

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT



*God has an enduring Spirit with all people:
longer than the longest rope can be extended to reach!*
—Job 38:1 and Matthew 18:26

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

March 14, 2021
10:45 a.m.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

The Lord's My Shepherd

John Ferguson

WELCOME

Psalm 62 declares,
"God alone is my rock, my salvation, and my fortress.
I shall never be shaken. Trust in God no matter what develops.
God is our refuge!"

HYMN NO. 687 (St. 1,2,3, & 6)

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

ST. ANNE

**Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:**

**Beneath the shadow of thy throne thy saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is thine arm alone, and our defense is sure.**

**Before the hills in order stood, or earth received its frame,
from everlasting thou art God, to endless years the same.**

**Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
be thou our guard while life shall last, and our eternal home.**

~~~~~

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 . . . O Ageless Source of our beginning and Goal of our life every day, we praise you for possibilities of the sacred amid what seems so ordinary, and for possibilities of amazement amid what seems routine. Also, we have approached too much of life seeking to have our own way, plotting our advancement at the expense of others, and honoring attitudes and inclinations which take us far from your grace. Hear us in these moments of silence, seeking a new relationship with you and all your people . . .** *(pausing in silence for prayer)*

Forgive us all our sin, O God. Restore us to a repaired and empowered life for faithfully and steadfastly serving you in the way and spirit of Jesus Christ. Friends, let us hear and share with gladness the blessed news of the Gospel.

**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.**

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

SCRIPTURE SENTENCES

PROFESSION OF FAITH QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

DECLARATIONS OF INTENT AND CARE, WITH GOD'S HELP

STATEMENT OF FAITH

from the *Heidelberg Catechism*, 1563

What is your only comfort in life and in death?

**That I belong — body and soul, in life and in death — not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. By the Holy Spirit, God in Christ also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready to live for the Lord alone.**

BAPTISMAL PRAYER, POURING OF THE WATER, AND BAPTISM

PRAYER FOR THE BAPTIZED, ANOINTING, PRESENTATION, AND DECLARATION

SCRIPTURAL AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

adapted from Numbers 6:24-26

**May the Lord bless and keep you, Presley Kate, and make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace — today, tomorrow, and always. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Job 20:1-9; 32:1-5; 33:1,12-13; 38:1-4; Matthew 18:26-27

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

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

Verbs Revealing Jesus as a Jobian Character: Endure

HYMN

The Church of Christ Cannot Be Bound

ST. PETER

**The church of Christ cannot be bound by walls of wood or stone.  
Where charity and love are found, there can the church be known.**

**True faith will open up the door and step into the street.  
True service will seek out the poor and ask to wash their feet.**

**True love will not sit idly by when justice is denied.  
True mercy hears the homeless cry and welcomes them inside.**

**If what we have we freely share to meet our neighbor's need,  
then we extend the Spirit's care, through every selfless deed.**

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

Let us pray . . . Eternal One, we thank you beyond the capability of words to express that your mercy is still remembered, that your glory is still glimpsed, that your power still endures with your people. We thank you that you give courage in weak and anxious moments, that you give guidance when we are directionless, that you comfort and encourage when we are downcast, that you impart wisdom when we are confused. Hear our prayers for those who wait for word of acceptance, of release, of diagnosis, of pardon, of commitment, of support. Undergird and surround us all by your power and presence beyond our ability to imagine or design.

As well, may the prayer Jesus taught be ours again this morning as we turn to you, saying together:

**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.**

HYMN NO. 354

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory

BATTLE HYMN

**Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;  
he is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;  
he has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword. God's truth is marching on.**

REFRAIN **Glory, glory hallelujah! Glory, glory hallelujah! Glory, glory hallelujah! God's truth is marching on.**

**God has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat  
and is sifting out all human hearts before the judgment seat;  
O be swift, my soul, to answer; O be jubilant my feet! Our God is marching on.** REFRAIN

**In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,  
with a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me;  
as he died to make us holy, let us live to make all free, while God is marching on.** REFRAIN

DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

arr. Valerie Roth Roubos

+ + + + +

Today, the Church administers the Sacrament of Baptism to Presley Kate Fox, infant daughter of Carolyn & Will Fox. Maternal grandparents are Allison & Brian Windham. Maternal uncle is Preston Windham.

*"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made..."* — Psalm 39:14

The prayerful support and sympathy of the congregation are extended to the family of Ulonda Rogers following her death on March 9. Expressions of love and support may be mailed to:

The Rogers Family, 703 Walker, Bryan Texas 77802

