## March 9, 2025 + 10:30 A.M.

## First Sunday of Lent

## We Join in Worship

If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker, or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of our Prayground, the extra space across the aisle from the sound booth.

Liturgist: Karen Lounsbury

PRELUDE He Who Will Suffer God to Guide Him

W. Baylor

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** 

\*THE PEACE OF CHRIST

\* CALL TO WORSHIP (Adapted from Psalm 91)

Leader: We who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,

will say to the LORD,

ALL: "Our refuge and our fortress; our God, in whom we trust."

Leader: For the LORD will deliver us from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.

ALL: The LORD will cover us with pinions, and under the LORD's wings we will find

refuge.

Leader: Because we have made the LORD our refuge, the Most High our dwelling place,

ALL: No evil shall befall us, no scourge come near our tent.

Leader: For the LORD will command the angels concerning us to guard us in all our ways.

ALL: On their hands they will bear us up, so that we will not dash our feet against a stone.

Let us worship and seek shelter in the LORD!

\*OPENING HYMN "The Glory of these Forty Days" (87)

#### **INVITATION TO CONFESSION:**

Leader: Paul writes, "One believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth

and so is saved." Let us confess together.

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions. We confess that when faced with the same temptations of Jesus Christ, we would give in. We would command the stone to become a loaf of bread. We would gladly accept power and authority over the kingdoms of the world. We would test you by imperiling ourselves to see if you would save us. Indeed, we give into temptations daily that show our lack of faith and trust in you. Forgive us for giving into these temptations. Help us to do better. In the name of Jesus Christ our liberator we pray. Amen.

**KYRIE:** No. 572 (unison)

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

#### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader:

Hear the good news! Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved!

ALL:

Jesus Christ liberates us! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

## **GLORIA PATRI (577)**

Glory be to the Father, and the Son, and Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, ever shall be, world without end. Amen. As it was in the beginning, is now, ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**STATEMENT OF FAITH:** (from *The Larger Westminster Catechism*)

Leader:

How did Christ humble himself in his life?

**ALL:** 

Christ humbled himself in his life, by subjecting himself to the law, which he perfectly fulfilled, and by conflicting with the indignities of the world, temptations of Satan, and infirmities in his flesh; whether common to the nature of humanity, or particularly

accompanying that his low condition.

Leader:

How did Christ humble himself in his death?

ALL:

Christ humbled himself in his death, in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors; having also conflicted with the terrors of death and the powers of

darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin,

enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

#### We Hear God's Word

## EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Saving Spirit, as you led Jesus into the wilderness and gave him the strength and Wisdom to survive, gather us around your Word and give us your strength and Wisdom that we might be equipped to follow your Son on this Lenten path. Amen.

**HEBREW BIBLE LESSON:** 

Exodus 16:1-8

**SECOND LESSON:** 

Romans 10:8-13

**GOSPEL LESSON:** 

Luke 4:1-14

**SERMON:** 

Courage in the Wilderness

MUSICAL MEDITATION: When I Return

Marta Keen/Jay Althouse

## We Respond in Faith

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

#### **OFFERING INVITATION:**

Leader:

Jesus was led by the Spirit in the wilderness and filled by the Spirit the whole time he was there. Let us give of our resources, trusting in the Spirit to provide for us in this season of wilderness. If you are here in person, please place your offerings in the plate as it is passed. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Now, let us reflect on stewardship as we hear the offertory.

**OFFERTORY** 

Lord, I Lift My Soul to Thee "Spanish Hymn"

R.R. Peery

#### \* DOXOLOGY:

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

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)

God, we trust in your Spirit as we dedicate our resources to you and the work of your Kingdom. Please guide us to use them well in the wilderness of the world today. In the name of Jesus Christ our liberator we pray. Amen.

#### We Go into the World

\* CLOSING HYMN: "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days" (81)

## BENEDICTION

#### CHORAL BENEDICTION

**POSTLUDE** The One Who Dwells in God

Walter Greatorex

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\* So that we can properly greet people who come to the building during Sunday morning worship, Door A will be the only unlocked external door during the worship service.

## Life of the Church

PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 3/9: Daylight Saving Time Begins

Adult Study – 9:00 AM

Worship In Person & Online – 10:30 AM

Endowment Fund Committee Meeting – 11:45AM Fellowship Hosts: Endowment/Shine the Light

MONDAY 3/10: GA -6:30 PM

Al-Anon – 7:00 PM

TUESDAY 3/11: Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH)

Mission - 6:00 PM

Stewardship/Finance – 6:30 PM

AA - 7:30 PM

WEDNESDAY 3/12: Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH)

Trustees – 6:00 PM

Lenten Study & Practice 7-8 PM (Zoom)

GA - 7:00 PM

THURSDAY 3/13:

Choir - 7:00 PM

SATURDAY 3/15:

Gladys' Table Prep

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

• <u>ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING</u> Participate in the PC(USA)'s annual special offering for Lent to support Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People. Make us of those trusty fish banks and envelopes!

