



Worship

March 5, 2023, 11:15 am

Second Sunday in Lent

+Stand as you are able



Gathering

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Centering Music

+Call to Worship

What is it like to begin again?

It is like flowers in the spring that push through frozen ground.

It is like babies learning to walk, one clumsy step at a time.

It is like Nicodemus in the night, asking Jesus for guidance.

It is like a Sunday morning, starting our week anew.

May we find God in our seeking.

May we learn as we go.

May we be brave enough to begin again.

Let us worship the God of new beginnings.*

+Hymn *The God of Abraham Praise #49*

Call to Confession

One of the things I love about the prayer of confession is it offers us a new beginning. In the prayer of confession, we lay our cards on the table. We speak honestly with God about who we are and who we long to be. And in response, God wraps us in grace and lets us begin again. So together, with God's grace, let us wipe the slate clean. Together, with God's grace, let us pray the prayer of confession:*

Prayer of Confession

God of new life, you call us into unknown places,
and we bury our heads in the sand.

You promise all the stars in the sky,
and we doubt it can be true.

You speak of new life in the Spirit,
and we tell ourselves we've missed our chance.

Over and over and over again, you invite us closer to you.

Show us the way. Forgive our mistakes. Give us the courage to begin again with you. Amen.* (*Moment of silent prayer*)

Assurance of Pardon

Family of faith, hear and believe this good news:

There is a grace to God's love that is bigger than we can imagine.

No matter what we did or didn't do yesterday, we have been forgiven. Today, the slate is wiped clean.

Today, we are made new.

Join me in saying:

We belong to God. We are held in God's love. We are made new. 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

Holy God,

We come to you today with our biggest questions:

Who are we called to be?

What do you need from us?

Where are you in our midst?

How can we follow you more clearly?

As we read your Word today, we ask that you would weave answers into the text. Speak to us through these ancient stories that we might find what we are seeking in you. With gratitude and open hearts we pray, amen.*

Scripture Reading **Genesis 12:1-4a.** Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." ⁴So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him.

Hymn *Breathe on Me, Breath of God #286*

Gospel Reading **John 3:1-17** Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews.²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of

Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Sermon

Responding to the Word

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a God who meets us in the shadows, who welcomes our questions, who invites us to begin again.

We believe that Jesus showed us a new way, a deeper faith, a more compassionate existence.

We believe that all of our beginnings should return us to this foundation, and that no matter how many times we lose our way, God always welcomes us home. 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 *May the God of Hope #765*

+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

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT - MARCH 5, 2023

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Focal Scriptures for Sunday, March 12

John 4:5-42

Exodus 17:1-7

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." The study will begin on the first Sunday of Lent, February 26, 2023. 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.

"Song of Our Lands" Concert

Former COF Choir Director Yeon-Kyung Kim will be performing during the "Song of Our Lands" concert on Friday, March 10 at 7 pm at the Dayton Korean United Methodist Church, and also on Knox Presbyterian on Saturday, March 11 at 7:30 pm.

Daylight Savings: Sunday, March 12

Daylight Savings begins on Sunday, March 12 at 2 am. Don't forget to spring forward!