

Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren

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

August 27, 2017

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

“Don’t let the present age keep you in its cocoon. Instead, metamorphose into the new mind, so as to be capable of discerning God’s design...”
(Romans 12:2, Cotton Patch version)

Beginning with Praise (9:50 am) “A mighty fortress is our God” 165

Announcements

Prelude “Reflection” Asper

Call to Worship Psalm 138 (*Laughing Bird* version)

*Hymn “Come we that love the Lord” 14

*Opening Prayer

Today’s Gospel Story Matthew 16:13-20 (from *The Message*)

Affirming our faith 716

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

Hymn “Take my life” 389

Pastoral Prayer

Returning our Tithes and Offerings Isaiah 51:1-6

Offertory “A Chorale Melody” Christopher
(Please sign the attendance pad and pass it on)

Scripture Romans 12:1-8

Message *“Out of the cocoon”*

Commissioning our Church Board

We, as brothers and sisters in Christ, affirm you as leaders called to serve in this congregation. We offer to you our cooperation and confidence, our prayers and support, so that both the knowledge and love of God revealed in Jesus Christ may increase among us and in all of God's creation.

*Hymn (v. 1-4) “Bless’d be the tie that binds” 421

*Responsive Benediction

I appeal to you, sisters and brothers, by the mercies of God to present your lives as a living sacrifice, set aside and acceptable to God.

The love of Christ inspires us.

Do not conform to the thinking of this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may test and prove the will of God.

The love of Christ empowers us.

The love of Christ Jesus will enable you, the love of God will underpin you, the friendship of the Spirit will fulfil you, today and for ever.

Amen!

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Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia

*Postlude “Heart with Loving Heart United” a Moravian tune

*Rise in body or in spirit

* * * * *

message to be posted at

www.lgvcob.org/sermons/2017/17-08-27.mp3

Call to Worship

Psalm 138

- 1 - *Thank you, LORD, thank you!*
- 2 - *Thank you, from the bottom of my heart!*
- 1 - *I will stand and sing your praises
in the face of every would-be god!*
- 2 - *Wherever I am, I turn towards your holy Temple
and fall to my knees in gratitude,
thanking you for your rock-solid love and loyalty;*
- 1 - *With everything you say and everything you do
your reputation continues to go through the roof.*
- 2 - *The minute I called, you were there for me,
you put steel in my spine, gave me the guts to go on.*
- 1 - *When the things you have been saying sink in, LORD,
all the earth's powerful rulers will give credit to you.*
- 2 - *They'll join the party,
singing and dancing in your honor,
celebrating the wonderful things you do.*
- 1 - *As great as you are,
you never think of ordinary people as beneath you,
but you don't waste your time
on those who are pretentious and stuck-up.*
- 2 - *Although I must often walk into dangerous situations,
you protect me from hatred and hostility;
your invisible hand is always there,
keeping me safe.*

1 - *You, LORD, have made plans for me
and you will see them through to completion.*

2 - *Your love is as timeless and dependable as the rock;
you have made us what we are
and you never give up on us.*

from the *Laughing Bird* version
©2001 Nathan Nettleton, LaughingBird.net

Does this Psalm speak for you? If so, I invite you to “stand and sing God’s praise.” Where knees and legs falter, remain seated and let your spirit rise through your voice. And even if you struggle with some of these words, wondering where the Lord might be along the way of your journey, I invite you to stand anyway and allow the love and faith of those on every side to help your spirit rise. “Come we that love the Lord ... join in song.”

“Come we that love the Lord” - #14

Opening Prayer

Grant, O God, that thinking, we may think your thoughts; that speaking, we may speak your word; that singing, we may sing to your praise; that hearing, we may hear your truth; and that willing, we may make your will our own, so that walking forward at the end of our worship, we may walk in your love and your peace, and departing from one another, not depart from you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

adapted from a prayer by Roy Pearson,
in *Hear Our Prayer*, ©1961 McGraw-Hill, Inc. New York, NT.
Taken from *For all who Minister*, ©1993, Brethren Pres, Elgin, IL, p.85

Today's Gospel Story:

Matthew 16:13-20

I need four persons who can speak up loud and clear and read pretty well. You will read from right where you are sitting. Yours are small parts, so who volunteers? As disciples of Jesus, the first three are not given a name in this gospel story. We'll just call them:

Disciple #1 - _____

Disciple #2 - _____

Disciple #3 - _____

Now I need someone to read the part of the disciple named Peter - _____

For the big part, Jesus, I've already recruited Meghan to read. She will be speaking to all the disciples at first, then specifically to Peter, and then to the church for whom this story of Jesus was written down.

Now, guess who the rest of you will portray in this story? You are the church for whom this story was written. Not just the early church, but also today's church. That is, you get to be yourselves. But you need to listen. Can you listen? Good. I thought so.

