

Sermon Title: **“By Faith”**

Bible: **Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 and Luke 12:32-40**

When: on Sunday, August 7th, 2022

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, we are thankful for what you have done for us and through us for this church and for this community. By faith, we are looking forward to what you will do for us. By faith, we are waiting for your time and your coming. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. By Faith

Today’s scripture reading of Hebrews 11 from the lectionary is one of my favorite Bible passages. It shows our ancestors’ faith journeys. Then, what is Faith? Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. By faith, we can see what we hope for, even though it is not visible yet. We cannot see it now. But by faith, we can see hope and the future. Then, where can we see faith?

2. Garage Sale

I can see the faith in our United Women in Faith, especially when we prepare our Granny’s Attic rummage sale. It is not a one-day event. About two or three months ago, when we brainstormed about having a garage sale, when we discussed it, the garage sale was already starting. When we planned, when we collected the signs, when we brought the items to sell,

when we cleaned the items, when we decided on the prices, when we displayed the items, we hoped for the garage sale on August 6th, even though it was not here yet. We can see the faith through our hands and feet. Yesterday the garage sale was full of joy and gratitude. And it is not over yet. We will sell more today after church, and more during Second Chance Week in September. And beyond that, we will help women and children in our community with the proceeds. By faith, we were preparing for the garage sale. By faith, we did a great job yesterday. By faith, we will serve our women and our children in our community.

3. New Church Parking Lot

I can see the faith through our trustees and our new church parking lot. On July 5th, our church had a new church parking lot constructed. Are you enjoying it? I wonder how long our new church parking lot will last. I googled it, and what I found is that it will last 25 to 30 years. It can be different depending on the climate, traffic, and maintenance. But I am so surprised at the number, 30 years. That's because I still dream about the year 2053. Next year, our church will celebrate its 170th anniversary. Then, in 2053, 30 years later, our church will celebrate its 200th anniversary. As you probably remember, one of my retirement plans is, as a retired pastor, to come back to Gilroy United Methodist Church in 2053 and to celebrate our 200th anniversary. This means that I might be able to see our new church parking lot in 2053, because it will last 30 years. Or maybe I can see the next brand new parking lot if we get the next one in 2053! Because I serve Hollister United Methodist Church, I need to leave earlier during the fellowship time. When I get in my car, my prayer and my hope is to see

more cars in our church parking lot today, and in 2053. As we enjoy our new church parking lot, our new church members whom we cannot see now will enjoy the very new church parking lot. By faith, we hope for what we cannot see now. When we celebrate our 170th anniversary next year, by faith we hope for our 200th anniversary.

4. Greeting

By faith, every Sunday morning, I stand in front of our church building. By faith, I wave my hands to the people in the cars on the church street, when they need to stop. Surprisingly, most of them wave back to me. I would like to let them know that our church is here for them. By faith, when they need a faith community, I hope that they remember our awesome church. We already know that we are an awesome church. We are a loving and caring faith community. We also know that we exist not only for ourselves, but also for others. So, by faith, every Sunday, I wave my hands.

5. Be Ready!

When I came to Gilroy United Methodist Church in 2018, I felt some kind of fear from the congregation. At that time, we had a fear of being closed, and a concern of how to survive. But we got through many difficulties, even this Pandemic. By faith, we hope and we reach out to our community, because God is still using us for our church and for our community. We are people of faith, hope, and love. Then, we do not need to worry. We do not need to be afraid.

When we read today's Gospel of Luke, how do we read it? The Son of Man is coming at an

unexpected hour. Is it good news or bad news? With fear, it can be bad news. That's because we need to be ready so that we will avoid punishment. But by faith, it is good news. That's because we are ready so that we will receive blessings. When we were ready for the garage sale, did we receive a lot of unexpected visitors and blessings? When we were ready for the new church parking lot, did we enjoy the smooth and nice parking lot? And when I am ready to wave my hands to the people, I receive a lot of blessings from the strangers.

By faith, we will do many things that we cannot see now. We do not know where God is leading us. But by faith, we will go as God is calling us. So, please do not be afraid. And please be ready. Be ready to receive more blessings coming our way. It will be God's joy and our joy! Are you ready?

Closing Prayer

O Lord, you are everything. By faith, we are following you. By faith, we are going where you lead us. By faith, we hope for what we cannot see now. O Lord, please guide us to be ready to receive more blessings. And please use us for your kingdom and your people. In Jesus' name. Amen.