

THIRD SUNDAY IN
LENT

Gilead Presbyterian Church
March 12, 2023, 10:00 a.m.
3rd Sunday in Lent, Year A

Convinced of God's Grace, we affirm that there can be no exclusiveness in the body of Christ. We welcome all regardless of race, ethnic heritage, national origin, age, ability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic standing; and we encourage the full participation of all in the life of our congregation.

WELCOME

OPENING MUSIC

"Ever Faithful, Ever Near"
Mary Temple, organ

by Franklin Ritter

OPENING SCRIPTURE

Psalms 121:1-2, 7-8

Leader: I lift up my eyes to the hills--from where will come my help?

People: My help comes from God Almighty, who made heaven and earth.

Leader: God will hold you through all darkness; God will keep your life.

People: God will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

***PURPLE HYMNAL #463**

"How Firm a Foundation"

**1. How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God 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 thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.**

**5. "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned 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."**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we come before you in need of forgiveness and grace. You call us

to trust in you completely, but we do not. We are timid and fearful as we follow your lead. We justify our actions and words, though we know they are not what you require. We struggle to understand the new life Christ offers, preferring old habits to risky change. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to be born again into the life of Christ, trusting that you have included us by grace in the family of faith. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

***THE GLORIA**

Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

***THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

Leader: Peace be with you. **People: And also with you.**

ANTHEM

"For this Is God"
Gilead Singers

by Gilbert M. Martin
based on Irish melody "Londonderry Air"

TIME FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

The children are dismissed to Sunday School.

SCRIPTURE

¹³ The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. ¹⁶ For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Romans 4:13-17

¹ Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Sanhedrin. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³ Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the realm of God without being born from above." ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the realm of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

John 3:1-10

PURPLE HYMNAL #684*"Faith Begins by Letting Go"**

1. Faith begins by letting go, giving up what had seemed sure, taking risks and pressing on, though the way feels less secure: pilgrimage both right and odd, trusting all our life to God.

2. Faith endures by holding on, keeping memory's roots alive so that hope may bear its fruit; promise-fed, our souls will thrive, not through merit we possess but by God's great faithfulness.

3. Faith matures by reaching out, stretching minds, enlarging hearts, sharing struggles, living prayer, binding up the broken parts; till we find the commonplace ripe with witness to God's grace.

PASTORAL PRAYER

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, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

"My Jesus, I love Thee"
Mary Temple, organ

by Sharon Elery Rogers

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION**PURPLE HYMNAL #49****"The God of Abraham Praise"**

**1. The God of Abraham praise, who reigns enthroned above,
the Ancient of Eternal Days, the God of love!
The Lord, the great I am, by earth and heaven confessed,
we bow before your holy name, forever blest.**

**2. Your spirit still flows free, high surging where it will.
In prophet's word you spoke of old and you speak still.
Established is your law, and changeless it shall stand,
deep writ upon the human heart by your strong hand.**

**4. You have eternal life implanted in the soul;
your love shall be our strength and stay, while ages roll.
We praise you, living God! We praise your holy name:
the first, the last, beyond all thought, and still the same!**

***BENEDICTION**

*CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Jesus, Lover of My Soul”
Mary Temple, organ

by Sharon Elery Rogers

**Please stand if you are able.*

*The flowers today were given anonymously to the glory of God
In honor of Gilead member Emma McLean.*

Thank you to our videographer today, Stephanie Gould.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ▶ Join us Wednesdays on Zoom at 8:30 a.m. for prayer and 7:30 p.m. for Bible Study. The link is in the weekly email.
 - ▶ Deacons meet today after worship. Session meets Tuesday at 7:30 on Zoom.
 - ▶ Join us after worship on Palm Sunday, April 2 for a kids’ pizza party with egg dyeing, cookies and Easter baskets! Maundy Thursday we will have a joint service at 7pm at 1st Presbyterian in Mahopac, and on Good Friday at 7pm we will present our Silent Passion here at Gilead. See Mariah Warren if you’d like to participate.
 - ▶ Easter Sunday Lilies will be \$16 this year. See Margery Amato or Pastor Martin to order yours in honor or memory of a loved one.
 - ▶ Today, Sunday March 12, Singers rehearse at 9:15—Come sing with us!. (quick set up for next week’s bell practice right after worship today)
- Next Sunday, March 19, Bell Chimes rehearse at 8:40, Singers at 9:15.



