

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) For **11am in the sanctuary**, please enter thru the lower red doors in front of the elevator 10:45-11am, wearing a mask. Temperatures will be taken. No reservations are needed at this time.
- 2) **1pm is time of Zoom worship**, until live streaming is available from the sanctuary. Please pray this is able to be installed soon!
- 3) **24 Hour Bible Reading** to start 5/5 at 5pm in downtown Pataskala is a to prepare for...
- 4) **National Day of Prayer** on 5/6 from 7-8:30 organized by Pataskala Area Churches at the Pataskala Nazarene Church. The event is also available online. RSVP to participate in-person or online at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/343485597027072/>
- 5) To watch **sermons recorded** on Zoom on our YouTube Channel, go to the FPCP website: <https://www.fpcpataskala.com/> and click on WORSHIP or follow us on Facebook from the homepage.

WORSHIP for May 2, 2021 – 5th Sunday of Easter

Prelude played on ukulele by Tom Kimble, “**J S Bach Cello Concerto #1 BMV 107**”

Streaming CCLI 20373701; Public Domain

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZQ6JBafEaw&list=PLAdy2hvW6PL8_1itXDbTRrCel331DmVVU

Call to Worship: Psalm 107:1-2 *Responsively*

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story – those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.

Opening Hymn: “Let Us Break Bread Together”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6N0OOE4i6hA>

Prayer of Confession: Colossians 3:5-10

(Responsively, pausing in silent confession between each stanza.)

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to [our] earthly nature:

sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. [We] used to walk in these ways, in the life [we] once lived . But now [we] must rid [our]selves of all such things, as these:

Anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from [our] lips.

Do not lie to each other, since [we] have taken off [our] old self with its practices and have put on the new self,

Which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe [our]selves with

Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of [us] has a grievance against someone.

Forgive as the Lord forgave [us].

And over all these virtues put on love

Which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Assurance of Forgiveness: Colossians 1:22-23 *Responsively*

Once [we] were alienated from God

and were enemies in [our] minds because of [our] evil behavior.

**But now he has reconciled [us] by Christ's physical body through death to present [us] holy
in**

**his sight, without blemish and free from accusation – if [we] continue in [our] faith
established**

**and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that [we]
heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven!**

“The Gloria Patri”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-uMeiUtOSVM>

Hymn of Preparation: “Break Thou the Bread of Life”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAZrT8SVYBM>

“Scripture cannot be set aside... What does Scripture say?” John 10:35 & Romans 4:3.

Prayer for Illumination: *Unison*

**Lord, through your Spirit enable us to consider your Word, and to enact it in our lives to
bring**

you glory and praise. Amen.

Scripture Readings: Colossians 1:21-22 & 2:9-23

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1%3A21-22&version=NIV>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+2%3A9-23&version=NIV>

SERMON: “Reality of Freedom Found in Christ” by The Reverend Dr. Janet Hufford

Watch sermon on: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAdy2hvW6PL93B6hbgswTxf93Evs575yd>

The sermon today is “Freedom in the Reality of Christ.” The message of freedom supports the central theme of Colossians on growing in maturity & fullness through Christ. Today’s passage coincides **with Colossians 1:21-22 & 2:9-15**. But growing into full maturity & freedom as heirs in God’s family is articulated even more in **Colossians 2:16-23**. The passage directs followers of Christ not to judge by what believers eat or drink nor by religious festival. Paul writes this, because those raised in the Jewish faith are taught that righteousness is gained through the practice of Jewish customs & traditions, such as circumcision & keeping kosher, not eating certain foods, particularly for Sabbath & other religious festivals. Author Blumental refers to this as Jewish dogma in his book “One New Man.” There is a difference for Messianic Jews, however. While customs may still be practiced as part of Jewish tradition, they are not considered the means to righteousness. Followers of Jeshua know through Scripture that righteousness does not come thru human offerings, but thru the final offering of sacrifice made in full by Christ on the cross. However, early Jewish believers in Jeshua once insisted that even Gentile believers were required to ascribe to Jewish traditions, like kosher eating, religious festivals, & circumcision. Even Peter believed these traditions necessary. But clarity comes to Peter in **Acts 10:9-16**, which describes a vision where God directs Peter to take & eat “unclean” animals. After the vision, Peter is invited as a guest to the house of the Gentile Cornelius. Being at table with Gentiles was forbidden by Jewish custom. However, Peter went because of the vision. Peter does not lose his freedom in the reality of Christ. Peter did not live under accusation & condemnation that comes through tradition & custom, with rules like, “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!... which are merely human commands & teaching.”

