

Sunday Morning Worship
Emmanuel Presbyterian Church
March 17, 2024
Fifth Sunday in Lent

Gathering

As we gather, settle in by pondering Isaiah's words of hope...
"Thus says the Lord . . . Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"—Isaiah 43:16a, 18-19

Gathering Music "Grace Greater Than Our Sin" [CCLI]
"Be Unto Your Name" [One License]

Welcome Pastor Laurie

Prelude "Nothing But the Blood" [CCLI]

Congregational Introit # 284 "Holy Spirit, Come to Us" [One License]

Call to Worship **Liturgist: Liz Simmons**

Liturgist: And now, let us center ourselves in this space as we tune in with fresh ears to a creative reading of Matthew 11:28-30. (pause)

Liturgist: Come.

Tamara: Come.

Tom Come to me.

Janet: Come to me.

Liturgist: All you who are weary and burdened.

Tamara: All who are weary.

Tom: All who are burdened.

Janet: God we are weary.

Tamara: God we are burdened.

Liturgist: So come.

Tom: Come to me.

Tamara: Come to me.

Liturgist: Come and I will give you rest.

Janet: I will give you rest.

Tamara: I will give you rest.

Liturgist: Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

Tamara: Learn from this.

Tom: Learn from love.

Liturgist: Take my yoke upon you, for I am gentle and humble in heart.

Janet: God we are weary.

Tom: I am gentle.

Tamara: God we are burdened.

Liturgist: I am humble in heart.

Tom: Take my yoke upon you, and you will find rest for your souls.

Liturgist: I will give you rest.

Tamara: I will give you rest.

Tom: Rest for your souls.

Janet: Rest for your bones.

Liturgist: Rest for your wandering mind and your broken heart.

Tamara: I will give you rest.

Tom: For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Janet: God we are weary.

Liturgist: My burden is light.

Tamara: God we are broken.

Tom: You will find rest.

Liturgist: Come.

Tamara: Come.

Tom: Come to me.

Janet: I am gentle.

Liturgist: I am here.

Tom: And you will find rest.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Holy one, worn from this busy week,
we draw near to you, seeking rest, seeking peace,
seeking to be restored by your Spirit.

In this time of worship, help us to encounter you
so that we might be filled up with your love
and sustained for the journey that is before us.

In your holy name we pray. Amen.

Opening Hymn # 90 “Wait for the Lord” (refrain)

[One License]

Letting Go

Call to Confession

Liturgist: Family of Faith, at this moment in our service, we are going to focus on letting go. Letting go of our fears—letting go of that which prevents us

from laying our burdens fully before God—and cultivating the confidence in God’s power and God’s presence with us no matter what. (pause)

Liturgist: Now, God who created you says—

Tamara: Do not fear.

Tom: Do not Fear.

Janet: Do not fear.

Liturgist: Do. Not. Fear.

Tamara: For I have redeemed you;

Tom: I have called you by name,

Janet: You are mine.

Tamara: So do not fear.

Liturgist: God says—

Tom: You are mine.

Liturgist: And God says—

Janet: When you pass through the waters,

Tamara: I will be with you.

Tom: And when you wade through the rivers,

Tamara: I will be with you.

Liturgist: And when you walk through fire,

Tamara: I will be with you.

Janet: They will not drown you; they will not burn you.

Tamara: I will be with you,

Tom: For you are mine.

Liturgist: Let us approach God with confidence that we belong to God, knowing that God abides with us and trusting in God’s gracious mercy. Let us turn to God without fear as we offer our prayer of confession

Prayer of Confession

God, we are works in progress.

In spaces where we could cultivate belonging, we build up walls.

In spaces where we could cultivate compassion, we insist on perfection and pressure ourselves to achieve the impossible.

In spaces where we could let go of anger, we keep score like it’s our job and insist on an “eye for an eye” justice.

So today we pray—

Remind us how to cultivate hope, love, and justice.

Remind us how to let go of fear, perfection, and hatred.

Forgive us. Guide us. Heal us.

Gratefully we pray, Amen.

Assurance of Grace

Liturgist: Beloved, hear these words of grace...do not fear.

Tamara: You are precious in my sight.

Tom: Honored.

Janet: Precious.

Liturgist: I love you.

Tamara: I am with you.

Tom: So do not remember the former things,

Janet: For I am about to do a new thing.

Liturgist: There will be a way in the wilderness

Tamara: And rivers in the desert.

Tom: I am doing a new thing—

Janet: A new thing.

Liturgist: Do you not perceive it?

Tom: I love you.

Tamara: I am with you.

Liturgist: Do you not perceive it?

Janet: I am doing a new thing.

Liturgist: And you are mine.

Tamara: Have you ever seen rivers in the desert?

Tom: Trust me.

Janet: I have called you by name.

Tamara: I am with you.

Liturgist: And You. Are. Mine.

Sharing of the Peace

Cultivating

Time of Wonder

*Hymn 201 “A Prophet Woman Broke a Jar” (verses 1 and 3)

[One License]

Prayer for Illumination

Let us pray.

God of grace, we see in a mirror dimly and
we struggle with the tug and pull of divided hearts.

We need your Word to illumine our path
and your Spirit to guide us in your way.

Awaken us with clarity and conviction to your hope for us,
so that we may follow your way of extravagant love with courage. Amen.

The Psalm Psalm 126 (Responsive)

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,

and our tongue with shouts of joy;

then it was said among the nations,

"The LORD has done great things for them."

The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the Negeb.

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,

shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

Gospel Reading John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

Sermon "Cultivating and Letting Go"

Responding to the Word

**Hymn # 692 "Spirit, Open My Heart"*

[One License]

Praying for One Another

Lord of Love,

Hear our Prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

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.

Sending

**Hymn # 702 "Christ Be Beside Me"*

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**Charge and Blessing*

Postlude "Recessional"

[CCLI]

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