

Sunday March 27th, 2022
The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship (Inspired by Psalm 32)

One: Happy are those who experience the grace of God
Many: Who find forgiveness and mercy from the Holy One.
One: Happy are those who experience the steadfast love of God
Many: Who find peace even in times of trial.
One: Happy are those who experience rest in God
Many: Who find sabbath to renew their spirit.

Opening Prayer Unison

Holy God, Holy Renewal, after times of broken relationships, painful injustices, and feeling deserted, we enter this season yearning for restoration and your comforting grace. In this time of wilderness and reflection, we evaluate the relationships between us and our neighbors. Fill our weary souls with hope. Lead us on roads of renewal, and focus our minds as we ponder our callings in your realm. Amen.

Hymn #35: "O Mighty God, When I Survey in Wonder"
(Please see separate attachment for the score)

Hymn Leader: Choir

- 1) O mighty God, when I survey in wonder the world that formed when once the word you said,
The strands of life all woven close together, the whole creation at your table fed,
My soul cries out in songs of praise to you, O mighty God! O mighty God!
My soul cries out in songs of praise to you, O might God! O mighty God!

- 2) When your voice speaks in rolls of thunder pealing, your lightning power bursts in bright surprise;
When cooling rain, your gentle love revealing, reflects your promise, arcing through the skies,
My soul cries out in songs of praise to you, O mighty God! O mighty God!
My soul cries out in songs of praise to you, O might God! O mighty God!

- 3) The Bible tells the story of your blessing so freely shed upon all human life;
Your constant mercy, every care addressing, relieving burdened souls from sin
and strife.
My soul cries out in songs of praise to you, O mighty God! O mighty God!
My soul cries out in songs of praise to you, O might God! O mighty God!
- 4) And when, at last, the clouds of doubt dispersing, you will reveal what we but
dimly see;
With trumpet call, our great rebirth announcing, we shall rejoin you for eternity,
Then we will sing your praise for evermore, O might God! O mighty God!
Then we will sing your praise for evermore, O Mighty God! O mighty God!

Prayer of Reflection and Growth **Unison**

Holy Breath of Life, there are moments when our decisions do not take into consideration the well-being of our neighbors. There are times when our reactions turn inward instead of building healthy reconciliation. How is it that we are holding back our neighbor's rebirth? How are our implicit and explicit biases restricting God's grace and radical love? How do our actions and biases impede our own spiritual growth?

Urge us to be life-giving agents of your love. May each of our steps be healing not only to us, but to our siblings on the journey. Amen.

Pastoral Assurance

God, our Divine Parent, runs towards us with infinite love and grace. May the mercy we experience transform our minds, hearts, and souls. May we extend God's grace as we run towards our Divine Parent.

Passing of the Peace

**Pastor: The Peace of Christ be with you
People: And also with you!**

Reading

Jim Miers

Psalm 32 The Joy of Forgiveness

- ¹ Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
² Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
³ While I kept silence, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Selah

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Selah

⁶ Therefore let all who are faithful
offer prayer to you;
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters
shall not reach them.
⁷ You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

Selah

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
⁹ Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle,
else it will not stay near you.
¹⁰ Many are the torments of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.
¹¹ Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Special Music

Keith Johnson and Tom Gill

Gospel Reading: The Prodigal Son

Luke 15:1-3, 11B-32

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So he told them this parable:

¹¹ Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent

everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'"

²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Musical Interlude

Sermon: Slip Sliding Away

Music for Meditation

Prayers of the People

Hymn #576: For the Healing of the Nations
(Please see separate attachment for the score)

Hymn Leader: Choir

- 1) For the healing of the nations, God, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords;
to a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word.
- 2) Lead us forward into freedom; from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness fear will die and hope increase.
- 3) All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned;
pride of status, race, or schooling, dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice may we hallow life's brief span.
- 4) You, Creator God, have written your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness bring the life of Christ to mind,
that by our response and service earth its destiny may find.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer Unison

Offering Invitation

Even when our gifts become dormant, God our Divine Parent stirs our hearts, calling us to bring to life our gifts once again. What gifts may God be challenging us to revive? How can these treasures, talents, and time create equitable communities?

Offering and Dedication Unison

Loving God, Holy Fountain of Blessings, with gratitude we celebrate the offerings we share with you and this community today. May they enliven our spirits, build excitement around us, and create a culture of giving. Open us to new possibilities for using our gifts to build the dignity of all and to strengthen our neighborhoods. Amen.

Benediction Unison

May our spirits come alive in this season of Lent when we run to God, our Divine Parent, with the hopes of strengthening our bonds; when we embrace the Christ, our Divine Neighbor, with the hopes of reconciliation; when we breathe with the Spirit, our Divine Encourager, in the hopes of peace. Amen.