



# First Presbyterian

## CHURCH OF EASTON



A Service for the Worship of God  
March 5, 2023

### The Second Sunday in Lent

*\*Indicates an invitation to rise in body and/or spirit as you are able.*

#### WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

GATHERING MUSIC

TOWER BELLS

PRELUDE

O Lamb of God Unspotted

J. S. Bach

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME

#### WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

We look for help.

**Where will it come from?**

Our help will come from the Lord who created the heavens and the earth.

**Let our hearts rejoice in God's promise of salvation. Amen.**

\*HYMN 234 (V.1-4)

I to the Hills Will Lift My Eyes

I to the hills will lift my eyes;  
From whence shall come my aid?  
My help is from the Lord alone,  
Who heaven and earth has made.

God will not let your foot be moved,  
Your Guardian never sleeps;  
God's watchful and unslumbering care  
Protects and safely keeps.

Your faithful keeper is the Lord,  
Your shelter and your shade;  
'Neath sun or moon, by day or night,  
You shall not be afraid.

From evil God will keep you safe,  
Provide for all you need;  
Your going out, your coming in,  
God will forever lead.

## WE PREPARE TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

RESPONSIVE READING

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills - from where will my help come?

**My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.**

He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

**He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

**The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.**

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

**The Lord will keep you going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Lord, we are such stubborn people. We want to know all the answers. We find it hard to place our trust even in your Son. When Jesus proclaims that we can have a new life, we want to know how this is possible. How can we get rid of the old burdens and difficulties and start over again? Wouldn't it be just like climbing back into the womb to make a fresh start? How we have misunderstood what Jesus has said. New life is possible. We can place our trust in God's healing care. Forgive us, and help us, gracious Lord. For we ask this in Jesus' name.**

*Silent Prayer*

**Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The Apostle Paul declared our hope, asking the question: "Who is in a position to condemn?" The answer? "Only Christ – and Christ died for us; Christ rose for us; Christ reigns in power for us; Christ prays for us." Trust this Good News. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free by God's generous grace.

\*RESPONSE OF PRAISE

Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen. Amen.**

## WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READING

John 3:1-17

SERMON

Rev. Stefanie Muntzel

Create in me a clean heart, O God;  
and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from Thy presence, O Lord,  
and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;  
and uphold me with Thy Spirit, O Lord.

Create in me a clean heart, O God;  
and renew a right spirit within me.

### **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

#### THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God has given us so many gifts in Christ and in creation. We offer our gifts in gratitude for the possibilities we enjoy, trusting God to multiply what we bring for goodness' sake.

*Please leave your offering in the box at the front of the sanctuary or make your gifts online or via mail.*

#### PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Lord God, we offer our gifts in thanksgiving for all the goodness you provide. Bless our gifts and our lives so that we become a source of goodness for others, in the name of Christ, our strength and our hope. Amen.**

#### \*RESPONSE

Doxology

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heav'nly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

#### THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

#### THE INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Friends in Christ, Lent is not simply a time for temporary self-discipline. It is time to refashion our relationship with God and to be refashioned by God's strength and grace. This meal is the gift of that strength and grace. It comes not as a whole loaf and bottle for each one to take away to relish in private. It comes in broken pieces and deep sips shared to remind us there will always be enough for everyone who seeks a place at this table. So come, you who have much faith and you who have a little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here for a long time. Our Savior invites all those who trust his grace to share this feast as a foretaste of his kingdom.

## THE PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

Holy and mysterious God, it is right to bring you our thanks and praise for you are the source of all that is. You spin the galaxies that twinkle in the night sky. You give life to fragile creatures shivering in the chill of winter and offer them hope as the sun stirs new growth deep in the earth. Your mercy sustains creation day by day and so we sing in praise of our Lord, first born of all creation:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.**

Lord Jesus Christ, we come to the table to remember the love which led you to lay down your life for the world. We remember how you walked the road with those who suffer, touching those in pain and grief, giving strength to those in weakness, welcoming those who had been pushed aside, standing up to those with callous hearts. You lived to offer mercy to us all. You died because we find it so hard to offer mercy to each other. And so we remember in silence those who need your mercy this day.

### *Silent prayer*

Holy Spirit, move among us in kindness now as we remember what mercy has cost the God of love. Pour out your grace on the bread we break and the cup we share today. Let us taste the passion of Jesus Christ baked into this bread and be moved to act with compassion in his name. Let us taste the renewing love of Jesus Christ that refreshes us from this cup and be moved to greet each day with fresh hope.

Holy God, Three in One, strengthen us by your undying love, so that we may remember to show mercy to others, and seek mercy from others, living unafraid to bear the cost of mercy day by day.

## THE STORY OF THE LAST SUPPER

On the night Jesus was betrayed by friends who thought their intentions good and commitment strong, Jesus sat at table with those very friends. While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it, he broke it and said, "Take, eat, this is my body."

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26)

As often as we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again. As Jesus gave thanks to God for the gifts of the earth, so let us give thanks for what we receive from God's hand. We offer our lives to you in the words Jesus taught us:

## THE 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.**

## COMMUNION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

*The bread and juice are distributed together and can be enjoyed immediately.*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus Christ, we are so grateful for the gifts you have shared with us, for we know what they cost you. Send us out in the strength of the Holy Spirit, unafraid of what service in your name will cost us, for we would be faithful to you now and always. Amen.

### **WE GO IN GOD'S NAME**

\*HYMN 399 (V. 1-4)

We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight

We walk by faith and not by sight;  
No gracious words we hear  
From Christ, who spoke as none e'er spoke;  
But we believe Him near.

We may not touch His hands and side,  
Nor follow where He trod;  
But in His promise we rejoice,  
And cry, "My Lord and God!"

Help then, O Lord, our unbelief;  
And may our faith abound  
To call on You when You are near  
And seek where You are found:

That, when our life of faith is done,  
In realms of clearer light  
We may behold You as You are,  
With full and endless sight.

\*BENEDICTION

As we journey through the season of Lent, remember the words of the prophet Micah:  
What does the Lord require of us? To do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

May God's loving kindness comfort you, God's justice inspire you, and Jesus walk beside you in humility and hope.

POSTLUDE

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days (Hymn 81)

Willan

*The flowers are given today by Ruthann Arras in memory of her mother, Naomi Smith.*

Worship Leaders

Rev. Stefanie Muntzel

Gloria Snyder, Organist

Elizabeth Campbell, Chancel Choir Director

The Chancel Choir

Ellis Finger, Liturgist

Noralee Manzek & Chris Gulotta, Communion Servers

Tech Support: Jacob Van Norman, Bill Bartlett, Rich Linnell, Pat Koefoed, Luke McGloughlin

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*Each Sunday we sing hymns taken from the blue hymnal provided for you in the pew where you are seated. Though we print the lyrics to the hymns in the bulletin, we encourage you to turn to the hymnal so you can also read the accompanying music.*

**John 3:1-17**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God."

Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.'

The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony.

If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.