



## 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.

**Palm Sunday**  
**April 2nd , 2023      10:00 a.m.**

### GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

**Biblical character: crowd**

**God's wilderness provision: fish and bread (Matthew 14)**

The disciples are exhausted and want to send the hungry crowd of people away. But when Jesus sees the crowd he feels not revulsion, not self-protection, not hopelessness, but compassion. This is a miracle of multiplication. Jesus takes the little that his tired and overwhelmed disciples have and multiplies it to meet a need that, humanly speaking, his disciples could never meet. What a faith lesson for us, his overwhelmed people in a busy world, in a wilderness time of political unrest, wars, refugees, climate change, and everyday challenges in our local communities and congregations.

### PRELUDE

### WELCOME

**PROCESSIONAL INTROIT #196** "All Glory Laud and Honor  
**#212** "Alas and Did My Savior" Bleed"

### CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 118:19–29

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

**20 This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.**

21 I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

**22 The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.**

23 This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

**24 This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

25 Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!

**26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD.**

27 The LORD is God, and he has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

**28 You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you.**

29 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

**OPENING PRAYER**

We praise you, O God, for your redemption of the world through Jesus Christ. He entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph and was proclaimed Messiah and King by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Just as we carry these branches, may we follow Christ in the way of the cross, that, dying and rising with him, we may enter into your kingdom, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

**HYMN #202** “An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare”

**PROCLAIMING THE WORD****PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Eternal God, whose Word silences the shouts of the mighty: Quiet within us every voice but your own. Speak to us through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, that by the power of your Holy Spirit we may receive grace to show Christ’s love in lives given to your service. Amen.

**OLD TESTAMENT LESSON:** Isaiah 50:4-9

4 The Lord GOD has given me  
a trained tongue,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he wakens,  
wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.

5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious;  
I did not turn backward.

6 I gave my back to those who struck me  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.

7 The Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

8 he who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand in court together.

Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.

9 It is the Lord GOD who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?  
All of them will wear out like a garment;  
the moth will eat them up.

**ANTHEM** Rejoice the Lord is King

**NEW TESTAMENT LESSON:** Matthew 14:13-21

13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16 Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." 17 They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." 18 And he said, "Bring them here to me." 19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

**SERMON** God sets a Table for the Hungry Crowd

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

**A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION**

Have you ever felt like you had nothing left to give?

What would it feel like if God used you to do something amazing in spite of your exhaustion?

**OFFERING**

Let us give our gifts and offerings as an act of worship to our Lord.

Compassionate God, we offer you these gifts as signs of our time and labor. Receive the offering of our lives and feed us with your grace, that in the midst of death all creation might feast on your unending life in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*(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)*

**OFFERTORY** 'There is a Higher Throne'

Jon Wenzel

**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**

The pattern of faith and true life is clear enough: God gives, and we receive.  
God gives far more abundantly than we can ask or imagine, and we receive.  
God gives life and breath to the world, gives miracles of deliverance and newness, and we receive.  
God gives God's very self in Jesus, and we receive.  
People of God, this is the table where God intends for us to be well fed.  
This is the table where the abundance of the whole creation and the angels surrounds us.  
This is the way Christ comes to renew his people.  
So come, all you who hunger and thirst  
for a deeper faith, a richer life, a fairer world.  
Christ has come. Christ will come again and again  
to feed us in the wilderness of life.

**Prayer**

Come, Lord, be our host at this table. Bread and wine are waiting.  
On your words depend all our celebrating.  
Send your Holy Spirit on us and these gifts of bread and wine,  
that they may become for us vibrant with your life,  
and that in them we may know Christ's presence,  
the Father's provision, and the Spirit's comfort, real and true.

**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 share this bread and this wine, we expect to be a little more keenly able to notice the table of God's provision through all the hours and days of our lives.

It is the table of Life itself.

We can expect to recognize Jesus Christ in all our meals and fellowship, even when the table is set for one or on a screen. And we remember that our lives, like his, are for the sake of the salvation of a suffering world.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (In Unison)

**Lord Jesus Christ, in deep gratitude for this moment and for the provision of this table, we**

give ourselves to you. We confess we so often labor for what does not satisfy; we try to drink from broken cisterns.

Having delighted now in your abundance, send us out to live changed lives, for having shared in the Living Bread, we cannot remain the same. Ask much of us this Lenten journey, enable much by us, encourage many through us. For we journey with you, Lord Christ, Spirit-led, into the wilderness of all our fears, there to find the courage—and the manna, the quail, the raisins and nuts, the fish, the angel food cakes— that strengthen us to lean once more into the winds of grace that have sustained your people through all the wildernesses of life. Amen.

### **DECLARATION OF PARDON**

Hear the Word of the Lord from Psalm 118: Let those who fear the Lord say, “His steadfast love endures forever.” Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free. The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.

I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord. In Christ, God answers us and sets us free! In Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God.

### **COMMUNION**

#### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

Among friends, who were gathered round a table, Jesus took bread and blessed it. Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Then Christ broke the bread and gave it to his disciples. Through that act Christ teaches that:

This loaf, this table, symbolizes a new relationship with God and with each other, sealed with Christ’s body, given for you.

Take, eat, remember and believe that God does provide a table in the presence of all our fears.

*Participants eat the bread.*

In the same way, Jesus took wine and blessed it. Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Then he poured the wine and gave it to his disciples. This cup then and now symbolizes a new relationship with God and with each other. It is sealed with Christ’s blood, which is poured out and given for you.

Take, drink, remember and believe that God does provide a table in the presence of all our fears.

*Participants drink the cup.*

**Communion Prayer:**

Now, Master, you are letting your servants go in peace as you promised; for our eyes have seen the salvation that you have made ready in the sight of the nations; a light of revelation for the Gentiles and glory for your people Israel. Through Christ, our Lord, Amen.

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

**TABLETALK WITH GOD'S CHILDREN** —adapted from John 6

Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee. He looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him. He asked his disciples, "Where shall we find bread for these people to eat?" Peter said, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" Jesus took the loaves and the fish, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. "Let nothing be wasted," Jesus said. And his disciples gathered twelve baskets of leftovers.

**HYMN #269** "Lead On, O King Eternal"

**CHARGE**

If any want to become my followers,  
let them deny themselves  
and take up their cross daily and follow me.

**BENEDICTION RECESSIONAL**

All Glory Laud and Honor  
*As the Choir sings the Congregation will be led into  
the Fellowship Hall by the children.*

**POSTLUDE**

**May the Peace of Christ be with you...**

**...And also with you!**

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