

THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
March 19, 2023 -- Fourth Sunday of Lent

GATHERING AND PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leader: Christ is risen!

People: He is risen indeed!

PRELUDE:

Prelude in D Minor

J.S. Bach

Readying Our Hearts (A time of silent prayer and reflection in preparation for worshipping God together.)

CALL TO WORSHIP: (adapted from Psalm 145:1-3, 21)

Leader: I will exalt You, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.

People: Every day I will praise You and extol Your name for ever and ever.

Leader: For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom.

People: Our mouths will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise His holy name for ever and ever.

INVOCATION

*OPENING SONG: #371 "Our Father, We Have Wandered"

**Our Father, we have wandered and hidden from Your face;
In foolishness have squandered Your legacy of grace.
But now, in exile dwelling, we rise with fear and shame,
As, distant but compelling, we hear You call our name.**

**And now at length discerning the evil that we do,
Behold us, Lord, returning with hope and trust to You.
In haste You come to meet us and home rejoicing bring,
In gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.**

**O Lord of all the living, both banished and restored,
Compassionate, forgiving and ever caring Lord,
Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease.
Stretch out Your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: (Unison prayer after a time of silent personal confession.)

O God, the abounding source of every good and perfect gift, shine in our hearts the light of Your limitless grace. God of love and tenderness, we humbly implore Your assistance. You know our faults, our failings, our sins, the dullness of our understanding, the waywardness of our affections, the perverseness of our will, the hardness of our heart. When, therefore, we neglect to practice what we know, confront us, we pray, with Your grace and mercy. Enlighten our minds, rectify our desire, correct our wanderings, and pardon our omissions, so that, by Your guidance, we may be preserved from making

shipwreck of our faith, we may keep a good conscience, and, we may be brought safely to our eternal home; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we are assured that there is no sin so terrible that God cannot forgive, and no hurt so deep that God cannot heal, when we repent and come to Jesus in faith.

People: Through faith in Jesus we believe that God accepts us, God forgives us, and God sets us free from the burden of sin.

Leader: Therefore, with confidence, not in ourselves but in our Lord Jesus, receive the forgiving love of God.

***All: (*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.**

ENCOUNTERING GOD THROUGH GOD'S WORD

LENTEN CANDLE EXTINGUISHING

“The Voices of Lent – Nicodemus the Pharisee”

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

ANTHEM: “Lord Have Mercy” *Steve Merkel*
Choir

SCRIPTURE READING: John 18:33-38a (Pew Bible p. 1683)

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

“What is truth?” retorted Pilate.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON: “Trusting in the true King of Truth”

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD THROUGH AFFIRMATION, OFFERING, AND PRAYER

*SONG OF REFLECTION AND RESPONSE:

“This Kingdom”
Acoustic Worship Team

Geoff Bullock

Verse 1

**Jesus, God’s righteousness revealed.
The Son of Man, the Son of God, His Kingdom comes.
Jesus, redemption’s sacrifice,
Now glorified, now justified, His Kingdom comes.**

Chorus

**And this Kingdom will know no end,
And its glory shall know no bounds.
For the majesty and power of this Kingdom’s King has come.
And this Kingdom’s reign, and this Kingdom’s rule,
And this Kingdom’s power and authority,
Jesus, God’s righteousness revealed.**

Verse 2

**Jesus, the expression of God’s love.
The grace of God, the Word of God revealed to us.
Jesus, God’s Holiness displayed,
Now glorified, now justified, His Kingdom comes. (Chorus)**

THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER AND OFFERING

Invitation

Affirmation of Faith: (Heidelberg Catechism Question #1)

Q#1. What is your only comfort, in life and in death?

That I belong -- body and soul, in life and in death -- not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who at the cost of His own blood has fully paid for all my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil; that He protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that everything must fit His purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

Partaking of the Elements and the Giving of Our Offering:

“In Christ Alone”
Acoustic Worship Team

Getty/Townend

**In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;**

**This Cornerstone, this solid Ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease.
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand.**

**In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save
'Til on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied.
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.**

**There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then, bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine,
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.**

**No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
'Til He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand!**

(For those joining with us in the Sanctuary this morning, you are invited, as you come forward to receive the Communion Elements, and as you feel so led, to place your offering in one of the plates up front. For those unable to be with us physically, you are encouraged to partake of the elements in your home at this time. Also, as you are able, we invite you to set aside your offering as an act of personal dedication at this time, either to be mailed in, dropped off at the church, or brought in when you are able to join us in worship. Let this time be one of receiving from and offering yourself up to our Lord -- to the praise of His holy name.)

