



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 after Epiphany
January 28th, 2024 10:00 a.m.

1

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

WELCOME

INTROIT PH #418 Softly and Tenderly (1 verse)

CALL TO WORSHIP from Psalm 111

1 Praise the LORD! Let us give thanks to the LORD with our whole hearts,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

2 Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

3 Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.

4 He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the LORD is gracious and merciful.

5 He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.

6 He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.

7 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.

8 They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

9 He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever.

Holy and awesome is his name.

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding
His praise endures forever.

OPENING PRAYER

Dear God, silence all voices within our minds but your own. Help us to seek and be able to follow your will. May our prayers be joined with those of our sisters and brothers in the faith, that together we may glorify your name and enjoy your fellowship forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

HYMN PH #327 BH #229 "From All that Dwell Below the Skies"

Most of us have, at some point, made or seen the paper cut-outs of a long chain of people, connected by hands and feet. Or we've seen images of a globe with a circle of people from around the world surrounding it, hands grasped in equality and love. This image is evoked once more in the words of Isaac Watts' hymn, "From All That Dwell Below the Skies". It is a beautiful thing to imagine a whole world of people, stretching across deserts, over mountains, deep in a forest, sitting on ships in the ocean, and lining the streets of a city. It's even more powerful to envision them with hands joined together and a song of praise on their lips. What is most astonishing is that this vision, more beautiful and powerful than we could ever imagine, will be fully realized. Every voice will be lifted in a cry of praise to our Redeemer. And until that day, though some voices are silent, we know that the whole earth resounds with a song that could only be sung in love of the Creator.]

CALL TO CONFESSION:

Far too often we fail to reflect on our lives. This leads us into convoluted and clouded perspectives. Let us clear the air, acknowledge who our God is, ask for, and receive forgiveness. Let us pray...

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

Our God and Lord, we confess our trespasses with shame: We have remained deaf to the cries of those who hurt. We have remained dumb in the face of evil. We have allowed the shadow of death to hover over the innocently condemned. We have failed to proclaim with conviction your liberation for the oppressed. We repent. Forgive our selfishness and greed, our unfaithfulness and pride, and give us the grace to forgive.

Help us, through forgiving others, to experience your forgiveness.

For you will treat us as we treat others, and help us to fulfill our debts.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

You change our lives, Lord, and shatter our complacency.

You take away the false peace of a repressed conscience and guide us to forgiveness. You forgive every debt, every trespass and crossed boundary. Only then is that other peace made: Your peace. Glory be to God in Christ, our Prince of Peace, who forgives freely.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Lord God, you have declared that your kingdom is among us. Open our eyes to see it, our ears to hear it, our hearts to hold it, our hands to serve it. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Leviticus 4:27-31

27 "If anyone of the ordinary people among you sins unintentionally in doing any one of the things that by the LORD's commandments ought not to be done and incurs guilt, **28** when the sin that you have committed is made known to you, you shall bring a female goat without blemish as your offering, for the sin that you have committed. **29** You shall lay your hand on the head of the purification offering; the purification offering shall be slaughtered at the place of the burnt offering. **30** The priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and he shall pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. **31** He shall remove all its fat, as the fat is removed from the sacrifice of well-being, and the priest shall turn it into smoke on the altar for a pleasing odor to the LORD. Thus the priest shall make atonement on your behalf, and you shall be forgiven.

ANTHEM Morning Has Broken**NEW TESTAMENT LESSON:** Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35

14 "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, **15** but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

21 Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” **22** Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

23 “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. **24** When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, **25** and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. **26** So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ **27** And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. **28** But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ **29** Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ **30** But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. **31** When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. **32** Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. **33** Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ **34** And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. **35** So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

SERMON

Forgive Us...

Pastor Robbie

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

What does real forgiveness mean to you?

Have you experienced the forgiveness of God?

Is the Holy Spirit calling you into a new season of forgiveness?

What will you do about it?

HYMN PH #435 BH #298 There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

OFFERING

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. Worship the LORD in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth. Let us faithfully bring our gifts for the service of our faithful God. Let us pray...

Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us— our selves, our time, and our possessions—signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us— 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

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 PH #465 BH #403 What as Friend We Have in Jesus

CHARGE

Jesus said: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.’ This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’ These two commands are pegs; everything in God’s Law and the Prophets hangs from them.”

BENEDICTION Dona Nobis Pacem

POSTLUDE

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

Flowers on the Communion Table In memory of my husband, Tom’s birthday and in celebration of my new grandson, Cole Thomas’s birth given by Heidi Roberts