



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.

3rd Sunday after Epiphany
January 26th, 2025 10:00 a.m.

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GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

WELCOME

INTROIT “I Will Glorify”

CALL TO WORSHIP *(Please rise if you are able)*

Children of God, we come to worship today with expectations: how we expect to feel, what we expect to experience, songs we expect to sing, or prayers we expect to pray. We find comfort in the familiar.

We come to worship, expecting God to meet us here.

Sometimes what feels familiar grows stale. We stop noticing the power of our prayers. We hear but don't listen to the Word. We sing without letting the music seep into our hearts. Yet, God is still here, moving and working among us.

We come to worship, expecting God to meet us here.

We may meet God in a familiar voice speaking a hard word, in a song we love that pierces our hearts, in a prayer that we receive in a new way. Because God is here, moving and working among us.

We come to worship, expecting God to meet us here.

Children of God, come! Let us worship, ready to embrace God's Word already at work among us, even when we are challenged to recognize God in the familiar and unfamiliar alike.

**We come to worship, expecting God to meet us here. ThankS be to God!
Amen.**

OPENING PRAYER

Rescuing God: your wall of hope surrounds us in our despair;
your haven of faith welcomes us in our unbelief;
your citadel of love protects us from our anger.

Gracious Word: you reach out to those we would dare not touch;

you greet those we ignore on a daily basis;
 you welcome those we would close our hearts to.
 Holy Spirit: rest gently upon us, so we might become kinder people;
 caress us with your humility, so we could let go of our pride;
 show us your Way, so we would not demand ours.

HYMN #744 Arise Your Light Has Come

CALL TO CONFESSION: from Isaiah 2

2 In days to come

the mountain of the LORD's house
 shall be established as the highest of the mountains
 and shall be raised above the hills;
 all the nations shall stream to it.

3 Many peoples shall come and say,
 "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
 to the house of the God of Jacob,
 that he may teach us his ways
 and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction
 and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations
 and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
 they shall beat their swords into plowshares
 and their spears into pruning hooks;
 nation shall not lift up sword against nation;
 neither shall they learn war any more.

5 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!
 Let us pray together...

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

**God, you share with us words of hope, words of Good News.
 But sometimes, we are unable to hear them
 because the source is too familiar.
 You call us to share the Good News with those around us.
 But sometimes we are unable to share,
 because the people know us too well.
 You encourage us to send messengers to other places
 where they will be heard better.**

**But we can be jealous,
 wanting the Good News to be for us, not them.
 In the multitude of ways, we can and have subverted
 your message of freedom and healing,
 in all the ways we have kept the Jubilee year from happening,
 we have left the path of true wisdom
 and call upon your Grace to lead us back on track.**

DECLARATION OF PARDON

This is the time of God's favor,
 God's grace continues to proclaim
 release to the captives,
 Good News to the poor
 and freedom to the oppressed.
 We live as loved, forgiven, and free people
 through the grace of God!

Hallelujah! Amen.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, you knew us before we knew ourselves.
 You consecrate us even now to be your servants.
 Create in us hearts worthy to be your prophets
 that we might go where you send us,
 and speak the Word that you give us.
 Through the power of your Holy Spirit,
 place your words upon our lips
 and your grace upon our hearts
 so that we might pluck up and pull down,
 destroy and overthrow,
 build and plant, as you, alone, have commanded. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Isaiah 60:1-7

The Ingathering of the Dispersed

60 Arise, shine, for your light has come,
 and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
2 For darkness shall cover the earth
 and thick darkness the peoples,

but the LORD will arise upon you,
 and his glory will appear over you.
3 Nations shall come to your light
 and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
4 Lift up your eyes and look around;
 they all gather together; they come to you;
 your sons shall come from far away,
 and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.
5 Then you shall see and be radiant;
 your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
 because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;
 the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
6 A multitude of camels shall cover you,
 the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
 all those from Sheba shall come.
 They shall bring gold and frankincense
 and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.
7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you;
 the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;
 they shall be acceptable on my altar,
 and I will glorify my glorious house.

ANTHEM "I Sing The Mighty Power of God"

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Revelation 21:22-27

22 I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. **23** And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. **24** The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. **25** Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. **26** People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. **27** But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

GOSPEL LESSON: Acts 1:6-11

The Ascension of Jesus

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" **7** He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive

power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” 9 When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. 11 They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

SERMON The Kingdom of the World has become the Kingdom of Our Lord

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

In what way has your vision of the Kingdom of Heaven been challenged? In what ways has it been affirmed?

How does that change things for you?

HYMN #260 Alleluia, Sing to Jesus

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

OFFERING *(Please be seated)*

We offer our gifts today, not because we buy grace or monetize mercy. We give of our time, our money and our personal talents to express to God our deep devotion, our love and our gratitude for all that we have received and for the hope that resides in our hearts.

Let us pray...

Loving God, we have been blessed with so much through your goodness. As we bring our gifts in gratitude this morning, you remind us that it doesn't matter what we have in our lives, if we do not have love, we have nothing. This love is not the love of Valentine's Day cards, and not even the love we feel among families, which are both rich blessings. You long for us to experience *agape* love – the love of the world, the love for those we don't even know. Open our eyes and our hearts. In Christ, our teacher, we pray. Amen.

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

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.

TABLETALK WITH GOD'S CHILDREN

HYMN PH #853 "We Are Marching in the light of God"

CHARGE

May God our Creator renew in us the creative Spirit
that brings healing and life to our world.

May Jesus the Christ uphold us in grace and love.

May the Holy Spirit fill us with courage
to be bearers of God's song of hope in our hometown and beyond. Amen.

BENEDICTION "The Peace of God"

POSTLUDE

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