



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**Shelbyville, Tennessee**  
**Sunday, March 14, 2021**  
**Fourth Sunday in Lent**



Dear Friends,

My goodness what a difference a year makes. A year ago, I was in Texas and wrestling with whether to get on a plane to head to Alabama for my first grandchild's birth. I drove the 938 miles instead.

So much has happened this past year. A lot of it has been tragic and sad. Like you I have lost friends, though no relatives. For that I am grateful.

As we enter the second year of this pandemic, we are finally seeing an end to this nightmare. But we are not there yet. It reminds me of an example John Leith would use to talk about the work of Christ and the kingdom of God.

He would liken Jesus' resurrection and what it accomplished too D-Day in World War II. D-Day. Dr. Leith would point out that the victory gained that was a indeed a decisive turning point in the war, and yet the war was not over. In the days and months hared there would be more battles to fight, and more lives would be lost. However, the victory won on those beaches made the outcome of the war inevitable.

I think the analogy applies to our fight against the COVID-19 virus and the variants it has (and will) spawn. With the roll out of three very effective vaccinations and as the number of people who have received the vaccine is growing every day and victory is almost in reach, we must continue to fight on in our efforts to eradicate this deadly menace. Sadly, more lives will be lost to this virus. I don't want that to include any of you. Or me, for that matter.

So, as we open up the church for in-person worship and committee meetings please observe the protocols your session has put in place for your protection and welfare. Wear masks, (even if you have been vaccinated), social distance and wash your hands or use the hand sanitizer we have place through-out the church.

Speaking of the session, we have our monthly stated meeting on Monday the 15th at 5:30PM. I would encourage you to take a moment and say a prayer for the work of your session as we seek to be good and faithful servants in our time and place as we lead this congregation in its work and witness.

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FYI – I will be taking a week of vacation beginning Tuesday, March 16th. I will be back in the office Tuesday morning, March 23<sup>rd</sup>. If you need to contact me, please feel free to do so, it comes with the territory folks. You can email me ([taylortodd57@gmail.com](mailto:taylortodd57@gmail.com)) or call me (205-283-1542).

The Reverend Elizabeth Gilliam will be your guest preacher for Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup>. I know you will welcome her with open hearts and minds.

I hope you have found the Lenten devotionals we have made available to you helpful during your journey this Lenten season.

I noticed the “Our Daily Devotionals” for March, April, and May are also in. You are welcome to pick up one of those as well for your post-Lent journey. We also have several copies of 10 Easter Reflections, also from “Our Daily Bread” publications, entitled “The Greatest – Love.”

As Spring approaches, I hope you will enjoy the beauty of God’s creation as it comes back to life. I will. It’s one of my favorite times of the year.

Stay safe and be smart. I’ll see some of you Sunday.

Grace and Peace,  
Taylor

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## **SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY**

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2021

### **Welcome and Announcements**

Stated Session of March will be held in-person tomorrow, Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30PM. There are no other committee meetings scheduled during the rest of the week.

Our youth will be meeting at 6:00PM this evening for dinner and the second lesson in our Confirmation Classes. All youth and parents are welcome to attend.

## **LOOKING AHEAD:**

UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED ALL WORSHIP SERVICES IN MARCH WILL BE IN-PERSON.

Next Sunday, March 21, Rev. Elizabeth Gilliam will be our guest preacher. Dr. Todd will be on vacation.

Palm Sunday: March 28<sup>th</sup> and 5-cents-a-meal Sunday.

Maundy Thursday Worship Service: April 1, 2021. Service begins 5:30PM.

Easter Sunday: April 4. One Great Hour of Sharing Offering.

(There will be no Easter Sunrise Service or breakfast this year due to COVID-19 concerns. Our regular 10:00AM Easter service will be in-person).

### **Prelude**

Billie Crowell

### **Responsive Call to Worship**

Leader: We give You thanks, O God, for You are good; Your steadfast love last endures forever.

**People: When we cried to You with our troubles, O Lord, You saved us from our distress.**

Leader: We give You thanks, O God for Your wonderful works to all of humanity.

**People: Hear now our offerings of praise and thanksgiving, as we come into Your holy presence.**

**ALL: Let us worship God!**

### **Prayer of Preparation**

Almighty God, You pour out the spirit of grace and supplication on all who desire it. Deliver us from cold hearts and wandering thoughts, that with steady minds and burning zeal we may worship You in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Call to Confession**

If we claim to be sinless, then we deceive ourselves and are strangers to the truth. If we confess our sins, God is just, and may be trusted to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every kind of wrong. Let us admit our sin before God as we confess our individual and corporate sins. Let us pray.

