



January 21, 2024
Third Sunday after Epiphany

GATHERING AND PRAISE

Welcome

Pastor Larry

Prelude

Blessed Master

Landon

The prelude signals the beginning of our sacred time together. During the prelude, you are invited to prepare your heart for worship by focusing your attention upon God.

***Call to Worship**

Carolyn Masters

L: We follow a God who calls us to take risks.

All: Help us God of risk-taking!

L: We follow a God who calls us to be “all in.”

All: Help us God to be “all in.”

L: We follow a God who calls us to be present.

All: Be present with us in this time and place, oh God.

***Opening Prayer**

Carolyn Masters

Faithful God, we gather together to praise your name and to experience your deep, abiding love. You are the one who has gathered us here. You have called us from our busy days, our ordinary moments; called us in the midst of our joys and sorrows. Even now, you call us to step outside of our comfort zones into the adventure of following you. We aren't sure this is a good idea! We are unsure of our safety, even knowing that you go with us! Calm our fears and give us the courage to take that risk, that step of faith, to go all in for you. We ask this blessing in Jesus' name. Amen.

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***Passing the Peace of Christ**

Carolyn Masters

Christ is our peace. He has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross. We meet in His name and share His peace.

Children's Time

Pastor Larry

Ministry of Music

Day by Day

Choir with Megan Ensor

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Prayer for Understanding

All Praying

Carolyn Masters

Holy and gracious God, you are the greatest of all. You are full of wonders that no mere human can comprehend. Lord, I seek to understand you and your ways so that I can live according to your commandments. I pray for your divine illumination in my heart and mind. Help me see what you intend for me to see. Help me understand what you intend for me to understand. Open my eyes and my ears to see you and hear your whispers. Amen.

John 3:1-21

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. **2** He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.^[a]"

4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. **6** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit^[b] gives birth to spirit. **7** You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You^[c] must be born again.' **8** The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."^[d]

9 "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

10 "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? **11** Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. **12** I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? **13** No one has ever

gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.^[e] ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,^[f] ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”^[g]

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God!

Hymn

Be Still, My Soul

UMH 534

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Sermon

“New Beginnings”

Pastor Larry

Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Morning Prayer

Pastor Larry

Offertory Invitation

Carolyn Masters

We are faced with the questions: What do I have to lose, by trusting God, moving in a new direction, going all in? This offering is a worshipful moment, an intentional opportunity to accept Jesus’ invitation to take a “leap of faith” towards generous giving. As you give, believe that you are worthy to be a part of the amazing things Jesus is doing.

Worship with Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

I Love You, Lord

Klein

**Doxology*

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Prayer of Dedication*

Carolyn Masters

Generous and abundant God, we offer you our gifts as a sign of our trust in you, knowing that as we give of ourselves, you will continue to shower us with blessing upon blessing. As you gave to us the greatest gift, Jesus Christ, inspire us to continually give to you the best that we have to offer. For we pray in the name of the One who gives us life abundantly. Amen.

GOING FORTH TO SERVE

***Closing Hymn**

Freely, Freely

UMH 389

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***Benediction**

Pastor Larry

***Choral Benediction**

Shalom to You

UMH 666

Shalom to you now, shalom my friends.

May God's full mercies bless you, my friends.

In all your living and through your loving,

Christ be your shalom, Christ be your shalom.

***Postlude**

Sent Forth

Hughes

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent word!
What more can he say than to you he hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*

*2. "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.*

*3. "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
for I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

*4. "When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.*

*5. "The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."*

BE STILL, MY SOUL

*Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side.
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
leave to your God to order and provide;
in every change God faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

*2 Be still, my soul: your God will undertake
to guide the future, as in ages past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
the Christ who ruled them while he dwelt below.*

*3 Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
when we shall be forever with the Lord,
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.*

FREELY, FREELY

*God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,
I've been born again in Jesus' name,
And in Jesus' name I come to you,
To share his love as he told me to.*

Refrain

***He said, "Freely, freely you have received,
Freely, freely give.
Go in my name, and because you believe,
Others will know that I live".***

*All power is given in Jesus' name,
In earth and heaven in Jesus' name,
And in Jesus' name I come to you,
To share his power as he told me to.*

Refrain

***He said, "Freely, freely you have received,
Freely, freely give.
Go in my name, and because you believe,
Others will know that I live".***