

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF EVERGREEN PARK
January 23, 2022 11:00am Worship

*Please stand as you are able

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

***Call to Worship (Responsive)**

How precious is the steadfast love of God.

All people may take refuge in the shadow of God's embrace.

Christ is the fountain of life.

In Christ we behold the Light of God.

***Hymn**

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Red Hymnal p 400
v.1-3

Prayer of the Day (Unison)

Holy God, through signs of grace you reveal your glory to all the world. Open our eyes to the hidden and surprising wonders you perform, that we may believe with our minds and trust in our hearts that you alone are Lord of all creation. In Christ's holy name we pray. Amen.

Children's Moment

The Call to Confession

In the light of Christ, we see the darkness of our world and of our hearts. Trusting in God's saving love, let us confess our sin.

The Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Almighty God, we confess that we have been led astray by the idols of our world. We have carelessly consumed the gifts you offer and have failed to be faithful stewards of the earth's resources. We have sought security in the might of the sword rather than the strength of your Holy Spirit. Forgive us, we pray. Lead us to true repentance that we may serve you faithfully. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

The Words of Assurance

Hear the good news: Christ unmask the idols of our world and frees us from slavery to all that would oppress us. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Hymn

Spirit of the Living God

Red Hymnal p 393
x2

The Prayer of Illumination (Unison)

Gracious God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, quicken our understanding that we may receive the testimony of Scripture and believe in the signs that reveal your presence. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Old Testament

1 Samuel 24:1-15

Old Testament p 268-269

1 When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the wilderness of En-gedi."

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to look for David and his men in the direction of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. **3** He came to the sheepfolds beside the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave.

4 The men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, "I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David went and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's cloak. **5** Afterward David was stricken to the heart because he had cut off a corner of Saul's cloak.

6 He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to raise my hand against him; for he is the Lord's anointed." **7** So David scolded his men severely and did not permit them to attack Saul. Then Saul got up and left the cave, and went on his way. **8** Afterwards David also rose up and went out of the cave and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance. **9** David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of those who say, "David seeks to do you harm"? **10** This very day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you into my hand in the cave; and some urged me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, "I will not raise my hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed.'" **11** See, my father, see the corner of your cloak in my hand; for by the fact that I cut off the corner of your cloak, and did not kill you, you may know for certain that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you are hunting me to take my life. **12** May the Lord judge between me and you! May the Lord avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you. **13** As the ancient proverb says, "Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness"; but my hand shall not be against you. **14** Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A single flea?

15 May the Lord therefore be judge, and give sentence between me and you. May he see to it, and plead my cause, and vindicate me against you."

The Word of God, for the People of God. **Thanks be to God!**

Psalter (Responsive)

Psalm 36:5-10

Red Hymnal p 771

5 Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

6 **Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.**

7 How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

8 **They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.**

9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

10 **O continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your salvation to the upright of heart!**

Epistle

1 Corinthians 2:1-11

New Testament p 166-167

1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. 6 Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. 7 But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"—10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.

The Word of God, for the People of God. **Thanks be to God!**

***Gospel**

John 2:1-11

New Testament p 93

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So, they took it. 9 When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." 11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

The Word of God, for the People of God. **Thanks be to God!**

Message

**Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets:
Is There a Tension That Deserves My Attention?**

Rev. Caitlyn Nesbit

This morning we are on week 3 of our sermon series Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets. As we follow this book by Andy Stanley, we are exploring what it looks like to make better decisions that will lead us to the best possible outcome for our future by asking ourselves 5 different questions. We began this series by asking the integrity question: Am I being honest with myself...really? Last week we asked the legacy question: What story do I want to tell? This week we are exploring the conscience question: Is there a tension that deserves my attention? Let's pray and begin.

Prayer.

There are a lot of times throughout life where we get these inklings that we just ignore. Nate and I are fostering a new dog who had to be fixed recently. This week, we both got home one evening to find he had gotten out of his protective cone and tore open the stitches from her surgery. When I was texting the president of the rescue, she immediately responded that she had been thinking about him all day for some reason. There are these moments where we have an insight that doesn't quite make sense or that we don't quite understand.

A lot of times this is that person that we just keep thinking about, or a gut feeling that we should or shouldn't go somewhere, that we should take a different route home than normal. Sometimes, we listen to those instincts, not really sure why they happen but why not follow their lead. We take that different way home; we make that extra stop that we could easily go without. Sometimes, we ignore them because they don't make sense to us or they seem to lead us down a path that would take more effort than we want to give. We don't make that call; we just continue on with our routine as normal.

