

Community Presbyterian Church

open hearted, open minded



March 17, 2024

Welcome to worship this morning!

Bulletin Cues: **Bold** indicates congregational response, * indicates please stand, if able

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Why are you here?

**I am seeking God with my whole heart,
with my entire mind,
with a fire burning in my bones.**

I see it! You're in the right place!

This is God's house. The door is open to you.

Why are you here?

I am seeking God with my whole heart,
with my entire mind,
with a fire burning in my bones.

We see that in you! You're in the right place.


This is God's house. The door is open to you.

Let us worship God.


Let us learn from the Spirit. Amen!

OPENING HYMN PH 358

Help Us Accept Each Other



1. Help us ac - cept each oth - er As Christ ac - cept-ed us;
2. Teach us, O Lord, Your les - sons, As in our dai - ly life
3. Let Your ac - cep - tance change us, So that we may be moved
4. Lord, for to - day's en - coun - ters With all who are in need,



Teach us as sis - ter, broth-er, Each per - son to em-brace.
We strug - gle to be hu - man And search for hope and faith.
In liv - ing sit - u - a - tions To do the truth in love;
Who hun - ger for ac - cep-tance, For righ - teous - ness and bread,



CALL TO CONFESSION

Friends, when you study Peter's story in scripture it's almost impossible to ignore how much he loved to ask questions. He asks Jesus:

"What does the parable mean?"

"Where are you going?"

"How many times should we forgive?"

Like a tenacious toddler, Peter was full of questions, because Peter was eager to learn. I wish I was more like that. I still have so much to learn.

So friends, let's be like Peter. Let's return to Christ with the humility of a student as we pray together the prayer of confession. Let this be a moment of learning. Let us pray:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God,

We long to be lifelong learners.

We long to approach you with curiosity and an open mind.

Instead, we often live as if we know best.

We forget that the disciples called you "Rabbi, Teacher."

Forgive us for the times when we fail to be curious.

Forgive us for the times when we assume we know best.

Forgive us for the moments when we imagine that our learning is done and that we have all the answers.

Like Peter—who was brave enough to ask, "How many times should we forgive?"—make us brave. Spark a desire in us to learn, and may our curiosity carry our faith into deeper waters. With hope and humility we pray, amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Family of faith, When Peter asked Jesus, “How many times should I forgive?” Jesus responded with abundance. That abundance exists for you as well.

No matter what you have done or left undone, no matter what lessons you have learned or are still learning, God’s abundant grace exists for you. God’s love will never run out.

So hear and rest in this good news: You are forgiven. You are loved. You are invited to serve. Thanks be to God! Amen.

LISTENING FOR GOD’S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Teaching God, We want to learn your ways. We want to learn the ways of forgiveness. We want to learn the ways of grace. We want to learn your ways of love. That is part of why we return to your text week after week, because we are hungry to be more like you. So, as we prepare to listen to your good Word, calm the noise in our minds. Center our spirits to focus on you so that we might learn and hear what we have missed in this story before. God, we want to learn your ways. Meet us here. Speak your truth. Help us listen. Amen.

LENTEN POETRY

Teach Me

by Rev. Sarah A. Speed

Teach me about the ways of the wind,
about the ways of the world,
about the ways of the heart.

Teach me about the soft crook of my lover’s arm,
and the way two souls can hold each other close.

Teach me about forgiveness, about the language of I’m sorry
and the softness of sincerity.

Teach me about abundance, about seventy-times-seven
and all the days of my life.

Teach me about joy, about its contagious weaving
and its soul-healing.

Teach me about mercy, about open hands and deep breaths.

Teach me about the dawn of time and the stars in the sky.

Teach me what matters most.

Teach me what is mine to do.

Teach this achingly curious heart
until I run out of questions
or I run out of days.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
and I will have a life well-lived.

RESPONSIVE READING Psalm 119:9-16

How can young people keep their way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

With my whole heart I seek you;
do not let me stray from your commandments.

**I treasure your word in my heart,
so that I may not sin against you.**

Blessed are you, O Lord;
teach me your statutes.

**With my lips I declare
all the ordinances of your mouth.**

I delight in the way of your decrees
as much as in all riches.

**I will meditate on your precepts
and fix my eyes on your ways.**

I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Aria from St. Matthew Passion
by Johann Sebastian Bach

Jennifer Taylor

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 18:15-22

The Message Bible

“If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you’ve made a friend. If he won’t listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won’t listen, tell the church. If he won’t listen to the church, you’ll have to start over from scratch, confront him with the need for repentance, and offer again God’s forgiving love.

