



Arms of Faith

Faith Presbyterian Church
"To know, to grow, and to show Christ to all people"

April
2021

Let me tell you a story

Those of you who read the Bible chronologically last year gained an appreciation for the many, many stories the Bible contains. The Bible is filled with stories of people who struggled to be faithful, along with stories of the Living God who was at times tender and nurturing, and angry and disgusted at other times. Jesus' preferred teaching method was to tell parables, stories that make their points indirectly. Another way to look at parables is to see them as invitations to see how one's own life measures up to the parable's meaning. As a preacher I see my primary role as storyteller...which leads me to a story!

Early in my career as a pastor I was frustrated frequently by having to spend a lot of time putting the scripture read in worship into context. Taking a handful of verses out of Mark's gospel, for example, is like taking one brick out of the Great Wall of China. That brick is important, but too much focus on it and you miss something much, much bigger. I said, "Someday I'd like to preach sermons based on longer passages." Ten years later, I expressed this same frustration at a preaching seminar and one of my colleagues asked, "Why don't you?" For one of the few times in my life I was at a loss for words!

This is all a long way of saying, I got my wish. In April we will have *a lot* of scripture read in worship.

On Maundy Thursday, April 1 we will gather in person, on conference call and livestream at 7 p.m. We'll celebrate the Lord's Supper and several different readers will tell the story of the events from the first Palm Sunday up to Jesus' celebrating Passover with his disciples as the story is found in Matthew's gospel.

On Good Friday, April 2 we will again gather in person, on conference call and livestream at 7 p.m. That day we will hear the story from Jesus' time in the Garden of Gethsemane until his body was sealed in the tomb, again from Matthew's gospel.

The two Sundays following Easter will be given to reading two books in their entirety. Sunday, April 11 we will read Jonah start to finish, and Sunday April 18 we will read all of Ruth. I will make some remarks about Jonah and Ruth, but most of the preaching will be from the stories themselves.

The stories we tell about ourselves reveal who we are. The stories we learn from the Bible tell us Whose we are.

Pastor Tom

March Session News

Your Session met over Zoom on Thursday, March 18. Every elder was in attendance!

Pastor Tom began the meeting with a reading of Psalm 22, the one that begins, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" the Psalm Jesus began on the cross just before He died.

Facilities Chair, Tom Negley, reported that all the outside groups who use the church's space have returned, though COVID restrictions remain. Both kitchens are now also open for use. We continue to look for other community groups who would like to use our space; it helps our outreach and bottom line.

Worship Committee Chair, Debbie Eggers, shared that plans are in place for Holy Week and all of April. Masked singing is now permitted. We still urge people to RSVP if they plan to attend worship, seating capacity is limited due to physical distancing—though we have yet to get close to capacity!

Plans for the Leadership Retreat were settled. The meeting will begin in Fellowship Hall @ 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 17. Physical distancing and mask wearing will be enforced. A variety of breakfast pastry, coffee and juice will be served. There will be an opportunity for Deacons and Elders to join remotely if desired. The main portion of the retreat will be hearing the results of the Holy Cow survey which was conducted in March. Progress on re-opening the church as we come out from under COVID-19 will also be on the agenda.

Session had a frank discussion on the future of Faith Church and the significance of the search process we're about to begin. There is some anxiety after a series of short-lived pastorates. Faith Church's future will be dramatically different from its past. We are very fortunate because the leaders who served on the last Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) learned a great deal about the search process and are eager to offer guidance to the next PNC.

Treasurer Marc Wagoner reported that through the first two months of the year revenue came in at 99.3% of projections!

So goes the work of your Session.

Streaming Sunday Worship Service 10:00am

We will continue to broadcast the worship service on Facebook. If you do not have computer access, you may listen to the service by calling 1-844-855-4444 and entering access code 716966#.

Church office hours Monday - Thursday 9:00am-4:00pm Closed Friday

The Church office will be closed April 5, the day following Easter.

Work Day

We are holding our work day on May 8, 2021 starting at 9am. Volunteers are encouraged to bring gloves and rakes and tools for working outside. Other tasks will be available in the building for those who prefer to work inside. Questions should be directed to Tom Negley at 402-301-5288 or tnegley13@cox.net.

Helping Hands to the Rescue

Congregation members – Do you have jobs at home that you cannot do on your own (cutting up limbs, small electrical, plumbing jobs or household repairs, yardwork, etc.)? For help, contact Doug Bogenhagen at 402-630-8487. If you are willing to be part of the Helping Hands Team, please let us know.

Faithful Friends Fellowship

Please join the Faithful Friends Fellowship, the Zoom fellowship hour following the church service each Sunday. A variety of topics are discussed, and we would love your input.

Here is the Zoom link:

[https://zoom.us/j/99782007363?](https://zoom.us/j/99782007363?pwd=L042cGQza2tjVTZvSINOYk1xYlBLQT09)
pwd=L042cGQza2tjVTZvSINOYk1xYlBLQT09
Meeting ID: 997 8200 7363
Passcode: 112592

Holy Cow—March is past!

