

WORSHIP SERVICE

Northampton Presbyterian Church

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 17, 2024

10:00 AM

PRELUDE

Variations on Wondrous Love

David Lasky

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Christian Life Groups, today following the worship service.
- Bible Study for Everyone, Tuesday (3/19) at 11 AM.
- Session Meeting, Tuesday (3/19) at 7 PM.

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Our God is the God of all; the God of heaven and earth, of the sea and of the rivers; the God of the sun and of the moon and of all the stars; the God of the lofty mountains and of the lowly valleys.

MANY: He has His dwelling around heaven and earth, and sea, and all that in them is. He inspires all; he gives life to all; he dominates all; he supports all.

ONE: He lights the light of the sun. He furnishes the light of the night. He has made springs in dry land... He is the God of heaven and earth, of sea and rivers, of sun, moon and stars, of the lofty mountain and the lowly valley; the God above heaven, and in heaven, and under heaven.

MANY: Lord, be with us this day, within us to purify us; above us to draw us up; beneath us to sustain us; before us to lead us; behind us to restrain us; around us to protect us.

HYMN

Christ Be Beside Me

BUNESSAN

Christ be beside me; Christ be before me;

Christ be behind me, King of my heart.

Christ be within me; Christ be below me;

Christ above me, never to part.

**Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand,
Christ all around me, shield in the strife.
Christ in my sleeping, Christ in my sitting,
Christ in my rising, Light of my life.**

Christ be in all hearts thinking about me;

Christ be on all tongues telling of me.

Christ be the vision in eyes that see me;

In ears that hear me Christ ever be.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, we long to be lifelong learners. We long to approach you with curiosity and an open mind. Instead, we often live as if we know best. We forget that the disciples called you “Rabbi, Teacher.” Forgive us for the times when we fail to be curious. Forgive us for the times when we assume we know best. Forgive us for the moments when we imagine that our learning is done and that we have all the answers. Like Peter—who was brave enough to ask, “How many times should we forgive?”—make us brave. Spark a desire in us to learn, and may our curiosity carry our faith into deeper waters. With hope and humility we pray, amen.

We pause for a moment of silent, personal confession.

RESPONSIVE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

ONE: When Peter asked Jesus, “How many times should I forgive?” Jesus responded with abundance. That abundance exists for you as well. No matter what you have done or left undone, no matter what lessons you have learned or are still learning, God’s abundant grace exists for you. God’s love will never run out. So hear and rest in this good news: You are forgiven. You are loved. You are invited to serve.

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 119:9-16

VOICE 1: How can young people keep their way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

ALL: With my whole heart I seek you; do not let me stray from your commandments.

CHOIR: Order my steps in your word, dear Lord...

VOICE 2: I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.

ALL: Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes.

CHOIR: Order my steps in your word, dear Lord...

VOICE 1: With my lips I declare all the ordinances of your mouth.

ALL: I delight in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches.

CHOIR: Order my steps in your word, dear Lord...

VOICE 2: I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways.

ALL: I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

CHOIR: Order my steps in your word, dear Lord...

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Matthew 18:15-22

SERMON

The Follow-Up Question

Rev. Judith A. Dwyer

RESPONSIVE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

ONE: We believe that questions are a building block of faith.

MANY: “How many times should I forgive?” “Jesus, where are you going?” “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

ONE: We believe that humble curiosity can open our eyes.

MANY: “Where does it hurt?” “What do you need?” “How can I help?”

ONE: We believe that God is a teacher.

MANY: “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.” “Here I am.” “Send me.”

ONE: We believe that faith invites our whole being to engage,

MANY: With all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength.

ONE: We believe. Help our unbelief.

MANY: In Christ’s name we pray, amen.

HYMN

God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me

GREEN TYLER

God, be the love to search and keep me;

God, be the prayer to move my voice;

God, be the strength to now uphold me:

O Christ, surround me;

O Christ, surround me.

**Bind to myself the Name of Holy,
Great cloud of witnesses enfold;
Prophets, apostles, angels witness:
O Christ, surround me;
O Christ, surround me.**

Brightness of sun and glow of moonlight,

Flashing of lightning, strength of wind,

Depth of the sea to soil of planet:

O Christ, surround me;

O Christ, surround me.

**Walking behind to hem my journey,
Going ahead to light my way,
And from beneath, above, and all ways:
O Christ, surround me;
O Christ, surround me.**

**Christ in the eyes of all who see me,
Christ in the ears that hear my voice,
Christ in the hearts of all who know me:
O Christ, surround me;
O Christ, surround me.**

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

(Scan the QR Code to give online →)



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

For Me

arr. Sharpe

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

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

IN BABILONE

There's a wideness in God's mercy,

Like the wideness of the sea.

There's a kindness in God's justice,

Which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows

Are more felt than up in heaven.

There is no place where earth's failings

Have such kindly judgment given.

**For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of the mind.
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful,
We would gladly trust God's Word,
And our lives reflect thanksgiving
For the goodness of our Lord.**

BENEDICTION

The Hardest Blessing

POSTLUDE

O Sacred Head Now Wounded

Hassler

CLG Questions

1. How do Jesus' instructions in Matthew 18:15-20 provide protection for those who are vulnerable?
2. Some translate Jesus' response to Peter's question in Matthew 18:22 as "seventy-seven times" and others translate it as "seventy times seven." What is the significance of this? How do you calculate the ambiguous math of grace?
3. What do you think of Jesus' step-by-step advice for dealing with conflict? Have you ever followed this when someone hurt you? How did that go? Are there any specific situations or circumstances where you would choose not to follow this advice?
4. Read Matthew 18:17 closely. Jesus tells the disciples to treat those who refuse to listen as they would a gentile or tax collector. How do you interpret his instruction? Based on how Jesus treats gentiles and tax collectors, what kind of treatment does he intend?

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 Glenn Burleigh © 1999, Burleigh Inspirations Music 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 written by Jan Richardson and appears in Jan's book, *The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief*. Wanton Gospeller Press, September 29, 2020.

Hymns are from the *Glory to God Hymnal*, The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, Louisville, KY, 2017. All are licensed for use by CCLI.

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License with license # A-739749.