**First Free Methodist Church of Saginaw**

**Third Sunday in Lent**

**March 20, 2022**



*“Then he told this parable: ‘A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none.'"*

*(Luke 13:6)*

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**Prelude**

**\*\*Greeting/Announcements**

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

L: Blessed are the poor in spirit

**P: For theirs is the kingdom of heaven**

L: Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation

**P: The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak**

L: Those who live in accordance with the Spirit

**P: Have their minds set on what the Spirit desires**

L: God is spirit, we worship in spirit and truth

**P: The words of Jesus are full of Spirit and life**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “Stand Up and Bless the Lord” #54 (vv.1-5)

**Stand up, and bless the Lord**

**Ye people of His choice**

**Stand up, and bless the Lord your God**

**With heart, and soul, and voice**

**Tho' high above all praise**

**Above all blessing high**

**Who would not fear His holy Name**

**And laud and magnify?**

**O for the living flame**

**From His own altar brought**

**To touch our lips, our mind inspire**

**And wing to heav'n our thought**

**God is our strength and song**

**And His salvation ours**

**Then be His love in Christ proclaimed**

**With all our ransomed pow'rs**

**Stand up and bless the Lord**

**The Lord your God adore**

**Stand up, and bless His glorious Name**

**Henceforth for evermore**

**\*Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: Almighty God, who sees that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body. Keep us safe from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul. By the Holy Spirit, tend to us that we may bear fruit according to your will. Give us strength to please you, 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.​**

**First Scripture Lesson:** Isaiah 55:1-9

 Lo, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

 Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**Prayer of Confession**

L: We confess to the Lord so we are reminded of that which is heavenly and that which is earthly. While all things around us pass away, we may hold fast those things which abide forever. May our spirits may grow calm, our vision be clear, and our purpose be unified...

**P: Grant to me, O Lord, a vigilant heart that no subtle speculation may ever lead me from you; a nobleness that no unworthy affection may draw from you; a rectitude that no evil purpose may turn from you. Grant me a steadfastness which no tribulation my shatter; a freedom that no violent affection may overthrow. Give me, O Lord my God, a mind to know you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you. Give me a way of life pleasing to you, perseverance to trust and await you, and finally faith to embrace you. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Psalm 63

**P: O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So, I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips when I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.**

**Hymn of Affirmation:** “Cleanse Me” #516 (vv.1-4)

**Search me, O God**

**And know my heart today**

**Try me, O Savior**

**Know my thoughts, I pray**

**See if there be**

**Some wicked way in me**

**Cleanse me from every sin**

**And set me free**

**I praise Thee, Lord**

**For cleansing me from sin**

**Fulfill Thy Word**

**And make me pure within**

**Fill me with fire**

**Where once I burned with shame**

**Grant my desire**

**To magnify Thy Name**

**Lord, take my life**

**And make it wholly Thine**

**Fill my poor heart**

**With Thy great love divine**

**Take all my will**

**My passion, self and pride**

**I now surrender, Lord**

**In me abide**

**O Holy Ghost**

**Revival comes from Thee**

**Send a revival**

**Start the work in me**

**Thy Word declares**

**Thou wilt supply our need**

**For blessings now**

**O Lord, I humbly plead**

**Second Scripture Lesson:** 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

 Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.”

 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

 So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

**Special Music:** Anne Norman

**Children’s Sermon**

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson****:** Luke 13:1-9

 At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.

 Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them--do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

 Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’

 He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

**Sermon:** “Strength and Spirit”

**Prayer of Response**

**Hymn of Response****:** “The Solid Rock” #436 (vv.1-4)

**My hope is built on nothing less**

**Than Jesus blood and righteousness**

**I dare not trust the sweetest frame**

**But wholly lean on Jesus’ name**

**On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand**

**All other ground is sinking sand**

**All other ground is sinking sand**

**When darkness seems to hide his face**

**I rest on his unchanging grace**

**In every high and stormy gale**

**My anchor holds within the veil**

**On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand**

**All other ground is sinking sand**

**All other ground is sinking sand**

**His oath, His covenant, His blood**

**Support me in the whelming flood**

**When all around my soul gives way**

**He then is all my hope and stay**

**On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand**

**All other ground is sinking sand**

**All other ground is sinking sand**

**When he shall come with trumpet sound**

**O may I then in Him be found**

**Dressed in His righteousness alone**

**Faultless to stand before the throne**

**On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand**

**All other ground is sinking sand**

**All other ground is sinking sand**

**Invitation of Offering**

L:Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Give that which is perishable for that which is imperishable, 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**

**\*Closing Hymn**: “The Wonder of it All” #79 (vv.1-2)

**There's the wonder of sunset at evening**

**The wonder as sunrise I see**

**But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul**

**Is the wonder that God loves me**

**O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all**

**Just to think that God loves me**

**O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all**

**Just to think that God loves me**

**There's the wonder of springtime and harvest**

**The sky, the stars, and the sun**

**But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul**

**Is a wonder that's just begun**

**O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all**

**Just to think that God loves me**

**O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all**

**Just to think that God loves me**

**\*Benediction**

L: Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. We have been filled with the Spirit, united as God’s people. Be strengthened by the spirit inside you. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, as you go in peace to love and serve. Amen.