**Saginaw First Free Methodist Church**

**Third Sunday of Lent**

**March 7, 2021**



*“Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, ‘Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!’”*

*(John 2:15-16)*

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*The mission of Saginaw First Free Methodist Church is to be faithful to God and to make known to all people everywhere God’s call to wholeness in Jesus Christ.*

**Prelude**

**\*\*Greeting/Announcements**

**\*Call to Worship** (*spoken responsively*)

L: God is calling us out of this world of sin

**P: We celebrate the steadfast love of God, our creator**

L: The heavens are declaring the glory of God

**P: We will honor the commandments of God**

L: Christ is the power and wisdom of God

**P: The wisdom of this world is foolishness and death**

L: The world wants signs and wonders

**P: We will follow the scriptures and the words Jesus spoke**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “Make Me a Captive, Lord” Handout (vv.1,4)

**Make me a captive, Lord**

**And then I shall be free**

**Force me to render up my sword**

**And I shall conqueror be**

**I sink in life's alarms**

**When by myself I stand**

**Imprison me within thine arms**

**And strong shall be my hand**

**My will is not my own**

**Till thou hast made it thine**

**If it would reach a monarch's throne**

**It must its crown resign.**

**It only stands unbent**

**Amid the clashing strife**

**When on thy bosom it has leant**

**And found in thee its life**

**\*Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: God of the covenant, in the glory of the cross your Son embraced the power of death and broke its hold over your people. Help us as we take up your invitation to prayer and simplicity, that the discipline of these forty days may sharpen our hunger for the feast of your holy friendship. Remain with us and give us hope, as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples…

**P: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done in 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.**

**\*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**

**Old Testament Scripture Lesson:** Exodus 20:1-17

Then God spoke all these words: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work--you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

**Prayer of Confession**

L: In this season of Lent, when we reexamine our lives and find our faith is tested, we may realize times we’ve broken covenant with God. For the times we do not treat everything like it’s God’s, let us pray…

**P: God of the living, through baptism we pass from the shadow of death to the light of the resurrection. Shape us and transform us by your grace, that we may grow in wisdom and in confidence, never faltering until we have done all that you desire to bring your realm of shalom to fulfillment. Forgive our misuse of your gifts, that we may be transformed by your wisdom to manifest for others the mercy of our crucified and risen Lord. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Psalm 19

**P: The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims God’s handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens God has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.**

**Hymn of Affirmation:** “Near the Cross” #240 (vv.1,3)

**Jesus, keep me near the cross**

**There a precious fountain**

**Free to all, a healing stream**

**Flows from Calv'ry's mountain**

**In the cross, in the cross**

**Be my glory ever**

**Till my ransomed soul shall find**

**Rest beyond the river**

**Near the cross! O lamb of God**

**Bring its scenes before me**

**Help me walk from day to day**

**With its shadow o'er me**

**In the cross, in the cross**

**Be my glory ever,**

**Till my ransomed soul shall find**

**Rest beyond the river**

**New Testament Scripture Lesson:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe.

For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

**Communion**

**MINISTER: THE INVITATION**

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with

your neighbors and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments

of God and walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy

sacrament to your comfort; and humbly kneeling, make your honest confession

to Almighty God.

**IN UNISON: THE GENERAL CONFESSION**

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all

people, we confess that we have sinned, and we are deeply grieved as we

remember the wickedness of our past lives. We have sinned against You, Your

holiness and Your love, and we deserve only Your indignation and anger.

We sincerely repent, and we are genuinely sorry for all wrongdoing and every

failure to do the things we should. Our hearts are grieved, and we acknowledge

that we are hopeless without Your grace.

Have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for the sake of your son, our Savior, Jesus

Christ, who died for us.

Forgive us.

Cleanse us.

Give us strength to serve and please You in newness of life and to honor and praise

Your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**MINISTER: THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who with great mercy has promised

forgiveness to all who turn to You with hearty repentance and true faith, have

mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from our sins, make us strong and faithful in

all goodness and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**CONGREGATION: THE COLLECT**Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom

no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of the

Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name,

through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**MINISTER: THE SANCTUS**

It is always right and proper, and our moral duty, that we should at all times and

in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the inhabitants of heaven, we

honor and adore Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying,

**CONGREGATION: THE SANCTUS (CONTINUED)**

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts!

Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord, most high. Amen

**MINISTER: THE PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

We do not come to this Your table, O merciful Lord, with self-confidence and

pride, trusting in our own righteousness, but we trust in Your great and many

mercies. We are not worthy to gather the crumbs from under Your table. But You,

O Lord, are unchanging in Your mercy and Your nature is love; grant us, therefore,

God of mercy, God of grace, so to eat at this Your table that we may receive in

spirit and in truth the body of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and the merits of His

shed blood, so that we may live and grow in His likeness and, being washed and

cleansed through His most precious blood, we may evermore live in Him and He

in us. Amen.

**MINISTER: THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS**

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who gave in love Your only Son, Jesus Christ,

to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who by His sacrifice, offered

once for all, did provide a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world,

we come now to Your table in obedience to Your Son, Jesus Christ, who in His holy gospel

commanded us to continue a perpetual memory of His precious death until He comes

again. Hear us, O merciful Father, we humbly ask, and grant that we, receiving this bread and this cup,

as He commanded and in the memory of His passion and death, may partake of His most blessed body and blood.

In the night of His betrayal, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to

His disciples, saying, “Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

In like manner, after supper He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink of

this, all of you, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of

sins; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” Amen.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting

life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed upon Him in your heart, by faith with

thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life.

Drink this in remembrance that Christ’s blood was shed for you and be thankful.

**MINISTER: THE BENEDICTION**

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love

of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and

the Holy Spirit, be yours now and forever. Amen.

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson:** John 2:13-22

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!”

His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?”

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?”

But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

**Sermon**

**Prayer of Response**

**Hymn of Response:** “In the Cross of Christ I Glory” #234 (vv.1-2,4)

**In the cross of Christ I glory**

**Towering o’er the wrecks of time**

**All the light of sacred story**

**Gathers round its head sublime**

**When the woes of life o’ertake me**

**Hopes deceive, and fears annoy**

**Never shall the cross forsake me**

**Lo! it glows with peace and joy**

**Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure**

**By the cross are sanctified**

**Peace is there that knows no measure**

**Joys that through all time abide**

**Invitation of Offering**

L:The commandments invite us to rely on God for all our needs. The gifts we bring are important, but more important is sharing the unabandoned love of God. Be zealous in your giving, as we collect this morning’s tithes and offerings.

**\*Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow**

**Praise Him, all creatures here below**

**Praise Him above, ye heavenly host**

**Praise Father Son, and Holy Ghost.**

**Amen.**

**\*Prayer**

**\*Hymn:** “I Will Sing of My Redeemer” #130 (vv.1,4)

**I will sing of my Redeemer**

**And his wondrous love to me**

**On the cruel cross he suffered**

**From the curse to set me free**

**Sing, O sing of my Redeemer**

**With his blood he purchased me**

**On the cross he sealed my pardon**

**Paid the debt, and made me free**

**I will sing of my Redeemer**

**And his heavenly love for me**

**He from death to life has brought me**

**Son of God, with him to be**

**Sing, O sing of my Redeemer**

**With his blood he purchased me**

**On the cross he sealed my pardon**

**Paid the debt, and made me free**

**\*Benediction**

L: You are empowered by God’s love. You have been filled with the wisdom of God. The power of love is not destroyed by death, but overcomes it. Seek to keep the spirit of the commandments, as you go in peace to love and serve. Amen.