June 9, 2024 + 10:30 A.M. Fourth Sunday of Pentecost

We Join in Worship

If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker, or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of our Prayground, the extra space across the aisle from the sound booth.

PRELUDE

Be Thou My Vision

Dale Wood

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every

living creature that is with you, for all future generations:

ALL: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between

me and the earth.

Leader: When I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow is seen in the clouds, I will remember

my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the

waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

ALL: When the rainbow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting

covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

Leader: At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the

throne! And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is

a rainbow that looks like an emerald.

ALL: As rainbow people, we declare, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty, who was

and is and is to come!"

*OPENING HYMN: "Will You Come and Follow Me?" (Glory to God 726)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader: In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes that we have treasure in clay jars to

show God's extraordinary power. Let us confess how we fall short in showing that

extraordinary power.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

God of extraordinary power, we confess our sins unto you, trusting in your rainbow covenant. We confess that all too often we do not let your light shine through us. You call out to us all the time, urging us to show the power of your love to the world. And yet, we only respond sometimes, when it feels convenient and free of risk. We act as though the treasure of your powerful love is a scarce commodity to be hidden in our clay jars rather than an abundant blessing to be shared with all. Forgive us for dimming the light that shines within us. Give us the courage to always respond to your call with boldness and joy. In the name of Jesus Christ, the embodiment of radical Love, we pray. Amen.

KYRIE:

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader:

Friends, hear the good news. It is the God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the

face of Christ.

ALL:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

STATEMENT OF FAITH: (From *The Confession of 1967*)

The reconciliation of humanity through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation. Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world's poor is the cause of his disciples. The church cannot condone poverty, whether it is the product of unjust social structures, exploitation of the defenseless, or lack of national resources.

We Hear God's Word

MESSAGE FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God, who made is in Your image, inspire us with your Word this day so that we may have the courage to show the power of your Love to the world. It is in the name of Jesus Christ, the embodiment of radical Love, that we pray. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON

1 Samuel 3:1-10

EPISTLE LESSON

2 Corinthians 4:6-12

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 2:23-3:6

SERMON

Shining in Our Hearts

MUSICAL MEDITATION

Jesus Calls Us

Franklin Ritter

We Respond in Faith

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

OFFERING INVITATION:

Leader:

God is always calling out to us. It is upon us to respond. Let us respond in this moment by sharing our resources. If you did not do so as you entered, please place your offering in the plate as you leave. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Let us reflect on stewardship as we listen to

today's offertory.

OFFERTORY

Cantabile on "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

John A. Behnke

* DOXOLOGY:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God, above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)

God of extraordinary power, we have responded to your call in this moment by sharing of our resources. Inspire us to continue responding to your call in every moment. It is in the name of Jesus Christ, the embodiment of radical Love, that we pray. Amen.

We Go into the World

* CLOSING HYMN: "Here I Am, Lord" (525)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Send the Light

Charles H. Gabriel, arr. John Peterson

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* So that we can properly greet people who come to the building during Sunday morning worship, Door A will be the only unlocked external door during the worship service.

Life of the Church

PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 6/9: Worship In Person & Online – 10:30 AM

Fellowship Hosts: Choir

MONDAY 6/10:

GA - 6:30 PM

Al-Anon - 7:00 PM

TUESDAY 6/11:

Mission – 6:00 PM

Stewardship & Finance – 6:30 PM

WEDNESDAY 6/12:

Trustees - 6:00 PM

Book Discussion – 6:30 PM (FH)

SATURDAY 6/15:

Gladys' Table Meal Prep

SUNDAY 6/16:

FATHER'S DAY

Worship Outside in Garden & Online – 10:30 AM

Salad Sale

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- WORSHIP OUTSIDE IN THE GARDEN JUNE 16: We are excited to announce that we will once again be worshiping outside in the garden on the third Sundays of the summer months! Please bring whatever chair and clothes you will be comfortable in and prepare to worship in God's Creation! We have extra chairs and water if any are needed.
- <u>SALAD SALE NEXT SUNDAY, JUNE 16</u>: Come prepared to get a delicious lunch and contribute to our church's general fund in the process!

