



the good news is...

great love for
God & neighbor

Second Sunday in Lent

March 1, 2026

Welcome to

First Presbyterian Church



Welcome to this sanctuary.
Welcome to this time of worship and wonder.
Welcome to this family of faith.

We're glad you're here today and pray that your experience
with us in worship is both challenging and uplifting!

Our ushers are available to assist you as needed.

For more information about First Presbyterian Church, we invite you
to visit our website. There you will find out the ways to keep in touch,
how we live our faith, our different partnerships and so much more.

Our website address is: www.firstpresracine.org

If you're interested in receiving news about the church,
please call 262.632.1686 or email: shelley@firstpresracine.org

Rev. Darren Utley—Church Pastor
pastordarren@firstpresracine.org

TODAY'S SERVICE

PASTOR—*Rev. Darren Utley*

LITURGIST—*Victoria Vollman*

POETRY READING—*Kathy Wortley*

MUSICIANS—*Alejandro Alumbrosos, Mark Paffrath, Pat Badger,
Dave Titus, Alan Galle, Chancel Choir*

MEDIA TECH SPECIALIST—*Steve Comeau*

*Please stand as you are able.

[**Bold type**] indicates text to be spoken by the congregation.

[***Bold italic type***] indicates song to be sung by the congregation.



WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

(As a courtesy to everyone, please mute your mobile device.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Victoria Vollman

Welcome! May you find God's love, peace, grace, and joy as we worship today.

POEM

If God Lived Next Door | *Sarah A. Speed*

Kathy Wortley

If God lived next door,
I'd drop off a loaf of bread.
I'd use my mom's best recipe.
I'd wrap it in parchment and ribbon
and place it on the front stoop.
If God lived next door,
I'd leave a note with my phone number.
Call anytime you need anything!
I'm always happy to help!
If God lived next door,
I'd keep sugar on the shelf,
just in case she needed a cup.
I'd put a picnic table in the front yard and begin taking my coffee there.
Whenever God passed by with their gaggle of rescue dogs,
I could say, *Want to sit for a moment? Want to rest your legs?*
I'd keep a jar of dog treats and water by the mailbox

and change my doormat to one that says:

All are welcome here.

I'd invite God over for dinner.

She'd bring bread and juice.

I'd host a block party,

so that everyone could meet her.

I'd start a community garden

so that the kids could run between rows of squash and tomatoes

while we adults put our hands in the dirt.

We'd share stories while we weeded,

and eat harvest meals at the end of the season.

If God lived next door,

I'd want to build something beautiful.

Then again,

who says she doesn't?

PRELUDE

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise | Jakob Hintze

Alejandro Alumbros

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Tell me something good!

God loves you more than you could imagine.

Tell me something good!

God loves all of creation more than you could imagine.

Tell me something good!

God's love meets us in this service of worship. We are not alone.

This is good news indeed!

Let us worship our compassionate God.

*OPENING HYMN

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

[GtG Hymn #366]

Alejandro Alumbros, Mark Paffrath, Pat Badger, Dave Titus, Alan Galle

CALL TO CONFESSION

Family of faith,
we long to love others as God loves us,
but that work is easier said than done.
We lose our way.
We become distracted.
We grow fearful.
We need God's grace.
Fortunately for us, God's grace is freely and abundantly given.
So join me in the Prayer of Confession.
Join me in being transformed.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God,
did we see you hungry and give you something to eat?
Did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink?
Did we see you alone and offer you compassion?
Or did we cross the street?
Did we avert our eyes?
Did we come up with every excuse in the book?
God, we long to be people who love our neighbors
with the same overwhelming love that you have for them.
But we must admit, we have a long way to go.
Forgive us for the times when we let bias, scarcity, or fear
get in the way of love. Wash us clean and give us the courage to try again.
With hope for a better tomorrow we pray, amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Faith family,
even when we act with judgment,
even when we are guided by fear,

even when we turn our back on a neighbor in need,
God does not turn God's back on us.
So join me in this good-news declaration:

We are seen.

We are forgiven.

We are invited to try again.

Thanks be to God for this unending love.

*ACT OF PRAISE

Spirit Divine, Attend Our Prayers

[GtG Hymn #407, v. 2]

*PASSING THE PEACE

As Christ welcomed everyone,
no matter what their background or social standing;
as Christ welcomed enemies & friends,
outcasts & leaders, foreigners & neighbors,
let us open our hearts and homes and lives.
Let us be like Christ to everyone we meet.
Peace be with you.
And also with you.

