

ST. STEPHEN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Service for The Lord's Day

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 19, 2023 | 11:00 AM

Bold text: All | Regular text: Leader | †: *Please stand in body or spirit.*



ENTERING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

PRELUDE: *Organ Hymn* (2015)

Raymond H. Haan (b. 1938)

PEAL OF THE TOWER BELLS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are blind to many things.

Lord, cure our blindness.

The light of God shines for us today.

Lord, pour that light upon us.

We come to worship God who forgives and heals our blindness.

Open our eyes, O Lord, that we might see opportunities to serve you. Amen.

†HYMN: 377 *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*

HOUSTON

OPENING PRAYER

Let us join together in our opening prayer.

God of great mercy and love, we come to you this day seeking restoration of our sight. Clear away our blindness, and give us a new vision of all that we can accomplish in your name. Give us strength and confidence to truly witness to your abiding love and faithfulness. For we offer this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

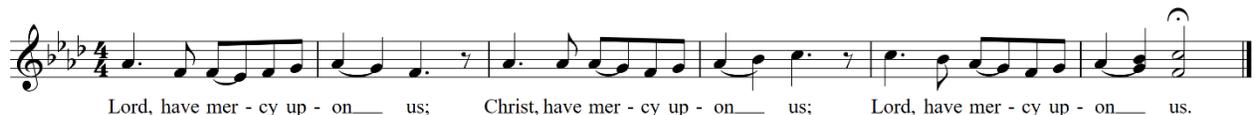
CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*kneeling or bowing down*)

Healing God, we have languished in our blindness. We have chosen to avoid reaching out and risking acceptance. We are afraid of the light of truth, and yet we crave it; for in it, there is healing, hope, restoration, and transformation. Forgive our lack of faith and our fearfulness, O Lord. Give us courage to open our eyes to see and accept the new things you are doing in this world. May our lives be transformed by your mercy, for we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

(*Moment of silent confession*)

KYRIE



ASSURANCE OF PARDON AT THE FONT

Friends, by God's grace and redemption we have been claimed and freed, and this truth is made visible in our baptism.

Our willfulness blinds and separates us from God's mercy and work in and around us. God's desire is for us to see and engage.

We have confessed our sins, and we are forgiven!

Thanks be to God! Amen.

PASSING THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Please stand and greet your neighbors with a sign of Christ's peace and love.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Bruce Campbell

HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Pew Bible, OT, p. 259

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE LESSON: Ephesians 5:8-14

Pew Bible, NT, p. 194

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

All children 5th grade and younger are invited into the center of the sanctuary to surround the Gospeler during the Gospel Processional Hymn. Afterward, the children will be led out of the sanctuary to the Chapel for Godly Play, and will return during the hymn that follows the sermon.

†GOSPEL PROCESSIONAL HYMN: 451 *Open My Eyes, That I May See* 1-2 | 3

OPEN MY EYES

†GOSPEL LESSON: John 9:1-41

Pew Bible, NT, p. 102

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON: "Seeking: Who Sinned?"

Rev. Angie Mabry, *Interim Pastor*

SILENT REFLECTION

Ultimately, the Gospel story concludes with the town members throwing the blind man out. They refuse to accept that he has been changed. They perceive his transformation as a threat. Can this story be a cautionary tale for us? When does our doctrine lead us to isolating and exiling people?

†HYMN: 649 *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound*

AMAZING GRACE

†AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*Westminster Larger Catechism, Modern English Version*)

Q. 7. What is God?

A. God is a spirit, who in and of [Godself] is infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection. [God] is all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, beyond our full understanding, present everywhere, almighty, knowing everything, completely wise, completely holy, completely just, completely merciful and gracious, patient, and overflowing with goodness and truth.

Q. 8. Is there more than one God?

A. There is only one, the living and true God.

Q. 9. How many persons are in the one God?

A. Three persons are in the one God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Although they are differentiated by their own individual, personal qualities, these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance and equal in power and glory.

INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY: *The Lord is My Shepherd* (1994)

Howard Goodall (b. 1958)

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
For you are with me, you will comfort me.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

†DOXOLOGY 606

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessing flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

†PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Let us pray together.
O God, with faith and hope, we offer these gifts. Use them, as you use us, to accomplish your purposes in Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church and the Lord of our lives. Amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD (*kneeling or bowing down*)

THE 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. Amen.

DEPARTING IN GOD'S GRACE

†HYMN: 362 *Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers*

LLANGLOFFAN

†CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Beloved people of God; the Holy Spirit invites us, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent by **self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of justice and love, and by meditating on God's Word.**

Go in peace, to love and serve God and God's people.

Amen.

PEAL OF THE TOWER BELLS

POSTLUDE: *Toccata on 'Amazing Grace'* (2001)

J. Christopher Pardini (b. 1973)

The Lenten Décor on the Holy Table encompasses much symbolism, from the fabric depicting Almighty God and Creator, to the fabric of the Holy Spirit over the Water, and “Peace, be still” story of Jesus calming the seas. The purple fabric portrays Jesus as sovereign and king. The Last Supper is depicted with a simple pitcher and cup while the Baptism of the Lord is symbolized with the blue bowls and colored stones (the bowls were recovered from the office after the vandalism in 2017). The flowers symbolize the colors of lent using small arrangements to minimize our celebration. The palm tree looms over all as foretelling of glory of the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem before his death on the cross.



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