



LENT 2020

IN SEVEN WORDS

MARCH 15, 2020 | THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

“So strange, life is. Why people do not go around in a continued state of surprise is beyond me.” — William Maxwell

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (from Psalm 95)

“Come, let us sing unto the Lord. Let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation.

“Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful noise unto God with psalms.

“For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth. The strength of the hill is his also. The sea is his, and he made it. And his hands formed the dry land.

“O come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.”

**PRAYER OF THE DAY** (from Psalm 95)

O Lord our God, we come before you, bowing in reverence before you. For you are our maker. You are our God. You are our shepherd, and we are the people of your pasture, the sheep of your hand. Today we shall listen for hear your voice. Amen.

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

Let us not harden our hearts in the presence of the Lord God. Let us not close ourselves to his gracious light. Let us soften our hearts, and open them, so that God’s mercy may search the innermost parts of our lives, and apply to all our broken places his healing touch. Let us confess our sin together.

**CONFESSION OF SIN**

We have searched for security and comfort from those powers which promise much and deliver little. We have indentured ourselves to gods who have proven themselves false. Although we could hear the thunder on God’s mountain, we chose instead to chase after gods we crafted with our own skills. We compounded our foolishness with vanity, taking pride in our little gods, our household gods, simply because they were made in our image. Turn us from all false choices, we pray. Bring us again to the foot of your holy mountain. Teach us your ways. Amen.

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

The Lord God has never ceased to venture into the wilderness to recover his own people. He goes there again and again. For as often as we stray, he does seek us out. As good shepherd, as maker intent on redeeming his creation, the Lord meets us where we are, to bring us home. Hear the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Gracious God, help us to find ourselves in your Word. However difficult this may be, help us to locate ourselves among those who hear you, and who know themselves to be addressed by you. Amen.

**OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

Exodus 17:1-7

**THE GOSPEL LESSON**

St. John 19:25-27

**SERMON**

“Behold Your Mother” [see sermon transcript and video, [www.scapc.org](http://www.scapc.org)]

Michael Jinkins

Lenten Sermon Series: *The Meaning of Life in Seven Words*

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:** The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

**PASTORAL PRAYER** (by Rev. Jeffrey Myers, published in *The Presbyterian Outlook*, March 13, 2020)

God our Creator, who calls the stars by name and sets the fireflies dancing, who makes the mountains burst into song and emboldens the purple crocus pushing up through the snow, we pause to give deep thanks for the beauty which surrounds us always and for the promise that life goes on.

Set in our hearts a hope more resilient than the coronavirus, and assure us of your power to bring good even out of the most formidable diseases.

God of healing and hope, we pray that you would cool the fevered brow of the sick and speak of love stronger than death to those who lay dying. Give healing compassion to all who care for the sick, and encourage those facing isolation with your peace-giving presence.

We pray that coronavirus would move us to reflect upon our responsibility, individually and together, in caring for creation. Let your righteous anger spur us to make the long-overdue changes, so that all of creation might have room to breathe.

Rein in fear, we pray, before it becomes contagious, and nurture trust to form the basis of our dealings with one another. Let the tireless efforts of those on the frontiers of research lead to new and effective treatments, and guide those in positions of power by principles of truth and integrity.

God of tender mercies, we ask humbly that the painful awareness of our own vulnerability lead not to greater fear, but to deeper faith – a faith that nothing in all of creation can separate us from your love – neither today, nor tomorrow. Amen.

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**CHARGE AND BLESSING** (2 Corinthians 13:13)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. Amen.