



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.

1st Sunday of Christmas
January 1, 2023 10:00 AM

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE Be Still, My Soul Rebekah Ratza

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

The presence of the Lord is here among us;

Protecting us, loving us, encouraging us.

We come as a people of hope to witness God's power;

Fixing our eyes on what is true and right and Holy.

May our hearts and minds dwell in the peace that only our Lord can provide. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Peace-giving God, we are your people, and we belong to you. While we are not of this world, we do live in this world with its challenges and obstacles. Often our fears and our anxieties overwhelm us. In our humanness we come before you, seeking the strength and courage that only you can provide. We come to grow in our confidence in you so that our faith will overcome our fears. We come to relinquish our worries and be freed from our burdens that we may fully experience your peace and joy through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

HYMN In Christ Alone (see slides)

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Living God, help us to hear your Word that we may truly understand; that, understanding, we may believe; and believing, we may follow your way in all faithfulness, seeking your honor and glory in all that we do. Amen.

RESPONSIVE SCRIPTURE READING *(based on Psalm 23, 27:3; Isaiah 41:10, 43:1-3; Luke 12:32; John 10:11)*

I am the Good Shepherd. Fear not for I am with you. Do not be dismayed for I am your Lord. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you. I will hold you up with my right hand.

Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod for protection and your staff for guidance, they comfort me.

I am your Shepherd. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, you shall not drown. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will revive me. Lord You stretch out Your hand against the wickedness of my enemies, and your right hand saves me.

You are the sheep of my pasture, I have created you, formed you. Do not fear for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name. You are mine.

Though many should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. You, Lord, are the Shepherd of my soul. You are my light and my salvation., You are the strength of my life. How great is Your goodness toward those who trust in You!

I am the Good Shepherd and I say to you “Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. He has determined to give you the Kingdom.”

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

ANTHEM

Fear Not!

Rebekah Ratza

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Matthew 6:33-34

25 ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?^[k] 28 And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” 32 For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But strive first for the kingdom of God^[l] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

34 ‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

SERMON

The Reality of Fear

Pastor Lindsey Carnes

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

How can your faith help you overcome your fears?

What might be holding you back from trusting Him whenever you are afraid?

OFFERING

As we prepare our hearts for the offering, let us do so with gratitude for our blessings and the knowledge that all we have, and all that we are, belong to God.

(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)

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Generous God, you have blessed us beyond measure. We pray that you will pour out your favor, not only on the monetary gifts we've given, but upon our very lives offered to you in a spirit of gratitude. Let our lives be focused on using our tangible gifts and our living witness to share and strengthen the faith of many. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

OFFERTORY It Is Well 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

Through this meal God is making all things new. When Jesus shares the meal with his friends, it is a defining moment, for he includes everyone, those he can trust and those he cannot trust. He declares no one unworthy. Today we, his modern disciples and friends, are welcome, no matter how worthy or unworthy we feel. For Jesus makes everything new, holds no prejudice, condemns no one, includes each of us as we are. We are invited to this meal.

GATHERING GOD'S CHILDREN

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

As we approach this meal of celebration and new beginnings, we confess our sin, in the hope and promise of reconciliation. Pray with me.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

God of new beginnings, you spread the year before us with possibilities and challenges. Some of us come to this meal feeling overwhelmed, stunted, blocked. Yet we want to trust your promise of a new beginning, today. Some of us approach this table feeling unworthy, flawed, broken. Yet we want to trust the assurance of your unwavering love and acceptance. Forgive our fear and doubt. Fill our minds and hearts with an unwavering trust in your promises and possibilities. Amen.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

Be assured that God welcomes us into this New Year with full forgiveness, full acceptance and love beyond measure.

COMMUNION**BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD**

HYMN The Power of the Cross (see slides)

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Let us look for Christ wherever we go
 Let us never stop seeking
 Believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness
 Which the darkness shall not overcome

And may the love of the Creator
 The joy of the Spirit
 And the peace of the Christ-child
 Be with you this New Year, and evermore

Let the people say...Amen!

POSTLUDE Let There Be Peace on Earth Rebekah Ratza

May the Peace of Christ be with you...

...And also with you!