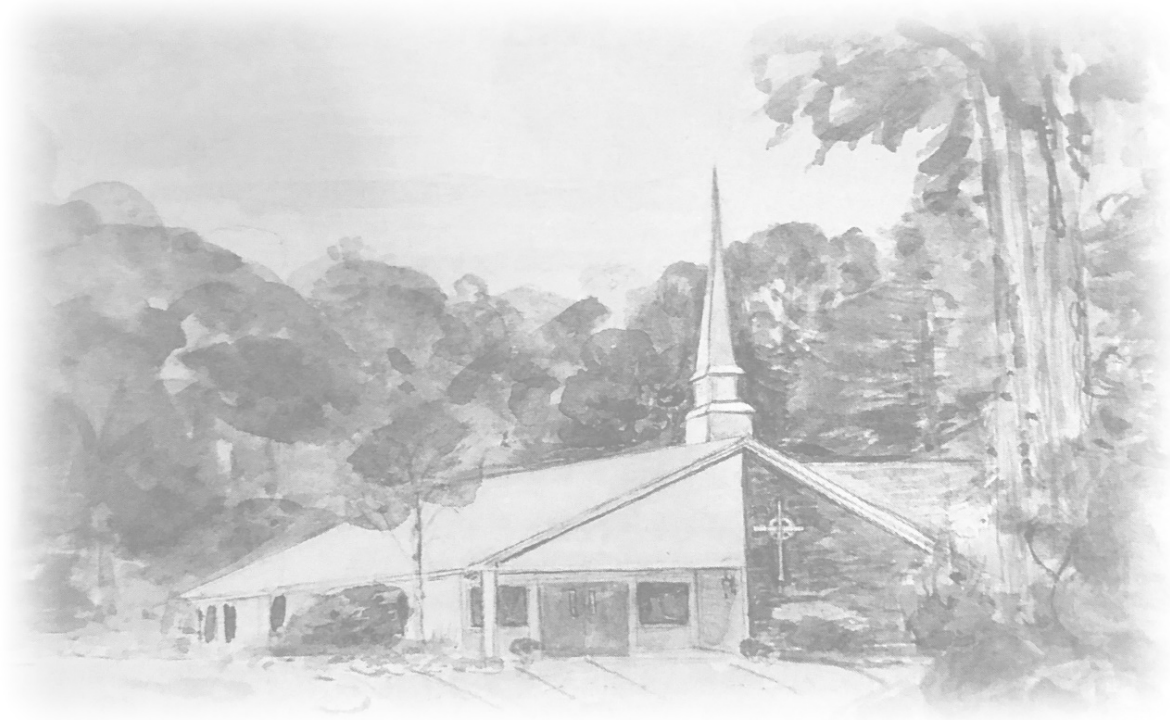


Presbyterian Church of Cape Cod



“I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the house of the Lord!” Psalm 122:1

The Lord's Day

August 2, 2020

Rev. Dr. James A. La Belle, Pastor

Morning Worship 10:00 am – Afternoon Study 4:30 pm

We welcome you to the Lord's house, to the worship of the living and true God, and into the fellowship of this congregation.

LIVE STREAMING @

<http://presbyterianchurchofcapecod.com/live-stream/>

GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP HIM AS OUR GOD

Psalm 117

A PSALM OF PRAISE

Psalm 100A – Shout to the Lord, All Earth

A PRAYER OF INVOCATION

THE CONFESSION OF OUR FAITH IN GOD

Q. What has God promised you regarding His good care for you, and will you believe it, no matter what His dispensations look like?

