



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.

5th Sunday in Lent
March 21st, 2021 10:00 a.m.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

DRESSING THE TABLE This is Amazing Grace
Chloe Muntin

WELCOME

A MOMENT FOR HOUSEHOLD WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 51

- 1 Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out our transgressions.
- 2 **Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity,
and cleanse us from our sin.**
- 3 For we know our transgressions,
and our sin is ever before us.
- 4 **Against you, you alone, have we sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.**
- 5 Indeed, we were born guilty,
sinners when our mothers conceived us.
- 6 **You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in our secret heart.**
- 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

OPENING PRAYER

Our fear has coiled itself around our hearts, slowly trying to squeeze out all our love and compassion. Release us from its grip today, Dear Lord. Wrap us in the comforting shawl of grace. Remind us that you are Big Brother, we have a Father in Heaven and we are invited to walk your way of hope, purpose and love. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

We have no excuse. We have no alibi. We have all fallen short of God's glory and who God has created us to be. But this need not remain the case. God says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14) Let us humbly approach our heavenly Father in prayer.

ENCOUNTER

(A time for silent and personal prayer...)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out our transgressions. Wash away all our inquiry and cleanse us from sin. Create in us a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within us. Do not cast us from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from us. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and grant a willing spirit to sustain us.

DECLARATION OF PARDON:

Rest in the joy of the Lord, not because we have accomplished our own rescue. Find rest in the quiet waters of forgiveness and the green pastures of mercy.; safely bought by Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

You are blessed, O Lord. Instruct us with your Word today as we recite your scripture and hear your teachings. Help us to meditate on your commandments and pay attention to what you ask of us. Help us to delight in your word and follow your teaching closely . Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Psalm 85:8-10

8 Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

SPECIAL MUSIC Were You There?
Peggy Fowler

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Matthew 6:25-34

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink,
or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than
clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and
yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And can any of
you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 28 And why do you worry about
clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell
you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes
the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not
much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we
eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ 32 For it is the Gentiles who strive for
all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But
strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to
you as well.

34 “So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s
trouble is enough for today.

SERMON Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit: Peace

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

1. What examples can you think of within our own church or community where Christians have
been instrumental in bringing peace and reconciliation?
2. Are there conflicts and divisions at present within our church or wider Christian community?
3. In what ways do you think your own life displays peace as the fruit of the Spirit, and in what
ways do you need to pray for this to be more true than it is now?

SPECIAL MUSIC When I Survey
Steve Sutton and George Hameline

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH Study Catechism of PCUSA

Question 28. What is the second article of the Apostles' Creed?

"And I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead."

Question 29. What do you believe when you confess your faith in Jesus Christ as "God's only Son"?

That Jesus Christ is a unique person who was sent to do a unique work.

Question 30. How do you understand the uniqueness of Jesus Christ?

No one else will ever be God incarnate. No one else will ever die for the sins of the world. Only Jesus Christ is such a person, only he could do such a work, and he in fact has done it.

PRAYER REQUESTS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (based on a prayer by Phil Hooper)

God, your Church is splintered and sorrowful. We are undone by the virulence of the age into which you have called us. We hunger for the bread only you can give; we long for the solace of an absent embrace. Gather us close, hide us under the shadow of your wings, and strengthen us to be your ministers amidst the uncertainties that lie ahead.

God, our nation is diseased. A pandemic has brought us to our knees, but we have been kneeling before false gods for too long: economic and environmental injustice, systemic racism, the imperialism of selfishness, the vainglory of unexamined consumption. We need you, the Divine Physician, to heal the heart-wounds we cannot see, so that we might heal the broken bodies and broken systems we can see.

God, our communities are being crushed by the yoke of sin: political enmity, economic inequality, gun violence, racism, xenophobia, disparities in health and education, pollution, loneliness, and despair. Our brothers and sisters are sleeping in the streets, weeping in the streets, bleeding in the streets, like strangers in their own land. And so many of us choose to look away. Give us, instead, your easy yoke, your light burden: to open the doors, to step out, to speak out, to trust one another, to be taken where we do not wish to go, to the foot of the Cross, to the tomb, where you will meet us, where real life begins.

We pray for the whole creation, that in our common “groaning” we may see a birth of a new world, a world where love and justice meet and where freedom and righteousness kiss each other. We pray that the Reign of God will be on our lips and in our hearts spreading not the deadly virus of hate and selfishness but a life-giving contagion of love, mercy and compassion. Unleash not your judgment O Lord but your forgiveness that we may incline our hearts to keep your law and love one another as Jesus loves us. May this pandemic unite us to be the kind of people that you want us to be. All these we ask in the name of Jesus Christ who holds all things together and who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. And in whose name we pray as he taught his disciples to pray, saying...

LORD’S PRAYER

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.*

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

OFFERING

Psalm 24 tells us that, “The earth is the LORD’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.” Therefore, when we give our gifts of time, money and gratitude to the Lord, let us do so as a loving act of worship.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

O God, You desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, you would rather be closely known than be given burnt offerings (Micah 6:6). May these gifts be signs of our desire to know you better and walk with you more closely. Amen.

HYMN #753 Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION —based on Philippians 4:7

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, remain with you always.