

**Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 17, 2024**

Gathering
God invites us to enter His presence

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Preparation for Worship (*Time for Silent Preparation*)

! **Call to Worship** (*Responsively*)

Jim Fox

Let us worship the eternal God, the source of love and life, who creates us.
Let us worship Jesus Christ, the risen one, who lives among us.
Let us worship the Spirit, the holy fire, who renews us.
**To the one true God be praise in all times and places,
through the grace of Jesus Christ.**

! **Invocation** (*Responsively*)

Jim Fox

God, our Creator, from nothing you made our world.
You formed us, love us, and give us all that we need.
God, our Redeemer, you rescued us from sin.
You have given us new life and hope of healing to the world.
God, our Comforter, you are with us always.
You comfort us, renew us, and guide us into your truth.
Almighty God, for your gracious love for us, we praise you.
Amen.

! **Hymn 25**

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Confessing
God invites us to be honest with Him

Call to Confession

Jim Fox

We know that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ. Let us in freedom confess the wrong we have done.
—based on Romans 8:39

Prayer of Confession (*Responsively*)

Jim Fox

O Lord, our hearts are heavy with the violence of our world,
so much suffering through the ages,

wars and holocausts, genocide and abuse.

We cry on behalf of our violent world:

Lord, have mercy.

O Lord, you love and care for us as a parent;
you came to share life with us as a brother.

But we confess we have failed to live as your children
and instead have broken many bonds.

We cry on behalf of our violent world:

Lord, have mercy.

O Lord, you have called us to live together in community,
to consider one another as brother and sister,
regardless of ethnicity, economic status, or popularity.

Yet we prejudge one another,
refuse to love one another,
and victimize one another.

We cry on behalf of our violent world:

Lord, have mercy.

O Lord, giver of all life,
you fearfully and wonderfully made us
and breathed into our nostrils the breath of life.

Yet we endanger the lives of one another,
abuse the lives of young children among us,
destroy those who are defenseless,
and oppress those who are powerless.

We cry on behalf of our violent world:

Lord, have mercy.

Pardon us through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Time for Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Jim Fox

Come now, let us argue it out, says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be like snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.

—Isaiah 1:18, NRSV

Leader: This is the Promise of the Lord

All: 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.
A-men, A-men.*

Offering

Thankful of the gifts God has given us, we offer ourselves to Him

Invitation I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God— this is your true and proper worship.
—Romans 12:1, NIV

Offering

Offertory

(Piano Solo—Donna Jackman)

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men.

Prayer of Dedication

O God of all bounty, from your hand we have freely received. Accept these offerings of your people as expressions of our thanks. Lovingly remember those who have given, enrich the lives of those for whom these gifts are intended, and use these gifts to promote goodwill and to bring your kingdom, for the sake of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Hymn 51

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Proclaiming

God speaks to us through His Word

Scripture Reading Luke 18:18-30

¹⁸ A ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

¹⁹ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "No one is good except God alone. ²⁰ You know the commandments: **Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; honor your father and mother.**"

²¹ "I have kept all these from my youth," he said.

²² When Jesus heard this, he told him, "You still lack one thing: Sell all you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

²³ After he heard this, he became extremely sad, because he was very rich.

²⁴ Seeing that he became sad, Jesus said, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁶ Those who heard this asked, “Then who can be saved?”

²⁷ He replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

²⁸ Then Peter said, “Look, we have left what we had and followed you.”

²⁹ So he said to them, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left a house, wife or brothers or sisters, parents or children because of the kingdom of God, ³⁰ who will not receive many times more at this time, and eternal life in the age to come.”

Sermon *“How To Enter the Kingdom of God”*
 Rev. Tim Latham

 **Hymn 466** *Jesus, Lover of My Soul*

Responding
We respond to God’s Word

 **Profession of Faith**

**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.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.
Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
“Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.”
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.**

—Psalm 46, NRSV

Prayers of the People

Lord God,
because Jesus has taught us to trust you in all things,
we hold to his Word and share his plea:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where nations budget for war,
while Christ says, "Put up your sword":

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where countries waste food and covet fashion,
while Christ says, "I was hungry . . . I was thirsty . . .":

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where powerful governments
claim their policies are heaven blessed,
while Scripture states that God helps the powerless:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where Christians seek the kingdom
in the shape of their own church,
as if Christ had come to build
and not to break barriers:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where women who speak up for their dignity
are treated with scorn or contempt:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where men try hard to be tough,
because they are afraid to be tender:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where we, obsessed with being adults,
forget to become like children:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where our prayers falter,
our faith weakens,
our light grows dim:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where Jesus Christ calls us:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Lord God,
you have declared that your kingdom is among us.
Open our ears to hear it,
our hands to serve it,
our hearts to hold it.

This we pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Commissioning

God sends us out into the world as His witnesses

Praise Song

His Mercy is More

*What love could remember no wrongs we have done?
Omniscient, all knowing, He counts not their sum.
Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore,
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more.*

Chorus

*Praise the Lord, His mercy is more.
Stronger than darkness, new ev'ry morn.
Our sins, they are many;
His mercy is more. Praise the mercy is more.*

*What patience would wait as we constantly roam?
What Father, so tender, is calling us home?
He welcomes the weakest, the vilest, the poor.
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more.
Chorus*

*What riches of kindness He lavished on us.
His blood was the payment; His life was the cost.
We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford.
Our sins they are many: His mercy is more.
Chorus*

 **Benediction & Blessing**

 **Postlude**