



# SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

## THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

July 12, 2020  
10:45 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas  
Link to worship videos available at: [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org)

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP Facing a Task Unfinished arr. Keith & Kristyn Getty,  
Ed Cash, Fionan de Barra

*Facing a task unfinished that drives us to our knees, a need that,  
undiminished rebukes our slothful ease. We, who rejoice to know Thee,  
renew before Thy throne, the solemn pledge we owe Thee to go and  
make Thee known. We go to all the world, with kingdom hope unfurled.  
No other name has power to save, but Jesus Christ The Lord.*

### WELCOME

We welcome you to worship today.

We remember the words from the Psalm 46:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Let us rejoice!

HYMN NO. 837

What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine

SHOWALTER

**What a fellowship, what a joy divine,  
leaning on the everlasting arms;  
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.**

REFRAIN

**Leaning (leaning on Jesus), leaning (leaning on Jesus),  
safe and secure from all alarms;  
Leaning (leaning on Jesus), leaning (leaning on Jesus),  
leaning on the everlasting arms.**

**O sweet to walk in the pilgrim way,  
leaning on the everlasting arms;  
O how bright the path grows from day to day,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.** REFRAIN

**What have I to dread, what have I to fear,  
leaning on the everlasting arms?  
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.** REFRAIN

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Almighty God, as the world swirls, tosses, splashes, and perhaps even overcomes us, we bring to you today concerns, threats, and challenges that grip at our hearts. We bring before you all of our worries, our pains, and our anxieties. God, hear us as we each communicate them to you in a time of silent prayer...

*(We pray in silence.)*

We call for you when the waters are high, and we lose our way in the waves. We listen but can be reluctant to hear your voice guiding us to safety. We grow frustrated, distant, and angry. We can become blind to your workings in this world, and we can drown amid influences which seek to destroy us. Lord, forgive our inattentions, our doubts, our ignorance, and our blindness. You offer us safe eddies of refuge alongside turbulent white waters. Help us to recognize you, though your ways may be mysterious. Open our eyes to see and our hands to take hold of the love you extend to us so graciously. Amen.

Praise be to God that we are not alone in the storms of our lives. God's holy goodness and mercy will prevail.

HYMN OF RESPONSE NO. 606

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

ONE HUNDREDTH

## SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 46:1-10

Genesis 6:11-22, 7:24

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

Ark People

## PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

O Lord, Ancient of Days, great are your mercies and infinite is your love. We give thanks for the safe harbor you give to us in our hope for your kingdom, in our faith in your love transcending beyond borders and extending to all people. In troubling times may we know where to find you in the chaos. Open our eyes to recognize you in expressions of compassion around us. Help us to be a welcoming and loving people to all. May we live faithfully, thoughtfully, and responsibly as we are surely called in a time that depends on it. Help us to look to the wellbeing of others that we may also be well and give praise to you.

We pray for all persons in positions of authority, that each may look to the welfare of all peoples and creatures sharing this earth. May we as a people do better, be better, and give the best of ourselves to the future for our children and succeeding generations.

We pray for the Church, that in this time, our voice will be that of Jesus Christ and our service exemplify the Gospel in action, always striving to live into your will.

We pray for the ones we love. Keep them safe, hold them in strength and in hope. Give peace to the sick and the dying, love to the lost and the lonely, hope to the hopeless and depressed, and comfort to all. May your spirit rest upon us and hold us in the palm of your hand, where fear finds no dwelling place.

Lord, we pray in these turbulent times and always, committing ourselves to your guidance through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying,

**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.**

**How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!  
What more can be said than to you God hath said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?**

**"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed, for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.**

**"When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;  
For I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.**

**"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no, never forsake."**

## DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

## POSTLUDE

Onward, Christian Soldiers

arr. Nancy Lau

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Especially in this time, visit the church website, [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org), for the newsletter, announcements, worship bulletins, devotionals for children and adults, updates, etc.

Like us on **Facebook** at: [www.facebook.com/FPCBryan](http://www.facebook.com/FPCBryan)

**NEW!!!** on **Instagram**: [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com). Search for and follow **fpcbryantx1867** and/or **fpcbryan\_youth**

Help FPC-Bryan's YouTube channel achieve 400 subscribers to be eligible for a custom url!  
On [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), search for First Presbyterian Church of Bryan, Texas, then click **SUBSCRIBE**

Our newsletter, **The Chimes**, continues to be available online, emailed to FPC-Bryan friends, and mailed to local FPC-Bryan members with the printed bulletin and sermon to those without technology.