In church language, we call those little nudges Holy Spirit moments. As United Methodists, we don't believe in pre-destination. We don't think that God has mapped out for us exactly what is going to happen. We don't believe that God dictates for us each step that we make and everything that happens in our lives. Instead, we accept that God has given us the gift of free will. This means we decide our futures for ourselves, we get a say in what we do and what will happen to us.

It doesn't mean that God abandons us and just walks away after we are created. God still is very present in each step that we take, in each decision that we make. Instead of choosing for us, God nudges us to make the decision that is best for us, that is best for our future. These nudges are those Holy Spirit moments. Those moments of tension where we just get a feeling, we don't quite understand it but our hearts or our guts are encouraging us to do, or perhaps not do, something.

In our scripture reading today, we see how David responds to this sort of inkling. At this point, Saul is the king of Israel who has continued to do a pretty meh job. So, God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint David as the next king, rather than Saul's son. The scripture passage begins with Saul returning from pursuing the Philistines. In addition to this warfront, Saul has also been on the hunt for David. David was no longer a boy, and he had gained quite the reputation for himself throughout Saul's kingdom. Not only had he defeated Goliath, which gained him many supporters, it was becoming well known that David was chosen to be the one who would take over the throne after Saul. Saul was not a huge fan of this, so he began to pursue David to kill him before David could get a chance to take the throne.

Because of this pursuit, David and his followers were out in the wilderness, essentially hiding from Saul's army. When returning from his battle, Saul learned which wilderness David was hiding in and gathered some of his troops to go find him. While they were traveling, Saul needed a potty break. If any other soldier needed to stop, he would be out of luck. But Saul being king means that they will listen to what he wants or needs. In the area they were traveling, there were all sorts of nooks in the rocks and caves all over. So, he stopped his caravan of 3,000 men to walk off to the privacy of a cave that would be used as his restroom.

At this same time that Saul is traveling to find David, David had received word that Saul was coming. So, he and his men split up to hide in various caves in the surrounding area, again there were ample-hiding places in this region. It just so happens that the cave Saul chooses is where David and a few of his soldiers were already hiding. And now a decision arises for David, he can kill Saul now when he is alone and vulnerable and take over the throne, or just continue hiding and let Saul pursue him.

Now many of David's soldiers were much like him, they were men on the run for one reason or another. They were beyond excited for the day that David would rule because it meant that they could return home. So, it is really no surprise that they encourage David to kill Saul here. They tell him, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he promised you, 'I will hand your enemy over to you and you can do to him whatever you think is best'" (v.4). This is it! This is God handing Saul over to you so you can kill him and finally take the throne that you were anointed for! For them, this is a no brainer, done deal.

But David begins to feel an inkling that maybe this isn't something he should do. While sneaking over to Saul, he begins to pay attention to that tension within him; this man was chosen by God to be the king of Israel. Should he really kill him? This doesn't seem right. Is that what God would really want? I mean, God CHOSE him after all... The doubts begin to creep in and he isn't sure that the decision his soldiers want him to make is the same one that God wants him to make. As he approaches Saul, he begins to feel horrible and instead of killing Saul, he cuts the corner off Saul's royal robe.

After Saul returns to his army, David approaches with this corner of his robe, explaining that he had the opportunity to kill Saul, but chose to give him mercy. The respect for David, which was already pretty high among the people of Israel, skyrocketed with this decision. If he killed Saul, he would have gotten the throne; honestly, no one would have questioned him. That was what was expected of him, that's what Saul was trying to do after all. It would have been a great show of David's power. But David chose mercy. And through this, he gained the respect of Israel. Not long later, Saul died while in battle with the Philistines and David took over the throne.

There was a decision before David that he had to make. He could kill Saul, as his soldiers wanted, or he could let him live. He leaned into the tension that he was feeling, rather than pushing it down. This tension reminded him that what God wanted wasn't always the same as what the people around him wanted. David remained open to that tension and was able to recognize where God was nudging him to go. God may not make our decisions for us, but we are given the good news that God draws us towards the best possible future. When making a decision, we can lean into this gut feeling that leads us toward where the Holy Spirit is leading us or we can ignore it. To close, I would like for us to touch on two ways that can assist us in being aware of where God is nudging us.

1. Pause

This is very similar to last week's suggestion as well. It is amazing what a good pause can do for us. When we don't rush into a decision, we allow for ourselves to see everything around us. So, the first thing we can do to be aware of where God is nudging us is to pause. And pay attention to that tension that may exist. Where there is tension, don't push it away and rush on. Let that tension build, sit in it for a while. It also allows for us to see where others are influencing us and where we what we actually think is the best decision for the situation. David's friends were pushing him towards killing Saul, and doing it NOW, but David used his moment of hesitation to parse out what he thought was truly right and what others were trying to get him to do. The power of the pause right there.

