



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NEWTON

10:30 AM MARCH 5, 2023

God, you know our hearts. You have knitted our inmost being and you know our deepest desires, fears and worries. Help us to journey during this Lenten season into a new awareness of your presence in our lives. Save us from our own temptations, so that we may more freely follow you. Amen

** indicates when to rise in body or in spirit*

(PH denotes *The Presbyterian Hymnal*,
STF denotes *Sing the Faith Hymnal*)

Gathering in God's Name

WORDS OF WELCOME

PRELUDE

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We come looking for help.

People: **Where will it come from?**

Leader: Our help will come from the Lord who created the heavens and the earth.

People: **Let us center ourselves and our lives on God's eternal love.**

* HYMN PH #354 *“Guide My Feet While I Run This Race”* verses 1 & 2

*Guide my feet while I run this race, guide my feet while I run this race,
Guide my feet while I run this race, for I don't want to run this race in vain!*

*Hold my hand while I run this race, hold my hand while I run this race,
Hold my hand while I run this race, for I don't want to run this race in vain!*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, we come with hesitant steps and uncertain motives to sweep out the corners where sin has accumulated, and uncover the ways we have strayed from Your truth. Expose the empty and barren places where we don't allow you to enter. Reveal our half-hearted struggles where we have been indifferent to the suffering of others. Nurture the faint stirrings of new life, where your spirit has begun to grow. Let your healing light transform us into the image of Christ. For You alone can bring new life and make us whole. (Our silent prayers continue...)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Even when we fail, even when we are not perfect,
 God still claims us. God still calls us by name.
 God still places God's Spirit upon us.

People: We are known and loved and forgiven. Amen.

*SUNG RESPONSE TO FORGIVENESS

*The glory of these forty days
we celebrate with songs of praise,
for Christ, by whom all things were made,
alone has fasted and has prayed.*

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

God has placed us in the world to live in community. God has taught us to love, to share in life, to struggle for bread and justice, to make God's truth incarnate in our life together - to share Christ's love and reconciliation and grace. May God's peace be with you -- today and always.

And also with you. (Please take a moment to greet one another from a distance.)

Listening For God's Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Holy God, reveal your presence to us this day as we journey this path with your Son. Through all of life's trials and tribulations your Word sustains us for the journey ahead. Send your Spirit upon us that we might listen, discern, and take heart. Be near us this day and may your Word with us stay and dwell with us forevermore.

RESPONSIVE READING

Psalm 121

Leader: I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?
My help comes from the lord, who made heaven and earth.

People: **God will not let your foot be moved;
The One who keeps you will not slumber.
The One who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night.**

Leader: The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.
The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON *“Abram takes away all our excuses...”*

Responding to God’s Word

* **HYMN PH #354** *“Guide My Feet While I Run This Race”* **verses 3 & 4**

*Stand by me while I run this race, stand by me while I run this race,
Stand by me while I run this race, for I don't want to run this race in vain!*

*I'm Your child while I run this race, I'm Your child while I run this race,
I'm Your child while I run this race, for I don't want to run this race in vain!*

* **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (in unison) **From People at Patmos Abbey
The Order of Saint Columba**

**We believe that our lives are held within the encircling love of God,
who knows our names and recognizes our deepest needs.**

**We believe that Christ is the divine Child of the living God,
and that Christ’s grace is like living waters that can never be exhausted.**

**We believe in the birthing, renewing, enabling Spirit of God
who yearns over our welfare as a mother yearns for her child.**

**We believe that God is in the arid desert as well as in green pastures,
and that hard times and disciplines are also loving gifts.**

**We believe that our journey has a purpose and a destination,
and that our path leads to a human glory we cannot yet imagine.
We believe that in the church we are fellow pilgrims on the road,
and that we are called to love one another as God loves us.
This is our faith and we are humbled to profess in Jesus the Christ.**

MINUTE FOR MISSION

SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD'S SERVICE

*** SUNG RESPONSE OF THANKSGIVING**

*O enter then God's gates with joy,
within these courts God's praise proclaim.
Let thankful songs your tongues employ.
O bless and magnify God's name.*

*** PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

*** HYMN PH #399 *"We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight"* verses 1 & 2**

*We walk by faith, and not by sight, no gracious words we hear
From Christ, who spoke as none e'er spoke; but we believe Him near.*

*We may not touch His hands and side, nor follow where He trod;
But in His promise we rejoice, and cry, "My Lord and God!"*

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S SUPPER

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE OF God

Leader: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the bread of Heaven.

People: **We are one in Christ in the bread we share.**

Leader: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.

People: **We are one in Christ in the cup we share.**

(You will be served in your pew. The bread is gluten free. The cup is grape juice.)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord God, in gratitude, in deep gratitude for this moment, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to you. Take us out to live as changed people because we have shared the living bread and cannot remain the same. Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us. So Lord, may we live to your glory. Amen.

Going Into The World as Christ's Disciples

* HYMN PH #399 *"We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight"* verses 3 & 4

*Help then, O Lord, our unbelief; and may our faith abound
To call on You when You are near and seek where You are found.*

*That, when our life of faith is done, In realms of clearer light
We may behold You as You as are, with full and endless sight.*

* CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

* POSTLUDE

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**OUR WORSHIP IS ENDED.  
OUR SERVICE BEGINS!**  
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Ushers and Greeters: Daele Phlegar and Gail Hoffman

Worship Leader: April Fisher

Photo Credit: *I don't know where I am going* by Logan Weaver, Unsplash

Liturgical resources include: [lifeinliturgy](http://lifeinliturgy.com) website and [Godspace](http://Godspace.com).

Notes