

Sunday Worship – February 21, 2021



In Our Hands | Lauren Wright Pittman
Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on paper

Again & Again: God Meets Us

First Sunday in Lent

First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon, Iowa
*“Striving to live as Jesus lived—
confronting injustice with love, compassion, service*

First Sunday in Lent
February 21, 2021
9:30 am

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

INTRODUCING OUR LENTEN THEME

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: God meets us in the night—

**All: Before the sun rises,
Before the wound heals,
Before there are answers,
Before there is closure.**

L: God meets us in the light—

**All: Where joy is effervescent,
Where laughter is contagious,
Where flowers bloom from cracks in the sidewalk,
And where people gather around the table.**

L: God meets us at the threshold—

**All: At the edge of the water,
At the beginning of the wilderness,
At the start of something new,
On the edge of faith.**

L: And if God meets us in all those places,
Then surely God meets us in between—

All: Staying with us through the wilderness.

L: We are not alone. God is all around.

All: Let us worship the God of the here and now.

~Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

HYMN #411 God Is Here Today (sing three times)

*God is here today; as certain as the air I breathe,
as certain as the morning sun that rises,
as certain when I sing you'll hear my voice.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Again and again, God meets us where we are.

God's love knows no bounds, which is hard for us to understand and easy for us to forget.

Therefore, in confession we remember together that we are not alone.

And in a unified voice, we once again ask for God's grace in that holy reminder. Family of faith, please pray with me:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: God who meets us where we are—
There is nowhere we can go that you are not.

**All: You were with Jesus at his baptism.
You were with him in the wilderness,
And even in between, you were there,
Saying aloud, "This is my beloved."**

L: We know that you are with us too—
In the good, the bad, and everything in between—
But so often we act like we are alone.

**All: Instead of coming to you with our hurt,
We hold it in or cast it onto others.
Instead of coming to you with our joy,
We credit ourselves and offer you nothing.**

L: How can we long for a deeper relationship with you
While living like you are nowhere to be found?

**All: Forgive our self-centered ways.
Remind us that in every breath, in every step, you are there.**

L: You are the God who meets us where we are.
**All: Before and behind, above and below, within and
around.**

Time of Silence

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

L: Amen.

Family of faith, if you hear nothing else today, hear this:
God is here. God sees you. God knows you. God meets you at the edge of every new beginning,
and God calls you beloved.

**All: We are washed by the water. We are called beloved.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.**

~Call, Confession & Assurance by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

REPONSE #814 In God Alone (sing three times)

*In God alone my soul can find rest and peace,
in God my peace and joy.
Only in God my soul can find its rest,
find its rest and peace.*

PASSING OF THE PEACE

L: The peace of Christ that passes understanding be with you.
P: And also with you.

DISCOVERY TIME

SCRIPTURE

L: In the beginning was the Word.

P: And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

L: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Genesis 9:8-17 (Common English Bible) – God’s Covenant with Noah

God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “I am now setting up my covenant with you, with your descendants, and with every living being with you—with the birds, with the large animals, and with all the animals of the earth, leaving the ark with you. I will set up my covenant with you so that never again will all life be cut off by floodwaters. There will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.”

God said, “This is the symbol of the covenant that I am drawing up between me and you and every living thing with you, on behalf of every future generation. I have placed my bow in the clouds; it will be the symbol of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will remember the covenant between me and you and every living being among all the creatures. Floodwaters will never again destroy all creatures. The bow will be in the clouds, and upon seeing it I will remember the enduring covenant between God and every living being of all the earth’s creatures.” God said to Noah, “This is the symbol of the covenant that I have set up between me and all creatures on earth.”

Mark 1:9-15 (Common English Bible) – Jesus’ Baptism & the Forty Days

About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. While he was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on him. And there was a voice from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness.”

At once the Spirit forced Jesus out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among the wild animals, and the angels took care of him.

After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee announcing God’s good news, saying, “Now is the time! Here comes God’s kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!”

L: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us,

P: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION ON THE WORD Again & Again: God Meets Us

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

All: We believe in a God who is everywhere and right here,

Bigger than the sky and in the smallest details,

All at once and in every moment.

We believe that God meets us where we are—

In heartbreak and high hopes,

**Around crowded tables and in quiet homes,
In joy and in suffering,
In loneliness and in connection,
In sanctuaries and in living rooms,
In marches and in waiting rooms.
We believe that nothing we do or leave undone
Can distance us from God's love.
God is forever drawing us close and pulling us in.
Again and again, God meets us where we are
And invites us into wholeness.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.**

~Affirmation by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

HYMN #833 O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go (verses 1-3)

*O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.*

*O Light that followest all my way, I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day may brighter, fairer be.*

*O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be.*

SHARING OF JOYS & CONCERNS 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.

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

L: As we come before God with our tithes and offerings,
let us remember the words of Micah 6:

What does the Lord require of us?

To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.

Thus we bring our money, gifts, and whole lives as an offering to our God.

OFFERTORY "Aeon" from *Night*

Ola Gjeilo

DOXOLOGY #70 What Does the Lord Require of You?

What does the Lord require of you?

What does the Lord require of you?

Justice, kindness, walk humbly with your God.

To seek justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

L: Let us pray our thanks together:

ALL: Great God, you are the giver of life and all that is good.

Accept our humble gifts and multiply them.

Accept our humble hearts and mold them.

**Accept our humble lives and transform them, that we might live
in the power of the resurrection, willing to risk all for your kingdom.**

In the name of Jesus we offer these gifts, and in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

~Words for Worship 2 by Diane Zaerr Brenneman, #152

HYMN #775 I Want Jesus to Walk With Me

*I want Jesus to walk with me;
I want Jesus to walk with me;
all along my pilgrim journey,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.*

*In my trials, Lord, walk with me;
in my trials, Lord, walk with me;
when my heart is almost breaking,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.*

*When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me;
when I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me;
when my head is bowed in sorrow,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE