

Sunday Worship - February 26, 2023



He Qi, *Woman Caught in Adultery*, 2013

The Gospel of Matthew - Narrative Lectionary Week 23

The First Sunday in Lent

First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon, Iowa

*“Striving to live as Jesus lived –
confronting injustice with love, compassion, service.”*

Welcome to Worship

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In sacred times of word, wonder, and awe,
in ordinary days of work and play:

People: in every moment, God is with us.

Leader: Whether we are stuck in doubt's mud,
or standing on faith's shoreline:

People: in every place, God is with us.

Leader: In those who teach us and those who trouble us;
in those who surprise us, and those who forgive us:

People: in every person, God is with us.

*HYMN #612 We Praise You, O God

*1: We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
we lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name; glad praises we sing.*

*2: We worship you, God of our fathers and
mothers;
through trial and tempest our guide you have been.
When perils o'ertake us, you will not forsake us,
and with your help, O Lord, our struggles we win.*

*3: With voices united our praises we offer
and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
With you, Lord, beside us, your strong arm will
guide us.
To you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!*

*CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: In worship and at work, in life and in loss, now and in every moment,
Christ is among us: loving us, teaching us, and hoping to lead us.

But we focus on the needs and the desires that keep us from recognizing him.
Let us confess our separation from God and others, as we pray,

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: All you ask of us is to love one another, God of our lives,
and you are more than willing to teach us how.

Yet we find this simple request so hard to carry out, this easy lesson so difficult to learn.
Someone cuts us off in traffic, and we curse them.

Another buys something we want but cannot afford, and we overflow with jealousy.
A friend gets the acclaim we wanted, and we whisper about them behind their backs.
Forgive us, Merciful God, and release our heads, hearts and hands from the grudges we hold.
With Christ in our midst, we can become the people your dream about:
loving, merciful, gentle, and compassionate people of God.
Amen.

Time of Silence

Leader: Knowing that you transform illness to health,
confusion to clarity, violence to peace, ashes to beauty,
we thank you for hearing our prayers.

All: Open our awareness this day to your Spirit dancing among us.

Amen.

~ Diane Zaerr Brenneman, *Words for Worship 2*. #190

*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: O loving Christ, scatter the sin from our souls as the mist from the hills;
begin what we do, inform what we say, redeem who we are.

P: In you we place our hope, our great hope, our living hope,
this day and evermore. **Amen.**

~Wild Goose Worship Group

*RESPONSE #596 You Are Holy

*You are holy, you are whole. You are always ever more
than we ever understand. You are always at hand.
Blessed are you coming near. Blessed are you coming here
to your church in wine and bread, raised from soil, raised from dead.
You are holy, you are wholeness; you are present.
Let the cosmos praise you, Lord!
Sing hosanna in the highest!
Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna to our God!*

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: In Christ, we are a new creation.

The old is passed away, and we live as signs of reconciliation and love.

The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

DISCOVERY TIME

ANTHEM

SCRIPTURE READING

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.

Matthew 18:15-35 (NRSV) - Forgiveness

Reader 1: “If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If that person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

Reader 2: “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

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

Radical Forgiveness

Rev. Bill Warhover

HYMN #445 God, How Can We Forgive

*1: God, how can we forgive
when bonds of love are torn?
How can we rise and start anew,
our trust reborn?
When human loving fails
and every hope is gone,
your love gives strength beyond our own
to face the dawn.*

*2: When we have missed the mark,
and tears of anguish flow,
How can you still release our guilt,
the debt we owe?
The ocean depth of grace
surpasses all our needs.
A priest who shares our human pain,
Christ intercedes.*

*3: Who dares to throw the stone
to damn another's sin,
when you, while knowing all our past,
forgive again?
No more we play the judge,
for by your grace we live.
As you, O God, forgive our sin,
may we forgive.*

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

Leader: There are many ways to offer ourselves, our resources, our lives to God and the way of God. We do so in response to God's abundant love and provision.

GATHERING OF THE GIFTS

OFFERTORY

***HYMN OF THANKSGIVING #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**

Leader: Let us pray together:

All: Generous God, we thank you for your gifts to us by returning them to you.

May we use what you have given us to enable others to be freed from all that continues to bind, and in every act of generosity may we find ourselves freed.

Amen.

*HYMN #435 There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

*1: There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in God's justice,
which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows
are more felt than up in heaven
There is no place where earth's failings
have such kindly judgment given.*

*2. For the love of God is broader than the
measures of the mind.
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully
kind.
If our love were but more faithful, we would
gladly trust God's Word, and our lives reflect
thanksgiving for the goodness of our Lord.
and you in me?*

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE