

Kuhn Memorial Presbyterian Church
955 Main Street
Barboursville, West Virginia 25504
September 27, 2020
Evangelism Sunday

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

*Call to Worship

Psalm 34:8

O taste and see that the Lord is good.

Happy are those who take refuge in the Lord.

*Prayer of the Day

**Almighty God, we pray for your blessing
on the church in this place.**

**Here may the faithful find salvation,
and the careless be awakened.**

**Here may the doubting find faith,
and the anxious be encouraged.**

**Here may the tempted find help,
and the sorrowful comfort.**

**Here may the weary find rest,
and the strong be renewed.**

**Here may the aged find consolation
and the young be inspired;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

Exodus 17:1-7

Time for Young Disciples

New Testament Reading

Philippians 2:1-13

The Morning Message

In my very first week of seminary, in New Testament Survey, I was introduced to a new word and a new theological concept. Like any first week in any professional school, new words and concepts come at you so fast it's like trying to drink from a fire hose. This was no exception.

Every class began with a time of worship- prayer and a hymn or chorus. On this particular morning, my new friend and classmate, I'll call her Sue, walked to the front of the room, boom box in hand. She was leading worship, and it would begin with a contemporary Christian song, "Broken and Spilled Out." This song had special meaning for Sue. It describes the gospel text in

which Jesus and his disciples had gathered for a meal, and then, as an act of devotion, Mary broke a jar of sweet perfume and poured it over Jesus's feet, drying it with her hair. Like the perfume, Mary's own life had been broken and spilled out before Jesus, only to be filled with a new life following his example of humility, compassion, and love.

Likewise, Sue's life was broken and spilled out through many years of ups and downs. Relying on her resources and desires alone, her life was wholly unsatisfying. She was headed toward disaster. It was in kneeling in humility before Jesus, confessing her sins and seeking his mind and heart, that she found life, and it came rushing over her like water from the rock in our Exodus text. Her life was "Broken and Spilled Out."

Which left us all prepared to receive the word of the day: "kenosis."

Kenosis is a Greek word which describes the self-emptying of Jesus's own will in order to be entirely receptive to God's divine will.

Paul writes:

"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death- even death on a cross."

Paul is urging the good people at the Church of Philippi to adopt a kenotic way of life. Why? Because there had apparently been conflict and it was damaging the church. The members were not imitating Christ.

People bring baggage to church with them. Of course we do, because it is a safe place to lay down our burdens. Our church is often times our second home and family. Church folks may be the only family some people have. And have you ever known a perfect family? A family where everyone brushes AND flosses and never brings the car home on empty? Me neither.

So, at the First Church of Philippi, there's conflict and it is so serious that it threatens to fracture the fellowship. Oh, my. I could tell you some stories. I was once dispatched to mediate a church conflict. The plan was to work with the session two nights and the next week work with the congregation. Well, the first thing that happened was the session got into an argument about the interpretation of a Bible passage we were using for a devotion. This did not inspire confidence. The second night, the pastor had a heart attack. We were doomed.

That situation could have been resolved satisfactorily, if everyone had taken Paul's advice and emptied themselves of their tightly-held biases and taken on the mind of Christ. According to

Paul, when Jesus emptied himself, he poured out his love. With an outpouring of love comes the other fruit of Spirit-joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

A new-born baby is a full time job. A friend of mine had a very difficult time with her new-born, to the point that she felt like a failure. Baby didn't sleep, was not feeding well, and cried day and night. She didn't know how she could go on. So, one really stressful night, she knelt by her baby's crib and prayed for God to take over.

And God did. Out of her brokenness, poured love, and energy, and skill, and her maternal instinct was evident for all to see. She is a wonderful mother. Her children are grown now and on their own. Strong, resourceful, confident like their mom.

The kenosis ethic invites us to imitate Christ, who took on a human body, growing and changing, feeling hunger and thirst, fatigue and pain, joy and love and became for us the very bread of heaven and the cup of salvation.

One day a plain village woman
driven by love for her Lord,
recklessly poured out a valuable essence
disregarding the scorn.
And once it was broken and spilled out,
a fragrance filled all the room,
like a prisoner released from his shackles,
like a spirit set free from the tomb.

Steve Green

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

*Affirmation of Faith

1 Corinthians 15:1-6; Matthew 16:16; Mark 16:9; John 20:28; Revelation 22:13

**This is the good news which we have received,
in which we stand,
and by which we were saved,
if we hold it fast:
that Christ died for our sins
according to the scriptures,
that he was buried,
that he was raised on the third day,**

**and that he appeared
first to the women,
then to Peter, then to the Twelve,
and then to many witnesses.
We believe that Jesus is the Christ,
the Son of the Living God.
Jesus Christ is the first and the last,
the beginning and the end;
He is our Lord and our God. Amen.**

*Blessing

2 Corinthians 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

*Postlude

Announcements

The session, both currently serving and newly-elected, will meet Oct. 1, 2020 at 7:00PM by Zoom. Directions will follow.

In observance of St. Francis Day, Christ the King Lutheran Church and Pea Ridge United Methodist Church will host a Pet Blessing October 4 at 4:00PM at the pavilion behind CTK. St. Francis of Assisi is the Patron Saint of Animals.

As the pandemic has presented numerous challenges for all of us, it is especially hard for the needy among us. KMPC has supported the ministry of ECCHO for years and now is a good time to help this organization. ECCHO has a special need for personal hygiene items. You may bring these to church any week and we will see that they are delivered. Financial contributions may be sent to ECCHO, 1036 Smith St. Milton, WV 25541.

Work is scheduled to begin October 19 on the HVAC project at KMPC. We anticipate work to be complete by month's end.