

June 26, 2022

“When Vengeance Rules but Faith Prevails”

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

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Welcoming the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in our congregations, we are liberated from a static understanding of the church, which often makes us allies of the status quo. As we open ourselves to the re-creating and animating power of the Holy Spirit, we become agents of healing and hope in the world.

1. GATHERING

Musical Prelude (Geoff)

Call to Worship (Lynette)

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit, come,

People: come fill the hearts of your faithful.

Leader: Come, Spirit of God, come, kindle in us the fire of your love,

People: warm our hearts, and free us to act with kindness and care toward all humanity.

Leader: Pour out your Spirit on your people, God of love,

People: and we shall be revived, made anew in the image of Jesus.

Leader: Come, gracious Spirit, come, guide and teach us,

Opening Prayer

Opening Song

Welcome and Passing of the Peace:

- **Leader:** May the peace of Christ be with you.
- **People:** And also with you.
- **All:** Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

People: so that by your light we may walk in the way of Jesus.

Leader: Spirit of the living God, anoint your children afresh,

People: fill our spirits with unquenchable hope, bathe our hearts with unbounded love, and nourish our souls with your peace.

All: Reveal yourself within us, great Spirit of God, so that we may better see ourselves and more truly reflect your light and truth. Amen

“Vengeance is the act of turning anger in on yourself. On the surface it may be directed at someone else, but it is a surefire recipe for arresting emotional recovery.” — Jane Goldman

2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scriptures: Ezekiel 25:15-17, Romans 12:18-21 (Lynette)

Ezekiel 25: ¹⁵ And the Lord God says: "Because the Philistines have acted against Judah out of revenge and long-standing hatred, ¹⁶ I will shake my fist over the land of the Philistines, and I will wipe out the Cherethites and utterly destroy those along the seacoast.

¹⁷ I will execute terrible vengeance upon them to rebuke them for what they have done. And when all this happens, then they shall know I am the Lord.

Romans 12: ¹⁸ Don't quarrel with anyone. Be at peace with everyone, just as much as possible.

¹⁹ Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for he has said that he will repay those who deserve it. Don't take the law into your own hands. ²⁰ Instead, feed your enemy if he is hungry. If he is thirsty give him something to drink and you will be "heaping coals of fire on his head." In other words, he will feel ashamed of himself for what he has done to you. ²¹ Don't let evil get the upper hand, but conquer evil by doing good.

Sermon: "When Vengeance Rules but Faith Prevails (John)

"Vengeance is not the point; change is. But the trouble is that in most people's minds the thought of victory and the thought of punishing the enemy coincide." — Barbara Deming



We are facing a critical choice. We are blasted with news and sometimes life events of anger, violence, hate and racist and ethnic vulgarities.

How do we relate? Respond? What do we do? Good news: do nothing. Vengeance and justice are in the hands of God. Let's think about it!

3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

"The highest hallmark of a civilized society is not the rapidity by which it exacts vengeance, but its ability to hold victim and victimizer in its compassionate heart." — Greg Boyle

a. Congregational Singing

b. Response (everyone)

Sending (Lynette)

Leader: Into a world filled with beauty and with suffering, the Spirit bids us go.

May the Spirit open your minds and hearts

People: so that we do not miss the beauty or ignore the suffering;

Leader: may the Spirit inspire you to let go of cynicism and indifference

People: so that we become agents of forgiveness, grace, and God's reconciling love;

Leader: may the Spirit anoint your eyes

People: so that we may see the face of God in that of our neighbor;

Leader: may the Spirit fill you with God's love,

c. Joys and Concerns (everyone)

d. Offering & Music

People: enabling us to embrace all God's creatures;

Leader: may the Spirit touch your lips

People: so that we can speak words of peace, truth, and kindness;

Leader: may the Spirit animate your hands

People: so that we may reach out with compassion and care to all our neighbors.

Leader: Go now, companioned by the God of wind and fire, and guided by the Spirit, to be agents of healing and hope in all the places the Spirit leads you to go.