

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 30, 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!



Holocaust candles 3/7/16 (photo credit: REUTERS)

Yom Hashoah / Holocaust Remembrance Sunday

"On the 27th day of Nisan according to the Hebrew calendar, Jews throughout the world formally recall the 6 million Jews of Europe who were tortured and murdered during the Shoah simply because they were Jews. We also remember the millions of others slaughtered because of their beliefs, ethnicities, identities, and disabilities. Many like in nameless graves in far off forests and lonely fields. But they shall not be forgotten. We (must) remember that we cannot allow evil and fanaticism to destroy lives and cause irreparable harm to humanity."

-- words on the cover of a Yom Hashoah bulletin, May 4, 2016, Agudath B'nai Israel Synagogue, Lorain, Ohio

POINTS TO PONDER

*"And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them,
and they died before the Lord.... And Aaron was silent."*

— Leviticus 10.2, 3e

"The cruelty and the killing raise the question whether even those who believe after such an event dare talk about God who loves and cares without making a mockery of those who suffered."

— Rabbi Irving Greenburg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust" p. 11

"How lonely sits the city that once was full of people!

*She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks...;
all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies.
Her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress."*

— Lamentations 1.1a, 2abde, 3d

*"We learned in the crisis that we were totally and nakedly alone,
that we could expect neither support nor succor from God nor from our fellow creatures."*

— Rabbi Richard L. Rubenstein, After Auschwitz, pp. 128-129

"Even when I cry out, 'Violence!' I am not answered; I call aloud, but there is no justice."

— Job 19.7

"One of the defenses of Pius XII's silence is that he felt he should not endanger the church and the faithful by stopping genocide. If true faith means taking up the cross for God, then when will there ever be a truer time to be crucified, if necessary? Even if the attempt to help is doomed to failure, when will it ever be more appropriate to risk one's life or the church's life than to stop the crucifixion of children?"

— Rabbi Irving Greenburg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust" p. 40

*"The very isolation and sense of the indifference of the world cowed the victims,
and made them go more quietly to their deaths."*

— Rabbi Irving Greenburg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust" p. 18

"He has uprooted my hope like a tree."

— Job 19.10c

"After Auschwitz, one must beware of easy hope."

— Rabbi Irving Greenburg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust" p. 55

"He has put my family far from me, and my acquaintances are wholly estranged from me."

— Job 19.13

*"If indeed such a God holds the destiny of mankind in His power,
His resort to the death camps to bring about His ends is so obscene that
I would rather spend my life in perpetual revolt than render Him even the slightest homage."*

— Rabbi Richard L. Rubenstein, Power Struggle, p. 11;

responding to the notion that God may have been punishing the Jews with the Holocaust

*"Today also my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy despite my groaning.
Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his dwelling!"*

I would lay my case before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.
I would learn what he would answer me, and understand what he would say to me.
Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power? No; but he would give heed to me.
There an upright person could reason with him, and I should be acquitted forever by my judge."
— Job 23.2-7

"No matter how valid a philosophy appears to be,
no matter how internally convincing and autonomously persuasive it is,
if it has the capacity to serve as a ground for unmitigated evil,
then it must be challenged, shaken up, rethought – if it can survive at all.
Failure to radically criticize and restructure
means collaboration with the possibility of a repetition."
— Rabbi Irving Greenburg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust" p. 20

"As God lives, who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter,
as long as my breath is in me and the spirit of God is in my nostrils,
my lips will not speak falsehood, and my tongue will not utter deceit.
Far be it from me to say that you are right; until I die I will not put away my integrity from me."
— Job 27.2-5

"Never shall I forget the little faces of the children,
whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.
Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever.
Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me,
for all eternity, of the desire to live.
Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God
and my soul and turned my dreams to dust.
Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God himself.
Never."
— Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

"After Auschwitz, one must beware of easy hope."
— Rabbi Irving Greenburg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust" p. 55

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

"Christ Lay in Death's Bonds," BWV 625

J. S. Bach

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; visu-
ally 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.*

Engaging our Ethical Conscience

"One Person Can Make a Difference" by Gwyneth Lewis

The fight for justice starts and ends with me.
Truth is the sound of what I may say.
I can only be well when others are free
And right has a price I'm prepared to pay.

I refuse to be afraid
Of force or hatred.

I will pull their lies like weeds,
Plant gardens of more generous seeds.

If I turn my back and walk away
Who'll ask for others what I want for me?
I can only be well when others are free
And right has a price I'm prepared to pay.