### **Unison Prayer of Confession**

God of holy majesty, we lift our hearts and eyes to You, acknowledging that we have disobeyed Your law; we have been sorely wounded by our sin, and call upon You to bind us up.

Have mercy upon us in our distress; heal us, restore us, shine Your light into our darkness. Be glorified in us and through us; that with gladness of heart we may testify of Your merciful kindness and steadfast love to us.

Help us by Your Spirit to bear witness to Your healing grace and restoring mercy, wherever we find brokenness and ruin; through Jesus Christ our saving Lord. Amen.

## **Assurance of Pardon**

God so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. Christ himself bore our sins in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness, by his wounds we have been healed. Thanks be to God.

## **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.

## **Passing of the Peace**

Minister: May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Minister: Please share the peace of Christ with those around you.

## **Time for Young Christians**

**Kate Canady**

## **Prayer for Illumination**

Almighty God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, open Your Word and illumine our darkened world, that we may see clearly and live faithfully by the light of the truth in Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **Scripture**

**Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:14-21**

## **Sermon**

**“Heading for the Light”**

**Rev. Dr. Taylor Todd**

## **Profession of Faith**

## **A BRIEF STATEMENT OF BELIEF**

### **RESURRECTION, RETURN OF CHRIST AND GOD'S TRIUMPH**

Adopted May, 1962 by the General Assembly of the PCUSA

Eternal life is the gift of God. We are assured by the promises of the Gospel, by our relation to Christ, and by his resurrection that death does not put an end to personal existence, but that we too shall be raised from the dead. Those who have accepted the forgiving love of God in Christ enter into eternal life in fellowship with God and his people. This new life begins in the present world and is fulfilled in the resurrection of the body and the world to come. Those who have rejected the love of God bring themselves his judgment and shut themselves outside the fellowship of God and his people.

As Christ came once in humility, he will return in glory for the final judgment and for the consummation of his universal Kingdom. The work and promised return of Jesus Christ give assurance that the age-long struggle between sin and grace will in God's time have an end; all the power of evil will be destroyed, and God's holy, wise, and loving purposes will be accomplished. Amen.

## SEALING OF THE WORD

\*Doxology (Instrumental)

Billie Crowell

### Prayer of Dedication

You, O Lord, are the giver of every good and perfect gift. Accept our offering for the things given, which sustain the body and nourish the soul. Though we may never be great in the eyes of the world, we can be useful in the work of Your kingdom. You depend on us to spread the Gospel. Bless that which we bring to Your altar that it may reach those in need in Your name and to the glory of God. Amen.

### Prayers of the People 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. Thine is the kingdom, power and the glory forever.* Amen.

## BEARING AND FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

\*Charge and Blessing

Rev. Dr. Taylor Todd

\*Postlude

Billie Crowell

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SUNDAY MARCH 14

- ♦ 4th Sunday in Lent
  - ♦ Worship 10:00am
  - ♦ Daylight Savings Time
- Set clocks 1 hour ahead
- ♦ Food donation for Good Sam

### MONDAY MARCH 15

- ♦ Session Meeting 5:30pm

### TUESDAY MARCH 16

- ♦ Pastoral Care 10:00pm

### WEDNESDAY MARCH 17

- ♦ St. Patrick's Day



### SATURDAY MARCH 20

- ♦ First Day of Spring





**Children's Church**  
**on Sundays during Worship**

Sunday, March 14th  
Pizza Dinner for  
Youth and Parents—6pm  
Confirmation Class at FPC



**Matt Coroson, Evelyn Davidson, Bob & Alice Durio, Pat Edmiston, Tommy Franks, Ed & Elaine Holcombe, Carolyn Matusek, The Family and Friends of Gail Parsons, Sheila Withers.**

**In Military Service: LT Andy Canady, Airman Chase Blanton.**  
*Those serving at home and abroad.*  
**Pray for our Nation!**



**COMMUNION PREPARATION** April 1 Maundy Thursday  
Aaron & Connie Crafton

**COMMUNION PREPARATION** April 4 Resurrection of the Lord/Easter~Mary Marsh

### **I CHOOSE GENTLENESS...**

Nothing is won by force. I choose to be *gentle*.  
If I raise my voice may it be only in *praise*.  
If I clench my fist, may it only be in *prayer*.  
If I make a demand, may it be only of *myself*.