



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

Rev. Dr. Karen Moritz, Pastor

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Week of November 15, 2020



Public Worship WILL be held at 10:30 am Sunday morning.

If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we ask that you follow along with this printed service. Find a comfortable place to be, relax your body, and calm your mind. Try to come into a prayerful mindset. As you pray the community prayer, remember, your fellow congregants at First Christian will be praying this along with you. Feel free to keep this prayer to pray all week.

Community Prayer

O generous and benevolent God, thank you for all of the gifts and talents you have bestowed upon us. In these strange days of uncertainty, encourage us to continue using our talents in ways that better our families, our neighborhood, and our city. O God, things look grim these days, and it is so easy to let fear take control of our hearts and minds. Fill us with your Spirit that we may see past the obstacles in our lives and give us the strength to choose hope, choose good risks, choose forgiveness, and choose love. We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

New Way to Connect!
Dial-A-Sermon 402-205-5988

Call any time to hear Pastor Karen's sermon for the week!

Worship Playlist

Unfortunately, one piece of the worship service that we cannot replicate on paper is our wonderful music ministry. Below are links to the songs for this week's worship and reflection. If you have access to the internet, you can type in the links below - OR - you can type the name of each song into YouTube's search engine to enjoy the music this week.

God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kJ71FRItvg>

Performed by LMH Faculty Lead Students

Life Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnflxczuOrA>

Performed by Casting Crowns

Even if you are worshipping from home, please continue your regular giving to the church in addition to your faith giving. The FCC office is accepting checks at 430 S. 16th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. We can also mail you a debit authorization form to do automatic withdrawals. Finally, there is a "GIVE" button on the top right-hand side of the fcclincoln.org website to make an online donation via PayPal.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 25:14-30

¹⁴ ‘For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵ to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷ In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸ But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹ After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, “Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.” ²¹ His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.” ²² And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, “Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.”

²³ His master said to him, “Well

done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.” ²⁴ Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, “Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.” ²⁶ But his master replied, “You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹ For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰ As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Reflection

Meditation for 22nd Sunday after Pentecost

“Embracing Trust and Hope, Not Fear”

These days, fear and anxiety seem to be the dominant emotions. Naturally, during these days as COVID continues to ravage our nation and world, fear and anxiety permeate everything. Health experts speculate that the residual effects will remain long after the pandemic has ended. Whether we are aware of it or not, fear and anxiety color every aspect of life today. Fear and anxiety often erupt in unexpected or unforeseen ways. Violence erupts in our neighborhoods, our cities, around our country, and across the world. Perhaps fear and anxiety hit closer to home. Perhaps fear has been a part of our past and our awareness of this comes to the surface in these stressful times. Perhaps we have known fear of a parent, a teacher, or a boss who struck fear in our hearts. Fear and anxiety may be old friends or new experiences brought up during these challenging times.

With that in mind, I suspect many of us can empathize with the third slave in our Gospel lesson today. This slave expressed the conviction that punishment could be swift and harsh at the hands of the master. This awareness prompted this slave to hold on to the Talent entrusted to him instead of taking a risk. Each person is so unique and fear can take us in many directions. Fear can be a good thing, keeping us out of harm's way. However, fear can also paralyze us. We can be stuck in our perceptions, unable to perceive the current reality. I recently learned that this is called a “cognitive distortion” and it can help us create a reality that is not necessarily accurate. This “cognitive distortion” led the third slave to a perception of the Master as cruel and judgmental. This perception kept him from perceiving the real character of the Master.

Well-known preacher, and one of my preaching professors in seminary, Tom Long, painted a different picture of the Master in this parable. Long's perspective invited me to see this parable, and the characters in it, in a very different way. Long suggested that instead of fearing the Master we are invited to see him as trusting, welcoming, generous, and benevolent. The Master entrusted his valuable Talents to others. He was perceptive

as well, entrusting different amounts to each slave according to their abilities. In this process he welcomed them to use their various abilities to enrich the Talents presented. In this way, the Master demonstrated generosity and a willingness to give much more than was expected. The Master could have done anything with the original and new Talents, but, he chose to give them to those who had used them well. In the end, the Master was benevolent and gracious. For those of us keenly aware of our fears and anxieties it is easy to overlook these qualities of God.

