

Beulah Presbyterian Church

Digital Worship Service

October 18, 2020



WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

In worship,

**May we be as welcoming as Sarah and Abraham,
who were quick to serve the stranger.**

In faith,

May we proclaim that nothing is too big for God.

In moments of holy surprise,

May we laugh with deep abiding joy.

For God is in the holy surprise.

God is in the winding path.

And God is in our presence today.

Let us worship Holy God.

HYMN

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love!

Hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above.

Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away.

Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of unexpected joy and answered prayers, we confess that sometimes things feel too good to be true, while at other times we wonder if you hear us at all. When life unravels for the worst—we blame you. But when life unravels for the best, filling our days with holy surprise—We tend to praise ourselves, thinking we've earned this unexpected joy. Forgive us. Help us to see you in our midst. And with every breath that turns into a laugh, draw us closer to you. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVING GRACE

Righteousness does not come from our own doing or not doing. Righteousness comes from God, by faith. Through the faithfulness of Christ, our Lord, we are forgiven.

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy Spirit of God, shine your light upon this Word and into our hearts that we may be enlightened with fresh understanding. Amen.

READING OF GOD'S WORD

Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7

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. 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. He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 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." And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. 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.

They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." 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. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' 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." But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh."

The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." And she said, "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“Sarah Laughs”

Rev. Dr. Diane M. Baldwin

TIME FOR REFLECTION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 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. Amen.

HYMN

*Mortals, join the happy chorus which the morning stars began.
Love divine is reigning o'er us, joining all in heaven's plan.
Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife.
Joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.*

BENEDICTION