***Hymn of Lamentation and Bewilderment**

"O God, My God"

#515

***Centering Our Souls**

"Prayer for Resolve"

O God of our ancestors, ourselves, and our descendants: We recall today the lives of 6 mil-
lion Jews, and over a million others, who were exterminated during the Holocaust.

We remember, because not to remember would be to kill them twice.

We said after the war, "Never again!" But "again" has happened in Cambodia, Rwanda,
Bosnia, and other places in these past 72 years.

**We have been the witnesses to genocide too many times. Never let us think such
things, nor the things that lead up to them, are normal.**

Instill in us a resolve to do everything in our power to stop the hostilities and hatreds in our
world. Give us the courage to resist all forms of tyranny, fascism, and the scapegoating of
minorities, refugees, and non-citizens.

**Keep us from fostering our own stereotypes and prejudices, for these will surely
move from simple acts of discrimination to violations against humanity – if not by us,
then by others.**

May the fires of Buchenwald, Dachau, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Sobibor, Ebensee, Treblinka, Ellrich, Flossenburg, Ravensbruck, Sachsenhausen, Mauthausen, Belzec, Theresienstadt, Natzweiler-Struthof, Vught, Majdanek, Chelmno, Bolzano, Citadelle, Bergen-Belsen, and the 15,000 other labor, death, and concentration camps throughout Europe sear our minds to refuse to work for the plans of despots and bigots.

Never let anyone convince us that there are others in the world who are of less worth than ourselves, or who are not deserving of the same rights, liberties, and needs for justice and compassion.

In all things, may we work against the powers that oppress anyone in this world.

For we are our brother's and our sister's keepers. We refuse to be like Cain. And we refuse to let the Cains of this world slay or victimize any of the Abels who reside with us on this earth.

And let us remember, too, that when tragedies or atrocities arise that we will not only not offer platitudes and words of simplistic comfort to those suffering, but that we will do whatever we can to come to their rescue.

For to see another suffer and do nothing is abominable. You have called us to care, to heal, and to restore. To look away or remain indifferent violates your image within us.

And should any harm come to us, either because of who we are, or because we are aiding those most in need, we ask you for strength, determination, and resolve to not return violence for violence or hatred for hatred.

For even if we cannot love them in the moment of our persecution, let us stand to face toward the perpetrators with our dignity intact.

For though they may take our lives, they cannot not take our souls. Even if we are silenced, our silence will be our protest – like that of Aaron.

May we have the integrity of Job in speaking truth to power, and denying falsehoods that victimize any person. May our lives be beacons of beneficence. Amen

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

WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES

Choral Anthem

A Time for All God's Children

Pastor Bret

"The Table of Rumpled Sheets, Empty Shoes, and Red & White Candles Whose Flames Can't Be Seen"

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 of Not Understanding**

"O God, Who Does Love Me"

see insert

Scripture Lessons

Leviticus 10.1-3

Lamentations 1.1-3

Job 19.1-14; 23.1-7; 27.1-5

Message

"'Never Again' Necessitates 'Never Forget' + Integrity"

***Hymn for Stewardship**

"Guide My Poor Vision"

see insert

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 "???"

***Song of Dedication**

O God of those who've lived and died, Who by our memories we're still tied:

Their parting hope for us they give; That we by love and peace may live!

***Unison Prayer of Dedication** "Teach Us Again and Again" by Ted Loder

O God, be with those for whom these gifts are given, and bless us who give them that we may dedicate ourselves as well, and passionately move against the ugliness and injustice and violence in your world without becoming unjust or ugly or abusive. Teach us again and again that the reward for loving is having our capacity to love stretched to include even those we define as enemies. So would we dare to live as vagabonds of faith, risking something big for something right, challenging all that shrinks and separates people, pressing on toward the freedom that enlarges life by sharing it with all our brothers and sisters, and empowers us not to be afraid; in Christ's name and spirit. Amen

Encouragement for the Journey

Selected Quotations from Elie Wiesel

"Indifference to me, is the epitome of all evil."

"The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it's indifference."

“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice,
but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”

“There are victories of the soul and spirit. Sometimes, even if you lose, you win.”

“We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim.
Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere.

When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy,
national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant.

Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views,
that place must - at that moment - become the center of the universe.”

