

Faith United Church of Christ

“An inclusive spiritual family shaping a better you for creating a better world.

A place to make a difference.”

October 15, 2017

Sacred Fellowship 10:45 a.m.

We are delighted that you are here today! We hope you will find us an affirming, uplifting, and committed family of faith. Here we work to make everyone, without any exceptions, to feel accepted, inspired, and encouraged in their spiritual journey. In dialogue, we seek to understand. In encouragement, we seek to heal. In all things we yearn to live by love, for peace, with joy. This is a place where your intellect will be challenged, your heart will be nurtured, and your spirit refreshed. Varying beliefs are expressed openly and freely, and your doubts will not be suppressed. We trust that we are all, every person and part of creation, continuing to be blessed by God's grace; and that in community we can help each other to see this grace alive in our lives and relationships. We hope to share our gifts with you, even as we pray that you will want to share your gifts with us. Whoever you are and wherever you may be in your life's journey, we invite you to be a part of our lives and our spiritual home. Welcome!

POINTS TO PONDER

“Let your gentleness be known to everyone.”

— Philipians 4.5

“The word translated as gentleness may also be translated as forbearance. This is not a gentleness that is merely meekness, but rather an intentional and strong-willed attitude towards life. Paul begins the chapter, in fact, by saying, ‘stand firm.’ Gentleness is the outcome of a loving disposition towards others. As Christ loved, so too are we. We are to want the best for others, and we are to act in their spiritual interests. To do this we need to treat them with not only respect, friendliness, and civic decency; but foremost with gentleness. Are we not most enamored by the sweet, tender, and endearing marks of gentleness? Is it not what we’ve yearned for since babies in our parents arms? When someone is gentle with us, especially in times where others would not be, we are drawn into feeling safe and secure in the knowledge that we are loved. And if you want others to know that you love them, be gentle. It is what it is to ‘be of the same mind/attitude’ as Christ.”

— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 10/12/2017

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

— Philipians 4.6

“We may feel intimidated by mega-churches that preach a gospel of prosperity, or worried about the financial or physical challenges facing our own congregation. Paul writes words that are both stirring and gentle: ‘Rejoice...do not worry about anything...pray...the peace of God will guard your hearts...keep on doing the things you have learned and received....’ What are the challenges your church faces, and the questions that arise about God's call and direction in the life you share as a community of faith? What are the ‘true,’ ‘honorable,’ ‘just,’ ‘pure,’ ‘pleasing,’ and ‘commendable’ things that you think about, together? What or who are the ‘guides’ for your congregation that give

you direction and vision? How often do you think long-term and big-picture about these values? Do the everyday, month-to-month, and year-to-year activities and programs sometimes lose this focus? What are moments when you could feel ‘the God of peace’ in your midst, in both recent history and in the shared story of your congregation? How can you tap into that source of peace as a means of hearing the Still-speaking God's voice, still speaking to your church today, through these words of Paul addressed to a small, struggling, counter-cultural church long ago?”

— Reflection on Philipians 4.1-9 by Kathryn Matthews at ucc.org

“The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

— Philipians 4.7

“When we live by the virtues and values of Christ, the peace we have is not an absence of conflict, pain, or suffering; but rather presence of hope, faith, and resolve despite circumstances that often seem beyond our control. The peace of God is not liberation from anguish, mourning, and heart-break, but a freedom that comes from the assurance that God is present with us in all things and loves us unconditionally. This trust in our worth and value in God's eyes strengthens us when hard times come our way – as it did for Paul in prison. It reminds us to keep acting as God would have us to act – not considering the results, which are in God's hands, but simply to be faithful to God's ways come what may. This is why we ‘do not worry about anything’ – for we are not asked to be successful in what we do, but rather to be faithful in what we do. Of course, we will be concerned about injustice, oppression, and other sufferings and we are to work to alleviate all of these diligently. These are to be worrisome to the degree that we take action and ‘stand firm’ for resolving them as best we can. But they are not existentially worrisome in the sense that their presence in our lives and world keeps us from affirming the blessing of living meaningfully and purposefully in accordance with God's calling regardless of the likelihood of success we have in achieving our ends.”

— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 10/12/2017

“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

— Philipians 4.8

“Living gently and peaceably with others is not something that simply happens to us. We have to train our minds and bodies to these virtues day by day. Knowing what is true, doing what is honorable and just, thinking with purity of heart and mind, and behaving in a way that is pleasing to and commendable to others requires diligent practice and habituation. Instinct would have us to lash back at those who cause us suffering in any way, but gentleness and peace come from looking not to the aggression against us as much as the response of love we are to have towards others in all things. We won't do what is praiseworthy if we don't think, pray, and meditate about on that which is praiseworthy – and doing so not because we will be praised, but simply because it is the right thing to do. Our attitudes, as well as our actions, therefore are countercultural. We are led by a ‘Holy Spirit,’ not the spirit of aggression, retribution, vengeance, and behaviors that is the response of those not centered in God's ways. Excellence of action requires excellence of thought and attitude.”

CALLED TOGETHER AS SPIRITUAL FAMILY

Welcome and Announcements

*Please sign the registration pads at the ends of the pews on the center aisle.
We ask that you please shut off cell phones and practice quietness during the service.
Please join us for fellowship and refreshments after the worship
in Romig Hall (lower level of elevator or stairs).*

* = You are invited to stand as you are able

Prelude "Keep us, Lord, by Thy Word" D. Buxtehude

Welcoming the Light of Love in Our Midst (acolytes light altar candles)

*We prepare ourselves for communing with the sacred as love's light is brought into our awareness.
The light of love burns within and among each of us, and we carry that light into our sanctuary; visually reminding us of the image of the divine that lives in our hearts, minds, and souls – and that we nourish through our faith-filled fellowship.*

Affirming God's Presence in Us All "You Matter!"

Sharing Christ's Peace

As a sign of our reconciliation with God and one another, greet and welcome those around you and share "the peace of Christ."

***Hymn for the Heart of Faith** "As the Earth Turns upon Its Axis" *insert*

*Centering Our Souls

Your Spirit, O God, is that of gentleness – a deep abiding care for us in all circumstances, and a desire for to live in love and compassion with others.

When we too live in gentleness, we reap of that joy which accrues from doing good towards others.

Others, too, are made more joyful, peaceful, and secure when we reveal to them our tenderness of heart towards them.

Deeds of loving-kindness bind us together as spiritual siblings, creating harmony in our relationships.

You who are divinely wise remind us that the joy and peace you supply is not that which is devoid of human sufferings, but is an assurance that following your ways will be the most meaningful and purposeful path we can take.

While we are troubled by all that is not right in our world, we nevertheless trust that our faithfulness will a blessing to others as well as ourselves.

And so we do not worry for how things may or may not turn out. Our faith is that you will bring all things to fruition if we will simply follow Christ's lead.

We may not always understand why things happen as they do, but we are confident that to love others, all others, is the noblest and most honorable life for us to live.

Therefore, we will always think and act on those things which are true, just, pure, and commendable in your sight.

Teach us to be tender with one another; for this is what it means for us to be excellent in loving.

In the manner of Christ, may we be self-giving and other-promoting.

May all whom we meet know us to be people of gentleness and loving-kindness. May it be so, now and always.

Our Stories of Random Acts of Kindness & Intentional Deeds of Compassion

WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES

Choral Anthem Non nobis Domine by William Byrd

A Time for All God's Children

Prayers

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer Jesus Taught (unison) *Please feel free to do the version you know, or the one below:*

"Our heavenly Creator, sacred be your name: your kin-dom* come, your will be done, on earth as if in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen"

*"Kin-dom" is an inclusive, non-authoritarian, and egalitarian term that reminds us that we are all "kin" as the children of God.

***Hymn Loving Nurture** "The Care the Eagle Gives Her Young" #468

Scripture Lesson Philippians 4.1-9

Message "A Spirituality of Gentleness"

***Hymn for Gentle Living** "Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness" #286

WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO GOD'S SERVICE THROUGH FAITHFULNESS

Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

"Generosity arises from gratitude like heat arises from fire. Like fire, gratitude is lovely to see; but when it warms others with generosity, that is when it becomes a true blessing."

Offertory "Organ Improvisation"

***Song of Dedication**

Tune: Old Hundredth; p. 7

When we give thanks, then go to sow; Our blessings are assured to grow.

We are not known by what we keep; We're known by deeds that others reap.

***Unison Prayer of Dedication**

O God who prods us to be earnest in caring, dutiful in sharing, joyful in giving, and abundant in gratitude: We pray that these tithes of our income, and offerings of our spirit, will be blessed for your purposes near and far. We are doubly blessed in our giving – being able to, and doing so freely from our hearts. Remind us not to be prideful in giving, nor ashamed in receiving; for we are here for each other – sowing seeds of compassion that will feed the world, and together reaping a harvest of peace. May it be so.