Our challenge this week is to practice the pause. Each day this week incorporate an act where you are taking time to pause and listen to where God is nudging you to go. Taking the time to pause for prayer and be difficult in our lives, let alone taking the time to pause and do nothing. So, take some time each day this week and just be. Maybe a it is few minutes in your car before you leave for the day or when you get home. This pause may be during a time of prayer, when you take a moment to listen and be still. Maybe you take a walk, or while out walking your dog still your thoughts and be open to where the Holy Spirit is resting on you.

2. Explore

Once you have paused and allowed for yourself to tune into where God is nudging you, or once you have given that tension the room that it needs to build, the next step is to explore. When Jesus left this earth, he sent the Holy Spirit to continue to guide us here and offer us these Holy Spirit moments in our lives. There is a reason why that tension exists, so it is also important for us to look for the information and insight that has created it. Before making a decision, we need to explore the tension that we may be feelings and pay attention to it and why it exists. Where is it leading up to go or stay away from? What supports that tension?

Has anyone else ever been talking to a friend about a problem and then got really upset with them because they brought up a really good point that you just didn't want to acknowledge or hear? I can think of a few times that this has happened in my life. Your friend points out something that you hadn't even considered, and suddenly there is now tension in a decision where they weren't before. Maybe I shouldn't take that job or go out with that person... It makes us not want to explore any decision, or even mention it really, because it's exhausting! But that is what we need to make the best possible decisions for ourselves.

We need not only to feel that tension, to be open to why it happens, but also the people in our lives to help us explore that tension. It allows for us to make decisions that we won't regret later. To make decisions that guide us into the futures that God is calling us into.

Making decisions can often be stressful, but our ability to do so also a gift from. We get to decide what our futures look like; we are given control of something in this world and it is ourselves. So, it's important to treat this process like the gift it is and not rush through it. It's also important that we remember, even though we are making the decisions, we are not alone in this process. God continues to nudge us towards the best way to go. So, let's go out, as followers of Christ, open to where the Holy Spirit is calling us f

The Prayers of Intercession

The Lord's Prayer (Unison)

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 trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power,

and the glory forever. Amen.

The Invitation to the Offering

God is a generous giver of gifts that flow like a river from the fountain of life. Bring offerings and tributes with thanks and praise; for the gifts we give are the gifts of God.

The Offertory Music

***The Doxology**

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Red Hymnal p 95

***The Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison)**

We offer our gifts with grateful hearts. Bless them and our lives to your service, that they may reveal your glory, nurture faith, and manifest the common good. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

***Hymn**

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

Red Hymnal p 404

v.1-2

***The Benediction**

***Postlude**

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Household Prayer: Morning

Enlivening God, each morning I am awakened by your goodness nudging the earth to life. I am filled with wonder. Your steadfast love extends to the sky, your constancy reaches to the clouds. How precious is your steadfast love! It shines like the dawn, and dews the desolation in my soul. Manifest in me the gifts of your Spirit that I may rejoice in you as I delight in serving your world this day. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

As evening falls and darkness shuts the day, do not forsake us, O God. Crown the sky with jewels of light that your salvation may burnish the heavens and illumine the earth, and all find refuge in the shadow of your wings. Amen.

***THIS WEEK AT FUMCEP**

SUNDAY	January 23	11 a 7 p	Worship Service Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting
MONDAY	January 24		
TUESDAY	January 25		
WEDNESDAY	January 26	6 p	Girl Scouts – Brownies – Daisy’s
THURSDAY	January 27		
FRIDAY	January 28		
SATURDAY	January 29		
NEXT SUNDAY	January 30	11 a 7 p	Worship Service Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting

OUR CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Caitlyn Nesbit, Pastor, pastorcaitlynnnesbit@gmail.com
Ray Paschke, Accompanist
Virginia Franson, Nursery Attendant

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PEOPLE TO KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Dawn Doran, Ginny Franson, Ruth Fuss, Kurt Gratz, Ardith Inman, Allen Jones, Freddie and Bessie Kendrick and Bessie’s mom Ruth Jones,
 Greg and Claudia Manow, Ed and Georgeen Slee, Doc & Nancy Wallace,
Prayer Shawl and Prayer Bear Recipients; Past and Present Servicepersons



**THE STORY OF DAVID
 DAVID SPARES SAUL**



Discover the hidden words.