***Response for Life Resistant** “Lead Us from Death to Life”

#581

vss. 1-2

Postlude

"Now Praise the Lord, My Soul," BuxWV 214

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

Pastor — Rev. Bret Myers

Ushers — Jim Welsh
Liturgist — Sue Cromwell
Acolyte —
Fellowship — Jim & Sally Welsh

Trustee — Neil Christy
Children's Message — Pastor Bret
Nursery — Jean Cole, Jean Frank

Church Staff

Custodian — Scott Luzier
Choir Director — Colin Ruffer
Administrative Assistant — Jeff Stormer
Church School Coordinator — Barbara Chellman
Organist — Mark Ferraguto

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



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 smart phone to be directed to our online donation page.



April Special Offering

Hoffman Homes for Youth 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.



- **May 2** **Trustee Meeting, 7pm**
- **May 5** **First Friday**
- **May 7** **Fourth Sunday of Easter**
- **May 14** **Fifth Sunday of Easter, Mother's Day**
- **May 21** **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Get In Touch with Us!

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 Church Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. 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.

Nourishment for the Journey

Leviticus 10: This chapter tells the story of the death of Nadab and Abihu, two of Aaron's sons, whom God struck down for bringing an "alien fire" into the services of ritual sacrifice. At first, Aaron remains silent in the face of this personal tragedy. Later, he breaks his silence and addresses Moses, reminding our greatest prophet that he and his surviving sons cannot consume the purification offering that Moses has demanded because the high priest's family is in mourning.

This portion of Leviticus, while not an exact parallel to the events of 70 years ago, is significant for two reasons: First, Aaron's silence embodies shock, resignation, humility, but also defiance; second, Aaron breaks his silence to tell Moses that a tragedy has occurred and there cannot be liturgical "business as usual." Nadab and Abihu represented the best that the Israelites had to offer, as did the Jews of Europe before the Shoah. Their deaths demand silence and not arrogance, a silence grounded in both humility and defiance. Aaron finally breaks his silence and, like the rabbis of the Warsaw Ghetto, reminds us that traditional liturgy and practice cannot go on as if nothing happened.

We must confront a new and horrifying reality in a meaningful way. We carry on with the service of God – but reality and the covenantal relationship will never be the same after the tragedy.

— Rabbi Eli Kavon, 4/21/2014

"We Are the Shoes" by Moshe Szulzstein
 We are the shoes, we are the last witnesses.
 We are shoes from grandchildren and grandfathers
 From Prague, Paris and Amsterdam,
 And because we are only made of fabric and leather
 And not of blood and flesh,
 Each one of us avoided the hellfire.

"The denial (by Allied forces) of Jewish particularity – in the face of the very specific Nazi war on the Jews – led to decisions to bomb industrial targets to win the war for democracy, but to exclude the death factories – lest this be interpreted as a 'Jewish' war! The very exclusion of specifying Jews from warnings and military objectives was interpreted by the Nazis as a signal that Jews were expendable."

— Rabbi Irving Greenburg, *"Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust"* p. 18

"On Holocaust Remembrance Day 2017, the President of the USA, in speaking of the Holocaust failed to mention that Jews were primarily the victims of this atrocity."

-- Bret S. Myers, 4/27/2017

"In the same way today in America, we have white privileged individuals claiming that 'All lives matter,' in protest to the dictum, 'Black Lives Matter.' And we have fundamentalist Christians seeking to refuse entry of Muslims into the country, as well as to kick out Muslims and Mexicans already here. They don't see this as a moral issue in the same way that Nazis did not see it as a moral issue: they regard them as illegal and subhuman. When you castigate another group of people, you see them as of less intrinsic worth than yourself. And whenever this happens, it is not very long before discrimination and violation of human rights, if not worse, ensues."

-- Bret S. Myers, 4/27/2017

"Then came the march past the victims. The two men were no longer alive. Their tongues were hanging out, swollen and bluish. But the third rope was still moving: the child, too light, was still breathing... And so he remained for more than half an hour, lingering between life and death, writhing before our eyes. And we were forced to look at him at close range. He was still alive when I passed him. His tongue was still red, his eyes not yet extinguished.

Behind me, I heard the same man asking: "For God's sake, where is God?"

And from within me, I heard a voice answer: "Where He is? This is where--hanging here from this gallows..."

That night, the soup tasted of corpses."

— Elie Wiesel, *Night*

"The vast number of dead and morally destroyed is the phenomenology of absurdity and radical evil, the continuing statement of human worthlessness and meaninglessness that shouts down all talk of God and human worth.... There is one response to such overwhelming tragedy: the reaffirmation of meaningfulness, worth, and life – through acts of love and life-giving. The act of creating a life or enhancing its dignity is the counter-testimony to Auschwitz. **To talk of love and of a God who cares in the presence of the burning children is obscene and incredible; to leap in and pull a child out of a pit, to clean its face and heal its body, is to make the most powerful statement – the only statement that counts.**"

— Rabbi Irving Greenburg, *"Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust"* pp. 41-42

"The answer to absurd death is unreasoning life; it is *chesed* – lovingkindness."