A. This is what my God has promised me and therefore I must, and by His grace will, believe it, now and always namely: “they shall be my people and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.” Jer 32:38-41

A PSALM OF RESPONSE

Psalm 99B – The Lord God Reigns in Majesty

OUR RESPONSIVE READING OF GOD'S LAW

The Ten Commandments (see insert)

THE CONFESSION OF OUR SINS TO GOD

Heavenly Father, how easily we become fearful and distressed by our difficult circumstances when it appears that life is out of control. We fear those who have the power to kill our bodies, feeling anxious about terrorists, criminals and many other dangers in this fallen world. We forget that they must answer to you and have no power to send us to hell. We even fear those who have the power to embarrass us, to make us feel uncomfortable or ashamed. We dread the disapproval of those whose good opinion we crave or of those who have power over us and can thwart

our dreams and desires. We quickly forget your awesome power to lift up and bring down people and nations. We don't remember that you govern every molecule in this universe, including every thought, word and deed that occurs. As a result, we act as if our futures lay entirely within our own grasp or were at the disposal of those around us. Forgive us for our faithless fear and for its opposite, our self-confident pride. Holy Spirit, give us a fresh boldness to face each new day, a boldness that flows from believing in the Father's promises and trusting in the Father's sovereign power and goodness. Teach us the proper fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom. Enable us to resist the constant pressure to conform to the values of this world and draw us to pray whenever we face troubles or joys in life. Help us to walk alongside each other in difficult times, bearing one another's burdens and reminding each other of the certain outcome of the race that is set before us, a joyous welcome into our Father's arms. Amen.

A SILENT MOMENT FOR CONFESSING PERSONAL SINS

GOD'S ASSURANCE THAT WE ARE PARDONED

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2

A HYMN OF RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE

Hymn 243 – How Firm a Foundation (Stanza 6)

SCRIPTURE RELATIVE TO TODAY'S SERMON

Hebrews 12:5-15

Pew Bible Pg. 1285

PASTORAL PRAYER FOR THE CONGREGATION

Followed by the Lord's Prayer ("Debts")

OUR OFFERING AND DOXOLOGY TO GOD

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heav'nly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. *Old Hundred L.M. (587)*

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Job 9:16-21

Pew Bible Pg. 535

The Struggle of Faith

Pastor James A. La Belle

OUTLINE

Job 9.16-21--The Struggle of Faith

If I were to pray, He would not answer me, vv.16-18
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- I. Job's greatest struggle was in the area of prayer.
 - A. He struggles to believe that G hears his prayers anymore, not because he's living in sin (Isa 59.1-2), but because the only answers he gets are more destroying tempests.
 - B. And he struggles with bitterness because he feels it's all without the provocation of sin (cf. 2.3)
 - C. God's way with him is so bitter and terrible to his senses that his faith can't find a foothold in the storm.
- II. And this is what sits at the heart of his whole struggle, because he went from a constant, vibrant communion with God to being subject to a battery of afflictions from God.
 - A. At least to his senses, he went from being best friend, to being enemy #1
 - B. Entertaining these thoughts creates a fertile breeding ground for unbelief and despair.

If I were to contend, He's too strong for me, v.19

- I. Job's second struggle was over the great disproportion between God's strength and man's impotence (cf. vv.4-13), which made it seem impossible to get a hearing with God.

- A. Being both almighty in strength and having the sovereign authority to use all that power, none can go toe-to-toe with God.
- B. But what's so discouraging is that all his life God's strength worked for Job; but now it's seems so clearly to be working against him.

If I were to go to court, none could speak for me, v.19

- I. Job's third struggle is that just as there's no way to contend with God, so there's no way to argue with God.
 - A. There's not a man on earth in any better of a position than Job is, who could represent him before God. In fact, Job's closer to God than all men (1.8); so that if he can't reason with God, then no one can.
- II. And it's not that Job wants to argue. He just wants to ask why—especially since he's not conscious of any extraordinary sin that would explain his suffering.

If I were to speak to my defense, my own mouth would betray me, v.20

- I. Job's fourth struggle is over his consciousness of the imperfection of his own righteousness before God.
 - A. If Job tried to defend himself, his attempt to do so would be his greatest offense, because to sound our own praise is to sound our own shame.
 - B. So Job has no intention of trying to defend himself before God, because God could so easily point out a thousand sins of which Job is unaware (1Kgs 8.38; Ecc 7.20).
 - C. Which is why this entire defense culminates in v.33 in a heart-cry for a Mediator to stand between him and God (1Tim 2.5).

