

First United Methodist Church of Elgin
August 23, 2020

Welcome

Rev. Dr. Felicia LaBoy

Announcements

Prelude

Dr. Mindy Pugh

Opening Hymn*

“How Majestic is Your Name”

TFWS 2023

The Call to Worship

Cindy Palm, Liturgist

Love God, all you saints. God takes care of all who stay close to him.

Be brave, be strong. Don't give up.

Blessed God. His love is the wonder of the world. God's word is solid to the core.

Be faithful, be patient. Don't give up.

We're depending on God. He's everything we need.

Our hearts are brimming with joy.

Opening Prayer

Cindy Palm, Liturgist

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Create in us a clean heart, O God. And renew a right spirit within us. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Offertory*

“Come and Find the Quiet Center”

TFWS 2128

Doxology

UMH 94

Scripture Reading

Acts 17:1-13 (MSG)

Cindy Palm, Liturgist

¹⁻³ They took the road south through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica, where there was a community of Jews. Paul went to their meeting place, as he usually did when he came to a town, and for three Sabbaths running he preached to them from the Scriptures. He opened up the texts so they understood what they'd been reading all their lives: that the Messiah absolutely had to be put to death and raised from the dead—there were no other options—and that “this Jesus I'm introducing you to is that Messiah.”



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Scripture Reading (continued)...

⁴⁻⁵ Some of them were won over and joined ranks with Paul and Silas, among them a great many God-fearing Greeks and a considerable number of women from the aristocracy. But the hard-line Jews became furious over the conversions. Mad with jealousy, they rounded up a bunch of brawlers off the streets and soon had an ugly mob terrorizing the city as they hunted down Paul and Silas.

⁶⁻⁷ They broke into Jason's house, thinking that Paul and Silas were there. When they couldn't find them, they collared Jason and his friends instead and dragged them before the city fathers, yelling hysterically, "These people are out to destroy the world, and now they've shown up on our doorstep, attacking everything we hold dear! And Jason is hiding them, these traitors and turncoats who say Jesus is king and Caesar is nothing!"

⁸⁻⁹ The city fathers and the crowd of people were totally alarmed by what they heard. They made Jason and his friends post heavy bail and let them go while they investigated the charges.

¹⁰⁻¹² That night, under cover of darkness, their friends got Paul and Silas out of town as fast as they could. They sent them to Berea, where they again met with the Jewish community. They were treated a lot better there than in Thessalonica. The Jews received Paul's message with enthusiasm and met with him daily, examining the Scriptures to see if they supported what he said. A lot of them became believers, including many Greeks who were prominent in the community, women and men of influence.

¹³ But it wasn't long before reports got back to the Thessalonian hard-line Jews that Paul was at it again, preaching the Word of God, this time in Berea. They lost no time responding, and created a mob scene there too.

Sermon

Rev. Dr. Felicia LaBoy

**Perceiving the New Thing God is Doing In This Season:
Moving Towards New Things Requires Us to Be At Odds with Convention**



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Sermon Text

Acts 17:16-34 (NIV)

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ They took him and brought to a meeting of the Aeropagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” ²¹ (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

²² Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Aeropagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

²⁹ “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” ³³ At that, Paul left the council. ³⁴ Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.



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