



THIRD SUNDAY
in
LENT

The Service for the Lord's Day
Bethel Presbyterian Church - Online Service
3rd Sunday in Lent
March 7, 2021 - 11:00 AM

Welcome

Prelude

Call to Worship (L = Leader, P = People)

L: Jesus, Light of the World, give us eyes to see as you see!
Once we lived in darkness, but now—

**P: as children of light, we are called
to what is good and right and true.**

L: Jesus, Light of the World,

P: give us eyes to see as you see!

Prayer of Invocation

Let us pray:

Holy God, why is it that we look but do not see?

Bring us again and again into your light

until your ways become visible to us, and bear fruit in us.

Touch us so that we are utterly changed,

a “before” and “after”,

a “now” and “then”;

that we may also say,

“One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

Lord, we believe; help our unbelief.

In Christ's light, we pray. Amen.

Hymn

“GOD IS CALLING THROUGH THE WHISPER”

*God is calling through the whisper
of the Spir-it’s deep-est sighs,
through the thrill of sud-den beau-ties
that can catch us by sur-prise.
Flash of light-ning, crash of thun-der;
hush of still-ness, rush of won-der:
God is call-ing – can you hear?
God is call-ing – can you hear?*

*God is call-ing through the voic-es
of our neigh-bors’ ur-gent prayers,
through their long-ing for re-demp-tion
and for res-cue from de-spair.
Place of hurt or face of need-ing;
stri-dent cry or si-lent plead-ing:
God is call-ing – can you hear?
God is call-ing – can you hear?*

*God is call-ing through the mu-sic
of sub-lime and hu-man arts,
through the hymns of earth and an-gels,
and the car-ols of our hearts.
Lift of joy and gift of sing-ing;
days and nights our prais-es bring-ing:
God is call-ing – and we hear!
God is call-ing – and we hear!*

Call to Confession

As children of God’s light,
we are called to do what is pleasing to the Lord:
to participate in what is good and right and true,
and expose what is unfruitful and evil.

God does not punish our sin with trials
but desires our genuine contrition.

And so, we bring our confession to God,
so that what is hidden in us becomes visible,
and the shadows of our hearts may be illumined by grace.

Corporate Prayer of Confession

**Healing God of majesty and glory,
we are thirsty for your grace.**

**You made a way for us in the wilderness,
and still, in our foolishness, we go astray.**

We hide our eyes from your presence.

We do not listen to your word.

**We are lifeless when we ought to dance
and speechless when we ought to sing.**

Forgive us, O Lord.

**Speak peace to our fearful hearts,
strengthen our weak hands,
and make firm our feeble knees**

as we seek to follow in your holy way. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness

Now return to the Lord with joy and gladness.

Sing a song of redemption!

Let sorrow and sighing be no more.

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer for Illumination

Let us pray:

Gracious God, illumine our hearts and minds
as the Scriptures are read and proclaimed,
so that by the power of your Holy Spirit
we may see what is good and right and true.

And seeing, help us to do what is pleasing to you,
so that your glory becomes visible in our words and deeds.

In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Readings from Holy Scripture

Prophet Isaiah 35:4-7a (*The Return of the Redeemed to Zion*)

Gospel John 9:1-41 (*A Man Born Blind Receives Sight*)

Sermon

“The Heart of the Matter”

The Rev. Dr. Wendy Neff

Affirmation of Faith

*Taken from The Brief Statement of Faith, 1991,
The Book of Confessions, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

In life and death we belong to God.

**Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,**

**and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.**

**We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.**

**Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed
and blessing the children,
healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.**

**Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.**

**God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.**

Prayers of the People

Remember your mercy, O Lord, and help us,
for you are strong and trustworthy.

Let all generations see your blessing,
for your name is holy and your mercy is great.

Show the strength of your hand,
quiet our fears.

Comfort those of us who are afflicted,
with your mighty, healing hands.

(cont.)

Afflict those of us who are comfortable,
to feel the pain of all who suffer.

Then we will sing out with joy and glorify you forever;
for your mercy shows no bounds. Amen.

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 sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Hymn

“HOPE OF THE WORLD”

(v. 1-4)

*Hope of the world, thou Christ of great com-pas-sion:
speak to our fear-ful hearts by con-flict rent;
save us, thy peo-ple, from con-sum-ing pas-sion,
who by our own false hopes and aims are spent.*

*Hope of the world, God's gift from high-est heav-en,
bring-ing to hun-gry souls the bread of life:
still let thy Spir-it un-to us be giv-en
to heal earth's wounds and end our bit-ter strife.*

*Hope of the world, a-foot on dust-y high-ways,
show-ing to wan-dering souls the path of light:
walk thou be-side us lest the tempt-ing by-ways
lure us a-way from thee to end-less night.*

*Hope of the world, who by thy cross didst save us
from death and deep de-spair, from sin and guilt:
we ren-der back the love thy mer-cy gave us;
take thou our lives and use them as thou will.*

Benediction

Go peaceably,
looking upon the hearts of others
with the same compassion Christ has shown you.

Trust that he is able to open your eyes,
enabling you to walk by faith in his name.

May the love of God pursue you,
the light of Christ enfold you,
and the Holy Spirit keep you;
as you dwell in the house of the Lord
your whole life long.

Minister: The Rev. Dr. Wendy Neff

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP THIS MORNING

Pianist: Judy Moyer

Sound: Adam Badger

Video: Jake Horton

“God Is Calling through the Whisper”

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, 2003

Music: Polish carol; harm. Wilbur Lee, 1958

Text © 2006 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music Harm. © 1958 Broadman Press (admin. Music Services)

“Hope of the World”

Text: Georgia Harkness, 1954

Music: Genevan Psalter, 1551

Text © 1954, ren. 1982 The Hymn Society

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