



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

E-Link

August 5, 2020

Adult Forum

On hiatus

Worship

10:30 am

This Weekend's Worship

Worship this weekend is our fourth in a six-week series in Romans called, *Broken: Good News in Difficult Times*. Sermon: "Restoration" Scripture: Romans 10:5-15.

Don't miss the children's chat where we'll talk about Jesus and Peter walking on water from Matthew 14:22-33.

Checking in - In the Midst of a Storm

It has been months now. This time of pandemic has been a tumultuous mix of staying-at-home monotony, bouts of grief, feelings of powerlessness, and politically fueled aggravation. In this stormy time, the story of Jesus walking on water and the faith of the disciples becomes especially poignant. I invite you to reflect with me on the words of Jill Duffield, editor of *The Presbyterian Outlook*. I have included an excerpt below.

- Reflection on Matthew 14:22-33 -

"Let's go to the culmination of all this coming and going, leaving and returning, storms, prayer, water-walking and cries for help. Let's remember that the point of the story is the disciples' newfound understanding of who Jesus is and their confession of faith. We should recap that immediately before this account of the storm and Jesus' walking on water and Peter's brief venture out of the boat came the feeding of the 5,000 and before that the murder of John the Baptist. The disciples, and Jesus, must be worn out, wrung out, exhausted. Is it any wonder that Jesus goes up the mountain to pray and be alone? Can we blame the disciples for thinking they are seeing a ghost? And yet, in the end, comes this incredible declaration: Truly you are the Son

of God. In the end, after grief and service, fear and confusion, storms and disorientation, comes worship.

I need to start with the end of the story this week. I need to know with certainty that Jesus truly is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world, the one who not only feeds the hungry crowds but controls the winds and waves. I need to know that after the death and burial of John the Baptist and the distribution of baskets of bread and the near-death experience on the sea, we will be together and we will worship God." Click and [read more on page 3...](#)

As we navigate this time distanced, yet together, we remember that we are not on our own. We are accompanied by the One who comes to us on the waters and lifts us to safety. May we reach out to Christ and each other while looking toward the joy that will be when we gather again. Take some time this week to check in with the ones God puts on your heart. A phone call, a card, or even a text can provide some much-needed encouragement.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Julie

Church Birthdays

Aug. 6-Mary Clapp,
11-Greg Dotseth,
14-Rhonda Braley

For your prayers... Vi Polk

Marlys Folkers grand-
son, Eli Moretz

Our **online worship** will be available to watch anytime this weekend. An email will be sent when it is ready, or tune to CFU Cable access at 7:00 pm Saturday or 12:00 noon Sunday.

Upcoming Zoom Events & Meetings Monday, August 6

5:30 pm Community
Ministries Meeting

Sunday, August 9

11:00 am Fellowship

Tuesday, August 11

6:00 pm Grand Sweep
Bible Study

7:00 pm Children,
Youth and Families Team
Meeting

Thanks for serving last week:

Worship Leader: John Luzaich

Pianist: Connie Herbon

Vocalists: Brad & Sandy Jensen

Communion Preparer: Lynette Cline

Videographer/editor: Eric Braley

Lawn Mower-July 26: Gary Clark

Furnace Cleaning: Jim Seeley

Electronic Door Repair: Neal Leeper

Congratulations

Chad and Sally Lee have a son, David Dean, born August 3. He was 6 weeks premature, but mother and son are doing well.



Per Capita Offering

It is still not too late to send in your per capita offering. This year's offering is \$37 per member. You may mail in your gift or via online with PayPal. Thank you for giving to help offset the church's per capita costs.

Circle Gathering

This Saturday, August 8, 9:30 am Esther Circle will have a social gathering at Lookout Park in Cedar Falls. Please bring lawn chairs and a face covering.

Fellowship Hour

Sunday, August 9 at 11:00 am, join us for our next Fellowship Hour via Zoom. It's a great way to see each other's faces and hear each other's voices without leaving home! If you do not have a computer with reliable internet access, you may join by phone. To join click the link: [Fellowship Hour](#).

Or join by phone: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 960 0560 9426

Passcode: 716125

Lectionary on the Lawn

Monday, August 10 at 10:00 am, you are invited to join Pastor Julie on the front lawn to discuss the upcoming Sunday's scripture selection. Bring your own chair and Bible. In case of rain, the lectionary discussion will be cancelled. The scripture passage for next week is Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32.

Lawn Mowing Volunteers!

Please sign up by contacting the church or use the Google Doc link to sign up. Two self-propelled lawn mowers are available. Google Doc: [Mowing Sign Up](#)

Due to dry weather conditions, please check before mowing to see if it's needed.

