

First Presbyterian Church of Newton

10:30 AM MARCH 12, 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: O come let us worship and lift our hearts . . .

People: Not because the world is good and last week was awesome,

Leader: but because the earth is the Lord's and everything in it,

People: is created by the God of the whole earth.

Leader: O come let us worship and bow down . . .

People: Not because God gives us what we want,

Leader: But because God gives us what we need –

All: God's way of love, in Jesus, God's unspeakable gift.

* HYMN PH #404

“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

*Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, help me stand;
I am tired, I'm weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light;
Take my hand, precious Lord,
Lead me home.*

*When my way grows drear,
Precious Lord, linger near;
When my life is almost gone,
Hear my cry, hear my call,
Hold my hand lest I fall;
Take my hand, precious Lord,
Lead me home.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Jesus calls us to deny ourselves. Yet we trust in our own works rather than in God's grace. Jesus calls each of us to take up our cross. Yet rather than allow our selfishness and sin to be put to death, we cling to what we know. Jesus calls us to follow him. Yet we fear where faith will lead and what it might change in our lives.

In this moment of silence, we confess the sin that separates us from one another and from God. (Our silent prayers continue...)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: People of God, hear this good news.

People: God's covenant with us is true.

Leader: God is faithful even when we fail.

**People: Through the Holy Spirit,
God gives us the gift of faith and makes us righteous.**

Leader: Believe in the good news that you are set free
to live as children of God.

People: Thanks be to God!

***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

(Based on Ephesians 2.15,16)

Christ is our peace. Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross. We meet in Christ's name and share the peace of Christ. May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you. (Please share the peace from a distance.)

CHOIR ANTHEM

"God's Peace"

Listening For God's Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

God, by your Holy Spirit, open our minds and hearts that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may be led into your truth and taught your will. May we be transformed by love that we might live in faith and for the sake of others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

RESPONSIVE READING

Psalm 95

Leader: Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

People: Let us come before the Lord with thanksgiving and extol God with music and song.

Leader: For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

People: In God's hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him.

Leader: The sea is God's, for God made it, and God's hands formed the dry land.

People: Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for the Lord is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Leader: Today, if only you would hear his voice, "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did.

People: For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared an oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'"

TIME WITH CHILDREN AND BUCKET BRIGADE

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely, therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

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

SERMON

“While We Were Still Weak”

Responding to God's Word

* HYMN STF #2055

“You Are My Hiding Place”

(Sing Twice)

You are my hiding place.

You always fill my heart with songs of deliverance,

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in you, I will trust in you.

Let the weak say, “I am strong in the strength of the Lord.”

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**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.**

SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD'S SERVICE

OFFERTORY

*** 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**

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.

Going Into The World as Christ’s Disciples

*** HYMN PH #386**

“O For a World”

***O for a world where everyone respects each other's ways,
Where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.***

***O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,
Where truth is spoken, children spared, equality achieved.***

***We welcome one world family and struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.***

***The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn; outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.***

***O for a world preparing for God's glorious reign of peace,
Where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.***

*** CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

*** POSTLUDE**

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**OUR WORSHIP IS ENDED.**

**OUR SERVICE BEGINS!**

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Worship Leader: Ron Hoffman
Ushers/Greeters: Debbie and Chris DeVries

Photo Credit: Cartoonist Steve Thomason
God's Love Poured Into Our Hearts

Liturgical resources include: Leonard Sweet and Daniel Flucke