For this reading, we are using that paraphrase known as *The Message*.

Just as an FYI, a "translation" takes what was written originally in Greek, and seeks to translate it to English, word for word (as much as possible). However, it needs to make sense. The words need to fit together. Different languages place words in different orders, so a translation needs to be how we would speak it today, as much as possible. A "paraphrase" does not go word for word. It seeks to

convey complete thoughts, and may put words in a very different order than the original. Generally, paraphrases use more words than the original, so as to somewhat explain what is happening, or what is being said. We use translations for study purposes, to be more exact. We use paraphrases for devotional or worship purposes, to catch the drama. There are many, many translations, like the *New Revised Standard*, the *New International*, or the *King James* versions. There are also many, many paraphrases, like the *Living Bible*, *The Message*, *The Good News Bible*, and that Australian version we sometimes use, known as the *Laughing Bird* version.

So, we turn now in *The Message* to the 16th chapter of Matthew, to read today's Gospel Story found in verses 13-20. It takes place on the lower slope of Mount Hermon, overlooking the valley of the Jordan as it flows south to the sea of Galilee. The town itself was built by King Herod, and enhanced by his son Philip in honor of the Roman Emperor, Augustus Caesar. Therefore, it is called Caesaria (Caesar-ria) Philippi (Philip-pi – do you get that: Caesar and Philip?) It is interesting that this gospel story, which identifies Jesus for the first by his disciples, takes place here, a luxurious getaway connected to emperor and king. This location is outside of Galilee, the home base of Jesus and his disciples. Now, I doubt Jesus was anywhere near the grand resort, if you will, of the king of Israel that is here. No, he and the twelve are where the common, everyday folks live, in their village.

Now, are my readers ready? Your parts will be on the screen... Listen to the Gospel, the good news.

N - *When Jesus arrived in the villages of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples,*

Jesus - *“What are people saying about who the Son of Man is?”*

N - *They replied,*

Disciple #1 - *“Some think he is John the Baptizer.”*

Disciple #2 - *“Some say Elijah.”*

Disciple #3 - *“Some say Jeremiah
or one of the other prophets.”*

N - *He pressed them,*

Jesus - *“And how about you? Who do you say I am?”*

N - *Simon Peter said,*

Peter - *“You’re the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”*

[Did you catch that? Not far from the *Mar Lago* of his day, Peter thought big. The children of Israel have been waiting a long, long time for God’s deliverer, the Messiah, the anointed One, the Christ, to arrive on the scene. That’s big news. And Caesars, the rulers of the Roman Empire, often proclaimed themselves the “Son of God.” Talk about “huge.” Now, making such a confession within earshot of dictators is dangerous business, which explains the very last thing Jesus says in this story. But were getting ahead of ourselves. Listen further.]

N - *Jesus came back,*

Jesus - *“God bless you, Simon, son of Jonah! You didn’t get that answer out of books or from teachers. My Father in heaven, God himself, let you in on this secret of who I really am. And now I’m going to tell you who you are, really are. You are Peter, a rock.”*

[*Petros*, in Greek, the name *Peter* means *rock*. This disciple will need a rock-solid soul for the days that lay ahead, not just for the events that will soon lead to a cross, but for the life that is to be lived out of the empty tomb and the Pentecostal birth of the church. Speaking of which, it is like – at this point in the story – Jesus turns his attention from Peter and faces the people who will be called into being after the resurrection: the Jesus movement of the Spirit, the body of Christ, the church – that is, YOU ALL. To really live out our faith, we need a rock-solid backbone, and good legs to follow Jesus. Listen to what he has to say to us today.]

Jesus - *“This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out. And that’s not all. You will have complete & free access to God’s kingdom, keys to open any & every door: no more barriers between heaven & earth, earth & heaven. A ‘yes’ on earth is ‘yes’ in heaven. A ‘no’ on earth is ‘no’ in heaven.”*

N - *He swore the disciples to secrecy. He made them promise they would tell no one that he was the Messiah.*

Affirming our faith

No one can lay any foundation
other than the one already laid,
which is Jesus Christ.

**In Christ the whole building is joined together
and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.**

**And in Christ we too are being built together
to become a dwelling in which God
lives by the Spirit.**

As we come to Christ, the living Stone -
rejected by builders but chosen by God -
we also, like living stones,
are being built into a spiritual house
to be a holy priesthood,
offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God
through Jesus Christ.

