

The Church at Worship
Second Sunday in Lent

February 28, 2021

9:00 am

“How is a disciple to know which is his or her cross? We receive it upon entering the discipleship of the suffering Lord, and come to recognize it in the community of Jesus.”
(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Gathering

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Remembering Black History Month – Gale Kinney

Call to Worship

(— written by Thom M. Shuman)

- W. Pilgrims, we are invited to journey through this season of Lent
L. toward the One who calls us each by a new name.
W. Disciples, we walk with Jesus wherever he leads us,
L. pulling our fears, our doubts, our longings behind us.
W. Believers, we seek to trust the God who always surprises us,
L. whose promises take on flesh and blood in the good news called Jesus.

Prayer of Gathering

- W. Eternal God, holy and faithful, what can we give in return for our life? Teach us to take up the cross of Christ with grateful hearts and humble spirits, offering all for the sake of the gospel, so that we may receive life in fullness; through Christ, who is coming in glory. Amen.

Morning Hymn: Sarabande by Bach, played by Jill Fung

What Wondrous Love Is This, #257WR, vs. 1 and 2

Confessing

“To be a saint does not mean never to sin. It means to start again with humility and joy after each fall.”
(Dom Helder Camara)

Invitation to Confession

(— written by Thom M. Shuman)

- W. If we would only confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from the wrongs we have caused. Let us confess our sin, trusting God’s promised mercy.

Prayer of Confession

- L. Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you and one another in our thoughts, our words and our actions. There is a brokenness in us that reflects the

brokenness of our world — and it is deep and broad. Yet in your mercy and healing grace, you can restore us and empower us to walk in the way of Christ.

W. In your mercy and healing grace, you can reform our paths toward love and justice for our neighbors and for the earth. In your mercy and healing grace, you can make your peace – your shalom – a reality in our communities and lives.
Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

L. Listen carefully, dear friends. God does not reject us, God redeems us. God does not back out of the relationship created so long ago, God restores it to its original purpose. God does not hold back, but pours abundant forgiveness into our lives.

W. Forgiven, we can follow; filled with hope, we can empty ourselves for others; restored to new life, we can live in relationship with God, with our neighbors and enemies, with ourselves. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn: I Come to the Cross, #251WR

Hearing

Scripture Read

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Choral Worship: At the Cross, #258WR

The Word Read and Spoken

Mark 8:31-38

“What It Means To Take Our Own Cross”

Responding

Hymn

Offering of Prayers and Gifts

W. Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer (use if you like)

Written by Roger Gench (Source: Pres-Outlook)

O God, our creator and redeemer, we pray that the Spirit of Jesus would be with us as we continue our journey through Lent. Jesus called his disciples to pick up their cross and follow him. Help us to discern what that means for us as the church in this time and place. Give us the courage to name suffering and evil and to stand in resistance to it. Give us endurance when we face persecution for resisting abuses in our lives and communities. Empower us to stand with those who suffer on account of homelessness, lack of food or resources, or other injustices. Inspire us to see Christ in the least of these in our midst.

O God, we pray for those who are isolated and lonely during this pandemic. May we find ways to be a comfort for them. We pray for children and parents who are navigating school and work under such stressful circumstances. We pray for those who have lost loved ones because of the virus and are grieving the loss. We pray for your church in this

time of crisis and that we would find new ways to live your mission. We also pray for those hurt by the snow and ice storms that have ravaged large sections of our county — adding to the already stressful realities of life in our current crisis.

And, O God, we continue to pray for the global community as it grapples with the pandemic. We pray that you would give us the fortitude to take responsibility for measures that will protect us all. We pray especially for the those hit hardest by the strains of this menace, and pray for those in leadership in our communities, states and nation as they negotiate ways in which to aid those most afflicted. We pray for a speedy process of vaccination in this country and in countries around the globe. And we pray for fairness in access to the vaccine for countries that heretofore have not received it. May this injustice be rectified.

We prayer all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying, *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.*

W. God is a fountain of good gifts that are bestowed upon all of us. Let us respond to these gifts by returning a portion of our resources as a sign that all of who we are is a gift from God. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

(Adapted from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Study Catechism, Question 45)

L. Why did Jesus have to suffer as he did?

W. Because grace is more abundant – and sin more serious – than we suppose. However cruelly we may treat one another, all sin is primarily against God. God condemns sin, yet never judges apart from grace. In giving Jesus Christ to die for us, God took the burden of our sin into God’s own self to remove it once and for all. The cross in all its severity reveals an abyss of sin swallowed up by the suffering of divine love.

Going Forth

Blessing

L. Disciples of Jesus, do not shun the way of the cross, but follow wherever our Lord may lead. May the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, uphold you on the way.

Postlude