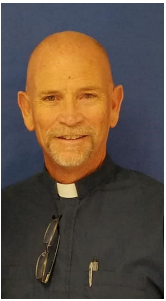


From the Pastor



*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.”*
Matthew 5:4

Sometimes this doesn't make sense to me. When I mourn, I want to not mourn anymore. Yet, Jesus said the ones who mourn are blessed, and will be comforted. Comforted how? With what? By whom?

The Beatitudes, of which this verse is a part, place our lives in the context of the whole realm and scope and community of God's love and justice. More description than instruction, more report than directive, they compose a litany in which all promises point to the same reality. They speak to those who now inhabit the kingdom/realm of God. The Beatitudes turn the world upside down with their shocking promise of hope to the hopeless, comfort to the bereaved, power to the powerless.

In a culture that celebrates wealth, power and the strong, Jesus lifts up those on the opposite end of that spectrum as blessed. The Beatitudes are a powerful antidote to the

contrived happiness of consumerism and mindless entertainment of our day. They are good news to God's people – the humble of the earth, the strong of heart, those who take refuge in God alone. We are blessed, not because we are particularly happy or esteemed, and certainly not because we are without troubles. We are blessed because in a unique and profound way God is near to us in Christ and in presence of the Holy Spirit.

Yet, I still do not want to mourn anymore. I want my sorrow to give way to gladness. I want what I lost to be returned to me so that I no longer must mourn its loss. As I heard another say, "If I had my druthers, the proper response to the presence of mourning would be to see it to the door!"

As lost as we feel when we mourn, we are no further from God than when things were once enjoyable. In fact, God maybe even closer in those times. The comfort of God in the victory of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit doesn't stop our

Rev. Dr. Ken Ritchie

mourning. But, it does carry us through the season of our grief. God is not dismayed when we are at our lowest. God is steadfast and faithful with the reassurance that says, "I'm here with you."

Our God dwells right with us in the midst of our brokenness and our death, big deaths and little deaths, with the blessing of redemption, deliverance, salvation, healing, wholeness, and victory. This is the blessing of the kingdom/realm of God given by Christ!

I look forward to seeing you soon, actually or virtually! Let me know of any needs or concerns. If you would like to visit with me, let me know and we can arrange a time to meet.

Let's continue to choose kindness, compassion, and love; let's do justice and make peace; let's welcome the stranger; let's persevere in prayer, as we glorify God, grow disciples, and meet the needs of our neighbors.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Ken

Ken@FaithUnited-pc.com

Online Giving

We now have online giving available. Just scan the QR Code to the right with your smart phone or go to our website and click the “Give Now” button. www.FaithUnited-pc.com You will have the option to set up your giving profile. This will make it easy to login anytime you are ready to give, even designated giving for Building Repairs, Garage Fund or Special Offerings that occur throughout the year. **You can also select to donate the 2% fee so Faith United does not incur it.**



2023 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2023 are available on the table near the office. If you currently give online or have checks mailed by your financial institution, no envelope is necessary. Rest assured your gifts are logged under your giving profile. If you do not see an envelope box with your name on it and you would like a box, please contact us at the church office and a box will be reserved for you.



Praying the Kingdom of God

Whenever we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we pray that God’s kingdom would come and that God’s will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. What are we praying for? Jesus offers several parables to describe the kingdom of God. We will consider those parables as models of prayer to form and shape our faith and faithfulness. Each week, usually Wednesday afternoon, a new episode will be uploaded to the church’s Facebook page and YouTube channel. If you like the Facebook page and/or subscribe to the YouTube channel you will be notified when the latest video is uploaded. You can view the video offering at your convenience. This midweek devotional series will run through April 19. Join Pastor Ken as we pray the kingdom of God!



Happy Birthday!

February 5

* Lorna Acker

February 15

* Chuck Acker

* Dick Smith

February 16

* Kurt Booth

February 18

* Barbara Richie

February 28

* Jacob West



Homebound or Recovering:

- ♥ Charley Rae Furrh (Terri Russell's cousin)

Prayers for:

- ♥ David Duell
- ♥ Dale Durcholz
- ♥ Mary Marxer
- ♥ George & Mozelle Mills and their son-in-law, Greg Kaut
- ♥ Dennis Van Deventer

Worship services are available In-Person, via Facebook Live, or on our YouTube channel.

Worship resources available at www.FaithUnited-pc.com




Weekly Bible Study class

Rich Lewis

The class is currently led by Rich Lewis. They meet from 9:30 to 10:30 in classroom #4. . The lessons are based on Amy-Jill Levine's book, *The Difficult Words of Jesus*. Each lesson will include a video in which she guides in ways to think of these often startling teachings of Jesus. They include Jesus saying to sell what you own, to hate your father and mother, to be a slave to all, to go nowhere among the Gentiles, as well as Jesus talking of an outer darkness or hell and his attitude toward other Jews. Amy-Jill Levine is one of the most popular and thought provoking teachers of the Bible. She will guide us in how these words of Jesus can be understood to help us be faithful Christians. The class will conclude the series of six lessons on Sunday, 2/12/23.



Rich and Courtland will be traveling Sundays 2/19, 2/26, 3/5 and the class will not meet. Stay tuned for information about the new study beginning on March 12 when the class resumes.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 9:30 LTCDS #1 7:00 FUPC Choir	2	3 9:00 LTCDS Fellowship Hall #1	4 9:00 GA-Double Rm #2 11:00 OA-Double Rm #2
5 9:30 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Coffee Fellowship 11:00 Communion Worship 11:00 Iglesia-Fellowship Hall	6 7 pm GA-Room #2	7	8 9:30 LTCDS #1 7:00 FUPC Choir	9	10 9:00 LTCDS Fellowship Hall #1	11 9:00 GA-Double Rm #4 11:00 OA-Double Rm #4
12 9:30 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Coffee Fellowship 11:00 FUPC Worship 11:00 Iglesia -Fellowship Hall 12:30 FUPC Session	13 7 pm GA-Room #2	14 	15 9:30 LTCDS #1 7:00 FUPC Choir	16	17 9:00 LTCDS Fellowship Hall #1	18 9:00 GA-Double Rm #4 11:00 OA-Double Rm #4
19 10:30 Coffee Fellowship 11:00 FUPC Worship 11:00 Iglesia-Fellowship Hall	20 7 pm GA-Room #2	21	22 9:30 LTCDS #1 Ash Wednesday Worship 7pm	23	24 9:00 LTCDS Fellowship Hall #1	25 9:00 GA-Double Rm #4 11:00 OA-Double Rm #4
26 <i>1st Sunday in Lent</i> 10:30 Coffee Fellowship 11:00 FUPC Worship 11:00 Iglesia-Fellowship Hall	27 7 pm GA-Room #2	28	1 9:30 LTCDS #1 7:00 FUPC Choir	2	3 9:00 LTCDS Fellowship Hall #1	4 9:00 GA-Double Rm #4 11:00 OA-Double Rm #4

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