



## 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

March 31st, 2024 10:00 a.m.

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### GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

#### PRELUDE

#### WELCOME

Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!

INTROIT "A Joyful Ring"

Handbell Choir

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

From the darkness of the grave,  
Over the power and fear of death,  
Walking from the empty tomb,  
From the triumph that is won,  
Opening wide the gates of life,

**Christ the Lord is risen today! Alleluia!**

Lord of life, you defeated death  
To show that we can rise  
From all that binds us to the world,  
Pride, envy, anger, fear,  
The debt of sin that holds us here,

**Christ the Lord is risen today! Alleluia!**

Lord of life, you defeated death  
To demonstrate a love that is  
Beyond our understanding,  
That reaches out even to me  
Saving grace to all who hear

**Christ the Lord is risen today! Alleluia!**

#### OPENING PRAYER

Lord of life, we pray for all who bring your word of life as a light to those in darkness, for those who bring your word of peace to those enslaved by fear, for those who bring your word of love to those in need of comfort. Lord of love and Lord of peace, Lord of resurrection life, be known through our lives and through your power. Christ the Lord is risen today! Alleluia!

**HYMN PH #232 (BH #123) Jesus Christ Is Risen Today**

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Even the obstacle of death has been removed between us and God. If death no longer stands in our way, we can be sure that our sin does not either. Let us confess our sins that they may be washed away by the mercy of our risen Lord.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

**Risen Lord, we have seen the empty tomb, and yet we sometimes act as if we have seen nothing. Why must we continue in fear? Why must we be afraid of death even after its defeat. Yes, this is a glorious day of song, but forgive us when we are quick to forget its Good News. Help us be a people of resurrection not just on this day but all days. Fill our hearts with your resurrection promise of life that we might turn from sin and be renewed. Eliminate from us the fear of sin that we might tell this glad story - that Christ is risen, he is risen, indeed! This we pray in the name of your Risen Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## DECLARATION OF PARDON

Sisters and Brothers in Christ, hear the good news of the Gospel: the tomb is empty! Our Lord and Savior has risen from the grave! That which has been dead is alive! No barrier, none whatsoever, can keep us from the love of God! I announce to you this day that our sins are forgiven!

## PROCLAIMING THE WORD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Living God, today's Good News is so wondrous, so magnificent, that we struggle to wrap our heads around it. Give our hearts the wisdom to receive that which our heads cannot fully understand. Send your Spirit to fill our whole bodies with your resurrection promise. This we pray in your holy and good name. Amen.

### NEW TESTAMENT LESSONS 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Acts 10:34-43

**15** Now I want you to understand, brothers and sisters, the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, **2** through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

**3** For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures **4** and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures **5** and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. **6** Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. **7** Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. **8** Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. **9** For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I but the grace of God that is with me. **11** Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you believed.

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**34** Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, **35** but in every people anyone who fears him and practices righteousness is acceptable to him. **36** You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. **37** That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were

oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. **39** We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, **40** but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, **41** not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42** He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. **43** All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

**ANTHEM**

Psalm 23

Paul Basler

**GOSPEL LESSONS**

Mark 16:1-8

**16** When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. **2** And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. **3** They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” **4** When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. **5** As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. **6** But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. **7** But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” **8** So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.

**SERMON**

Eternally New

Pastor Lindsey Carnes

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD

**A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION**

Do you feel a need to be renewed?

How might the Holy Spirit be speaking to you about this right now?

Who can you talk to about it?

**HYMN #250**

In the Bulb There is a Flower

## BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

**OFFERING**

If the whole world were ours, it would not be enough. What we have let us humbly offer to our God. Thousand, thousand thanks are due, let us give with worshipful generosity.

*(If you would like a written prayer request included in our prayers today, please indicate that and an usher will collect them)*

God of great gifts: This morning we give you praise, we give you glory, we give you thanks! With resurrection humming in our hearts, our minds are tuned to your song of peace! We joyfully present these gifts to you, a tangible chorus of thanksgiving, a harmony of hope for your Kingdom come! Amen.  
*Will the Ushers Please come forward.*

**OFFERTORY**

For God so Loved

J. Martin

**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. Who taught his disciples to pray, saying...

### **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**

**HYMN** #238 (BH # 122) Thine is the Glory

### **CHARGE**

When the world seems to crumble around you,  
remember who you are...

**We are God's Resurrection people with Easter in our hearts.**

When despair would seem to squelch all hope,  
believe in who you have become...

**We are his Resurrection people with Easter in our hearts.**

When it is hard to persevere against all odds,  
trust in the name God has given us...

**We are Christ's Resurrection people with Easter in our hearts.**

Let us follow Christ into the world,

to share the good news,

and may God dwell in all we say and do

and live as the Spirit's people with Easter forever in our hearts.

In the name of the Father, of the Risen Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

**BENEDICTION** "A Joyful Ring"

Handbell Choir

### **POSTLUDE**

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