

Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren

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

August 14, 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

“...let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith...” (Hebrews 12:1b-2a)

Beginning with Praise (9:50 am) “Guide my feet” 546

Announcements

Prelude

Call to Worship Jeremiah 23:23-24 (*Laughing Bird* version)

*Song “Awesome God” (insert)

*Opening Prayer Meghan Knight

Hymn “There’s a wideness in God’s mercy” 145

Returning our Tithes and Offerings Hebrews 13:15-16

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

Exercising Faith Hebrews 11:29-12:2 (*Laughing Bird* version)

Sharing a joy, a concern, a word of testimony or praise
(please be brief, and aware of God’s listening presence)

Hymn “Turn your eyes upon Jesus” (insert)

Pastoral Prayer

Scripture Hebrews 12:1-2 (*NRSV*)

Message “*Faith and ADHD*”

*Hymn “O God, in restless living” 557

*Benediction Hebrews 13:20-21

*Postlude

* Rise in body or in spirit
* * * * *

Call to Worship

Listen to the Lord speak through the prophet Jeremiah:

“What kind of God do you think I am:
a pocket God who lives where you put me,
or a God far beyond your grasp?”
says the LORD.

“Can anyone find a secret hiding place
where I won’t be able to see them?”
says the LORD.

“Do I not fill the entire universe,
heaven and earth alike?”
says the LORD.

Rise now, in body or spirit,
and sing of how our God is an “Awesome God.”
The words and music
are on your bulletin insert.

Jeremiah 23:23-24 from the *Laughing Bird* version
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Opening Prayer

Indeed, Lord God, you are awe-inspiring. When we make the time to really become aware of you, your presence in this world - in our very lives - takes our breath away. Even when we can explain, with words of science or philosophy, some of what lies behind what you have created, our thoughts are like baby steps along the way of real wisdom.

Forgive us, Lord, when we lose our sense of awe and wonder, when our worship and work assumes we’ve got you in our pocket, ready to do our bidding.

Yes, you have promised to be with us always.

Yes, you said whenever two or more are gathered in your name that you are among us, and that when we agree - in your Spirit - upon anything, you will honor our prayer.

Yes, you are as close to us as our very breath, nearer than we can imagine possible.

Even so, help us not to take this for granted. We are comforted by your presence. We are also challenged, especially when we wander in directions we know we shouldn’t travel.

Awesome God, you fill the entire universe! Right now, fill this time of worship, fill us. This we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Returning our Tithes and Offerings

We read in the New Testament this instruction for giving offerings to God:

*“Through (Jesus), let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”**

As the plate is passed, ponder how your gift may be a “*sacrifice of praise,*” bearing “*fruit,*” “*doing good,*” “*sharing what you have,*” in ways that “*please God.*”

Say your own silent prayer as you give.

*Hebrews 13:15-16 from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved

Exercising Faith

Hebrews 11:29 - 12:2

Pastor Pete:

In the New Testament letter to the Hebrews, we find a description of faith, which we quoted last week: “*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for*” (Hebrews 11:1-2, *NIV*). Now lest we think that faith is a passive affair, the author of this letter goes on to list a variety of Old Testament characters and how they actively lived out their faith.

Since we are in the middle of the 2016 Olympics, it’s important to remember that faith involves exercise. Like those athletes we see on television, we are called to work-out our faith muscles. To help us keep this in mind, as Beth and Sharon read Hebrews 11:29 - 12:2, every time they speak the word “***faith***,” we will each flex some physical muscle. It’s up to you which muscle you flex. As the Australian women’s Rugby team won the gold this year, how about if we hear this scripture through the Australian paraphrase, the “Laughing Bird” version.

To prepare, let me re-read the definition of faith found in Hebrews, as paraphrased by this Australian version. Have you chosen what muscles you will flex when you hear the word “***faith***”? Good! Let’s practice:

“***Faith*** is the capacity to put all your eggs in the one basket, when even the existence of the basket must be taken on trust and hope. It was the ability to take decisive action based on ***faith*** alone that made our forebears such memorable heroes.”

Well done. Let's actively listen to God's Word.

Sharon: It was by exercising ***faith*** that the people of Israel were able to walk through the Red Sea as though it were dry land.

Beth: The slave-drivers from whom they had escaped drowned when they tried to do the same thing.

Sharon: It was the exercise of ***faith*** that brought down the fortified walls of Jericho.

Beth: The people of Israel encircled the city for seven days, trusting God, and the walls collapsed.

Sharon: Rahab the prostitute was exercising ***faith*** when she harbored the Israelite spies in her Jericho home.

Beth: Because of her ***faith***, her life was saved when those around her who had resisted God were killed.

Sharon: Need I go on? There is not enough time to tell the stories of all the great heroes of faith.

Beth: The stories of Gideon,

Sharon: Barak,

Beth: Samson,

Sharon: and Jephthah;

Beth: of David and Samuel and the prophets — all of them well worth telling.

Sharon: Exercising ***faith***, they did extraordinary things:

Beth: they defeated world powers;

Sharon: put justice into practice;

Beth: and won promises of loyalty.

Sharon: They closed the jaws of lions;

Beth: put out raging fires;

Sharon: and escaped unscathed from savage violence.

Beth: Although their positions seemed weak and vulnerable,

Sharon: they were given strength and became formidable warriors who successfully repelled invading armies.

Beth: The things ***faith*** has achieved!

Sharon: ***faith***-filled women saw their dead loved ones raised back to life.

Beth: Some ***faith***-filled people even endured torture — refusing to cave in and go free —

Sharon: sustained by their confident expectation of the ultimate freedom that comes with resurrection.

Beth: We have stories of others who were publicly humiliated and flogged, or locked up in chains.

Sharon: Others were battered to death with rocks,

Beth: or sawn in half,

Sharon: or hacked to pieces.

Beth: We know of others who lived as refugees;

Sharon: forced out into harsh isolated environments,

Beth: deprived of their basic human rights,

Sharon: and constantly subjected to persecution and harassment.

Beth: Dressed in rags,

Sharon: homeless,

Beth: powerless,

Sharon: and shunned;

Beth: they had to survive as best they could

Sharon: on the edges of a hostile and callous world —

Beth: a world that did not deserve them!

Sharon: All these heroes received top marks for their **faith**,

Beth: and yet even they did not see the completion of all God had promised.

Sharon: Why?

Beth: Because God had even better ideas!

Sharon: God wanted us to be included in the story too, and so put everything on hold

Beth: until we could all be made perfect at once.

Sharon: So, we are by no means running the race alone!

Beth: The air around us is thick with encouragement —

Sharon: all these heroes (of **faith**) who bore witness to the truth before us,

Beth: cheering us on.

Sharon: So let's strip down for the run that lies ahead,

Beth: tossing aside everything that would hold us back,

Sharon: especially the sin that clings on so tenaciously.

Beth: And then let's get on with it — run and run and never quit until we've crossed the line.

Sharon: We can do it if we just (**faith**-fully) keep our eyes fixed on Jesus,

Beth: because he has led the way

Sharon: and become the first to complete this faith marathon.

Beth: He was so focused on the goal

Sharon: that he was able to push on through the pain barriers,

Beth: enduring the agony and humiliation of the cross.

Sharon: He knew that the celebrations would make it all worthwhile,

Beth: and sure enough, he now enjoys the number one seat of honor

Sharon: alongside God's throne.

Benediction

Now may the God of peace,
 who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
 the great shepherd of the sheep,
 by the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you complete in everything good
 so that you may do his will,
working among us that which is pleasing in his sight,
 through Jesus Christ,
 to whom be the glory
 forever and ever.
 Amen.

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