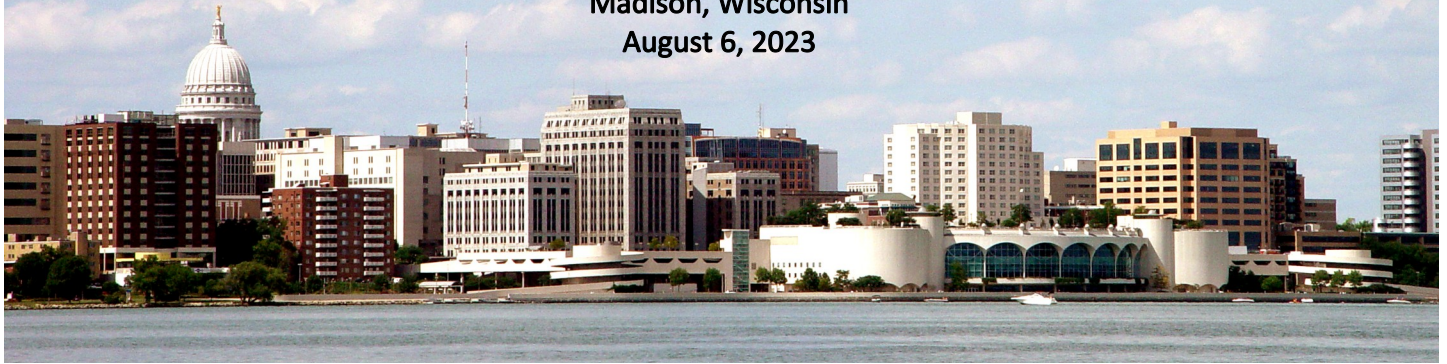


# Song Service: Faith

Baxter T. Exum (#1700)  
Four Lakes Church of Christ  
Madison, Wisconsin  
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We'd like to welcome you to the Four Lakes Church of Christ this morning! As King David said nearly 3,000 years ago (in Psalm 122:1), *"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'"* We are here to worship God this morning, so it is good to be together. If you are visiting with us today (either here in person or online), we are glad to have you with us, and we would invite you to fill out a visitor card (either online or by using a card from the pew in front of you). And if you have any questions or concerns about your time with us today, please feel free to pull me aside after worship today.

As we get started this morning, we'd like to share a few notes from some men enrolled in our Bible correspondence course program. This is the first lesson in the first series of six lessons that have labeled "God's Plan for Me." Basically, we are lost, and this is what we need to do about it. Each lesson has a text with scripture references, followed by a series of multiple choice and true/false questions. I believe these go out two at a time, we grade the lessons and send them back, along with the next two lessons, and so on, until we send out a certificate of completion. We then move on to a unit on James, then Luke, then Acts, and then 1 Corinthians, for a grand total of 23 lessons. And sometimes we get letters! These notes and letters often ask some very good questions, and sometimes people just want to say "thank you."

And we have two of these this month, starting with a note from Bryan, who is an inmate somewhere in Pennsylvania. I've taken off his last name, and inmate number for the purpose of our livestream, but Bryan says, "Dear friends at Four Lakes Church of Christ, thank you for the wonderful Bible studies. Please keep up the good work. We sure look forward to studying the word of God with you all. Sincerely, Bryan. In God we trust always." And then we also have a note from Joe who says, "Hello. My name is Joe. I am really interested in your Bible study. I am in the Mcracken County Jail in Paducah, Kentucky. I am reading my Bible daily. I found this in the library where we go to church. I am requesting it. I really love Bible studies. Good for my soul. And who knows, some other inmate might see me read and doing my study and maybe it will turn them to God. So, if you would, I would really like to receive this study. If you have a prayer list, please put me on it. God knows I need it. God bless you, Joe."

I hope you keep up with the numbers in the bulletin each month. In the lower left-hand corner on the back side, we summarize what's been going on. Last month, for example, we graded and returned 868 lessons. These came in from 276 students, with 62 of these being brand new to the program (just as Joe is). And, like

Joe, many of these are inmates in county jails as well as state and federal prisons. So, when you see those figures in the bulletin each week, remember that we usually have 2-300 men and women just like Joe and Bryan who are studying the Bible thanks to the Four Lakes congregation. And, if you would like to enroll in these studies, just let us know. Send your name and address to us, and we will mail you the first two lessons – no charge, no obligation, and we even pay the postage. We also make these lessons available online for other churches to use, and several are, including a number of churches in other countries.

We are here this morning to worship God, and we plan on doing that today by spending a bit more time than usual in reading from the word of God and by singing some songs together. But before we do that, we want to make sure that we share the good news. Some of you may be here for the first time (either here in person, on the live-stream, or on the phone). Or, there may be some of us who are here for the last time. Others may just appreciate the reminder. But the gospel (according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15) is the good news concerning the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. And as we've summarized on the wall up here, we obey the good news through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. And as our tradition has been, we have an example to share this morning. This one comes to us from the Lord's church down in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. They posted a few days ago, and they say that "Maggie Howe has been added to the Lords body, welcome your new sister in Christ." And that's all we know, but we are thankful for Maggie and her decision to obey the gospel. If you have not yet done what Maggie has done, if you would like to study, please get in touch.

In the rest of our time together this morning, we plan on focusing on FAITH. We've been working our way through a study of Hebrews, and we are ready to move into Hebrews 11, which is sometimes known as the "Hall of Fame of God's Faithful." As the author encourages his first audience or first readers to stay faithful, to not turn away from the gospel, he tells us what faith is in Hebrews 11:1, "***Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.***" He explains (in verse 2), "***For by it the men of old gained approval,***" and then he gives a series of examples. And this will our focus over the next several weeks. But today, as we prepare for Hebrews 11, we are thinking about the importance of faith, and that will be our focus through a series of scripture readings and songs.

We will start by partaking of the Lord's Supper together, and then we will move down the order of worship on the right-hand side up here. Before we prepare our hearts for the Lord's Supper, let's go to God in prayer:

Our Father in Heaven,

Thank you so much for allowing us to be together this morning. We are thankful for your kingdom, the church. We are thankful for safe travels, we are thankful for the encouragement that you have allowed us to both give and receive within our Christian family this morning.

Father, we ask for greater faith. We know that faith comes from hearing your word, and so we are thankful for your book, for the encouragement it gives, not only on a daily basis, but especially in difficult times. We know that our faith in you will bring us safely home when this life is over.

We come to you today through Jesus, who has saved us from our sins. Lord, come quickly!  
AMEN.

To comment on this lesson: [fourlakeschurch@gmail.com](mailto:fourlakeschurch@gmail.com)