

**First United Methodist Church of Evergreen Park  
September 26, 2021 11:00am worship**

**\*Please stand**

**Prelude**

**\*Call to Worship (Responsive)**

If it had not been for God, who was on our side,  
**We would have fallen prey to those who want to harm us;**  
We would have been swept away by sadness and fear.  
**Blessed be the Lord, our protector!**  
Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.  
**Blessed be God's holy name!**

**\*Hymn**

**“How Firm a Foundation”**

**Red Hymnal p 529  
v.1,2,5**

**The Prayer of the Day (Unison)**

**God of unquenchable fire and overflowing grace, take away the things that make us stumble. Lead us into your realm of life and season us with your peace; in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Children's Moment**

**The Call to Confession**

In faithful prayer there is power to save the sick; anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore let us confess our sins and pray for one another so that we may be healed.

**The Prayer of Confession (Unison)**

**God of unity, we live in a world where our lives move between inclusivity and exclusivity. We often move toward the latter, trying to oust from our circles those not like us. Forgive our need to reject, give us the eyes of our Teacher, who knows unconditional love and compassion and sees us all as one. Amen**

**The Words of Assurance**

Though we wander from the truth, God brings us back and saves our souls from death. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn**

**“Amazing Grace”**

**Red Hymnal p 378  
v 1,2,6**

**The Prayer of Illumination (Unison)**

**Your Word is our salt; without it, we lose our being, our joy, and our ability to endure. Open our hearts and our minds to listen, to really listen, to your Word today. Amen.**

**Old Testament**

**Proverbs 29:25**

**Old Testament p 611**

The fear of others lays a snare, but one who trusts in the Lord is secure.  
The word of God, for the People of God. **Thanks be to God!**

**Psalter**

**Psalm 55**

**1** Give ear to my prayer, O God; do not hide yourself from my supplication.  
**2 Attend to me, and answer me; I am troubled in my complaint. I am distraught**  
**3** by the noise of the enemy, because of the clamor of the wicked. For they bring trouble upon me, and in anger they cherish enmity against me.  
**4 My heart is in anguish within me, the terrors of death have fallen upon me.**  
**5** Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me.  
**6 And I say, "O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest;**  
**7** truly, I would flee far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; (Selah)  
**8 I would hurry to find a shelter for myself from the raging wind and tempest."**  
**9** Confuse, O Lord, confound their speech; for I see violence and strife in the city.  
**10 Day and night they go around it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it;**  
**11** ruin is in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace.  
**12 It is not enemies who taunt me— I could bear that; it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me— I could hide from them.**  
**13** But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend,

**14 with whom I kept pleasant company; we walked in the house of God with the throng.**

**15** Let death come upon them; let them go down alive to Sheol; for evil is in their homes and in their hearts.

**16 But I call upon God, and the Lord will save me.**

**17** Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he will hear my voice.

**18 He will redeem me unharmed from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.**

**19** God, who is enthroned from of old, (Selah) will hear, and will humble them— because they do not change, and do not fear God.

**20 My companion laid hands on a friend and violated a covenant with me**

**21** with speech smoother than butter, but with a heart set on war; with words that were softer than oil, but in fact were drawn swords.

**22 Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.**

**23** But you, O God, will cast them down into the lowest pit; the bloodthirsty and treacherous shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in you.

### **Epistle**

**Colossians 3:12-17**

**New Testament p 200-201**

**12** As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. **13** Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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

### **\*Gospel**

**Luke 2:8-14**

**New Testament p 58**

**8** In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: **11** to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. **12** This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, **14** "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

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

### **Sermon “Unafraid: Failure, Disappointing Others, Insignificance, & Loneliness” Rev. Caitlyn Nesbit**

This week we are on part three of our five-week sermon series following Adam Hamilton's book and our small group study Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times. I have found this study and series to be really meaningful in this world so drenched in fear, I hope you have as well and continue joining for the next couple of weeks. Next week we will be looking at apocalypse, change, missing out, and finances. Oooo, ahhh. This week we are exploring failure, disappointing others, insignificance, and loneliness. Now doesn't that sound fun. Let's pray and begin.

Prayer.

When we started this series, I mentioned the study that Pastor Hamilton did in his congregation which revealed that the number one fear for people under 50 was failure and disappointing others. This isn't a fear that is exclusive to this age group, I think we all experience these feelings or concerns, but it is one that is felt particularly strongly among this group. Last week we talked about the primary fear of those over 50, which was the direction of our country. Politics. Now we are shifting gears a bit from this fear of others and how they can hurt or affect us in an external sense to our fear of others and how those relationships or lack of relationships can harm us on an internal level.

While combining failure, disappointing others, insignificance, and loneliness is casting a rather large net, they all come from the root concern that we aren't valuable enough. We aren't valuable enough because we aren't as successful as we want to be or as successful as others are. Because we aren't good enough, we are letting other people down with our lack of success. We aren't making millions of dollars or full-time missionaries, so are we really making a difference or having an effect on the world? And we are ignored or overlooked, no valued enough for those we love to love us back; or to even build those relationships in the first place.

