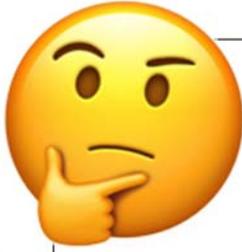


THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT



*Considering
tragedy and suffering,
and grace from God*



THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

March 7, 2021
10:45 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas
Link to worship videos available at: www.fpcbryan.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

My Tribute

Andraé Crouch

WELCOME

The Book of Lamentations declares that –
as devastating as life sometimes is –
God's steadfast love and mercies never end,
and, in fact, they are new every morning.

HYMN NO. 667 (*st. 1,2,4*)

When Morning Gilds the Skies

LAUDES DOMINI

**When morning gilds the skies, my heart awaking cries:
may Jesus Christ be praised!**

**Alike at work and prayer to Jesus I repair:
may Jesus Christ be praised!**

**Does sadness fill my mind? A solace here I find:
may Jesus Christ be praised!**

**Or fades my earthly bliss? My comfort still is this:
may Jesus Christ be praised!**

**Be this, while life is mine, my canticle divine:
may Jesus Christ be praised!**

**Be this the eternal song through all the ages long:
may Jesus Christ be praised!**

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Text in **bold face type** is to be read by all.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION, ASSURANCE OF PARDON, AND JOYFUL RESPONSE

**Expressing praise and confession to God, let us pray . . . With both our voices and every part of each one's life, O God, we honor and glorify your holy name! We also acknowledge and realize our failings, how we are always undeserving of your love and care. We have strayed from your guidance and fallen short of your desires for our well-being. In these moments of silence, we approach your throne of grace seeking your forgiveness . . .**  
*(pausing in silence for prayer)*

Make us whole in your love, Blessed One. Open our awareness to your presence multiple times each day. Anoint us again with the ointment of your unending faithfulness and sacred kindness. Bring your new life among us for serving you continually in the way and spirit of Jesus Christ.

Friends, we are liberated in the gospel news of Jesus' love and God's amazing grace for us all.

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!**

HYMN OF RESPONSE NO. 606

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

OLD HUNDREDTH

**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.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Job 6:1-5; 18:1-4; 19:1-3,19-22; Luke 13:1-5

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

Verbs Revealing Jesus as a Jobian Character: Resist and Probe

SOLO

Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling

SOFTLY AND TENDERLY

*Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me.  
See on the portals He's waiting and watching, watching for you and for me.*

REFRAIN *"Come home, come home! You who are weary, come home."  
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling, "O sinner, come home!"*

*Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading, pleading for you and for me?  
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies, mercies for you and for me?* REFRAIN

*O for the wonderful love He has promised, promised for you and for me.  
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon, pardon for you and for me.* REFRAIN

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION

WORDS OF INSTITUTION: THE BREAKING, THE POURING, THE SHARING IN PARTAKING



PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, CONSECRATION, INTERCESSION, AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray . . . Eternal God, receive our thanksgiving for all that you have given to this world, both across the ages and in our lifetimes. Through faith communities and among your people, multiply the offerings of our lives with a witness to your love, close by and around the globe. God of mercy, as your love and power both prevail through adversity and mend brokenness following the most threatening of situations, continue to go before us, beside us, and behind us, abiding steadfastly, that we and all others might receive your life in abundance and behold your realm and providence, even amid successive hardship and grief. Now, from this table of communion – with your people everywhere, nourish us and give us drink through these elements of field and vine. Grow within us and strengthen us by the spirit of Jesus Christ, crucified and resurrected, our host and our mentor always, God-with-us today and forever.

And hear us praying once more, as Jesus taught the community of faith to believe and give voice:

**Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on 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 thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

PRAYER OF COMMISSIONING

HYMN NO. 724 (st. 1,2,3)

O Jesus, I Have Promised

ANGEL’S STORY

**O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end; be thou forever near me my Master and my friend; I shall not fear the battle if thou art by my side, nor wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my guide.**

**O let me feel thee near me! The world is ever near: I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear. My foes are ever near me, around me and within; but, Jesus, draw thou nearer and shield my soul from sin.**

**O let me hear thee speaking in accents clear and still, above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will. O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control; O speak, and make me listen, true guardian of my soul.**

DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Take the Name of Jesus with You

arr. Cindy Berry

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**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION**

FPC’s Annual Meeting of the congregation will be offered on two dates with two options for participation —

**OPTION 1:** Today (March 7) at 11:50 a.m. in Room 304 (hallway near Fellowship Hall) or via Zoom.

**OPTION 2:** Wednesday (March 10) convening at 6:30 p.m., in Room 304 or via Zoom.

Zoom links The Annual Meeting booklet can be found on our website at: [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org). Interim Treasurer Jim Nachlinger and Stewardship and Finance Committee elder chair Adam Hartman will be available for 2020 and 2021 budget reporting and responding to questions. ALSO, votes on the recommended 2% increase in Pastor’s and Associate Pastor’s terms of call will be received by U.S. Postal Service from Thursday, March 11, to Monday, March 22, or with responses by email to Clerk of Session Karon Mathews.