*"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord."* — John 11:25

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

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

Preston Windham, uncle

Rev. Dr. Joseph W. Shook,  
maternal great-grandfather

#### MUSICIANS

Kathrine MacNeil, *organist*

Michelle Lassiter, *piano*

David Kipp,

*Director of Music Ministries*

### AUDIO-VISUAL | SOUND

Jerry Norris

Bill Watson

### COPYRIGHT LICENSES

Hymns from *Glory to God:*

*The Presbyterian Hymnal*

CCLI 196019

OneLicense.net A-718836

CVLI 504246321



### THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

#### 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 Walk the Labyrinth-P (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

#### MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2021

5:30pm Cub Scout Pack 350-FH

7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 976-FH

#### TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021

9:30am Circle V-100/102/via Zoom

3:00pm Memorial Service for Ulonda Rogers

5:00pm Stewardship & Finance Committee-FH

6:30pm Children's Center Ministry Committee-via Zoom

#### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021

11:00am Staff Meeting-L



CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED  
MARCH 18-19  
(THURSDAY-FRIDAY)

#### THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021

#### FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2021

#### SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2021

#### FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 21, 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 Walk the 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.

**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 or 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.

## 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, April 16**. 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.)



## WANTED: EASTER CANDY



An Easter Egg Hunt will be held Easter Sunday morning, April 4 (after the early outdoor worship and before the mid-morning festival worship). Kathryn Nachlinger is seeking **wrapped candy** to fill eggs for the hunt. Please place your donations in the marked box on the Indoor Patio. The children appreciate your generosity.

## 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, 17, 18, 19, and 22 thru 26**.



-----  
The deadline for the next issue of the newsletter, The Chimes, is **Noon, March 21**. This newsletter will be distributed **Wednesday, March 24**, and will cover news from **April 1-14**. 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](http://www.facebook.com/FPCBryan)

**Instagram** [www.instagram.com](http://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](http://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: Endure

Job 20:1-9; 32:1-5; 33:1,12-13; 38:1-4; Matthew 18:26-27

March 14, 2021

Ted V. Foote, Jr.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

In this series across several Sundays examining the Book of Job and aspects of Jesus' life and teachings, today our verb is "endure," which, from the New Testament Greek, is sometimes translated as "patience." The word in Greek is "makrothumeo." It's the "personal characteristic" meaning of patience, possibly the more frequent meaning of the word. It means bearing with another person's shortcomings and even flaws, as in, "Have patience with me," or "I'm trying to have patience with him or her." The Greek word is, literally, to have a "drawn out steadfastness" – to have a "drawn out steadfastness" for someone, even with their shortcomings, since a relationship is considered to be greater than shortcomings themselves. In the parable Jesus tells at Matthew 18:23-35, verse 26 notes that a servant says to a king about the large debt the servant owes, "Your Highness, please be patient with me, even considering the debt I owe!" Or, possibly better translated without the word "patient" – "Your Highness, please endure with me for a longer time this debt I owe." Jesus says that God endures much because we humans are tremendously indebted to God for God's graciousness and generosity. We do well to seek God's enduring with us due to our always being indebted.

Today, we explore: (1) what Job endures from his friends, particularly the third one, Zophar; (2) what Job endures from a know-it-all passer-by named, Elihu; and (3) what God endures from all of them and all of us. So, (1) to Job, whose suffering brought Zophar and his two partners to offer Job compassion and encouragement, Zophar says: "Job, your arguments against the logic Eliphaz, Bildad, and I advance is like a rebuke. It's insulting to us. The sinner will not endure. That's you, Job" (20:3-7). Then, (2) when Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar feel like they've run out of arguments against Job's assertion that tragedy is not God's punishment for unconfessed sin, and that he (Job) lives by the integrity, dignity, value, and care which God gives, the three go silent; but a young man shows up, self-confident and self-convinced that he is the one (a) to rebuke Job for Job believing that his God-given integrity is legitimate, and (b) to rebuke Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar for failing to convince Job of how correct they are (32:1-5; 33:1,12-13). Then, (3) when God has had enough of Job's first three counselors and this fourth know-it-all wandering in to speak for six chapters straight (32-37), God's voice speaks – directly to Job – ignoring Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, and ignoring Elihu. Out of a whirlwind – which could be life's craziness – God speaks directly to Job who has desired a conversation with God from the onset of Job's afflictions. God begins with some advice for Job: "Pin up your diapers, and cinch up your belt." Then God asks a question, "Job, where were you at Creation's beginning, when I was working right and left and up and down?"