Thank you to everyone who completed the Holy Cow Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) in March. The Holy Cow staff is compiling the results as you read this. In March the Session scheduled a Leadership Retreat for the morning of Saturday, April 17. The Deacons will join with the Session to hear the result of the CAT assessment. Session also scheduled a Congregational Meeting to follow worship on April 25 to share with the whole congregation what the CAT assessment indicates about Faith Church as we prepare to form a Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC).

Holy Cow is the next, faithful step Faith Church is taking on the road to calling our next pastor.



Thank you to Pastor Tom and Debbie Eggers for planning the wonderful recognition Sunday, February 7th, on the 50th anniversary date of my serving as Organist for Faith Church. It is quite a milestone that I had just hoped would be mentioned in worship, so I was totally surprised and humbled by all that occurred! The beautiful bouquet of flowers from the Church presented to me by Tracy Kristensen, the Handwarmers from the Worship Team, the many Cards of thanks and congratulations from current and former members of Faith Church, and the Prayer of Blessing written by Pastor Tom and Debbie (the framed copy given to me) will all be cherished remembrances of the special time. I have loved serving as your Organist for these 50 years and I look forward, with God's help, to continue to do so for as long as I am able. With my love and gratitude ..and in His service... I thank you!

Mary Ann Stevens

Your Session

Clerk of Session	- Joe Seda
Fellowship	Shayla Hall
Facilities	Tom Negley
	Matt Kasprzak
	Jim Willett
Mission & Ev	Chuck Shafer
Discipleship	Peter Svoboda
Support	Marc Wagoner
Worship	Debbie Eggers
Human Res	Scott Jamieson

Synod School

There is spectacular, affordable, fun Christian education coming this summer: Synod School.

The week of July 25-July 30 Presbyterians from all across the Upper Midwest will gather at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa.

There is high quality programming for people of all ages. The morning and evening worship services are outstanding, and there are classes that range from Introduction to the Old Testament to Pickleball is Serious Fun, Outdoor Cooking—RIBS, RIBS, RIBS to Inspired Living—a Life of Prayer. I will be teaching The Humor of Christ this summer.

The food offers a wide variety of healthy choices for all dietary needs. Caramel Roll Day has been declared a state holiday in Iowa.

For a week's worth of programming, fun and education Synod School is very affordable: \$280 for lodging, classes and meals for adults sharing a room.

There are also generous scholarships available from Synod School—and also money that Faith Church has available.

Check out the catalog for more classes and information.

[741_sscatalog21_final.pdf \(lakesandprairies.org\)](#)

Or call Pastor Tom to hear more about how wonderful Synod School is - 402-331-6944. He is a true Synod School evangelist!

Easter Offering

Christ
is
Risen!

This year's Easter Offering will support Table Grace Cafe. Located in downtown Omaha at 16th and Farnam, Table Grace opened ten years ago with the concept "provide everyone who enters the door with the same dignified dining experience." There are no prices on the menu. Customers pay what they feel is appropriate or they can

afford. Those who cannot pay are invited to volunteer. It is not uncommon for a business executive to enjoy the same meal as a jobless individual.

Table Grace's mission statement reads, "to foster a healthy community by offering great food prepared and served with dignity and to provide opportunities for transformation both personally and spiritually through hospitality, music and fellowship." Table Grace also offers a 10-day job experience program to give people a chance to learn skills needed to find permanent employment.

The Circle Maker

Praying Circles Around Your Biggest Dreams and Greatest Fears

By Mark Batterson

Facilitated by Debbie Kippley

Sunday, April 18, 25, and May 2, 9, 2021

8:30 AM

The Circle Maker is a study based on a story from The Book of Legends, from the Talmud and Midrash, by Sefer Ha-Aggadah. The book includes teachings of Jewish Rabbis passed down from generation to generation.

In the 1st Century BCE, there was a terrible doubt destined to wipe out the generation of Jews before Jesus a long time after the last prophet and when the people did not remember miracles. Honi believed that God was still listening. He drew a circle in the parched earth and prayed for rain. God answered his prayer.

This study will help us explore prayer in new ways.

Reading Exodus 16 and Joshua 6 would be good preparation for this study.

Please sign up in the Centrum or call the church office. The study guide is \$10.00. The number of people who sign up will determine which classroom will be used.

April Birthdays

Apr 2 Ranae Overton
Apr 3 Ben Jamieson
Apr 6 Rob Crick
Apr 9 Anna Howard
Apr 14 Lesli Pool
Apr 17 Ginny MCKulsky
Apr 17 Peter Svoboda
Apr 19 Debbie Kippley
Apr 19 Barb Rooker
Apr 20 Jacob Hayes
Apr 21 John O'Brien
Apr 22 John Davey
Apr 23 Al Levene