

## 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 in Lent  
March 23rd, 2024 10:00 a.m.

1



### GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

#### PRELUDE

#### WELCOME

**INTROIT** “Let All Who Are Thirsty Come”

**CALL TO WORSHIP** From Psalm 32 *(Please rise if you are able)*  
Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.

**Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

While we keep silent, our bodies waste away  
through our groaning all day long.

**Then we acknowledged our sin to you,  
and do not hide our iniquity;**

When we say, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,”  
and you forgive the guilt of our sin.

**Therefore let all who are faithful  
offer prayer to you;**

at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters  
shall not reach them.

**You are a hiding place for us;  
you preserve us from trouble;**  
you surround us with glad cries of deliverance.

#### OPENING PRAYER

Holy and awe-inspiring God, we come into this time of worship today seeking you, asking for your continued guidance as we journey through this season of Lent together.

**Draw us close to you this day and always. Grant us the grace to accept our shortcomings, and may we lean not into the temptations of this world but focus our attentions on you, and you alone. For we pray through Jesus Christ, who came to serve and to save. Amen.**

**HYMN #65**      Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah**CALL TO CONFESSION:**

God is not content to simply return or restore us to who we once were but calls us to growth and new life. In faith and in humility let us confess the sin that entraps us.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**      (In Unison)

**We pray “lead us not into temptation” but we find ourselves caught in the web of our sinful ways. We protect ourselves with a thin veneer of faith that keeps us comfortable. We resist vulnerability shielding our hearts from the brokenness of others. We mock those of differing opinions believing we alone know the truth.**

**In your mercy Lord, forgive us and strengthen us to hear your true word and live into your commandment to love one another. Guide us to see you clearly and to reflect your word in the world. We ask this in the name of our Savior, your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**CHORAL RESPONSE**      “O Lord Hear My Prayer”**DECLARATION OF PARDON**

We do not make ourselves righteous. Our righteousness comes through faith in Christ. As we confess our shortcomings, God does not turn away from us but draws us near. Hear the Good News of the Gospel, in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

## PROCLAIMING THE WORD

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Illuminate the shadows of our hearts and cast out the darkness of our sinful world. Warm our hearts with the light of your word and awake our minds to your truth through these scriptures. Amen.

**OLD TESTAMENT LESSON:** Isaiah 55:1-9

- 1** Hear, everyone who thirsts;  
     come to the waters;  
 and you who have no money,  
     come, buy and eat!  
 Come, buy wine and milk  
     without money and without price.
- 2** Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread  
     and your earnings for that which does not satisfy?  
 Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,  
     and delight yourselves in rich food.
- 3** Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, sure love for David.

**4** See, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.

**5** Now you shall call nations that you do not know,  
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,  
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.

**6** Seek the LORD while he may be found;  
call upon him while he is near;

**7** let the wicked forsake their way  
and the unrighteous their thoughts;  
let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

**8** For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

**9** For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**ANTHEM** “Take it to the Lord”

**NEW TESTAMENT LESSON:** Luke 13:1-9

**13** At that very time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. **2** He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? **3** No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. **4** Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the other people living in Jerusalem? **5** No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish just as they did.”

**6** Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. **7** So he said to the man working the vineyard, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ **8** He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. **9** If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.’ ”

**SERMON**

A Hard Hearted Faith

Pastor Robbie Carnes

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

## A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Have you ever withheld mercy? Why?

**HYMN #435**      There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

## BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

**OFFERING** *(Please be seated)*

Because of the Lord's graciousness toward us, we now take time to return our gifts to the Lord in the form of our tithes, time, gifts, and offerings. Let us give generously. Let us pray...

Lord, in your goodness and mercy, grant that these gifts would further your Kingdom and proclaim your Gospel in our neighborhoods and communities. May these offerings bear witness to your love, grace, mercy, and compassion for all the world. 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 #307** "God of Grace and God of Glory"

**CHARGE**

Let the scales of our eyes fall away.  
Let us look honestly upon ourselves,  
And honestly upon God.  
And Walk in the Light of the Gospel.

**BENEDICTION** “Stay With Us”

**POSTLUDE**

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