“Take this most seriously: A yes on earth is yes in heaven; a no on earth is no in heaven. What you say to one another is eternal. I mean this. When two of you get together on anything at all on earth and make a prayer of it, my Father in heaven goes into action. And when two or three of you are together because of me, you can be sure that I’ll be there.”

At that point Peter got up the nerve to ask, “Master, how many times do I forgive a brother or sister who hurts me? Seven?”

Jesus replied, “Seven! Hardly. Try seventy times seven.”

We proclaim Christ crucified—the wisdom and power of God.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Pastor Carla

RESPONDING TO GOD’S GRACE

OFFERING

An offering plate is placed near the back of the room to receive your offerings and is available before, during the hymn of the day and shortly following the service.

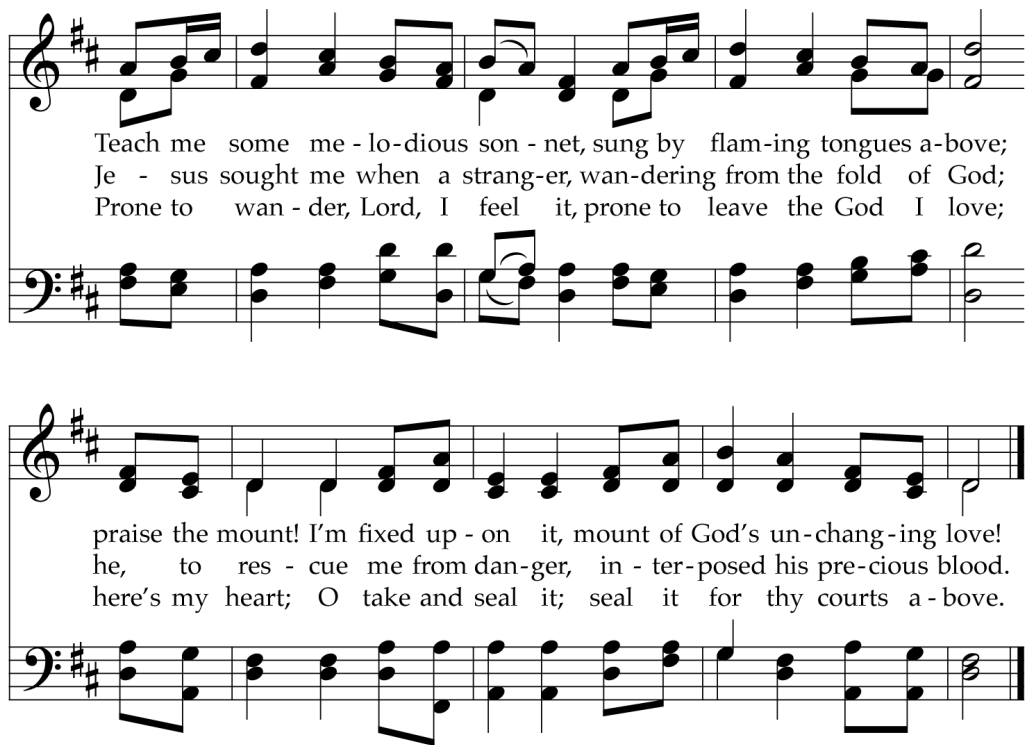
HYMN OF THE DAY GTG 475

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

1 Come, thou Fount of ev-ery bless-ing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - e - ne - zer; hith-er by thy help I'm come;
3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be!

streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud-est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea-sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan-dering heart to thee.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing'. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The first system contains the first three verses of the hymn. The second system contains the concluding lines of the hymn.



Teach me some me-lo-dious son-net, sung by flam-ing tongues a-bove;
 Je-sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-dering from the fold of God;
 Prone to wan-der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;

praise the mount! I'm fixed up-on it, mount of God's un-chang-ing love!
 he, to res-cue me from dan-ger, in-ter-posed his pre-cious blood.
 here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a-bove.

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AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe that questions are a building block of faith.

“How many times should I forgive?”

“Jesus, where are you going?”

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

We believe that humble curiosity can open our eyes.

“Where does it hurt?”

“What do you need?”

“How can I help?”

We believe that God is a teacher.

“Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”

“Here I am.”

“Send me.”

We believe that faith invites our whole being to engage,

with all our heart,

with all our mind,

with all our strength.

