

**SERVICE OF WORSHIP
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT
MARCH 14, 2021**

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE

A PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Healing God, you are rich in mercy and generous in love. Grace us with signs of your presence, so that our worship may glorify you, and lift up the Christ, who calls us towards new life. Amen.

WORDS OF WELCOME

SENTENCES OF ADORATION

OPENING HYMN: SWEET HOUR OF PRAYER

505

1 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer! that calls me from a world of care,
and bids me at my Maker's throne let all my needs and wants be known.
In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief,
and oft escaped the tempter's snare by your return, sweet hour of prayer!

2 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer! the joys I feel, the bliss I share
of those whose anxious spirits burn with strong desires for thy return!
With them I hasten to the place where I would know my Savior's face,
and gladly take my station there, and wait for you, sweet hour of prayer!

3 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer! whose wings shall my petition bear
to One whose truth and faithfulness engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since I'm bid to seek God's face, believe God's word, and trust God's grace,
I'll cast away my every care, and wait for you, sweet hour of prayer!

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Pastor: Give thanks to God,

Unison: for God is good all the time,

Pastor: and God's steadfast love endures forever.

Unison: For we cried out to God in our troubles, and God saved us from our distress.

Pastor: The Word came to heal and deliver us from destruction.

Unison: Let all of humankind offer thanksgiving, and sing of God's deeds through worship and song.

REJOICING IN GOD'S GRACE

CALL TO AND CONFESSION OF SIN:

God of Moses, we can relate to the Israelites in the desert. We know that it is easier to condemn and criticize than to redeem and reflect, long for what we had than to imagine what could be. We know how simple it is to get stuck in places of anger and condemnation. When we cry out against you, as the people cried out to Moses, please be patient with us, and grant us the courage to choose gratitude and hope whenever possible. Amen.

ASSURANCE

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON:

Old Testament: Numbers 21:4 – 9

Epistle: Ephesians 2:1 – 10

Gospel: John 3:14 – 21

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SPECIAL MUSIC: *WHAT FAITH CAN DO* – *Kutless*

Darin Jellison

SERMON: *Choices to Make*

DEDICATING OURSELVES TO GOD'S WILL AND WORK

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: A *LENTEN CREED*

We believe that our lives are held within the encircling love of God, who knows our names and recognizes our deepest needs.

We believe that Christ is the divine Child of the living God, and that his grace is like living waters that can never be exhausted.

We believe in the birthing, renewing, enabling Spirit of God who yearns over our welfare as a mother yearns for her child.

We believe that God is in the arid desert as well as in green pastures, and that hard times and disciplines are also loving gifts.

We believe that our journey has a purpose and a destination, and that our path leads to a human glory we cannot yet imagine.

We believe that in the church we are fellow pilgrims on the road, and that we are called to love one another as God loves us.

This is our faith and we are humbled to profess in Jesus the Christ.

Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: God of Moses and Miriam, we know that there is no pain that you have not felt, no grief or longing that we cannot share with you. With the confidence of your camaraderie, we pray to you for all the long days and lonely nights, the unmet dreams, the cries in the wilderness, the

inconsolable pain, the half goodbyes, the relationships without resolve, the truths left unsaid, the sighs and tears that words cannot express.

(time of silence)

When we feel alone, God, remind us of your presence. When we feel broken, God, remind us of all that you have made whole. And help us, God, to hold on.

Pause for private intercessions

Pastor: We dream of your reign here on earth, as it is in heaven. And so, with our siblings and cousins in the faith, from generation to generation, we join in the prayer that Jesus taught...

**Unison: Eternal Spirit,
Earth – maker, Pain – bearer, Life – giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the
World!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
Sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptations and testing, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For your reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen**

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SHARING

SPECIAL MUSIC: *WHO AM I – Casting Crowns*

Darin Jellison

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Unison: Gracious God, we choose to give, as a way of giving thanks for the gifts that we have received, for the love that we have shared, for the healing we have felt. Amen.

GO IN GOD'S NAME

CLOSING HYMN: LORD, DISMISS US WITH YOUR BLESSING

77

1 Lord, dismiss us with your blessing; fill our hearts with joy and peace;
let us each, your love possessing, triumph in redeeming grace.
O refresh us, O refresh us, traveling through this wilderness.

2 we give thanks and adoration for your gospel's joyful sound:
may the fruits of your salvation in our hearts and lives abound:
ever faithful, ever faithful to the truth may we be found.

3 So that when your love shall call us, Savior, from the world away,
fear of death shall not appall us, glad your summons to obey:
may we ever, may we ever live with you in endless day.

BENEDICTION POSTLUDE

*Special thanks to **Darin Jellison** for sharing special music
and to our "**Stream Team**" for filming today's service.
God Bless!*