***Encouragement for the Journey**

When we see the world, all its peoples, all its creatures, and all creation as the whole community of God, our hearts are warmed, our minds are bedazzled, and our spirits are lifted. For in all that we experience, we come to understand that we are all one family. Everywhere we go is home. All whom we meet are our siblings. And in this hope and expectation that unity may abound, we draw closer to making that unity a reality. In your thoughts and perceptions, in your emotions and sentiments, in your words and gestures, and in your actions and practices, show the world that you love the world. Be a friend to the friendless, a giver to the one with less, a receiver to the generous of heart, a caretaker for the one in need, and a beloved to the one with love abundant so that you may help bring peace, justice, and harmony to all your relationships – near and far. Go, be good!

Postlude

Gigue in C Major

D. Buxtehude

***The Light of Love Goes into the World**

Love's light is not extinguished from our worship, but is transferred from the flame of the candles to the passion in our hearts that we may go forth to let the light of love shine through us as we go to serve in the world!

WE GO FORTH AS PEACEMAKERS TO CREATE JUSTICE FOR ALL

*Our worship is fulfilled, and our purpose is confirmed,
through our service as God's stewards to the world and all creation.*

*Use the blessings God has given you as you share
the joy in your heart, the wisdom in your mind,
the love in your spirit, and the peace in your soul.*

Thank you for sharing sacred fellowship with us.

Faith UCC is an open and affirming church, embracing diversity in our congregation and community, and affirming the dignity and worth of every person. We are an inclusive community of faith that celebrates God's presence through worship and the sharing of God's word. We welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of the church, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, capability, or circumstance of life.

Our Ministry

Ministers — All the Congregation

Ushers — Tina Aumiller

Liturgist —

Acolyte —

Reiss

Fellowship — Women's Guild

Interim Pastor — Rev. Bret Myers

Trustee — Neil Christy

Children's Message —

Nursery — Jean Frank, Jean Cole, Emily

Church Staff

Custodian — Scott Luzier

Organist—Mark Ferraguto

Church School Coordinator — Barbara Chellman

Choir Director — Mike Dolan

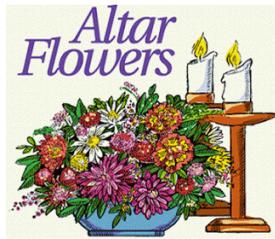
Administrative Assistant — Jeff Stormer

The liturgies for this morning's worship, along with the Song of Dedication, were written by Rev. Bret S. Myers except where otherwise noted.

Prayers for healing and wholeness:



The family of Jean Weller, The Family of Linda Merchant, Lisa B. (JoAnn's daughter), Brandon G., Lisa Neidigh, Bunnie Hartswick, Katelynn Wilson, Darlene Ripka, April S., Randy Brown (Aimee's Dad), the Piggot family, Robert Zupp (Eileen Pfaff's nephew)



Altar Flowers
 Courtesy of Linda and Tom Daubert
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Welcome to all first-time (and returning) guests to Faith UCC! We would like to get to know you and for you to get to know us. Join us after worship for coffee and conversation. There is free parking on Sundays at the meters and at the McAlister & Pugh Street parking garages – so, we hope you'll worship with us again next Sunday!

Electronic Giving Options: During the offering time in the service, you may place your offerings on the plates the ushers will bring around. If you prefer to give electronically simply **scan the QR**



code with your smart phone to be directed to our online donation page.

October Special Offering

Neighbors in Need (<http://www.ucc.org/nin/>) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

Please note “NIN” in the memo line of your check or on the offering envelope.



- **October 15** Congregational Meeting/Workshop: The Church Profile
 Immediately after service
- **CROP Walk Registration: 1 PM, Start: 2 PM**
- **October 16** Consistory Meeting 7 PM
- **October 22** 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
- **October 29** 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time
- **October 31** 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation
- **November 5** 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Get In Touch with Us!

Faith United Church of Christ, 300 E. College Avenue, State College, PA 16801
 Tel: (814) 237-3904 Websites: www.faithuucc.info, [facebook.com/SCFaithUCC](https://www.facebook.com/SCFaithUCC)

Church Office Email: faithucc@comcast.net
 Church Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Pastor's Email: revbmyers@yahoo.com
 Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Fridays

Please make an appointment with Rev. Myers if you would like to meet with the pastor.
 You may call the church office, or his cell at 608-370-9472.

Announcements can be found here: <http://www.faithuucc.info/news.html>

Nourishment for the Journey

"Nothing is so strong as gentleness. Nothing is so gentle as real strength."
 — Ralph W. Sockman

I have frequently heard it said of ministers and pastors that they need to be 'thick-skinned.' And while I recognize the context that comes out of given that clergy are so often subject to criticism, it has never resonated with me. What an odd characteristic for someone who is supposed to be the epitome of gentleness, tenderness, loving-kindness, and peaceableness.

