

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MARCH 1, 2026

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT / COMMUNION SUNDAY

As you arrive for worship, greet each other with a smile and soft words, but please remember there are those who cherish a time of quiet before worship.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE Cheryl Mayhew, organist Robert J. Hughes "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"

LENTEN READING—WEEK 2 Lay Leader: Kiersten Clifford L: Belief. This is a huge concept; one that involves trust, as talked about in our first Lenten reading, acknowledgement of blessings and being open to the "real" truth. In the book of Genesis, the Lord tells Abram to trust Him, for he will be blessed. How would he be blessed? With a GREAT nation for Abram and all his future descendants. But it would involve picking up his life, family, wealth and others working for him in Haran and making a journey to Canaan. Let's be honest. How many of us at the age of 75 would trust God if we did the same thing that He asked of Abram? Believe enough in God to move to a land far away where we and our descendants could live forever and call our own. These blessings given to Abram didn't come without heartbreak, hardship, and quarreling among family and Abram's traveling party.

Similarly, in the New Testament in the scripture of John, Nicodemus, a Jewish leader and teacher who was a Pharisee, acknowledges Jesus to be a great teacher, Rabbi, sent from God. But Nicodemus doesn't believe Jesus when He tells Nicodemus that no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless one is born again, not of flesh but of spirit. Nicodemus, being a great teacher himself, doesn't understand what Jesus is telling him. He is not open to the "real" truth Jesus is saying.

Are we ourselves blocked from the "real" truth? Do we not believe in the blessings of God, whether good or bad? Now is the time to understand and believe that Jesus was sent to earth not to judge us but to save us.

EXTINGUISHING THE LENTEN CANDLE

L: We extinguish this second candle of Lent to acknowledge that we wish to believe and accept the real truth.

(extinguish candle)

† OPENING HYMN "To God Be The Glory" #485

† CALL TO CONFESSION (leader)

L: Beloved, if we say we have not sinned we do not even fool ourselves and the truth is not in us. With great sorrow for our sins, but with the bold confidence of beloved children, let us confess our sins to God and one another.

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

All: Loving Father, forgive us when we don't believe in Your truth and just do what we believe is right. Help us to discern the difference between Your teachings and the teachings of those who have ill intent. Remind us that belief in You may not always be easy, or a blessing, but it is our path to true freedom in Your Kingdom. Show us the way to you every day. Amen.

(Time for Silent Confession)

† WORDS OF ASSURANCE (unison)

L: Lord, we want to believe that You will take care of us, if we believe and trust in You.

P: We acknowledge that we don't always trust in the plans You have for us and our lives.

L: Let us take this time to ask God's guidance so that we are led to the truth.

P: We want His blessings and to believe in His word.

All: In Jesus Christ we are saved! Thanks be to God! Amen.

† GLORIA PATRI words on screen

CHORAL ANTHEM "Psalm 91" Chancel Choir (Aleane Carter) (Children are dismissed to Sunday School)

OFFERING

Offertory "Just a Closer Walk With Thee" James Denton † Doxology words on screen

† Prayer of Dedication (responsive)

L: God of grace, you have gifted us with life in Christ. Today we bring the gifts of our work and the gifts of our hearts.

P: May all that we bring and all that we are be your means of grace in the world, that all people may encounter your good news. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament Lesson: Genesis 12:1-4 Old Testament pg. 10 New Testament Lesson: John 3:1-17 New Testament pgs. 93-94

MESSAGE "It's Fundamental" Pastor Ken Locke

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Lift up your hearts.

P: We lift them up to the Lord.

L: Holy and loving God, you formed us in your image to love and serve you, but we forgot your promises and abandoned your commandments.

P: Mercifully, you did not reject us but claimed us as your own.

L: When we were slaves in Egypt you freed us and led us through the waters of the sea. You fed us with heavenly food in the wilderness and satisfied our thirst from desert springs.

P: You gave us your law to guide us in your way and led us into the land of your promise, sustaining us in times of trial.

L: Speaking through the prophets, calling us to turn from willfulness to obedient righteousness, you sent your Son to be the way of eternal life.

L: Holy God of majesty, blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. He took up the weight of our sin and carried our guilt.

P: He shared our life in every way, and though tempted, was sinless to the end.

L: Baptized as your own, he went willingly to his death and by your power was raised to new life.

P: In his dying and rising, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

L: Remembering your mighty and merciful acts, we take this bread and this cup and celebrate with joy the redemption won for us.

P: Accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving as a living and holy offering of ourselves, that our lives may proclaim the One crucified and risen. Amen.

-Words of Institution

-Communion of the People

L: Help us, O God, to be obedient to your call to love all your children, doing justice and showing mercy, and so living in peace with your whole creation.

P: Guide us through the desert of life, quench our thirst with the living waters, satisfy our hunger with the bread of heaven.

L: Give us strength to serve you faithfully until the promised day of resurrection, when with the redeemed of all ages we will feast with you at your table in glory.

P: Through Christ, all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit in the holy church, now and forever. Amen.

-Servers: Mark Wisely, Clint Gingerich, Gregg Swanson, Joe Sullivan

† CLOSING HYMN "Let All Things Now Living" #554

† BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE "Voices Exultant" Roy E. Nolte

†Please stand if you are able.

Join us in Fellowship Hall following the service for coffee and refreshments.

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 12:1-4a

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?'

¹¹ 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.