

Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren

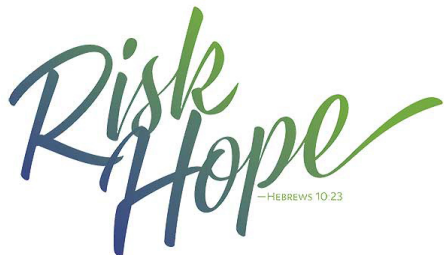
Long Green and Kanés Rds., near Glen Arm, MD

September 10, 2017

Worship 10:00 am Sunday School 11:10 am

Large print hymnals are available see an usher

This room is equipped with a sound loop for the hearing impaired



*“Let us hold fast
to the confession of our hope
without wavering,
for he who has promised
is faithful.”
(Hebrews 10:23)*

Beginning with Praise (9:50 am) “All praise to our...” 21

Announcements

Prelude Video “Let us build a house” Marty Haugen

*Call to Worship

One: We gather here, where God would teach us:

**All: so we may learn to be more compassionate,
so we may be taught how to be more loving.**

One: We gather here, where Jesus would teach us

**All: the wisdom to choose forgiveness over holding a grudge,
the language of hope so we may speak to all.**

One: We gather here, where the Spirit imparts wisdom,

**All: so we might know how to share grace,
so we would learn to welcome all to this Table.**

*Hymn “Praise him, praise him” 100

*Opening Prayer (based on Psalm 149:1-5)

Encouraging words Romans 13:8-10 from *The Message*

Responding with our confession 696

Gospel words Matthew 18:15-20

“where two or three are gathered...”

Sharing a joy, a concern, a word of testimony or praise
(please be brief, and aware of God’s listening presence)

Hymn “In the bulb there is a flower” 614

Pastoral Prayer

Returning our Tithes and Offerings

Annual Conference Wrap-up video
(Please sign the attendance pad and pass it on)

Prayerful ponderings of our delegate

*Hymn “Great is thy faithfulness” 327

*Sending

One: Go now to the people who are overwhelmed by despair.

**All: We will take the hope which has been given to us
and share it with all.**

One: Go now to those who are at odds with neighbors.

**All: We will offer the peace and reconciliation which God
has poured into our lives.**

One: Go now to those who are the most vulnerable in our world.

**All: We will bring the healing, the grace,
the love of our God.**

*Postlude

*Rise in body or in spirit

* * * * *

message to be posted at

www.lgvcob.org/sermons/2017/17-09-10.mp3

Call to Worship

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written by Rev. Thom M. Shuman,
currently interim Pastor at
Galloway Presbyterian Church near Columbus, Ohio.
from: lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com

Opening Prayer

(based on Psalm 149:1-5)

Hallelujah! A new song we sing to you, O God. The tune may be old, and the words ancient. Even so, your Spirit moving among those who love you, make our hymn fresh and alive. For you created us and we rejoice in you, above every earthly or heavenly power. You set our feet to dancing. Yes, these “Brethren” shoes - which struggle with rhythm – you set them tapping, if not hopping, O Lord of the Dance. And beyond the sound of the organ we hear echoes of an angelic orchestra, as you join in the chorus, delighting in the melodies and harmonies of your people. As we ground ourselves in worship, letting go of our pride, you lift us up and help us to shine. And so, we celebrate your glory, right where we are... Amen!

“Praise him, praise him”

Hymn #100

Encouraging words
Romans 13:8-10

*From words of **praise**, we turn now to words from the apostle Paul which build up **courage** in those who would follow Jesus. Listen.*

⁸⁻¹⁰ Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along. The law code—don't sleep with another person's spouse, don't take someone's life, don't take what isn't yours, don't always be wanting what you don't have, and any other "don't" you can think of—finally adds up to this: Love other people as well as you do yourself. You can't go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is *love*.

from *The Message*
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Responding with our confession

Do we have the courage to love in this way? ... If we are truly honest with ourselves and with God, we've all got a long way to go, don't we? Let's respond with the confession found in your hymnal, #696, as well as on the screen. Shall we speak it together?...

God of love and justice

we long for peace within and peace without.