We believe. Help our unbelief.

In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Through the grace of God, we have gifts in abundance and pour them out like perfume from a flask, not for our sakes, but to worship the One who lavishes love on the world.

Gracious God, we thank you for the mystery that you give yourself to us. Lead us by your Spirit in this Lenten season to repent in hope, to serve you in faith, and to die and rise with Christ. Amen.

JOYS AND CONCERNS/PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God, our Savior, **hear our prayer.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER


**O Divine Parent, Giver of Life,
whose presence is holiness,
may our hearts be in you.
Transform the world
according to your delight,
that all earth may become a holy place.
Give us each moment that moment's breath.
Give us your gift of forgiveness,
that receiving it deeply we may give it freely.
Transform our desires,
and free us from evil powers;
for all creation, and all power, and all beauty
are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

SENDING INTO THE WORLD TO LOVE AND SERVE

*CLOSING HYMN GTG 722

Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak

1 Lord, speak to me that I may speak in liv - ing
2 O lead me, Lord, that I may lead the wan - dering
3 O teach me, Lord, that I may teach the pre - cious
4 O fill me with your full - ness, Lord, un - til my
5 O use me, Lord, use e - ven me, just as you



ech - oes of your tone. As you have sought, so
 and the wa - vering feet. O feed me, Lord, that
 truths which you im - part. And wing my words that
 ver - y heart o'er - flow in kin - dling thought and
 will, and when, and where un - til your bless - ed

let me seek your err - ing chil - dren, lost and lone.
 I may feed your hun - gery ones with man - na sweet.
 they may reach the hid - den depths of man - y a heart.
 glow - ing word, your love to tell, your praise to show.
 face I see, your rest, your joy, your glo - ry share.

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* BENEDICTION

Beloved wanderer, as you leave this place,
 may you carry your curious heart on your sleeve.

May you look for God in every face.

May you find the courage to get out of the boat, to run to the tomb,
 and to speak of your faith.

And when the world falls apart, may you hear God's voice deep within,
 saying, "Take heart, it is I, be not afraid."

You are called. You are blessed.

In both your ups and your downs, you always belong to God.

Go now in peace. Go trusting that good news.

Amen. Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Seventy-seven Times

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Matthew 18:15-22

Digital painting



When I'm creating a mandala inspired by a text, I'm able to zoom out and see the bigger picture, and the image itself ends up looking like a bird's eye view, which I think is a helpful perspective sometimes. In this mandala, I wanted to follow a person through the process of reproval, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration as Jesus describes in Matthew 18. In the center, a person is standing alone, isolated, with their arms crossed in a closed-off posture. If you're sinned against, Jesus says to go and "point out the fault when the two of you are alone" (Matthew 18:15). When you move to the second ring of the mandala, there are pairs of people shaking hands, finding common ground, or at least attempting to. If this doesn't work, then you are to bring more people (one or two more) together to provide counsel and witness. In the third ring of the mandala, two people are engaging with the closed-off person, sharing a way forward. In the next ring hyacinth flowers—which represent sorrow, regret, and forgiveness—stretch, bloom, and grow, bringing beauty into the now open arms of the people in the last ring of the mandala, who are embraced and woven into the community. The person from the center goes from being alone and closed-off to embraced and open.

When I was drawing the figures from the center out, it began to look like a dance. Is this the picture that grace paints? Forgiveness cannot happen in isolation and certainly neither can reconciliation nor restoration. The movement toward wholeness is the movement toward one another.

Perhaps craving more tangibility and practicality, Peter asks how many times he should forgive someone who has wronged him, and Jesus says, "Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18:22). This piece contains seventy-seven people and flowers to represent the abundance of grace that Jesus calls us into. The gold represents the divine presence of empathy, compassion, grace, and love throughout this dance from isolation toward community, from brokenness toward wholeness, and from guilt and shame toward freedom.

—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

“Prayers by Rev. Sarah A. Speed, A Sanctified Art LLC, sanctifiedart.org.”
Lord’s Prayer adaptation from *Unfolding Light*.