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**ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES** are available in the narthex. Please help yourself or ask an usher for assistance.

**NEW MEMBERS** may be received any Sunday by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith, or transfer of membership. If you feel led to inquire about becoming a church member or deepening your commitment as a disciple of Jesus Christ, please indicate your desire on the fellowship folder. You may also call the church (979.823.8073) or email Pastor Ted Foote ([tfoote@fpcbryan.org](mailto:tfoote@fpcbryan.org)) or Associate Pastor Emily Béghin ([ebeghin@fpcbryan.org](mailto:ebeghin@fpcbryan.org)). They will be glad to arrange a mutually convenient Sunday when you can be received by the Elders and introduced to the congregation.

By vote of Session on December 30, First Presbyterian moved to **an altered Sunday morning format for an indefinite time (hopefully not long), that began January 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Due to the COVID-19 infection, active case, and hospitalization rates, FPC – to assist the efforts of health providers and public officials – is suspending Sunday morning “full worship” in the sanctuary. **The sanctuary will be open in this calendar period each Sunday, from 10:40 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (regular time) for “come-and-go” contemplation, prayer, and receiving the Lord’s Supper. All who choose to participate in this opportunity are encouraged to wear a mask and observe physical distancing.**



## A WARM WELCOME!

*We are delighted that you chose to worship with us today.*



### WORSHIP NOTES

#### PREACHER

Rev. Ted Foote

#### LITURGISTS

Rev. Emily K. Béghin

Rev. Dr. George E. Klett

#### MUSICIANS

Michelle Lassiter, *piano*

David Kipp,

*Director of Music Ministries*

### AUDIO-VISUAL | SOUND

Nicole McKinley

Jerry Norris

### CHANCEL FLOWERS

In loving memory of  
Joyce McCandless (Deb's mother)

by

Debe & Scott Shafer

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*The Presbyterian Hymnal*

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### THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

#### THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 7, 2021

9:00am Loose Leaf Church School Class-via Zoom

9:20am Seekers Church School Class-via Zoom

9:00am The Word Class Church School Class-303/via Zoom

**10:45am Sanctuary** \* open for prayer, meditation, and Lord's Supper;

WORSHIP pre-recorded, viewable via [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org), with click on homepage "sentence about worship" or small red YouTube box in far top right of homepage screen

11:50am **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION**- 304/via Zoom

#### MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021

5:30pm Cub Scout Pack 350-FH

7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 976-FH

#### TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021

#### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021

11:00am Staff Meeting-L

#### THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

6:45am Men's Fellowship Breakfast-CCF

6:00pm Property Committee-L

6:00pm Cub Scout Pack 350-304

7:00pm Circle VII-via Zoom

#### FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2021

#### SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2021



#### FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 14, 2021

2:00am Spring Forward (move your clocks ahead one hour)

9:00am Loose Leaf Church School Class-via Zoom

9:20am Seekers Church School Class-via Zoom

9:00am The Word Class Church School Class-303/via Zoom

**10:45am Labyrinth-P or CCF (until 11:30am)**

**10:45am Sanctuary** \* open for prayer, meditation, and Lord's Supper;

WORSHIP pre-recorded, viewable via [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org), with click on homepage "sentence about worship" or small red YouTube box in far top right of homepage screen

\* *During COVID-19, Room 108 is available for your nursery needs.*

**First Presbyterian Church | 1100 Carter Creek Parkway | Bryan, Texas 77802**

PH. 979.823.8073 | FAX. 979.822.7063 | Website: [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org) | Email: [office@fpcbryan.org](mailto:office@fpcbryan.org)

Find "First Presbyterian Church of Bryan, Texas" on FACEBOOK

## MEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

Men's Breakfast has been re-scheduled to **Thursday, March 11**, at 6:30am for fellowship and great food. For early risers, this is a great way to get your day going. Contact Allyn Jordan, [allyn@jordanhome.net](mailto:allyn@jordanhome.net), to receive email notifications and/or to RSVP (so there is enough food for everyone and organizers can plan adequately for physically distanced seating).

