

The First Presbyterian Church *in the City of New York*

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT
Service for the Lord's Day
March 22, 2020 | 11:00 a.m.

The Session and members of First Church extend a sincere welcome to all persons regardless of race, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services, and service as an officer of the Church.

GATHERING

WORDS OF WELCOME

PRELUDE

Improvisation on ABERYSTWYTH and HYFRYDOL

Michael Shake

CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 46:1-3, 11)

**God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.**

HYMN 643

“Now Thank We All Our God”

NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT

**Now thank we all our God
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things hath done,
in whom this world rejoices;
who, from our mothers' arms,
hath blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.**

**O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us;
and keep us in God's grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
in this world and the next.**

**All praise and thanks to God,
who reigns in highest heaven,
to Father and to Son
and Spirit now be given:
the one eternal God,
whom heaven and earth adore,
the God who was, and is,
and shall be evermore.**

-Martin Rinkart; Catherine Winkworth, trans.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

**God of the present moment,
God who in Jesus stills the storm
and soothes the frantic heart;
bring hope and courage to all your children
who wait or work in uncertainty.
Bring hope that you will make us the equals
of whatever lies before us.
Bring us courage to endure what cannot be avoided,
for your will is health and wholeness.
You are God, and we need you, now and always.
Amen.**

-Adapted from *A New Zealand Prayer Book*

DOXOLOGY

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

**Inclusive
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore;
praise Triune God, whom we adore.
Amen.**

- © 1990, Neil Weatherhogg

HEARING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION AND FIRST LESSON 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.’

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

CHILDREN'S PRAYER 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.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 7:24-29

'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!'

Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"What Not to Give Up for Lent: 4. Wisdom"

Dr. Dunham

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from A Declaration of Faith, 1977

God is greater than our understanding.

**We do not fully comprehend who God is or how God works.
God's reality far exceeds all our words can say.**

**The Lord's requirements are not always what we think is best.
The Lord's care for us is not always what we want.
God comes to us on God's own terms
and is able to do far more than we ask or think.**

**Hope in God gives us courage and energy
to contend against all opposition,
however invincible it may seem,
for the new world and the new humanity that are surely coming.**

**Jesus is Lord!
He has been Lord from the beginning.
He will be Lord at the end.
Even now he is Lord.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

SENDING

HYMN 450

"Be Thou My Vision"

SLANE

**Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**

**Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower;
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.**

**Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
thou, mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.**

**High King of Heaven, my victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

-Mary E. Byrne; Eleanor Hull, vers./Harm. © 1927 Oxford University Press

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

If Thou but Trust in God to Guide Thee, BWV 642

Johann Sebastian Bach

Today we continue our five-part sermon series for the season of Lent that we are calling, "What Not to Give Up for Lent." Instead of fasting or relinquishing – "giving something up" – we will propose taking on some distinctive Christian values and practices especially needed in our time. We continue today with a focus on "wisdom." Next week we will think together about "political will."