- <u>LENTEN STUDY AND PRACTICE WITH PASTOR TYLER</u> This year's Lenten Study and Practice is entitled *Unsung Heroines: The Unnamed Women in Luke Who Propelled the Dream Forward*. We will be meeting and learning from women who were brave enough to enter into spaces that would put them in the path of the Messiah as he was on the path to the cross, and thus brave enough to change the course of history. As always, we will also be implementing spiritual practices that will put us in the path of the Messiah. <u>Join us each Wednesday of Lent, March 12 April 16, from 7-8 pm online on Zoom.</u> All are welcome! We will record our sessions and send out materials if the time does not work for you. The Zoom link is sent out via email weekly; if you are not currently receiving this email and would like to, please contact Kristen in the church office.
- PRAYER ACTIVITY STATIONS Instead of having a spirituality center set up in one room, as we have in the past, this year we will have a variety of prayer stations set up around the building for you to engage with (most will be located in the Narthex and Sanctuary). Beginning on March 9, one new prayer station will be added each week of Lent. There will also be a walkable Labyrinth in the Fellowship Room for anyone to use. The prayer stations are appropriate for all ages, so you are encouraged to share this space with children, youth and adults in your life. The prayer stations will be available on Sundays before and after worship, and during regular church office hours (Mon. –Thurs., 8 am to noon). If you cannot come to the church and would like an at -home version of the stations, please contact Heather Casiano at heasiano@fpchighland.org, or call the church office.
- SHARING CALENDAR FOR LENT This year's Lent devotional is a calendar instead of a booklet. 
  "A Sharing Calendar for Lent 2025" is part of the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering that is associated with Lent each year. Beginning with Ash Wednesday (March 5) and going through Easter Sunday (April 20), there is a suggested prayer, reflection or activity you can do each day except on Saturdays. The reflections and activities are related to the areas of hunger, disaster assistance and self-development of people the three focus areas of the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. As you make your way through this calendar devotional, you might find yourself inspired to try something new, or to

pray and reflect in a different way. This Lent calendar devotional is available in worship beginning March 2, and mailed to those who don't have email. If you would prefer to have an electronic copy of the calendar emailed to you, contact Heather Casiano (hcasiano@fpchighland.org).

- <u>SOUP SALE NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup>, AFTER WORSHIP</u> Come prepared to get a delicious meal and support our general fund in the process! It's a win-win situation!
- <u>"BYOB" (BRING YOUR OWN BIBLE)</u> The Lenten Study and Practice will be taking the place of BYOB throughout Lent.
- <u>THE BIBLE IN TODAY'S WORLD</u> Bible study group meets on Sunday mornings from 9-10 am at the church. We're reading through *A is for Alabaster* by Anna Carter Florence. The book takes us through the alphabet of both the Old and New Testaments, focusing on one Scripture passage per letter. Join us for great conversation and perhaps a new way of reflecting on God's Word. Contact John Toren or Heather Casiano with any questions.
- <u>BUILDING USE FORMS</u> Just a quick reminder that for the safety and security of everyone using our building, we need to have building use request forms filled out by both members and non-members whenever they use any area of the building outside of regular church activity functions.
- <u>FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!</u> If you don't already follow us on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so @firstpchighland on both Facebook and Instagram.
- <u>INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?</u> You are always welcome here, whether a member or not! If you are interested in joining as a member, though, we would love to have you! Please talk to Pastor Tyler if you would like to learn more.

## Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

- <u>BLESSING BOX</u> Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates!
- <u>HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!</u> Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex and fill it to help the church's food pantry.
- **BIN OF WARMTH** Bring in clean, gently used stuffed animals, scarves, hats, and gloves for distribution to migrant families with young children who need the joy of loving welcome!
- GOT SNEAKERS? We are still participating in the Got Sneakers Fundraiser where there is nothing to buy or sell; all we need is your support and your gently worn, used, or new sneakers! Blue bins are located in the narthex, and inside and outside DOOR D by the office. Every pair counts!

