



Worship
March 19, 2023, 11:15 am
Fourth Sunday in Lent
+Stand as you are able



Gathering

Welcome and Announcements
Lighting of the Christ Candle
Centering Music

+Call to Worship

Scripture is full of questions...

Where are you?

Am I my brother's keeper?

Whom shall I send?

Who do you say that I am?

Who sinned?

How many times shall I forgive?

If God is for us, who can be against us?

Scripture is full of questions,

so just like those in our scriptures, may we bring our full curiosity and wonder into this space.

Let us ask and seek after our merciful God.*

+Hymn *Gather Us In #401*

Call to Confession

In today's text, the disciples ask Jesus, "Who sinned?" They want to know who around them could be blamed for suffering. The disciples want to identify who around them had done wrong.

In the prayer of confession, we stop pointing fingers at others. In confession, we turn our attention toward ourselves and invite God into that honest and vulnerable space.

So do this counter-cultural thing with me today. Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

Who here has sinned?

We have sinned. We put our heads in the sand. We ignored people in need. We make false assumptions and fail to be kind. We are in need of forgiveness.

Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Have you sinned?

I have sinned. I put my head in the sand. I ignore people in need. I make false assumptions and fail to be kind. I, too, am in need of forgiveness. *(Moment of silent prayer)*

Assurance of Pardon

Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running.

Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

Response of Praise *Great are You, Lord (Great is the Lord) #614*

Passing of the Peace

L: Be kind to one another, and tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. May the peace of Christ be with you.**

P: And also with you.

Anthem

Hearing the Word

Prayer for Illumination

God of Good news, there is reading your Word, there is hearing your Word, and then there is tunneling ourselves into your Word— harvesting your Word, building a home in your Word, laying your Word over us like a blanket, wrapping ourselves in your Word, knowing your Word like the back of our hand, singing your Word, planting ourselves like a garden in your Word. God, we could listen to scripture like we listen to the news, or we could cocoon ourselves in your Word and it could change us entirely. So bundle us up. Give us the latter. We want to know you. With hopeful hearts we pray, amen.

Scripture Reading **John 9:1-12** As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

Hymn *Amazing Grace #649*

Gospel Reading **John 9:13-25** ¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.” ¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been

blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” ²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

Sermon

Responding to the Word

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a merciful God,

a God who does not keep score, a God who wants good for us.

We believe in a creative God,

a God who would heal with mud, a God capable of seeing what we cannot.

We believe in a saving God,

a God who heals, a God who greets our questions with patience, a God who sends us out with hope in our step.

What wondrous love is this. Amen.

Offering Prayer

Giver of all good gifts, accept our offerings of money, time and talents that we give in response to your generosity to us. Guide us in the way we share our resources and in the way we use the offerings, for the benefit of our community and the world. Amen.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Joys and Concerns

Invitation to the Table

Friends, if we are honest with ourselves and with God, we are all seeking something.

Some of us long for a place to belong. Others seek permission to be who we are made to be.

Some of us are hungry for connection, hungry for justice, or hungry for a glimpse of the Divine. No matter what it is your soul longs for, there is good news to be found here.

Friends, this is Christ's table. We are the guests. He is the host. There is a seat here with your name on it. Thanks be to God for a love like that.*

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Holy God, you made the world to hum in harmony; you listened and you called it good. In time we broke off from singing the song and went our own way, but you called us back and when the time was right you came in flesh and blood to live as one of us.

In Christ, dividing walls are broken down— no Jew or Greek, male and female, slave or free. You are there on every spectrum, in every color, at every table.

By your Spirit, make us one. By your Spirit, make us whole. By your Spirit, make this bread and wine your body and blood, that we may know communion with you and with each other. Take our hearts, our lives, our hands; mold us, change us, and send us out, that we may be your body in the world you so love, for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen. Hear us now as we pray Christ's prayer together:** ***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.***

Words of Institution

Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion

God of manna and mustard seeds, we came to this Table hungry and we leave feeling full

—
 full of hope,
 full of promise,
 full of what could be.

For we not only found glimpses of you at this Table, but we caught a glimpse of the way things could be: in a meal where all are welcomed and all are fed. Is there anything holier than that?

So thank you for nourishing our curiosity alongside our spirit and our conviction. May we always seek you the way you seek after us. With grateful hearts we pray, amen.*

Taking the Word into the World

+Song *Live Into Hope #772*

+Charge and Benediction

As you leave this place, may God bless you with seeking.

Seek out the hungry.

Seek the weary.

Seek the good in every person you pass.

Seek out the hopeful.

Seek the faithful.

Seek God in each of us.

As you seek and as you wonder, may you find what you are looking for.

In the name of our loving God, who is always seeking us, go now in peace. Amen.*

*Prayers by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

**Prayers from the Book of Common Worship, PCUSA, Kindle Edition.

Toll free conference call number (844) 855-4444, access code 654132#

Worship will also be connected through Facebook Live

COMMUNITY OF FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT - MARCH 19, 2023

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Focal Scriptures for

Sunday, March 26

John 11:1-45

Ezekiel 37:1-14

In Our Thoughts

& Prayers

Betty Murphy

Ruth Roeber

The McDermott family

Johanna Willis

The Kleier family

Jean Jennings' family

Emilee Walden

Kelly Montana

Lynda Jaeger

Ron Carlin

Ella Grace Marksberry

Worship Services

Join us for in-person services at 710 Western Reserve Rd., Crescent Springs, KY. You can also worship with us online via Facebook Live, or by joining the conference call. Worship services begin at 11:15 am.

Lenten Study

We will be having a Lenten study before worship on Sundays at 10:15 am, using materials from our Lenten Series, "Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith." Coffee and snacks may be shared. Contact Rev. Sharon for more information.

Liturgists Needed

Liturgists are needed to help lead worship. Please sign up on the sheet on the welcome table. Thank you!

"One Great Hour of Sharing" Special Offering

The "One Great Hour of Sharing" special offering will be collected until Sunday, April 9. This offering supports the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People.

Cornerstone Mission

We'll be preparing dinner for Cornerstone on Monday, March 20, and serving meals on Tuesday, March 21.