

February 22, 2026 + 10:30 A.M.

First Sunday of Lent

We Join in Worship

Liturgist: Hunter Balczo

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.

PRELUDE The Glory of These Forty Days

T. Keeseker

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (Adapted from *Psalm 121*)

Leader: We lift up our eyes to the mountains—from where will our help come?
ALL: **Our help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.**
Leader: The LORD will not let our feet be moved; the LORD who keeps us will not slumber.
ALL: **The LORD who keeps us will neither slumber nor sleep.**
Leader: The LORD is our keeper; the LORD is our shade at our right hands.
ALL: **The sun shall not strike us by day, nor the moon by night.**
Leader: The LORD will keep us from all evil; the LORD will keep our lives.
ALL: **The LORD will keep our going out and our coming in from this time on and forevermore.**

***OPENING HYMN:** “Baptized in Water” (492)

INVITATION TO CONFESSON:

Leader: Paul writes, “Sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned.” Together let us confess our sins to God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSON (unison)

Loving God, listen to our prayer of confesson. 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, your beloved Son, we pray. Amen.

KYRIE

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

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Friends, hear the good news. Just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all.
ALL: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!**

GLORIA PATRI

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. Amen.

STATEMENT OF FAITH: (*The Nicene Creed*)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

We Hear God's Word

EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: (Unison)

Saving Spirit, as you led Jesus into the wilderness and gathered the wild beasts and angels to surround him, gather us around your Word and lead us into your wisdom that we might be equipped to follow your Son on this Lenten path. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: *Psalm 91*

EPISTLE LESSON: *Romans 5:12-19*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 4:1-11*

SERMON Waited upon by Angels

MUSICAL MEDITATION *A Shadow Fell on Sharon's Rose*

We Respond in Faith

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM *Ophelia Rose Giglio*

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.

CHORAL RESPONSE

OFFERING INVITATION:

Leader: Jesus was led by the Spirit into 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. Please place your offering 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 and practice stewardship as we listen to today's offertory.

OFFERTORY These Forty Days and Forty Nights Noble

* 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, your beloved Son, we pray. Amen.

We Go Into the World

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

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Jesus, Priceless Treasure Crüger/Bach

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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.

PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 2/22:

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT
Adult Study – 9:00 AM
Worship in Person & Online – 10:30 AM
Fellowship Hosts: Mission

MONDAY 2/23:

GA – 6:30 PM

Al-Anon – 7:00 PM

TUESDAY 2/24:

Prayer Shawl – 1:00 PM

Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH)

AA – 7:30 PM

WEDNESDAY 2/25:

Rummage Sale Meeting—1 PM in Meeting Room

John Wachala Sanctuary/FH 6:30 PM

Lenten Study 7-8 PM (Zoom)

GA – 7:00 PM

THURSDAY 2/26:

Choir – 7:00 PM

SATURDAY 2/28:

Sackurday 12:00 PM

AA – 6:30 PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **LENT PRAYER ACTIVITY STATIONS** There are Lenten Prayer Stations set up in the church library room (across the hall from the church office) and in the narthex. The prayer stations are appropriate for all ages, so you are encouraged to share this space with the 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 hcasiango@fpchighland.org, or call the church office.
- **LENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET** The Ministry of Faith Development is once again providing a Lenten devotional booklet. This year's devotional is titled "Discipleship in a Divided Age," from the Presbyterian Outlook, and guides readers to journey through Matthew's Gospel to discover how Jesus leads us toward humility, courage, compassion and faithful discipleship amid the fractures of our age. The booklet provides a daily Scripture, a focus verse, a theologically rich reflection, guided questions, and a closing prayer. This Lenten devotional will be available in time for Ash Wednesday: emailed to those on our email list and mailed to those who don't have email. We have a few extra printed copies in the narthex for those who prefer a printed version and do not have access to a printer.
- **LENTEN STUDY AND PRACTICE WITH PASTOR TYLER** Once again, Pastor Tyler will be leading us in a special Lenten Study and Practice during the season of Lent. Join in each Wednesday of Lent, Feb. 25 - April 1, from 7-8 pm online on Zoom (During our usual BYOB time). This year's theme is "I Lift My Eyes Up to the Mountains." *Psalm 121* is a powerful salve in times of great challenge and need. We will explore it and other mountain passages as we seek hope and healing. All are welcome! The sessions will be recorded for those who would like to participate but cannot make the live sessions on Wednesdays. 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.
- **RUMMAGE SALE MEETING WEDNESDAY, 2/25, AT 1:00 PM** Join us in the meeting room upstairs if you are interested in helping out with this exciting fundraising event for the church! Talk to Lexa Miller or Donna Nelson if you have any questions.
- **"THE BIBLE IN TODAY'S WORLD"** class meets on Sunday mornings from 9-10 am in the middle classroom (across from Pastor Tyler's office). This group is reading through the book, "A is for Alabaster" by Anna Carter Florence. Each week is independent of the other weeks, so come as you are able. If you need a book, or for any other questions, contact Heather Casiano.
- **FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!** If you don't already follow us on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so @firstpchighland on both Facebook and Instagram.
- **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?** 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:

- **BLESSING BOX** 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!
- **HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!** Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex and fill it to help the church's food pantry.

