Third Sunday bulletin

February 21, 2021

The First Sunday in Lent

Welcome and Gathering

Call to Worship, paraphrased verses from Psalm 25

I lift up my soul. My God, I trust in You.

**Show me Your ways, O God. Teach me Your paths.**

Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation.

**I wait all day long for You. Remember Your mercies, O Holy Spirit, Your love--Your ancient and unwavering love!**

How good You are, O God.

**You teach us about Your path and guide the humble in what is right. Teach us Your way.**

All of Your paths are full of love and faithfulness,

**And we want nothing more than to worship You in this moment and with all of our lives.**

**Hymn Glory to God #166 “Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days”**

Call to Confession

Gracious God, You call us into Your Very Being. We want to love You so much more deeply than we do, and sometimes our own sin gets in the way. And so let us get out of Your way by stepping aside and confessing our sin to You. Hear our prayer, O Lord:

**Confession of Sin**

**Holy God, we bow down before You to confess our sin:**

**We’d prefer the path of life be easy;**

**We’d prefer the path of faith be easy;**

**You didn’t promise easy. You promised Your presence in all things.**

**We’re tired of waiting.**

**We’re tired of waiting for the pandemic to be over, tired of waiting to be together again.**

**We’re tired of waiting for unity.**

**We’re tired of being tired.**

**We confess that we are not good at waiting upon You; of being still and knowing that You alone are God, and You hold all times, places, things, and people in Your care.**

**Forgive us our sin. Hear our silent prayers of confession.**

**Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

From everlasting to everlasting, You are God. Your mercies are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness! We are free in our salvation to live our lives for You and through You. Thanks be to God in Jesus Christ that our sin is forgiven and forgotten! All glory belongs to God!

Prayer for Illumination

We are grateful, Creator of the cosmos, for Your Word in scripture and for Your Word in Jesus Christ. May be hear and learn; seal into our hearts what You want us to know and do and be. Thank You for Your extraordinary graces, and especially for ears to hear and hearts to absorb. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable to You, O God, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Scripture Lesson: Mark 1: 9-15

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

And the Spirit immediately drove Jesus 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.

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

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon         “Forty days. Is that All?”         Rev. Laurie Palmer

Prayers of the People and The Lord’s Prayer

How often can we thank You, O God, for Your grace and mercy in Jesus Christ and it be enough? Your love sets us on a path that pulls from us more than we know we had. We love because You first loved us in ways that are a mystery to us. You love us despite ourselves.

What wondrous love is this?

Keep us mindful of our own baptisms where we were claimed in waters that nourish and cleanse us. We were not baptized once; it is a perpetual seal of adoption by You.

We remember that Christ didn’t have to be baptized. He did it to identify with us. The lengths He went to be us, to know us, to love us are breathtaking.

We pray for Your children around the globe.

For the war-torn, hungry, and homeless.

For the ill and dying.

For caretakers and for those who practice the medical arts.

For our country as we still seek understanding and unity, even in the midst of great loss of life.

For scientists on the front line of the virus, which seems to mutate by the day.

During these forty days, we cling to You, as if we too were in the wilderness with wild beasts, for we know that Your angels will provide sustenance--even if sustenance is different than what we want or expect. We love you, Lord, and seek Your face above all others. We pray in Jesus’ name, who knew we didn’t know how to pray, so He taught us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be they 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.**

**Glory to God #172 Blest Are They**

**Glory to God #188 Jesus Loves Me!**

Charge and Benediction

Go out into the world in peace.

Be of good courage.

Render no-one evil for evil.

Strengthen the fainthearted,

Support the weak,

Help the afflicted,

All for the sake of Jesus Christ

And in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.