## PUZZLE SWAP



**Tired of working on the same old puzzles?** Then box them up and participate in FPC's Puzzle Swap organized by Congregational Care Committee. The puzzles are available in the Indoor Patio thru **Friday, March 12**. Bring in one puzzle, take one. Bring in two puzzles, take two. **Just want to clean out old puzzles? We'll take them!** BRING IN COMPLETE PUZZLE SETS (No missing pieces, please). Remember, children like to work puzzles, too. (NOTE: Donated puzzles will not be returned.)

## 2021 LENTEN AND EASTER THEME

*In Life and in Death We Belong to God:*  
Verbs Revealing Jesus as a Jobian Character

Find the schedule of weekly topics and related scriptures  
on our website at [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org)

## WALK THE LABYRINTH

This Lent, FPC is offering a unique opportunity for you to walk a labyrinth, an ancient tool for prayer and meditation, consisting of a winding path that begins at the periphery and leads to a central space, and then back out again by the same path. The labyrinth will be set up in the Church Parlor for walking during the worship "hour" (10:45-11:30) on Sunday mornings, **MARCH 14 & 21**, and for weekday walks 9:00am-5:00pm, **MARCH 15-26**.



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The deadline for the next issue of the newsletter, The Chimes, is **Noon today**. This newsletter will be distributed **Wednesday, March 10**, and will cover news from **March 18-31**. Submit content to: [office@fpcbryan.org](mailto:office@fpcbryan.org).

### **Visit us on social media!**

On the web [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org) for the newsletter, announcements, worship bulletins, updates, etc.

**Facebook** [www.facebook.com/FPCBryan](https://www.facebook.com/FPCBryan)

**Instagram** [www.instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com) Search for and follow **fpcbryantx1867** and/or **fpcbryan\_youth**

**BE THE FIRST TO KNOW** when **WORSHIP** and **ACTIVITY** videos are uploaded to our YouTube channel!

Go to [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com), search for First Presbyterian Church of Bryan, Texas, then click **SUBSCRIBE**

**Share prayer needs and church group news with fellow FPC participants on Church Updates!**

is FPC-Bryan's online tool for YOU to post church-related announcements, ways to serve, and your current prayer needs. While users receive a weekly reminder email on Thursdays to view new posts, this online tool is "REAL TIME."

Contact Karen in the church office, 979.823.8073 or [office@fpcbryan.org](mailto:office@fpcbryan.org) to set up your account.

Then, login at <https://fpcbtx.churchupdates.org/login> to create your password-protected account.

## Verbs Revealing Jesus as a Jobian Character: Resist and Probe

Job 6:1-5; 18:1-4; 19:1-3,19-22; Luke 13:1-5

Ted V. Foote, Jr.

March 07, 2021

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

The story of Job tells readers that Job's three friends were named Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Once they came to visit Job, they were silent when sitting for seven days and seven nights, as friends giving support when tragedy strikes and trauma moves in (2:11-13). When Job began to complain in prayer and argument both with God and with the life-developments which had brought him indescribable agony, after a week, the three friends began arguing back with Job. Last Sunday, Pastor Emily touched on Eliphaz's argument with Job. This week we hear from Bildad. Next week from Zophar. While his friends present a customary religious point of view, Job resists, and he probes for an alternative. He says (6:1-5), "I speak in extremes because my vexations and calamities are huge. The arrows and terrors of God are in me." Zophar argues back (18:1-4), "Your arguments, Job, are empty. It seems like you think we are stupid in the advice and understanding we bring you. And aren't you putting the whole world at risk by the way you complain to God and to the universe based on your claim of integrity and your resistance to what is God's will? You might get the whole world destroyed!" To which Job replies (19:1-3,21): "Your words wrong me. Come on! Pity me! Understand!"

If Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were sitting in Shipley's Donuts arguing as they do, you would take your coffee and cinnamon roll, and either speak to the management or go directly to your car. Same if they were in your Sunday School class, or in a restaurant or a bar where their arguing interferes with your ability to be part of another conversation, to read a book, or to check the internet. You are distracted from your fellowship with anyone else or your contemplation and study on your own. "Come on, Guys. Do y'all need to drag this out with such intensity? Give the rest of us a break." But they only change speakers, and keep going.

