



10th March 2024 – Lent 4

Greeter: *Betty*

Meditation Song: *A new commandment* (TIS 699)

(please remain seated)

A new commandment I give unto you
that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
By this will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another;
by this will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another.

(repeat)

Welcome:

Greeting:

On this fourth Sunday of Lent
May Christ be with you
And also with you

Moment of Stillness:

There is a stirring in us that won't let go.
It stirs in us like the wind stirs leaves—

inviting us to move, drawing us forth.
When we're quiet,
we know that stirring is the Holy Spirit,
dancing love awake in us.
We're here.
And we're still.
And we're quiet.

In this quiet moment let's be still and aware of the Spirit's presence within us
and all around us.

Lent Candles:

In Lent we set love upon our hearts and feet and walk with Jesus towards the
cross. As a reminder that Jesus did not shy from entering the darkest and
most difficult places, we blow out a candle each week.

[Four candles are blown out]

In our walking we know that we are not alone,
for Jesus has walked this road before us,
and God's Spirit rests upon us as we take this journey forward.

Acknowledgement First Peoples:

This is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here. We pay our respects to the
Gadigal and Wangal people, the traditional custodians of the land on which
we gather today.

We are grateful for the grace they have shown in extending the hand of
reconciliation to us in the call to pursue justice together for a better future for
all. **May we walk together for justice and peace.**

Call to Worship:

We are invited
Into the story,
Into this place,
Into God's presence.

We are invited

Into reflection,
Into community,
Into a spiritual journey.

We are invited
The broken and bruised,
The hopeful, the new,
The faithful, the doubting,
The wondering, the waiting.

We are invited
Because God so loved;
So, listen, trust the invitation,
the invitation is for you.
All are invited here.

Opening Prayer:

In a world full of fear,
open our hearts to your love.
Though we walk in wilderness places,
open our minds to your hope.
As we seek paths in the darkness,
open our eyes to your light.

May we turn away from hatred,
towards love.
May we turn away from intolerance,
towards understanding.

As sisters and brothers in Christ,
we commit ourselves to compassion.
Together, not alone,
We pray for peace.
Amen

Hymn: There's a wideness (TIS 136)

1 There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea.

There's a kindness in God's justice,
sealed for us on Calvary.

2 There is plentiful redemption
in the blood that has been shed;
There is joy for all the members,
in the sorrows of the Head.

3 For the love of God is broader
than the measures of our mind,
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

4 But we make God's love too narrow
by false limits of our own,
and we magnify its strictness
with a zeal God will not own.

5 If our love were but more simple,
we should rest upon God's word,
and our lives would be illumined
by the goodness of our Lord.

Prayer of Confession:

In the prayer of confession, we admit to ourselves and to God that we do not have it all worked out. And in that vulnerability, we are surrounded by God's grace. So, in this knowledge, let us pray:

Forgive us God:

For closing ourselves to the driving of your Holy Spirit;
for choosing to live in the places of comfort
rather than being led into the wilderness;
for letting fear of the person who is different rule our lives,
rather than letting your love for all people fill our hearts;
for our separation from one another in the Body of Christ;
for not trusting that you hold the future in your hands.

Merciful God, forgive us.

Amen

Words of assurance:

Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God.

Again and again, we are loved.
Again and again, we are forgiven.
Again and again, we are invited in.

**Thanks be to God for such amazing love!
Amen.**

Peace:

The peace of Christ be always with you
And also with you.

Let's share Christ's peace with one another from where we're seated.

Hymn: Now thank we all (TIS 106 i)

1 Now thank we all our God
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms
has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
to keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
of this world in the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son and Spirit blest,

who reign in highest heaven
the one eternal God,
whom heaven and earth adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Moment for the young at heart: Tonia

Bible Readings: Andrew

Introduction to the Hebrew Scripture Reading:

One of the most difficult questions that our reading from the book of Numbers raises is that of the character of God. What kind of God is this who inflicts death on people for their lack of trust? The people have been to Sinai; they have received the law and are bound in covenant with God. Their lack of faith is, to the writers of this passage, a violation of the covenant, and therefore worthy of punishment. But God does also provide the remedy. We hear that God doesn't remove the snakes, but provides a means for healing in the midst of danger.

Number 21:4-9

⁴ From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but the people became discouraged on the way. ⁵ The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶ Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

John 3:14-21

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷ "Indeed, God did

not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned, but those who do not believe are condemned already because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Hear the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Reflection: Roger Abrahams

Moment of Stillness:

Prayers of the People: Ron

The Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your name.
your kingdom come
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread
forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us in the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom the power and the glory are yours.
Now and forever.
Amen**

Community News:

Offering Prayer:

Creator God,
Take our Lenten offerings
and make them radical;
Grow their actions,
enable their impact.
As we prepare for tomorrow,
may your will be done.
On earth as it is in heaven.
Amen.

Song: Psalm 19

May the words of my mouth
And the meditations of my heart
Be pleasing to You pleasing to You
May the words of my mouth
And the meditations of my heart
Be pleasing to You my God

Chorus

You're my Rock and my Redeemer
You're the reason that I sing
I desire to be a blessing in Your eyes
Ev'ry hour ev'ry moment
Lord I want to be Your servant
I desire to be a blessing
In Your eyes in Your eyes

Ending

May the words of my mouth
And the meditations of my heart
Be pleasing to You my God

Benediction & Blessing:

As you leave this place,
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.
May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God's grace.

And the blessing of God Almighty;
Creator, Christ and Spirit
Be upon you and remain with you always.

3-fold-Amen

Pastoral Prayers: Hector

Acknowledgements:

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Moment of Stillness / Call to worship: adapted Sanctified Art

Opening prayer: Annabel Shilson-Thomas (Let Justice Roll Down)

Confession: adapted Sanctified Art

Words of Assurance: adapted Sanctified Art

Benediction: adapted Sanctified Art