The week of :

August 2: Seeley

August 23: *Open

August 9: Lawry

August 30: *Open

August 16: Lawry

September 6: *Open

The Grand Sweep Bible Study: We continue our journey through the Bible with the Grand Sweep Bible Study beginning Tuesday, August 11. The class is led by the pastors from the PCUSA churches in the Cedar Valley. We pick up our reading with the wisdom literature (Job through the Song of Solomon) and will work our way through the Old Testament by Thanksgiving. The class meets weekly on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. and lasts until 7:30 p.m. ***The class will be shared via Zoom at 6:00 each Tuesday night. Church offices will send out the weekly link / invitation as part of their regular email to their congregations.*** People are welcome to follow that link and join the class that week. Missing a few classes is fine. We encourage you to keep up your reading.

Tuesday, August 11 - Scripture: Job 1-42

Leader: Rev. Johnny Janssen

**Because our newsletter is sent on Wednesdays, the link will be included in our Fellowship Hour email sent on the Friday before. – Lynette*

Personal Care Drive

The Northeast Iowa Food Bank's Personal Care Drive ends **this week**. Please any personal care drive items like laundry detergent, soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, etc. by this Friday, noon. You can drop items off in the northeast entryway of the church.

Habitat for Humanity

Heartland Habitat for Humanity is looking for volunteers. Go to their website to see what opportunities are available and where you can sign up: [Habitat for Humanity Volunteers](#).

Outlook Article Continued:

Deep into this strange calendar year when the forces of creation threaten to overtake us, I need to be reminded that while Jesus may send us out on the ocean without him for a time, he will not abandon us and is surely coming to us as we attempt to navigate the strong winds that work against us. We may well struggle to perceive him through our anxiety and weariness, but he will tell his battered followers over and over again, "Take heart, it is I, do not be afraid."

We, like Peter, may test his claim, ask for proof and scramble briefly out of the boat only to look around and begin to flail. But Jesus meets us in our failures and faltering faith, too. Remember the end of the story? Jesus reached out his hand to Peter and when they got into the boat the wind ceased and those in the boat worshipped him and said, "Truly you are the Son of God."

In the end comes utter clarity about who Jesus is, what he has the power to do and how we are to respond. In the end is a declaration of faith - an unequivocal declaration of faith. In the end is worship. After the death and the feeding, the times in the pit and the guilt for how we treated our sibling, after the tumult on the sea and the estrangement in our family, after the briefest brave moments of faith and the months of enduring doubts, after the plagues and the pandemics, the hurricanes and the devastation, we will worship together. We will confess and repent and be forgiven and made new. We will pass the peace and we will sing. We will share our joys and our pain. We will pray and there will be preaching. We will bless and break the bread and, Lord please, we will baptize a new member of the household of God and affirm our faith together.

In the end, at the end, we will declare that Jesus truly is the Son of God and we will worship with our wounds and our worries, our losses and our dreams. And together with Jesus in the middle of us, we will rejoice that nothing we endured managed to take us away from the God who loves us and will not leave us alone.

Now in the middle of the storm, when we are not sure if it is Jesus coming toward us or not, when we want to leave the boat and go to him, when we notice the strong wind and start to sink in the mire of

so much upheaval, do not forget the end of the story. Envision the worship that is to come. Yes, keep in mind our socially distant services and our masked faces, and give thanks for those amended services where they are possible, but also see in your mind's eye the heavenly worship happening right now. See every tribe and nation singing alleluia around the lamb on the throne. Picture those who have been through the ordeal, clothed in Christ and consumed with the unmitigated joy of seeing our risen Lord face to face. Hear the heavenly choir of angels and remember in the end the winds cease, Jesus stands before us, we know who he is without a doubt and the whole dysfunctional, flawed and forgiven family of God worships.

Sonja Livingston writes in her book, "The Virgin of Prince Street: Expeditions into Devotion," about the power of the church. She writes, "Just a building, true. But think of all it's held. ... All that's said and heard and washed away. All that remains locked inside the body's tender vault. ... If everyone whoever set foot in this church sang a psalm at the same time, our hearts would become birds and fly straight into each other's hands." In the end, we worship. After Jesus stills the storm, still soggy from our near drowning, we will confess Jesus is Lord and we will worship. While we may still be in the middle of the sea, the shore out of sight and the waves still swamping our boat, even now wherever we are, no matter how afraid, we can sing a psalm and know the storm will not last forever and Jesus is near.

This week:

Where are you in this story? Who are you in this story? Imagine the scene and place yourself in it. What message do you hear from God?

When have you felt overwhelmed by life's storms? How did you get through it? How do you find calm even in the middle of the storm?

When have you declared with certainty that Jesus is the Son of God? What difference did that confession of faith make in how you lived your life? How did it help you understand all that was happening around you?

Can you think of an occasion of worship that was especially meaningful? What made it so? What do you most miss about corporate worship? How has virtual worship been meaningful for you?

Does it help you to remember the end of this story? The end of the entire salvation narrative? How does knowing the outcome give you strength in the moment?

Do you admire Peter for getting out of the boat or do you lament his doubt once he is on the water? Both? When have you gotten out of the boat, metaphorically speaking? What happened as a result?