These aren't thoughts that we tend to have constantly. If so, we are usually in a bout of depression or if these are thoughts that are a constant presence in your life to the extent that you cannot think of anything else,

they don't have to be. We have professional counselors who can help us find the root of these thoughts and how to better cope with them.

But even if they aren't thoughts we have constantly, they are thoughts that we've all had, thoughts where these fears rise to the surface. They often arise when we are faced with taking a risk, have been met with defeat, or are experiencing a major life change. But we all do face them to some degree in our lives. And these fears often leave us feeling like we are floating, directionless, or purposeless. As a grounding for us in the midst of these fears, or just life in general, and that's the good news that we have been given the unconditional love of Christ, our purpose is then to go and do likewise.

There are a lot of inspirational stories we can share about how people have overcome all odds and failures, but with perseverance kept going. J.K. Rowling, who authored the incredibly popular Harry Potter series met a lot of rejection or comments about how unsuccessful her work would be when first seeking publishers. Michael Jordan, who is an incredible athlete can also recount the many baskets he missed during games or losses. Yet they didn't give up. We have all and will all fail at things, some failures are bigger than others usually depending on the risk, and our relationships are no different. Our relationship with one another, our relationship with God, will be full of times that we mess up. But what is important is that we don't let these failures stop us from perusing this life grounded in God's love that we have been gifted.

When we fail in our relationships, we actually begin to face that second fear of disappointing others. I'm curious, how many of your parents said the line, "I'm not angry at you, I'm just disappointed?" How many of you have said it to your kids? I wasn't sure if it was a generational or just general parenting thing, but that is definitely a line that was commonly heard among my generation. And it is so much worse than the anger! At the root of our need to please others, this fear of disappointing others, is a fear of the separation that we receive because of the disappointment. Like, now I am not good enough so this person is going to leave me or not love me anymore.

Luckily, we hear that good news again, we have been given the unconditional love of Christ, our purpose is then to go and do likewise. God loves us, even when we behave in ways that would disappoint God. We aren't met with rejection; we are met with grace. Thank goodness, because we all need a whole lot of it; from God, from each other, from everywhere. This separation we fear isn't something that will happen on God end, and a part of the love we receive means we don't let it happen on our end either.

Sometimes, in the midst of all of these fears we are wrestling with we feel like we aren't worthy of this call from God. This wrestling with the call to be something greater, these feels of insignificance or lack of worth are often present in the people we find God calling to be leaders throughout the Bible.

Our Gospel reading this morning may have felt like a surprise, it is often when we focus on during the season of advent as we tell the story of Jesus birth. This scripture passage begins with some shepherds, doing their thing, living with their flock. Shepherds were not looked upon favorably by the rest of society, they were not those thought to be the *crème de la crème* of people. They were living with their sheep in their fields, likely smelly and dirty. We can imagine the feelings of insignificance that they were experiencing. What am I doing with my life, working a job where I live outside with animals all of the time? Am I any good at it or am I just doing it because it was laid before me? Does this even make any sort of difference in the world? So, these shepherds were out doing what they do every night, looking over their flock. When suddenly this angel of the Lord appears and informs them about the birth of Christ. The angel says ""Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people." Uh, woah! That's intense right! These shepherds, doing their job, which is not looked upon favorably or seen as an esteemed position, are offered this good news for all people. Suddenly, the shepherds are a part of something bigger than they ever could have imagined. They are tasked to go out, see this baby, and then share this good news with everyone they meet. This is world transforming news.

And this transforming news is what we are called to share today. We all face times where we are questioning purpose in our lives. Many of us find purpose in our occupations, or raising our children. So, it may be when we retire, and our children begin to leave home, we are left wondering what we are supposed to do now. I was talking to a friend the other day who oldest child has just started college, and who's youngest is now so busy with school, work, and extra-circulars my friend is now often left home alone. Spending most of her kids' lives as a stay-at-home mom, working part-time when her kids returned to school, she is experiencing the need to redefine her purpose.

Just like the shepherds, we have been given a purpose that is far greater than ourselves. We have been given the unconditional love of Christ, our purpose is then to go and do likewise. This is what we were created by God to do, to be a part of Christ's unconditional love and to share it with the world around us.

There is a man I know, Mike, who worked for his career as a butcher. Now I didn't expect this at all, but if you ask Mike what his favorite thing about his job was, he would say the people he gets to serve. You see, Mike would treat every customer with the care that he would if they were his mother. He would do everything he could to make sure their cut of meat was the best quality and exactly what they were looking for. He saw his work as an opportunity to be a blessing to everyone he encountered.