† We accept offerings through the “Online Giving” link on our website, www.gileadchurch.org, or mail checks made out to Gilead Presbyterian Church, 9 Church Street, Carmel, NY 10512. Or give elsewhere if you see a need. In doing so, we brighten the world, and brighten our hearts.

GILEAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Mary Temple, Music Director
Diana Drake Behan, Church School Superintendent

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www.gileadchurch.org



463 How Firm a Foundation

1 How firm a foun - da - tion, ye saints of the Lord,
 2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dis - mayed,
 3 "When through the deep wa - ters I call thee to go,
 4 "When through fi - ery tri - als thy path - way shall lie,
 5 "The soul that on Je - sus hath leaned for re - pose,

is laid for your faith in God's ex - cel - lent Word!
 for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
 the riv - ers of sor - row shall not o - ver - flow;
 my grace, all suf - fi - cient, shall be thy sup - ply;
 I will not, I will not de - sert to its foes;

What more can be said than to you God hath said,
 I'll strength - en thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
 for I will be near thee, thy trou - bles to bless,
 the flame shall not hurt thee; I on - ly de - sign
 that soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,

to you who for ref - uge to Je - sus have fled?
 up - held by my righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand.
 and sanc - ti - fy to thee thy deep - est dis - tress.
 thy dross to con - sume, and thy gold to re - fine.
 I'll nev - er, no, nev - er, no, nev - er for - sake."

It seems odd now to think of singing this text to ADESTE FIDELES, but mainline churches did so well into the 20th century because of a cultural bias against shape note music. The vigor of the present tune seems especially right for the final line's reference to Hebrews 13:5.

Faith Begins by Letting Go 684

1 Faith be - gins by let - ting go, giv - ing up what
 2 Faith en - dures by hold - ing on, keep - ing mem - ory's
 3 Faith ma - tures by reach - ing out, stretch - ing minds, en -

had seemed sure, tak - ing risks and press - ing on,
 roots a - live so that hope may bear its fruit;
 larg - ing hearts, shar - ing strug - gles, liv - ing prayer,

though the way feels less se - cure: pil - grim - age both
 prom - ise - fed, our souls will thrive, not through mer - it
 bind - ing up the bro - ken parts; till we find the

right and odd, trust - ing all our life to God.
 we pos - sess but by God's great faith - ful - ness.
 com - mon - place ripe with wit - ness to God's grace.

This text affirms that faith is not a state of being but a process of becoming what we are called to be in relationship to God, other people, and the world. The movement from one stage of faith to another is suggested by gestures of the hand: letting go, holding on, reaching out.

49 The God of Abraham Praise

1 The God of A-braham praise, who reigns en-throned a - bove,
 2 Your spir - it still flows free, high surg - ing where it will.
 3 Your good - ly land we seek, with peace and plen - ty blest,
 4 You have e - ter - nal life im - plant - ed in the soul;

the An - cient of E - ter - nal Days, the God of love!
 In proph - et's word you spoke of old and you speak still.
 a land of sa - cred lib - er - ty and Sab - bath rest.
 your love shall be our strength and stay, while a - ges roll.

The Lord, the great I AM, by earth and heaven con-fessed,
 Es - tab-lished is your law, and change-less it shall stand,
 There milk and hon - ey flow, and oil and wine a - bound,
 We praise you, liv - ing God! We praise your ho - ly name:

we bow be - fore your ho - ly name, for - ev - er blest.
 deep writ up - on the hu - man heart by your strong hand.
 and trees of life for - ev - er grow with mer - cy crowned.
 the first, the last, be - yond all thought, and still the same!

Shaped by its traditional Jewish tune, this selection of English stanzas conveys the essence of the *Yigdal*, a canticle based on a medieval Hebrew statement of faith about the nature of God and often used in synagogue worship, alternately chanted by cantor and congregation.