



Rainbow by Helen Babcock.

**First Sunday
in Lent
February 18, 2024
10:30 a.m. Worship**

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: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

Genesis 9:12-13

First Presbyterian Church

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COMMISSIONED PASTOR: DR. WENDY L. LAMB

MINISTRY OF PASTORAL SUPPORT: REV. DR. STEPHEN W. SMITH

MINISTRY OF VISITATION: LAURIE STAFFORD

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: CURTISS ALLEN, JR., DIRECTOR OF MUSIC;

WILLIAM ZEITLER, ORGANIST;

AMY GANO, BELLS

PASTOR EMERITUS: REV. JAMES C. HUFFSTUTLER

Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church

This service is being livestreamed and can be viewed on our YouTube channel in real time or as a recording. **Large-print copies of this order of service**, as well as **audio enhancement devices** are available **from the ushers**.

We gather on Sunday for 3 reasons:

- **To seek God**- whom we find in sacred text and sacrament, in music and in song, in prayer, in the beauty of this space, in the stillness where we can hear our hearts. We offer God our thanks and praise, our lament and longing, and our resources. We let go of burdens and receive grace and forgiveness. We see the One our hearts love.
- **To practice Community** – rejoice w/those who rejoice, weep w/those who weep. To break bread with those whom we love and those whom we need to love more fully. We practice things our culture does not emphasize: resting, forgiving, sharing. Jesus asked us to love one another as he loved us, and we cannot do so without practice.
- **To listen for our Call**- often an invitation to go out and be or do or remember. God is speaking all the time: through conscience, nature, friends, and certainly scripture. We gather to listen for that Call and to recommit ourselves to discipleship.

Information on our common life can be found on our website www.fpcsb.net, along with sermons and newsletters. You can participate in our work by supporting us financially with a one-time or sustaining donation.

Children are welcome in worship. Younger children may go to the Nursery at any time.

OUR NEXT COMMUNION will be Sunday, March 3rd.
Our deacons will set the table so all may be made welcome.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Marion Wiens

REFLECTION before the SERVICE

Sweetgrass is best planted not by seed, but by putting roots directly in the ground. Thus the plant is passed from hand to earth to hand across years and generations. Its favored habitat is sunny, well-watered meadows. It thrives along disturbed edges.

Robin Wall Kimmerer,
Braiding Sweetgrass

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Fugue in E minor, BWV 548 J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
"The Wedge"

Allow the music to usher you into sacred space and time.

INTROIT

I bring my heart to Thee

David H. Williams

I bring my heart to Thee Thou Lamb of Calvary. Hear Thou my prayer to thee,
O living God. Amen.

***CALL to WORSHIP**

In times of joy and of sorrow

✠ We belong to God, who loves us.

In times of fasting and feasting

✠ We belong to God, who loves us.

In seasons of pain and of purpose

✠ We belong to God, who loves us.

As Pilgrims in the desert, As travelers on the Way

Wherever, Whenever we gather

✠ We are home, for God is with us.

***HYMN 65**

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

CWM RHONDDA

† The symbols you will see in this order of worship mean:

*** Stand if you are able ✕ The congregation will read.**

PRAYER of CONFESSION

*from Celtic Rite of New Skellig,
Fr. Vincent Pizzuto, rev. NSW*

Bound in love to the triune God, let us call upon Your covenantal love and recollect in silence those times when we have failed to live as beings created for love, either because of that which we have done or for that which we have failed to do."

(Silence)

Let us pray together then, to the God of Compassion.

✕ **Most merciful God,**

We confess that we have sinned against you,
against one another, and against our Mother Earth.
Although you have made us incarnations of your Love,
we have not reflected your Divine Image in the world.
Although you have called us to intimacy through Christ,
we have shunned you in ourselves, in others, and in your
Creation.

Although you have poured upon us a Spirit of freedom, we have
remained in slavery to perceptions of scarcity, separation,
and disempowerment.

Turn to us Jesus, even when our hearts turn away from you.
Forgive us for the harm we cause to the innocent, the vulnerable,
the voiceless.

Forgive us for the harm we inflict
on the very planet that sustains us.

Instill in us a spirit of repentance.

Shake us from our complacency.

Move us to act in accordance with your deep desire
for the love of the planet and one another.

Awaken in us the hope of the Resurrection,
that recalling your boundless love for us
we may love boundlessly in return.

We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen."

ASSURANCE of FORGIVENESS

Be assured that the covenant God made with Noah
is for each of us this day.

