

**Lenten Midweek Service**  
**The First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn**  
**Wednesday, March 16, 2022**

THE OPENING SPEECH

“The High Priest”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Adapted from Isaiah 56:1-5

Maintain justice and do what is right.

***For my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed.***

Blessed is the one who does this,

***The one who holds it fast,***

Who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it,

***And keeps his hand from doing any evil.***

Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the Lord say,

***“The Lord will surely exclude me from His people.”***

And let not anyone complain,

***“I am only a dry tree.”***

For this is what the Lord says:

***“To those who keep my Sabbaths,***

Who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant,

***To them I will give within my temple***

And its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters.

***I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off.”***

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Exodus 32:1-14

**32** When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

<sup>2</sup> Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” <sup>3</sup> So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

<sup>5</sup>When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD.” <sup>6</sup>So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. <sup>8</sup>They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’

<sup>9</sup>“I have seen these people,” the LORD said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. <sup>10</sup>Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”

<sup>11</sup>But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. “LORD,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup>Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. <sup>13</sup>Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.’” <sup>14</sup>Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

PSALM 77:11-20

Stanza 1

I will remember the deeds of the Lord.

***Yes, I will remember Your miracles of long ago.***

I will meditate on all Your works,

***And consider all Your mighty deeds.***

Your ways, O God, are holy.

***What god is so great as our God?***

You are the God who performs miracles.

***You display Your power among the peoples.***

With Your mighty arm You redeemed Your people,

***The descendants of Jacob and Joseph.***

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 26:57-

68

<sup>57</sup> Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. <sup>58</sup> But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

<sup>59</sup> The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. <sup>60</sup> But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally, two came forward <sup>61</sup> and declared, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’”

<sup>62</sup> Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” <sup>63</sup> But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

<sup>64</sup> “You have said so,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

<sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. <sup>66</sup> What do you think?”

“He is worthy of death,” they answered.

<sup>67</sup> Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him <sup>68</sup> and said, “Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?”

## A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

PSALM 77:11-20

Stanza 2

The waters saw You, O God. The waters saw You and writhed.

***The very depths were convulsed.***

The clouds poured down water, the skies resounded with thunder.

***Your arrows flashed back and forth.***

Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, Your lightning lit up the world.

***The Earth trembled and quaked.***

Your path led through the sea.

*Your way through the mighty waters, though Your footprints were not seen.*  
You led Your people like a flock,  
*By the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

#### THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray to recognize and rejoice in the loving gift of faith that God has for us.

Creator God, far beyond our understanding, You reach Your loving hand toward us. We ask that You help us to grasp the wonder of this love and the freedom such faith gives us. Doing this, we will not be able to restrain the joyful witness that will pour out from us.

*We pray to You, O Lord.*

Forgive us, Lord, for hiding behind the world You have given us, and claiming the things of this world which are destined for extinction, and even the relationships You have given us as the gods on which we rely. Increase in us the knowledge on Your love, thereby increasing our peace of mind and heart.

*We pray to You, O Lord.*

Increase in us, dear Lord, the knowledge of Your will and the dedication we feel to the proclamation of Your Good News. Unite Your Church so that the world with which You have blessed us may see the powerful force of Your love.

*We pray to You, O Lord.*

(Other petitions may be offered.)

All this we pray in Jesus' name, 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.*

#### BENEDICTION