



# Paxton Presbyterian Church

3500 Sharon Street, Harrisburg, PA 17111

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**September 13, 2020**

*Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

## WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

(Take time to prepare your heart to worship God.)

PRELUDE

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

MUSIC INTERLUDE

## TO GIVE PRAISE TO GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

from Psalm 118 and 124

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

**who made heaven and earth.**

This is the day that the Lord has made;

**let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

\* HYMN 65 "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

## Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah 65

1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this  
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing  
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land. I am weak, but thou art might - y. Hold me  
 stream doth flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me  
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, land me

with thy power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,  
 all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,  
 safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.  
 be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.  
 I will ev - er give to thee; I will ev - er give to thee.

\* PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

Eternal God, we confess that we are indifferent to your will. You call us to proclaim your name, but we are silent. You call us to do what is just, but we remain idle. You call us to live faithfully, but we are afraid. In your mercy, forgive us. Give us courage to follow in your way, that joined with those from ages past, who have served you with faith, hope and love, we may inherit the kingdom you promised in Jesus Christ. Amen.

*(Time of silent reflection)*

\* ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the Good News. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

**Praise God. Amen.**

\* GLORIA PATRI

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

**TO CELEBRATE THE FAMILY OF FAITH**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

MORNING PRAYER/LORD'S PRAYER

**TO HEAR GOD'S WORD PROCLAIMED**

FIRST LESSON

Exodus 14:19-31

**This is the word of the Lord.**

Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 18:21-35

**This is the word of the Lord.**

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"How Often Should I Forgive?"

Pastor John Green

HYMN 444 "Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive"

"Forgive our sins as we forgive,"  
You taught, us, Lord, to pray,  
But you alone can grant us grace  
To live the words we say.

How can your pardon reach and bless  
the unforgiving heart  
that broods on wrongs and will not let  
old bitterness depart?

In blazing light your cross reveals  
the truth we dimly knew:  
what trivial debts are owed to us,  
How great our debt to you!

Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls  
and bid resentment cease.  
Then, by your mercy reconciled,  
our lives will spread your peace.

\* APOSTLE'S CREED

**TO OFFER OUR GIFTS AND OUR LIVES**

PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS

\* DOXOLOGY

\*HYMN 543 "God Be the Love to Search and Keep Me

God, be the love to search and keep me;  
God, be the prayer to move my voice;  
God, be the strength to now uphold me:  
O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Bind to myself the Name of Holy,  
great cloud of witnesses enfold;  
prophets, apostles, angels witness:  
O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Brightness of sun and glow of moonlight,  
flashing of lightning, strength of wind,  
depth of the sea to soil of planet:  
O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Walking behind to hem my journey,  
going ahead to light my way,  
and from beneath, above, and all ways:  
O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Christ in the eyes of all who see me,  
Christ in the ears that hear my voice,  
Christ in the hearts of all who know me:  
O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

**TO GO REJOICING IN GOD'S NAME**

BENEDICTION (unison)

from St. Augustine

O God, full of compassion  
I commit and commend myself to you,  
In whom I am, and live, and know.  
Be the goal of my pilgrimage,  
And my rest by the way.  
Let my soul take refuge  
From the crowding turmoil of worldly thought  
Beneath the shadow of your wings.  
Let my heart, this sea of restless waves,  
Find peace in you, O God. Amen.

POSTLUDE

I am writing to inform you of some dynamic and needed amendments to the Church's by-laws and government structure that the Session will be submitting to the membership for consideration at the next congregational meeting, scheduled for Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. Last year, after issues were encountered by the 2019 Nominating Committee in attempting to fulfill the requirements of the current by-laws, an ad hoc committee was formed from its members to review the Church's 2008 Strategic Plan and by-laws. The committee worked closely with me during the entire review. The focus of that review was to see what aspects of the Plan had been completed, what aspects had not and what aspects may no longer be relevant. This necessarily involved a consideration of issues with the by-laws which had not been reviewed for some time and, in their current state, did not reflect changes in the church's membership size, demographics and committee structure.

During the ad hoc committee's review process and starting with issues encountered by the Nominating Committee during its work several issues became apparent that the committee felt needed immediate attention and brought those to the Session for consideration. The need for immediate attention stems from several factors. First, the Church's by-laws had several areas that needed to be updated to match the current manner in which Church government actually operates. Second, the nominating process for church officers had become increasing difficult over the years based on current by-laws requirements considering the size of the membership, the existing demographics of the congregation, the number of eligible candidates and the desire to avoid conflicts of interest and promote diversity. Third, the committee structure of the Church had several areas that needed to be clarified. Finally, in assessing the long term health of the Church, it became apparent to the committee that the current structure of the Church's government (e.g required number of elders and deacons, the committee structure) was not sustainable.

