

Lent, 2021
The First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn
Ash Wednesday – February 17

Call to Worship

Jonah 2:2-9a

In my distress I called to the Lord,

And He answered me.

From the depths of the grave I called for help,

And You listened to my cry.

You hurled me into the deep.

Into the very heart of the seas,

And the currents swirled about me.

All Your waves and breakers swept over me.

I said, "I have been banished from Your sight.

Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.

The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me.

Seaweed was wrapped around my head.

To the roots of the mountains I sank down.

The earth beneath me barred me in forever.

But You brought my life up from the pit,

O Lord, my God.

When my life was ebbing away,

I remembered You, Lord.

And my prayer rose to You, to Your holy temple.

Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.

But I, with a song of thanksgiving,

Will sacrifice to You.

The First Reading

Prayer of Confession: Psalm 51:1-18

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love;

According to Your great compassion, blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Against You, only You, I have sinned,

And done what is evil in Your sight,

So that You are proved right when You speak,

And justified when You judge.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Prayers of the People

Dear Lord, grant to all who come before You this night the peace of Your presence. We pray that all who invoke Your presence will feel its warmth in spite of the coldness of the world, and will see it shining through even the brightest, fleeting glitter of our misdirected hopes. Our heads deeply bowed,

We pray to You, O Lord.

Draw us more deeply, Lord, into the faith that can be ours through Your Holy Spirit. Surround our lives with Your loving presence, so that neither fear nor loneliness can invade our lives and lead us from You. Our heads deeply bowed,

We pray to You, O Lord.

During these next six weeks, Lord, help us to repent of our distance from You, distances which we have allowed, not only because of fear or loneliness, but because of selfishness and laziness as well. Teach us to feel the dread of that distance so that we feel the joy of Your nearness. Our heads deeply bowed,

We pray to You, O Lord.

We thank You, Lord, because You have promised that You will be with Your creation this night, that You will comfort the fearful, strengthen the weak, be present to the lonely, and encourage the faithful. Help us to work to be Your hands and feet in and among Your people. Our heads deeply bowed,

We pray to You, O Lord.

Standing on the edge of faith, we beg You to hold us up with Your gift of peace, and to hear our prayers. All this we pray in Jesus' name, saying, "Our Father ..."

The Gospel Reading

Sermon

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give You thanks, O Lord, that You have welcomed us, unworthy as we are, into Your presence. Fill us with a gratitude born of the knowledge of Your Son's sacrifice, and send us forth to embrace the freedom and joy this sacrifice brings. Amen.

Benediction