



Bedford Presbyterian Church

Third Sunday in Lent

March 7, 2021 at 10 AM

Worship-at-a-Distance Format

GATHERING TOGETHER

Chimes

Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor John Sawyer

PREPARING FOR THE WORD

Call to Worship¹ (Responsive)

Elder Bethany Avery

Again and again,

We come to this space.

Again and again,

We gather as a community.

Again and again,

We move closer to God.

And again and again,

God is here.

We are met.

We are heard.

We are shown the way.

So again and again, let us worship holy God.

Hymn # 14 (see below)

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

DIX

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon

Elder Bethany Avery

God of justice, we are guilty of building tables.

We have built tables that oppression dines on, sexism thrives on, and racism lives on.

God of justice, we are guilty of forgetting where we are,

Of turning faith into a negotiation tool and the church into a place for insiders.

God of justice, we are guilty of ignoring the point;

For you taught that the temple was for worship and your message was for all.

God of our hearts,

Be in our decision making.

Draw near to our choices.

Forgive our mistakes.

And as you do,

Flip every table, habit, belief, or point of view that needs adjusting.

With hope we pray for a better day.

Amen.

Family of faith, the good news is that God took on flesh and walked this earth to show us the way. God took on flesh so that we could see what it looks like to disrupt and

¹ Some of the prayers and readings in today's service are by The Reverend Sarah Are and adapted and used with permission from A Sanctified Art, LLC.

overturn systems of corruption. God took on flesh to teach us another way. God took on flesh to point us to restoration. God took on flesh so that we might be forgiven. Friends, we are held, loved, and forgiven by a just and merciful God.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Sung Response

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. Amen, Amen.*

ENCOUNTERING THE WORD

Children's Sermon

Pastor John Sawyer

Prayer for Illumination

Elder Bethany Avery

First Scripture Reading

John 2:13-22

Listen now for the Word of God. **Our ears are open. . .**

Second Scripture Reading

Psalm 19

. . . The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

"What is Acceptable"
(God's Zeal of Approval - Again and Again)

Pastor John Sawyer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Hymn

"Inspired by Love and Anger"

SALLEY GARDENS

*Inspired by love and anger, disturbed by need and pain,
Informed of God's own bias, we ask him once again:
'How long must some folk suffer? How long can few folk mind?
How long dare vain self-interest turn prayer and pity blind?'*

*From those forever victims of heartless human greed,
Their cru-el plight composes a litany of need:
'Where are the fruits of justice? Where are the signs of peace?
When is the day when prisoners and dreams find their release?'*

*To God, who through the prophets proclaimed a different age,
We offer earth's indifference, its agony and rage:
'When will the wrong be righted? When will the kingdom come?
When will the world be generous to all instead of some?'*

*God asks, 'Who will go for me? Who will extend my reach?
And who, when few will listen, will prophesy and preach?
And who, when few bid welcome, will offer all they know?
And who, when few dare follow, will walk the road I show?'*

Affirmation of Faith – from A Sanctified Art

Deacon Kevin Avery

We believe in a God who knows holy rage — a God who stands with the underdog, who passionately protects the suffering, and who overturns systems of corruption. We believe in a God who leads by example — feeding the hungry, welcoming the children, offering water to the Samaritan, eating with the tax collector, healing the sick, preaching from the mountaintop, and offering second chances.

We believe in a God who knew that we would lose our way, and still said, “This is my body broken for you.” We believe in a God who knew our capacity for mistakes, and still said, “I’m going to prepare a place for you.” And because of this love, we believe that God shows us the way, again and again and again. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Call for the Offering

Deacon Kevin Avery

Offertory

Special Music
Sarah Murai, soloist

*At this time, you are invited to offer your tithes and offerings,
by writing a check and putting it in an envelope to the church,
or through our church’s online giving website
(<https://bedfordpresbyterian.org/giving/one-time-gifts-pledges/>),
or by scanning this QR code and making a donation.*



*Your giving has a direct impact on the ministry and mission
of Bedford Presbyterian Church!
Thank you!*

Song of Response

OLD HUNDREDTH

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.***

Prayer of Dedication (Unison)

O Lord our God, we want to follow all your commandments – to love only you, not worshiping the things of this world; to love our neighbor freely, not desiring for ourselves something they possess. Accept these offerings, we pray, and teach us to be generous, giving fully of ourselves that we may truly be the body of Christ in this world. Amen.

Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
Invitation to the Table

Pastor John Sawyer

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give our thanks and praise.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Words of Institution

Communion of the People

At this time in the service, you are invited to use any bread that you have along with any beverage (preferably grape-based) to participate in the Lord’s Supper. As Presbyterians, we believe that the Holy Spirit connects us to one another and to the Table at God’s heavenly feast no matter where we are.

Prayers After Communion and 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 IN GOD'S NAME

Hymn # 770 (see below) "I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table"

WELCOME TABLE

Charge and Benediction and Peace

Pastor John Sawyer

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And with you.

Closing Song

NORTHUMBRIA MORNING BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you, wherever he may send you.

May he guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm.

May he bring you home, rejoicing, at the wonders he has shown you.

May he bring you home, rejoicing, once again into our doors.

Postlude



Liturgists and Leaders in today's worship service –

The Reverend John Sawyer, Pastor

Barbara Flocco, Music Director

Elder Bethany Avery, Liturgist

Deacon Kevin Avery, Liturgist

Sarah Murai, Special Musician

Marc Murai, Elder Mike Chen, and Kirk Wilson Technical Assistance

Information on ways to access audio and video versions of today's service can be found at www.bedfordpresbyterian.org.

For the Beauty of the Earth

14

1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the glo - ry of the skies,
 2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
 3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
 4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
 5 For thy - self, best gift di - vine to the world so free - ly given;

for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
 hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light:
 for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
 friends on earth, and friends a - bove, for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
 for that great, great love of thine, peace on earth and joy in heaven:

Refrain

Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grate - ful praise.

In the course of many revisions, the original eucharistic emphasis of this text has shifted to a hymn of thanksgiving for a wide range of human experience, with a Christological summation. It is set here to the tune that is customary in North America, though not elsewhere.

770 I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table

1 I'm gon-na eat at the wel - come ta - ble;
 2 I'm gon-na eat and drink with my Je - sus;
 3 I'm gon-na join with sis - ters, broth - ers;
 4 Here all the world will find a wel - come;
 5 We're gon-na feast on milk and hon - ey;

I'm gon-na eat at the wel - come ta - ble, Al - le - lu - ia.
 I'm gon-na eat and drink with my Je - sus, Al - le - lu - ia.
 I'm gon-na join with sis - ters, broth - ers, Al - le - lu - ia.
 here all the world will find a wel - come, Al - le - lu - ia.
 we're gon-na feast on milk and hon - ey, Al - le - lu - ia.

I'm gon-na eat at the wel - come ta - ble; I'm gon - na
 I'm gon-na eat and drink with my Je - sus; I'm gon - na
 I'm gon-na join with sis - ters, broth - ers; I'm gon - na
 Here all the world will find a wel - come; here all the
 We're gon-na feast on milk and hon - ey; we're gon - na

eat at the wel - come ta - ble, Al - le - lu - ia.
 eat and drink with my Je - sus, Al - le - lu - ia.
 join with sis - ters, broth - ers, Al - le - lu - ia.
 world will find a wel - come, Al - le - lu - ia.
 feast on milk and hon - ey, Al - le - lu - ia.

The image of a great feast showing God's welcome of all people was part of Jewish tradition (Isaiah 25:6-9) and underlies Jesus' parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:15-24). Such equality remains as unknown to many people today as it was to the slaves who created this spiritual.