Until further notice, it will not be mailed to its full distribution list.

The deadline for the next issue of the newsletter is Noon, Sunday, July 19, and will be distributed on Wednesday, July 22. This newsletter will cover news from July 30 thru August 12.

**STAY CONNECTED!** with others in this community of faith at Church Updates—FPC-Bryan's online tool for church-related announcements, ways to serve, and current prayer needs. This online tool is "**REAL TIME**," and users receive a weekly reminder email on Thursdays to view new posts.

Login and create your password-protected account at <https://fpcbtx.churchupdates.org/login>.  
For more information, contact Karen in the church office, 979.823.8073 or [office@fpcbryan.org](mailto:office@fpcbryan.org).



## A WARM WELCOME!

*We are delighted to have you worship with us today.*

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### WORSHIP NOTES

#### PREACHER

Rev. Emily K. Béghin

#### LITURGISTS

Rev. Ted Foote

Rev. Dr. George E. Klett

#### MUSICIANS

Michelle Lassiter, *Pianist*

David Kipp,

*Director of Music Ministries*

#### COVER ART

“The Covenant with Noah  
and All Mankind”

One of 11 faceted windows  
in sanctuary of

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

#### CHANCEL FLOWERS

In loving memory of

Aileen Smith McDonald

by

Ranney McDonald

#### AUDIO/VIDEO

Emily K. Béghin

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*Glory to God:*

*The Presbyterian Hymnal*

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### THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, JULY 12, 2020

#### ONLINE WORSHIP-

To view, visit [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org)

5:45pm Youth (GR 6-12) Sunday Fun Day-DIGITAL

*(Watch your inbox for details via email!)*

MONDAY, JULY 13, 2020

TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2020

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2020

THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2020

FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2020

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 2020

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, JULY 19, 2020

#### ONLINE WORSHIP-

To view, visit [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org)

5:45pm Youth (GR 6-12) Sunday Fun Day-DIGITAL

*(Watch your inbox for details via email!)*

For regularly scheduled meetings/gatherings,  
please be in touch with your group's  
moderator, leader, coordinator, or facilitator  
to determine alternate meeting options/platforms.

## The Covenant Windows

Designed from Biblical stories by the Smith Glass Co. of Ft. Worth in 1966, eleven windows gird the nave, proclaiming the theme of God's covenant with God's people. The five windows at the congregation's left, moving toward the entrance, portray the covenants of the Old Testament. In counterbalance, the five to the right of the chancel depict the covenants of the New Testament. The window above the main entrance behind the balcony is an expansive Nativity scene.

A covenant is a solemn and binding agreement made by two or more individuals or groups, to do or to keep from doing, a specified action with understood accountability. God's compact with human beings is a commitment, a promise—absolute and certain.

The history of the people of Israel commences with the covenant of God with Israel. Abraham, at the direction of God, left Ur of the Chaldees and journeyed to a land where God promised to make his descendants a great people. The origin of Israel's religion is the covenant given to Moses at Mount Sinai and is referred to as the "old covenant."

The "new covenant" is God's gift of His Son in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So it was that, in the beginning of the Third century, Tertullian began to refer to the two collections of scripture as the Old and New Testaments—by literal definition, the old and new covenants.

### The Covenant of Noah and All Mankind

"God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.'" At the top of this striking window the rainbow represents a sign and seal of the covenant by God to Noah, to Israel and to the whole of mankind. "Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him . . . 'I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy earth.'" At the center of the ark washed by rains and at its base is the figure of Noah leaving the ark with the creatures who are to multiply again upon the earth. Transcending, the eye is arrested by the rainbow, and God's words are recalled: "This is the sign of the covenant which I will make between you and every living creature that is with you for all generations. I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between human beings and the earth.

## Ark People

Rev. Emily K. Béghin  
Genesis 6:11-24

July 12, 2020  
First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

Today we arrive at window number 2 in our beautiful sanctuary; the story of Noah's ark. This may be one of the most widely known stories in all the Bible. I admit, this is one of my dear favorites. I'm a sucker for rainbows and happy endings, and my heart lives for the animals, but this story has a deeper darkness to it than what we tell to our children.

