

# 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 8, 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**

“The law of God is perfect, reviving the soul;  
the decrees of God are sure, making wise the simple;  
the precepts of God are right, rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of God is clear, enlightening the eyes.”

— Psalm 19.7-8

“The 10 Commandments are a prescription for how to live in love, respect, and peace with one another. They teach us how to be harmony-keepers and justice-promoters in all of our relationships.”

— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 3/7/12

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

— Exodus 20.2

“Rather than being a short list of legalistic prohibitions and requirements, the commands give shape and expression to the people's relationship with God who brought them out of slavery and away from Pharaoh's oppressive system. They speak of God's holiness and of love and justice for neighbors.”

— Reflection on Exodus 20.1-17 by Kathryn Matthews Huey

“You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol...or worship them....

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.... Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy...the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it....

Honor your father and mother....

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness....

You shall not covet your neighbor's house...wife...or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

— The Ten Commandments, quoted in Exodus 20.1-17

“God did not bring us out of slavery to Pharaoh in order to make us slaves of God. God seeks our freedom. But God also wants us to be responsible in that freedom. We are in covenantal relationship with God, with each other, and with all creation. Freedom does not mean we have a right to do whatever we please, or whatever is to our interest despite the interests of others. The precepts of God are not chains that keep us bound in a moral prison. Rather they are the key that allows us to unfetter our own minds and hearts so that we may live peacefully with others. They are the decrees of wisdom and right thinking that, if followed, will put us in right relationship with each other and with God. Good ethics liberates us to be free from the excesses and self-interests of others who would take advantage of us if the world was ruled by ‘me first.’ The commandments are thus necessary propositions for peaceful living. If they are followed, peace will ensue. If they are not, peace will die. The commandments do not enslave us; they free us to live more fully. They make justice possible, and thus they nurture a respect for each other – making love a real possibility in how we treat everyone. They are the way to peace; for they are the way of peace.”

— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 3/12/2009

“(The Sabbath is) perhaps Israel's most stunning counter-cultural notion of justice.... Israel asserts that ‘rest’ for self, for neighbor, and even for God is the goal and quintessence of life...a kind of ‘at-homeness’ that precludes hostility, competition, avarice, and insecurity...and anticipates a community of peace, well-being, and joy.”

— Walter Brueggemann in *The Covenanted Self: Explorations in Law and Covenant*

“Rather than declaring our larger society a ‘Christian’ one, perhaps we should see ourselves as a small, counter-cultural force, a community that has something to say to the larger forces pressing upon us, the militarism, the materialism, the greed and consumerism that set themselves up as rival gods to the God who brought us up, out of our own experiences of bondage and death.”

— Reflection on Exodus 20.1-17 by Kathryn Matthews Huey

“The first four commandments describe our relationship to God and God's values, and the remaining six to other people and creation. They are thus spiritual and ethical ways of being in relationship with others so as to produce peace, love, justice, and joy in our lives together. All of them are interconnected, just like our social web. When we affirm and live by these divine values rather than those which are less than divine, we bring our collective lives into balance and health. When we don't, that is when life becomes askew.”

— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 10/5/2017

## **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** "I Call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ" 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; 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 Faithful Remembrance** "Deep in the Shadows of the Past" #320

**\*Centering Our Souls**

O God, in whose divine image and character we were created:

**When we forget your values and virtues, we lose sight of who we are.**

Remind us when we stray from your path to set ourselves aright by putting you and your ways first in our lives.

**When the idols of life come calling, keep us faithful to your word and example.**

By keeping our thoughts and emotions centered in and by your Spirit, may our mouths only speak of your goodness, mercy, and love and never defame your name by claiming you have brought tragedy on those with whom we disagree.

**Keep us mindful of the Sabbath – which you designed for our spiritual renewal and nourishment, so that in being regularly rested and refreshed we may not grow weary of doing your will in the world.**

Remind us of our humble beginnings, and of how our parents or guardians looked after our well-being. For all those who loved and taught us without reward, we offer our thanks and respect.

**By learning the best that we witnessed in them, and avoiding the worst, we honor them by living a life reflective of your wisdom and values.**

Engage our moral consciousness and imagination that we may be aware of all the ways that we consciously or unconsciously inflict harm and death on others.

**From cruelty, bullying, prejudice, negligence, and apathy keep us from being towards others what we'd never want others to be towards us.**

Help us to recognize the interwoven nature of our relationships: that an agreement between two consenting adults which does not take into consideration their other relationships and commitments is not justifiable.

**Remind us, too, to not only consider all the relationships we and others have with those around us, but also with what people call their own; for to take from another what is not ours is a theft not only of substance but also of trust.**

In all things, keep us vigilant in bolstering each other's esteem and self-worth rather than tearing another down by our words or actions.

**May we not forget that it is a lie which allows us to see any other person or creature as less than the goodness you created within them.**

Direct us to be joyful in the successes of others, to be saddened in their hardships, and to never envy what another has or be jealous of their possession of that which we don't have.

