



Mt Lebanon Evangelical Presbyterian Church

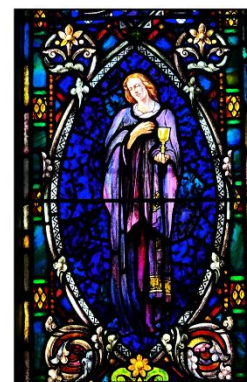
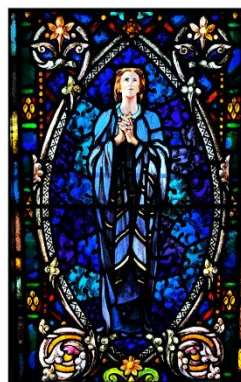
Making and Growing Followers of Jesus

August 20, 2026

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

It is hard to believe school is starting and summer is winding down! It was such a delight to see all our students and teachers up front last Sunday for our Blessing of the Backpacks. Please keep them in prayer as they enter into this new year of discovery.

Our sermon series on Stories in Stained Glass is winding down too. We are on the last set of windows, those in the transept on the Dormont side. You can tell right away that these are different. They are designed by another company and are more Art Nouveau than the Neo-Gothic windows in the rest of the building. This final set is on the Christian Virtues. Five are personified by women and one is, literally, a knight in shining armor!



Where does the idea of Christian virtues come from? First, of course, they come from scripture. Paul talks frequently about the characteristics of our new life in Christ, with the Holy Spirit's power to help us be transformed into Christ-like people. The early church took the passages like Colossians 3, Galatians 5, and 1 Corinthians 13, and put them in a more specific list to help people understand what it meant to be a true disciple of Christ.

But how does this relate to our salvation? Does this mean we have to rely on works righteousness? By no means. One commentator explains, *"Ultimately, cultivation of virtue is not the remedy for sin — justification and final salvation come through the atoning work of Christ, alone. But in the same way the seven capital sins [Prov 6:16-19] provide a diagnostic for disordered affections, the seven heavenly virtues provide a framework for spiritual formation."* The virtues are like a mirror, helping us to examine our own hearts and seek the Lord's help in being "transformed by the renewing of [our] minds" (Rom 12:2).

This week, we will consider the virtues of Faith and Hope. We will be looking into Hebrews 11, sometimes called the "Hall of Faith," about many Old Testament heroes whose faith was tested by one trial after another. We will also look to Romans 5 for Paul's explanation of hope in the Lord and how hope and faith are forever connected.

As you prepare your hearts for worship this Sunday, reflect for a little while on faith and hope. What experiences in your life helped you grow in faith and hope? Were there times when you felt like you had no hope, but you then saw God work in unexpected ways? How would you explain the concept of faith and hope to a friend? I offer you this blessing from Romans 15:13: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Blessings,
Pastor Carolyn