CHORAL ANTHEM

Behold Now, Praise the Lord | *Everett Titcomb*
Chancel Choir, directed by Alejandro Alumbros

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Good news God,
speak louder than the news updates.
Speak louder than our mental distractions.
Speak louder than our anger and louder than our fear.

God, speak loudly to us today,
because we long to hear your good news once more.
With hope we pray, amen.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 7:36-50

[NT 66]

Matthew 25:35-40

[NT 29]

SERMON

the good news is...great love for God and neighbor
Rev. Darren Utley

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

Songbird | *Alexis French*

*SONG OF RESPONSE

A Prophet-Woman Broke a Jar
[GtG Hymn #201 vv. 1,3-4]

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
It sounds like welcome
and feels like home.
It sounds like laughter
and feels like mercy.
It sounds like love
and feels like a seat at the table,
so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
I have seen it alive in the world.
And even when my heart aches,
even when wars rage,
even when mercy feels out of reach,**

I remember the one who
welcomed the children
and led with nonviolence.

I remember the one who
cared for the vulnerable
and inspired those around him.

I remember that the good news really is good news,
for I have seen it alive in the world.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

OFFERTORY

Promenade a Deux (*Strolling Together*) | Eugénie Rocherolle

*DOXOLOGY

*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*

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you,

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts,

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

SHARING THE BREAD & THE CUP

Come to the Table of Grace

Please be assured that the communion bread will always be gluten-free.

GOING FORTH TO MINISTER

*CLOSING HYMN

Take My Life
[GtG Hymn #697]

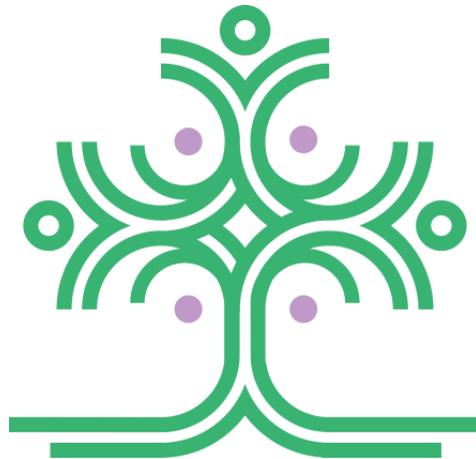
*BENEDICTION

*SUNG BLESSING

Why Should I Feel Discouraged
[GtG Hymn #661, v. 2 & refrain]

POSTLUDE

The Love of God | *Frederick M. Lehman, arr. Rumi Oh*



This week...

Sun., Mar. 1 st	9:30 ^{AM} 10:40 ^{AM}	Second Sunday of Lent Worship Fellowship
Mon., Mar. 2 nd	9:00 ^{AM}	Staff Meeting via Zoom
Wed., Mar. 4 th	4:00 ^{PM}	Food Pantry
Sun., Mar. 8 th	9:30 ^{AM} 10:40 ^{AM}	Third Sunday of Lent Worship Fellowship

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!



Join us after worship, on Sunday, March 15th, in the lower level dining room for some fun fellowship and a mouth-watering traditional Cuban sandwich (for any first timers, they are **not** spicy).

Join us in the dining room or get yours to go if you prefer. \$10 per sandwich. We will have 100+ sandwiches available so take orders from your friends and family or better yet, bring them all along.

Proceeds benefit our Cuban partnership with Central Reformed Presbyterian Church in Matanzas, Cuba

Prayer Matters

Heartfelt thoughts & prayers for all who have recently experienced the loss of a friend or family member. May they know peace and comfort during these difficult times.

Prayers of comfort & healing for Steve Simpson, Evelyn Vanderheyden, Don Tobias, Peggy Taylor, Elie Hunt, Vi Shufelt, Sheila Lawrence, Peggy Wagner, Ed Lehmann, Austin Moulds, Mac & Marilyn MacCaughey, Ellen Easley, Sandra Hopkins, Kay Mahl, Mary Johnson, Leah Fisher, Barb Stevenson.

As they deal with physical, emotional and/or spiritual issues, please pray for John—husband of Sandy Hawley; Johan—husband of Cicelia Andersson; Dan—father of Shelley Maurer; Chad—son of Sheila Lawrence; David—brother and Lynn—sister-in-law of Ed Lehmann; Mark—son of Sharon Campbell; Mary Ann—mother of Cheryl Nitz; Jack Flynn and Mary—sister of Gretchen Hermann; the paternal grandfather of Autumn Eifert; Amy—daughter of Jim & Bonnie Eastman and sister of Jenny Eastman; Elena & Ezequiel Romero—parents of Deb Uteley; Masako—mother of Fumi Nakayama; Nancy—mother of Gloria Zember; John—son of Mac & Marilyn MacCaughey; Chuck—husband of Sue Pehlivanian; Ramona, Steve, Susan, Sandra, John, Liz and Gabby—friends & family of the Galles; Meyer Schaal; Scott Mohn—friends of the Paffrath family.