Prayer List

Anthony
Brady Vanes
George Griner
Guy Hendricks
Bill and Anettia Holmes
David Markley
David Kingen
Diana and Ray Mendoza
Janet Orem
Cindy Waltz and Sister
Yvonne Suroviak
Georgette Sknerski
Jakob Holden
Denise Matthys
Jan Oprea
Florance Cody
Kathy & Chuck Pumnea
Laura Buono Domsic
The Windstrups
Rick Parker
Gary Everhart
Darlene O'Brien
Doug & Sue Matthews
Janet Terpstra
Glen Nahler
Tom
David Hamblin
Jana Tolley
Larry & Bonnie Perryman
Delta Rose
Winnie Owen
Breeanne
Mom Bechtler
Victor
Marian Clayton
Ella P
Melissa J.

Rita Stronczek
Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon
Edna Cruz
Charlie
Jerry & Rena Martinez
Nicole
Greg
Pastor Jane
Mary Ellen Edeus
Jane and David
Flora R.
Tyler Gall
Phil
Luana Sulkowski
Sonny Buono
Shannon Sutton
Robin
Eunice
Betsy
David
Trina & Scott
Joe & Kathy
Breanne Polan
Tammy
Alex
Ben
Mike Kelly
Sue Heth
Ron Toren
Tony
Mildred
Neal
Rita
Carolyn
Leroy Fassett
Barb

Psalm 91

¹ You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
 who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
² will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress;
 my God, in whom I trust."
³ For he will deliver you from the snare of the hunter
 and from the deadly pestilence;
⁴ he will cover you with his pinions,
 and under his wings you will find refuge;
 his faithfulness is a shield and defense.
⁵ You will not fear the terror of the night
 or the arrow that flies by day
⁶ or the pestilence that stalks in darkness
 or the destruction that wastes at noonday.
⁷ A thousand may fall at your side,
 ten thousand at your right hand,
 but it will not come near you.
⁸ You will only look with your eyes
 and see the punishment of the wicked.
⁹ Because you have made the LORD your refuge,
 the Most High your dwelling place,
¹⁰ no evil shall befall you,
 no scourge come near your tent.
¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you
 to guard you in all your ways.
¹² On their hands they will bear you up,
 so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.
¹³ You will tread on the lion and the adder;
 the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.
¹⁴ Those who love me, I will deliver;
 I will protect those who know my name.
¹⁵ When they call to me, I will answer them;
 I will be with them in trouble;
 I will rescue them and honor them.
¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy them
 and show them my salvation.

Romans 5:12-19

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned— 13 for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. 16 And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. 17 If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. 18 Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. 19 For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Matthew 4:1-11

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴ But he answered, “It is written,

‘One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,’
and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

⁷ Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’ ”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Waited upon by Angels

Psalm 91; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

In our Call to Worship today, we joined our voices with the voice of the psalmist, saying, “I lift my eyes up to the mountains,” and asking, “Where does my help come from?” As we observe this sacred season of Lent, we will keep lifting up our eyes and hearts to our Creator whose power and love is grand enough to have created such majestic magnificence as the mountains. As we remember with intention the suffering of Jesus on his journey to the cross, we will lift up our eyes and our hearts. As we recognize the suffering that persists for so many in our broken world today, we will lift up our eyes and our hearts. As we acknowledge the suffering that we ourselves experience in our own contexts, in our own grief, in our own trauma, we will lift up our eyes and hearts.

Last week we lifted our eyes up and found Jesus on the mountain of his metamorphosis. There he felt the brilliant light and heat of God’s love and encouragement through a mystical conversation with Moses and Elijah. There he transformed in such a way that he himself became the light of the world that he had previously preached in the sermon on the Mount. 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. We are going back 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 in the river, responding to John’s call for repentance. And then he “was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested

by the devil.” That wilderness was a desert, but it was by no means flatland. I have had the blessing of visiting the Jordan River and the region that surrounds it, and it is dotted with rock formations, hills, and mountains. Out there in the harshest of realities, facing down the very incarnation of suffering and evil, Jesus also would have had the mountains to remind him that he was not alone, to remind him that he was still held in the arms of the one powerful enough and love enough to have created the mountains.

Jesus’ experience out in the mountainous wilderness for those forty days fascinates me nearly as much as his experience up on the mountaintop with Moses and Elijah. There has to be something hugely significant about the fact that before he embarked upon his public ministry in Galilee he faced down the great cosmic enemy, the one our scriptures elsewhere call “the satan.” Perhaps he had to take on the cosmic force of evil incarnate before he could get to the work of Kingdom building. Perhaps he had to get him out of the way so that he wouldn’t keep plaguing him throughout his ministry. Perhaps he had to do it to prove to himself that he was more than ready for whatever the world had to throw at him. Perhaps the Holy Spirit knew that in standing up to temptation Jesus would have the preparation he needed to teach what needed to be taught and seek what needed to be sought. Perhaps it was for all of those reasons and other reasons we cannot even guess at as well.

