



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.

22nd Sunday after Pentecost
November 6, 2022 10:00 AM

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

“O Church, Arise”

Pastor Robbie Carnes, Jeanne Cupp, Rhonda Pierce, Cheryl Kopplin

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP from Psalm 145

1 I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.

2 Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

3 Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable.

4 One generation shall extol your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts.

5 They will recount the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works I will meditate.

17 The Lord is just in all his ways and kind in all his doings.

18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

19 He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.

20 The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

21 My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, we come to sing you a new song today for the marvelous things you have done. You are the victor in all things and you have revealed your vindication to everyone. We make a joyful noise to you and break forth in song because you have remembered your steadfast love and faithfulness to us. Open our hearts to your mercy and grace and grant us the power to respond in praise today. Amen.

HYMN PH #37 BH#554

“Let All Things Now Living”

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of wisdom and might, we are grateful for the garden of knowledge and truth that is your word. May we grasp the fruit of your will and plant the same in our hearts so that we might

blossom into wisdom, truth, knowledge and merciful action. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

EPISTLE LESSON 2 Thessalonians 2:3-15

3 Let no one deceive you in any way, for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one[a] is revealed, the one destined for destruction.[b] **4** He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. **5** Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? **6** And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. **7** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed. **8** And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus[c] will destroy[d] with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming. **9** The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, **10** and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. **11** For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, **12** so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned.

Chosen for Salvation

13 But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits[e] for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. **14** For this purpose he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. **15** So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.

ANTHEM "If God is For Us"

Chancel Choir

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Revelation 13:1-18

13 1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, and on its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads were blasphemous names. **2** And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave it his power and his throne and great authority. **3** One of its heads seemed to have received a death blow, but its fatal wound[a] had been healed. In amazement the whole earth followed the beast. **4** They worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

5 The beast was given a mouth speaking arrogant and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. **6** It opened its mouth to speak blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. **7** Also, it was allowed to wage war on the saints and to conquer them.[b] It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation, **8** and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it,

everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.[c]

9 Let anyone who has an ear listen:

10 If you are to be taken captive,
into captivity you go;
if you kill with the sword,
with the sword you must be killed.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

The Second Beast

11 Then I saw another beast that rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb, and it spoke like a dragon. **12** It exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and it makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound[d] had been healed. **13** It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of all, **14** and by the signs that it is allowed to perform on behalf of the beast it deceives the inhabitants of earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that had been wounded by the sword[e] and yet lived, **15** and it was allowed to give breath[f] to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast could even speak and cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. **16** Also, it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be given a brand on the right hand or the forehead, **17** so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the brand, that is, the name of the beast or the number for its name. **18** This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number for a person. Its number is six hundred sixty-six.

SERMON

Mark of the Beast

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Are you developing wisdom that counters deception?

(2 Tim 4:3-4) For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

(Prov 9:10) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

(2 Cor 4:17-18) For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

OFFERING

Let us give our gifts and present our pledges for the work that God has set before us. Let us pray...

(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 also be placed in dropbox located in the New Narthex)

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Truth be told, Holy God, we are often afraid that you will misuse the gifts we offer - bringing hope to those who deserve none, feeding those who could be working, looking after those who are coddled too much. Forgive our fearfulness. After all, you entrusted these gifts to us in the first place! Bless these gifts and pledges for the nurture and growth of your kingdom. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

OFFERTORY

“Ye Mighty Gates”

Rebekah Ratza

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.*

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

At this table you are invited to stop running around in circles and sit in peace. You are invited to rest from your stumbling and uncertain steps and be energized by the Spirit. You are invited to admit that you are running empty and Jesus is ready to dwell in you.

What does this cost? Nothing, just all of you. Will it hurt? What does it demand? Will I get to take off two weekends a month? Jesus says, ‘No promises, See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone’s work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.’ Let us come together and dine with our Lord!

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.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

We often think God is 'out there' somewhere, distant and uncaring. But God hears our hearts, God shares our struggles, God walks with us as we try to be faithful disciples. Let us come to the One who is as close as the very breath we take in this moment to confess the brokenness of our lives. Please join me as we pray,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

We are so easily confused by what the world tells us, Loving God, that we forget the stories of faith we heard as children. We are so fearful of tomorrow, we are not aware of your Spirit with us today. We are so busy wondering “what if?” or “suppose?” - we cannot hear the faithful promises you whisper to us.

