



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Online Order of Worship
Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany
January 31st, 2021

— GATHERING —

Welcome & Announcements

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

Prayer of Invocation

Call to Worship

Alma Dowdakin

Thinking we know all the answers,
yet wondering if we haven't missed something:
we enter this sanctuary of Truth.
In the company of sinners,
in cahoots with saints:
we gather as God's people.
Sacredly distant with folks of deep, aching faith;
seated as those who too often stumble through the Kingdom:
we lift our praise to God.

Hymn

“Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim” HANOVER

Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
And publish abroad His wonderful name;
The name all victorious of Jesus extol,
His kingdom is glorious and rules over all.
“Salvation to God, who sits on the throne,”
Let all cry aloud, and honor the Son;
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
Fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.
Then let us adore, and give Him His right,
All glory and power, all wisdom and might,
All honor and blessing, with angels above,
And thanks never ceasing, and infinite love.

Prayer of Confession

The times when we have used knowledge in ways
which put people down rather than build them up.
God, source of all knowledge, forgive us.
When we see people being exploited
because of lack of knowledge, and do nothing.
God, source of all goodness, forgive us.
When we have idolized knowledge
at the expense of loving and caring for others.
God, source of all love, forgive us.

When we have ridiculed others
for having a weak and feeble faith
because they appear to lack wisdom ;
God, source of all wisdom, forgive us...Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Forgive us, O God, for seeing good only in what we understand and accept as your truths. Remind us of Paul's words, "If I have all knowledge but do not have love, I am nothing." Touch us, teach us, heal us and make us newly aware of your love and forgiveness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Response

"Our God, Our Help in Ages Past"
ST. ANNE

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.

— THE WORD —

Prayer for Illumination

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

Scripture

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; 3 but anyone who loves God is known by him.

4 Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one." 5 Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords— 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

7 It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8 "Food will not bring us close to God." We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. 9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? 11 So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. 12 But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

Sermon

A Friend Among Colleagues

Hymn

“Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”

ST. DENIO

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessèd, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice, like mountains, high soaring above
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

Thou reignest in glory, Thou rulest in light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render; O help us to see
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee!

— **RESPONSE** —

Prayers of the People

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

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 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.

— **SENDING** —

Song

“Be Thou My Vision”

SLANE

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art—
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my wisdom, be Thou my true Word,
I ever with Thee, and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, and I Thy dear son,
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Riches I heed not nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance through all my days;
Thou, and Thou only, the first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art!

Benediction

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

Announcements

Good morning, grace, mercy, and peace in the name of Jesus Christ our Risen Lord, welcome to Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church. We are delighted that you have chosen to worship with us this day. We do have a few brief announcements for you this day.

Welcome New Elders

Last weekend, we celebrated the ordination and installation of our new church officers: Ben Barber, Angie Hawthorne, and Amy Kiley, along with our returning elders David Barclift, Joy Carden, and Charlie Gray. Please welcome them and also give thanks for the elders who have concluded their term of service: Wit and MacKenzie Truitt, Donna Neumann, and Bryce Cumming. These celebrations came on the heels of our annual Session retreat, a retreat that you will hear more about in today's sermon.

Upcoming Events

As we have shared with you, due to winter weather and the viral surge locally, we are currently not holding in person Sunday services. However, in February, we will hold two events that you can attend:

On February 10th, we will have our monthly Taize service at 6pm. There we will also burn the palm leaves from last year's Palm Sunday service in preparation for Ash Wednesday. 15 people are welcome to join us at the Gailey Hall outdoor fireplace. Let us know if you would like to attend.

The following Wednesday, February 17th, we will hold a drive-thru Pancake supper at Ash Wednesday service from 5:30-6:30pm. We will offer pancakes to commemorate Shrove (Fat) Tuesday starting at 5:30, as you arrive to pick-up your food, Isaac and I will offer socially distant ashes using Q-tips or a blessing if you prefer. Stay in your car and eat and then at 6pm, we will offer a brief 15 minute service that will be in the same mold as our Christmas Eve service: you can access audio via our FM transmitter and we will have a camera close by so you can see us. I know: it has a lot of moving parts, but the bottom line, come get pancakes, enjoy, and let us join together for this Lenten season.

Supporting CAC/PW Mission Program

Also happening on the 17th, when you come to pick-up the pancakes, please also bring non-perishable food items to support the families served by CAC. And speaking of CAC, next Sunday, February 7th, will be the annual Presbyterian Women Mission Program. This short video will go online at 12:30pm and will explore the work of Tamara Carrera, the retiring CEO of CAC and the work they engaged in amid the pandemic. We hope you will join us.

Extra! Extra!

You can learn more about all of these announcements in our just released monthly newsletter, *The Good News*. To read and learn more, please see the website below.

Prayer Concerns

Finally, let us be in prayer at this time for so many. I think of the petition I heard a church member say in a small church I worked at while in seminary. "For everybody and everything." It seems so overwhelming to us, but it is not for God. Let us pray for that infinite love to be a presence in the hospitals, school, homes, and workplaces. Let us pray for peace and stability, and let us pray that our leaders find common ground.

And now, let us prepare our hearts and minds to worship God. Please join me in prayer.