**May our relationships with you and with others be filled with love, peace, justice, and joy that we may build the world in which you have called us to abide. May it be so.**

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

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

**Choral Anthem** For the Beauty of the Earth Conrad Kocher

**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 for God's Truth** "O Word of God Incarnate" #315

## Scripture Lesson

Exodus 20.1-17

## Message

“Polylogue: The Relevance of the 10 Commandments for Today”

### \*Hymn for Right Living “The Ten Commandments” *Tune: World Peace (Let There Be Peace on Earth)*

*Music: Sy Miller & Jill Jackson, 1955; harm. Charles H. Webb, 1987; Words: Rev. Bret S. Myers, 10/2/2014*

Worship no God but God, and let there no idols be.

Curse not God’s holy name, and make ev’ry Sabbath free.

Respect father, mother. Don’t kill, cheat, or steal.

Lie not to one another, nor want another’s meal.

These rules will make for peace; and show us just how to care.

They bless each life with grace, and teach us how to be fair.

With each forgiveness and act of mercy we build a world of love.

Heed these divine decrees, in order to rise above.

## **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 care-

taker 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

Postlude in F Major

E. L. Ashford

### \*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

Ushers — ,

Trustee —

Liturgist —

Children’s Message —

Acolyte —

Nursery —

Fellowship — June Irvin

### Church Staff

Custodian — Scott Luzier

Church School Coordinator — Barbara Chellman

Organist—Mark Ferraguto

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), the family of Susan Meyer

Courtesy of Sue Doran



simply **scan the QR code** with your smart phone to be directed to our online donation page.

**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



**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.

*Mark Your Calendars*  
**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- **October 8** 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time
- **October 10** Cider Outing @ The Bair's
- **October 15** Trustees 7 PM
- **October 15** 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time
- **October 16** CROP Walk 1 PM
- **October 16** Congregational Meeting/Workshop: The Church Profile
- **October 16** Consistory Meeting 7 PM
- **October 22** 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time
- **October 29** 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time
- **October 31** 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation

**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  
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, 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.faithucc.info/news.html>

***Nourishment for the Journey***

*"The Ten Commandments: Reflections on Rules for Right Relationships"*

1) **"You are to have no other gods before me":** You are to set the virtues and values of God (goodness) as your highest priority. Developing these character traits is what makes you truly free, and keeps you from being slaves to lesser values. Any other value (family, nation, ethnic identity, religion, occupation, possessions, etc.) must be of lesser importance than God and God's ways/characteristics. Values other than God's values are not allowed to take precedence in your life. Desiring and striving after wealth, power, and material things is a form of worship, and is opposed to faithfulness to God. Desiring only to be good, loving, peaceful, just, compassionate, forgiving, and other God-like traits is appropriate worship. Granted, we may still have other loyalties in our life; but when the loyalties conflict, then God and God's values and virtues must have highest priority. We are to aspire to revealing the image of God (God's character traits) within us more than we aspire to anything else. God is to come before all other loyalties in our lives. The implications of this are mind-boggling – as it affects every aspect of our lives. This is why some have said that all the other commandments follow from this first one.



2) **“You are not to make anything into an idol. You not to bow down to them or worship them”**: You are not to pay homage to any other thing than God. To do so is idolatry – i.e., treating something of lesser importance than God as that which one serves. Some take this commandment too literally in thinking it only condemns making icons, statues, etc., of other values, but it really is about anything that we serve with our heart and soul. If you want to know what is an idol, ask yourself what you cannot speak against without great public outcry. Can you imagine anyone saying in this country that they do **not** “support our troops?” This one hits home to most of us. If you consider what memorials and monuments are most prolific in this country, it is clear that those depicting war and those who served in wars far outnumber all other memorials and monuments combined. Militarism and nationalism be our nation’s greatest idolatry, even above greed for wealth and power. Pledging allegiance to the flag, standing, kneeling, or crossing your heart during than national anthem, and even having flags in churches are interpreted by many to be modern day idolatries. Pursuing wealth, career, family, and even religious rigidity may all be idols that we serve and worship with our attentions. What we show we serve by our actions and behaviors are passed down to our children, which is why it tells us that children will reap from their parents’ poor values for three or four generations. Your behavior, conduct and character will affect your children and theirs for many generations after you.

3) **“You are not to make wrongful use of the name God, for God will not acquit anyone who misuses his name”**: Again, many have interpreted this in a narrow, rather than mytho-poetic, understanding of these words. Using profane language certainly is not reverence, and reflects poorly on your character. However, using God’s name to justify natural catastrophes, human tragedies, people’s sufferings, winners in war, condemnation of others who are different, disdain for the poor or oppressed, etc., are perverse ways of using God’s name to justify one’s lack of love and compassion for others – ironically, disavowing the very quality, love, that is most attributed to God. Telling others that God is punishing them for doing something, or being someone, who doesn’t conform to one’s own image of holiness is not only blaspheming God’s good name and character, but is spiritual abuse. Revering God and all that is of God includes purity of words as well as heart and spirit. As Jesus reminded us, you can’t really love God if you don’t love others. Telling others God hates rather than loves them is a horrible distortion of the Biblical message, and portrays God in a malevolent light.