So once again, Gracious God, have mercy on us. You know our hearts so well—touch them with your grace. You see our deepest fears—heal them with your peace. You hear our secret longings—speak to them of your hope. This we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

DECLARATION OF PARDON:

The One who searches our broken hearts has found the way to mend them and make us new people. The good news is that everything God has done in Christ is for us, that we might be made whole.

With kindness and with justice, God makes us new people. We will sing our thanks through all eternity. Great is God and greatly to be praised! Amen.

COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

People of God, lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the One who heals our brokenness.

Let us offer our thanks to God, who has prepared this Table for us.

We will bless the One who offers us life in every moment.

We thank you for your greatness, God of the living, and fall silent.

When there was only chaos, you whispered your Word, and creation sprang forth.

The sun and the stars filled the heavens with your splendor, and the earth sang your glory.

You filled us with your dreams of life with you forever, but we confused your hopes with our desires and went chasing after the seductions of sin and death.

You sent the prophets to remind us of the stories we had been told as your children, but we thought them to be myths and fables.

So once again, you sent your Word to speak sense to our lives. Holy are you, God of understanding, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son.

When we had been deafened by the songs of the world, he came to speak of hope, and to offer us justice. When we were easily confused by the promises of sin, Jesus came to make clear your dreams for us.

When we thought we could save ourselves, Jesus offered himself on the cross, that we might spend eternity in your presence.

As we come to the Table of Grace, as we are offered all your gifts, we remember what Christ has done for us:

**Christ died, holding fast to God's promises;
Christ was raised, opposing Death;
Christ will return to fill our hearts with splendor.**

Send your Spirit upon the gifts of the bread and the cup, and upon your children who gather in this place.

Place into our empty hands your Bread made with life and mercy, that we might take justice and peace to the outcasts of our world.

Fill our parched hearts with the Cup of Grace, that we might be poured out for the broken and lost in these times and places.

Heal us with the peace of this joyous feast, that we might become your people of hope.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Communion Prayer:

Teach not to fear, O Ancient of Days. You have fed us, do we lack anything? Teach us to be wise. Your wisdom is unfathomable. Fill us until overflowing. Teach us to speak with truth, mercy and love. Your Word is eternal. Unloose our tongues so that your word would proceed from our mouths to benefit and build up each other. Open our eyes to your glory. You are the Father of Lights and the Giver of all Good Gifts. Take the scale off our eyes so that we might follow boldly. Amen.

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

HYMN PH#93 BH #8

“Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates” stanza 3

DEDICATION OF PLEDGES

The Congregation is invited to gather in a circle for prayer as you are able.

Open up your Heart

I open my heart to the Lord

Dear Jesus, you arrive right on time to make your will happen in our lives. You didn't, and won't, wait for us to get ready. You presented yourself for sacrificial death when we were far too weak and rebellious to do anything to get ourselves ready. And even if we hadn't been so weak, we wouldn't have known what to do anyway. We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble

could inspire us to selfless sacrifice. But the Father put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him.

Heavenly Father, Now that we are set right with You by means of Jesus' sacrificial death there is no longer a question of being at odds with You in any way. We were at our worst and we were put on friendly terms with you by the sacrificial death of your Son, now that we're at our best in Christ, just think of how our lives will expand and deepen by means of Jesus' resurrection life! Now that we have actually received this amazing friendship with you, we are no longer content to simply say it in plodding prose. We sing and shout our praises to God through Jesus, the Messiah!

It is in recognition and praise that we offer these pledges to you. It is because of your Great faithfulness to us that we present our promises of provision for your church here on the corner of Leroy and Elizabeth Street. We pray that you would strengthen this church to glorify you and to do your work in your way according to your Word! We pray that you would make these gifts and these promises flourish, in ministry and in our hearts. Turn our hearts to your heart and give us the power, in your Spirit, to fling wide the portals of our hearts and enter into your resurrected life with joy. Amen.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Now, go out into the world as God's people!

We will not be afraid to trust in God's future.

Now, go out as followers of Jesus!

We will not falter in bringing justice and hope to all.

Now, go out as those gifted by the Spirit!

We will not fear, but will journey into the days ahead.

POSTLUDE Postlude on "*Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*" Rebekah Ratza

May the Peace of Christ be with you...

...And also with you!