✕ **Nothing can separate us from the Love of God, in Christ Jesus.**

TIME with the CHILDREN

*[Children are always welcome in worship. After the Time with Children, we
invite our children ages 4 to 11 to go to KidSpace in Room 11. Parents, please
pick your children up immediately following worship.*

Infants through pre-Kindergarten may go to the Nursery at any time.]

ANTHEM

*O Love, How Deep*¹

Everett Titcomb

O love, how deep, how broad, now high, How passing thought and fantasy, That God, the Son of God should take Our mortal form for mortals' sake. For us he prayed, for us he taught, For us his daily works he wrought, By words and signs and actions, thus Still seeking not himself, but us. All glory to our Lord and God For love so deep, so high, so broad; The Trinity whom we adore For ever and for ever more. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Genesis 9:8-17

Mark 1:9-15

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✠ **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Repentance, Regret, and Apology

Rev. Dr. Nancy Wiens &
Mary Bolaños

PRAYER of LAMENT

(We will repeat this line throughout the prayer.)

✠ **Trusting in your covenant of compassion,
we repent toward Your Love.**

THE OFFERING of OUR TITHES and GIFTS

(We offer our gifts as a response to God's Word, to be part of God's purposes in the world. You may place gifts in the plate during the offertory, or on your way out – or by mail or online.)

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY

OLD HUNDREDTH

✠ **Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost, Amen.**

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE and OUR 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.**

¹ Text: Latin, 15th century, tr. Benjamin Webb. Music: Everett Titcomb. © 1952 The H. W. Gray Co., Inc. All rights Reserved. Used by permission of OneLicense #A706254,

***HYMN**

***Be Not Afraid*²**

Bob Dufford

You shall cross the barren desert,
but you shall not die of thirst.
You shall wander far in safety
though you do not know the way.
You shall speak your words in foreign lands
and all will understand.
You shall see the face of God and live.
Be not afraid.
I go before you always.
Come, follow me, and I will give you rest.

When you pass through raging waters in the sea
You shall not drown,
If you walk amid the burning flame
You shall not be harmed
And if you stand before the pow'r of Hell
And death is at your side,
know that I am with you through it all-
Be not afraid.
I go before you always.
Come, follow me, and I will give you rest.

And blessed are your poor
for the kingdom shall be theirs
Blessed are you that weep and mourn
for one day you shall laugh
And if wicked tongues insult and hate you
all because of me
Blessed, blessed are you!
Be not afraid.
I go before you always.
Come, follow me, and I will give you rest.

***MOMENT for REFLECTION**

***CHARGE and BENEDICTION**

² Text based on Isaiah 43.2-3; Luke 6.20 ff. ©1975, 1978, Robert J. Dufford, SJ and Oregon Catholic Press. All rights reserved. Used by permission of ONELICENSE #A706254.

RESPONSE

Paul Sjolund

Jesus our only Joy be Thou, As Thou our prize wilt be; In Thee be all our glory now, And through eternity.

POSTLUDE

Improvisation

W. Zeitler

(For health reasons we are not greeting at the door)

The Rev. Dr. Nancy Wiens is our guest preacher today. She says: Following the form of introduction I have learned from Grandmother Mona Polacca of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers, I will introduce myself by telling you about those upon whom I am dependent for my life—my matrilineal line, including Mother Earth.

I was born in the lands of the Serrano people and in the Oak Glen creek watershed. I am the daughter of Marion Draper Wiens, who was born in the lands of the Meherrin, Saponi, Skaurhreh/Tuscarora, Lumbee, and Kawwets'a ka peoples and in the Roanoke River watershed. Today, I live on the lands of the Coast Miwok people in the Mt. Tamalpais watershed. My ancestors came from Russia, England, and Scotland to settle on this land, now known as the United States. I follow the Way of Jesus, son of Mary, born on the lands of the ancient Palestinians and in the Sea of Galilee watershed.

GREETERS: Susan Skoglund, Meryll Davis

USHERS: Dave Thomas, *Lead Usher*

Jim Siegmund, Al Rueda, Security Ushers

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord

LIVESTREAM ENGINEER: James Welte

CAMERA OPERATORS: Kevin Lamb, Lynn Usher

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Doris Schiavone, Josie Short, Beverly Snell

Elders: Pat Morris, Martha Pinckney, Lily Bolaños

Deacons: Rebecca Allen, Brad Smith, Dave Thomas

This Weeks' Celebrations

***Feb 19* Amy Smith**

***Feb 22* Janet McKinster**

***Feb 23* Martha Pinckney**

More News and announcements are available in your Friday *Keeping in Touch* emails. If you are not receiving these, and you would like to, contact Mimi in the church office.

