

WORSHIP SERVICE

Northampton Presbyterian Church

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 10, 2024

10:00 AM

PRELUDE

Lyric Piece

Brahms

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Christian Life Groups, today following the worship service.
- Bible Study for Everyone, Tuesday (3/12) at 11 AM.
- Men's Breakfast at Robin Hood, Wednesday (3/13) at 8:30 AM.
- Esther Circle, Friday (3/15) at 10 AM.

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: On our worst days,

MANY: God is good.

ONE: On our best days,

MANY: God is good.

ONE: When life is consistent,

MANY: God is good.

ONE: And when life turns on its head,

MANY: God is good.

ONE: Day and night, Monday through Sunday,

MANY: God is good. God is here. God is love.

ONE: Hold tight to that good news. Let us worship God!

HYMN

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty

UNSER HERRSCHER

**Open now thy gates of beauty,
Zion, let me enter there,
Where my soul in joyful duty
Waits for God who answers prayer;
O how blessed is this place,
Filled with solace, light, and grace.**

**Gracious God, I come before thee;
Come thou also unto me;
Where we find thee and adore thee,
There a heaven on earth must be;
To my heart, O enter thou;
Let it be thy temple now.**

**Speak, O Lord, and I will hear thee;
Let thy will be done indeed;
May I undisturbed draw near thee,
While thou dost thy people feed.
Here of life the fountain flows;
Here is balm for all our woes.**

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, we often find ourselves moving through a world that does not make sense. Like Peter, we want to yell out, “This should not happen!” We want to control scenarios beyond our reach. We want to hold your world in our hands. Forgive us for the moments when we lead with declarations instead of curiosity. Forgive us for arguing when we could listen. Forgive us for fixating on one truth, when we could open ourselves up to many. Soften our hard edges and teach us how to listen. With hope in our hearts we pray, amen.

We pause for a moment of silent, personal confession.

RESPONSIVE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

ONE: Nothing can separate us from God's love, not even a stubborn attitude or a tense heart. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel: God's love for us will always be deeper than we can imagine. We are seen. We are loved. And we are forgiven.

MANY: Thanks be to God! Amen.

HYMN

Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me *GLORY TO GOD*

**Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
And to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
And to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.**

World without end, without end. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen

World without end, without end. Amen.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

PSALTER READING

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

READER: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

ALL: Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

CHOIR: "Give Thanks to God Who Hears Our Cries," (vs.1)

READER: Some were sick through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities endured affliction; they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

ALL: Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress; He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind. And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices, and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

CHOIR: "Give Thanks to God Who Hears Our Cries," (vv. 2 & 6)

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Matthew 16:21-23

SERMON

The Courage to Continue

Rev. Judith A. Dwyer

RESPONSIVE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

ONE: I believe in a God of second chances,

MANY: A God who sees through my stubbornness and holds my fear with tenderness.

ONE: I believe that this God of second chances uses ordinary people like Peter to do good in the world.

MANY: Therefore, I believe and hope that God can use me too.

ONE: I believe that from time to time, God invites us to imagine the impossible. I believe that from time to time, God invites us to change our minds.

MANY: This change is holy and important work, although challenging. When fear and scarcity plague me, or when the impossible feels out of reach, I believe that God meets me with grace and invites me to follow.

ONE: Thanks be to God for a love like that.

MANY: Amen.

HYMN

Just as I Am, without One Plea

WOODWORTH

**Just as I am, without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou biddest me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come; I come!**

**Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come; I come!**

**Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come; I come!**

**Just as I am, thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come; I come!**

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

(Scan the QR Code to give online →)



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Behold the Lamb

Dottie Rambo

DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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, for ever and ever. Amen

HYMN

Jesus Loves Me!

JESUS LOVES ME

Jesus loves me! This I know,

For the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to him belong.

They are weak, but he is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!

Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! This I know,

As he loved so long ago,

Taking children on his knee,

Saying, "Let them come to me."

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!

Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain

Smith

CLG Questions

1. In *The Life and Witness of Peter*, Larry R. Helyer argues that Peter's profession of Jesus as the Messiah indicates that he misunderstands Jesus' purpose. He writes, "Peter almost certainly harbors nationalistic hopes for the Jesus movement." In his commentary on Mark, James R. Edwards agrees: "Peter has supplied the proper title, but he has the wrong understanding... Jesus will don the servant's trowel rather than the warrior's sword." What do you think Peter expected and hoped for? What do you think were his perceptions of who Jesus would be and how Jesus would behave?
2. At what moments in your life have you cried out like Peter, "God, forbid it!" (Matthew 16:22)? When have you faced inconvenient and difficult truths that challenged your faith or the way you see the world? What did you cling to during those times?
3. Do you blame Peter for not wanting Jesus to suffer? Was Jesus' response to Peter harsh? Fair?
4. Read the poem, "Open Hands" by Rev. Sarah Speed (on the back). The final lines of the poem conclude: "And even though / we are born with the ability / to hold tight, / we can learn how to love / with open hands." When do you feel the instinct to hold tightly to what you know? What does it look like for you to "love with open hands"?

“Open Hands” by Rev. Sarah Speed

Open Hands

We are born with the ability
to wrap our fingers around another,
to hold tight to what we know.

Maybe that’s where the instinct comes
from—

this clinging,
this sinking,
this holding on.

Maybe that’s why Peter cries, “Never!”

when Jesus must leave.

From the very beginning
we’ve known how to hold tight.

So I pray:

open up my hands.

Uncurl my fingers
one by one.

Loosen the grip
that I hold unyielding.

Remind me that birds must fly
and children must grow
and leaves must fall.

And even though
we are born with the ability
to hold tight,
we can learn how to love
with open hands.

WORSHIP NOTES:

The **Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession, Assurance of Pardon** and **Prayer for Illumination** are written by Rev. Sarah A. Speed and posted on *A Sanctified Art*. | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

The **Psalm Setting** is composed by Ruth C. Duck © GIA Publications, Inc and published in *Psalms for All Seasons*, Martin Tel, Ed. Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, MI: Grand Rapids, 2012.

The **Prayers of the People** are written by Thom M. Shuman and posted on his blog, lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com. © Thom M. Shuman

The **Benediction** is from the *Carmina Gadelica III*, 267. Posted on **Journey with Jesus**. <http://www.journeywithjesus.net>

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