Prayer of Commitment

*Sung Response (Doxology)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

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.

BRINGING OUR WORSHIP INTO OUR WORLD

*CLOSING SONG: #255 “Beneath the Cross of Jesus”

**Beneath the cross of Jesus I gladly make my stand –
the shadow of a mighty Rock within a weary land
a home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noon tide heat, and the burden of the day.**

**Upon that cross of Jesus my eye at times can see
the very dying form of One who suffered there for me;
and from my smitten heart with tears two wonders I confess –
the wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness.**

**I take, O cross, your shadow for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face,
content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,
my sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.**

*BENEDICTION: (Hebrews 13:20-21)

May the God of peace -- Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant -- equip you with everything good, that you may do God's will, working in you what is pleasing in God's sight, through Jesus Christ to Whom be glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*POSTLUDE: “God of Grace and God of Glory”

arr. Anna Laura Page

MEMORY VERSE: John 18:37b

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. If you would like to help support the work of Hope 7 in our local community, we encourage you to drop off **non-perishable food items, toiletries and other hygiene items** either at Third Church, or at Hope 7 directly (M-F 9:30-11:45), or call Sue Laz (518-892-4042) to arrange for a pick-up.
2. **We are receiving new or gently used clothes for the Capital City Rescue Mission (CCRM).** There is a box in the narthex for donations. You may bring your items to the church or call Sue Laz to arrange for a pick-up.
3. Adult Sunday morning Sunday school (9:15-10:00am) has begun a new series study, “New Testament Survey”. All are welcome to join.
4. If you are interested in joining into membership at Third Church, please speak with Pastor John about participating in an upcoming Inquirer’s class.
5. **Our Wednesday evening Lenten Program has begun.** We gather Wednesday evening at 6:15pm for a Soup Supper followed by a time of worship (beginning around 6:45). If you would like and are able, you may bring soup, bread or cookies/dessert to share, but regardless, all are invited to come and share this evening together throughout the Lenten season.
6. There are postcards in the narthex with information on our holy week services. You are encouraged to take some to share with family and friends and invite them to join us in worship.
7. Sunday school for children will follow worship on March 19.
8. **International Crossroads Game Night, April 1st from 4:00 – 9:00 PM,** we host this event annually for international students and their American friendship partners. The evening includes time to play board games, an always exciting ping pong tournament, pizza and snacks, and a movie that presents the Gospel. It is a wonderful opportunity to interact with individuals from all around the world as well as enjoy a time of fellowship, fun, and food. Everyone is encouraged to come and join in the fun for all or just part of the evening. If you have questions or would like more information, please speak with Sue Laz or Pastor John.
9. **Serving at Capital City Rescue Mission, Saturday, April 15th,** we have the privilege to minister to those in need by helping to serve the evening meal at Capital City Rescue Mission. We will meet at the church at 5:00 for those wishing to carpool to the mission or you can meet us there around 5:30. Serving involves ensuring the tables are set for dinner, serving the meal, and cleaning up the tables afterwards. If you can help, please speak with Peter Laz.



In celebration of Easter, you can purchase flowers to decorate the sanctuary. If you would like to purchase a plant, please fill out this sheet and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office by March 26th. Checks should be made payable to "Third Presbyterian Church".

Lilies _____ @ \$15.00 = \$ _____

Mums _____ @ \$15.00 = \$ _____

Tulips _____ @ \$15.00 = \$ _____

TOTAL = \$ _____

GIVEN BY: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

IN HONOR OF: _____

Please check one:

_____ I will take my plant(s) after worship on Easter Sunday.

_____ Please deliver my plant to me at home.

_____ Please share my plant(s) with someone who would enjoy them.

