



March 6, 2022

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church

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Pastor Russel is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Welcome Visitors: We are pleased you have chosen to worship with us today. If you have questions concerning the service, please feel free to ask an usher or a person sitting near you. If you do not have a permanent church home, please consider joining us. May God bless your experience in worship with us today. We are here to serve, so please let us know how we might better serve you. Pastor Russel has an open-door policy. In case of an emergency he is available 24/7. Please feel free to contact him.

ORDER OF WORSHIP 11:15AM

CELEBRATION THROUGH CENTERING

PRELUDE

'Lord Thee I Love With All My Heart'

J.F. Alberti

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHIMES AND BRINGING FORTH THE LIGHT

GATHERING WORDS

We are entering a holy time. The Lenten candles have been lit, but over the next six weeks the light will slowly fade into darkness. For we are retelling the story of Jesus' betrayal and suffering and death. We do not do this to be morbid, but because in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, God is revealed—in the amazing transformation of death into life, in endings transformed into beginnings, and in dead-ends that become a source for new possibilities.

This is the sacred center of our faith—the truth made manifest in Jesus the Christ—that God is in each of us and every one of us, quietly transforming us and the world. In his pain and suffering, Jesus speaks to every pain and loss we have endured and offers us the promise of transformation. It's an old story, but it still has the power to reveal, to heal, and to redeem. Jesus is at the heart of our faith, in the depth of our souls. He is waiting for us, inviting us to leave ordinary time and follow along with him on the journey that brought him to the Cross. Listen in silence, for Jesus is calling us.

SILENT REFLECTION

As we extinguish the first candle, we acknowledge the darkness and pain and that God is waiting for us.

HYMN

'Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross'

No. 301 (Refrain only)

*In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever
till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.*

THE FIRST CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED

CELEBRATION THROUGH ADORATION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: In this season of Lent, we make our way to the cross.

People: We remember the steps that led Christ there: betrayal and fear, but also trust in God and love for humanity.

Pastor: In this season of Lent, as we make our way to the cross, we strive to follow Christ's example: to admit betrayal and fear that are a part of life,

People: to embrace trust in God and love for humanity.

Pastor: We begin our journey to the cross.

HYMN

'Beneath the Cross of Jesus'

No. 297

*Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand
The shadow of a mighty rock
Within a weary land.
A home within the wilderness,
A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat,
And the burden of the day.*

*Upon that cross of Jesus
Mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One
Who suffered there for me.
And from my stricken
Heart with tears,
Two wonders I confess,
The wonders of redeeming love
And my unworthiness.*

*I take, O cross, thy shadow
For my abiding place.
I ask no other sunshine than
The sunshine of His face.
Content to let the world go by,
To know no gain nor loss.
My sinful self my only shame,
My glory all the cross.*

OPENING PRAYER

Sheltering God, through your Spirit, you drove your son, Jesus Christ, into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Yet, even there he was sheltered by your word. As you were to him in those trials and tribulations, be our refuge and our fortress as we begin this Lenten journey. This we pray in your good and holy name. Amen.

INTROIT

'Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley'

TFWS No. 2112, vs. 1 & 2

*Jesus walked this lonesome valley.
He had to walk it by Himself;
O, nobody else could walk it for Him,
He had to walk it by Himself.*

*We must walk this lonesome valley,
We have to walk it by ourselves;
O, nobody else can walk it for us,
We have to walk it by ourselves.*

CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

CELEBRATION THROUGH THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Pastor: O Lord, open our eyes, our ears our minds, and our hearts.

People: **that we might behold wondrous things out of your word.**

CHORAL RESPONSE

'Thy Word'

No. 601 (Refrain only)

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

FIRST LESSON

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

'Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus'

No. 349

*"Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will
Grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace."*

Pastor: The Lord be with you,

People: **and also with you.**

Pastor: A reading from the Gospel of St. Luke.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

*THE GOSPEL IS READ

Luke 4:1-13

*THE GOSPEL RESPONSE

Pastor: The Gospel of the Living Christ.

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*GLORIA PATRI

No. 70

CELEBRATION THROUGH PROCLAMATION

SERMON

'Worshipping Through Our Stories'

Rev. Russel Shuluga

CELEBRATION THROUGH CONFESSION AND PARDON

CALL TO CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins before our merciful God and beg for God's pardon on this Lenten journey.

GENERAL CONFESSION

Holy God, we have entered the wilderness of Lent and temptations are all around us. From outside and from within we are tempted to abandon your Word and replace it with lies of our own. We confess that we have not trusted you as we should. Through both our action and our inaction we have failed to trust your Word and believe your promise of salvation. Forgive us, merciful God, and hear now our prayer.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Friends, by the grace of God, you and I have been forgiven of our sins.