We long for harmony in our families,
for serenity in the midst of struggle,
and for commitment to each other's growth.

We long for the day when our homes
will be a dwelling place for your love.

Yet we confess that we are often anxious;
we do not trust each other,
and we harbor violence.

We are not willing to take the risks
and make the sacrifices that love requires.

Look upon us with kindness and grace.
Rule in our homes and in all the world;
show us how to walk in your paths,
through the mercy of our Savior. AMEN

by Ruth C. Duck, *Flames of the Spirit*, ed. Ruth C. Duck,
© 1985, The Pilgrim Press, altered as found in *The Hymnal*, #696.

Gospel words
Matthew 18:15-20

And now some Gospel words from Jesus. Listen.

¹⁵“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

from the *New Revised Standard Version* Bible,
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National Council of the Churches of Christ
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“where two or three are gathered...”

Jesus spoke the promise in the context of conflict. Where brothers or sisters find themselves at odds, our Lord is in the middle of seeking common ground. “I am among you,” he said. Not “I *will be*,” but “I *am* among you.” A promise in the present tense.

We trust in this promise that Jesus is with us, for it carries over into everything we do. Today begins yet another year of intentionally gathering together to seek God’s wisdom in this program we call, for better or worse, “Sunday School.” Summer is over, you know - school is in session. It’s not that we stopped learning these past few months. Now, however, is time for a re-start, a fresh beginning. Are you ready?

“*Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.*” That’s the promise. For those of you – no matter what your age – who attend this “school” I encourage you to approach this as more than “study” time. Whether your class explores the Bible, or seeks to address a topic through the eyes of faith, pay attention to the presence of the One who wants to encounter you in this gathering. Listen deeply. Speak humbly. Don’t run blindly through the forest, so to speak, just to get through the scripture or the topic. Be still at times and wait together for what may come to you, a thought, perhaps, approaching like a shy animal in the woods. Allow it to accompany you through the week.

“*Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.*” With this promise of Jesus, I now dedicate our Sunday School – those who come to grow in faith, as well as those who teach or facilitate – themselves seeking to grow also. Let all who agree say, “Amen!”

Sharing a joy, a concern,
a word of testimony or praise

Hymn #614

“In the bulb there is a flower”

Pastoral Prayer

We are blessed, O Lord, with the abundance of harvest. Our tables are full of produce fresh from the field. Thank you. At this time of year, it is so easy to see that what was once merely a seed planted in the ground now has become a stalk of corn, or even a tree full of apples. Help us not to take all this for granted.

We have only to turn on our televisions, O God, and water-soaked homes in Texas or India; roofless houses and leafless trees in Florida or on Caribbean islands; toppled dwellings in Mexico and Guatemala inundate our awareness, and we wonder: can all these lives truly be rebuilt and restored following hurricane or earthquake? Yes, we are thankful that we have been spared such devastation. However, that could have been us. Would we have the hope needed to begin again? We pray for those in harm's way this week, that they may not only have the resources to start over, but also the gumption to risk hope. Prod us to respond as you lead to other's needs.

Here and now, we thank you for a first week of school; for children we see in new clothes or uniforms on their way to or from classrooms led by refreshed teachers. May good seed be planted this year. Surround and protect them, for there are many weeds that can strangle the life out of them. We are mindful of the opioid crisis in our own neighborhoods, perhaps even in our own homes. Empower recovery, that those caught in that web may risk hope and come clean.

You have heard our cries for loved ones who are facing a variety of health issues: preparing for or recovering from surgery, in treatment for some illness, in therapy (physically or mentally). You know and love those who reside in nursing homes, as well as those who are preparing for their death. Help them, and us, to risk hope – believing that, as we just sang,

“In our end is our beginning;
in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing;
in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection;
at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season,
something (*you, O*) God alone can see.”*

Amen

*from “In the bulb there is a flower”
hymn #614 by Natalie Sleeth
© 1986 Hope Publishing Co.

Returning our Tithes and Offerings

(Sue Ellen Wheatley)

Annual Conference Wrap-up video

Prayerful ponderings of our delegate

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*Hymn #327

“Great is thy faithfulness”

Sending

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Postlude