— Rabbi Irving Greenburg, *"Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust"* p. 42

What If It Were Me? by Naomh Hannon

Naomh's poem is the competition winner from the series inspired by the theme for HMD 2012 Speak Up, Speak Out

I was walking through the park one day,
Pottering about in my usual way,
When I saw two surly youths staring at me,
Two surly youths, with a boy, pinned to a tree.
The youth called out, 'You got something to say?'
I bent my head low and went on my way.
But something stopped me, a sound, helpless and weak.
It got louder and turned into a shriek.
I stopped in my tracks, 'Who would help me?
What hope would I have were I pinned to a tree?'
I could now hear their taunts and jeers,
With words so foul that they burned my ears.
I turned on my heels and strode back to the tree.
Where the two boys stood, staring at me.
'It's wrong and disgraceful, what you have done here.
It's behaviour like this that spreads violence and fear.
Everyone's different; no two are the same,
To judge someone 'inferior' is cause for shame.
This isn't a game to share with a friend,
It's up to everyone to make racism end.'
The youths sulked off and I noted with glee,
That the boy was smiling, smiling, from under the tree.

How Many Times? by Tim Price

Tim Price wrote this poem entitled *How Many Times* to remember and commemorate the Genocide in Rwanda.

No one knows when it started
No one will know its end
The crying the maiming the dying
Carried out by neighbour and friend
The reasons are always crazy
The slaughtered always the same
Be it religion, politics or culture
No one ever admits to their shame

How many times will it happen?
How many times will we say?
"This has to stop forever

God help us and stop it today"

It's happened all over the world
Since the beginning of time
It's happening now in front of us
But we choose to close our eyes
70 years ago it happened in Germany
25 in the Balkan War
20 in Rwanda
In Darfur we have to do more.

How many times will it happen?
How many times will we say?
"This has to stop forever
God help us and stop it today"

So let's all scream out together
And tell the politicians they're wrong
They let it happen in Rwanda
Why are we accepting their con?
Dafur will soon be a memory
Like Hitler, Stalin and Pot
We need to look at the future
I'm sick of accepting this lot

How many times will it happen
How many times will we say
"This has to stop forever, God help us and stop it today"

O God, Who Does Love Me

Tune: Gordon (My Jesus, I Love Thee) 11 11.11 11

Music: Adoniram J. Gordon, 1876; Words: Rev. Bret Stuart Myers, 2/26/07

Verse 1

O God, who does love me / And brought me to birth
With me through my childhood / You welcomed my mirth
I still can remember / When to you I would pray
You promised to love me / To never skip a day

Verse 2

O God, who does love me / Though I am confused
I've started to question / All I thought was true
I doubt your existence / I cannot understand
How evil has prospered / And you've not raised your hand

Verse 3

O God, who does love me / Though I don't believe
Why do I still feel you / I still can't conceive
The war and the violence / Is more than I can bear
I still hold to loving / But do you really care

Verse 4

O God, who does love me / I still hear your voice
You speak loud or tender / Despite the world's noise
You call me to free the souls / That justice has denied
You call me to peacemaking / God, know that I have tried

Verse 5

O God, who does love me / I feel I have failed
Oppression and anger / Continue to sail
I feel like my rudder's broke / The waves are all around
O God, will you save me / As discontent abounds

Verse 6

O God, who does love us / I now understand
How it's up to us to / Enact your love's plan
Your presence is best revealed / When we will take a stand
O God, now I see it / Your love does need our hands

“Guide My Poor Vision”

Tune: Slane

Tune: #451

Music: Traditional Irish melody; harm. Carlton R. Young, 1963; Words: Rev. Bret S. Myers, 3/2/2008

Guide my poor vision when fog lingers near / Dispel the clouds that my eyes may see clear
Blow through the valleys of blinding despair / Till on the hillsides your light shines most fair.

Guide my poor vision when darkness I dread / Injustice lurking, the needy unfed
When my hope wavers amidst all earth's pains / Make me a lighthouse that pierces all rains.

Guide my poor vision when problems arise / Finding no answer seems like my demise
When I'm frustrated and bound to give in / Turn my gaze upwards, let starlight stream in.

Grant me the vision to love and forgive / Seeing that peace is the way I should live
It's not the outcome I need to control / It's the compassion that makes my life whole.