D	A	U	I	D	Z	B	E	R	W	F	X	N	T	J
H	Z	O	I	M	I	G	Z	C	I	V	E	I	R	O
O	M	G	R	V	E	N	U	U	N	U	Z	W	S	N
R	H	R	O	C	P	S	E	E	E	O	S	I	A	A
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K	P	G	A	G	X	K	I	N	G	N	E	E	I	L
U	T	O	S	W	O	R	D	A	U	K	A	O	Z	A
R	Z	J	B	U	O	E	M	E	U	I	D	B	U	H
P	H	I	L	I	S	T	I	N	E	S	K	G	T	O

Word Bank

DAVID
 JONATHAN
 SAUL
 HORSE

CAVE
 ROBE
 PHILISTINES
 KEILAH

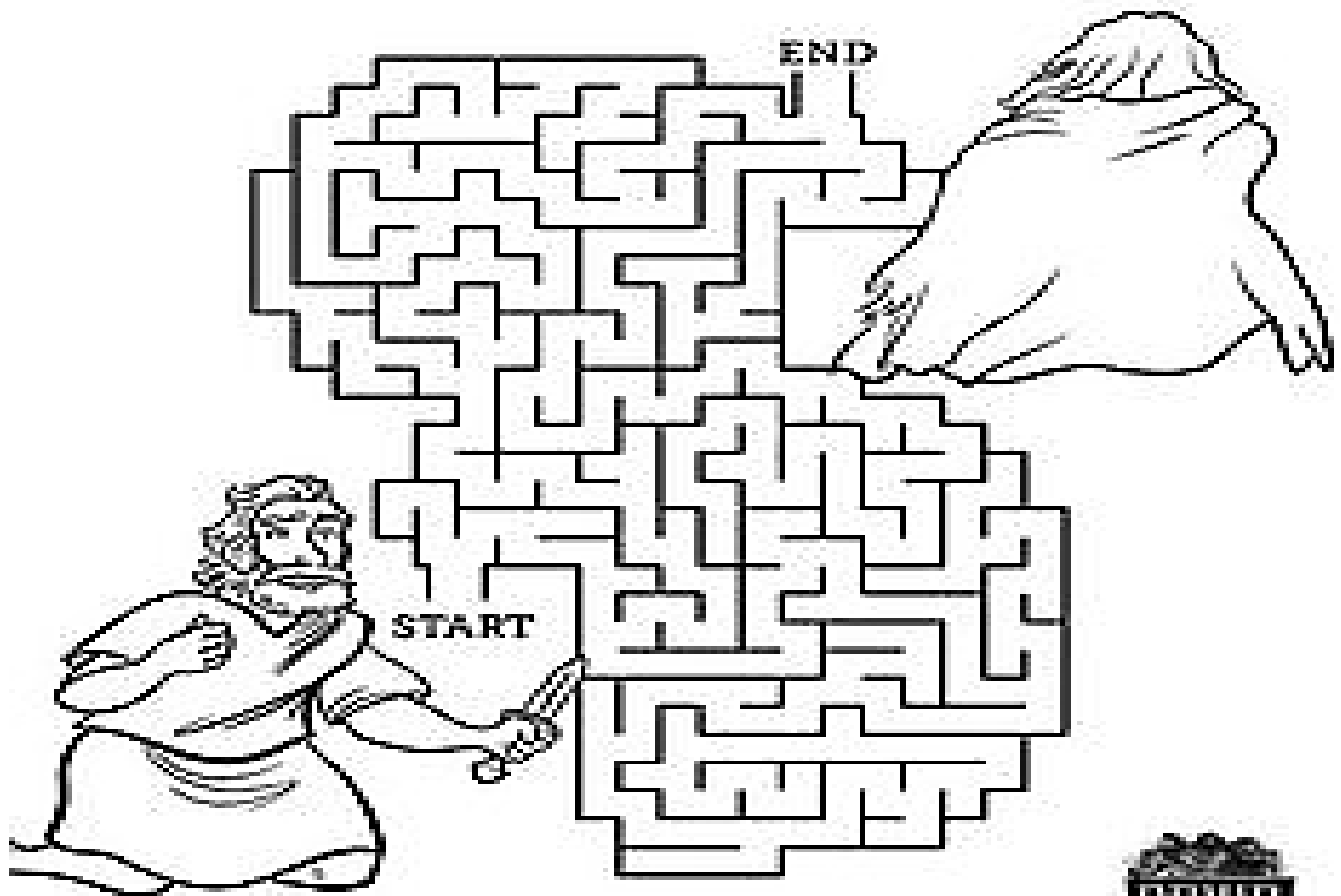
WILDERNESS
 MESSENGER
 KING
 SWORD



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THE STORY OF DAVID DAVID SPARES SAUL

Hurry! Cut a piece of Saul's robe off before he spots you!



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Let us
WORSHIP
Together

IN PERSON WORSHIP SUNDAY @ 11 a.m.