And afterwards, he was certainly ready for all that he had to do! Indeed, you can see the impacts of the experience throughout his life. After forty days and forty nights of fasting, when he would be beyond exhaustion physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, he would stand up to those temptations, and he would learn from doing so. After the temptation of greed, to turn the stone into bread, Jesus would say, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt.” The way of Jesus is the way of communal interdependence and the exorcism of personal greed. After the temptation of power, to rule all the kingdoms of the earth, Jesus would defy the violent power of empires and choose the way of the cross, the way of strength through weakness. And after the temptation of distrust, to throw himself down to see if the angels would catch him, Jesus would go willingly to his death with full trust in God’s plan for the resurrection. You see, in facing down the satan, Jesus came to understand that God is bigger than any power of evil that ever was or ever could be. And Jesus understood that God’s way is better than the way of greed, power, and distrust. Oh yes, there was certainly something about that terrifying, mystical encounter that prepared him for the rest of his life and ministry.

Part of it was the sheer strength of his will. He had the willpower to fast for that long, and he had the willpower to resist the most tempting of temptations from the most tempestuous of tempters. Yes, Jesus, was indeed a remarkable human being whose example of spiritual fortitude we should always strive to follow. But it was not just a matter of Jesus on his own. There was a very, very important detail at the end of the encounter as told in the gospel of *Matthew*. Jesus may have resisted the temptation to jump off the pinnacle of the temple so that the angels would save him, but that does not mean that the angels stayed away. They must have been there all along, looking out for him, sending strength and goodness his way. For, at the end of it, when the devil left, *Matthew* says, “Suddenly angels came and waited on him.”

Wow! Let us pause and take a moment to take that in! Suddenly angels came and waited on him. He was not left alone out there to fend for himself through the hardest of seasons. God’s messengers were there, whether he was conscious of it or not. And then, when all was said and done, they made themselves known to him. Again, I say, “Wow!”

And of course, the angels were not complete strangers. They were there at the very beginning, foretelling and then proclaiming his birth. But then we don’t really see or hear from them again except in this single situation. So the fact that they were explicitly mentioned means something! These mysterious beings hold an outsized role in our collective imaginations as humans, and we have certainly come up with many images for them. But all we truly know is that they are messengers from God. Somehow they are able to navigate the spiritual and physical realms of existence. Somehow they are able to move between heaven and earth. So of all the times that they could appear, it makes sense that they would show up for Jesus when he faced this embodiment of spiritual evil. They would have known this satan from the time before time even existed. They would have been able to advise Jesus in a way that nobody from the physical world could. And, of course, as is in their very nature, they would have been bringing messages from God. They would have been reminding

Jesus WHO he was in the midst of his hunger-induced delirium and satan-induced temptation. They would have been reminding Jesus WHOSE he was. I am sure that they surrounded Jesus as he faced their ancient foe and said, “Hey! He’s with us!”

And then, afterwards, they waited upon him. They comforted him in the aftermath of this traumatic encounter. They offered healing. They offered hope. They reminded him that the spiritual realm was never out of reach, that God was never out of reach.

And this is the message for us as well, loved ones. God is never out of reach. God’s Spirit is always within us and within all Creation. God’s messengers are always around. In the midst of our hardest struggles, in the face of our strongest temptations, in the aftermath of our worst traumas, God is there. Let us hold onto that truth as we move through Lent. Let us hold onto that truth as we move through a broken world. Let us share that truth with those most broken by this world. Let us also be messengers, for after all, that is who the angels are—the messengers of God, the messengers of Love. Amen!

Baptized in Water

492

BUNESSAN 5.5.8.5.5.9

Michael A. Saward, 1981

Gaelic melody
Arr. Dale Grotenhuis, 1985

C Am Dm G F G C

1. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Cleansed by the
2. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Dead in the
3. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Marked with the

Em Am Em G C Am F C/G

blood of Christ, our King; Heirs of sal - va - tion, Trust-ing the
tomb with Christ, our King; One with His ris - ing, Freed and for -
sign of Christ, our King; Born of the Spir - it, We are God's

Am G C G/B Am G7 C

prom - ise, Faith - ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.
giv - en, Thank-ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.
chil - dren, Joy - ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.

81 Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

ST. FLAVIAN CM

Claudia F. I. Hernaman, 1873; alt.

Day's *Psalter*, 1562

1. Lord, who through-out these for - ty days For us didst fast and pray,
2. As Thou with Sa - tan didst con-tend, And didst the vic-tory win,
3. And through these days of pen - i - tence, And through Thy Pas-sion - tide,
4. A - bide with us, that so, this life Of suf - fering o - ver - past,

Teach us with Thee to mourn our sins, And close by Thee to stay.
O give us strength in Thee to fight, In Thee to con-quer sin.
Yea, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.
An Eas-ter of un - end - ing joy We may at - tain at last!