HYMN OF ASSURANCE

'What Wondrous Love Is This'

No. 292, v. 1

***What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.***

CELEBRATION THROUGH COMMITMENT

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

THE LORD'S OFFERING

THE OFFERTORY

"Jesus Thou My Life Art Ever"

F.W. Zachau

*DOXOLOGY

No. 95

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of Deliverance, you led your chosen people long ago out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land. Your people rejoiced and worshipped you with the first fruits of their labors. Their contributions were a symbol of devotion to your mighty presence in their lives and in the lives of following generations. Guide our gifts so that they may be multiplied to help those still languishing in the wilderness of uncertainty. Help our giving to inspire others as they journey toward the promise of Eternal Life. Through your holy son, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

CELEBRATION THROUGH THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

Dear friends, we are going to Jerusalem with Jesus.

He is our pardon, our healing, and our peace!

We will suffer the trial with him, resisting evil.

With him, we will walk the path to life.

But come first to the table where there is food for the journey.

With hearts full of joy we come,

giving thanks to God, our maker,

and offering our praise!

HYMN

'We Come to This Table'

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

KREMSER 12.11.12.12 ("We Gather Together")

We come to this table, O God, with thanksgiving.

We lift up our hearts, we remember, we pray.

We hear Jesus' welcome — inviting, forgiving;

We know your Spirit's peace as we feast here today.

We dine at your table as sisters and brothers,

Diverse in our cultures, yet nourished as one.

The bread and the cup that we share here with others

Are gifts uniting all who are claimed by your Son.

We grieve for your world here; we cry, "How much longer?"

We pray for the cycles of violence to cease.

Yet here, in Christ broken, we're fed and made stronger

To labor in his name for a world filled with peace.

We rise from this table with new dedication

To feed the world's children, to free the oppressed,

To clear out the minefields, to care for creation;

We pray, O God of peace, that our work will be blest.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Pastor: May God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, O Lord our God, creator and ruler of the universe. When our ancestors were slaves in Egypt, strangers in the land, you saw our suffering, heard our cries, and came to deliver us— bringing us out of captivity into a land flowing with milk and honey.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with choirs of angels with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all the faithful of every time and place who forever sing to the glory of your name:

SANCTUS

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Tested for forty days in the wilderness, Jesus taught us to seek nourishment in your word, to worship and serve you alone, and to commit our lives to your providence and protection.

Remembering your gracious acts in Jesus Christ, we take from your creation this bread and this wine and joyfully celebrate his dying and rising, as we await the day of his coming. With thanksgiving, we offer our very selves to you to be a living and holy sacrifice, dedicated to your service. Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit, unite us with Christ and with your church in all the world.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever.

Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Sung)

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Thank you, merciful God, for gladness in this bread and cup, for love that cannot die, for peace the world cannot give, for joy in the company of friends, for the splendors of creation, and for the mission of justice you have made our own. Give us the gifts of this Holy Communion —oneness of heart, love for neighbors, forgiveness of enemies, the will to serve you every day, and life that never ends. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

CELEBRATION THROUGH SENDING

*BENEDICTION

Pastor: As you leave this place, abide in the shadow of the Most High.
People: God is our refuge and our strength.
Pastor: As you wander through the wilderness, put your trust in the Holy One.
People: Christ is our shelter in times of temptation and fear.
Pastor: As you face times of trial, call on the name of the Lord and be saved.
People: The Comforter leads us safely through. Go with God's blessing.

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

'Jesus, Remember Me'

No. 488

*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*



*RECESSIONAL HYMN

'You Give Your Church a Story'
(Tune Hail to the Lord's Anointed No. 203)

(Carolyn Winfrey Gillette)

*You give your church a story, O God of wondrous grace —
A story of your goodness and of your love's embrace:
A wandering Aramean once settled in the land.
Your people longed for freedom; you saved them by your hand.
You give to us a harvest and teach us to recall
That when your gifts seem endless and when our fields grow tall,
We're called to share your kindness — with immigrants as friends;
Your story still reminds us how far your love extends.
You give your church a memory — the good news written down —
So when the world is scary, we'll know where help is found.
As Jesus quoted scripture when good and evil blurred,
We see the bigger picture when guided by your word.
Your word to us is precious — reminding where we've been,
proclaiming you are generous, and teaching, "Love will win!"
It points us to your glory and shows us what to do.
May we who hear your story be glad to follow you.*

*POSTLUDE

'See The Lord of Life and Light'

J.S. Bach

WE TAKE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD



Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word *lencten*, meaning “lengthen” and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance by all Christians. Today, Christians focus on relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter." This is why you will see the designation "Sunday in Lent" rather than "Sunday of Lent" in the naming of these Sundays. On each Lord's Day in Lent, while Lenten fasts continue, the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.