

## GATHERING

### Prelude

#### Welcome

Welcome to worship with FPC! We are glad you are here this morning.

If you are new here, we invite you to fill out a welcome card or email [secretary@fpcmissoula.org](mailto:secretary@fpcmissoula.org) with your information so we can get connected with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it!  
Let us prepare our hearts and minds to worship and encounter our living God.

#### Call to Worship

One: Lent calls us to journey, this and every day, following Jesus wherever he leads us.

**All: Lent calls us to journey: to the place where God covenants with us, to receive the new names we are given.**

One: Lent calls us to worship together, to tell future generations the good news.

**All: Lent calls us to practice justice, to bring God's hope to all people.**

One: Lent calls us to faithful living, to trust the One who gives us life.

**All: Lent calls each of us to take up our cross, to trust the One who bears it with us.**

One: Lent calls us to journey with God.

**All: Let us worship God, who walks with us, this and every day.**

#### Gathering Song: Come Thou Fount

Come Thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy praise.  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet sung by flaming tongues above!  
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it, mount of Thy redeeming love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer, here by Thy great help I've come.  
And I hope by Thy good pleasure safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God.  
He to rescue me from danger, interposed His precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be.  
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love!  
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above.  
Robert Robinson\*\*

## PRAISING

#### Prayer of Adoration

Let's pray.

Almighty God, Your extravagant love has called us together.

Long before we even knew You, You already knew us,  
and had chosen us to be part of Your own family.  
Thank You for the amazing love You have shown toward us!

And so we come before You with praise and thanksgiving,  
offering You the worship of our hearts and lives,  
and opening ourselves to the prompting and leading of Your Holy Spirit.

Receive our worship—our praise and prayers and offerings—  
through the intercession of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
May the time we spend here in Your presence bring honor and glory to Your Name.  
Amen.

## **O, the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus**

O, the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!  
Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me!  
Underneath me, all around me, is the current of his love,  
Leading onward, leading homeward to that glorious rest above!

O, the deep, deep love of Jesus, spread his praise from shore to shore!  
How he loves us, ever loves us, changes never, nevermore!  
How he watches o'er his loved ones, died to call him all his own;  
How for them he's interceding, watching o'er them from the throne!

O, the deep, deep love of Jesus, love of every love the best!  
'Tis an ocean vast of blessing, 'tis a haven sweet of rest!  
O, the deep, deep love of Jesus, 'tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me;  
And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to thee!  
O, the deep, deep love of Jesus, 'tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me;  
And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to thee!  
Samuel Trevor Francis and Thomas J. Williams\*\*\*

## **The Kingdom is Yours**

Blessed are the ones who do not bury all the broken pieces of their heart.  
Blessed are the tears of all the weary, pouring like a sky of falling stars.  
Blessed are the wounded ones in mourning, brave enough to show the Lord their scars.  
Blessed are the hurts that are not hidden, open to the healing touch of God.

*Refrain: The kingdom is yours, the kingdom is yours.  
Hold on a little more; this is not the end. Hope is in the Lord; keep your eyes on Him.*

Blessed are the ones who walk in kindness, even in the face of great abuse.  
Blessed are the deeds that go unnoticed, serving with unguarded gratitude.  
Blessed are the ones who fight for justice, longing for the coming day of peace.  
Blessed is the soul that thirsts for righteousness, welcoming the last, the lost, the least. *Refrain*

Blessed are the ones who suffer violence and still have strength to love their enemies.  
Blessed is the faith of those who persevere; though they fall, they'll never taste defeat. *Refrain*  
Terrell Wilson, Brittney Spencer, Micah Massey and Aaron Keyes\*\*

## **BELONGING**

### **Kids on the Steps**

#### **Prayer of Confession**

In this season of Lent, we are invited to consider how we live as followers of Christ – to look at our decisions and our actions straight on, and to hold them up to the example of Christ, and to make amends. So let us come before God and one another in a time of prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, you have called us to name you as our Savior, and to take up our cross and follow you. Yet it is too easy for us to worship other things. We spend more time focusing our energies elsewhere, diverting our time, our energy, our money, our attention away from you. You call us to set aside our own desires so that we may embrace your desires, but we are stubborn and refuse to let go.

Forgive us for choosing daily to be complacent.  
Shake us of our apathy and fill us with an urgency to follow you.

Forgive us for the times we have tried to make carrying our cross more comfortable.  
May our love for you be a driving force to live with joyful surrender.