- MINISTRY OF MISSION'S 2024 FLOWER VOUCHER SALE IS HERE! The Ministry of Mission is once again selling vouchers for Zandstra's Greenhouse located at 10202 Kennedy Avenue, Highland, Indiana. The vouchers are \$17.00 and are worth \$17.00 at Zandstra's, just like cash. You can purchase anything from flowers, to veggie plants, to potting soil, to flower pots, etc. If you are interested in purchasing vouchers, please see any Mission Member or contact Tracy Oprea @ (219) 616-7181.
- <u>THE BIBLE IN TODAY'S WORLD CLASS</u> is on hiatus for the season. Please consider participating in our Spring Read-A-Long!
- **BYOB** is on hiatus for the season. Please consider participating in our Spring Read-A-Long!
- SPRING READ-A-LONG AND BOOK DISCUSSION Faith Development is sponsoring a spring read-a-long on a timely subject for this year. The book is "Thou Shalt Not Be Jerk: A Christian's Guide to Engaging Politics" by Eugene Cho. You're encouraged to start reading the book this month. This book, originally published in 2020, and our discussions, will not endorse any candidates or political parties, so no matter where you may find yourself on the vast spectrum of thought, there is room for all voices. We will have an in-person discussion of last half of the book on June 12 at 6:30 pm. We have 5 copies of this book at the church that can be checked out to read. Please sign the check-out sheet when you take a book, and sign it back in when you are finished so more people may enjoy the book. "Thou Shalt Not Be A Jerk" is also available in paperback and as an e-book (Kindle).
- FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA! If you don't already follow us on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so @firstpchighland on both Facebook and Instagram.
- <u>JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP AFTER WORSHIP</u> Every Sunday after worship we have delicious snacks, coffee, lemonade, and conversation. Join us for this vital part of our life together!
- <u>INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?</u> You are always welcome here, whether a member or not! If you are interested in joining as a member, though, we would love to have you! Please talk to Pastor Tyler if you would like to learn more.

Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

- <u>BLESSING BOX</u> Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates!
- <u>HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!</u> Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex and fill it to help the church's food pantry.
- **BIN OF HUGS** Bring in clean, gently used stuffed animals for distribution to migrant families with young children who need the joy of loving welcome!
- GOT SNEAKERS? We are still participating in a fundraiser where there is nothing to buy or sell; all we need is your support and your gently worn, used, or new sneakers! As you do spring cleaning, gather your old pairs of sneakers (athletic shoes only, please). Ask your neighbors, kids, grandkids, friends or co-workers to help out too! The sneakers that we all collect will help raise money to support our programs and projects here at FPCH AND will help our environment by keeping sneakers out of landfills. Blue bins are located in the narthex, and inside and outside DOOR D by the office. Every pair counts!

Prayer List

Anthony

George Nelson Brady Vanes

George Griner Guy Hendricks

Bill and Anettia Holmes

Daniel Litwicki David Markley

Pat and David Kingen Diana and Ray Mendoza

Janet Orem Jeanne Nestor

Cindy Waltz and Sister

Yvonne Suroviak

Wendy

Georgette Sknerski Jakob Holden Denise Matthys Steve & Melinda

Jan Oprea Janet Vargo Ric Jaeggi Florance Cody Josephine Kim Carol Figley

Kathy & Chuck Pumnea

Nick

Laura Buono Domsic The Windstrups Ruth Dekker Rick Parker Gary Everhart Gale Osterby Bonnie Kern

Collin & Kathy Stein

Peter Tim Barbara Morton Caroline Studer

Cary & Jennifer Pearson

Holly Letnich Jaden Mendez Frank Falzone

Doug & Sue Matthews

Robert Urich
Richard Simmons
Janet Terpstra
Glen Nahler
Tammy
Tom
Jana Tolley

Larry & Bonnie Perryman

Virginia Marshall

Delta Rose Winnie Owen Charity Lynn Chestine Shannon

David Hamblin

Judy
Breeanne
Joe Petersen
Susan Agbor
Mom Bechtler
A Close Friend

Gloria

John Miramontes Colton Bobonick

Cletus Victor

Mary Ellen Edeus

Crystal and David Cerventies

Cheryl

Marian Clayton Lou Ann Sulowski

1 Samuel 3:1-10

- 3 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.
- ² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³ the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵ and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶ The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

2 Corinthians 4:6-12

- ⁶ For it is the God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.
- ⁷ But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, ⁹ persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, ¹⁰ always carrying around in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹ For we who are living are always being handed over to death for Jesus's sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us but life in you.

Mark 2:23-3:6

- ²³ One Sabbath he was going through the grain fields, and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. ²⁴ The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" ²⁵ And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food, ²⁶ how he entered the house of God when Abiathar was high priest and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions?" ²⁷ Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath, ²⁸ so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."
- 3 Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. ² They were watching him to see whether he would cure him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³ And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." ⁴ Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. ⁵ He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶ The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Shining in Our Hearts

1 Samuel 3:1-10; 2 Corinthians 4:6-12; Mark 2:23-3:6

Last week we heard the remarkable story of a remarkable woman named Hannah. Even though she was cast to the margins, ridiculed, and considered unworthy, she dared to enter into God's temple and pray in her own, unique way. God honored her prayer, and she responded by honoring God. She spoke words of radical love that would inspire the mother of the messiah generations later. And she dedicated her child, Samuel, to God by making him a Nazirite, somebody set aside to serve God. In doing so, she sacrificed the potential security and wealth that could come from a son. That was just fine with her, though, because she understood what it meant to respond to a higher calling.

