



the good news is...

together, the impossible
is possible

Third Sunday in Lent

March 8, 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—*John Brooke*

POETRY READING & MUSICIAN—*Alejandro Alumbrosos*

MUSICIANS—*Mark Paffrath, Pat Badger, Dave Titus, Alan Galle,*
The Well-Intentioned Repenters

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

John Brooke

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

POEM

Surely, This Must Be It | *Sarah A. Speed*

Alejandro Alumbros

Everyone has a job. I wash the potatoes, filling the sink with slivers of potato peel. You brine the turkey, hovering by the oven all afternoon. Someone sets the table, taking care to fill a vase with asters and marigolds, sprigs of holly and shoots of evergreen. We play music while we prepare. *"What The World Needs Now is Love"*¹ comes on. We can't get it out of our heads. We whistle along to Dionne all afternoon. And eventually, the doorbell rings.

You've invited the neighbors, the grad student who sits on the second row at church, the widower in the choir. We add seats to the table. We go around the room and share one thing we're grateful for. Eyes well as we create a laundry list of beauty. The kids get squirmy, but we're grateful for that too.

And then we eat! We scoop whipped potatoes and crisp green beans with fresh garlic. We pass the bread basket, leaving crumbs all over the table. They are tiny reminders of communion in our midst. And at the end of the night, when we walk our guests to the car and carry sleeping children to their car seats, our neighbors say, *What a holy moment it all was*. Surely this must be what heaven feels like. Surely we *can* create it together.

¹ *"What the World Needs Now is Love," lyrics by Hal David, music by Burt Bacharach (Imperial Records, 1965). Dionne Warwick recorded the song in 1966 on her album, Here Where There Is Love.*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

If you need good news,
settle into this space.
We have good news to share.

If you need a word of hope,
then trust us when we say,
there is hope enough to go around.

If you need a glimmer of joy,
then you're in luck!
We have resilient joy abounding.

If you need to feel God's presence in your midst,
then know that this is God's house.

This is the good news of the gospel.
God is here. Love is real. Joy is on the move.
Let us worship our with-us God!

*OPENING HYMN

God, You Spin the Whirling Planets

[GtG Hymn #23]

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

CALL TO CONFESSION

Friends, we are like the disciples.
The day that Jesus fed 5,000,
his disciples could not imagine a solution to the crowd's hunger.
They told Jesus to send the crowds away.
We often do the same.
Like the disciples, we try to follow Jesus around,
but when we run into issues,
we often cannot imagine how we could play a part.

That is why we need the Prayer of Confession.
For in this prayer, we remember that we can make a difference.

So friends, join me in this moment of truth telling.
Join me in prayer:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Holy God,
with you the impossible is possible.**

5,000 can be fed.

The blind can see.

The hopeless can find hope.

**With you the impossible is possible,
but we are quick to forget that.**

**We look at our hurting world and tell ourselves that nothing can be done.
We forget that you empowered the disciples to feed the crowd.
We forget that you are always with us.**

**Forgive our small-minded ways.
Forgive us for doubting that change could ever come.
But even more so, forgive us when we refuse to be a part of it.
With hope for a better tomorrow we pray, amen.**

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Family of faith,
no matter how many mistakes the disciples made,
Jesus still washed their feet.
Jesus still fed them.
Jesus still called them beloved.
The same is true for you and me,
so hear and believe this good news:
**today is a new day, and once again, we belong to God.
We are forgiven. We are called. We are not alone.
What good, good news. Amen!**

*ACT OF PRAISE

Spirit Divine, Attend Our Prayers

[GtG Hymn #407, v. 3]

*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.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Love Can Build a Bridge | *N. Judd, P. Overstreet, J. B. Jarvis*
The Well-Intentioned Repenters

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God,
we could press our ear to the page,
hoping to hear you more clearly.
We could silence all the alarms and notifications,
hoping to catch a murmur of your voice.
We could still our beating hearts,
and still we might miss your voice.
So today we pray, open up space in our hearts,
in our spirits, in our minds,
to feel your presence among us.
With you, anything is possible.
We believe. Help our unbelief.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 6:32-44

[NT 41]

Ephesians 3:20-21

[NT 193]

SERMON

the good news is...together, the impossible is possible

Rev. Darren Utley

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

In My Life (*Lord Be Glorified*)

*SONG OF RESPONSE

Called As Partners in Christ's Service

[GtG Hymn #761]

*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

What the World Needs Now Is Love | *B. Bacharach, H. David*

*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***

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE/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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

GOING FORTH TO MINISTER

*CLOSING HYMN

Blest Be the Ties That Bind
[GtG Hymn #306]

*BENEDICTION

*SUNG BLESSING

Why Should I Feel Discouraged
[GtG Hymn #661, v. 3 & refrain]

POSTLUDE

Anything Is Possible | *Hans-Gunter Heumann*

What's happening this week?

