30

Unison Confession 703

Offering our Joys and Concerns

Hymn “God, who touches earth” 511

Prayer

Offering our Tithes and other Gifts

Offertory (Please sign the attendance pad and pass it on)

Scripture 1 Corinthians 13

Message *“Lives immersed and drowned”*

*Hymn “Where charity and love prevail” 305 (sing to 306)

*Benediction

*Postlude

* Rise in body or in spirit

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*“The final grounds of holy Fellowship are in God. Lives
immersed and drowned in God are drowned in love, and know
one another in Him, and know one another in love.”
Thomas Kelly, **A Testament of Devotion**, p.82*

Call to Worship

Let me adapt what the apostle Paul wrote at the beginning of his first letter to the church in Corinth, as a Call to Worship this morning.

Please rise in body or spirit and listen.

To God's church here in Long Green Valley:
To you who have been made holy to God in Christ Jesus,
who are called to be God's people,
together with all those
who call upon the name
of our Lord Jesus Christ
in every place —
for he is their Lord
and ours!

Grace to you and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us sing,
"Praise, I will praise you, Lord"
#76 in our hymnal

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your Holy Name; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

For all who Minister, ©1993, Brethren Pres, Elgin, IL, p.86

Unison Scripture Reading

Luke 4:18-19

Last Sunday, we heard the first part of the gospel story of Jesus visiting his hometown and worshipping in the synagogue which had nurtured him as a boy toward an adult faith. This happened after his baptism by John in the Jordan river, and his subsequent 40 days of fasting in the wilderness. "Filled with the power of the Spirit," he then started his ministry, teaching in synagogues throughout Galilee. It was only natural that, along the way, he would visit Nazareth, where he raised.

Today, we will re-read in unison what he read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah on that Sabbath day long ago. The words are printed in your bulletin. Let's join our voices as one in this powerful statement:

***"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."***

And then, according to Luke, Jesus "rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'"

Moment for Mission - Terri Smyth

The rest of the story

Luke 4:21-30

Back to the gospel account of Jesus in his hometown of Nazareth. As you probably know, there is always more to every story. This is no exception. Here was the pride and joy of Mary and Joseph, who learned Hebrew from his elders in that congregation, who probably had stood in that very place when he turned 13 and read from the Torah, as he chose to become a “son of the covenant,” or bar mitzvah. Here was Jesus as an adult, who had begun making a name for himself all over Galilee, “*praised by everyone*,” scripture says (4:15). After having read those words from the prophet Isaiah which we spoke earlier, he rolled up the scroll, sat down, and said, “*Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*”

²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” ²³ He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” ²⁴ And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. ²⁵ But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶ yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷ There were

also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage.²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff.³⁰ But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

It is perplexing to us how people could shift so quickly from admiration to rage. But, you know, we can flip from wonder to anger just as easily, especially if something is said that runs contrary to deeply held convictions. In Nazareth, Jesus extended the words of Isaiah to cover not just the good people of Galilee or Judea, but also foreigners or even enemies. The widow that Elijah helped was a Gentile, after all, in what is today, Lebanon. Naaman, who was healed by Elisha, was from Syria, of all places, and an officer in their military.

Later on, Jesus would tell a story of a “good Samaritan” (Luke 10:25-37), which no doubt upset folks who did not think those two words (*good* and *Samaritan*) went together. Furthermore, he befriended sinners, from prostitutes to tax collectors, which raised the eyebrows of good people all over. Can you imagine? In this episode in his own hometown, the childhood neighbors of Jesus were ready to begin what was later accomplished on the cross - his violent death. All because of what he briefly said... In this story, on this Sunday before the beginning of Lent, we have a glimpse of Good Friday.

Now, it would be easy for us to distance ourselves from what happened in Nazareth long ago, believing that we would never behave like that, or even come close to it. But that would be a lie. There, but for the grace of God, go you and I. This “rest of the story” invites us to step into confession. May Jesus pass through us as we see ourselves for real, and not pretend... Turn to #703 in the back of your hymnal. Take a moment to read it over. After a few moments, I’ll invite you to make it your confession, our confession together, if you are ready.

Unison Confession

#703

Gracious God, hear our confession.

Our faith is uncertain,
our forgiveness slow,
our conviction weak,
our compassion wavering.

We have exalted the proud and powerful,
put down the weak,
saturated the rich with good things,
neglected the poor,
sent the hungry away empty-handed.

We have helped ourselves.

Show us your mercy,

Help us show mercy,

through your Son, our Savior. AMEN

Offering our Joys and Concerns

Offering our Tithes and other Gifts

In his letter to the folks in Ephesus, the apostle wrote the following, as paraphrased by Eugene Peterson in *The Message*. Listen.

“Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn’t love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.”

Those are good words to ponder
as we offer our tithes and other gifts.

Ushers?

Benediction

Near the end of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote the following to those who are immersed and drowned in the love of God:

*“Keep alert, stand firm in your faith,
be courageous, be strong.
Let all that you do be done in love.”*
(16:13-14)

And then he nudged them forward with this blessing, which is good for us, also:

*“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.
My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.”*
(16:23-24)

Amen!