## **Prayer List**

Anthony Brady Vanes George Griner Guy Hendricks

Bill and Anettia Holmes

Daniel Litwicki David Markley

Pat and David Kingen Diana and Ray Mendoza

Janet Orem Jeanne Nestor

Cindy Waltz and Sister Yvonne Suroviak

Wendy

Georgette Sknerski Jakob Holden Denise Matthys Steve & Melinda

Jan Oprea Florance Cody

Kathy & Chuck Pumnea

Nick

Laura Buono Domsic The Windstrups Ruth Dekker Rick Parker Gary Everhart Bonnie Kern

Tim

Barbara Morton Caroline Studer Holly Letnich Jaden Mendez Darlene O'Brien

Charles Donn Davies

Doug & Sue Matthews

Janet Terpstra Glen Nahler Tammy Tom Jana Tolley

Larry & Bonnie Perryman

Virginia Marshall

Delta Rose Winnie Owen Charity Lynn David Hamblin

Judy Breeanne Mom Bechtler

Gloria Victor

Crystal and David Cervantes

Marian Clayton Lou Ann Sulowski

Ella P

Edie Delgano Melissa Katie

Rita Stronczek Flora Reichanadter Bill and Suzanne

Ashley

The McBride Family Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon

Sharon Janet

Lois and Tom

**OGB** Edna Cruz Connie Katie Charlie Carol Lestina

Jerry & Rena Martinez

Amaiya

Shannon and Paisley

George Bob U Wally Dustin Noreen Kim

#### Exodus 16:1-8

16 The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim and came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and ate our fill of bread, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

<sup>4</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. <sup>5</sup> On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days." <sup>6</sup> So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, <sup>7</sup> and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?" <sup>8</sup> And Moses said, "When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord."

#### Romans 10:8-13

- <sup>8</sup> But what does it say?
- "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim), <sup>9</sup> because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For one believes with the heart, leading to righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, leading to salvation. <sup>11</sup> The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

#### Luke 4:1-14

- 4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"
- <sup>5</sup> Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup> And the devil said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is written,
- 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'
- <sup>9</sup> Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup> for it is written,

- 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,'
- 11 and
- 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "
- <sup>12</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' " <sup>13</sup> When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.
- <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding region.

## Courage in the Wilderness

Exodus 16:1-8; Romans 10:8-13; Luke 4:1-14

Last Sunday we heard of Jesus' dreamlike encounter out into the wilderness, upon Mount Tabor, where he shone with glory, with the brilliant light of the sun, the moon, and the stars in the presence of Moses and Elijah and, of course, God in the cloud—whose voice peeled through the heavens, proclaiming: "This is my Son, my Beloved; listen to him." This week we are staying out in the wilderness, but we are going back in time. We are going back to the time of Jesus' baptism by his beloved cousin brother John, back to the banks of the Jordan River, where God's voice had peeled out years before: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." We are going back in time because this is Lent, and it is our tradition to mark the first Sunday of Lent with the story of Jesus out in the Judean wilderness near the Jordan River. For, we base our forty days of fasting and other forms of intentional spiritual practice upon Jesus' forty days of fasting out in that wilderness. Just as we started our forty days with a day of repentance on Ash Wednesday, Jesus started his forty days with an act of repentance, responding to John's in the river.

And then he was led by the Holy Spirit out into the wilderness. Now I have to take a moment to wonder in wonder. The Holy Spirit has a big part to play in all that is about to go down out in the desert, and I cannot help but picture this whole Holy Spirit leading Jesus thing as that dove that flew down at the baptism flying ahead of him and leading him in physical form. After all, the way the story is presented is the dove descending, God claiming Jesus, and then Jesus being led out into the wilderness. I've never thought about it in this way before, but what a cool image—Jesus following a bird, a wild animal, out into the wilderness—Jesus following the Holy Spirit, the wild and free nature of God out into God's nature.

He was led out into the desert ecosystem, where he fasted for forty days and forty nights. He was led out into the presence of the personification of evil—the satan, the boogey man, the cosmic enemy. And this prosecutor, whose hateful, harmful tactics we know all too well from his perpetration of devastation upon Job, put Jesus to the test with powerful siren-calls of temptation. He would tempt Jesus to break his fast and thus his self-discipline. He would tempt Jesus to depend on other sources for sustenance outside of God. He would tempt Jesus to take power and become like God in his authority. He would tempt Jesus to worship him instead of God. He would tempt Jesus to test God's love and protection for him. All while Jesus was painfully, desperately hungry from forty days and forty nights of fasting. And those temptations at the end are just the part that we know.

