



SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, March 19, 2023, 10:30 A.M.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

FOR WORSHIP

In today's Gospel passage, Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking outrage from the religious authorities. The Pharisees interrogate the man who was miraculously healed, but disbelieve his testimony and drive him away. In compassion, Jesus seeks out the man again and invites him to place his faith in him.

PRELUDE

Variations on "Aberystwyth" (Jesus Lover of My Soul)

Janet Linker

My Song is Love Unknown

Michael Burkhardt

Janice Robison, organist

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Robert Martin

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist Carol Perry

L: How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

P: They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

L: For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

P: Your steadfast love, O God, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

L: Let our shouts of praise reach the heavens!

P: How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

*HYMN 276

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

FAITHFULNESS

**1 *Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not; thy compassions they fail not.
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.**

Refrain:

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning, new mercies I see.

All I have needed thy hand hath provided.

Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

**2 Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.
(Refrain)**

**3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow:
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
(Refrain)**

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Liturgist Perry

God of steadfast love, we are complicit in this world, seeking ways for the world to serve us instead of serving the world for the work of your kingdom on earth. We search for opportunities to feel better about our complicitness; we numb ourselves when feeling powerless, and we hide from the truth. Help us, O God. Help us trust you. Help us be courageous. Help us discern your wisdom for confronting the powers that be. For we seek to follow you and learn from these ways that we fall short. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

We are glad to have you join us for worship. If you are new to First, it is our prayer that you will experience the presence of God while you are here. At First, it is our hope that all who enter find a home.

In the presence of a holy God, we become aware of the ways we fall short of God's best hopes for us, and the ways we have hurt others. We turn to God in prayer, asking for forgiveness.

We express gratitude that through God's grace and Christ's giving of himself on the cross we are forgiven and restored to God and one another.

*DECLARATION OF PARDON

L: Friends, believe the good news.

P: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

*Gloria Patri - 579 *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen and Amen.*

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

L: The peace of Christ be with you.

P: And also with you!

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Richard Nease

ANTHEM

O God of Mercy

Simon Lole

O God of mercy, God of might, in love and pity infinite,
Teach us, as ever in thy sight, to live our life to thee.
In sickness, sorrow, want, or care, whate'er it be, 'tis ours to share;
May we, where help is needed, there give help as unto thee.
And may thy Holy Spirit move all those who live, to live in love;
Till thou shalt greet in heav'n above all those who give to thee.

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Liturgist Perry

God of our salvation, open our hearts to love you more deeply and send your Holy Spirit now to illuminate your holy word, that we may be strengthened for your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

SCRIPTURE I Samuel 16:1-13 (pages 259, 260 in pew Bible)

Liturgist Perry

John 9:1-41 (pages 102, 103 in pew Bible)

Rev. Martin

L. This is the Word of the Lord!

P: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

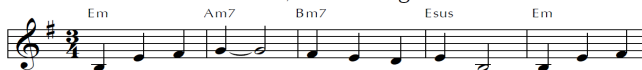
Seeing Clearly

Rev. Robert Martin

*HYMN

Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness

Christ, Be Our Light



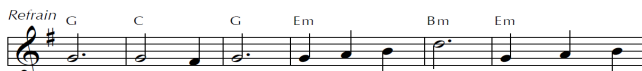
1 Long-ing for light, we wait in dark-ness. Long-ing for
2 Long-ing for peace, our world is trou-bled. Long-ing for
3 Long-ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long-ing for
4 Long-ing for shel - ter, man - y are home-less. Long-ing for
5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



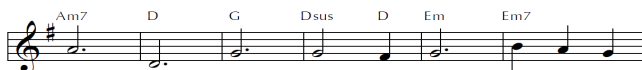
truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



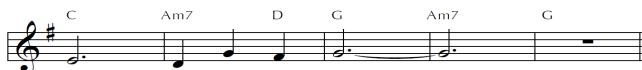
your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
has power to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
to one an - oth - er, mak - ing your king - dom come.



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

Passing of the Peace is one of the most ancient responses in worship. We invite you to share a sign of peace with your neighbor.

The sermon is a reflection on the day's scriptures, suggesting implications for our faith and life.

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

On behalf of the congregation, the Pastor expresses the corporate prayers of the congregation. These prayers are for world, local and personal concerns.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Martin

Response #583 "Amen"

THE OFFERING / OFFERTORY

Jesus, I Will Ponder Now
Janice Robison, organist

Robert Powell

*DOXOLOGY

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below.
Praise Him above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. AMEN.*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

Liturgist Perry

Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, give us strength and courage to make the changes that are needed in our lives. May the act of giving this offering help to pry open our hearts and our minds to your steadfast presence and help us to put our trust in you. Amen.

