



CRANSTON MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

March 30, 2025

Fourth Sunday in Lent

GATHERING

ACTS OF WELCOME

LENTEN CHORUS: *The Lord is my light, my light and salvation. In God I trust. In God I trust.*

CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 32)

The one whose wrongdoing is forgiven, whose sin is covered over, is truly happy.

The one the Lord doesn't consider guilty – in whose spirit there is no dishonesty – that one is truly happy.

One: What makes you truly happy?

All: To be accepted and forgiven.

One: And where do you find acceptance?

All: With God, who is Welcome.

One: Where do you find forgiveness?

All: With God, who is Grace.

One: Come to the One who longs to free your spirit.

All: We come to the One whose Spirit is Truth.

HYMN # 223

O My Soul, Bless Your Redeemer (verses 1-4)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION FOR THE LENTEN JOURNEY (inspired by Psalm 51)

Invitation to Prayer: We make our confession with confidence that God's abundant mercy and constant love is already ours. Together, let us confess both our mistakes and our hopes for this Lenten season.

Spoken Prayer: Have mercy on me, O Gracious One, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant kindness forgive me where my thoughts and deeds have hurt others. Teach me that I may know my weaknesses, the shortcomings that bind me, the unloving ways that separate me, that keep me from recognizing your Life in me. Create in me a clean heart, O Gracious One, and put a new and right spirit within me. Restore in me the joy of your saving grace and encourage me with a new spirit.

SILENT PRAYER

Sung Prayer: Hymn # 572 Lord, Have Mercy Upon Us

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Friends, believe the good news.

All: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

TIME WITH CHILDREN

WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Speaking God, awaken us to the clarity of our minds, the warmth of our hearts, and the openness of our spirits so that we can receive a fresh word from you today. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Joshua 5:9-12

⁹Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." So the place was called Gilgal, as it is today.

¹⁰The Israelites camped in Gilgal. They celebrated Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month^[b] on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹On the very next day after Passover, they ate food produced in the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. ¹²The manna stopped on that next day, when they ate food produced in the land. There was no longer any manna for the Israelites. So that year they ate the crops of the land of Canaan.

Luke 15:20-24

"While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion. His father ran to him, hugged him, and kissed him. ²¹Then his son said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet! ²³Fetch the fattened calf and slaughter it. We must celebrate with feasting ²⁴because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life! He was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

One: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us
All: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

Leaving the Wilderness

Rev. Rebecca Bosarge

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe that our lives are held within the encircling love of God,
who knows our names and recognizes our deepest needs.

We believe that Christ is the divine Child of the living God,
and that his grace is like living waters that can never be exhausted.

We believe in the birthing, renewing, enabling Spirit of God
who yearns over our welfare as a mother yearns for her child.

We believe that God is in the arid desert as well as in green pastures,
and that hard times and disciplines are also loving gifts.

We believe that our journey has a purpose and a destination,
and that our path leads to a human glory we cannot yet imagine.

We believe that in the church we are fellow pilgrims on the road,
and that we are called to love one another as God loves us.

This is our faith, and we are humbled to profess it in Jesus the Christ. Amen.

*LENTEN CHORUS: *The Lord is my light, my light and salvation. In God I trust. In God I trust.*(3x)

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God all creatures here below;

praise God above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 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.

SENDING

*HYMN My Life Flows On (How Can I Keep from Singing?) – see next page

*CHARGE AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE AND CARRYING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD (*please be seated for a moment of quiet as we contemplate the God we met today and the light that dwells within us*)

Prayer and Practice for the Week: In our prayer of confession, the psalmist asks God to help them be aware of the things that keep them from recognizing God's Life in them. Make this a focus of your prayer this week. Pause during your day to pray this breathe prayer: Your life (inhale)... in me (exhale)... You might also extend the prayer: Your life...in them/him/her; your life...in New Richmond; Your life...filling the earth...

LIVING AND DYING IN CHRIST

821 My Life Flows On

How Can I Keep from Singing?

1 My life flows on in end-less song, a-bove earth's lam-en - ta - tion.
 2 Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I hear that mu - sic ring - ing.
 3 What though my joys and com-forts die? I know my Sav - ior liv - eth.
 4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a foun-tain ev - er spring-ing!

I hear the clear, though far-off hymn that hails a new cre - a - tion.
 It finds an ech - o in my soul. How can I keep from sing-ing?
 What though the dark-ness gath-er round? Songs in the night he giv - eth.
 All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from sing-ing?

Refrain

No storm can shake my in-most calm while to that Rock I'm cling-ing.

Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from sing-ing?

In the *New York Observer* of August 7, 1868, this text was titled "Always Rejoicing," and was attributed to "Pauline T." This may well be where the Baptist pastor and musician to whom it is usually credited encountered the words that he later published with his tune.