**So then we are no longer foreigners and aliens,
but citizens with God's people
and members of God's household,
built on the foundation
of the apostles and prophets,
with Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone.**

Hymnal #716, ©1992 The Hymnal Project,
based on 1 Corinthians 3:11-13, 1 Peter 2:4-5,
and Ephesians 2:19-22, New Revised Standard Version

Sharing a joy, a concern,
a word of testimony or praise

Hymn

“Take my life” #389

Pastoral Prayer

Lord, we hear the wonderful words from Matthew's gospel in which Simon Peter acknowledges Jesus as the Christ, the son of the living God. He is given the name Peter, the rock upon whom the church will be built. We would like to be the kind of “rock” that Jesus could count on – to be strong in the face of adversity; brave when danger is present; compassionate when sorrow and strife prevail. You have called us to be your church and we ask for your transforming love that we might be better witnesses for you. Today we name in our hearts before you people that we love who are dealing with sorrow and illnesses; people who feel abandoned and alone; people who are entering schools and colleges, military service, the workforce. We also name those people and situations filled with joy and hope; a new home, the birth of a child, celebrations of special occasions, and often just a beautiful day. Hear the cries of our hearts to you, O God. Heal and transform lives. For we ask these things in Jesus' Name.
AMEN.

by Nancy C. Townley
an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church
from ministrymatters.com

Returning our Tithes and Offerings

Isaiah 51:1-6

As we shift to a time of offering to God our monetary gifts, let's pay attention to the prophet Isaiah, who makes clear (like all God's prophets do) that our creator is interested in more than our wallets. Open your and ears, sisters and brothers, and pay attention.

- 1 - Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the LORD.
- 2 - Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.
- 1 - Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.
- 2 - For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden,
 - 1 - her desert like the garden of the LORD;
 - 2 - joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.
- 1 - Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation;
- 2 - for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples.
- 1 - I will bring near my deliverance swiftly,

- 2 - my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples;
- 1 - the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope.
- 2 - Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
 - 1 - and look at the earth beneath;
 - 2 - for the heavens will vanish like smoke,
 - 1 - the earth will wear out like a garment,
 - 2 - and those who live on it will die like gnats;
 - 1 - but my salvation will be forever,
 - 2 - and my deliverance will never be ended.

from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*,
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National Council of the Churches of Christ
in the United States of America.
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Ushers, come forward and guide our giving.

Offertory

Romans 12:1-8

Message

Commissioning our Church Board

The end of summer is a time for turning a page in the life of our church. In a few weeks, our Sunday School program will resume, and we'll celebrate that fresh beginning. After our service today, the persons whom you have called to lead this congregation as our Church Board, will start a new year with a picnic. After consuming burgers, hot dogs and other goodies, your board will reorganize itself and get up to speed on the immediate needs facing us. We'll also look down the road of this new year and do some initial dreaming and planning in an enjoyable picnic setting. Before doing so, let's formally commission them to this task. Pray with me.

O God, we give thanks for those who have said "yes" to your call in Christ Jesus to be workers together with you. In their work, help them to live out their faith and witness. Grant us grace that we may all present our gifts and talents to be used for your glory and our neighbor's good. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Would all who have been called to serve on our church board, officially or ex officio (that is, those who are given the power to make decisions, and those who assist them in doing so) please stand.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, God has called you to lead this congregation in various ways, focusing on our inner growth or our outer mission, as well as the stewardship of the means to accomplish both. We thank God for each of you and for your willing response to this call. We believe that God will empower you for this

ministry among us. Please respond to the following questions.

Do you willingly accept this responsibility, and do you promise to be faithful in fulfilling your call?

If so, say "We do."

Will you endeavor to live a life worthy of this trust, living out your faith and seeking the guidance of God through the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and your brothers and sisters in Christ?

If so, say "We will."

Will you be creative, redemptive, and cooperative as you work together in common tasks?

If so, say "We will."

Will you attend all meetings of the board and the commission on which you will serve, coming prepared to faithfully do what you are called to do?

If so, say "We will."

Will the congregation now stand?

Congregation: We, as brothers and sisters in Christ, affirm you as leaders called to serve in this congregation. We offer to you our cooperation and confidence, our prayers and support, so that both the knowledge and love of God revealed in Jesus Christ may increase among us and in all of God's creation.

As a co-worker in Christ, I declare you installed as leaders, of the Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren, in the name of God who created us, Jesus Christ who redeemed and leads us, and the Holy Spirit who empowers us. Amen.

The above commissioning service
is heavily adapted from *For All Who Minister*
(a manual for ministry in the Church of the Brethren)
© 1993 Brethren Press

Hymn

(v. 1-4) "Bless'd be the tie that binds" #421

Responsive Benediction

1 - I appeal to you, sisters and brothers,
by the mercies of God to present your lives
as a living sacrifice, set aside and acceptable to God.

All - *The love of Christ inspires us.*

2 - Do not conform to the thinking of this age
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
that you may test and prove the will of God.

All - *The love of Christ empowers us.*

1 - The love of Christ Jesus will enable you,

2 - the love of God will underpin you,

1 - the friendship of the Spirit will fulfil you,

2 - today and forever.

All - *Amen!*

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Postlude