Luke very interestingly tells us that the satan was actually testing Jesus for the entire forty days! Who knows what all that would have entailed?! I do not even want to try to imagine what all the satan would have tried. He was cunning, though, so he probably would have tried out those things of evil that too easily worm their way into human souls—things like trying to convince him that he was part of some chosen race and chosen nation and like trying to convince him to care about his own people more than the other people of the world and like trying to convince him that money and might make right and like trying to convince him that his

language was superior to others and like trying to convince him that it is actually loving to hate and exclude certain people and like trying to convince him that there are limits to love. He probably would have bullied him. He probably would have tried to get a rise out of him, to get him to react with violence. He probably would have done what he could to get Jesus to question his own worth, his own belovedness, his own goodness, his own reality. Again, I do not even want to try to imagine what all the satan would have tried, for I am sure that it was the sneakiest and most insidious form of all the evil that we see in the world today.

Whatever those forty days of testing entailed, one thing is for certain. Jesus had to have had remarkable courage to be willing to go out there in the first place and then to make it through those forty days of confronting evil incarnate all while fasting. And I use that word "courage" very intentionally. Yes, it carries those meanings of bravery and valor, of boldly facing something difficult or dangerous. In addition to that common way that we use it, though, "courage" has very significant roots. It goes back to the Latin word *cor*, which means "heart." And even back in the ancient days of Latin the heart was understood to be the seat of emotions, the part of the body that fosters our feelings. And so, courage is intrinsically about vulnerability. To be courageous is to put one's heart out there, to risk the exposure of emotions. It is to face a challenge head on by putting the entirety of ourselves into it, including those parts of ourselves that we prefer to protect, defend, and hide.

And Jesus would have been totally exposed out there. After all, he was facing this supernational embodiment of evil. There would have been no hiding any part of himself as he was being tested. His heart would have been on full display. And that, of course, is how he made it through. With his heart on his sleeve, the satan would have seen all of his fear and sorrow and anger, AND he would have seen a love that was stronger than all of it, that was stronger than the satan himself. His vulnerability was thus indeed incredible strength.

And courage goes even deeper than that. For the heart as the seat of emotions would have been considered the home of the spirit. And I want to remind us of something very significant here. Not only had Jesus been led out into the wilderness and thus to this encounter by the Spirit bird, but *Luke* also tells us that Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit." Spirit. Heart. Courage. Jesus had so much courage out there because he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus had so much courage out there because he was not truly alone with the satan. The very Spirit of the living God was there with him, there inside of him. God's own beloved Son filled with God's own Spirit. Of course the satan would have been no match for that!

Loved ones, we are going to be focusing on courage a lot throughout this Lenten season. We are going to hear about remarkable women who had the courage to put themselves into Jesus' path and thus the courage to impact the course of history. We are going to hear more about Jesus' own remarkable courage in living out radical love in a way that would put him on a collision course with more and more embodiments of the same evil that met him out in the desert wilderness. And we are going to try to discern what it means for us to be people of courage for such a time as this in which we now find ourselves. For, make no mistake, evil is alive and well, reaching out in those same insidious ways of temptation and testing, of worming into our souls and warping our realities, of making us think things like hate is love and xenophobia is righteous and selfishness is godly and wealth is God-ordained and killing is justice. And it takes great courage to choose the truth over these lies. And it can be deeply dis-couraging to see so many people giving into the temptation of these lies. And so, this Lent, we will also seek ways to en-courage each other, to strengthen each other's hearts and boost each other's spirits.

Lent is a great time to commit to practicing courage, for it is the time in which we most closely look at Jesus' Journey to the cross and thus at Jesus' most stunning acts of courage, of putting his heart on such full display that the emperor and king and scribes and Pharisees trembled. And the truth is, the world today needs stunning acts of courage, bold displays of hearts filled with love. Following Jesus to the cross gives us the opportunity to ask ourselves if we are willing to risk suffering for the sake of love, to risk stoking the rage of people in power for the sake of love, to risk the complacency of our daily lives for the sake of love. Following Jesus to the cross gives us the invitation to actually take those risks by showing that love, by putting our hearts out there for the world to see and thus for the world to witness something different from hatred and violence.

And wow do I ever have good news for you! We are never alone when it comes to doing courageous work, just as Jesus was never alone out there in the desert wilderness. For, if we are truly acting with courage, then we can know that we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We can even imagine that dove flying before us, leading us to places and positions and situations that are not necessarily easy but that are certainly right—to the wild places that challenge us to grow and change and thus transform the world. I am encouraged! Are you? Amen!

ERHALT UNS, HERR LM



# 81 Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

ST. FLAVIAN CM