Forgive us for the times we have not followed you because it wasn't convenient.  
Help us to turn away from our distractions and sin.

Strengthen us to set our faces toward Jerusalem, to take up our cross and follow you.

All we are and have, we give back to you with open hands, knowing that all our needs you will meet as we go with you. We pray this, counting on your grace and mercy. Amen.

### **Song: Have Mercy**

Have mercy on me. Have mercy on me. O Lord, have mercy; O Lord, have mercy.  
Oh, help my unbelief. Oh, help my unbelief. O Lord, have mercy; O Lord, have mercy.  
Sandra McCracken\*\*

### **Assurance of Forgiveness**

Hear these words from Joel 2:13:

One: Return to the Lord your God, for God is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and abounding in love.

Turn toward your God in the confidence that, through Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

## **FORMING**

### **Sermon: Luke 10:25-42**

### Who is My Neighbor?

-Sometimes it is the most familiar stories that are hardest to understand.

For us the word Samaritan has positive connotations. Because of Jesus' parable, we can almost only think of the *Good Samaritan*. This last week Jo, Emma, Austin and I got certified for CPR and First Aid, and our instructor mentioned how Good Samaritan laws protect someone trying to help save a person's life from lawsuits. There are recognizable charitable organizations like Samaritan Medical Center, Samaritan Hospice and Samaritan's Purse Disaster Relief.

But in the days of Jesus, Jewish references to the Samaritan people were not positive. *What do you know about the Samaritans?*

Do you remember that there was a time that the land of Israel was divided into two kingdoms? Judah was the southern kingdom, where Jerusalem lies. The northern kingdom lay north of Judah up to the Galilee. And it was called Samaria. In 721BC, the Northern Kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrian Empire in what was understood biblically as God's judgment on their idolatry. Most of the people were deported, never to return, but those who were left behind or who escaped to the hills over time were intermarried with Gentiles. You recall that the Southern Kingdom was destroyed and carried away to Babylon in 586BC. When the exiles from Judah returned from exile to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, they encountered Samaritans in the north, now having rejected the old Jewish priesthood and traditions, having claimed their own city for a Temple, having truncated Hebrew Scriptures, having become convinced that they were the true heirs of Abraham and Moses, the true keepers of the true faith. And to the Jews, the Samaritans were half-breed idolators who defiled the true religion. They were more revolting than Gentiles.

By the time of Jesus the hatred between Jews and Samaritans had gone on for hundreds of years. It's reflected in the animosity between Israel and Palestine today. Both claim to be the true descendants of Abraham. Both claim to be rightful possessors of the land. Most Israelis do not travel south from the Sea of Galilee to Jerusalem through the Palestinian West Bank (Samaria) at risk of violence. For their safety Jews in Jesus day headed north from Jerusalem would first descend east down to Jericho in the Jordan valley, then turn north to follow the river up to Galilee. The point is that Jews avoided Samaria and Samaritans. They avoided Samaritans by using the Jerusalem/Jericho road that Jesus references in his parable.

Sounds like something still going on in our world, no? And not just in the Middle East.

Who even now do we think of as bitter competitors over the mantle to be true guardians of Christian faith or national identity?

-The Gospel reading for today is from Luke 10:25-37. The Chosen has helped us see and hold on to the tension that lies behind so many biblical passages. See if you can hear the tension that lies beneath this exchange between two ways of understanding what it means to be God's people.

<sup>25</sup> An expert in the law (expert in Hebrew or Old Testament Scriptures) stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" <sup>27</sup> He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself." <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

Let's pause there for a second.

We're told the expert is out to *test* Jesus. You know how someone can ask an innocent-sounding question to try to get someone else to expose how out of step they are with the crowd in order to vilify them?

He asks: What must I do to inherit eternal life? A better translation of 'eternal life' is probably 'the life of the age to come.' What must I do to enter into God's age to come? By the time of Jesus, Jews divided history into the Present Age and the Age to Come. The Age to Come would be when the LORD would finally act decisively to judge evil, rescue Israel, and create a new world of justice and peace. So he's not asking What must a person do to go to heaven when they die? But: What do I have to do and be to pass through God's judgment and endure into the coming age on earth as it is in heaven? What's the way to enduring life in God's kingdom? Where the realm of God and the realm of earth overlap and God's will is done, God's shalom made fully manifest?

And Jesus wisely answers his question with a question: Well, what is written in our Scriptures? How would you answer that question? What do you read there?

His answer? Love God with everything. Love your neighbor as much as yourself. Exactly how Jesus answers himself when he's asked about the greatest commandments, the heart of the Scriptures, what life is all about.

And so Jesus *affirms* this man who's challenged him. 'You know the answer. Do this and you will live.' And so the man went away satisfied to enter into a quiet Lenten journey spiritual renewal, setting aside what was getting in the way of his putting God first, so that he might love God with everything, and attend to his neighbor.

No. He did not. What he *wanted* was to surface the scandal of Jesus' views in public. The way he saw the road to life mattered to him. He saw Jesus as a corrupter of the truth and a danger to the People of God. And he wanted to expose Jesus' heresy.

<sup>29</sup> But wanting to justify himself, the legal expert asked Jesus, "And *who* is my neighbor?"

And there it was. Dig down on this question and we will see how it divides people of faith. If not on the surface, in practice. In what we want for our children. In what we want for our church. In what we want for our country. In what we want.

'Who is my neighbor?' would be a strong question to ponder for the season of Lent.

For the legal expert, God is the God of *Israel*. For him neighbors are *Jewish*.

For Jesus, God is the God of grace for all people. For him neighbors are Jews and Gentiles, that is Jews and non-Jews. And who are the people who are either Jewish or non-Jewish? Every human person.

<sup>29</sup> [So] wanting to vindicate himself, the Bible scholar asked Jesus, "And *who* is my neighbor?" <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, Once upon a time, "a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan while traveling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two [days' wages], gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.' <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" <sup>37</sup> He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

-Let's look at the story. *Who's in the story Jesus tells?* [man robbed, Priest, Levite, Samaritan – Priest and Levite would be folks from same tribe, priests descendants of Aaron go to Jerusalem on rotation to help with sacrifices; Levites help with other non-sacrificial liturgical tasks – religious elites steeped in the Scriptures; Samaritans recognized neither their validity nor their authority]

OK. So there's a guy stripped, beaten and left for dead by thieves, though of course those passing might have no idea who he was and what happened to him. First the priest then the Levite see him on their side of the road, walk to the other side, and pass by.

*Why do they pass by?*

Maybe preserving ritual purity. Maybe they don't think they can touch someone actually dead lest they be unclean for their work in the Temple (though they are going the opposite way of their work in the Temple).

Maybe too important. Maybe they are going about things they consider too big to pause for things they consider this small?

Maybe busy. Maybe they have so many responsibilities that there's no time left for this basic human responsibility?

Maybe no one watching. And they are used to showing sacrificial kindness only for the applause of others.

Maybe afraid to help the wrong person. What if he's a Samaritan? What if he basically deserves this? What if my failure to spurn him has the appearance of endorsing his false beliefs?

In any case, the religious people pass by. In Jesus's story, the People of God most knowledgeable about their calling fail to help.

But when the Samaritan comes upon the (likely Jewish) wounded traveler, he's the one that has compassion, that touches what may be repulsive wounds, that rearranges his plans, that spends significant money, that follows up.

-'Who is my neighbor?' Jesus doesn't answer the question directly does he? Hold on to this piece of the story. Instead of answering the question: 'Who is my neighbor?' Jesus asks his own question: 'Which of these three *was a neighbor* to the man who was assaulted?' That is, Jesus kindly invalidates the man's attempt to *limit* who's included to his own ethnicity, nationality, and faith. Jesus won't let him establish a bare minimum of who's to be included in the centerpiece of God's calling. He asks which of the three showed *mercy*. And so he reframes the exchange from 'Whom do I have to love?' to 'How am I growing in neighborly mercy?'

And get this. Here's what's so brilliant. This is *exactly* what the lawyer was trying to catch Jesus saying in public. That his urgent vision for the justice and peace of God's kingdom meant seeking intimate fellowship with the wrong people, even these hated, godless, half-breed enemies. But in the end, Jesus doesn't have to say it. The man gets to hear *himself* admit it out loud.

-Who exactly is our neighbor, Church? Well. Do you see how easy it is to wear the badge of Christian faith while at the very same time believing in your bones (without seeing the contradiction) that it's generosity and goodness are limited to the people I love? Lent is a time for self-reflection. Do you see how easy it is to believe (even unconsciously) that Jesus just goes too far in making mercy for someone on the side of the road the measure of Life?

Something to consider. Will we use the God-given revelation of love and grace as a marker of personal identity and security not unlike national chauvinism? A warmth of pride that extends to our own people and up to our own borders? Or will we see that revelation of God in Christ as a challenge to extend love and grace to the whole world?

