

# *Faith United Church of Christ*

*“An inclusive spiritual family shaping a better you for creating a better world.  
A place to make a difference.”*

April 1, 2018

Sacred Fellowship 10:45 AM

*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!*

## **Easter Sunday**

### **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**

Prelude for trumpet and organ  
Samuel Nemeth, trumpet

#### **Welcoming the Light of Love in Our Midst**

*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!”

**\*Centering Our Souls**

Like the women who went to anoint the dead and found an empty tomb, we do not know what to think.

**Dare we believe the unbelievable?**

Do we trust our eyes, our mind, our gut, or our heart?

**How do we make sense of what we do not understand?**

Who was the young man dressed in white at Jesus' tomb?

**Had he stolen the body? Was he a friend or an enemy? Was he human or divine?**

What did he mean when he said: “Jesus has been raised; he is not here.”

**Did followers, or perhaps authorities, raise Jesus from this tomb to hide his body elsewhere?**

Had God taken his lifeless body?

**Did God do something even more wonderful than this?**

O God, help us face our fears of the unknown.

**Remind us that we are a resurrection people – those whose faith is not only in Jesus, but in his life, his teachings, and example.**

It was easy for the disciples to be led by Jesus while he was with them; but now Jesus has asked them, and us, to be led by his virtues and values as we follow in his way of love and peace.

**With the inspiration of new life within us, may we be resurrected from our own crosses of conflict and tombs of apathy.**

May Christ live in us as we go to put character over comfort, and live with more courage than fear.

**Transform us body and soul into your instruments of loving-kindness and reconciliation. Let your divine light live within us for all the world to see. In the name of the Light of the World we pray; Hallelujah!**

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

**WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES**

**Choral Anthem** The Festal Day Is Here Dutch Melody arr. by Hal H. Hopson

**Prayers**

***Sharing Our Joys and Concerns***

***Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People***

***Unison Easter Prayer*** “*Prayer for Abundant Living*”

O God of empty tombs and resurrection living:  
    Make us mindful of the pervasiveness of hope,  
        the determination of faith,  
        and the persistence of love.

In a world where suffering is ever near,  
    and where terrorism provokes fear,  
        instill in us a resolve  
        to live peacefully, justly, and compassionately.

May we be the agents of healing and reconciliation  
    when opposed by the forces of destruction and alienation.

May we be the beacons of beneficence  
    when others are the harbingers of hatred.

Call us to be your resurrection people:  
    those who trust in kindness more than might,  
        in forgiveness more than revenge,  
        in gentleness more than harshness,  
        and in virtue more than prudence.

May beauty flow forth from our spirits,  
    truth from our lips,  
        and mercy from our hands.

Help us to live the life that is light,  
    that we may, like Jesus,  
        rise above the shadows of death and despair  
        and shine forth the blessings of love on all of creation.

In the Spirit of the risen and still rising Christ, may it be so.

**\*Hymn of Love Renewed**                      “Now the Green Blade Rises”                      **#238**

**Scripture Lesson**    Mark 16.1-8

**Message**                      “Unanswered Questions: An Invitation to Faithfulness”

**\*Hymn for Resurrection Spirit**                      “The Day of Resurrection”                      **#245**

### **WE AFFIRM & CELEBRATE OUR UNITY AS GOD’S CREATION**

#### **The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

*(As God calls all people to the table of forgiveness, peace, and loving fellowship, Faith UCC affirms an inclusive and open Communion Table. All persons (all ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations/identities, dis/abilities, religious affiliations, and other distinguishing features) are welcome to partake of this sacrament which affirms that we are all part of God’s family and are to commune together in sacred relationship. Love and peace are the uniting virtues of this spiritual meeting place.*

*Therefore, all who wish to join in this ritual of unity are invited to do so providing that you do so in the spirit of peace and mutual love for one another.)*

## **The Purpose of Holy Communion**

God seeks to be in communion with us, and wills that we be in communion with one another. Through the Christ in Jesus, God drew closer to us by living among us with all the desires and temptations of being human, and showed us that we each have the power to overcome wrongdoing by the inspiration of our spiritual lives and the discipline of our physical lives; thereby affecting the Christ in us. Jesus represented the individual model of how we each can do this; and in calling to his side the disciples and followers in his way of love and peace, many of whom were ostracized by the wider society, he revealed how to model this in our community here on Earth.

Reminding us symbolically of this union of body and spirit, Jesus took a loaf of bread, broke it like we are often broken in our relationships with one another, and showed us the way to reconciliation by asking us to share our bread with one another in remembrance of his own example. Through the broken bread, we participate in and become the body of Christ in the world.

In like manner, Jesus took the cup filled with the fruit of the vine, the vine that sustains us and links us to one another, and the fruit that nourishes the spirit of virtue that abides within and between each of us, and asked us to drink of that same spirit of loving-kindness and uniting harmony that was in him. Through the cup of blessing, we participate in and become the new life of Christ in the world.

