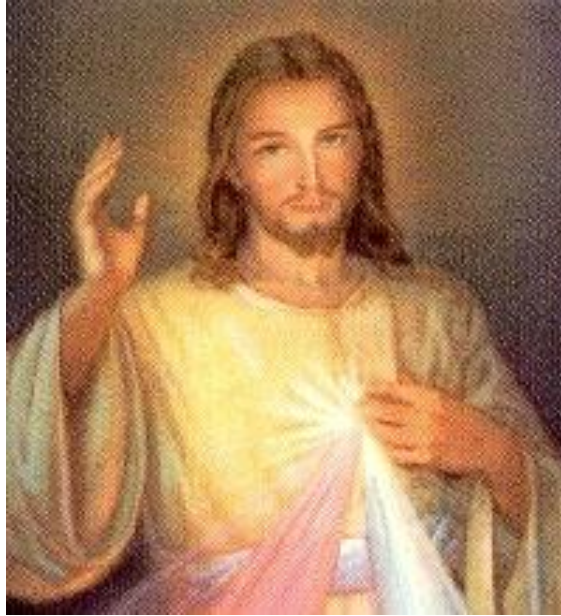


*First United Church of Christ
457 Delaware Avenue
Palmerton, PA 18071
610-826-2696*



April 23, 2017

2nd Sunday of Easter

Holy Humor Sunday

Theme:

God's gift of laughter

Websight: www.firstuccpalmerton.org

Email: office@firstuccpalmerton.org

Music of Preparation

Saints in Action

Joys and Concerns

Illuminating Our Worship Space

*Call to Worship – congregation responses are in bold print

One: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Many: And also with you.

One: Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her.

Many: All you who love her; rejoice with her in joy.

*Opening Hymn

sung twice

652

“This Is the Day”

*Prayer of Confession: *congregation responses are in bold print*

Gracious God, you reached into Abraham and Sarah's lives and asked them to dream the impossible dream— that you would transform what appears to have been a barren and lifeless situation into one overflowing with promise and hope— and, through faith in you, they believed your promises.

Forgive us, O God, if we never get beyond thinking of your call on our lives as an impossible dream or even as an unwelcome interruption.

Faithful God, the apostle Paul emphasizes Abraham's complete trust and faith in your promises and how he grew ever stronger in

faith, fully convinced of your ability to fulfill what had been promised.

Forgive us, O God, when we find it hard even to hear your promises above commercial assurances of transformation—promises tempting us to trust the newest and trendiest product to realize our dreams.

Merciful God, Jesus revealed the great depth of your love in his determination to defeat evil even when this meant giving up his own life.

Forgive us, O God, when we allow the power of evil to flourish because we fear that taking up one's cross would be just too costly an exercise.

Silent reflection on these words

Gracious and loving God, forgive our lack of trust in you; Have mercy on us and forgive us. Help us when we hesitate, and strengthen us when we are weak Breathe your Spirit afresh into our hearts and minds—our lives— so that we have the courage to follow Jesus wherever he takes us. Amen.

*Assurance of Pardon

*Song of Praise Refrain to *“He Lives”* #302

*Passing of the Peace and Greeting One Another

The Children’s Message *“Smile”*

Sharing Some Laughs Together

Scripture Reading:

New Testament Lesson: Genesis 18: 1 – 15

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. ³ He said, “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” ⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” ⁷ Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹ They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” ¹⁰ Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?” ¹³ The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ ¹⁴ Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁵ But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “Oh yes, you did laugh.”

New Testament Lesson: Genesis 21: 1 – 6

21 The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. ² Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. ⁴ And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."

*Hymn of Preparation *"I Come with Joy"* # 706

Old Testament Lesson: Ecclesiastes 3: 1 – 4

3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: ² a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; ³ a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; ⁴ a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

Message "A Time to Laugh"

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer (Unison) (debts/debtors)

Our Father, which 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen.

Silent Reflection

The Final Opportunity for Laughter

The Offering Invitation – Your gifts proclaiming you are a joyful giver because "God loves a cheerful giver, so smile while you drop that cash in the plate!"

*The Offering Response – The Doxology

*Prayer of Dedication of Gifts and Self: Unison

Most loving God - as you have given yourself to us in Christ Jesus, now let us give ourselves to you. We give you our bodies that they may be vessels for your Spirit; we give you our souls that they may be made pure by your grace; we give you our hearts that we may always love you and we give you our minds that they may be always be full of your wisdom. Receive all that we offer and use it for your honor and glory. Amen

*Hymn of Celebration

sung to tune 483

"Take Time to be Funny" see insert

*Commission and Benediction

*Three Fold Amen

*Postlude

* denotes that all who are able are encouraged to stand

Thought for the Day:

A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones. Proverbs 17: 22

May the Spirit of God transform you and bring a blessing to you always. Please join us as often as you are able. May each of you have a blessed week! If you are visiting please introduce yourself to the Pastor, and sign our guest book located in the Narthex entrance to the Sanctuary. We welcome each of you to this worship this day.

Please remember to bring in food items for **CACPAC food bank**. The need becomes greater every day and each of us is able to help out with a food item or two. Let us share God's blessings with those who lack!

Confirmation class will be held tomorrow evening, April 24th at 5:00PM in the upstairs parlor.

Family Promise host week begins next Sunday, April 30th. If you are able to assist us in this mission of giving and caring, please see Gail Nonnemacher. Thank you.

The Bulletins are sponsored by:

The Serfass Family -Tabitha, Nathan, Gaige & Jaggar

The Altar Flowers are sponsored by:

Carol Thomas in Celebration of all Grandchildren

AND

Mr. & Mrs. Lester Bass in Memory of Loved Ones

The Whole Congregation in Ministry and Assisted By:

Rev. Martin E. Nuscher Pastor
Jenn Sommers Council President
Jenn Sommers Sunday School Director
Darlene Nothstein Financial Secretary
Judy Bollinger Treasurer
Robyn Hill Organist
Fae Wentz Secretary
The Nuscher FamilyCustodians

Worship Assistants This Week Next Week

Lay Assistant:	Jenn Sommers	Darlene Nothstein
Ushers & Greeters:	Pete & Shirley Blynn	Ed & Lisa Shellhammer

Take Time to Be Funny

Take time to be funny, rejoice in the Lord
Let laughter explode and have fun with God's Word
For laughter is healing, gives strength to the weak
God loves to see smiles, for they lift up the meek.

Take time to be silly, it's good for the soul
Too many are somber, grabbing control.
Let go and let God's love wash over your soul
Heavenly transcendence can be your life's goal.

Old Sarah and Abram – a child they lacked
But God's angels promised and she birthed Isaac
In Hebrew that's "laughter", go check if you want
Genesis Seven-teen is where it is found.

For humor is holy, it sanctifies life,
Replenishes hope and oft softens advice
It undercuts sorrow, deflates haughty pride
So smile and hang on, and rejoice in life's ride.