Besides the Jewish faith, certain Christian traditions, such as Eastern Orthodox, Byzantine, & Roman Catholic have also taught the necessity of not eating certain foods, especially during Lent, the time of preparation leading up to Easter. In my Roman Catholic tradition, I was not to eat meat on any Friday. I was also required to confess to a priest, when I broke food rules or did not attend required religious festivals. But I asked, “Where in the Bible are we told that we can’t eat hotdogs on Fridays?” Like eating kosher, fasting from meat on Fridays was a human custom or tradition. But Paul in reminding us of freedom in the reality of Christ says that we are free from accusation. Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink. Do not submit to human rules of do not handle, do not taste, or do not touch. A requirement to adhere to these rules takes away from freedom in Christ. These rules are human additions to the commands of God. They are beyond God’s word. In fact, “do not handle, do not taste, do not touch” alludes to the first addition to God’s word in the garden of Eden. First the serpent questions in Genesis 3:1, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman in verse 2 answers, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden.’” Thus far the woman’s word accurately repeats God’s do not taste rule, but then she adds to God’s word, “And you must not touch it.” This addition gives weight to final words in Revelation 22:19: “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll.”

Now as Reformed Protestant Presbyterians that do not traditionally practice fasting, we may think today's passage does not apply to us. But today we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Here is the description from the directory of worship regarding the communion element of bread: "The bread used for the Lord's Supper should be common to the culture of the congregation." Should be, but not required to be, ordinary bread commonly served on table at home. That means the bread may be baguettes in France, soda bread in Ireland, tortillas in Mexico, pita in Greece, or other flatbreads from around the world. But in one church I served, communion bread could only be non-ordinary Scottish short bread. Today we will also be taking non-ordinary bread, but we are not breaking Biblical law. Here is why we have the particular type of non-ordinary bread today. Because of COVID, pre-packaged elements are safer, although they are different than ordinary tradition. Also since regular bread is a choking hazard for some, I have often used these pre-packaged elements for homebound communion. The bread for today easily melts in the mouth, allowing us to safely stand in unity & compassion with those with a special health need. In addition, more churches opt to serve only serve gluten free bread due to the health needs of those with Celiac's disease, where the elimination of gluten is not just a fad or lifestyle choice, but a necessity. Another example is that we serve unfermented juice of the grape vine. This practice began at the prohibition of alcohol, but is also a compassionate choice for those who struggle with an addiction to alcohol. The point is that the reality of Christ grants us freedom to enjoy all that God offers by not limiting ourselves to tradition & custom. Also freedom helps us in mercy to realize that while everything is permissible, not everything is necessary nor beneficial, enabling us to make untraditional choices to stand in compassion with those who have health needs. Colossians urges us to live in the freedom of the reality in Christ for the sake of the health of others, like Jesus, who healed on the Sabbath against Jewish custom & tradition.

There are other examples, too, of the relevance of today's passage for traditional churches that voluntarily take on the necessity of traditions that are not required in Scripture, which may keep us from experiencing fully the freedom of reality in Christ. This does not mean that we should drop every tradition, but if we open ourselves up beyond our own traditions, we can further discover freedom & blessing. For example, we were blessed this morning with Tom playing the prelude on the ukulele, an instrument that is outside our own tradition, but common in Portugal and later Hawaii. Similarly, on Christmas Eve we sing Silent Night originally composed to be accompanied by guitar. On Good Friday we experienced Jesus' journey to be crucified with stations of the cross originated in Roman Catholicism. Like last week, when we meditated upon the transcendence of God, next week we'll meditate on Jesus' ascension through icons, as do Eastern Orthodox & Byzantine believers. For we have freedom in the reality of Christ to praise God in many meaningful ways. The reality of Christ grants us freedom to enjoy all that God offers by not limiting ourselves to tradition & custom. Freedom in the reality of Christ also helps us in mercy to realize that while everything is permissible, not everything is necessary nor beneficial, enabling us to make untraditional choices to stand in compassion with those who have specific health needs. According to this message from God in Colossians, let us live maturely & fully in the freedom of the reality in Christ.

PRAYERS of Joy and Concern, followed by: **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.**

Please Continue to Give in Dedication to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

Prayer Of Dedication: *Unison*

Jesus, Our Savior. In view of your mercy, we offer up our thanks thru giving. Amen.

Doxology

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSshNIuVPbA>

Closing Hymn: “The Church’s One Foundation”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jotNbcFelX4>

Benediction: Colossians 3:17 *Responsively*

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him,... in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**