

September 11, 2022

“An Irritating Slave Girl!”

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

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

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

Cell: 970-412-7510



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 (Cathy and Steve)

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

“I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Truth is the ultimate power. When the truth comes around, all the lies have to run and hide.”

— Ice Cube

2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scriptures: Acts 16:16-26 (Cathy and Steve)

16:16 One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit of divination that brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. 17 While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." 18 She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

19 But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. 20 When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are

Jews 21 and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe."

22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. 23 After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.

SERMON: "An Irritating Slave Girl!" (Steve)



Sometimes the truth is so unpleasant that we try to avoid it. Maybe we need to be irritated up to the breaking point and allow the truth to "get under our skin" so that we finally get angry enough to actually do something?

"The discovery of truth is prevented more effectively, not by the false appearance of things present and which mislead into error, not directly by weakness of the reasoning powers, but by preconceived opinion, by prejudice." — Arthur Schopenhauer

"We want the facts to fit the preconceptions. When they don't, it is easier to ignore the facts than to change the preconceptions." — Jessamyn West

3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

a. Congregational Singing

b. Response (everyone)

c. Joys and Concerns (everyone)

d. Offering & Music (Geoff)

e. Sending

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,

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.