What did Bildad find so risky and problematic about Job's assertion? Basically, Bildad, Eliphaz, and Zophar support a customary, often-believed perspective and notion that God reaches out to punish and correct where there is sin. Therefore, if there is tragedy throwing someone's life off the rails, God must be sending a message. It's a cause-and-effect type of perspective: If I sin, God seeks to get my attention, if need be, getting my attention with punishment and correction. Since tragedy struck Job and those around him, Job's friends argue that God must be sending him a message: that there's some sin in Job's life which he's hiding or failing to acknowledge.

When Joanie and I moved to Henderson, Texas, in 1983, I came to know a church member by the name of Jess Fowler. Jess was a former U.S. Marine and a graduate of Texas A&M in the 1950s. He was a petroleum geologist by profession, who retired and moved back to Texas from Calgary after the death of his two young adult sons four months apart, one in Canada and one Houston. Between the ages of 18 and 30, one died in a motorcycle collision, the other in an underwater welding industrial accident. From 1983 to 1992, three or four times a year, Jess would send me free verse poetic reflections from the Book of Job. He would usually write them on Sunday afternoon, mail them on Monday, and I would receive them on Tuesday. Jess was very sympathetic to Job. Jess never believed the logic of Job's friends, that God had punished him (Jess) for some sin by causing the death of two young adult sons. Jess's poems, with Job, took issue with the customary religious logic that God causes whatever happens. So if bad stuff happens, you must have offended God somehow. Either you are being punished by God, OR God does nothing to prevent evil because you deserve the evil that happens to you – or the evil that happens to those you love. Job said, "I don't believe for a minute it's that simple. I want God to show up for a personal conversation with me." East Texas Presbyterian, ex-US Marine, and Texas A&M

graduate Jess Fowler took Job's point of view. Many people who encountered Jess experienced his smile and conversational mood nine or ten months of the year, but, given his deep moodiness in the weeks either side of Christmas and Easter. People learned it was at those two times of year when Jess's two sons died, and then understood a little better.

In Luke, at the beginning of chapter 13, when Jesus presents an interpretation of God and God's will in the world, it is as head-turning and attention-getting as Job's non-customary assertions. Jesus, though, does not receive the degree of counter-argument that Job does. This passage in Luke might receive relatively little attention from Christians, because it does not fit comfortably into our customary religious belief set. Our customary religious belief-set includes the sense that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-present. That understanding is supported by many Biblical stories, teachings, and prayers. Jesus, though (like Job), argues it is problematic and possibly wrong to assert and interpret that there is always cause-and-effect from God which can accurately be "read into" or "interpreted from" every, most, many, or even any tragic events.

In these often overlooked verses, Jesus points out that grading the sin of one person or group as being more severe than your own sin is problematic, whether you are Roman, Greek, Jew, etc. Jesus teaches that military or police or mob action, whether morally justified or not, can get anyone killed. And Jesus teaches that anyone can be in the wrong place at the time when random accidents happen; and injuries and fatalities can occur. None of that, according to Jesus is necessarily caused directly by God due to human sin. Jesus here resists religious teachings that tragedy and suffering are caused by God. Yet, YET – Jesus teaches that God seeks an on-going relationship of dignity, respect, and care with all – whether we are Roman, Greek, Jew, Texan, Pakistani, Chinese, Russian, Presbyterian, Muslim, atheist, etc. For the reason that God cares so much that God is willing to embody vulnerability in this Jesus, God desires everyone to repent, to turn from the thoughts, words, and deeds which set us at a distance from God and from one another – a distance which God seeks to shorten. God desires repaired and healthy relationships for life every day with everyone. But healthy relationships don't happen when someone else's life- situation has taken a turn for the worse, and we say their life must be at a distance from God and under God's judgment.

Bildad says that Job's behavior of protesting against customary religious cause-and-effect punishment from God and instead praying for a relational conversation with God imperils everyone, because God will lose patience with Job's impudence and insistence. "It's arrogant," Bildad says. "God may come to get us all!"(18:4). Jesus, in contrast, resists religious causality, whether Bildad's, yours, mine, anyone's. Instead, Jesus – with Job – probes the validity of a faith relationship based on human vulnerability and God's own vulnerability. In the tradition of Job, Jesus was more correct than Job's spouse, friends, and the know-it-all-passerby (of whom we'll read next Sunday).

Come to this table resisting arguments that your humanness and your distance from God will cause God's punishing you with tragedy. Probe, rather, for an on-going relationship with God through the grace God extends and embodies. In your human vulnerability, yearn to have repaired and renewed the dignity, respect, and care God has been giving from the beginning. No matter who tells you differently, Job and Jesus are worth listening to on this. Let us gather here for nourishment and drink with all who are vulnerable, including God who invites and Jesus who hosts. – All honor and praise be to God.