As Christians, we enjoy skipping to the good parts. We love the rainbow moment, the day the Israelites reach the promised land, the birth of Christ, the baptism, the resurrection, and the parts at the end of revelation when we speak of a new heaven and a new earth, where we live with God forever... but it is vital to our faith that we also honor the beginnings and the journeys our faithful ancestors took to get to those rainbows and the miracle of resurrection. These stories, they're our stories. We're still writing the story for the things yet to come, and we must honor where we are now as we also sit in a place of darkness, much like the darkness we find in the beginning of Noah's story.

The world in Noah's time had become corrupt with hatred, intolerance, violence, and disregard for the ways of God's love. Sin had overcome them. Evil had become their primary nature. God wants a clean slate, so he vows to wash this world bare in a storm so great that it drowns all the earth. But, God looks upon Noah, his faithful and loving heart, and he decides to spare him. He is a little speck of goodness in a world of pain and terror. He could have scooped Noah up in the palm of his hand and all the animals too, but that isn't how God works it seems.

So, God tells Noah to build a ship. I must admit, I am impressed. Noah labored day after day, probably for months not giving up on God's word and not giving in to a society that would taunt him and mock him for his belief.

Noah knew that this was God's way of carrying him through the storm to come. Even as it began to rain, the people mocked him. Even as it began to rain...

Storms take many forms and often we do not recognize them until we are helpless and begin to drown.

Much like a literal storm, this is how evils, such as tyranny, rise and fall. It sprinkles until it pours and floods until all that's left is destruction. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor and anti-Nazi dissident, spoke early on against Adolf Hitler's persecution of the Jewish people. Many pastors and influential people in early Nazi Germany remained silent. Some could not believe the route things were taking and made excuses to justify it, belittling evil for the sake of the greatness of Germany. It sprinkled until it outright poured.

The darkness we see in this world is not always something that we are comfortable confronting. And when we do confront it, people we know and love tell us to be quiet. "Keep your head down. You don't know what you're talking about. Oh, stop exaggerating. You're the problem." That is the easy road, the comfortable route, but I wonder, is comfort worth the loss of our discipleship?

Dietrich would not stand down. After first being accused and placed in a concentration camp and later found guilty of treason, he was hanged on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945. His book, *The Cost of Discipleship* speaks volumes today, as it did when first published in 1937. Bonhoeffer writes that to be a faithful servant of God, we must work every day to pursue the will God has for us through ways of mercy, justice, love, and hope in the church and in society. We cannot slack from the path of the higher road just because it is uncomfortable or difficult. Faith becomes us when we choose discipleship. We have a charge to labor to be builders of God's

kingdom and being of that number, being a servant comes at great cost.

I like to think that Noah knew that cost and paid it in his labor to save the creatures of goodness from ruin with the evil of the earth.

The church stands to remind believers of that cost, and the true church will come with a warning label. This faith is not easy. This faith is costly, exhausting, at times confounding, and always worth it. This faith is not cheap.

Today we talk about the window, but truly, this entire sanctuary is in dedication to Noah's story. This church has its warning label built into its foundation, into its very walls. In November of 1956, architect, Henry Mayfield and his team drew up the blueprints of this space. I do not know if he was aware of exactly what he was giving to us, but he has left us with a most wonderful gift. Look behind me. What do you see? After all, this is an odd place to preach from, isn't it?

Behind me you see the roof of our sanctuary; wooden beams come up the sides of the walls and meet at the highest point. Let's flip the sanctuary upside down. Now, what do you see? We are in an ark. The church is an ark in the storm of the world. The side beams form the hull, all of us able to fit within this ship. The area where the pews sit is called the Nave. Nave has its root in Latin, Navis, which means ship. The church is a haven, a sanctuary for all who wish to come aboard. Those of every kind are welcome to seek refuge in the faith.

This church is teeming with rich theological symbols and signs, but this is the largest, paired with cross, both pointing to hope for what is beyond.

We sit in an ark built by a laborer of faith to worship a carpenter's son, the Son of God who carries us also through the mighty storms just as this great ark, this incredible faith, this transcending, radical love. We worship in a space that reminds us that God saves us by our faith and that in our faith we are called to be laborers for God's desires to love and be the

best of the little speck of light that fights from within us.