We teach others how to be by being what we value. I have no intention to harden other people or myself. There is too much hardness in the world. I desire a softer place to reside, and I aim to contribute to that softness. Yes, we 'thin-skinned' people are more prone to bleed, but our sensitivity to the abuses of the world remind us of how to be sensitive to and gentle with others. God forbid that I become so walled up and unempathetic that I am not spiritually wounded by the animosities of others.

People lash out when they are in pain. Their pain does not justify their infliction of pain on others, but it does make their cruelty more understandable. It also reminds us not to take their nastiness as a result of who we are but rather who've they allowed themselves to become.

Everyone goes through pain; it is inescapable in life. But how we respond to it matters.

Joyful souls tend to be gentle souls. It is not that they haven't suffered, though. Indeed, the most tender and gentle of souls are often the ones who have suffered the most. They realize how torturous life can be, and they don't want anyone to have to go through what they have themselves. They bear the scars of their hardships; and yet, they know a peace that results not from their circumstances, but from a faith that tenderness, not ruthlessness, and gentleness, not callousness, are the only ways to find peace in a world that is too often not peaceful.

I'm thankful to be a thin-skinned, 'sensitive soul.' Without the agony I've felt from senseless inhumanity, I might end up apathetic, dispassionate, and unkind. While I never want to suffer, or have anyone else suffer, my resolve to make the world a kinder, gentler, place has grown because of that suffering. Compassion literally means, 'with suffering.' When we allow ourselves to develop thick-skins, something God did not give us at birth, we may feel we are protecting ourselves from the harshness of life, but we are indeed only making ourselves more harsh. When I hear of another's

suffering, or experience my own, I am bound, if I am a compassionate person, to feel that pain. It is not something I choose. It is simply the result of caring. — Rev. Bret S. Myers, 10/12/2017

Quotations on Gentleness

"I choose gentleness... Nothing is won by force. I choose to be gentle. If I raise my voice may it be only in praise. If I clench my fist, may it be only in prayer. If I make a demand, may it be only of myself." — Max Lucado

"The art of gentleness toward ourselves leads to being gentle with others -- and is a natural prerequisite for our presence to God in prayer." — Brennan Manning, *Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging*

"A wise mother knows: It is her state of consciousness that matters. Her gentleness and clarity command respect. Her love creates security." — Vimala McClure, *The Tao of Motherhood*

"It's the hard things that break; soft things don't break. It was an epiphany I had today and I just wonder why it took me so very, very long to see it! You can waste so many years of your life trying to become something hard in order not to break; but it's the soft things that can't break! The hard things are the ones that shatter into a million pieces!" — C. JoyBell C.

"Oh! that gentleness! how far more potent is it than force!" — Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

"I learned that it is the weak who are cruel, and that gentleness is to be expected only from the strong." — Leo Rosten, *Captain Newman, M. D*

"Live in the wisdom of accepted tenderness. Tenderness awakens within the security of knowing we are thoroughly and sincerely liked by someone... Scripture suggests that the essence of the divine nature is compassion and that the heart of God is defined by tenderness." — Brennan Manning, *Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging*

"Tender," she said again. "Tender is kind and gentle. It's also sore, like the skin around an injury." — Brenna Yovanoff, *The Space Between*

"You can't substitute material things for love or for gentleness or for tenderness or for a sense of comradeship. Money is not a substitute for tenderness, and power is not a substitute for tenderness." — Mitch Albom, *Tuesdays with Morrie*

"Trust was accumulated quickly, due primarily to the brute strength of the man's gentleness, his there-ness." — Markus Zusak, *The Book Thief*, p. 36

"Gentleness towards self and others makes life a little lighter." — Deborah Day, *BE HAPPY NOW!*

"Part of him wanted to weep...but his purpose was rigid within him. He felt he could not bend to gentleness without breaking." — Stephen R. Donaldson, *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, the Unbeliever*

"When I look at the clues that indicate the nature of Jesus – born in a barn, questionable parents, spotty ancestry, common name, misdirected announcement, unattractive looks, reared in a bad neighborhood, owning nothing, surrounding himself with unattractive co-workers, and dying a shameful death – I find his whole approach unable to fit into the methods that automatically come to mind when I think about "winning the world." His whole approach could easily be described as nonthreatening or nonmanipulative. He seemed to lead with weakness in each step of life. He had nothing in the world and everything in God and the Spirit." — Gayle D. Erwin, *The Jesus Style*