**The bread and fruit we partake nourishes us that we may nourish others. Through this sacrament of Holy Communion, we affirm that we are committed to Christ's way of love and peace by our motives, thoughts, actions, and practices in this world. We acknowledge that we are one community made by God, and that we must consciously choose, day by day, to be in right relationship with God, each other, and our sacred values. We therefore dedicate ourselves, individually and collectively, to make the Body and Spirit of Christ real in this world, here and now, and throughout our life as a community of the faithful. What we symbolize here in this holy space, we make real by our service when we go forth from this place.**

## **Time of Personal Reflection/Confession/Commitment**

### **Invitation**

Christ invites "all" to the table of reconciliation – those who affirm their intrinsic worth, and those who are yet to do so...those whose hearts and minds are admirable, and those still struggling to make them so...those who are most like us, and those who are least like us. In the spirit of Christ, we at Faith United Church of Christ welcome you to share your spiritual journey with us as we share ours with you in a sacrament designed to bridge all differences in a spirit of extravagant welcome, of heartfelt openness, and of mutual loving-kindness. In coming together, let us recognize our responsibility in living in love and peace with one another and all creation so as to be joined together as one Holy Communion of Body and Spirit throughout this good earth.

## **Partaking of the Bread and Juice**

*(Please come forward by rows down the center aisle, taking a piece of bread, dipping it in the cup, eating, and returning to your seats by the side aisles. You may take additional elements with you to bring to those in your row unable to come forward, or we will have a server to bring the elements to any who cannot come forward. Grape juice is used, and gluten free bread is available upon request.)*

## **Commissioning**

Go forth with forgiveness, courage, faith, hope, love, peace, justice, kindness, and gentleness. May these virtues, representing the image of God in each one of us as was also manifested in Jesus, strengthen you to reach out in compassion as you nurture and aid others within this worldwide community. May the Spirit and grace of God be with you and among you. Amen

## **WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO GOD'S SERVICE THROUGH FAITHFULNESS**

### **Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings**

**Offertory** Organ improvisation

**\*Song of Dedication** Tune: *Old Hundredth*

Our Easter joy triumphant rings! Our resurrection hope does spring!

Christ's love and peace will ever rise, when we see through forgiving eyes!

**\*Unison Prayer of Dedication**

We are an Easter people! We believe that faith can move mountains, and that caterpillars can be transformed into butterflies. We trust that with your grace present, even the smallest act of kindness, the shortest practice of goodness, or the slightest gesture of generosity can have significance well beyond all expectations. With that faith, we rise. With that faith, we are resurrected into new life. With that faith, we give – freely and joyfully. And so now we give, out of what we have, to bless those who have not, in order to bear witness to, and to inspire, a spirit of resurrection – in ourselves, and in others. Let us flitter and fly like butterflies on the wings of the Risen Christ, beautifying our lives and our world. Blessings be.

### **\*Encouragement for the Journey**

Remember that resurrection is more than mere resuscitation! It is life transformed!

It is faith in possibilities, when others are convinced of inevitability.

It is the courage to love others, when they don't love you in return...

to show compassion, when others are heaping judgment...

to live by peace, when others are being violent...

to work for justice, when others are working for wealth...

to respond with gentleness, when others are reacting with rage...

and to trust that life, well-lived, even if short-lived,

is preferable to longevity without virtue.

Don't remain caterpillars when you can become butterflies!

Live beautifully! Birth goodness in all you think, say, and do!

For you are called to life abundant!  
God's blessings be with you.

**Postlude**

Toccata on 'O Fili et Filiae'

L. Farnam

**\*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    Interim Pastor — Rev. Bret Myers

Trustee — Larry Bair                      Ushers — Larry Bair

Fellowship — Jean Cole

Communion Servers — June Irvin, Lois Bair, Larry Bair, Ernie Hawk

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:**

Susie Keck, Joann Edwards, Lisa V. (John Vincenti's daughter), the family of Lois Bair, Carlton Miller, Bob Ritzman, the family of June Brown, 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), the Snook family.



**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 McAllister & 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 smartphone to be directed to our online donation page.



**April Special Offering**

**Hoffman Homes for Youth** (<http://hoffmanhomes.com/>) serves boys and girls ages 6 to 18 with mental health diagnoses by providing behavioral and cognitive therapy, physical health care services, education, spiritual nurturing and a safe and comfortable home for up to 141 children.

Make checks payable to Faith UCC with "Hoffman Homes" noted in the memo line.



- April 7 Tom Brown Memorial, 2:30
- April 8 2nd Sunday of Easter
- April 9 Delta Zeta Fundraiser, 5-8
- April 15 3rd Sunday of Easter

## **Get In Touch with Us!**

Faith United Church of Christ      300 E. College Avenue State College, PA 16801  
Tel: (814) 237-3904      Websites: [www.faithucc.info](http://www.faithucc.info)      [facebook.com/SCFaithUCC](https://facebook.com/SCFaithUCC)  
Church Office Email: [faithucc@comcast.net](mailto:faithucc@comcast.net)      Pastor's Email: [revbmyers@yahoo.com](mailto:revbmyers@yahoo.com)

Church Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.      Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays

Pastor Bret's Office Hours: Tuesday 5-8 p.m., Wednesday 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Thursday 2-4 p.m.  
or other hours by appointment.

Appointments are recommended so as to give you the time you need without interruptions. You may call the church office, or his cell at 608-370-9472, or email him at [revbmyers@yahoo.com](mailto:revbmyers@yahoo.com).