

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FENTON

To be a loving community of faith dedicated to helping people know Jesus Christ and grow, share and serve as his disciples.

4th Sunday in Lent

March 27th, 2022 10:00 a.m.



GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

DRESSING THE TABLE The Old Rugged Cross *with* He Was Despised (Handel)

WELCOME

MOMENT FOR HOUSEHOLD WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP

This is what God the Lord says-
he who created the heavens and stretched them out,
**who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people,
and life to those who walk on it:**

I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand.

**I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the
Gentiles,**

to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison, and to release from the dungeon
those who sit in darkness.

OPENING PRAYER

God of righteousness, who created the heavens, open our eyes that we may see your glory
and refine us to be made more worthy of you. Help us to remember your covenant with us,
your people. In your Holy Spirit we pray.

Amen.

GOD'S GREETING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Our help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.

Grace, mercy, and peace are yours, from God the
Father Almighty, from the Lord Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

Even in the garden of betrayal Jesus is patient with us. Let us turn to our Savior and confess who we are with confidence because we know who he is.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

Lord Jesus, in your shame-filled suffering, your disciples, your closest friends did not come to help you. When you went to pray, to agonize over the cross, your friends slept. They could not muster strength to watch and pray with you.

Lord, often we too exhibit indifference to the suffering of others and a dullness for what so passionately concerns you. Lord Jesus, do not hold our sins against us and grant us your mercy.

Lord Jesus, in your shame-filled suffering, Peter grew confused, disillusioned, afraid. When identified as your disciple, he swore that he did not know you—not once, but three times.

Lord, we too falter when boldness is called for. We would rather blend in than stand up in faith. Lord Jesus, in your mercy do not hold our sins against us and grant us your mercy.

Lord Jesus, in your shame-filled suffering, when they came to arrest you, your disciples were afraid. They ran and left you standing alone with your enemies.

We wonder how you feel when we willfully take leave of our faith, when we slide away into the darkness of our doubts, when we hear you call us but run the other way. Lord Jesus, do not hold our sins against us and grant us your mercy.

DECLARATION OF PARDON:

Simply because he called on the name of the savior:
Jesus said to the thief, condemned to die alongside him,
“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in Paradise.”
Know you are forgiven and be at peace.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Malachi 2:17-3:18

17 You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, “How have we wearied him?” By saying, “All who do evil are good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them.” Or by asking, “Where is the God of justice?”

The Coming Messenger

3 See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. **2** But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; **3** he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. **4** Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

5 Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

6 For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, have not perished. **7** Ever since the days of your ancestors you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, "How shall we return?"

Do Not Rob God

8 Will anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, "How are we robbing you?" In your tithes and offerings! **9** You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me—the whole nation of you! **10** Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. **11** I will rebuke the locust for you, so that it will not destroy the produce of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not be barren, says the Lord of hosts. **12** Then all nations will count you happy, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts.

13 You have spoken harsh words against me, says the Lord. Yet you say, "How have we spoken against you?" **14** You have said, "It is vain to serve God. What do we profit by keeping his command or by going about as mourners before the Lord of hosts?" **15** Now we count the arrogant happy; evildoers not only prosper, but when they put God to the test they escape."

16 Then those who revered the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord took note and listened, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who revered the Lord and thought on his name. **17** They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act, and I will spare them as parents spare their children who serve them. **18** Then once more you shall see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Luke 15:11-24

11 Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. **12** The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. **13** A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. **14** When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. **15** So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. **16** He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. **17** But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! **18** I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; **19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” **20** So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. **21** Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ **22** But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **23** And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; **24** for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

SERMON A Scroll of Remembrance

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Have you ever robbed God? What do you think God thought about it?

What would it mean to you to hear the Father welcome you home?

WITNESS TO GOD’S GOODNESS

Roy Fetzer

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

OFFERING

Scripture says, “Every good and perfect gift is from above.” But what does that really mean? It means we can only give credit to God for things like wisdom, patience, and unfailing love. What are we to give back in response? We are asked to use these gifts for the good of the world around us. Lord, we offer these things to you now.

(If you would like a written prayer request included in our prayers today, please indicate that and an usher will collect them)

(Financial Offerings can be placed in dropbox located in the New Narthex)

ANTHEM Amazing Grace - Julie Hussar and Peggy Fowler

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Just as we dedicate these gifts to you, Lord, we dedicate our lives. Use these gifts and use our lives, we pray. Our hope is that these offerings will make a difference in our community, especially in the lives of those who need your grace the most. In Christ's name we pray.
Amen.

DOXOLOGY

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.

HYMN #223 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

We are blessed by God who knows us by name.

We are blessed by God whose giving knows no bounds.

We are blessed by God whose grace extends to every part of our lives.

We are blessed by God whose love never flees or runs out on us. We are blessed by God who never leaves us alone.

So go out into the world confident in God, full of grace and hope and love.

Go out—blessed.

POSTLUDE When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
with "Spring", movement no. 2, from The Four Seasons (Vivaldi)

Peace be with you!
...and also with you!