

United Presbyterian Church
First Sunday of Lent
February 21, 2021
11:00am

WORSHIP FOR THE LORD'S DAY

Thanks for worshipping with us. Whether you are with us from the pew or with us via your computer screen, we are so glad you're here. Remember, worship is about God and we focus our eyes and hearts on the One who is before all things. At the same time, we know that when we gather, we receive gracious gifts and experience the love of Christ as one church.

To prepare for worship, read the Words of Preparation; read and reflect upon the Scripture passage for today. Be intentional about connecting with God in your worship.

Words for Preparation

Holy God, by the grace of Jesus Christ you know the tests and trials we face. Walk with us through this wilderness. Come to us with ministers of healing and visit us with messengers of hope, so that we may return to you in faith, believing the good news of the gospel; through Jesus Christ our Savior. (Mark 1:9-15 / Year B)

Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Prelude

"Toccata"

J.P. Sweelinck

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship¹

From water to wilderness:
God's covenant continues;
God's kingdom comes near.

One stone and in hearts:
God's covenant continues;
God's kingdom comes near.

From the ancestor of nations to the Son lifted up:
God's covenant continues;
God's kingdom comes near.

Hymn

**"Let All Things Now Living"
(Glory to God #37, all verses)**

Call to Confession

God's bow has been hung in the clouds—a unilateral disarmament in spite of our sin. God remains faithful to the covenant of steadfast love, even when we are unfaithful. Without fear, then, we confess our sins.

(Period of silence for personal confession)

Prayer of Confession

God of mercy, we begin this Lenten season in confession. We do not live according to your ways, but according to our own. We condone violence, participate in systems of injustice, and use power to our own advantage at the expense of others. Forgive us, we pray, when we are tempted to follow paths other than those you set before us.

Teach us your commandments; help us turn from evil in its many guises and turn us toward your kingdom drawing near. In covenantal love, remember us, we pray, and be for us, once more and always, an ark of safety and new life. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

¹ Liturgy is from *Feasting on the Word, Liturgies for Year B, Volume 1*, ed. Bracken Long, Kimberley.

Assurance of Pardon

As Noah and his family were brought safely through the flood onto dry ground, so in baptismal waters we are brought from death into new life in Christ. Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, forgives us and reconciles us and all things in heaven and on earth.

Thanks be to God for this good news!

Gloria Patri

Prayers of People and 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 and ever.

Amen.

Special Music

Sarabande

Bach/Godowsky

Prayer for Illumination

Gracious God, in rushing waters and in dry wilderness, in every season and circumstance, we need your sustaining word. By the power of your Holy Spirit, proclaim the good news among us today so that we may repent and believe and see anew how the time is fulfilled and the kingdom has come near; in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Genesis 9:8-17 (New Revised Standard Version)

9:8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him,

9:9 "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you,

9:10 and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.

9:11 I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

9:12 God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations:

9:13 I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

9:14 When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds,

9:15 I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

9:16 When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

9:17 God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

1 Peter 3:18-22 (New Revised Standard Version)

3:18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,

3:19 in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison

3:20 who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water.

3:21 And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you--not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

3:22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon

“In the time of Arks and Rainbows”

Rev. Candice Womack

Affirmation of Faith

In the gospel God declares his love for the world and his desire that all people should be saved; reveals fully and clearly the only way of salvation; promises eternal life to all who truly repent and believe in Christ; invites and commands all to embrace the offered mercy; and by his Spirit accompanying the Word pleads with all people to accept his gracious invitation. Since there is no other way of salvation than that revealed in the gospel, and since in the divinely established and ordinary method of grace, faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God; Christ has commissioned his church to go into all the world and to make disciples of all nations. (Westminster Confession, 6.056, 6.058)

Offering Ourselves and Our Gifts

The Lord is indeed good, for God has blessed us richly. Let us offer back a portion, in gratitude and love.

Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

“Maria zart”

Arnolt Schlick

(Please use this time for silent prayer and reflection as you consider ways to offer your life, your gifts, time, and commitment to God. You may give online at upctx.org/giving)

Prayer of Dedication

God of steadfast love and faithfulness, we are humbled as we try to do what is right and to walk in your ways. Receive, we ask, these offerings, and use them for your own good purposes in the church and in all creation. We pray in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn

**"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"
(Glory to God #435, all verses)**

Choral Benediction

"Go Now In Peace"

Benediction

Postlude

"Canzona"

Girolamo Frescobaldi