"I won't desecrate beauty with cynicism anymore. I won't confuse critical thinking with a critical spirit, and I will practice, painfully, over and over, patience and peace until my gentle answers turn away even my own wrath." — Sarah Bessey, *Jesus Feminist: An Invitation to Revisit the Bible's View of Women*

"The attitude of others towards you is the reflection of their state of mind." — Lailah Gifty Akita, *Think Great: Be Great!*

"His gentleness was uncompromising; because he would not compete for dominance, he was indomitable." — Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*

"only the gentlest hands can brush away tears" — John J. Geddes

"In social life we hardly stop to consider how much of that daring spirit which gives mastery comes from hardness of heart rather than from high purpose, or true courage. The man who succumbs to his wife, the mother who succumbs to her daughter, the master who succumbs to his servant, is as often brought to servility by a continual aversion to the giving of pain, by a softness which causes the fretfulness of others to be an agony to himself,—as by any actual fear which the firmness of the imperious one may have produced. There is an inner softness, a thinness of the mind's skin, an incapability of seeing or even thinking of the troubles of others with equanimity, which produces a feeling akin to fear; but which is compatible not only with courage, but with absolute firmness of purpose, when the demand for firmness arises so strongly as to assert itself." — Anthony Trollope

"No, Zahra, dear, no! Gentleness isn't weakness.' Her hand, suspended in midair, trembled with emptiness and fell to her side. 'How easy it is to be bitter or angry; that's when you're at your weakest! But when you choose to be kind, to forget your hurt, that's when you find within the greatest strength of all.'" — Judy Croome, *Dancing in the Shadows of Love*

"The ability to be tough-minded remains useful; but by now, the fact that we are all in trouble in terms of both nature and culture can only be denied by those who become overly conservative and blindly reactionary. The more tender-hearted imagination that suggests we are all in this together and that there must be an underlying unity in life may be the only way to survive."

— Michael Meade, *The Genius Myth*

"Considering the fact that we're all laced with flaws, idiosyncrasies, and vulnerabilities, wouldn't it be wise and kind to adopt an attitude of gentleness in relating to each other?"

— Sue Patton Thoele, *The Courage to Be a Stepmom: Finding Your Place Without Losing Yourself*

"We can say what we need to say. We can gently, but assertively, speak our mind. We do not need to be judgmental, tactless, blaming or cruel when we speak our truths"

— Melody Beattie

"I hope you will grow up gentle and good, and never learn bad ways; do your work with a good will, lift your feet up well when you trot, and never bite or kick even in play."

— Anna Sewall, *Black Beauty*

"Love comforts, it is gentle, it is warm and you can feel it within your entire being."

— Ellen J. Barrier

"...with you, I find peace from pain - You are gentle and healing like the landscape—like rain..."

— John Geddes, *A Familiar*

Rain

"It is wonderful how attractive a gentle, pleasant manner is, and how much it wins hearts."

— Francis de Sales

"Don't judge the gentle; their gentleness is stronger than your fears and angers. Don't judge those who have lost their gentleness; you haven't lived their lives. In all people, hope for the gentleness to return and see gentleness for the beauty that it is."

— C. JoyBell C.

As the Earth Turns upon Its Axis

Tune: As the Deer

Music: Martin J. Nystrom, 1984; Words: Rev. Bret S. Myers, October 26, 2005

As the earth turns upon its axis / So my heart is turned by you.
I have longed for a love to cherish / And I've found that love in you.
With this love I can find my way / Through any danger on any day.
I have longed for a love to cherish / And I've found that love in you.

As the tree stands above the meadow / So my soul stands strong and true
I have love that will never perish / And I give that love to you.
Can you trust me to be your friend / Faithful despite what the world may send?
I have love that will never perish / And I give that love to you.

As the stream rushes down the mountain / So love's song will I ever sing
It's a song full of all life's goodness / And the joy that virtue brings
There's no log that can block my way / With faith in love I can't go astray
It's a song full of all life's goodness / And the joy that virtue brings.

As the waves crash upon the seashore / So will my love persevere
There's no tide that can stop my coming / Back to one I hold so dear
I'll be there on your darkest day / To give you hope when your spirit sways
There's no tide that can stop my coming / Back to one I hold so dear.

As the dove coos serenely, gently / So my soul is soothed by you
It's a peace unlike any other / Comforts when I'm feeling blue
In the quiet of life's long nights / You're the anchor that holds me tight
It's a peace unlike any other / Comforts when I'm feeling blue