In any storm there will be those who listen for God and those who are too busy shouting over the thunder to even recognize that God is speaking. God spoke to Noah who listened as others shouted at him and mocked him in his belief. They thought him a cook, a crazy, and they belittled him because he was different. God and Noah got the final laugh... literally. Faith looks crazy sometimes. Faith means taking a chance and being quicker to listen than to shout.

We have not been able to meet within our nave ark for some time because we are currently scattered in a big and terrifying storm. Truly the ark transcends beyond this building, the ark is our faith in God, and we build it by being the connectional church, sharing in the labor. What does it mean to build an ark in this storm?

We exist in one of the greatest storms in history here and now. Truly made up of many storms, this one is a behemoth... Coronavirus rages on, racism is alive and well, political unrest is at a high point, reasonable people have become raging fools, friends have become enemies, love has become a radical idea, hatred and selfish behavior seems like the new broadcasted norm.

This did not come along all of the sudden. This storm has been sprinkling for a long time, and now we are sinking in the flood waters as they rise, and it is remarkable that still there are those who would rather shout and scream at each other with no consideration of the other while all around them the wreckage piles on.

The news has become so stressful that I must monitor what time of day I see it anymore. I see things not of the path of the good, the loving, and the humble way of Christ; no, I see things that I can never unsee. I am appalled. As Christians we should be absolutely appalled. It's easy to let feelings of anger and frustration boil up. I feel them now. It's okay to

get angry. Bonhoeffer was extremely angry. We should be angry, but we should not allow ourselves to behave in a way that would seek to drown another out of selfish pride or inconsiderate practices. We are called to be more. We are the faithful.

We are saved by faith, not by works. We threw that idea out some 500 years ago, but make no mistake, being faithful means living in a way that we must never need to announce our faith for it is already known by our works. If we shout, kick, scream, and provoke, then we do not hear God who is trying to speak to us. Noah had ears to listen and God spoke. Noah had faith and even when mocked, yelled at, and belittled by his society, he continued God's work to build an ark for the goodness of the world.

I am sick and tired of this storm. It has been 112 days since we closed this building to battle this virus. Noah not only spent months building an ark, but he had to weather a storm that would rage on for 150 days. I'm tired. Are you tired? Well, guess what... our storm isn't stopping any time soon. We've got work to do. We've gotta love. Period. We've got to love... love all kinds. We've got to listen. We can't learn anything or grow if we've got our mouths open all the time. We've got to look around. God's at work everywhere, not just in you, but in all people, all creatures, we must seek him. Do you see him? Noah was faithful. Noah persevered, labored on, and in partnership with God, he weathered the storm.

Bonhoeffer was faithful. He stood against one of the greatest forces of evil this world has ever known, and his name lives on as light, his writings live on as teachings, and he now lives in the place of eternity in that new shining place with God and our Savior.

Bonhoeffer and Noah both worked in partnership with God.

Partnership means being willing to listen, grow, and build together. That's what the church does. And that's what we as a church

family do together with God. Before we allow the darkness to consume us in the anger and frustrations that would drag us under with the rest of the world, may we remember that our first loyalty is to God who commands us to build something better for all kinds.

The way of the faithful looks like work. Anyone who preaches faith as the easy and dainty road of beauty of ultimate comfort is lying. So, in times when we are tired, frustrated, edgy even, impatient, in times when the world is dark... we must ask ourselves, "Do we believe?" Do you believe in the love of God for all kinds? Do you believe that goodness must prevail by the way of God?

Do you believe in the commandments, in the stories, in the hope of Christ?

Like Peter on the ocean, like Moses before the red sea, like Noah before the storm... do we believe?

Friends, we have work to do. Let us not grow weary. The world will taunt and writhe and resist the radical nature of God's amazing grace and nondiscriminatory selfless love that by faith is let to shine through you. It is up to you, oh beloved believer. Sometimes strength and resilience in the paths of goodness looks like work and that scares people. Faith is the higher road, the harder path, the more costly way to live. And in that manner, we must be humble servants.

We are the church, an ark in the storm of this world. We are the strong beams held together in love, upholding the goodness that fights to see the day within us. We are the ark with open doors, with room to spare, with love abundant. God is calling us to partner with us to build a better way, to outlast the storms around us and within us. You, you little speck of good in a dark and angry world, you are worth everything. He is calling you. Now is the time. Stand up, build, love, and welcome, go be ark people, all you beloved believers.

Amen.