Music Box

In many ways I think Lent is when the rubber meets the road, spiritually speaking. That is, religion and spirituality are all well and good when things are going well. But it can be challenging to feel their necessity in sunny times. However, when we face adversity, suffering, death — the Dark side of life, that's when spirituality really comes into its own. Indeed, generally speaking, historically Christianity has thrived during tough times, and less so during easy ones.

The two big Gospel stories covered in Lent are the Temptation, and the Journey to Jerusalem (including encounters and parables along the way). This morning's Gospel lesson is about the Temptation. Matthew and Luke detail the three temptations, Mark only gives a summary: "And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him."

Mark is unique in mentioning that "he was with the wild beasts." Mark is generally terse — why would he include this detail omitted by the other Gospels?

The single Greek word translated here as 'wild beasts' is ThĒRIA, and refers to wild animals as opposed to domesticated ones. Any animal in the wild is a ThĒRIA. Interestingly, ThĒRIA is closely related to the word THERION used in the Book of Revelation to describe the infamous Beast. Actually, there are two main Beasts in Revelation, and they're found in chapter 13. The first Beast rises out of the sea and is often interpreted as a symbol of political or imperial power persecuting Christians. The second Beast, sometimes referred to as the False Prophet, supports the authority of the first beast and leads people to worship it.

A few other places where ThĒRIKA and THERION are used:

Matthew 7:15: In this verse, Jesus warns his disciples to beware of false prophets who come to them in sheep's clothing but inwardly are "ravenous wolves" (ThĒRIA).

Luke 10:3: Jesus instructs his disciples as he sends them out, saying, "Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves" (ThĒRIA).

1 Corinthians 15:32: In this passage, Paul speaks of the dangers he faces daily, including "fighting with beasts" (ThĒRIA) in Ephesus — likely the 'two-legged' variety.

James 3:7: James uses the term ThĒRIA to emphasize the untamed nature of various animals, comparing them to the tongue, which he describes as "a restless evil, full of deadly poison."

2 Peter 2:12: Peter speaks of false teachers who are like "irrational animals": ALOGA ThĒRIA, "wild animals without LOGOS", that is, without 'reason', or 'rationality'.

So, with more of a feel for the word, what is its significance in today's passage? It highlights the wildness and desolation of the wilderness. And it echoes Old Testament imagery depicting the wilderness as inhabited by dangerous creatures. Also, in Jewish and early Christian thought, wild beasts symbolized spiritual forces of evil or chaos, so wild beasts suggests the broader context of spiritual warfare. And, despite the presence of wild beasts, Jesus remains unharmed and unthreatened, underscoring his divine authority and mastery over creation. And there's more that could be gleaned!

At any rate, Mark paints a picture with three groups of beings: Angels, Jesus the 'Son of Humanity', and the Wild Beasts. Heaven, Earth, and the Underworld? Just a wild imaginative thought...

If "paradox" is about holding opposing ideas simultaneously in our minds, this morning's prelude is definitely a "musical paradox". It derives its nickname "the Wedge" from the wedge-shaped fugue subject. And as fugue subjects go, this one's on the wild and crazy side.

In this piece, Bach starts with strict fugue. Now, the 'fugue' is one of the most highly regimented and complex musical forms there is. Heavy on LOGOS. Meanwhile, on the other end of the spectrum, he has 'musical fantasy' passages — wild and free, pretty much rule-free. ThĒRIA? Bach combines both in this piece, alternating between 'strict fugue' and 'wild fantasy' — and sometimes both at the same time. I don't know of another piece like it — by Bach or anyone else.

--William Zeitler



The seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a symbolic statement of the church's heritage, identity, and mission in contemporary form. Its power depends on both its simplicity and complexity, as well as its traditional and enduring qualities.

The basic symbols in the seal are the cross, Scripture, the dove, and flames.

As a church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), our congregational life is governed by the Ruling Elders of our current Session:

Mary Bolaños, Brooke Dvorak, Pat Morris, Martha Pinckney, Lily Bolaños, Margaret Doane, Jon Horstmann, Phyllis Hough, Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark, Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis,
and Clerk of Session Amy Smith

and supported by our Board of Deacons:

Rebecca Allen, Robin Edwards, Rick Rodriguez, Katie Smith, Brad Smith, Dave Thomas, Chris Wright-Thomas, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda

In this time of change for our congregation, a Mission Assessment Plan will be completed by our Mission Assessment Team:

Mary Bolaños, John-Paul Fletcher, Nancy Horstmann,
Marilyn Kraft, Jim Morris, Brent Nord, Irene Sandoval Suverkrup