



FIRST SUNDAY

in

LENT

**The Service for the Lord's Day
Bethel Presbyterian Church - Online Service
1st Sunday in Lent
February 21, 2021 - 11:00 AM**

Welcome

Prelude

Call to Worship

Come to the Lord with openness,
seeking God's presence whatever it brings.
Bring doubt, bring belief. Seek the Lord and live.

Prayer of Invocation

Let us pray:
God of wilderness and nighttime,
as we devote these forty days to you,
shape us by your Holy Spirit into the image of Christ our Lord,
so that we may be ready, by your grace,
to confront the power of death with the promise of eternal life.

Hymn **"LORD, WHO THROUGHOUT THESE FORTY DAYS"**

*Lord, who through-out these for-ty days
for us did fast and pray,
teach us with you to mourn our sins
and close by you to stay.*

*As you with Sa-tan did con-tend
and did the vic-tory win,
O give us strength to per-se-vere,
in you to con-quer sin.*

*And through these days of pen-i-tence,
and through this Pas-sion-tide,
yes, ev-er-more, in life and death,
O Lord, with us a-bide.*

*A-bide with us, till when this life
of suf-fering shall be past,
an Eas-ter of un-end-ing joy
we may at-tain at last.*

Call to Confession

We cannot earn God's grace or favor.
It comes to us, not as something owed,
but as a gift freely given.
Confident in God's love for us,
even when we are ungodly,
we confess our sins in faith.

Corporate Prayer of Confession

**Gracious God, we come before you
in need of forgiveness and grace.
You call us to trust in you completely, but we do not.
We are timid and fearful as we follow your lead.
We justify our actions and words,
though we know they are not what you require.
We struggle to understand the new life Christ offers,
preferring old habits to risky change.
Forgive us, we pray.
Help us to be born again into the life of Christ,
trusting that you have included us by grace
in the family of faith.
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

Declaration of Forgiveness

Friends, God is for us and not against us!
For that very reason, God sent the Son into the world
not to condemn the world,
but that the world might be saved through him.
Believe the good news, in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Prayer for Illumination

Let us pray:
God of signs and wonders,
we come to your word again and again,
seeking understanding and the new life it offers.
By the power of your Holy Spirit,
illumine our hearts and minds
so that we may believe this testimony and have eternal life.
In the name of Jesus Christ, our teacher and Savior, we pray.
Amen.

Readings from Holy Scripture

Torah Numbers 21:4-19

(The Bronze Serpent)

Gospel John 3:1-21

(Nicodemus Visits Jesus)

Sermon

“Take a Hard Look”

The Rev. Dr. Wendy Neff

Affirmation of Faith

*Taken from The Brief Statement of Faith, 1991,
The Book of Confessions, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

In life and death we belong to God.

**Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,**

**and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.**

**We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.**

**Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed
and blessing the children,
healing the sick**

**and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.**

**Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.**

**God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.**

Prayers of the People

God our Helper, we thank you for keeping our lives
always in your care and protection
and pray for any and all who are in harm's way.

For those walking in the midst of danger ...
for those who are treading a slippery path ...
for those exhausted and seeking relief ...
for those who face a mountain of worry of debt
or any other obstacles ...

Be guardian and Guide, we pray,
setting all our feet on your paths of righteousness and peace.

We pray for those who are struggling
with a new challenge or call ...
with a major transition in life of livelihood ...
with their faith and understanding ...
with grief, ancient or new ...

Keep in your tender care and mercy, O God,
those who are sick in mind, body, or spirit ...
those weighed down by depression or pain ...
those recuperating from surgery or accident. ...

Protect not only us and those we love,
but also the whole wide world you so love.

In places of war, bring peace ...
in places beset by natural disaster, bring calm and restoration ...
where there is unrest and injustice, make justice our aim.

Where hope has grown tired and thin, lift our sights,
so that we may see hope beyond hope, life beyond death,
and you, lifted up before us.

In the name of Christ, who gave himself for our sake, we pray.
Amen.

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 sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Hymn

“GREAT GOD OF EVERY BLESSING”

AURELIA

*Great God of ev-ery bless-ing,
of faith-ful, lov-ing care,
you are the fount of good-ness,
the dai-ly bread we share.
How can we hope to thank you?
Our praise is but a start:
sin-cere-ly and com-plete-ly
I of-fer you my heart.*

*Your Word is our sal-va-tion,
the source of end-less grace,
in death and life ex-tend-ing
your cov-e-nant em-brace.
In Christ we are one bod-y;
each mem-ber has a part:
sin-cere-ly and com-plete-ly
I of-fer you my heart.*

*Your Spir-it is our teach-er,
the light that guides our search,
trans-form-ing bro-ken peo-ple
in-to the ho-ly church.
For feed-ing us with mer-cy,
for wis-dom you im-part:
sin-cere-ly and com-plete-ly
I of-fer you my heart.*

Benediction

Go out in faith, trusting in God's sense of direction.
Remember how much God loves this world
and so love the world in the name of Christ,
that your testimony becomes the good news
someone else has been waiting to receive.

You are free from condemnation, free to question and seek,
knowing God's love surrounds you
in both the dark of night and light of day. Amen.

Minister: The Rev. Dr. Wendy Neff

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP THIS MORNING

Pianist: Judy Moyer

Sound: Adam Badger

Video: Jake Horton

“Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days”

Text: Claudia F. I. Hernaman, 1873, alt.

Music: Day’s Psalter, 1562

“Great God of Every Blessing”

Text: David Gambrell, 2009

Music: Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1864

Text © 2011 David Gambrell

(admin. Presbyterian Publishing Corp.)

Used By Permission. ONE LICENSE #A-718125