

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 2025

First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

**THIRD SUNDAY in LENT**

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Incline your ear and come to me, God says to us.  
Listen, so that you may live.  
God's covenant is everlasting.  
It is with us from generation to generation.

**All: God's love is steadfast and sure.**

One: We come together today in God's presence  
to call on the Holy One and draw near.

**All: Let us offer our worship and praise.**

**\*OPENING HYMN** "God of Grace and God of Glory" GtG 307

- 1. God of grace and God of glory,  
on thy people pour thy power;  
crown thine ancient church's story;  
bring its bud to glorious flower.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the facing of this hour,  
for the facing of this hour.**
- 2. Lo! the hosts of evil round us  
scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!  
From the fears that long have bound us  
free our hearts to faith and praise.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the living of these days,  
for the living of these days.**

*(continued...)*

3. **Cure thy children's warring madness;  
bend our pride to thy control;  
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,  
rich in things and poor in soul.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal,  
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.**
4. **Save us from weak resignation  
to the evils we deplore.  
Let the gift of thy salvation  
be our glory evermore.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
serving thee whom we adore,  
serving thee whom we adore.**

Words: Harry Emerson Fosdick, 1930, alt.  
Tune: CWM RHONDDA, John Hughes, 1907  
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#### **UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**We confess to you, O God,  
that we have been tempted by evil  
and have succumbed to sin.  
We compare ourselves to others and find their failures  
but seldom discover our own shortcomings.  
We seek to build our lives by our own limited design  
rather than by your larger purposes.  
You call us to worship you alone,  
but we seek to serve worldly powers.  
Forgive us, God of grace,  
when we fall short of your claim upon our lives.  
Disturb our complacency and  
quicken our desire for a more fruitful life.  
Guide us by your Word  
and guard us with your Spirit,  
so that we may live in faith  
and follow you faithfully;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

#### **SILENT CONFESSION**

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**One:** Hear the promise of the Lord:  
When you call on me, I will answer;  
I will satisfy you with life  
and show you my saving love.  
This is the good news of God's reconciling love:  
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

**All:** **Thanks be to God.**

## **THE PEACE**

**One:** The peace of Christ be with you all.  
**All:** **And also with you.**

*(From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, etc.)*

## **THE WORD**

**SCRIPTURE READING** Luke 13:1-9

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**SERMON** "A Good Word, a Harsh Word ... a Truthful Word" by Pastor Bill Vincent

**\*HYMN** "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound" GtG 649 [*Verses 1-4*]

- 1. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind, but now I see.**
- 2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
and grace my fears relieved.  
How precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!**
- 3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come.  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.**

*(continued...)*

**4. The Lord has promised good to me;  
his word my hope secures.  
He will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.**

Words: Stanzas 1-4, John Newton, 1772  
Music: AMAZING GRACE, *Columbian Harmony*,  
1829; arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1910, alt.  
*Public Domain*

#### **\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**We trust in God,  
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.  
In sovereign love God created the world good  
and makes everyone equally in God's image,  
male and female, of every race and people,  
to live as one community.  
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.  
Ignoring God's commandments,  
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,  
accept lies as truth,  
exploit neighbor and nature,  
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.  
We deserve God's condemnation.  
Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.  
In everlasting love,  
the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people  
to bless all families of the earth.  
Hearing their cry,  
God delivered the children of Israel  
from the house of bondage.  
Loving us still,  
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.  
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,  
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,  
God is faithful still.**

(from *A Brief Statement of Faith*, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Confessions)

#### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**One:** In your mercy, O God...  
**All:** ...hear our prayer.

**THE LORD'S PRAYER** (Contemporary)

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

**OFFERING**

*Invitation*

*Reflection*

*\*Unison Prayer of Dedication*

**Gracious God, you give material gifts and spiritual gifts out of your abundance, and we thank you. All that we present to you now, we have received from your hand. We give so the hungry may eat and the thirsty may receive pure water. We share to send the good news of your Word to those who have not heard. We invest in just causes, that your mercy may be known among all people. We give because it is necessary to our lives. Receive our gifts of time, talents, tithes, and self; and lead us as we use our gifts to join your work in this community, and beyond. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

**SENDING**

**\*CLOSING HYMN** "Change My Heart, O God" GtG 695

**Change my heart, O God;  
make it ever true.  
Change my heart, O God;  
may I be like you.**

*(continued...)*

**You are the Potter;  
I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me;  
this is what I pray.**

**Change my heart, O God;  
make it ever true.  
Change my heart, O God;  
may I be like you.**

Words and Music (CHANGE MY HEART): Eddie Espinosa, 1982  
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**\*CHARGE AND BLESSING**

**One:**           ...And let the gathered people of God say...  
**All:**            ...Amen.

**POSTLUDE**

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