With this new sensitivity in mind, this parable invites us to embrace these latter qualities of the Master and thus embrace a renewed sense of thanksgiving that enables us to take risks. God does not want to hear us say “It's just like you left it.” We are called to take risks. In these days of COVID, we continue to be challenged to take risks to enrich God's reign. What this will look like going forward is uncertain. In taking risks we are called to be wise and not fool-hardy. How will we continue to use our gifts as individuals and as a congregation? As we prepare to dedicate our pledges, we continue to be invited to give our gifts. Like the slaves in the parable, we are all given differing amounts of resources. As we dedicate our pledges we are invited to give of our time, talents, and wealth. Will our giving be guided by our fear and anxiety or our sense that there is never enough? Or, will we stretch our thinking and give in response to a God who is trusting, welcoming, generous, and benevolent? Even, and especially, in this season of fear and uncertainty we are called away from fear. We are called to trust and place our hope in a God of trust, welcome, generosity, and benevolence.

AMEN

Prayers & Praises

November 15, 2020

In Our Church Family:

- Georgann Jordan
- Betty Ferguson
- Arlene Heimer
- Marvin Thurber
- Roger & Jessica Vocasek
- William Deterding
- Nancy & Leo Jelinek
- Vic Burgess
- Donna Baker
- Polly Putney
- Dave Harris, *for COVID-19 diagnosis*

Relatives:

- Friends and Family of *Vic Burgess*
- Fred Ogren, *prayers for healing during hospitalization, son of LaVonne Ogren*
- Tricia Gangwish, *prayers for fighting breast cancer, aunt of Lindsay Swanson*
- Ron & Katy Pickel, *diagnosed with COVID-19, son and daughter-in-law of Dick & Roxie Pickel*
- Will Oldenburg, *prayers for deployment to Middle East, cousin of D'Arcy Blosser*
- Wayne Rediger, *prayers for triple bypass surgery, brother-in-law of Cec Burkhart*
- Aunt, Uncle, and several cousins with COVID-19 diagnoses, *family of Sondra Peterson*

Friends:

- Pam Larsen, *continuing to fight cancer, friend of Marcia Foster*
- Peggy Westburg, *praise for improvement, though there is no cure for her cancer, friend of Lindsay Swanson*
- Karen, *during cancer treatments, co-worker of Rhonda Ball*
- Peggy, *prayers for fighting breast cancer, co-worker of Sara Lugin*
- Van Hall, *friend of William Deterding*
- Tallu Schuyler Quinn, *prayers for diagnosis of glioblastoma, friend of Kaleo and D'Arcy Blosser*
- Jeff & Sharon Schneiders and daughter Suzanne, *for complications with COVID-19, friends of the Blossers*

Our Timothys:

- Bruce Frogge at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, *Creative Arts Ministry in Lincoln, NE*

In the Nebraska Region:

Retired Ministers in Nebraska

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

Bryan Parrish serving in Democratic Republic of Congo

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at www.globalministries.org



Song of the Week

God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens

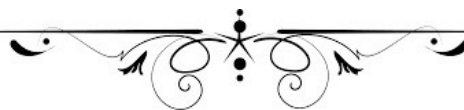
Words by Catherin Cameron
Music by William Moore

God, who stretched the spangled heavens infinite in time and place, flung the suns in burning radiance through the silence fields of space, we, your children in your likeness, share inventive powers with you. Great Creator, still creating, show us what we yet may do.

Proudly rise our modern cities, stately buildings row by row. Yet their windows, blank, unfeeling, stare on canyoned streets below, where the lonely drift unnoticed, in the city's ebb and flow, lost to purpose and to meaning, scarcely caring where they go

We have ventured worlds undreamed of since the childhood of our race; known the ecstasy of winging through untraveled realms of space; probed the secrets of the atom, yielding unimagined power, facing us with life's destruction or our most triumphant hour.

As each far horizon beckons, may it challenge us anew, children of creative purpose, serving others, honoring you. May our dreams prove rich with promise, each endeavor well begun. Great Creator, give us guidance till our goals and yours are one.



Check out our weekly video at www.fcclincoln.org, First Christian's Facebook page, or search for First Christian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVejAW8Dmqv8Jmk5rzj43g>