Sun., Mar. 8 th	9:30 ^{AM} 10:40 ^{AM}	Third Sunday of Lent Worship Fellowship
Mon., Mar. 9 th	9:00 ^{AM}	Staff Meeting via Zoom
Tues., Mar. 10 th	6:30 ^{PM}	Deacons Meeting
Wed., Mar. 11 th	4:00 ^{PM} 7:00 ^{PM}	Food Pantry Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Sun., Mar. 15 th	9:30 ^{AM} 10:40 ^{AM}	Fourth Sunday of Lent Worship Cuban Sandwich Fundraiser <i>(LL-Dining Room)</i>



Join us after worship, **next 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.

To err is human...

In this month's newsletter, the last paragraph of the *Chili Tasting Recap* was inadvertently left off—so here it is!

"We had ten different Chili makers and many toppings, sides and desserts on offer. Big shout out of thanks to our volunteer bakers and chefs! It was a truly wonderful event and thanks to the hard work and generosity of all who participated, we were able to raise \$602.00 for the First Pres Food Pantry from the free will offering collected. What a fitting tribute to Dennis to have an event that was filled with delicious food, fellowship and laughter, and at the conclusion provide funds to help folks in our community who are in need."

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—brother of Cecilia 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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Mark 6:32-44 (*Feeding the 5,000*)

Ephesians 3:20-21 (*“By the power at work within us [God] is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine”*)

As Jesus and his disciples head to a deserted place, perhaps seeking peace and quiet, many from the surrounding towns follow them. Instead of turning them away, Jesus expresses compassion and begins an impromptu teaching session. As the day goes on, the disciples have logistics in mind and urge Jesus to send the people back into the villages so they can feed themselves. Instead, Jesus presents them with an impossible task: “You give them something to eat.”

Dumbfounded, the disciples can only fathom the limitations and financial constraints of Jesus’ suggestion. Yet when they “go and see,” their meager provisions multiply so that thousands are fed. This week we focus on building networks of collective care in order to meet people’s needs. Jesus models a way to be in community by coming together and sharing what we have, dispelling perceived impossibilities. The good news empowers us to believe in the miracles that can become possible through the power of community.



Weekly good news mantra ...
together, we can make a difference



SUNDAY

Question:

*What change feels impossible to bring about?
Name what feels impossible and offer it all to God.*

Prayer:

Creating God, can I help change the climate crisis? Can I prevent my body from failing me? Can I do something for the people of Gaza and Sudan? Can I forgive the one who hurt me? Can I do the impossible? Sit with me in the weight of these challenges. Show me how to dream new dreams. With hope I pray, amen.

MONDAY

Question:

*Jesus charged the disciples to feed the crowds.
What is Jesus charging you to do in this season of life?*

Prayer:

Jesus of Nazareth, you could have fed the crowds that day, but instead you had your disciples break bread and pass baskets. You had the disciples feed the crowds before you. In this season of life, what are you charging me to do? In this season of life, how would you like me to grow, to serve, to connect, to partner with others? Amen.

TUESDAY

Question:

What is a dream you have for yourself, your church, or the world?

Prayer:

Out-of-the-box God, I dream of a vibrant church full of intergenerational joy. I dream of a country without hunger and a world without war. I dream of a neighborhood where we know each other's names, and a city where we eradicate poverty. I have dreams stacked upon dreams and can't help but wonder—what if they aren't impossible? Show me the work that is mine to do. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

Question:

Who in your life helps you believe that you can make a difference?

Prayer:

Calling God, you have placed people in my life who inspire me to be a better Christian, a better neighbor, a better version of myself. Those people are like beacons of light in the night, calling me forward and calling me home. Show me how to adopt the courage, the conviction, and the compassion that these saints model for me. And if possible, show me how to be a light for someone else. Amen.

THURSDAY

Question:

The gospel is full of stories of surprising good. What does this teach us about God?

Prayer:

Jesus of Nazareth, time and time again you did the unexpected. You ate with outcasts. You healed on the Sabbath. You flipped tables in the Temple. You welcomed the children. Time and time again, you reinterpreted the law and bent the rules, all in the name of love. What surprising good are you up to today? I don't want to miss it! Amen.

FRIDAY

Questions:

Where do you see signs, even small ones, that the impossible might already be shifting?

How is God at work around you in ways that give you hope?