-It gives me chills that Jesus shares this parable on his own way to Jerusalem. That he tells this story about a stretch of road he would all-too-soon cover. And that his own answer to the question 'Who's my neighbor?' is finally answered by the urgent mercy of the cross: 'Father forgive them (all) for they know not what they do.'

'Who is your neighbor?' No apprentice of Jesus can remain content watching a person made in God's image lying half-dead in the road. Let's pray...

### Song of Response: God of All Comfort



God of all com - fort, God of com - pas - sion, re - veal your  
Show us the val - ue of ev - ery per - son, show us your  
We hear the groan - ing of all cre - a - tion, we hear the  
mer - cy through us your church, dis - turb our  
im - age in ev - ery face; we all are  
prom - ise of earth re - newed, so make us  
slum - ber, move us to ac - tion, to show your  
e - qual, we all are bro - ken, and need the  
a - gents of your re - demp - tion in this, the  
king - dom on the earth. Make us like Je - sus, full of your  
kind - ness of your grace. We stand to - geth - er, here in the  
world so loved by you. May we grow bol - der, may we speak

Spi - rit, de - clar - ing good news to the poor, pro - claim - ing  
mar - gins, there in the hard - ship and the pain, we cry for  
lou - der, un - til your voice of hope is heard; for we see  
free - dom for ev - ery cap - tive, and the fa - vor of the Lord.  
jus - tice, and re - stor - a - tion, un - til the si - lent sing a - gain.  
Je - sus go - ing be - fore us, to bring his king - dom on the earth.

Joel Payne and Matt Weeks\*\*

## **STEWARDING**

### **Invitation to Offering**

In response to the One who crosses the road in compassion to bind up our wounds and pay for our recovery with his own suffering love, let us gather our gifts that they might be for the love of those he calls neighbor.

### **Musical Offering: I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say**

Arr. Sandra Eithun

### **Prayers of the People**

Let us join our hearts together in prayer.

Loving Lord, at the beginning of this Lenten season,  
we are met with the challenge of handing over  
every bit of our lives that do not come from You.  
To rid ourselves of what clutters our lives,  
and all that distracts us from the simple truth of Your love for us.

Your prophets have called us to change the way we worship—  
to make internal sacrifices instead of external ones.  
To seek justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with You  
each and every one of our days.

Help us to cease living in ways that disconnect us from You,  
Help us to give up our way and give ourselves to Your way for us.

So, lead and guide us on this Lenten way.  
May we walk with Jesus toward the hill just outside of Jerusalem.  
May we like Him take up our cross and follow,  
spending each moment of our lives living responsively to You, just as Christ Himself did.  
We pray this in His name, saying together,

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name.  
Your kingdom come, Your 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 Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

## **SENDING**

## Sending Song: Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days



Lord, who through-out these for - ty days  
As you with Sa - tan did con-tend,  
As you did hun - ger and did thirst,  
And through these days of pe - ni-tence,  
A - bide with us, that through this life



for us did fast and pray,  
and did the vic - tory win,  
so teach us, gra - cious Lord,  
and through your Pas - sion - tide,  
of doubts and hope and pain,



teach us with you to mourn our sins  
O give us strength in you to fight,  
to die to self, and so to live  
for - e - ver - more, in life and death,  
an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy



and close by you to stay.  
in you to con - quer sin.  
by your most ho - ly Word.  
O Lord, with us a - bide.  
we may at last at - tain!

Claudia Frances Ibotson Hernaman\*\*\*

## Benediction

### Leading in Worship This Morning:

Liturgist: Jeremy Flesch  
Kids on the Steps: Austin Graef  
Sermon: Dan Cravy  
Musicians: Austin Graef, Chris Caldwell, Emma Thackston,  
Joselyn Thomsen, Julie Thackston, Simon Hill  
Slide, Sound and Video Techs: Pat Scott,  
Zane Reneau and Bill Maitland

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### FPC Ministry Staff:

Pastor: Dan Cravy  
Worship Director: Emma Thackston  
Children, Youth and Family Director: Austin Graef  
Church Operations Manager: Becky Kress  
Program Support Administrator: Jo Ruby  
Church Secretary: Haleigh Adair  
Facility Steward: Robert Miller  
Bell Choir Director: Tomi Kent  
Parish Associates: Rev. Janet Malone and Rev. Bob Schurr  
Preaching Pastor, Blackfoot Church of the Potomac: Natalie Mauer