



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.

Easter Sunday

April 9th, 2023 10:00 a.m.

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GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

Biblical character: Jesus' disciples

God's wilderness provision: fish (John 21)

Jesus shows up after a long night of work. Jesus works a miracle. Jesus sits with us by the fire. Jesus invites us to bring what we have. Jesus feeds us. How do we respond? As Easter people, this is our one task: to point to the presence and work of Christ in the world every chance we get, to exclaim "It is the Lord!" every chance we get.

PRELUDE

WELCOME

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 57:8–11

Awake, my soul! Awake, O harp and lyre!

I will awake the dawn.

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples;

I will sing praises to you among the nations.

For your steadfast love is as high as the heavens;
your faithfulness extends to the clouds.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.

Let your glory be over all the earth.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, worker of wonders, you made this day for joy and gladness. Let the risen Lord abide with us this day, opening the Scriptures to us and breaking bread in our midst. Set our hearts aflame and open our eyes so that we may see in his sufferings all that the prophets foretold and recognize him at this table as the Christ, now entered into his glory, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

HYMN PH #232 BH #123 "Jesus Christ is Risen Today"

CALL TO CONFESSION

Jesus is the brightness of God's glory and exact image of God's person, whom death could not conquer nor the tomb imprison. Jesus shared our frailty in human flesh and promises to share his immortality in the Spirit. Let no shadow of the grave terrify us and no fear of darkness turn our hearts from him.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

Almighty God, in raising Jesus from the grave, you shattered the power of sin and death. We confess that we remain captive to doubt and fear, bound by the ways that lead to death. We overlook the poor and the hungry and pass by those who mourn; we are deaf to the cries of the oppressed and indifferent to calls for peace; we despise the weak and abuse the earth you made. Forgive us, God of mercy. Help us to trust your power to change our lives and make us new, that we may know the joy of life abundant given in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. Amen.

DECLARATION OF PARDON:—Romans 8:9-11, NRSV

You are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Lord, we do not always find it easy to recognize your coming to us. Come, reveal yourself to us. Meet us in the breaking of the bread. Set our heavy hearts on fire with love for you, and send us on our way rejoicing. For your name's sake, Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Jeremiah 31:1-6

31 At that time, says the LORD, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

2 Thus says the LORD:

The people who survived the sword

found grace in the wilderness;

when Israel sought for rest,

3 the LORD appeared to him from far away.

I have loved you with an everlasting love;

therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

4 Again I will build you, and you shall be built,

O virgin Israel!

Again you shall adorn yourself with your tambourines

and go forth in the dance of the merry-makers.

5 Again you shall plant vineyards

on the mountains of Samaria;

the planters shall plant

and shall enjoy the fruit.

6 For there shall be a day when sentinels will call

in the hill country of Ephraim:

“Come, let us go up to Zion,

to the LORD our God.”

ANTHEM

Sing Alleluia

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: John 21:1-14

21 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he showed himself in this way. **2** Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. **3** Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. **5** Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” **6** He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. **7** That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he had taken it off, and jumped into the sea. **8** But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

SERMON “God sets a Table on the Beach for Us”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

How has Jesus fed you this season?

In what ways is Jesus calling you to feed those around you?

HYMN PH #157 BH #302 “I Danced in the Morning”

The Congregation is invited to sing on the last three verses

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

OFFERING

We give to the ministries of this church as an act of worship and eagerly expect God to use us to further the kingdom. Let us pray...

Good Shepherd, you spread a table before us. We offer you our gifts, signs of your gracious love and tokens of our grateful hearts. Nourish us at the feast of the Lamb, that we may proclaim to all the world your triumphant love 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)

Will the Ushers please come forward

OFFERTORY “Crown Him with Many Crowns”

Bob Chappelle

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

O Holy God, beyond our imagining and yet near to us as flesh to fingernails, we come before you this Easter day in gratitude. We confess, O God, that we like to think of Easter as a sunny and warm day, full of light and sweetness, redolent of all that is fragrant in springtime. Yet no matter what the weather outside, on this day your world remains in so many corners a dark and stormy place, sunk deep into the cold winter of sin and evil. Those who first witnessed your Son's resurrection found it to be a fearful and fearsome event. For you, O great God of surprises, crashed into our reality with something new and unexpected. But on this morning we do not want to forget the darkness of last Friday afternoon and the way by which the Easter victory, about which we so happily sing this day, came about. We cannot forget the sacrifice, the bloody death, the God-forsaken pain of it all. This clash between your kingdom and this world was fierce. Today we do praise you for all the might, power, and creativity by which you won the victory, Father. We praise you for raising from the dead our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the great shepherd now of all of us sheep who follow him. But because we cannot and must not forget also the darkness of sin that even still is around us, we make petition this morning for all people anywhere and everywhere who continue to feel crucified by a cruel world and yet do not perceive any Easter. We pray for refugees, for tortured prisoners, for the innocent victims of war. We pray for abused children and battered women, for stricken families from whom a loved one has disappeared without a trace. We pray for the homeless poor and those victimized and diminished by racism, discrimination, and oppression of all kinds. We pray for all those who can see no Easter light because all that is good and lovely has been eclipsed by a depression that will not lift, by chronic pain that will not abate, by a stretch of unemployment with no end in sight, or by a job that is slaying the spirit day by day because the work seems so meaningless. O Lord, the things that led Jesus to the cross have not yet disappeared from the face of the earth. The need for resurrection remains stubbornly present in the lives of millions. Make us, O Spirit of the living God, life-giving spirits to minister to those in need this Easter Sunday and always. Right here in this congregation there are also needs aplenty. So we make petition for the widow or widower who marks this Easter for the first time without a beloved spouse who died since last we observed this holy day. Be with anyone who feels that he or she needs to believe in the resurrection more than ever but is finding it more and more difficult because the absence of that dear person is too real to deny, too total to grasp. We pray for those who are sick this day or who are worried about a loved one who is very ill. And be with each of us gathered for this service. Thank you for friends and family who are our guests this morning, and grant them a special blessing by your Spirit. We bless you, Father God, for gracing us with musicians who spend their talents thoughtfully and well in this place so that all of us may be edified and, through the mystery of music, be drawn closer to you. But above all we thank you for the presence of the Spirit of the living Lord, Christ Jesus. As we encounter nothing short of your very self here this morning, may we know for sure that we have indeed been in your sacred presence, and may this encounter in turn embolden us to live an Easter life not only now but also in the days to come and forevermore. Help us to take what we experience and learn here and to allow it to set a holy tone for us always and everywhere. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

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.

TABLETALK WITH GOD'S CHILDREN —John 21:4–6, 9, 12–14

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered. He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. . . . When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. . . . Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

HYMN The Hallelujah Chorus

CHARGE —Ephesians 3:20-21, NRSV

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION “The Lord Bless You and Keep You”

POSTLUDE

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