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, open my eyes to the quiet ways your kin-dom is already breaking in. So often I look for big signs when the truth is that you move through small mercies, everyday kindness, and ordinary acts of courage. Help me notice the places where healing is budding and justice is taking root. Let these glimpses of your movement steady my hope and soften my heart. And as I see the work you are already doing, draw me into it with humility and trust. Amen.

SATURDAY

Question:

What strength, gift, or resource can you contribute to the work God is already doing—and how might it join with the strengths of others?

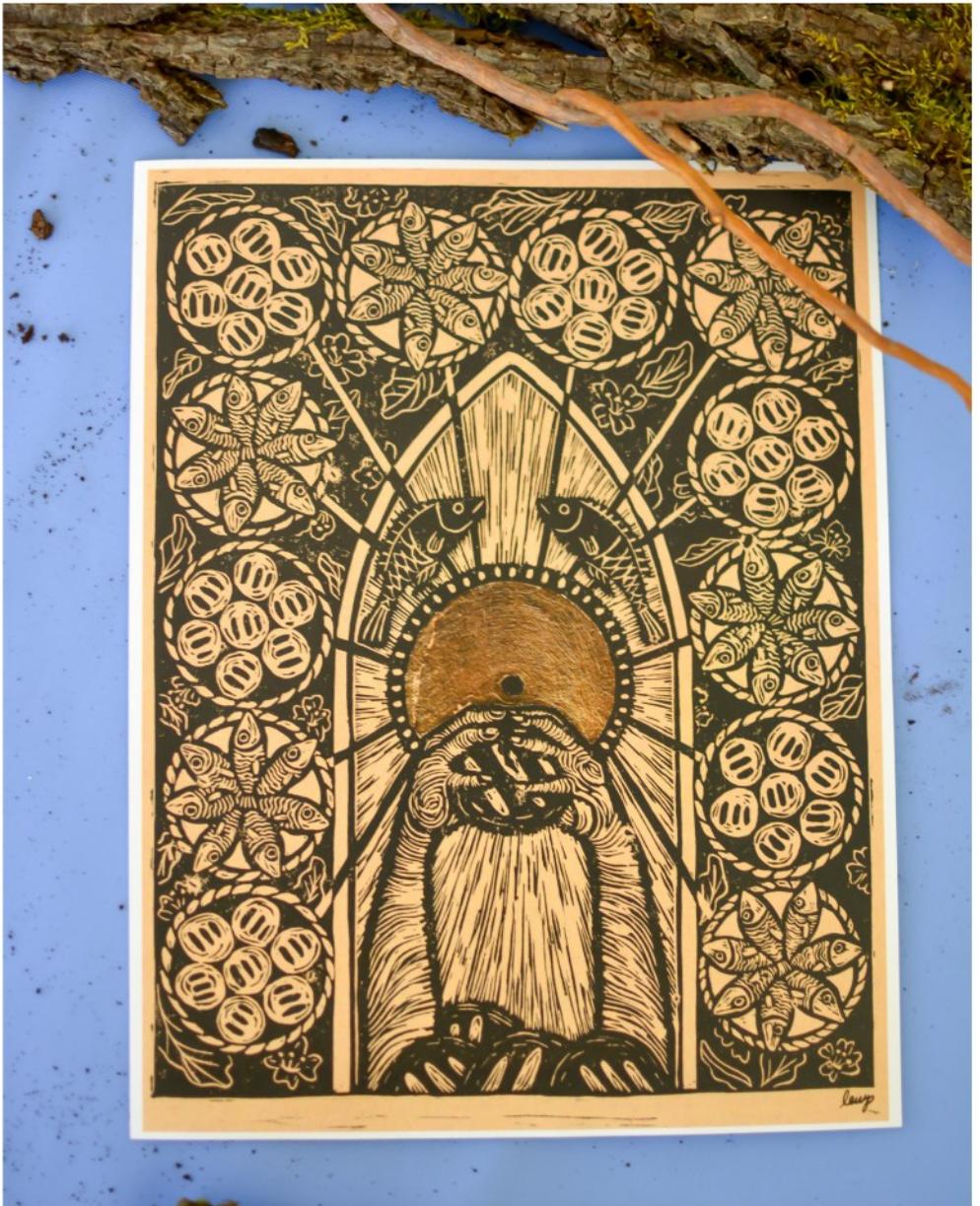
Prayer:

Collaborating Christ, you never meant for us to do this work alone. From the very beginning, you gathered people and showed us that transformation is born in community. So today I offer what I have: my gifts and my questions, my courage and my care. Take these small pieces and weave them into the good you are already doing in the world. Remind me that my offering matters and that its impact grows when joined with the offerings of others. Amen.





Scarce Abundance | Hannah Garitty
Paper lace and water color



Far More Abundantly | Lauren Wright Pittman

Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on paper with gold leaf detail