Every interaction we have is an opportunity to be a blessing. An opportunity to recognize the value of the person before us to God, and to treat that person with the same value God has for them. Which we all need so

much more of, because honestly it is a lonely world out there. As communication through technology grows, our ability to connect with each other has rapidly dwindled, creating an overwhelming sense of loneliness. There is an article that was published in the Atlantic that shared how kids born between 1995 and 2012 are facing the worse mental-health crisis in decades.<sup>1</sup> Most of us are also addicted to our phones, and for the past couple of years this technology has been a blessing, letting us communicate when there would be a way otherwise. But, we have also begun to forget how to connect and treat each other as children of God. I know that there was a lot we steamrolled through this morning, these are huge topics all lumped together, but there is one thing I want us to hear again. And that is that we have been given the unconditional love of Christ, our purpose is then to go and do likewise. When we fail or disappoint others, we can know that God's love for us remains unconditional. When we are struggling to see our purpose or connect with others, we remember we are a part of something so much greater than we can comprehend that transforms the world and connects us together.

I want to leave us with this. Honestly, we have heard this good news before, and we will need to hear it again and again because it is our purpose. But sometimes we struggle to understand it, so see how we can incorporate it into everything we do as Mike has. Luckily, the New Testament is essentially a book telling us how it looks for us to love one another, and I think one place where this is laid out really clearly is in our Colossians verse this morning. So, I would like to close with reading Colossians chapter 3 verses 12-17:

*As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 13 Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Let us pray.

### **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

Today and every day, we see signs of God's grace and abundance. But we also know that there is suffering and need in the world. Give freely of what you have been given, as a witness to God's actions in the world.

### **The Offertory Music**

**\*The Doxology**                      **"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"**                      **Red Hymnal p 95**

**\*The Prayer of Thanksgiving**  
Blessed be the Lord, for God is good, and God's love endures forever. Help us to mirror your goodness through this offering in the world. Amen.

**\*Hymn**                                      **"Forward Through the Ages"**                                      **Red Hymnal p 555**

**v.1-3**

**\*The Benediction**

---

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton pg 122- Atlantic Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?

**\*Postlude**

*Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from Feasting on the Word Worship Companion. Copyright 2014.*

**Household Prayer: Morning**

May the first words in my mouth today be the sound of the name of Jesus. Lead me to reflect on his power as I seek to live my day, honoring the One who gave me salvation and a new life. In his powerful name I pray. Amen.

**Household Prayer: Evening**

God, was I an agent of hope and salvation to others as you have been to me? As the day winds down, help me to think about those times during the day when I lived in your grace and the times when I failed to be salt in our world. Keep on working in my life, through the power of your Holy Spirit, so that I can become more like you want me to be. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

**PAPER SHREDDING DAY** at the Evergreen Park Farmers Market will be on Thursday, September 30 from 9am-11pm. Two-box limit per person. For more info, call (708) 422-8776

**DONATION DRIVE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS**

Supplies for Vets through Hynes VA Hospital can be brought to the Community Center (3450 W. 97th Street) beginning Saturday, October 2. For more information please email [vivrod24@gmail.com](mailto:vivrod24@gmail.com), or [jeanineclarkin@yahoo.com](mailto:jeanineclarkin@yahoo.com).



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

2 Tiffany Williams	18 Ardith Inman	27 Katrina Del Rosario	31 Matt Panush
11 Jason Kazin	22 John "Jack" Wallace	29 Bill Runowski	Brianna Mooney



**Please join us on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. for in person worship**

**PEOPLE TO KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:**

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

**\*THIS WEEK AT FUMCEP**

<b>SUNDAY</b>	September 26	<b>11:00 a</b> <b>11:45 a</b> 7:00 p	<b>Worship Service</b> <b>Coffee Hour</b> Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting
<b>MONDAY</b>	September 27	6:00 p	Music Lessons
<b>TUESDAY</b>	September 28		
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	September 29	6:00 p	Girl Scouts – Brownies – Daisy’s
<b>THURSDAY</b>	September 30	<b>10:00 a</b>	<b>Study Group – all are invited (5 wks.)</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b>	October 1		
<b>SATURDAY</b>	October 2	<b>9 a</b>	Parsonage Basement - Cleaning
<b>NEXT SUNDAY</b>	October 3	<b>11:00 a</b> <b>11:45 a</b> 7:00 p	<b>Worship Service - Communion</b> <b>Coffee Hour</b> Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting

**OUR CHURCH STAFF**

Rev. Caitlyn Nesbit, Pastor, [pastorcaitlynnesbit@gmail.com](mailto:pastorcaitlynnesbit@gmail.com)  
Ray Paschke, Accompanist  
Virginia Franson, Nursery Attendant

**First United Methodist Church of Evergreen Park**  
9358 S Homan Avenue, Evergreen Park, IL 60805  
Office hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Email: [fumcepoffice@yahoo.com](mailto:fumcepoffice@yahoo.com)  
Telephones: Church: 708-422-8451 /// Pastor: 815-474-3136 cell  
Website: <http://evergreenparkmethodist.org>



**First United Methodist Church of Evergreen Park**  
9358 S. Homan Avenue  
Evergreen Park, IL 60805  
708-422-8451  
<http://evergreenparkmethodist.org>



IN PERSON WORSHIP SUNDAY @ 11 a.m.