I am innocent, but I don't want to live like this, v.21

- I. Here we see Job throwing up his hands in discouragement. He feels like there's no way out but in the grave.
 - A. When life's reduced to nothing but pain and misery and when it seems that God's turned foe, it's hard to find any motivation to go on living, and it's very hard to find the faith to go on trusting.
 - B. That's where Job is. And maybe that's where you are.

Observations for Application

- I. Our prayers may be heard and answered, even when afflictions are upon us. Our faith in God doing us good can't be based on whether or not we feel good about it; and our trust in God to answer our prayers can't be determined by whether or not we got the answer we prayed for.
 - A. We need to understand that God answers our prayers according to His wisdom, not ours, and for our soul's good, not to accommodate our feelings. That's why we pray in Jesus' name and for His will to be done, not ours (Phil 4.6-7).
 - B. God may be answering us even when He storms us with suffering.
- II. God usually sorely afflicts those He greatly loves, Heb 12.5-14
 - A. We need to reconcile "afflictions" with "God's children" in our minds and hearts, because in God's mind and heart, these two things not only go together, but work very well together.
 - B. So we're wrong to say the heart of God is against us because of the negative providences in our life. In His hands, the scalpel, the poison, and the rod will *always* do us good, because that's His promise, Jer 32.40
 - C. This is a call to be on our guard against Satan's temptations in the hours of trial. Because when Satan sees our faith faltering, he comes to fan our unbelief into flame with a question like, "How can God love you and deal with you like this?" (cp. Mt 4.1-3).
 - 1. We need to counter those lies with the promises of God's faithfulness to do us good, not only *in* trials, but even *by* trials. And we need to remember that however bitter the cup of suffering may be, the children of God *never* drink the wrath of God (cf. Jn 19.30).
 - 2. And when we drink the cup of suffering with faith in God's promises, we can taste the sugar of His love mixed with it.
- III. The faith of even a strong Christian may sometimes waver under trial.
 - A. Faith is a grace that needs constant exercise; and when it's not exercised, it can grow weak—especially under trial—so that we think, say, and do things we ought not.

- B. So let us remember that our recourse and refuge in the seasons of a struggling faith is to hide ourselves in Jesus, resting on the strength of His keeping power in the hour of *our* trials (Jn 10.28-30) and resting on the perseverance of His faith in the hour of *His* trials for us, when He struggled for us—and overcame (Lk 22.42; Mt 27.46).
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RESPONDING IN PRAISE TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn 241 – O God beyond All Praising

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(The inner circles of cups contain wine and the outer circle contains grape juice. Please hold each element until all have been served so that we may partake together.)

DEACON'S OFFERING

RESPONDING IN PRAISE TO GOD'S GRACE & MERCY

Hymn 215 – Give to Our God Immortal Praise

OUR LORD'S BENEDICTION

HIS CONGREGATION'S RESPONSE

Now blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel, for he alone does wondrous works in glory that excel. And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity. The whole earth let his glory fill. Amen, so let it be. - McKee CM

We extend a **cordial welcome** to the visitors in our service today.

July 2020 Giving Statement

Total Giving.....	\$ 21,590.05
Giving Weekly Average.....	\$ 5,397.51
Weekly Average Giving to Date.....	\$ 4,741.99
Budget - Weekly Average Needed...	\$ 4,553.88

Afternoon Study – The Walk of Faith, Lesson 7:
Examining & Exercising our Faith – Pastor La Belle

Prayer Meeting – Wednesday, July 8th, 6:30pm

Birthdays this week:

August 2nd Elizabeth Regan
August 4th Karen Kinner

Anniversaries:

August 3rd John & Lori Chapman
August 8th Carl & Jeanne Mores

The missionaries for this month – Ben and Heather Hopp, Haiti

Bulletin announcements should be submitted to Elly Mead by 12 noon on Wednesdays. Please e-mail to pcccsecretary@gmail.com.