*HYMN 288

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

ELLACOMBE

**1 I sing the mighty power of God
that made the mountains rise,
that spread the flowing seas abroad
and built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained
the sun to rule the day.
The moon shines full at God's command,
and all the stars obey.**

**2 I sing the goodness of the Lord
who filled the earth with food.
God formed the creatures with a Word,
and then pronounced them good.
Lord, how thy wonders are displayed,
where'er I turn my eyes,
if I survey the ground I tread,
or gaze upon the sky!**

**3 There's not a plant or flower below
but makes thy glories known.
And clouds arise, and tempests blow,
by order from thy throne,
while all that borrows life from thee
is ever in thy care,
and everywhere that we can be,
thou, God, art present there.**

*CHARGE AND BLESSING

Response #570 "Amen"

POSTLUDE

To Thee, Lord Jesu, Thanks We Give
Janice Robison, organist

J.S. Bach

Deacon of the Month For March - Bobbi Conliffe

740-707-7461 or conliffb@ohio.edu — *A friend to phone with joys or concerns.*

Ushers - Mary Costello and Ellen Sostarich

Chancel Prep - Mary Costello

Fellowship - Lee Gregg and Martha Johnson

NEXT Sunday, March 26th - Mr. Roger's Day Celebration and Cross Crafts - Monday, March 20th would have been Mr. Roger's 95th birthday. Everyone is invited to wear a sweater on Sunday, March 26th to celebrate. The puppets are planning to include at least one of their Neighborhood heroes in the Children's Moment. Please join FPC family and friends during the worship service in person or on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/@fpcathensoh/streams>) to help celebrate.

Materials will be provided to decorate small wooden crosses during fellowship time. These may be done in person, or pick up materials to complete them at home. Please contact Joan Nease at christianed@athensfpc.org or phone the church office at 740-593-3351 if you are interested. This will help determine how many supplies are needed.

NEXT Sunday, March 26th - Next Sunday, March 26th, at 3:00 p.m., the members of the American Guild of Organists will present a recital of Lenten music at First Presbyterian Church. The program will include organists of the downtown churches as well as flute and clarinet. All are invited to attend this free concert.

Easter Flowers - If you would like to purchase a spring flower (lily, tulip, or hyacinth) in memory of or in honor of someone for Easter Sunday, please notify the church office at: office@athensfpc.org; phone 740-593-3351. Price per flower is \$10.00 and choice of flower is on a first come-first served basis. An insert with "In memory" or "In honor of" will be in the bulletin. Please specify if you want to pick up the flower after the Easter service or have a Deacon deliver it to a church family member. Please send your check to 9 North College Street, Athens OH 45701, or place it in the offertory plate with "Easter Flower" on the memo line. **The deadline to order flowers is March 31st.**

Lenten Soup and Studies continue on Tuesday evenings - 5:30-7:00 p.m. Meal will be from 5:30-6:00 p.m., with study from 6:00-7:00 p.m. If you are unable to attend, the study will be available by Zoom.

College Lunch and Fellowship – Thursdays, 11:30 a.m-1:00 p.m. - First Presbyterian Church has resumed its mission work for OU college students with the College Lunch. At a time when so many young people are struggling with financial and mental health issues, this work is more important than ever. So many students have told the Lunch Bunch how much it means to be in such a welcoming environment and have home made food! Current food needs are – main dish (usually casseroles or soup) and/or dessert (often cake or cookies), for Thursdays March 30th through April 27th. This is a great way to support this FPC mission in the comfort and safety of your own home! Contact Lee Gregg by phone, 740-592-3622 or email, tleegregg@gmail.com, to volunteer or for more information.

Women's Book Study - Join Women's Book Study on Fridays at noon via Zoom as participants discuss *If God is Love, Don't Be a Jerk: Finding a Faith That Makes Us Better Humans* by John Pavlovitz. For more information or to join, please contact Joan Nease at christianed@athensfpc.org.

Prayer Concern Requests and Visitation - Prayer request slips are available in the narthex. If you would like others in the church to pray for a person or for a concern near to your heart, place the slips in the Prayer Request box in the narthex. If you or someone you know would enjoy a visit from Pastor Rob and a Deacon, or appreciate receiving communion at home, contact the office 740-593-3351 or office@athensfpc.org

Presbyterian Women meet the third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at Wyngate. Next meeting is April 19th. (UNLESS schools are closed.)

2023 Per Capita Remains at \$40.00 - For 2023, the Presbytery of Scioto Valley per capita will remain unchanged at \$40.00 per member. This \$40 is allocated as follows: General Assembly's share is \$9.82, Synod's share is \$3.25 and Presbytery of Scioto Valley is \$26.93.

*Weekly Worship Service
can be seen live on
Sunday Morning*

You can access them directly on the FPC YouTube channel and on the church web site under Worship Archive.

To go directly to the live service - <https://www.youtube.com/fpcathensoh/streams>

Minister: Rev. Robert E. Martin Clerk of Session: Andrew Stuart
CE Coordinators: Richard and Joan Nease Administrative Assistant/Financial Secretary: Jane Baker
Handbell Director: Tyler Thress Organist: Janice Robison
Choir Director: David Tadlock Creative and Digital Media Administrator: Linnea G. Stevens

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Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/c/FirstPresbyterianChurchAthensOH/>