As they say, like mother like son! Samuel's higher calling came much earlier in his life, while he was still a child. As a Nazirite, he was raised in the temple. This meant that he grew up with the priest Eli, the same one who had once accused his mom of being drunk because of how she prayed. His mother would come to visit and bring him gifts, but Eli was the one who raised him. The writer of the book of *I Samuel* makes the significant point that the word of God was rare in those days and that visions were not widespread. In that time, this would have meant that the well of prophecy had been dry. Perhaps the prophets had stopped listening to God. Perhaps the prophets had stopped responding to God. As a result, even in the temple there was apparently no experience nor expectation of God speaking. And so, it should come as no surprise that Samuel would have been surprised and confused when he heard someone calling his name. "Samuel! Samuel!" Since the only other person there was Eli, it makes sense that Samuel's first response was to rush to Eli...and his second...and his third. Ah, look at that divine number three!

And Samuel was not the only one who did not understand what was going on. For his part, Eli sent Samuel back to bed twice, assuming that he was having auditory hallucinations. Oh to ponder how often we silence the voices of the prophets with diagnoses of psychosis! Perhaps because of that divine number three at work, Eli finally understood what was happening with the third occurrence. He sent Samuel back to bed, saying, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."

Then something remarkable happened! The LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" This was no longer a disembodied voice that could be misunderstood as a hallucination. This was God standing there physically. Clearly, God wanted Samuel to fully know and understand just who it was calling his name. Samuel followed Eli's advice and said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." That, loved ones, is a very significant way of phrasing things. Clearly God is the one who initiates this conversation, but Samuel then invites God to speak. He welcomes God into conversation. And then he declares that he is listening. He is not just hearing the sound of God's voice. He is actively listening, and we all know that active listening requires intention and attention. It is a commitment to be fully present.

This sounds like an incredibly fruitful formula for us to follow as we ourselves consider communicating with God! God is constantly reaching out to us, calling out to us in ways that we can hear—through direct speech, through the voice of others around us, through scripture, through blessings, through natural phenomena, through the voice of conscience, through art, through music, there is no end to the possibilities. Whenever we open ourselves to the voice of God, we must invite God in, and we must actively listen. When we do so, we might just find that God is standing right there, ready to converse!

When Samuel listened, he heard God calling him to action. And that first call to action was a very, very hard one. You see, Eli's sons by birth, Hophni and Phinehas, were "scoundrels" in the very polite wording of scripture. They were also priests, and they had become notorious for stealing food from offerings meant for God. This was considered blasphemy, as it would have been a sign that they considered themselves to be worthy of that food and thus that they considered themselves to be either on par with or greater than God. Yes, they were the very embodiment of the type of pride that is sinful in our scriptures. And God's call to action for Samuel was to have him tell Eli—his mentor and surrogate father—that his house was a house of iniquity that would be punished because of the blasphemy of his sons and because of his own failure to do anything to stop it.

Now we get to another significant detail about Samuel's response to God. He did not jump up and run to Eli to once again say, "Here I am," and to declare to him what God had declared. Clearly feeling some type of way about what God had called him to do and whom God had called him to confront, he first avoided it and went back to bed. I am sure that many of us can see ourselves in that response! When he got up and was once again in the presence of Eli, he must have continued with his avoidance by simply being silent. Eli had to pull it out of him. And so, like long ago with Jacob and Moses, we have a good example of how it is ok to wrestle a bit with responding to God's call. In Samuel's case, it took another person's assertive encouragement to get him to follow through on responding to God's call and thus to fully step into his role as a prophet. And I am sure that many us can resonate with that as well! It is ok if we sometimes need the push of a little assertive encouragement to follow through on faithful responses to God's call!

From that point onward, Samuel wore the mantle of a prophet. According to the text, "As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD. The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD." Samuel's particular calling was to be a prophet. That particular calling is one of many possible callings. We see different gifts lifted up throughout our scriptures, and we ourselves embody those gifts in special ways. The common thread that runs through all of these gifts, of course is what Jesus would later call the greatest commandments: to love God and to love our neighbors, and thus to love ourselves. Samuel did so in a way that fit his time and context, and then generations later Jesus fully embodied it with his many gifts.

