

Sunday Worship - March 12, 2023



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*The Third Sunday of Lent - Narrative Lectionary Week 25
Parable of the Wedding Banquet*

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

L: Whatever we are wearing let us put on
an attitude of openness to God's will for our lives.

**P: We enter into this time of worship clothing ourselves
in the garments of love and commitment to God's way.**

L: Let us journey into worship praising the one
who wore and now offers the robes of righteousness.

**P: Living Lord, may we receive all that you offer here,
accepting the invitation to be served and to serve.**

*HYMN #301 Let Us Build a House (Verses 1, 2, 4, 5)

*1: Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
all are welcome, all are welcome
all are welcome in this place.*

*2: Let us build a house where prophets speak
and words are strong and true
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and a symbol of God's grace
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
all are welcome, all are welcome
all are welcome in this place.*

*4: Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
all are welcome, all are welcome
all are welcome in this place.*

*5: Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
all are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

***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: God, let us make our excuses.

**Let us list the ways we convince ourselves
to turn from the loving way.**

**The excuses of the late night, the excuses of the busy lives,
the family problems, the desire not to be hypocritical.**

**God, let us make our excuses
as to why we travel so lightly with you.**

**We do not reject your invitation,
we just leave it on the mantelpiece,
telling ourselves we will pick it up one day.**

But there it remains.

**God, let us make our excuses
as to why we are not lining up for the feast
but instead finding reasons to avoid it.**

Pause

**O God, in every excuse,
may we hear your compassion, may we recognize your grace,
always calling, inviting, waiting, longing
for us to enjoy the gifts you have set before us.**

**In this journey through Lent,
may we refine our excuses from 'No!' to 'Yes!'
and meet you in the place
where you simply give yourself in the name of love.**

So be it.

Amen.

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Leader: Hear this good news! In Christ, God comes near to us,
bringing hope, joy and forgiveness into our lives.

**P: God gathers up the fragments of our lives and shapes us into new people.
For this reason, we lift our thanks to God. Amen.**

***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.

ANTHEM

DISCOVERY TIME

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 22:1-14 (NRSV) - The Wedding Banquet

Reader 1: Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’”

Reader 2: But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.

Reader 1: Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad, so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Reader 2: “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

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

Rev. Lori Wunder

HYMN #707 Take Thou Our Minds, Dear Lord

*1: Take thou our minds, dear Lord, we humbly pray;
give us the mind of Christ each passing day;
teach us to know the truth that sets us free;
grant us in all our thoughts to honor thee.*

*2: Take thou our hearts, O Christ; they are thine own;
come thou within our souls and claim thy throne;
help us to shed abroad thy deathless love;
use us to make the earth like heaven above.*

*3: Take thou our wills, Most High! Hold thou full sway;
have in our inmost souls thy perfect way;
guard thou each sacred hour from selfish ease;
guide thou our ordered lives as thou dost please.*

*4: Take thou ourselves, O Lord, heart, mind, and will;
through our surrendered souls thy plans fulfill.
We yield ourselves to thee: time, talents, all;
we hear, and henceforth heed, thy sovereign call.*

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

~ you may place your offering in basket located at the back of church ~ you may also give online at www.firstpresmv.com

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: Happy are we, blessed are we, that know God's presence in our lives,
and who welcome him to give purpose to all we do,
so that we do it not just for ourselves, not just for family and friends,
but rather for all people in God's commonwealth of creation.
Use us this day and every day as the ones that bring blessing to others,
through all we give and offer. Amen.**

HYMN #700 I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

*1: I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!*

*2: I'm gonna work so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna work so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!*

*3: I'm gonna pray so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna pray so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!*

*4: I'm gonna sing so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna sing so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!*

***MARCH BIRTHDAY BLESSING & BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE**

Thanks to Jennifer Lengwin for being our liturgist today.