

Our Service of Worship for February 21, 2021

The First Sunday of Lent

Westwood First Presbyterian Church

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude: “Hymne”—Gordon Young

During the Prelude, you are invited to take a moment to prepare for worship.

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Hymn: “*God of the Sparrow*” *

A Time of Confession

Prayer for Illumination/Scripture Readings: Genesis 9:8-17; Mark 1:9-15 *

Sermon: “*A Dangerous Place*”

Solo: “Give Me Jesus,” arr. Mark Hayes—Noelle Scheper, soprano

The Pastoral Prayer and 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.

Hymn: “*Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*” *

Charge and Benediction

Postlude: “Voluntary in A Minor”—Boyce

* The words to the hymns and readings are included with the order of worship.

Rev. Dr. Jeff Colarossi

Pastor

Heather MacPhail

Organist/Director of Music Ministries



God of the Sparrow

1. God of the sparrow, God of the whale, God of the swirling stars,
How does the creature say Awe? How does the creature say Praise?
2. God of the earthquake, God of the storm, God of the trumpet blast,
How does the creature cry Woe? How does the creature cry Save?
3. God of the neighbor, God of the foe, God of the pruning hook,
How does the creature say Love? How does the creature say Peace?
4. God of the ages, God near at hand, God of the loving heart,
How do your children say Joy? How do your children say Home?

Lord, who throughout these forty days

1. Lord, who throughout these forty days for us didst fast and pray,
Teach us with Thee to mourn our sins, and close by Thee to stay.
2. And through these days of penitence, and through Thy Passion-tide,
Yea, evermore, in life and death, O Lord, with us abide.
3. Abide with us that, when this life of suffering is past,
An Easter of unending joy we may attain at last!

First Reading: Genesis 9:8-17—The Covenant with Noah

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹“As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

¹² God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷ God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”



Gospel Reading: Mark 1:9-15—Jesus' Baptism, Temptation and Early Ministry



⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

Moment for Meditation—A Reformed Understanding of Lent

Most of us know something of Lent, whether or not we have participated in its activities. We may recognize Lent as that period of time before Easter on the church calendar. Or we may know people who have observed Lent by fasting, sacrificing a favorite entertainment for a few weeks, or setting aside money for a special cause.

But while we may acknowledge Lent as a time of spiritual discipline in the lives of others, and although we would readily admit that we also seek spiritual depth, observing this church season hasn't been our practice. Many of us are skeptical about participating in such practices because we are uncertain whether they are consistent with our faith tradition. But perhaps it's time we gave Lent a second thought.

At its heart, Lent has always been a season of preparation. During the weeks of Lent the early church catechized those who would be baptized on the coming Easter morning, instructing them in the fullness of the faith. Others who had been estranged from the church's fellowship were called to repentance so that they might be received more fully again.

Later this theme of repentance permeated the faith community, as did almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. Through these activities the church sought to enact its oneness with the Lord in service and sacrifice. Lent developed because these Christians recognized the call to prepare to follow Christ in obedience, the kind of obedience in which taking up a cross preceded resurrection.

But underlying all of these, and becoming their focus, the call to preparation is essentially a call to prepare God's pathway into human hearts. As this awareness of who we are grows, we gain deeper insight into worship as well as Lent. And this is a perspective we need. So often we feel our lives are already very full. In the midst of rustling papers and busy agendas, the voice of Lent stops us and quietly speaks of fullness in Christ.

~ Shirley Heeg, reformedworship.org