The committee presented its findings to Session at its February 2020 meeting. The Session has worked steadily and thoughtfully on these recommendations and is now prepared to present them to the members and to urge the congregation to adopt those recommendations in several key areas which are summarized below.

**Church Leadership**—the by-laws currently provide that the Session and Deacons consist of no fewer than 15 members. The amendment would provide that each Board would have up to 15 members but no fewer than 13.

An additional amendment would provide that the Session Moderator (Pastor) would appoint the Ministry (committee) chairs annually.

Two related amendments would pertain to the Nominating Committee. The current by-laws require **four** Members-at-Large be on the committee. The amendment would provide for **two** Members-at-Large. In addition, language in the by-laws requiring the Committee to nominate one eligible member for each office would be amended to requiring it to use its "best efforts" to provide an eligible nominee for each office.

**Church Treasurer**---currently the by-laws do not provide for an assistant treasurer. Due to the burdens on the Treasurer and to provide better succession planning, the recommendation is to amend the by-laws to provide for the appointment by Session of an assistant treasurer.

**Corporate Officers**---the by-laws currently provide for the officers of the corporation to consist of a President, a Secretary and a Treasurer but makes no provision for a Vice President. The amendment would add the office of Vice President, elected by the Session like the other positions, and permit the Vice President to preside at meetings of the corporation in the absence of the President and such other duties as Session may assign. The term would be for one year.

Much thought and prayer has gone into these recommendations. These are items that need immediate attention if the Church is to continue to fulfill its mission in an effective and efficient manner. Your prayerful consideration of these much-needed updates is appreciated.

God's Peace,

Pastor John Green

# Paxton Presbyterian Church Congregational Meeting

Sunday, September 20, 2020

6:30 pm – following Prayers in the Woods in the Grove (in case of inclement weather, Prayers in the Woods and the Congregational Meeting will be held under the pavilion at Saussaman Park, Paxtang.)

The purpose of the meeting is to review and adopt the proposed changes to the Paxton Presbyterian Church By-Laws.

*Article IV The Session (By-Laws page 3) and Article VIII Board of Deacon (By-Laws page 6) amend as follows:*

Article IV, Section 2 currently states: There shall be no fewer than 15 ruling elders,...

Article VIII, Section 2 currently states: There shall be no fewer than 15 deacons,...

Amend wording for Article IV, Section 2: **There shall be up to 15 ruling elders with no fewer than 13,...**

Amend wording for Article VIII, Section 2: **There shall be up to 15 deacons with no fewer than 13,...**

*Add Section 5 to Article IV The Session (By-laws page 3)*

**Section 5: The Session Moderator (Minister) shall annually appoint the Chair of each Session Ministry.**

*Article IX Church Nominating Committee (By-laws page 7) amend as follows:*

Article IX currently states: Four members-at-large shall be elected...

Amend wording for Article IX: **Two members-at-large shall be elected...**

*Article IX Church Nominating Committee (By-laws page 7) amend as follows:*

Article IX currently states: The committee shall nominate one eligible person for each office to be filled.

Amend wording for Article IX: The committee shall **make its best effort to** nominate one eligible person for each office to be filled.

*Article XI Section 4. Corporate Officers (By-laws page 8) amend as follows:*

Article XI Section 4 currently states: The treasurer, whether an elder in active service or active member of the church, shall be appointed by the session. Other treasurers shall be appointed as needed.

Amend wording for Article XI Section 4: The treasurer, whether an elder in active service or active member of the church, shall be appointed by the session. **An assistant treasurer, whether an elder in active service or active member of the church, shall be appointed by the session.** Other treasurers shall be appointed **by the session** as needed.

*By-laws, Article XI, Section 1 Corporate Officers (By-laws page 7) amend as follows:*

Add position: **(b) The vice-president.**

Renumber as follows: **(c) The secretary; and (d) The treasurer.**

*By-laws, Article XI, Sections 2-4 Corporate Officers (By-laws page 7) amend as follows:*

Add Section 3.: **The vice-president who shall be a voting member of the congregation in good standing, duly elected to a term of active service on the session, and who shall be elected by the session shall serve a one-year term. In the absence of the president, the vice-president shall chair meetings of the corporation and such other duties as shall be assigned from time to time by the session or the president.**

Renumber as follows: **Section 4. The secretary...**

**Section 5. The treasurer...**