Prayers for those in the service — Evan Humphreys, Col. Jay Brooke, Jared Smith, Jordan Smith, Nicholas Hansen.

Thank you for your continued prayers for everyone. They are powerful!



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Luke 7:36-50 (*Woman with the alabaster jar washes Jesus' feet*)

Matthew 25:35-40 (*"Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me"*)

Simon and some Pharisees host a dinner for Jesus and an unexpected guest arrives: a woman from the city who kneels at Jesus' feet and washes him with expensive perfume. Simon scoffs at this party foul, but Jesus reorients his focus, asking him to truly see the woman and recognize that she has shown "great love," offering the tender hospitality he was not granted when he entered Simon's home. The woman with the alabaster jar shows a shocking, extravagant love that exemplifies the greatest commandment: to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind and to love your neighbor as yourself. Will the other guests see that loving God goes hand in hand with loving neighbor? We've paired this story with Jesus' words in Matthew 25. When we care for the hungry, the naked, the imprisoned—each of whom are created in the image of God—we are showing love for God, too.



Weekly good news mantra ...

When I love my neighbor, I love God.



SUNDAY

Questions:

When you hear the word “neighbor” what comes to mind?

Who do you picture?

Prayer:

Dear God, I know that your definition of neighbor is bigger than mine. I tend to see those who look or speak like me as my neighbors. Help me to see as you do. Help me to see the children on the news, a world away, as my neighbors. Help me see those I disagree with as neighbors. Help me to see the world as you do. With hope I pray, amen..

MONDAY

Question:

If you were to teach a child what it means to be a good neighbor, what would you say?

Prayer:

Dear God, I know being a good neighbor is more than sharing a cup of sugar. It's choosing to assume the best, to speak with kindness, to lead with curiosity, and to love whenever possible. Help me remember that your invitation to be a good neighbor is always an invitation to love. Maybe it's all that easy, and it's all that hard. With hope for more love I pray, amen.

TUESDAY

Questions:

Who does your heart break for?

What neighbors are you called to love, pray for, or pay attention to in this season?

Prayer:

With-us God, I worry for my neighbors who are hungry. I worry about those who are cold at night. I worry about my neighbors who are targets of oppression. I worry for my neighbors. Help me pay attention to that concern rattling around in my heart. Show me how to turn that worry into action. Show me how to use this worry as an invitation to do the good that is mine to do. With hope I pray, amen.

WEDNESDAY

Questions:

*In the past, how have you practiced loving your neighbors?
Moving forward, are there new acts of compassion you wish to embrace?*

Prayer:

Holy One, teach me your ways. Teach me the expansive ways that I could love my neighbor as myself. I am sure that I can do more than offer just a prayer, so in the coming weeks and months, reveal the ways that I might embrace compassion. Give me eyes to see. Give me hands to serve. Give me words of love. Grant me a heart like yours. With gratitude I pray, amen.

THURSDAY

Question:

*Mother Teresa once said, "If you can't feed a hundred people, then just feed one."
How does this quote shape the way you think about being a good neighbor?*

Prayer:

Loving Christ, there are days when I look at the news and am overwhelmed by the amount of need in the world. How can I be a good neighbor in a world as messy as ours? Where do I even begin? Remind me that you fed the masses with a few loaves and a couple of fish. Remind me that I do not do this work alone. Remind me to start with one, and to trust that you are by my side. Amen.

FRIDAY

Question:

Mr. Rogers once said, "Everyone longs to be loved. And the greatest thing we can do is to let people know that they are loved and capable of loving." Do these words help you think about how to show love?

Prayer:

Holy One, we humans are more similar than we are different. We long to be loved. We long to be seen. We long to be heard. We long to matter to someone. If I can help someone feel loved and like they matter, then I want to do just that. Open up room in my heart to give the same love that I long for. Open up room in my heart to offer the love that my neighbors deserve. Amen.

SATURDAY

Questions:

*What kind of neighbor would you like to be?
What acts of compassion would you like to be known for?
Take a moment to reflect on these things.*

Prayer:

Holy God, when I get to the end of my days, I pray that people will say that I was a good neighbor. More than a résumé or worldly accomplishments, I want to be known as someone who acts with compassion. I want to leave a legacy of love. Keep this desire at the forefront of my mind. Teach me how to love like you. Amen.





LL Cool J | Nicolette Faison

Acrylic, marker, paper on canvas



See You | T. Denise Anderson

Acrylic on canvas