**Saginaw First Free Methodist Church**

**Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**

**November 15, 2020**



*“At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment.” (Judges 4:4-5)*

Guest Speaker: Bill Erickson

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**Proper 28 (33)**

**November 15, 2020**

*The mission of Saginaw First Free Methodist Church is to be faithful to God and to make known to all people everywhere God’s call to wholeness in Jesus Christ.*

**Prelude**

**\*\*Greeting/Announcements**

**\*Call to Worship** (*spoken responsively*)

L: God invites all people into the kingdom of heaven

**P: We seek abundant life for ourselves and our neighbors**

L: God’s people have lived in bondage in many times

**P: We cry out to the Lord, and God comes to rescue us**

L: God patiently waits for all to come to repentance

**P: We will not fall asleep, but be awake and sober**

L: The LORD calls us to labor on behalf of everyone

**P: We will use our talents for the betterment of God’s kingdom**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “Nearer, Still Nearer” #478 (v.1)

**Nearer still nearer, close to Thy heart**

**Draw me, my Savior, so precious Thou art**

**Oh fold me, oh fold me, close to Thy breast**

**Shelter me safe in Thy haven of rest**

**Shelter me safe in Thy haven of rest**

**\*Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: Everlasting God, who gives us shelter and provides for us always, challenge our notions of security and comfort. You have used unexpected people in all generations to care for your people. You have used the marginalized, the oppressed, and the weak to give wisdom and direction. Teach us to hear the voice of all, as we pray together the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples…

**P: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

**Glory be to the Father​**

**And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.**

**As it was in the beginning​**

**Is now and ever shall be**

**World without end**

**Amen. Amen**

**First Scripture Lesson:** Judges 4:1-7

 The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died. So the LORD sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim. Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly twenty years.

 At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment.

She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, ‘Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.’”

**Prayer of Confession**

L: Sometimes God puts people who we hold with contempt and scorn as our leaders. We let our pride and arrogance dictate our attitudes towards others. When we have a false sense of peace and security, let us confess…

**P: Sovereign God, who surprises us when we least expect it, we look to you for wisdom. We seek self-protection rather than fully participating in loving, faithful service. We hide and horde our treasures and talents, retreating into a false sense of security. We attempt to escape your judgement by becoming successful in the world’s eyes. We avoid the tasks of bringing justice to the world and liberation to the oppressed. We think we are to store up wealth on earth, instead of providing for the abandoned. Help us to be children of light. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Psalm 123

**P: To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens! As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, until he has mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.**

**\*Hymn of Affirmation:** “Revive Us Again” #719 (v.4)

**Revive us again**

**Fill each heart with Thy love**

**May each soul be rekindled**

**With fire from above**

**Hallelujah! Thine the glory**

**Hallelujah! Amen**

**Hallelujah! Thine the glory**

**Revive us again**

**Second Scripture Lesson:** 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape!

 But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night.

 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson**: Matthew 25:14-30

 “For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 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.’ 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.’

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.’ 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.’

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; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’

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? 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. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents.

For 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. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

**Sermon**

**Prayer of Response**

**\*Hymn of Response:** “O God, Our help in Ages Past” #95 (v.6)

**O God, our help in ages past**

**Our hope for years to come**

**Be Thou our guide while life shall last**

**And our eternal home**

**Invitation of Offering**

L:God has entrusted us with gifts of wisdom, love, and mercy; to enable us to bring justice to the world. To bring heaven to earth, we must strengthen the weak, the poor, and anyone in need. Give to bring others abundant life, as we collect this morning’s tithes and offerings.

**\*Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow**

**Praise Him, all creatures here below**

**Praise Him above, ye heavenly host**

**Praise Father Son, and Holy Ghost.**

**Amen.**

**\*Prayer**

**\*Hymn**: “Rise Up, O Church of God” #724 (v.3)

**Rise up, O church of God**

**His kingdom’s task embrace**

**Redress sin’s cruel consequences**

**Give justice larger place**

**\*Benediction**

L: God has given us talents and abilities to share with the world in need. Let us bring comfort to all people, sacrificing our own comfort to do so. Be faithful to our calling to go and make disciples, as you go in peace to love and serve. Amen.