We don't know whether the storyteller of the Book of Job imagined God's voice booming toward Job, with Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu in the background cowering in fear; or if God's voice whispered toward Job, with Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu leaning forward, hands cupped at their ears, trying to hear. We don't hear or read in the story whether God's voice should be understood as booming or as whispering. It's clear, though, what God does not do. While God seems sick and tired of the arguments of the four visitors, God does not slap them dead. They have been on Job's case attempting to convince him that he is wrong before God. They have been on Job's case telling him how repentance (in their opinions) means "getting in line" with their theology, "getting in line" with their logic, and "getting in line" from their pressure, because their perspective is a correct witness to how God is and what God expects. Yet God, giving no acknowledgment of the theology, logic, and pressure of the four – ignoring them and their arguments – (God) enters the scene focused solely on Job. As with Jesus' parable-description of the king to the indebted servant, God's "long thread"/God's "rope" for a relationship with integrity, dignity, value, and care is a connecting long-thread/a connecting rope enduring in relation to Job, and which Job has placed at the center of his faith.

It's important to notice how, in the second scene of this parable Jesus tells, the servant whom the king forgave of the large debt immediately afterward refuses to forgive the debt of another servant who owed him, ordering that fellow-servant thrown into debtor's prison. When the king finds out, he cancels the previous debt-cancellation and orders the once-forgiven-but-actually-unforgiving first servant thrown into debtors' prison also (Luke 18:28-35). God's passion for God's people is maintained by a relationally connecting long-thread/rope of enduring, in the hope that God's own enduring makes a difference in the lives of people to shape their enduring with each other. Job argued with the four that God, who creates humans with integrity, dignity, value, and care, and who may never wield or wave a magic wand to cure what ails us, can be counted on to endure with humans, even when humans find themselves in situations of indescribable grief and despair; and God can be counted on to endure with humans even when humans experience coercive pressuring in the name of religion, of politics, of tradition, of cultural custom, as the four had been coercively pressuring Job.

The four who speak to Job about his life are ancestors of who we might call "thought police," those who are convinced that others need to bow to the way the others are told it is best for them to think. This can and has developed among families, corporations, fraternities, sororities, political parties, in religious traditions and faith communities, in cultures anywhere. Many have said, "Believe this particular way about God or about life if you are to have a place in this group." Job argues that the integrity, dignity, value, and care with which God has created him serve as a connecting relational thread or rope to God, from and by which God which endures with people! Jesus' teaching about God would be "makrothumeo." A long spirit. And God shows up in chapter 38 for a conversation with Job, indicating God's enduring "long spirit," and ignoring the "thought police visitors" on stage who have argued their logic of God, whom they say causes tragedy as punishment when sin goes unconfessed.

There was a clue early in this story indicating this development might occur. In chapter 2, God – who has bet on Job's integrity – is conversing with Hasatan (The Satan) after Job's young adult sons and daughters have died. God says: "Job still holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause." Without cause. Think about this. Destruction is the "dark opposite" of grace, both being "without cause." In the Jobian story, God says at chapter 2, verse 3, "Harm, agony, and destruction can without reason." In Job, harm, agony, destruction are not the punishment of a God who is vindictive toward people; nor is God insisting on theological uniformity such as Job's "thought police" visitors insist. Harm, agony, and destruction happen, but happen not as Job's visitors insist: with his unconfessed sin as a cause. Remember, God said destruction can be without cause; and God endures with Job, as God endures with you and me and others, amid harm, agony, and destruction in life. God may not rescue people from every threat, but God is gracious and enduring with a long-spirit, for integrity, dignity, value, and caring.

In August of 1942, the leaders of the Reformed/Presbyterian church in LaChambon in south central France were brought before the Nazi-collaborating administration in their district and interrogated about harboring immigrant Jews fleeing Germany for their lives. The Nazi-collaborating administrators asked, "Have you aided Jews as refugees?" The Reformed/Presbyterian church leaders said, "We don't know what a Jew is. We only see people." So does God. Whether in Biblical times, in the 1930s and '40s, in any other period of history, in contradiction to what "thought police" argue and say someone or everyone should believe, God endures, as Jesus taught, with a "long thread and rope of a Spirit." And how does God endure like that? God shows up – maybe sweeping past the "thought police." God shows up amid conflict, harm, grief, and agony, to honor the integrity, dignity, value, and care that God has been intending from the beginning for all. How that conviction of who God surely is helped Job endure, helped the Reformed/Presbyterian folk of LaChambon endure, and does the same for us and all others. Don't you think that God endures with and for all people so we will follow suit/ so we will endure ourselves and with others, trusting and modeling the integrity, dignity, value, and care God has intended from the beginning? – All honor and praise be to God.