4) **“Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy/sacred. Six days you are to labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to revere God; you are not to do any work”**: Set aside a sacred day to rest, to study goodness, to revive your spirit, and nurture your character. Do not do work or do mundane things on that day, but only those things that restore your spiritual, moral, emotional, and physical strength. Jesus, of course, did not take this commandment legalistically, recognizing that work done to help humans or animals (but not one’s usual daily labor) is what it means to

honor God. It is important that we have some downtime from our normal activities, which not only gives us an opportunity to reflect on those activities and whether they are worthy of our time and efforts, but also helps renew and restore us so that if your labors do serve God’s purposes, then we will be in a better position to carry out those tasks creatively, constructively, and in a manner filled with grace. An appropriate Sabbath is a blessing to you that prepares you to be a blessing to others.

5) **“Honor your father and mother”**: Respect and honor your parents. Show gratitude for what they have done for you, and do not make their lives difficult. Let them be not ashamed of your behavior, whether in their presence or elsewhere. Honoring them does not mean, however, mimicking them if they do what is against God. We most honor our parents when we assimilate their virtues and avoid their vices. What greater honor is there for a parent than for them to see that their child has grown up to be a respectable, caring, kind, and loving being – a reflection of the image of God?

6) **“You are not to murder”**: While often also myopically construed as causing physical death to a person who doesn’t want you to, murder here should also be applied to what we do to another’s spirit, reputation, esteem, self-worth, etc. Cruelly bullying or defaming another can be as bad, if not worse, than physical death. Ridicule has caused many to take their own lives. Those who have torn down, rather than built up, others with words and behaviors are responsible for their destruction just as readily as if they attacked and killed them with a physical weapon. Jesus reminds us that being angry with another can cause as much harm to them as actually killing them. Revere and care for all life. We are all interconnected and made good. While doing injury or killing another violates our covenant as brothers and sisters of one another, so does verbal, emotional, and spiritual abuse.

7) **“You are not to commit adultery”**: In sum, respect and honor the relationships of others. Tempt not one who has made vows to another, and consider the pain you would feel if another did the same to you. Place your integrity over your pleasure, and your morality over the desires of your heart. Whether a person is willing to violate their own relationships does not make it justifiable for you to do so yourself. Think, too, about your own, or the other’s, partner and how they would feel about your relationship. Again, this should be expansively understood to include not only having sexual relationships with married people, but any inappropriate behavior with someone who has a vow/commitment to another they’d be breaking.

8) **“You are not to steal”**: Respect others’ things, and their feelings towards things they own or desire. Do not take from another what is not yours, and do not cheat another to get what you both desire. Stealing another’s property, job, income, dignity, dreams, etc., disrespects them and violates the covenant of caring you have toward them. Moreover, it breeds in you a dangerous ethic of believing you are entitled to what you did not earn. It also promotes an ethos of taking from the world and others, rather than an ethos of giving to the world and others. It makes possessions more important than relationships; things more valued than people.

9) ***“You are not to speak or act in ways that falsely portray your neighbor”***: Our character and reputation are perhaps more important to us than life itself. When we fabricate something about another, we defame them. Likewise, when we tell only about their negative traits or actions without revealing their positive traits and actions, we distort their image in the eyes of others. Truthfulness, an ennobled form of honesty that seeks the best for others, is necessary for justice and harmony in relationships. Therefore, we are not to lie, deceive, or manipulate others. We are not to portray another falsely, condescendingly, or maliciously. We are not to gossip about or disparage another, despite what our view of them is. We must remember, too, that every person, even the worst among us, have the image of God imprinted within them. It may be difficult to see in some cases, but to treat others fairly and respectfully, we must remember this truth even when we have not visible evidence in it based on their behaviors. In the end, how you speak of others reflects more on you than it does them. Be a peacemaker, not a troublemaker; a reconciler, not a reprimander; a restorer of compassionate relationships, not a destroyer of them.

10) ***“You are not to covet your neighbor’s house; your neighbor’s wife, or servants, or livestock or anything that belongs to your neighbor”***: Envy and jealousy create disharmony. To want what another has is to see the other person not as a person, but as a possessor of things. It is also to see what they have as more essential to you than your relationship to them. Furthermore, it leads you to see life as more about getting and having than being and giving; more about desire and acquisition than gratitude and generosity. Desire perverts our perception of reality and what is most important in life – as all the major religions testify. Wanting what another has incites us to be in competition rather than collaboration with others. It makes us forgetful about being thankful for what is in our soul by focusing on what exists outside of ourselves and our relationships with those God created to be our siblings. We are to place more importance on our interdependency with others as spiritual companions rather than on what things they have or how what they control might benefit you. Again, we need not limit ourselves to thinking in purely physical terms, for lusting after someone else’s job, popularity, reputation, influence, etc., can be just as detrimental to our relationship with them, if not more so, than material things they may own or beings with whom they are close to. We are to be a trustworthy friend who is glad for another’s successes. We, too, are to be a generous neighbor who shares our own good fortune when others are lacking what we have – not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because it will lessen the envy and jealousy others may have when we’ve been blessed abundantly.

--- Rev. Bret S. Myers reflecting on the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20.1-17; 3/7/2012; revised 10/4/2017