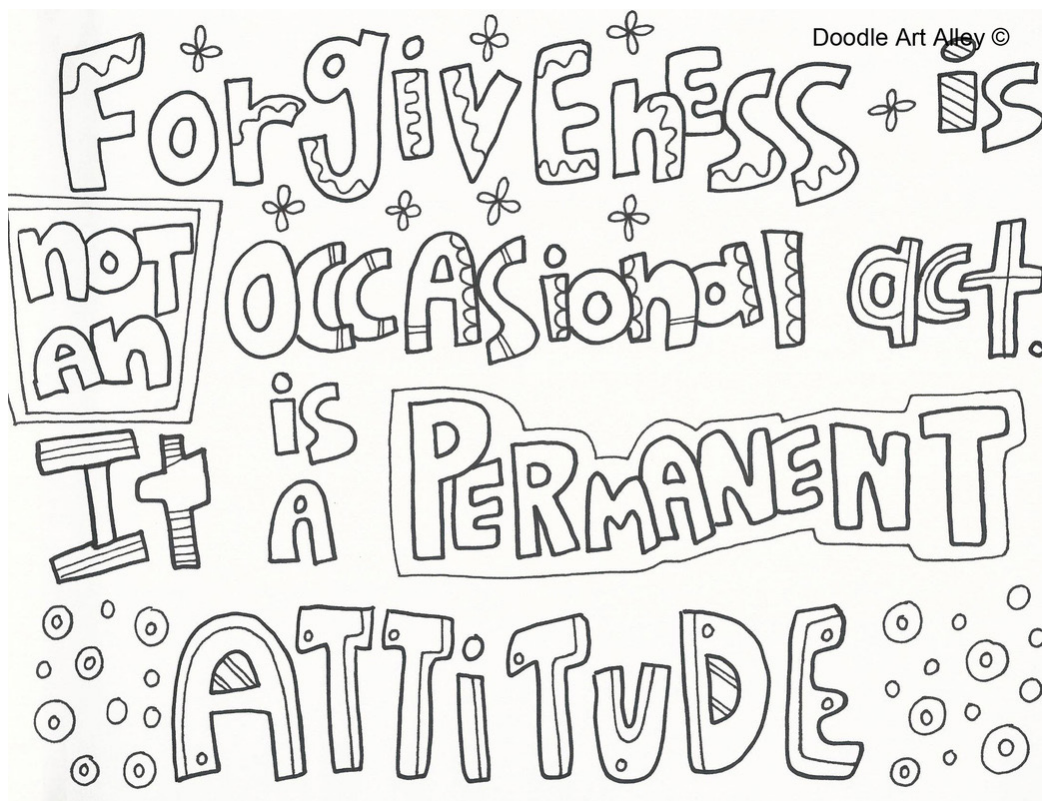
BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



The Book Discussion Group will meet after worship today to discuss *The Big Finish* by Brooke Fossey.

from Goodreads.com:

“In a funny, insightful, and life-affirming debut, Brooke Fossey delivers an unflinching look at growing old, living large, and loving big, as told by a wise-cracking man who didn’t see any of it coming.”



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Sunday, March 17

9:30 am **Worship - Onsite and Online**

2:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios

Monday, March 18

9:30 am Mission Prayer Group

Tuesday, March 19

Stephanie- out of the office

12:00 pm Bulletin Information Due

7:00 pm Building Use: Mission Aid Network

Wednesday, March 20

9:00 am Prayer Group

12:00 pm Newsletter Information Due

7:30 pm CPC Choir

Thursday, March 21

5:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios

Sunday, March 24

9:00 am Quarterly Deacons Meeting

9:30 am **Worship - Onsite and Online**

2:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios

For your calendar

Palm Sunday - March 24, 9:30 am worship

*Maundy Thursday - March 28, 6:00 pm meal,
6:30 pm worship*

Easter Sunday - March 31, 9:30 am worship



Judy Leal

Jane and Ed Burgstaler family,
especially daughter Jenny

Connie Holst

Vera Atkinson's daughter, Teresa

Shannon Cisewski

Ron Murray

Dick Massaro and family

Nellie Brovold's mother, Jacqueline

Roland Ronningen and his parents

Building Partners:

Children's Place Preschool

Labranza de Dios

*To be added to the prayer list, please
contact the pastor: pastor@cpchester.org.
or the office: 507-280-9291 or via
email: office@cpchester.org. Emergency
Pastoral Support: Pastor Carla Nelson:
507-254-1254*

Church Staff

Bridge Pastor	Rev. Carla Nelson
Music Director	Jennifer Taylor
Pianist	Glenna Muir
Custodian	Nancy Sanford
Office Manager	Stephanie Pasch

Serving in Worship Today

Special Music	Jennifer Taylor
Liturgist	Sue Chipman
IT Support	Louis Bouchard