Jesus also made it clear that responding to God's call with our gifts of love is countercultural and dangerous...and that it is always worth the risk! In our gospel reading today we witnessed Jesus responding to God's call by embodying radical love in a way that would have made Mary and Hannah smile with the biggest grins. He boldly broke the law by supporting his disciples in their simple joy of plucking grain while they walked through a field on the Sabbath and then by healing a man who had a withered hand, right there in the face of those who would condemn him and seek to destroy him for doing so. He looked at them directly in the eyes as he did so, saying with his actions that there is no fear in love. I can just see the light shining in his heart!

And this brings us to us, to our own responses to God's call. Even if we sleep on it a bit like Samuel did, even if we require the intervention and support of others, we ultimately need to say, "Here I am, Lord!" And with that declaration, we need to be willing to embody love boldly, even when it may seem risky to do so. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes, "It is the God who said, 'Light will shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." I love that image of God shining in our hearts! I think it is the best description of what happens when we respond to God's call upon our lives with boldness, fearlessness, and joy.

This past week I did something that I have been striving to avoid for a long time. I stepped into a Facebook wall debate of sorts. Our faithful Shine the Light team posted a love-filled message about Pride month on our page, and my mom, another exemplar of radical love, reposted it on her page. Some pharisaical religionists took exception to that and swooped in, wielding weapons of words that they claimed to be from *the* Word. I tried my best to enter the conversation with empathy, for I know that so many churches have filled people with the false teaching that to be a faithful Christian is to judge and exclude and condemn people to hell. Pastors have a lot of authority, and I can understand that people often think that by following their pastors they are following the will of God. By the way, please do not ever allow me such authority! Question me, pray over the things I say, and listen for the Holy Spirit!

Anyways, I saw that one particular person was wielding the wordly weapon of saying that "Pride" is sinful and thus should not be embraced by a church. This person was referring to such sayings as, "Pride goes before the fall," and, "The LORD detests all the proud of heart." It quickly became clear that we had very different understandings of the different meanings of the word "pride" and how it is used in translation of scripture. The vocabulary word itself was a stumbling block. The conversation was revealing because it made me realize that this person is surely not alone in struggling with a church's embrace of Pride month simply because of that word. So, I clarified that pride as a sin refers to a person's arrogance in believing that they are

somehow on par with or greater than God. This, indeed, is an egregious sin. It is the sin we see when people feel like they have the authority and right to judge and exclude people from God's presence and God's family. Our celebration of LGBTQIA+ Pride, on the other hand, refers to an embrace of the beauty of God's creation, the image of God within us, the love of God for all. This sort of pride honors God's brilliant work rather than challenge God with our egos. In short, this sort of pride is how we get that light which shines in our hearts to glow forth and give light to others.

I am sharing all of this because it helped me and will hopefully help you to realize that Pride month provides an awesome opportunity for us to respond to God's call with boldness. For, it is an invitation to say, "Here I am, Lord!" in the fullness of our God-gifted identities and our God-given gifts. In loving God, we love God's image within us. In loving ourselves, we are able to love our neighbors to the fullest. And loving our neighbors to the fullest means loving them in the fullness of who they are and encouraging them to love themselves fully. It is a beautiful, life-sustaining cycle!

So, please let's let that light within us shine! Let's say, "Here I am, Lord!" in the fullness of who we are! Is it risky to do so? Certainly! Will we have to look some Pharisees directly in the eyes? Without a doubt! But such is the way of the one whose light fills us. May we be encouraged by Paul's words!

We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, always carrying around in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.

Amen!

726 Will You Come and Follow Me





- 1 "Will you come and fol low me if I but call your name? 2 "Will you leave your-self be-hind if I but call your name?
- 3 "Will you let the blind ed see if I but call your name?
- 4 "Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
- 5 Lord, your sum-mons ech oes true when you but call my name.



Will you go where you don't know and nev - er same? the for cruel and kind and nev - er the same? Will you care same? the and nev - er the pris-oners free Will you set the same? in - side and nev - er Will you quell the fear same. the you and nev - er fol - low Let me turn and



Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known; Will you risk the hos - tile stare should your life at - tract or scare? Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as this un - seen, Will you use the faith you've found to re-shape the world a - round, In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and foot-steps show.



me?" be grown in you and you in life will you let my me?" an - swer prayer in you and you in you let me Will me?" mean in you and you I what ad - mit and me?" through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in I'll move and live and grow in you and you me. Thus

The first four stanzas of this ballad-like hymn are understood to be in the voice of Christ, with the fifth reflecting the individual singer's response. Created for this traditional Scottish tune, the text was written to mark the conclusion of a youth volunteer's time of ministry.

Here I Am, Lord

HERE I AM, LORD 7.7.7.4 D with refrain

Daniel L. Schutte, 1981



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