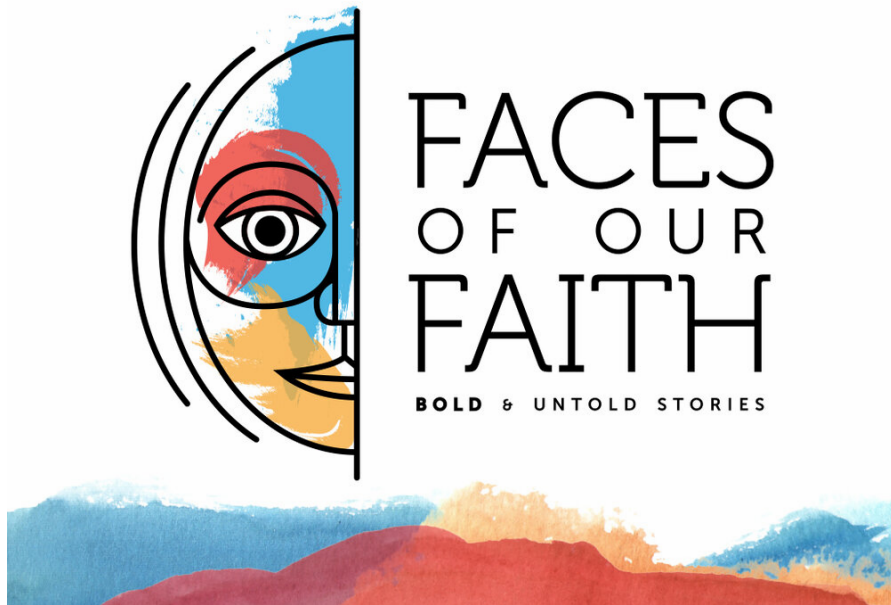


# Napa Methodist Church

## June 30, 2024



**The United Methodist Church:  
Following Jesus, Thriving in Community,  
Healing the World**





Daniel is also unusual for being partly written in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic. Even its genre - half stories, half visions - is mysterious. Exile is the root of these crises and holds the stories together. Babylon makes it hard to remain true to God, yet in every crisis, Daniel and friends hold fast to God. More important, God stands with them not only in extreme settings, like lions' dens and fiery furnaces, but in familiar activities, like eating food, telling the truth, and showing mercy. God rewards their faith and allows it to spread, sometimes even to the kings who keep them in exile.

**\*Song**        *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego*  
Led by Ellen Patterson and Steve Cairns

**Time for Children**

Pastor Marylee

**\*Passing the Peace of Christ**

**Scripture**        A Reading of Daniel, chapter 3

Narrator: One day King Nebuchadnezzar ordered his craftsmen to make a statue plated with gold that was 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. When finished, it was set up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon, and King Nebuchadnezzar planned an elaborate ceremony to dedicate the statue. He sent out invitations to his officials. At the appointed time, his officers, prefects, governors, trusted advisors, treasury officials, judges, magistrates, and all the rest of his provincial leaders arrived and gathered near the statue for the dedication ceremony.

Herald: People of all nations and languages:

by order of the king, you are commanded to bow down and worship the golden statue erected by King Nebuchadnezzar every time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, lute, harp, pipe, and all the other musical instruments. Anyone who does not obey the king's command and refuses to bow and worship will be taken immediately and thrown into a furnace of blazing fire.

Narrator: So, on cue, the moment all the people in the crowd heard the sound of the musical instruments—horn, flute, lyre, lute, harp, pipe, and all the rest—all of the people, regardless of their heritage, nationality, or language, bowed down and worshiped the golden statue erected by King Nebuchadnezzar. Meanwhile, certain Chaldean leaders stepped forward to make accusations against the Jews.

Chaldeans: Long live the king! You, good king, have made a decree that every person who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, lute, harp, pipe, and all the other musical instruments is supposed to bow down and worship the golden statue you erected. You have also decreed that anyone who does not obey the

king's command and refuses to bow and worship will be taken immediately and thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. It has come to our attention that certain Jews whom you appointed to govern in the province of Babylon are ignoring your order, O king. They refuse to serve your gods, our gods, and they do not fall and worship the golden statue you erected. Their names: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Narrator: When Nebuchadnezzar heard this, he flew into a rage and ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in for questioning; so his officials went out, found them, and brought these men before the king.

Nebuchadnezzar: It is reported to me that you, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, refuse to serve my gods and do not bow and worship the golden statue I had set up. Is that true?

If you are ready to comply with my order and fall down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, lute, harp, pipe, and all the other musical instruments, then things will go well for you from here. But if you refuse to worship, you will be taken immediately and thrown in a furnace of blazing fire. What god could possibly rescue you from my hands then?

Congregation in Unison (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego)

**Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to defend our actions in this matter. We are ready for the test. If you throw us into the blazing furnace, then the God we serve is able to rescue us from a furnace of blazing fire and release us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if God does not, O king, you can be sure that we still will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue you erected.**

Narrator: At this Nebuchadnezzar flew into such a rage at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that onlookers saw his face twisted and distorted. With fury burning in his eyes, he ordered the furnace heated up seven times hotter than usual. He commanded some of his strongest soldiers to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego so they could be thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. So the Jews were taken and tied up so quickly that they were still wearing the clothes they had on when they arrived—pants, cloaks, hats, and all. Then they were picked up and thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. The furnace was so hot and the king's command carried out so quickly, without any precautions, that the soldiers who took Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego up to the furnace were themselves killed by the heat of the raging fire. And the three Jews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, tied and bound, fell into the furnace of blazing fire.

Nebuchadnezzar could hardly believe his eyes. Shocked, the king jumped up and asked his advisors,

Nebuchadnezzar: Didn't we tie up and throw three men into the heart of the fire?

Advisors: Yes, O king.

Nebuchadnezzar: Then why do I see four men, completely unbound, walking around in the middle of the fire? They don't appear to be hurt at all. And the fourth . . . he appears to be like a son of the gods.

Narrator: Then Nebuchadnezzar moved as close to the door of the furnace as he dared without being scorched. He shouted over the roar of the blazing fire.

Nebuchadnezzar: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, right now. Come here!

Narrator: So the three men made their way out of the fiery furnace. The officers, prefects, governors, and king's advisors moved closer to see what had happened to these men. They, too, could hardly believe their eyes. The fire had done nothing to harm these men. Their hair was not singed. Their clothes were not scorched. They didn't have the faintest smell of smoke on them.

Nebuchadnezzar: Praise is certainly due the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego today. He sent His heavenly representative and rescued His servants who put their trust in Him. They had the audacity to disobey the king's order and surrendered their bodies to the fire rather than serve and worship any god other than their own God. Therefore, I decree that any people—regardless of their heritage, nationality, or language—who speak against the God worshiped by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn apart, limb from limb, and their houses reduced to rubble; for no god I have ever heard of is able to rescue as this God has rescued His servants today.

Narrator: Afterward the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to even higher positions in the province of Babylon.

**Sermon**

*A Fire Within*

Pastor Marylee

**Prayer Song**

*How Firm a Foundation*

UMH #529

**A Time of Prayer**

Pastor Marylee

**The Lord's Prayer**  
Our God in heaven,  
hallowed be Your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours  
now and forever. Amen.

**Invitation to Give Our Gifts**

**Offertory**      *As a Fire Is Meant for Burning*

**\*Doxology**      *Come, Rejoice in God*      TFWS #2017  
**Prayer of Dedication**

**Benediction**      Michael Herzog  
**\*Closing Song**      *Shalom to You*      UMH #666